

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 15, 2015

TO: THE ALEXANDRIA HOUSING AFFORDABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FROM: HELEN S. MCILVAINE, ACTING DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF HOUSING

SUBJECT: CITY RELOCATION ACTIVITIES IN BEAUREGARD

ISSUE: Report on the Beauregard redevelopment process and the status of Prequalification Applications for Committed Affordable Units (CAUs) and Office of Housing (Housing) activities in the community.

BACKGROUND: The Beauregard Small Area Plan established a goal and funding plan to create or preserve 800 committed affordable units with rents ranging from 40% to 75% of the area median income (AMI). Affordability terms for these units will be at least 40 years. The City also negotiated 105 10-year affordable units at Southern Towers. Residents of future committed affordable and workforce units must qualify as “income eligible” and both the tenant income certifications and the lease agreements will be monitored by Housing to ensure compliance based on specific conditions incorporated during the development review phase. Ideally, income eligibility would result in a household spending only 30% of its income on rent in the affordable units.

As the Beauregard Area goes through substantial redevelopment over the next 30 years, the City will provide ongoing information to the 2,250 Beauregard households anticipated to be impacted.

DISCUSSION:

Development Update

Home Properties, owner of Seminary Hill Apartments postponed the approved redevelopment of its 296-unit complex and will not demolish and redevelop the property in 2015-2016 as previously anticipated. Nevertheless, the Housing included Seminary Hill in its pre-application solicitation in order to be prepared for the possibility that Home Properties proceeds with redevelopment at a later date or sells the property to another developer who pursues the approved redevelopment plan.

The JBG Companies, owner of the remaining 2,254 units to be redeveloped in the Meadowcreek, Stoneridge, Lynbrook, Stoneridge and Brookdale communities, has indicated to Planning staff that redevelopment of the Town Center area may in FY 2016 or in early 2017. Town Center-related redevelopment could affect 251 or more residential units. Pursuant to the approved Tenant Assistance and Relocation Plan (TARP), JBG must notify all residents who will be

affected by construction at least nine months prior to any development activity, in addition to issuing required 120-day notices to vacate.

Housing staff will continue to attend JBG resident meetings as they are scheduled. In addition, Housing is hosting its own quarterly community meetings for Beauregard residents to keep them generally informed regarding redevelopment and to provide information about affordable housing and other city resources and services.

Pre-application Questionnaire and Community Outreach

Since hiring a Relocation Coordinator in January 2014, Housing has developed a CAU pre-qualification application and a brochure explaining the redevelopment and relocation processes, as well as an FAQ (frequently asked questions) answer sheet. After confidentiality issues were resolved in consultation with the City Attorney, these documents were mailed to 2,550 households in November 2014 with a cover letter providing information about the approved TARP and Committed Affordable Units. The questionnaire is designed to collect household information necessary to establish and maintain a waitlist for the CAUs and to provide statistical information to help Housing project and plan for future City housing needs. All materials were provided in Spanish and English. Housing has also organized a “language bank” of city employees to assist with interpretation for clients who are fluent in other languages.

In February 2015, a follow up post card was sent to households that had not responded. In April 2015, Housing prepared a shorter questionnaire that tenants could return by email or text message from their smartphones by taking a picture of the completed questionnaire. This short form version was distributed through a door to door canvassing campaign, and from April through July 2015, Housing staff visited 2,254 units, knocking on doors, personally distributing the questionnaire and answering residents’ questions during the distribution.

To date, 344 completed pre-qualification applications have been received from the 2,550 units included in the Beauregard Small Area Plan and the results are summarized later in this memo. The margin of error for this sample is +/- 5%. The sample size is statistically significant; however, because the instrument is an application for affordable housing, staff believes that tenants in need of affordable housing are more likely to complete and return the application than those who are able to afford market rate rents. Nevertheless staff believes ongoing community outreach efforts to get more residents to respond will provide additional information to guide planning for the housing needs of the community prior to large-scale relocation.

Housing has also created a database with a preliminary CAU waitlist that will be active once redevelopment starts. Staff has been meeting with tenants to help them complete the CAU Pre-qualification Application. Staff also recently reinstated door-knocking a second time for the 251 units which may be redeveloped when the Town Center area projects start to ensure that impacted residents understand the importance of completing the application.

Housing staff have participated in 5 community meetings with Beauregard residents since January 2014. In June 2015, the Office hosted a resident meeting to explain the CAU waitlist process, the priorities and point system and to share information about affordable housing opportunities in the area. Thirty households attended the meeting and the Relocation

Coordinator continues to communicate with these households through phone calls, texts and emails.

Completed/In Progress Activities

Activity	Date completed
Creation of CAU Pre-Qualification Application, Cover Letter, FAQ (In English and Spanish)	January - November 2014
Mailing of 2,550 CAU Pre-qualification Applications	November 2014
Create Waitlist Database	December 2014
Newspaper notifications for tenants who moved out (Washington Post and El Tiempo)	December 2014
Create abbreviated version pre-qualification application (can be sent by text or email)	April 2015
Door Knocking Campaign (2, 254 doors knocked)	April – July 2015, August 2015
Meeting with Tenants /Community	November 2015 - June 2015 (Additional Meetings Planned)
Received CAU Pre-applications and send receipt letters	Continuous
Update waitlist	Continuous
On- going communication with tenants via email, text and letters	Continuous

CAU Complete Pre-applications Received	344
Doors Knocked in the Community	2254
One on one contact- meetings, appointments, on-site visits and phone calls	460
Community/Tenant Meetings	5

Preliminary Data and Findings

The community is very diverse, with many hard working families with multiple children. Several families that have participated in the pre-application survey are recent refugees from Arabic-speaking countries with very limited financial resources. They have been receiving temporary housing and economic assistance. Based on pre-applications completed so far, sixty percent (60%) of the households in the Area earn less than 40% of the AMI and sixty percent (60%) of households are families with three or more members.

As stated above, staff believe that some residents who have responded are motivated by the likely housing affordability challenges they will face if/when displaced. The slowdown in the anticipated pace of redevelopment/demolition and the relatively static rents in Beauregard (moderated by new rental housing supply still being absorbed in Potomac Yard and elsewhere in the City) have somewhat depressed the expected response rates.

An anecdote from the trenches

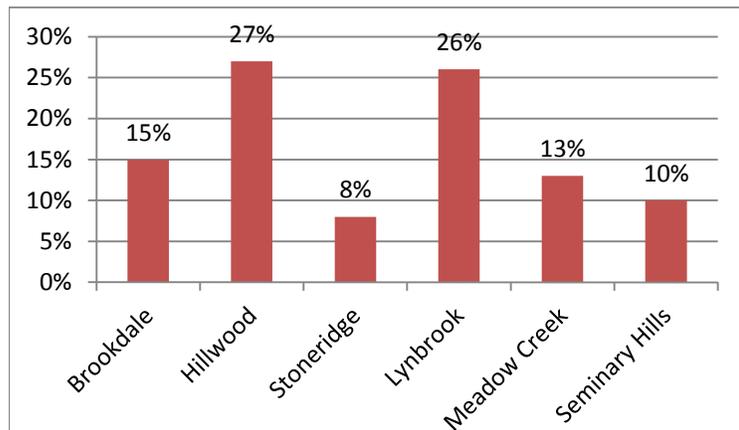
Staff recently interviewed a community household of a single mother with two school-age children. She has two jobs and spends \$1,400 in rent for a 2 BD unit. Her income is at 30% AMI, even after working two jobs. She barely sees her kids and is always exhausted, causing her stress and health issues. She spends one paycheck in rent and one to pay for groceries, health insurance, transportation and utilities. She says that if she gets an affordable unit she will pay \$983 in rent, and that she would like to work one job and spend the weekends with her children. A CAU will dramatically improve her quality of life. Her story is typical of many residents interviewed to date.

Preliminary Data

CAU Pre-qualification Applications/ Sample size: 344

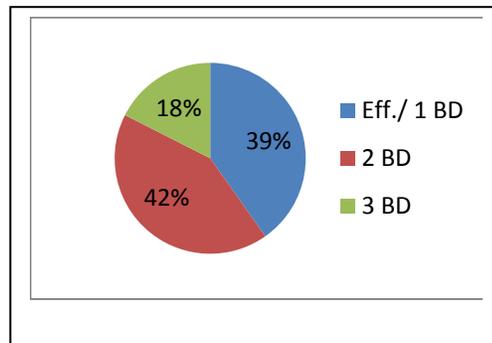
Brookdale	15%
Hillwood	27%
Stoneridge	8%
Lynbrook	26%
Meadow Creek	13%
Seminary Hills	10%

By Complex:

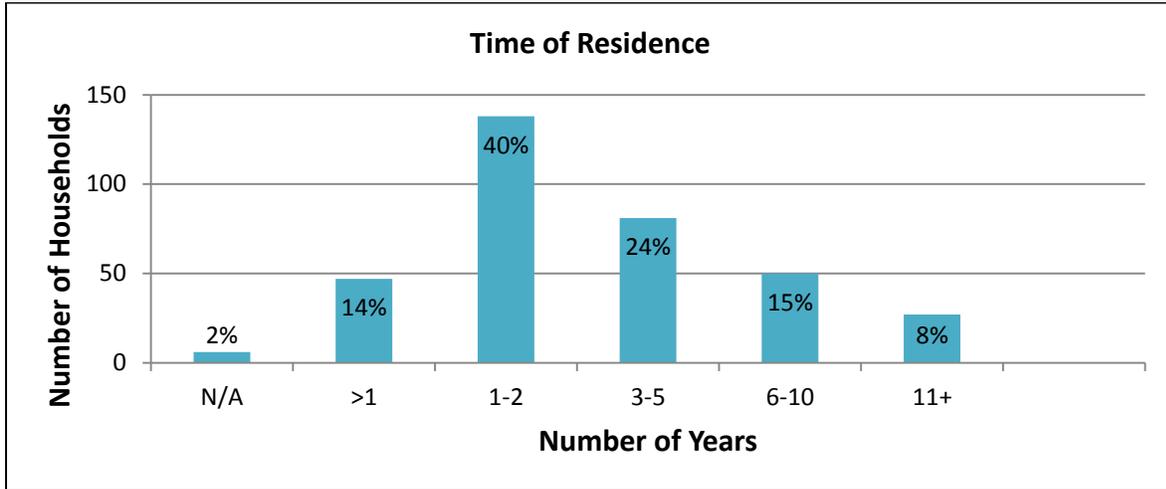


Unit Size needed by HH#:

Eff./ 1 BD	39%
2 BD	42%
3 BD	18%



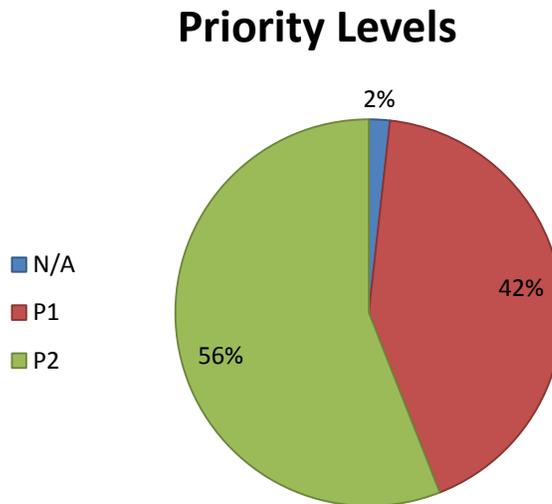
Time of Residence in the Beauregard Small Plan Area:



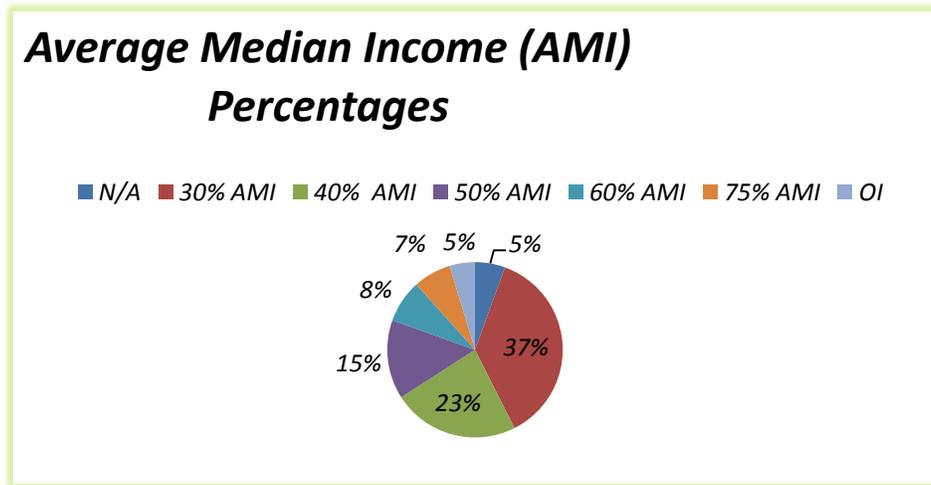
Community Households by Priority Level:

LEVEL I PRIORITY HOUSEHOLDS must have lived in one of the properties listed below on May 12, 2012 when the Beauregard Small Area Plan was approved by City Council and were still living in a unit in one of these properties on April 13, 2013 when Council approved rezoning amendments for the Small Area Plan.

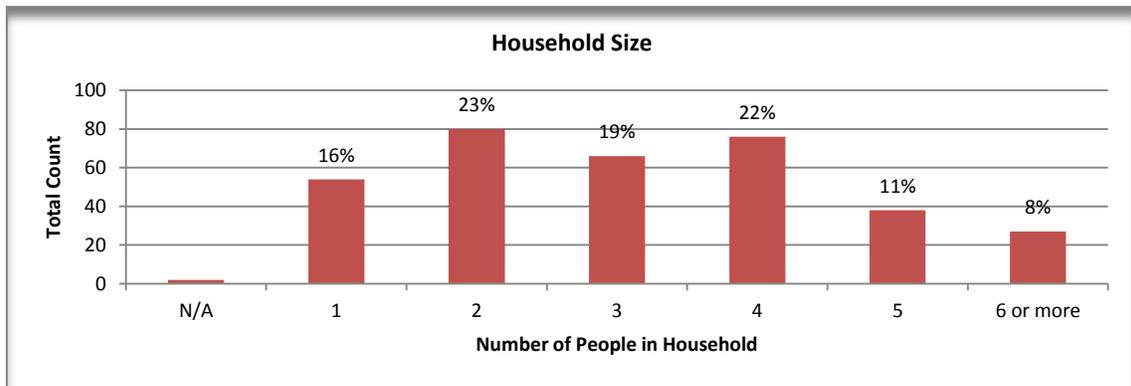
LEVEL II PRIORITY HOUSEHOLDS are residents of one the BSAP properties who moved into that property after May 12, 2012 and who live in a unit in one of these properties as of the date of approval of a DSUP that will result in the demolition of their unit.



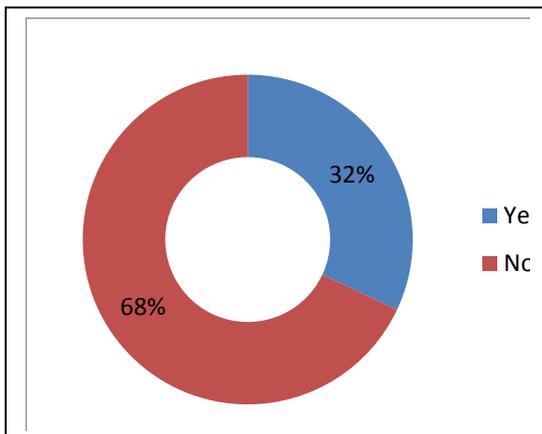
Population by AMI Levels:



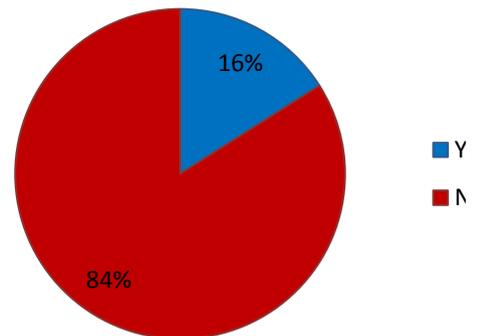
Household Size:



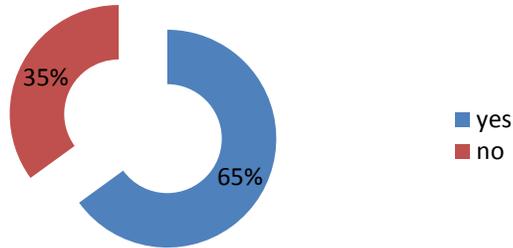
Households with Children in Elementary School:



Households with Disabled or Elderly member:



Interest in Southern Towers Units:
(Units that will remain affordable for 10 years)



Next Steps:

The Office of Housing will continue to receive CAU Pre-qualification applications and enter data into the waitlist database. These data will be used in aggregate to inform decisions in developing CAUs. Staff will maintain communication with the tenants by mail, phone, email and text and will meet with residents throughout the redevelopment.

A City Services Fair is planned for November 11, 2015 in coordination with the Department of Community and Human Services. Housing staff, including the Beauregard Relocation Advisor will participate in an upcoming Town Hall being planned by the Office on Human Rights. In February 2016 residents will be offered information on Financial Literacy Services, Homeownership Programs, and Preparation for Homeownership. At each meeting Housing staff will update residents on the redevelopment process and information about affordable units in the Area. Sharing information by text message has so far been a very effective way for Housing to continue to communicate with those who have completed the pre-application survey.

Staff:

Melodie Seau, Division Chief, Landlord-Tenant, Office of Housing
Caridad Palerm, Relocation Advisor (Beauregard), Landlord-Tenant Division, Office of Housing