



RI Housing Strategic Plan Status Update

June 29, 2021



Process Update

- External Stakeholder Engagement
- Internal Staff Workshops
- Draft Goals & Strategies
- Re-engage with Board
- Finalize Goals and Strategies
- Develop Plan
- Present Final Plan to the Board in September
- Publish Plan





Stakeholder and Staff Engagement

Activity

- Review of prior agency strategic plans and state housing plan
- Outreach during January
 - 29 external interviews including board members, state and community officials, real estate industry experts, development and financial partners
 - 2 focus groups with developers and community partners
- Participants were asked for their general impressions of the agency as a partner, what its role was in the housing market in RI, and what priorities should be over the next 2 to 3 years



External Stakeholders: **KEY THEMES**

- There needs to be more housing built in Rhode Island across all price points;
- There needs to be more focus on preserving existing affordable housing including Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) because of the lack of overall housing supply in the market;
- There isn't enough development and contractor capacity in the system which is impacting housing development;
- RIHousing is the only housing entity in the state with the scale and capacity to execute projects and programs, and therefore ends up as the defacto state housing agency rather than being just a "bank";
- RIHousing needs to be cognizant of how current housing market forces (including availability of starter homes and competition for limited supply) could negatively impact key segments of its operations such as mortgage financing, and development.



External Stakeholders: Suggested Priority Areas

- Spur increased production in RI of housing up to 80/120% AMI
- Have a housing production plan – even if it is just RI Housing production plan
- Find additional capital to support more housing development, and educate the non-profit development community on how to use alternative sources like the revised 4% credit
- Consider pilot programs in a variety of areas to spur innovative approaches to finance, development, housing and social issues, and place making / environment
- Expand developer / contractor pool with emphasis on minority and women options
- Put together education / messaging around the importance of housing and different options for missing middle housing
- Take steps to preserve existing affordable housing including NOAH
- Continue internal process improvements and simplifications where possible





Staff Perspectives

Believe.

Staff Engagement Process



- Seven internal interviews were conducted with assistant and deputy director level staff
- 23 members of the leadership team were engaged in a series of workshops during February, March and April to develop goals, recommendations and establish priorities



Staff Perspectives

- Strong support for the development of housing production programs
- Dynamic homeownership market requires different approaches by RIHousing to provide opportunities for first-time homeowners
- Creating innovative approaches to a series of housing issues needs to be a priority
- Targeted capacity building among the Agency's partners would strengthen the housing delivery system
- Ensuring RIHousing remains competitive as an employer of choice by its flexibility, staff development, and diverse workforce





Goals and Strategies



Goals

GOAL #1

Increase new housing production for middle- and low-income Rhode Islanders

GOAL #2

Expand partnerships to increase the creation and preservation of homes affordable to Rhode Islanders

GOAL #3

Drive innovation, diversity, equity and accessibility in housing development, mortgage financing, and leasing

GOAL #4

Invest in the expansion of partner technical expertise and capacity to develop, preserve, and manage affordable housing across the state

GOAL #5

Transform RIHousing into a flexible, dynamic, top performing housing finance agency





GOAL #1

Increase new housing production for middle- and low-income Rhode Islanders

GOAL #1:

Increase new housing production for middle- and low-income Rhode Islanders

Strategies

- Establish a RIHousing 5-year production plan integrated with a capital finance plan
- Develop a program for starter home production
- Support opportunities to finance a mix of housing and commercial/community space that is responsive to the needs of communities and its residents
- Actively promote and strategically utilize RIHousing's land bank program to acquire properties for future (re)development opportunities





GOAL #2

Expand partnerships to increase the creation and preservation of homes affordable to Rhode Islanders

GOAL #2:

Expand partnerships to increase the creation and preservation of homes affordable to Rhode Islanders

Strategies

- Increase RIHousing's brand awareness and the unique value proposition and opportunities created by our products and grant programs
- Increase coordination with federal, state, municipal, and community partners to leverage funding opportunities to rehabilitate existing housing stock
- Create an acquisition and rehabilitation program for naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH)
- Research, perform analyses, and produce materials that support and inform decision makers on housing policy choices that help achieve the state's housing goals





GOAL #3
**Drive innovation,
diversity, equity and
accessibility in housing
development, mortgage
financing, and leasing**

GOAL #3

Drive innovation, diversity, equity and accessibility in housing development, mortgage financing, and leasing

Strategies:

- Incentivize innovative building techniques to lower the cost of construction and rehabilitation
- Adopt development strategies designed to reduce “living costs” by addressing energy efficiency, transportation/commute time, maintenance costs, etc.
- Explore non-traditional mortgage underwriting processes and products that address historical barriers to homeownership
- Enhance programs and services for partners and participants in our leased housing programs





GOAL #4
Invest in the expansion
of partner technical
expertise and capacity
to develop, preserve,
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state

GOAL #4

Invest in the expansion of partner technical expertise and capacity to develop, preserve, and manage affordable housing across the state

Strategies

- Invest in technical training opportunities for Community Development Corporations and other non-profit partners
- Support Public Housing Authorities as they evaluate opportunities to reposition their housing assets
- Collaborate with state and local agencies, trade organizations and funding institutions to address obstacles for un and under-represented contractor groups created by bonding capacity, insurance requirements, and lack of working capital
- Provide communities with planning support to develop and implement affordable housing strategies which meet the needs of residents





GOAL #5

Transform RI Housing into a flexible, dynamic, top performing housing finance agency

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Transform RI Housing into a flexible, dynamic, top performing housing finance agency

Strategies

- Implement creative staff recruitment models to attract a more diverse workforce and support a richer and more inclusive workplace
- Develop leadership and professional development plans for our workforce to prepare the next generation of management leaders
- Provide a flexible work environment that represents the changing nature of HFA business and is on par with industry employers
- Create an agile workforce committed to improving agency processes and adapting to changing market conditions and technology

