

Charter Oak Communities

Major Agency Goals & Objectives

Five Year Rolling Plan

Each year the Housing Authority of the City of Stamford d/b/a Charter Oak Communities (“COC”) updates its Major Agency Goals & Objectives to maintain a current working plan for the seven (7) areas which broadly cover organizational components for a quasi governmental affordable housing real estate operation.

A) Asset Management

“Asset Management” covers systems and organizational capacity to oversee the various owned real estate assets of the Authority as well as repositioning of the specific properties through administrative policy changes. This includes regulatory compliance, customer services, property management and related systems that support these functions such as Information Technology, staff expertise and the creation of new or revised administrative policies. In addition, portfolio strategic planning falls under this heading as well as modernization and extraordinary maintenance activities that do not use leveraged financing mechanisms.

A.1) Refine program administration in a manner that sustains full regulatory compliance and improves customer service.

Short Term (12 to 24 months)

1. Implement a new enterprise-wide Management Information System (MIS). The new solution will encompass all aspects of COC program operations and financial management systems and reporting.
2. Develop cross function collaborations to excel in the area of asset-based budgeting and management. Use multi-year budget projection techniques and data analytics to drive operational and financial sustainability and growth.

3. Develop measurable property goals (i.e. Turnover costs per unit, Occupancy Rates) and objectives as part of the budget development/management process to challenge and gauge effectiveness of the budget planning process and budget execution.
4. Continue an internal benchmarking process for program functions (procurement, file reviews, inventory, vehicle use, payroll, etc.) to ensure compliance with HUD and COC requirements and improve operating results.
5. Review current recertification process to determine if the new authority to conduct detailed recertification on a three-year cycle rather than a one- or two-year cycle is both feasible and provides adequate program controls. Such review would look at the current income sources for both Public Housing Program and Housing Choice Voucher Program participants to determine if a three-year cycle will be efficient and beneficial from a compliance and cost saving basis. The review will also consider household type such as elderly, disabled and family which all have different income, exclusion and deduction patterns.
6. Consider the technological options for more extensive outreach to contractors and vendors through online and web-based systems. Potential reduction in costs by leveraging annual purchasing volume; reduced staff administrative time; and the provision of enhanced internal controls by each procurement step being automatically tracked will not only benefit COC operations but may become a marketing tool for 3rd party property management opportunities.
7. Paperless Resident Record Management System – Review and assess solutions that would be most suitable and beneficial for COC’s operation. The intent of the solution is to integrate resident documents and data into workflow processes that allow for creation, retention and management of electronic resident records in a manner consistent with all pertinent rules and regulations. This solution will also provide improved information sharing and inter-departmental coordination for easy retrieval and reporting capabilities.

Medium Term (25 to 48 months)

Continue implementation of objectives described above.

Long Term (49+ months)

Continue implementation of objectives described above.

A.2) Improve customer service through more effective uses of technology.

Short Term (12 to 24 months)

1. Rollout new website capabilities that include additional self service and interactive features to enhance the customer experience. Web-enabled features may consist of on-line work orders, resident applications and streamlined vendor procurement opportunities.
2. Evaluate document-sharing software that would enhance cross-functional collaboration for multi-users and reduce the need to merge and edit multiple documents.
3. Develop user training classes derived from the data retrieved from the IT Ticketing System to aid in the creation of preventative maintenance and equipment replacement schedules and to reduce business downtime.
4. Evaluate the benefits of a new phone system (VMR – Virtual Meeting Room) that will allow users to navigate easily to areas of interest and need, and to gather tenant/applicant information in lieu of walk-in or phone inquiries.
5. Perform Cyber Security Assessment of all systems and processes. Ensure we remain vigilant in our Cyber-Security technology an organizational policies and procedures.
6. Implement a plan to ensure IT systems are adequately supporting COC business needs including telecommunications, internet reliability and connectivity and remote access capabilities.

Medium Term (25 to 48 months)

1. Develop Disaster Recovery or Business Continuity Plan. The plan will address user access during an adverse event.

Long Term (49+ months)

1. Continue implementation of objectives described above.

A.3) Ongoing transition to a site-based management paradigm that includes the use of full use project-based budgets, site-based waiting lists and site-based offices

Short Term (12 to 24 months)

1. Review existing COC leases and obtain recommendations for a lease format that can work with both single program and multiple program properties, where appropriate.
2. Implement Property Management/Accounts Receivable Improvement Plan via collaboration with Property Management and Finance to review, revise, and create policies and practices that will improve workflow and efficiencies, reduce debts owed, and streamline procedures between departments.
3. Implement annual review process to assess financial and operational condition at each development. Make determination if a specific development could be candidate for refinancing/redevelopment outside of the public housing program.
4. Develop and evaluate the purchase of on-line budgeting software solutions that will enhance collaboration and data collection and analyses.

Medium Term (25 to 48 months)

1. Prepare and develop site specific management plans for newly acquired private properties in targeted neighborhoods.

Long Term (49+ months)

1. Continue implementation of objectives described above.

A.4) Maintain security and public safety systems at the highest levels permitted by available funding

Short Term (12 to 24 months)

1. Continue to engage Stamford Police Department in comprehensive security plan. Incorporate neighbors from the commercial and market rate housing communities.
2. Incorporate Police Department resources into Community Building initiative.

Medium Term (25 to 48 months)

1. Evaluate and refine effectiveness of security plan and supporting surveillance systems.

Long Term (49+ months)

1. Evaluate effectiveness of security; continue to evaluate and refine security plan.

A.5) Improve Facilities Management Systems to support site- based Management and Property Planning

Short Term (12 to 24 months)

1. Review and update the resident charge list to reflect current cost of supplies and labor for all properties. Review will be conducted on a by property/program basis to maximize areas of opportunity for increased potential revenue and to serve as a deterrent for unit damages and abuse.

Medium Term (25 to 48 months)

1. Continue implementation of objectives described above.

Long Term (49+ months)

1. Update programs as appropriate based on modernization activities.

B) Development & Redevelopment

“Development & Redevelopment” covers activities that add dwelling units to Stamford’s housing stock or activities related to the replacement, revitalization or repositioning of existing hard assets of the Authority. Activities that involve real estate finance using private sector funds which may or may not be combined with public sector grants fall under this heading.

B.1) Diversify the Housing Portfolio of the agency in terms of types of funding and financing sources; types of housing (family, elderly & supportive); and range of incomes served.

Short Term (12 to 24 months)

1. Continue development process for Vidal Court, a state-aided housing

development, utilizing a wide range of public and private funding sources to support development and operations, including federal project-based rental assistance and federal Replacement Housing Factor funds.

- a. Identify potential sites and funding sources for Phase V off-site development.
2. Continue and complete comprehensive renovations at Rippowam Manor, 80-unit elderly development receiving project-based rental assistance.
3. Continue and complete comprehensive renovations at Glenbrook Manor, 44-unit elderly development receiving project-based rental assistance.
4. Obtain funding and close financing for comprehensive renovations at Lawnhill Terrace 4, the 32 unit fourth, and final, phase of renovations at a 204-unit State-sponsored development. Commence and complete renovations.
5. Complete pre-development planning and identify funding options for comprehensive renovations of redevelopment at Oak Park, a 168 unit State-sponsored development. Submit funding proposals for first phase. Design and implement interim scope of health and safety repairs prior to undertaking comprehensive renovations.
6. Identify, evaluate and, if appropriate, acquire existing private properties for redevelopment in targeted neighborhoods (i.e. Stamford West Side) or elsewhere within Stamford to support mixed-income, public housing redevelopment efforts or expansion of the portfolio.
7. Consider conversion of eight income-restricted owner-occupied units located within the Taylor Street mixed-tenure development to income-restricted rentals.
8. Obtain approval for applications for Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) conversion of four federal properties and the LIPH units in a mixed-finance property. Submit applications for conversion of all remaining federal properties and LIPH units in all remaining mixed-income and mixed-finance properties.
9. Plan for Year 15 activities for LIHTC partnerships at PHA-sponsored developments approaching year the end of their compliance periods, and seek opportunities to acquire LIHTC properties owned by others that are nearing Year 15 disposition

Medium Term (25 to 48 months)

1. Acquire a development site for Phase V of the Vidal Court redevelopment effort and commence predevelopment activities.
2. Consider the acquisition of existing multi-family housing developments suitable for rehabilitation.
3. Consider provision of development consulting services to other housing authorities or non-housing authority entities wishing to develop, acquire, or preserve affordable housing
4. Obtain approval for streamlined conversion of remaining federal properties and LIPH units in mixed-income and mixed-finance properties to Project-Based Section 8.

Long Term (49+ months)

1. Research available expiring use properties in Stamford and/or acquire an expiring LIHTC, 221(d), Section 236 development or other expiring affordable housing development.

C) Leased Housing Programs

“Leased Housing Programs” refer to the use of rental subsidies in either private owned units or in units under Authority ownership. The primary program under this heading is the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program and any specialized set-asides of Section 8 used for meeting community needs such as supportive housing or geographic deconcentration of poverty. Administrative systems that support the use of rental subsidies and related quality control and program performance evaluation tools also fall under this heading.

Short Term (12 to 24 months)

1. Continue to utilize project-based Housing Choice Vouchers for supporting Authority development efforts including family, supportive and elderly facilities.
2. Continue to refine and utilize the HCVP 2 Year Model to maximize voucher utilization while remaining within budget authority levels.
3. Utilize tenant-based and/or project-based Housing Choice Vouchers to support Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) application.
4. Identify, evaluate, if appropriate, submitting grant applications for vouchers for programs such as the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) and additional vouchers for Family Unification Program (FUP) and Mainstream.
5. Enhance lobby self-help kiosks by posting additional signage and by exploring alternate options.
6. Paperless Resident Record Management System – Review and assess solutions that would be most suitable and beneficial for COC’s operation. The intent of the solution is to integrate resident documents and data into workflow processes that allow for creation, retention and management of electronic resident records in a manner consistent with all pertinent rules and regulations. This solution will also provide improved information sharing and inter-departmental coordination for easy retrieval and reporting capabilities.
7. Identify ongoing technical and operational opportunities that will support a hybrid work environment and the delivery of remote service. These opportunities will enhance the customer service experience, streamline operational effectiveness, and create a safe work space for employees and customers.

Medium Term (25 to 48 months)

1. Create standard operating procedures manual to establish consistency and achieve top performance.
2. Develop an enhanced professional development plan for employees to support programmatic growth and expertise, while also focusing on a service-centered environment with an enriched customer service experience.

Long Term (49+ months)

1. Continue implementation of objectives described above.

D) Supportive & Resident Services

“Supportive & Resident Services” covers all Authority initiatives that cover household-based economic development efforts such as the Family Self-Sufficiency Program or services targeted to specific sub-populations to assist them in maintaining their residency or ability to be program participants.

Short Term (12 to 24 months)

1. Partner with multiple Stamford-area organizations to align and focus resources on COC and analogous local populations. This alignment will leverage individual (i.e. ‘siloed’) interventions and produce a ‘multiplier’ effect. The result will be more measureable and sustained impact.
2. Continue to be a catalyst for resident-led initiatives at all properties and COC communities. This effort will draw increased resident participation, foster resident leadership and improve ownership of outcomes by residents.

Medium Term (25 to 48 months)

1. Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan in collaboration with Family Centers to assess the impact of support and resident services programming. Using a variety of tools such as surveys, resident assessments, and community-level data, this information will be used to improve and refine services and programs.

Long Term (49+ months)

1. Continue implementation of objectives described above.

E) Organizational Administration

“Organizational Administration” references initiatives which deal with human capital, financial management, information technology, risk services, purchasing, risk management and any other strategic administrative functions which enhance or improve the operations and the positioning of the Authority.

Short Term (12 to 24 months)

1. Continue to utilize the document retention policy including the disposal/archiving of historical and/or stored documents.
2. Partner with Insurance Consultant to maintain a robust, efficient insurance program that ensures proper coverage levels and reduces risk across the portfolio. Develop employee training curriculum on the insurance program to ensure claims are processed appropriately.
3. Provide training to all staff and residents on the “Safety First” program implemented by the COC Safety Committee. Partner with the USI Risk Management Department, the Stamford Police Department and others to implement improvements to protect our employees and residents from potential threats.
4. Review and update the COC adopted Investment Policy as appropriate with the Board of Commissioners, including the addition of longer-term investment options for reserve funds.
5. Continue to provide on-going cyber security protocols and formal training for staff to reduce risk and protect confidential and sensitive data.
6. Continue to perform quarterly policy review and revision process with the Board of Commissioners and senior staff. This best practice will ensure understanding and compliance with important COC adopted policies and ensure they remain current and updated.
7. Prepare a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (verses Annual Financial Statements alone) for COC. This Annual Report will outline accomplishments and future goals and initiatives and provide additional information on 10-year historical financial trends, revenue and debt capacity, demographic and economic information and more operating information. The report will enhance financial transparency and valuable information for the users of our financial statements.
8. Evaluate Insight (a budget and financial reporting module) that will make financial processes more efficient, accurate, flexible and collaborative across the organization.
9. Continue to implement Charter Oak Learning Exchange (Litmos, a Learning Management System) that will act as a depository of our employee and board training and development materials. Access to on-line curriculum will improve on-boarding, training, engagement and provide professional development skill-building opportunities.

10. Continue to optimize ADP modules including the implementation of the recruitment module that will standardize and enhance process efficiencies, including significant timesaving's for HR and departmental recruiting efforts.

Medium Term (25 to 48 months)

1. From a recruiting and employee relations perspective, promote a COC "brand" in order to compete within the employment market.
2. Conduct a formal Cyber Security Assessment and action plan to resolve any findings to reduce cyber security risk factors. This will be the second assessment.

Long Term (49+ months)

1. Continue implementation of objectives described above.

F) Entrepreneurial Activities

“Entrepreneurial Activities” include income generating actions (i.e. fee-for-service) and the creation of entities to serve societal needs, leveraging the core competencies, reputation and relations of the parent entity (i.e. Charter Oak Communities).

Short Term (12 to 24 months)

1. Continue development of enterprise cost center for consulting with 3rd party property owners and the City of Stamford to manage the marketing, leasing and servicing of below market rate (BMR) units/properties. Explore creation of new entity to perform this function on city-wide basis.
2. Assist City of Stamford in preparing its 2021 Affordable Housing Study and prioritized Plan. Assist in establishing protocols and guidelines for implementation of Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
3. Participate and provide guidance to the regional housing initiative – Fairfield County Housing Alliance – to advocate for favorable conditions and funding in support of housing initiatives in Stamford and surrounding communities.
4. Continue implementation of Dovetail: SIP, Inc., COC's social enterprise entity,

as a platform for addressing complex socio-economic challenges of the Stamford community through support of Vita programs, Cradle to Career, Anchor Opportunity Network and other initiatives.

5. Identify innovative approaches to leverage the asset value and subsidy opportunities to create more affordable housing opportunities for Stamford, including Housing Choice Vouchers, State Policy Advocacy, Rental Assistance Demonstration, Streamlined Voluntary Conversion, etc.

Medium Term (25 to 48 months)

1. Manage consultancy servicing 3rd party property owners and the City of Stamford to manage the marketing, leasing and servicing of below market rate (BMR) units.
2. If deemed appropriate, launch a separate corporation to take on projects outside of Stamford.
3. Assist City in implementation of Affordable Housing Plan or another appropriate vehicle.
4. Implement innovative approaches to leverage COC's asset value and subsidy opportunities to create more affordable housing opportunities for Stamford.
5. Develop Dovetail into a partially self-sustaining entity by demonstrating impact and continuing to strengthen the social services/economic development ecosystems for Stamford and surrounding areas.

Long Term (49+ months)

1. Continue development and implementation of above activities

G) Transformational Activities

While there is an overlap between “entrepreneurial” and “transformational” activities, the difference between the two can be described as the former being about new business lines and expansion of business lines while the latter pertains to COC becoming a new kind of entity – one that in and of itself is distinct from its public housing agency roots.

Short Term (12 to 24 months)

1. COC has jurisdictional limits that generally limit its governmental programs to operations within the City of Stamford. However, affiliated entities have no such restriction (versus instrumentalities). For both affirmatively furthering fair housing (AFFH) and business purposes, a consideration of the “what, where

and how” of expanded activities would be appropriate to COC’s mission and business plan.

2. Continue development and initial implementation of COC’s 2030 Strategic Plan. Embed Core Objectives in key resource investments (i.e. human, financial, reputational), policy development, training programs and support for continuous improvement policies.

Medium Term (25 to 48 months)

1. Continue implementation of objectives described above.

Long Term (49+ months)

1. Continue implementation of objectives described above.