

## Collaborative Partners (CP) Homeless Housing Planning Project

The Alameda Point Homeless Providers planning project will be implemented by three nonprofit “Collaborating Partners”(CP): Operation Dignity (OD), Building Futures with Women and Children (BFWC) and Alameda Point Collaborative (APC). Ten years ago, the CP realized an unprecedented community development success with the conveyance of 34 acres and 200 vacant units at the decommissioned Alameda Naval Air Station to meet the housing and service needs of persons in Alameda County impacted by homelessness, poverty, mental health concerns, veterans status and domestic violence. The CP negotiated this conveyance with the City of Alameda, the U.S. Department of Defense, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

In the past six months, the three organizations have begun to engage in a collaborative planning process to preserve, enhance, and potentially expand 200 units of affordable, supportive housing serving formerly homeless individuals and families at Alameda Point, California.

The redevelopment of Alameda Point would likely require the relocation of the residents and facilities of the Collaborating Partners from their current 34-acre site to a smaller site within the Alameda Point Master Redevelopment Plan. The developer of Alameda Point would gain access to the prime, “gateway” location of Alameda Point, essential to initiate their redevelopment plan. In turn, the developer would build replacement supportive housing and facilities for the Collaborating Partners.

The project seeks to optimize the influence, vision, and strategic planning needed for the Collaborating Partners to pro-actively respond to the City of Alameda’s plan to redevelop the area. The collaborative planning process provides the framework for the CP to negotiate an equitable deal relative to the master development plan. The goals of the negotiations are to preserve and expand the housing, social programming, community, and economic development benefits for residents. The project would involve building new facilities based on best practices, sustainability goals, and the needs and aspirations of constituents. An engaged resident participation process, involving residents with serious mental illness, will be an integral part of the planning process.

The Collaborating Partners have developed 200 cumulative units of transitional and permanent housing resources for their constituents. APC serves formerly homeless individuals and families. BFWC has a special focus of serving homeless, domestic violence survivors with mental health disabilities. Operation Dignity serves homeless veterans and their families.

The project addresses the following key questions:

- If the Collaborating Partners have the opportunity to build new properties for their constituents, what design best reflects the vision of their organization, lessons learned over the last decade, and the needs and aspirations of their constituents?
- How can the Collaborating Partners benefit from the wisdom and ideas of formerly homeless residents, including people with SMI in the development of the new strategic vision for Alameda Point?

- What is an equitable “deal” between the Collaborating Partners and the Master Developer, accounting for the value of the proposed land to be utilized by the Developer (24 acres) and the contribution of the Developer to the costs for the construction of new properties and relocation of residents?
- What “best practices” in the fields of supportive housing and urban design can inform and shape the project?
- What is the relationship of each organization to each other in the new design (campus with a shared identity, village with some shared services, or independently developed sites)?
- What is the desired relationship of the project to the master planned community (physically integrated into the community or separate from the master plan)?
- What are the expansion plans and new directions of each organization that will help shape the site planning and architectural design of the new buildings?

## **Opportunities**

Key project opportunities for the Collaborative Partners include:

Sustaining and Enhancing Supportive Housing. The partners can replace existing military housing that is becoming increasingly expensive to maintain with green up-to-code housing that better fits the demographics and needs of the community, and that is more efficient to maintain and operate.

Organizational Vision. The project provides an opportunity for the three organizations to collaborate on the new design for supportive housing for their constituents. After a decade of supportive housing provision, each organization has the opportunity to identify the factors that create success for their constituents and incorporate these features into the design and social programming of new facilities. The new property can reflect the core values and priorities of each organization, such as the need for community-building, safety, and creating a healing environment. The project can be designed to effectively support residents’ permanent exit from poverty, homelessness, domestic violence, substance abuse and family disruption.

Constituent Engagement. Residents will be engaged at various levels of planning, including workshop(s) regarding design alternatives and if desired, strategic planning and new organizational directions. The organizations will strive to become safe, inclusive and welcoming of the ideas of all stakeholders, including residents with SMI.

Transition to a Community Environment. The Alameda Point community has an opportunity to transition from a geographically and socially isolated and economically distressed area to a master planned community with an increased: residential population, vibrancy, levels of economic opportunity, and recreational, educational, transit, and other resources.

Facilitate Access to Employment Opportunities and Expansion of Social Enterprises. The project has the potential to realize significant employment benefits for residents and other low-income and unemployed individuals. The “first source hiring agreement” achieved by the homeless providers recommends that 15 percent of newly created jobs through the redevelopment of Alameda Point

benefit formerly homeless and low-income individuals. The Collaborating Partners can negotiate with the Master Developer to fulfill this hiring commitment and realize significant economic opportunities that foster economic self-sufficiency. For example, developing an employment training facility will support the Collaborating Partners to prepare and train residents and other low-income persons to access the newly created jobs. Training space can be designed for landscape maintenance, construction, weatherization, painting, janitorial, remediation, and other employment opportunities that can be targeted to individuals with limited work experience and multiple barriers to employment.

The project also provides an opportunity to expand APC's social enterprises, such as Ploughshares nursery and landscaping businesses. The redevelopment of the base can expand employment opportunities through increased plant purchases and landscape contracts at Alameda Point. APC can locate their Bike Shop and potentially start a bicycle rental business in a visible and highly trafficked location in the master plan to increase sales activity. In addition, each Collaborating Partner can consider creating new social enterprises that would benefit from the increased residential, employee, and visitor populations at Alameda Point.

Environmental Benefits. The project can realize significant environmental benefits through the Developer's agreement to remediate the high level of toxins at Alameda Point. Environmental remediation and clean-up would reduce acute health risks and ameliorate the overall atmosphere of neglect and deterioration.

The project can advance sustainability through green building design that reduces energy use, conserves water, and uses sustainable materials. The project can enhance community conservation of resources and enhance residents' health by designing safe, walkable and bikable connections to open space and recreational opportunities.

Collaborate on a Common Vision. The Collaborating Partners have the opportunity to design a concept plan that meets their unique and collective needs for a safe, supportive housing. Clustering housing in a village or campus environment can bring supportive services and employment opportunities within convenient access to residents and build on the synergy and shared services between the groups. Preserving a separate identity and maintaining privacy is a priority of one or more organizations.

## **Challenges**

The community planning and design process will need to address the following challenges:

Determine Land Needed for Collaborative Housing. A key challenge is to assess the land needed to accommodate the individual and collective vision of the Collaborating Partners for 200 units (or more) supportive housing, social services and economic development programs. Increasing the density of development could create greater stress on residents with SMI by reducing privacy and increasing social interactions and expectations for residents who are already facing multiple challenges.

Mixed-Income Housing. Design solutions need to consider best practices of supportive housing programs to develop designs for the successful co-existence of market rate residents, low-income residents and severely disadvantaged residents in close proximity to each other.

Project Phasing. The phasing of the relocation of the project, and the construction impacts of the build-out of the master plan over several years, presents a key community planning challenge. Planning will need to examine how to mitigate these impacts on the daily routines and well-being of residents, as well as customers for APC's social enterprises.

Economic Analysis. A preliminary analysis of land value is essential to ensure an equitable trade with the Developer. The Developers' proposed contribution towards the relocation and new construction of the supportive housing will need to be assessed, the difference in land value, costs of renovation/new construction and other factors.

## **Work Plan**

We envision the following community planning process to design a concept plan:

### **1. Collaborative Planning Process**

The project has successfully built a foundation for a collaborative planning process that engages the three Collaborating Partners to develop a unified vision and process to work together to effectively negotiate a deal that advances their goals. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been adopted by APC, BFWC and Operation Dignity, with the approval of the Board of Directors of each agency.

The collaborative planning process is designed to address both the unique and common needs and goals of the three agencies, their constituents and key stakeholders. The process honors the significant accomplishments of each Collaborating Partner to date as well as the importance for each organization to provide key inputs into the plan. It establishes an effective structure for efficient, inclusionary decision-making and action.

The Collaborating Partners meet to discuss all aspects of the planning process, including issues relative to the redevelopment plan, negotiations with the Developer and key programming issues (such as targeting the hardest-to-serve constituents and single vs. families as residents). This planning process represents the first time since the initial negotiations for the conveyance of the land for supportive housing purposes that the organizations are effectively collaborating together.

### **2. Programming, Needs Assessment and Site Analysis**

The consultants have developed a programming questionnaire to provide a framework and tool for each organization to define baseline information about current housing and supportive service programs as well as identify desired program expansion and new directions that meet constituent and organizational goals. This programming information will be used as the foundation for alternative development scenario analysis, site planning, and building design recommendations for each organization and the

collaboration as a whole. The program questionnaire is divided in four parts: Services, Existing Facilities, Future Directions, and Design Opportunities.

The consultants will provide focused strategic planning assistance to support each organization to develop a clear vision and priorities that relate to the development of a master plan. Each organization has the opportunity to engage staff members, residents, and Board members in the planning process.

As part of the strategic planning, each Collaborating Partner will have the opportunity to identify lessons learned from their experiences as developers of supportive housing and how these key findings translate into new organizational directions. Examples of new directions include: targeting housing and services to specific constituent groups, focusing on transitional or permanent housing, ensuring greater privacy between units, enhancing safety features, fostering community, and improving access to services.

A project program will summarize the findings of the needs assessment in terms of required spaces, floor areas, access and spatial relationships. We will prepare a site analysis which maps the opportunities and constraints to development. Together, the program and site analysis define the design problems to be solved by the concept plan.

The project will be informed by best practices relating to transitional and permanent supportive housing as well as urban neighborhood design concepts.

### **3. Concept Plan**

The concept plan is a vision and site plan for how to design facilities for the three housing providers in relationship to the overall master plan for Alameda Point. The concept plan will assist the three agencies to evaluate the opportunities and impacts of relocating to a smaller site. Alternative site plan concepts will be developed to explore and test priorities and program options. Alternatives will be evaluated based on meeting program goals, objectives, and incorporating feedback from the staff, Board members, and participating residents. A preferred concept plan will synthesize feedback.

### **Project Team**

*Bruce Fukuji*, Principal of Fukuji Planning and Design, is a nationally-awarded architect, urban planner, and expert in the collaborative design of sustainable, livable transit-oriented communities. Mr. Fukuji brings extensive experience building unity among diverse stakeholders and creating innovative urban design solutions. He is currently leading the community engagement process for the design of High Speed Rail program for 17 cities from San Francisco to San Jose.

*Bonnie Wolf*, Principal of Wolf and Associates, is a community development consultant, providing expertise in community economic development and job creation initiatives, strategic planning and visioning, program planning, fundraising, and organizational development. She holds a Masters of City Planning from M.I.T., with a Specialization in Community Development and Poverty Alleviation. Ms. Wolf has provided community development planning assistance to a range of organizations including:

Esperanza Community Development Corporation, Alameda Point Collaborative, American Indian Business Development Corporation, Stairstep Foundation, National Economic Development and Law Center, Wind Youth Center, Wu-Yee Children's Services, Nonviolent Peaceforce, Puerto Rican Organization to Motivate, Enlighten and Serve Addicts, and the Asian Community Development Corporation. She helped administer and ran a 24-hour hotline for a battered women's shelter in Boston, MA. Ms. Wolf has provided leadership and healing support for community activists, including leading a five day retreat for activists from Ecuador, the Philippines and the United States.

*Brad Paul* is a housing, urban development and planning consultant with thirty years of experience helping clients develop solutions to the economic, social and political problems challenging cities and neighborhoods. From 2000-2008, he was a Senior Program Officer at the Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund focusing on community planning and development. He has consulted with Swords to Plowshares (Veterans Academy, Presidio), Bay Area Women's & Children's Center (Tenderloin Grade School), Forest City Development (Emporium/Bloomingdale's project), Catellus (Mission Bay plan) and the S.F. Redevelopment Agency (Treasure Island Reuse Plan). He also worked on the reuse plans for Hamilton Field in Novato and El Toro Marine Corps Air Station in Orange County. From 1989-92, Brad served as Deputy Mayor for Housing and Neighborhoods under Mayor Art Agnos and before this position, he ran the North of Market Planning Coalition, a 600-member planning and advocacy group in the Tenderloin. He spent a year as a Loeb Fellow at Harvard's Graduate School of Design.

*Erick Mitiken*, Principal of Mitiken Architects, can provide key input on the community program and design of supportive housing for formerly homeless individuals. He is the Architect of Shinsei Gardens for Operation Dignity.

*Susan Friedlander*, Executive Director of Affordable Housing Associates, can provide valuable input on supportive housing costs, financial feasibility modeling, special needs programming for formerly homeless persons, and negotiating complex real estate transactions.