

## **Study Session on the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park**

### **Background Information**

Buena Vista Mobile Home Park (**Park**) is located at 3980 El Camino Real, on 4.5 acres in Palo Alto, CA. In 2017, the Santa Clara County Housing Authority (**Housing Authority**), the County of Santa Clara (**County**), and the City of Palo Alto (**City**) came together as partners to purchase the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park (**Park**) in order to preserve affordable housing in one of the most cost-prohibitive and highly-resourced cities in the Bay Area. The Park's acquisition by the Housing Authority and its partners secured existing affordable housing stock and prevented the potential displacement of residents by the previous owner. The property was purchased for \$40,375,000, with \$14,500,000 contributed by the City, \$14,500,000 from the County and \$12,075,000 from the Housing Authority. The Housing Authority also committed an additional \$19,925,000 towards the renovation and improvement of the Park. After the Park was acquired, all three parties entered into a joint Regulatory Agreement, which requires that the Park be improved, and the rents are affordable for each family based on their income. At present, the Park consists of 77 occupied homes, with variety of income levels, housing types, family sizes, as well as homeowners and renters. In total, the Park provides housing for approximately 270 Palo Alto residents.

It is important to note that when the Housing Authority took ownership of the Park in late 2017, the intention was to lease it to an operator/developer who would quickly stabilize the Park and commence with renovations. Unfortunately, this plan was impacted greatly by the difficult realities of the Park's condition, including the state of the infrastructure systems, the physical condition and age of the units, a significant relocation project within the Park, and the varying degree of barriers facing each household. While not insurmountable, these difficult realities have slowed down our efforts significantly while the Housing Authority carefully and methodically move forward with Park relocations, renovations and site upgrades, while balancing the needs and desires of residents with financial and legal considerations, code requirements, and physical constraints. The Housing Authority's goal continues to be the preservation and improvement of the Park, and the stability and success of its residents.

Below, please find the investments the Housing Authority has made in time and resources over the past five years into the Park. The work, efforts, and partnership with the City, County, and Housing Authority has allow us to get to this point to move forward redevelopment.

### **Park Upgrades & Improvements**

Since 2017, the Housing Authority has been making substantial investments to improve the infrastructure and quality of life for residents of Buena Vista. Early on, the Housing Authority undertook a major relocation project, moving several families from a dilapidated motel on the property and relocating mobile homes from a portion of land that was retained by the original owner of the Park. In 2020 and 2021, 18 new RVs and Manufactured Homes were brought into

the Park as part of a Replacement Housing Pilot Program, creating better quality housing for 61 Park residents. Other substantial investments include the clearing of trash and abandoned cars, repairing homes, installing new electrical and gas utilities, replacing aged sewer and water lines, replacing paving, demolishing abandoned coaches, capping unused utilities for safety, and providing space for onsite services and the afterschool program.

### **On-Going Compliance & Property Management**

At the same time, the Housing Authority was tasked with bringing the Park and its residents into compliance with the new regulatory agreement and rental housing laws. The Housing Authority and its partners, including The John Stewart Company, worked towards completing Housing Quality inspections on the units, ensuring the units were up to code and Health & Safety standards, issuing compliant leases, and certifying household income levels. This work continues today as residents adjust to the new management and policies of the Park.

### **Redevelopment Plan**

In late 2019, the Housing Authority assumed the role of Developer and owns the Park through its affiliated non-profit, Poco Way HDC, Inc. In its capacity as Developer, the Housing Authority is working towards creating a feasible plan to redevelop the Park into quality, affordable housing. The major goals of this redevelopment plan are to:

- 1) Ensure there is quality housing for all current Buena Vista residents at the Park
- 2) Provide new, comparable housing units for all current residents
- 3) Ensure all current owners retain their homeownership rights
- 4) Ensure rents at Buena Vista Park are affordable for the current and future residents based on income levels
- 5) Increase community and amenity space
- 6) Remove the gas lines and upgrade all utilities and coaches to electric

Currently, the plan includes maintaining a portion of the Park as a mobile home park and carving out a portion that will become a rental apartment building, thus serving existing coach owners, as well as current and future renters. The Housing Authority is in the process of completing a construction phasing plan which will determine if and how long any temporary relocation may be necessary. As required under the Uniform Relocation Act, a General Information Notice (GIN) will be issued to residents in order to inform them of their rights in relation to any potential relocation that may happen as part of the redevelopment. A draft GIN is included as an attachment to this report.

### **Future Engagement Opportunities**

Starting in January 2023, the Housing Authority anticipates sharing plans and feasible design concepts with residents, City and County partners, and local elected officials. Our goal is to solicit feedback from residents through June 2023 to help determine the future amenities, design, security and living spaces. The Housing Authority anticipates submitting design plans

for entitlements with the City of Palo Alto and California Department of Housing and Community Development in Summer 2023, with construction commencing on the future mobile home park in late 2023 or early 2024.

More information on the history of the Park and the redevelopment plan will be presented at the Study Session.