

Attain Housing Q&A (March 14, 2019)

Q: Do your residents have cars? Is our bus access adequate?

A: Less than 50% of our residents have vehicles, and the bus access is fine. We will work with the City to try and get a variance on the parking requirements.

Q: How will you select the tenants?

A: We have a process where we work with our partners to identify families in need. We also work directly with Coordinated Entry for All (CEA) which is the county-wide system for prioritizing homeless families and individuals. The families need to have some source of income, as they will be required to pay some rent. We also interview the families prior to placing them.

Q: What support services do you provide?

A: A case worker is assigned to each family, and meets with them once a week. They will develop a set of goals, whether it is getting their GED or finding better employment.

Q: Do you have a hard cutoff at 2 years?

A: We try very hard to transition families out by 2 years. We start working on finding permanent housing after 1 year. Most of our families are able to leave after 18 months.

Q: You didn't mention any sort of public funds in your proposal. Can you explain why?

A: Organizations will only provide funds after a project has been approved. After we have acquired the land and have produced an architectural plan, then we will be able to apply for public funding.

Q: What are your plans for this project?

A: We will use the same model. If we do not get any public money, we will either hold a capital campaign or seek financing through alternative means. With our cash on hand and proceeds from the duplex sale, we will be able to pay for the land.

Q: Are half of the units market rate?

A: The plan is to have 12 units of transitional housing to start with. The remaining units would be market rate or section 8. We can only provide case worker support for 12 families at this time. As we grow, we will be able to support additional families. The plan is to eventually have all of the units as transitional housing.

Q: Why do you need the lot addition (playground)? Why didn't you factor that into your proposal?

A: Our architect thought it would be a creative way to increase the number of units, and still meet the City's open-space requirements. Improving and sharing the playground space could be a win-win for both of us. If East Shore doesn't agree to the proposal, we will either get a variance from the City or

reduce the number of units. We would still have 12 transitional housing units, and reduce the number of market rate units to 10. This would not be a deal-breaker in our minds.

Q: Do you have a plan to work with the neighbors?

A: Once the project is approved, a notice is sent to everyone within a certain radius. There is a comment period, where we will address any concerns or objections that come up.

Q: How long before the market-rate units convert to transitional housing?

A: It depends on how successful we are in raising funds. If we have to take out a mortgage, we will need the income from the market-rate units to service the loan. Our goal is to move to all transitional housing as quickly as possible, while maintaining the stability and effectiveness of our organization.

Q: How long until the unit are ready to be occupied?

A: 8-12 months for permitting, then another 12 months for construction.

Q: Will the market-rate tenants be paying the full rent themselves?

A: If the units are designated as Section 8, the tenants will pay 30% of their income and the Federal Government will pay the rest. Section 8 project vouchers are hard to come by so there's no guarantee that they would be Section 8.

Q: Given your other programs, would it be better for Attain to develop the property or receive a cash donation for the eviction prevention (and other) programs?

A: We need both our eviction prevention program and our transitional housing program to serve the community, but housing for homeless families is a more urgent need. The families needing temporary financial assistance are usually better able to live independently and they are just having a momentary setback. Families in transitional housing need support services beyond rent. Our original and primary mission is to provide transitional housing.

Q: What portion of your budget goes to transitional housing as opposed to your other services?

A: 70% of our program budget goes to transitional housing. 57% of our total operating budget is our transitional housing program.

Q: What will happen to the Sophia Way residents currently in Holly House?

A: We will let them stay as long as possible, until we break ground. There will be plenty of time to plan for the transition. We already work closely with Sophia Way and anticipate a smooth transition.

Q: Do you anticipate ever selling this property?

A: If we take public funds, we will be required to leave the property as affordable housing for 50 years. This is the largest project we feel comfortable managing. We wouldn't sell it to buy another property. Our mission is to serve homeless families and this project would allow us to almost double the number of families we serve.