

# **Community Investment Plan**

## **Metro West Collaborative Development, Inc.**

Metro West Collaborative Development, Inc. is a community development corporation that serves an approximately 23-town area comprising the West Metro HOME Consortium and surrounding communities (see Attachment A). This Plan represents the input, concerns, goals, and strategies of many individuals and organizations. A full list is included in Attachment B. This plan does not deviate significantly from our 2013-2018 plan.

## **What We Believe**

Several themes serve as the backdrop to this plan:

- 1) Our past and future successes hinge on relationships both deep and wide and with those who are now, and those will become, key stakeholders.
- 2) The organization has grown steadily in the past five years, building upon successful implementation of a few core programs. This growth and commitment to programs with strong content and outcomes will continue.
- 3) The organization will continue to invest in its existing assets (projects, programs and people) while creating opportunities for new ones.
- 4) All of our work is interrelated: building housing, supporting neighborhood centers and small businesses, helping people find housing, work and the services they need. We are strengthening families and communities.
- 5) The spirit of collaboration and maximizing resources by sharing burdens and opportunities is essential in all facets of our work.

## **Current Environment**

Back in 2013 we faced a stalled economy with its myriad challenges and now we face a booming economy and the challenges do not seem any less. For a variety of reasons, Metro West Collaborative Development is strong and looking forward to a period of growth despite a very expensive and politically difficult environment within which to work. Key opportunities in our region include:

- 1) Opportunity: Of the 23 towns in our target area 15 fall below the state's 10% affordable housing goal, requiring over 5,000 units simply to meet the 10% goal.
- 2) CPA funds: 21 of the 23 towns in our target area have CPA funds with a total of more than \$25 million available annually. Even if only the minimum of 10% is used for affordable housing production, that provides over \$2.5 for potential projects.
- 3) Strong advocates: Many of the 23 towns in our target area have strong Housing Trusts or Housing Partnerships with positive track records advocating for affordable housing in their towns. Our work will focus on building upon their success.
- 4) All 23 towns in our target area are "High Opportunity" areas, which suggests that residents of these towns will have access to good schools, jobs and transportation.

## **Section 1: Community or constituencies to be served by the organization**

Metro West CD works in an approximately 23-town geographic area (the precise number of towns can vary slightly from year to year). They are primarily suburban communities. Collectively these communities are home to approximately 35,000 low and very-low income households but have only 19,000 affordable housing units leaving nearly 16,000 households at risk of homelessness and severe economic strain. To simply meet the 10% Chapter 40B affordable housing goal these communities would need to add 5,247 units. Our goal is to help organize low and moderate income families and other housing advocates to strive to reach this 10% goal.

## **Section 2: Involvement of community residents and stakeholders**

Success of our Plan is ultimately measured in affordable housing units created. Each community that we work with identifies their own affordable housing development goals and potential projects. Metro West CD serves as the facilitator, vehicle, trainer and coach that helps communities accomplish their goals. Our work is informed regularly by outreach to low and moderate income individuals through surveys, meetings and workshops and through regular meetings with community stakeholders like Housing Trusts, Planning Boards, Community Preservation Committees and Boards of Selectmen. Below is a list of some of the outreach activities engaged in over the past twelve months. Collectively, these activities involved over 300 people.

- Metro West CD members / annual meeting November 2016
- Metro West CD and CAN-DO Tenant survey Fall 2017
- Ready Renter Annual Survey Fall 2016
- Belmont Housing Production Plan process 2016-2017
- Lexington Housing Partnership 2016-2017
- Natick Housing Trust 2017
- Medway Affordable Housing Trust 2016-2017
- Norwell Affordable Housing Trust 2016-2017
- WATCH CDC 2016-2017
- West Metro HOME Consortium 2016-2017
- Senior Housing Seminars in Waltham, Watertown, Westwood and Lexington Fall 2016

## **Section 3: Plan goals**

Goal #1: To complete construction of 74 units of affordable housing and obtain permitting for another 100 units.

Goal #2: To assist 500+ low and moderate income households annually in their search for stable, safe and decent housing.

Goal #3: To use an affordable housing development as a catalyst to grow the local economy of a neighborhood center.

Deed-restricted affordable housing is not only a potential life changer for low and moderate income households, but it becomes a resource for the entire community. It becomes a place that

people can know is there if they ever need it. It creates stable communities where children can thrive in school and employees can more confidently head out to work in the morning. It creates homes where seniors don't have to fear being kicked out. Our affordable housing is also well maintained and is an asset to the neighborhood. Quality affordable housing can be a catalyst for additional investments in a neighborhood.

#### **Section 4: Activities to be undertaken**

Metro West CD provides programs in two core areas:

- 1) Real Estate Development
- 2) Housing Services

##### Real Estate Development Background

Metro West CD has developed four ownership units and 43 rental units. 40 River Street (Norwell), which was recently awarded DHCD subsidies, will add 18 more rental units to the list of accomplishments. In total 44 units are currently operated by Metro West CD with support from a third-party property management firm, Maloney Properties.

Metro West CD has recently become affiliated with Citizens for Affordable Housing in Newton – Development Organization (CAN-DO). The two organizations share a common Board of Directors and Metro West CD provides staff to CAN-DO. CAN-DO has developed 41 units of ownership and rental housing. In total, 33 units are currently operated by CAN-DO. CAN-DO has also recently received funding commitments to begin construction on an 8-unit rental development at 236 Auburn St., Newton.

Metro West CD staff are actively exploring project opportunities in many of the Metro West communities. This work is largely done in consultation with planning staff and/or housing advocates within each community.

##### Housing Services Background

Metro West CD currently provides two housing services:

- 1) Regional Ready Renter Program – Through this program, low and moderate income tenants can sign up for on-going referrals to affordable housing opportunities. Approximately 1,000 households are on the current list, up from 150 in 2013. The program was designed to meet DHCD Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing requirements and therefore units filled from this program are eligible for listing on the Subsidized Housing Inventory.
- 2) Affirmative Marketing and Monitoring – These services are available to towns and developers who seek assistance meeting the regulatory requirements for affordable housing through Chapter 40B, 40R or local inclusionary zoning ordinances. We are currently working on projects in Dedham, Stoughton, Medford, and Scituate. We are also the consultant to a regional housing consortium that includes the towns of Hudson, Bolton, Boxborough, Stow, Littleton and Devens Enterprise Committee. Metro West CD is a MassHousing approved 40B Monitoring Agent. This work creates relationships with municipal staff and real estate developers and supports our mission of preserving and

promoting affordable housing. We are proud to be one of the stewards of the growing inventory of affordable housing in the Commonwealth. A full list of our Affirmative Marketing and Monitoring work is in Attachment B.

### Real Estate Development - The next five years:

Metro West CD has recently had several important wins:

- 1) The permitting and funding of the 40 River St., Norwell project.
- 2) The permitting of the Glen Brook Way, Medway project.
- 3) The funding of 236 Auburn St., Newton with its affiliate CAN-DO.

Together these projects form the foundation of Metro West CD's expansion of its real estate development activities. In 2013 Metro West CD had set an ambitious goal of building 100 units of housing by the end of 2018. While they might not all be built within the 5-year timeframe the goal was largely met:

St. Joseph Hall – senior rental: 25 units. Completed 2014.

40 River St. – senior rental: 18 units. Completion expected March 2019

Glen Brook Way – family rental: 48 units. Completion expected 2020

236 Auburn St. – family rental: 8 units. Completion expected March 2019

Total: 99 units

The next five years envisions a similar level of success utilizing similar strategies.

**Goal: To complete construction of 74 units of affordable housing and obtain permitting for another 100 units.**

#### Specific Next Steps for 2018-2019

- Launch and complete the construction of 40 River St., Norwell, 18 rental units.
- Launch and complete the construction of 236 Auburn St., Newton, 8 rental units
- Obtain subsidies and other financing for Glen Brook Way, Medway, 48 rental units and begin construction.
- Provide regular support to the Housing Partnerships/Trusts throughout the region as requested and as time allows.
- Pursue leads on projects in: Hudson, Natick, Needham, Waltham and other communities as they emerge.
- Respond to municipal RFPs as they are announced.
- Obtain site-control of a new project every 18-24 months.

### Housing Services - The next five years:

While significant changes are not anticipated in Metro West CD Housing Services we have the opportunity to triple our outcomes over the next 3-5 years as we expand into more communities.

#### **Housing Services Goals:**

- 1) Regional Ready Renter program will serve 500+ households annually.
- 2) Provide more in depth housing search assistance and financial coaching to 25-50 households annually.
- 3) Affirmative Marketing and Monitoring – continue to provide this service to 1-3 new projects per year

Specific next steps for 2018-2019

- Continue Ready Renter marketing and wait list management. Implement on-line capacity.
- Identify 25-50 households for more in depth support
- Reach out to 1-2 new municipality annually to “pitch” monitoring services

Neighborhood-Center Development - The next five years:

An economic development strategy for Metro West CD would focus on very specific geography: neighborhood centers, village centers, transit centers.

As Metro West CD pursues development opportunities in neighborhood centers, the clear desire by neighborhood activists and community leaders is for mixed-use developments that encourage local small businesses. Neighborhood centers are important opportunities for employment as well as goods and services for low and moderate income households.

The Metro West CD approach to this work will be to focus on the “geography.” Where do we already have projects, advocates, and partners? Where are the seeds of support for these kind of initiatives that we can help grow? One example is Waverley Square in Belmont. The center of the square contains an MBTA commuter rail station that is at risk of closing in 2024 if a plan for addressing its lack of handicapped accessibility is not created. Later this year Metro West CD will be working with members of the Belmont Housing Trust to raise CITC funds to undertake a creative place making process in 2018 with the goal of creating a plan that will save the train station as well as create affordable housing.

**Potential Economic Development Goals:**

- 1) Begin construction of one mixed-use development in a neighborhood center; ideally a 40R project. This project will ideally contain at least 2,500 square feet of commercial space and be located near public transit.
- 2) Organize and support neighborhood business interests. Healthy neighborhoods have viable and attractive businesses that provide goods, services and employment opportunities to neighborhood residents. Metro West CD will convene stakeholders in the Waverley Square area of Belmont to create a community-based plan to redevelop the MBTA train station site.

Specific next steps for 2018-2019

- Continue to explore potential mixed-use development sites.
- Research potential funding opportunities for mixed-use developments.
- Launch a creative place making initiative in the Waverley Square area of Belmont.

## **Section 5: How success will be measured and/or evaluated**

The Metro West CD Board of Directors annually establishes a set of organizational goals and evaluates them at the end of the year to measure whether the goals were met. The above goals will be measured by:

- Completion of the construction of 18 units in Norwell and 8 in Newton.
- Construction begun on 48 units in Medway.
- Purchase and Sale Agreements signed for 2-4 additional properties, one to be a mixed-use proposal in a neighborhood center.
- Maintaining the Ready Renter Program and providing support to 500+ households, as evidenced by applications and annual surveys and interviews to measure outcomes.
- Continued involvement of numerous community stakeholders as evidenced by attendance at or facilitation of meetings with Housing Trusts, Planning Boards, Community Groups, Community Preservation Committees and Boards of Selectmen.

## **Section 6: Collaborative efforts to support implementation**

All of Metro West CD's work is done in collaboration with local leadership. The form of leadership may vary but generally includes Housing Trusts, Planning Boards, local Community Groups, Community Preservation Committees and Boards of Selectmen. To reach the point of consensus for an affordable housing development we have generally also convened numerous neighborhood or community meetings in order to involve neighbors and potential occupants. Often a local community will contribute funding to a project early in the process as a show of good faith. Housing advocates in both Norwell and Medway committed local funds to their projects early on. In Belmont, a group of CITC donors came together to be able to pool donations and use those proceeds to engage Metro West CD to conduct it's Housing Production Plan. There are various creative ways that local people can work with Metro West CD to raise the funds needed to accomplish their goals.

Known collaborators in 2018-19 will be:

Medway Affordable Housing Trust  
Norwell Community Housing Trust  
Belmont Housing Trust  
Natick Affordable Housing Trust and Family Promise of Natick  
WATCH CDC  
CAN-DO

## **Section 7: Integration of activities/consistency with community strategy and vision**

The production of affordable housing is a component of every master plan or community plan in the communities within which we work, although not all communities have master plans. When considering work in a community we always begin with what planning documents are available on the municipal website. It is a core component of our work that we support local goals and strategies and thus always seek to be consistent with local plans.

## **Section 8 The financing strategy**

Metro West CD has primarily relied on developer fees for its survival. Although these fees will continue to be the largest single source of revenue we have been expanding our monitoring and consulting contracts which provide sufficient funds to cover one staff person. Also, a major new resource opportunity has presented itself in the form of the affiliation with CAN-DO and its annual "gala." CAN-DO raises nearly \$100,000 annually from this event and Metro West CD will be able to learn from and perhaps expand on its success into other communities or perhaps new ways of giving. This continues to be explored by the Board of Directors but will be an important source of revenue in the years going forward.

Metro West CD has been utilizing approximately \$50,000 in CITC allocation annually. We believe we can increase this because of:

- a) The affiliation with CAN-DO and the opportunity to raise CITC gifts from Newton residents, corporations and foundations.
- b) The success of our "Belmont donors" who raised \$15,000 each year for the past two years and have set an ambitious goal of \$50,000 for this year in order to undertake a Waverley Square Visioning Campaign.
- c) Our ability to maintain a steady donor base of approximately a dozen individuals, foundations and corporations who give \$50,000 annually.

## **Section 9: History, track record and sustainable development**

Metro West CD has a 25-year history of working with housing advocates in numerous metro west communities to accomplish their housing goals. We have successfully utilized the Community Investment Tax Credit to grow new resources and therefore grow new initiatives (such as the Belmont Housing Production Plan) and expand current ones (such as the Ready Renter Program).

The three projects that are underway exemplify the skills Metro West CD bring to the community development world as well as our commitment to the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles:

Norwell – the project was a "friendly 40B," which by definition cannot happen without significant local support. The municipality has committed \$1.2 million to the project and was recently awarded funds from DHCD and MassHousing so that construction can begin in March 2018. Total development cost is \$5.6 million. The project accomplishes several Sustainable Development principles

- 1) Concentrate development – this site is much more dense than its surrounding uses and is close to the town center.
- 2) Advances equity – it locates affordable housing in a community that is well below the Chapter 40B 10% goal.
- 3) Protects land and ecosystems – over 50% of the site will be reserved for open space
- 4) Expands housing opportunities – the project will create much needed wheel chair accessible units and units for households with a mix of incomes: 30% of AMI to 100% of AMI