



Annual Report

OCTOBER 2020

Prepared by the
Holyoke Housing Authority



For the

Holyoke
REDEVELOPMENT
Authority



Development Update

The Holyoke Housing Authority (HHA) is proud to partner with the Holyoke Redevelopment Authority (HRA) on the ambitious and much needed goal of providing outstanding housing in South Holyoke. Since the HRA designated the HHA as lead developer of the project in the spring of 2018, we have been advancing the goals that are defined in the Urban Renewal Plan for Area 8, which include: redeveloping vacant property, adding more density, improving housing options, improving housing stock, and increasing home ownership opportunities.



We are proud of the work we have accomplished since our last annual report, including community outreach and engagement, preparing a phased Master Plan, receiving unanimous City Council approval for a home rule petition, securing infrastructure funding, and advancing designs for Phase 1. We have turned the idea of developing housing around Carlos Vega Park into a multi-phased plan and begun implementation. None of it would have been possible without the input and support of the community and local stakeholders. We look forward to our continued work together to bring the entire plan to fruition.



Community Outreach

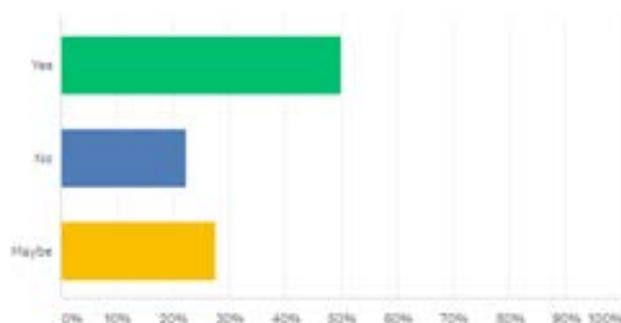
While the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our ability to hold in-person events since March of 2020, we were able to hold a Community Conversation in January at El Mercado that was well attended. We presented our Master Plan at the event and received good feedback on the five phases of development that incorporates the diversity of housing needs we heard during engagement: rental housing, home ownership opportunities, single-family homes and rowhouses.



To augment our public input process, we have continued to engage a Stakeholder group, which currently represents 12 community organizations. The group met in February and March of this year and includes the following entities: Nueva Esperanza, South Holyoke Neighborhood Association, Providence Ministries, South Holyoke Safe Neighborhood Initiative, City Council, State Representative, Valley Opportunity Council, Holy Trinity Church, Morgan School, Habitat for Humanity, OneHolyoke, and the City of Holyoke.

Would you be interested in renting or buying a brand-new home in South Holyoke?

Answered: 58 · Skipped: 1



We have continued to circulate a survey, in English and Spanish, available on-line and in print. We brought the surveys to all the community events, and also distributed at HHA's First Time Homebuyer classes. Thus far we have over 100 responses; 49 in Spanish and 59 in English. The survey results are helpful in determining both the demand and the challenges as the project moves forward.

Community Engagement

We have emphasized our online presence to bring transparency and awareness to the project. We launched a new website in February (www.southholyokehomes.org), which we hope will serve as a repository for all pertinent documentation for the project. All of the planning documents that have been instrumental to the development of the project can be found on the site, along with recaps of every community meeting, including PowerPoint presentations, meeting minutes and flyers. We also created Facebook and Instagram accounts for the project and regularly post project updates.



Meeting Documents

PLEASE REVIEW THE SIDEBAR FOR FLYERS, POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS, AND MEETING MINUTES OF ALL OF OUR PUBLIC MEETINGS.

Community outreach and engagement is a critical component to ensure the success of this project. We are committed to keeping the community informed of our plans, and incorporating input regarding density, design, and programming.

We have organized three Community Conversations in May and July 2019 and January 2020 at El Mercado. We also engaged with attendees at the Noche de San Juan, the Morgan School Open House and Halloween, and the Taste of South Holyoke.



A successful component of our community engagement has been a 3D model of the neighborhood that allows participants to engage around the issue of density. This has been a large question for the project, as we want to ensure there is a demand for the type of

DOCUMENTS

1st Community Conversation
5/28/19

- Flyer
- PowerPoint
- Minutes

2nd Community Conversation
7/24/19

- Flyer
- PowerPoint
- Minutes

3rd Community Conversation
1/23/20

- Flyer
- PowerPoint



MassWorks Award

We were thrilled when Governor Baker announced a \$6.5M MassWorks infrastructure grant to support the project, the largest award in the Commonwealth. On December 10th, the Governor came to Holyoke to make the announcement at El Mercado. The funding includes utility upgrades for water and sewer; streetscape improvements including new sidewalks, streets, bike lanes, lighting and trees; improved alleyways with new lighting; and a new greenspace at the intersection of Sargeant, Clemente and South East Streets.

The project was put out to bid by the City of Holyoke, a contractor was selected in the spring, and work has begun with an anticipated completion of June 2022.



Phase I Updates

Immediately after completing the Master Plan, we began working with Abacus Architects and Charleen Regan (our financial consultant) on designing and securing funding for Phase 1 on the corner of Hamilton and South East Streets. We identified MassHousing and DHCD's Community Scale Housing Initiative (CSHI) as a good fit for the project and worked on the design of a 12-unit rental building that will serve income eligible individuals and families using HHA's Project-Based Section 8 vouchers. The proposed 3-story building consists of 4 one-bedroom, 4 two-bedroom and 4 three-bedroom apartments with two accessible units.

In January we applied for, and in March were awarded a pre-development loan from the Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC). We submitted a CSHI pre-application in April and were asked to submit a full application by the end of June. Thanks to the 202 people who signed the petition in support of our application - and to the South Holyoke Neighborhood Association for their support! We are awaiting an imminent funding announcement.



In addition to submitting a funding application to the State, we also applied for funding through the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston's Affordable Housing Program. We partnered with PeoplesBank for a grant and subsidized loan. We will find out about the award in December.

We have completed all permitting for Phase 1 and were very pleased that the Planning Board and Stormwater Authority provided unanimous support for the project. Our architects are preparing construction documents and if funding is secured, we could begin construction in Spring of 2021.

Next Steps

As we await funding decisions for Phase 1, we have turned our attention to Phase 2, which will consist of home ownership units. We have identified funding for home ownership through MassHousing's Commonwealth Builder Program and will be working to put together an application in the coming months. We have brought on a home ownership consultant to our development team and are currently working on a market study to best design a program that will be successful. We are hoping to submit a funding application for home ownership in 2021 and if we are successful, a very optimistic projection would be that construction on the home ownership component could begin in 2022.

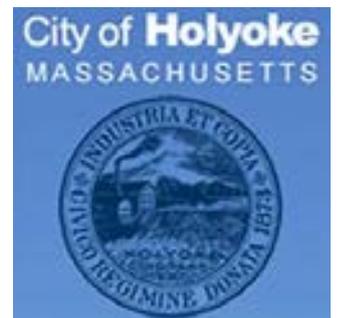


We will continue to work, phase by phase, to transform the vacant lots into a dense, urban neighborhood that fits the needs and maintains the strength of the local community. We look forward to continuing to work with the HRA to advance our shared goals.

Thank you to our partners!



Holyoke REDEVELOPMENT



Ward 2 City Councilor
Terence Murphy

