



Resources for Community Development



Strategic Plan 2022-2024



From top left: St. Paul's Commons in Walnut Creek, Embark Apartments in Oakland, Victory Village in Fairfax, Emperyean Towers in Oakland



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Welcome to Resources for Community Development's (RCD's) Strategic Plan from 2022 to 2024! As we move into 2022, our Strategic Plan will provide a road map for the next three years of RCD's work. The plan will guide RCD as we navigate through what we hope are the late stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, and into a healthier and more prosperous time for all of us.

The last few years have seen an ever-increasing crisis in our community around affordable housing and homelessness. Between 2017 and 2019, the number of unhoused residents in Alameda County grew by 43%. Clearly, there is a challenge for RCD, with our mission "to create and preserve affordable housing for people with the fewest options" to provide more affordable housing opportunities and provide more homes for unhoused people living in our region.

The pandemic, the murder of George Floyd, and the protests that followed also focused attention on racial inequities in our community. These inequities limit opportunities and create poor outcomes in many areas, including housing, jobs, education, health care, and more. Through this lens, we strive to fulfill the second half of RCD's mission which is to "build communities and enrich lives." Through our work with RCD's residents and the larger community through our Resident Services and Community Development programs we are improving lives and neighborhoods, but we feel compelled to do more in these areas, and to keep equity as our foremost value and focus.

Building more, and doing more, for our communities through the lens of equity are the two principles that drive our Plan:

Growth: RCD will grow to meet the deep and rising need for affordable housing for residents and communities. We will continue to increase internal capacity, develop and support new properties, and enhance the quality of life experienced by RCD residents.

Equity: As an organization dedicated to promoting and upholding racial justice, RCD will continue to examine all of its work through an equity lens. We recognize the different backgrounds and circumstances of residents, community members, staff, board members, and partners, and we strive to design our developments, programs, and communications to meet the diverse needs of our housing communities and workforce.

RCD's Plan includes strategies that aim to enhance our capacity for growth and impact over the next three years. The Plan calls on us to learn, innovate, and adapt to the changing world. It includes strategies for RCD to become more data-focused in order to better evaluate and communicate our successes and impacts. The Plan has sections focusing on our residents and communities, to support and empower them, and to elevate their voices. The Plan also focuses on our portfolio to ensure that we build and maintain excellent housing. Finally, the Plan incorporates all of the key strategies from RCD's 2020 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan as well as strategies to enhance our workplace, support our staff, and ensure that our values are known, and that RCD is an effective, resilient, and human-centered organization.

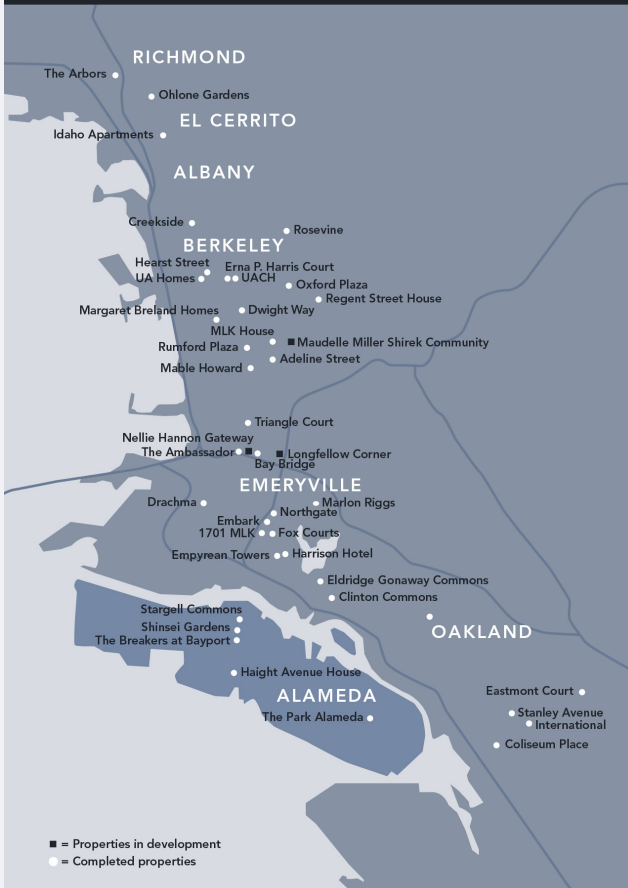
With the opening of Quetzal Gardens, our first Santa Clara County property, we have now built over 2,500 homes, housing over 5,100 residents. We are excited to continue expanding— physically, geographically, and programmatically. We are eagerly anticipating the opportunities and challenges that will come RCD's way in this three-year period and look forward to working with our partners and stakeholders, our residents, neighborhoods, staff and board, towards building the homes and equity that our region needs to thrive.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Sawislak".

Dan Sawislak, Executive Director

Our Portfolio January 2022



By The Numbers

2,564

Residential homes developed and owned by RCD

5,115

Residents living in RCD communities

50,500

Square feet of commercial space

30%

Homes dedicated to residents with special needs

355

New apartments built in last 3 years

1,290

New apartments slated for completion by 2024



Background & Context of Strategic Plan

RCD is embarking on a three-year process of investment and improvement, summarized in our 2022-24 strategic plan. This plan lays out a set of strategic directions with associated activities and initiatives to guide our work through the coming years.

RCD has a long-standing commitment to strategic planning as the roadmap that defines the short to medium term goals for the organization. In 2015, after weathering the 2008 financial crisis, the recession and the end of California Redevelopment funding, we completed a three-year plan that set goals for an expected growth period for the organization.

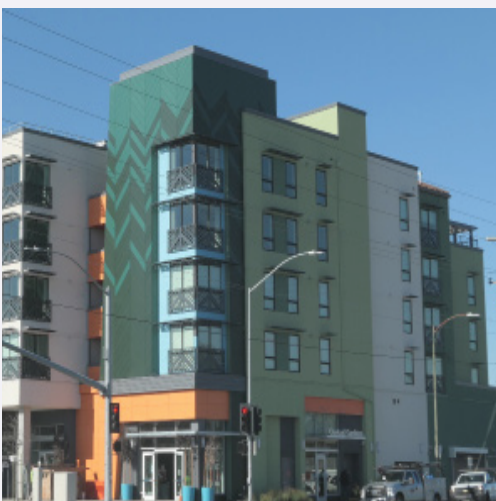
The 2016 -18 plan included significant initiatives that became core parts of RCD's work including:

- The creation of our Community Development Department
- Increased emphasis and investment in resources dedicated to enhancing Resident Services
- The geographic expansion of our real estate development efforts into Santa Clara County
- Important investments in RCD's organizational infrastructure

In 2018, RCD began a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiative to re-center our work in equity and racial justice, which is inherent in our mission of adding much needed affordable housing and supporting and building communities. At the end of 2019, we finalized a 3-year DEI plan for RCD. The plan included goals to support RCD as a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace that is accountable to our residents and communities and is intentional about investing in and supporting low-income and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities and enterprises. The 2022-24 strategic plan includes the goals from our DEI plan.

In the fall of 2019, we began work on our current strategic plan. With the changes from COVID-19 in March 2020, we halted work on the plan until December 2020. We completed the strategic directions of the plan in the summer of 2021 and wrote Departmental Action Plans to set specific goals for RCD's 2021-22 Fiscal Year in late summer 2021.

Our new strategic plan includes a number of ambitious strategies to further integrate our DEI plan, improve the measurement and evaluation of programs, update our technology and systems, and continue to invest in our staff, residents and communities.



Quetzal Gardens in San Jose opened in 2021 and was a direct result of our initiative to expand into Santa Clara County



RCD's strategic plan responds to challenges and opportunities in the external environment, as well as within RCD itself. Most of the strategies and activities contained in the plan address those issues.

External

The long-term trend of steeply rising housing costs in the Bay Area has intensified in the last five years, leading to an increasing scarcity of housing affordable to many residents. As noted previously, homelessness has significantly increased in the region in the past several years. The visibility of homelessness and the continuing expansion of the number of people impacted by the lack of housing affordability made housing and homelessness one of the Bay Area's and California's most pressing issues.

In response, laws were passed streamlining permitting processes for affordable housing, and voters approved bonds at the state, county, and city levels to fund affordable housing development. This influx of funding and political support has created a delivery system for affordable housing development in the Bay Area that has increased the number and viability of RCD's developments.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has transformed society and led to devastating illness and loss and record-breaking unemployment. The devastation disproportionately impacts our low-income residents and community members and exacerbated long-standing racial and economic inequities. In the Bay Area, our public health systems and social safety net programs were inundated and over capacity. On a positive note, there has been an increase in federal and state stimulus funding to support low-income and impacted individuals, invest in communities, and adopt policies intended to protect renters from displacement. This presents an important opportunity for RCD's services, community development, and DEI work.

While the funding and political environment is in some ways better for affordable housing than before, we still face daunting challenges in our development efforts. These include:

- Challenges in the administration of public affordable housing finance programs and delivery systems due to the need to combine multiple sources to build affordable housing. In 2020-21, a lack of bond financing capacity in California delayed five RCD developments for a year or more.
- Rising costs of construction and operations of affordable housing developments.
- The state of California is addressing its booming homelessness crisis by providing targeted funding for the development of new affordable housing which integrates an increasing number of formerly homeless households. As a result, RCD has increased the number of people coming from homelessness living in our developments. However, accessing the operating and services funding needed to support these residents is very challenging.
- Increasing need for working capital to support an ever-larger pipeline of development projects.
- Challenges in finding and retaining qualified personnel throughout the affordable housing delivery system.

Internal

The plan also focuses on RCD's internal challenges and opportunities. Some of those issues are reflective of the external environment, while others are somewhat unique to RCD. These include:

- Increasing our use of and capacity with technology to support the growth and sustainability of our organization.
- Investing in our workforce to attract and retain excellent staff in a highly competitive environment and to build and maintain a great workplace culture.
- Creating and implementing core values for the organization that center our stakeholders and communities, equity and justice, collaboration and innovation, and resiliency.
- Including activities and goals in the plan that highlight RCD's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- Incorporating a focus on residents in our planning, decision-making, and leadership.
- Tracking and reporting of progress and outcomes in RCD's work.
- Expanding our Community Development and Resident Services programs to have greater impact for RCD's residents and communities.
- Strengthening our growing housing portfolio - physically, financially, and from a customer service perspective.
- Communicating RCD's successes both internally and externally.



Idaho Apartments, El Cerrito

Through an iterative and collaborative process, RCD has identified and formalized these values to help guide our work and further develop our workplace culture.

At RCD, we believe that values are the foundation on which an organization’s mission and vision is achieved. We believe that to be effective, values should be communicated and modeled consistently throughout the organization. It is the values practiced, not just written, that define how an organization conducts itself.

We will continue to incorporate our values into the fabric of RCD (internally and externally) and ensure our values are truly the foundation of our culture. We will use these values to reinforce broader goals and feed into how we do our work, make important decisions, interact with each other, and pursue our mission.

Our Values

People and Community Focused
 We are thoughtful and thorough, always focused on what is best for our residents, staff, communities, and planet.

Collaborative and Innovative
 Our teamwork fuels creative problem solving and leads to greater impact.

Justice Centered
 We are dedicated to fairness and equity, and work to further racial and economic justice.

Resilient
 We adapt, grow, and persevere when challenged and continue to learn and strive for excellence in our work.



From left: Harrison Hotel in Oakland, Victory Village in Fairfax, Embark Apartments in Oakland

The core of RCD’s strategic plan is its six strategic directions. The directions were the result of months of discussions to determine strategies for RCD’s work over the next three years.

We created four working groups that developed the strategies, and the strategies in the plan are organized accordingly. Those groups were:



Organization – Our efforts to support the sustainability and growth of RCD as an organization



Housing – Focused on RCD’s housing work, both in creating and sustaining affordable homes



Residents – Our activities and strategies to support and empower RCD’s residents



Community – RCD’s work supporting, developing, and building the communities and neighborhoods around our housing portfolio

The four working groups developed strategies for their areas. Based on those strategies, we agreed on six overall strategic directions for this plan as follows:

Adapt for Success in a Changing World.

The changing world around us requires continual innovation and adaptation. We proactively manage change within our organization through thoughtful planning and assessments.

Continuous Improvement of Property Design, Construction, and Maintenance.

Our long-term impact depends on the development and maintenance of high quality and sustainable buildings.

Elevate Resident and Community Voices.

Our values and commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion call on us to strengthen the voices of our residents and communities. We have a greater impact when these voices are integral to our work.

Invest in Staff and Promote a Values-Driven Workplace.

Our investments demonstrate our commitment to nurturing and sustaining a diverse and inclusive organization.

Support and Empower our Residents and Communities.

Our ultimate impact is measured in the lives and well-being of our residents and communities. We need to provide new and updated resources and services to our residents as their needs and our communities change.

Utilize Data to Increase and Communicate Impact.

Our investments in updated systems for measurement and evaluation across departments increases internal accountability and helps us effectively leverage data to meet our goals.

Adapt for Success in a Changing World

Innovation • Change Management • Continuous Improvement



Organization

- Encourage and champion innovation, measurement and accountability, and equity in all aspects of RCD's work.
- Establish an internal structure to support the implementation of new technology systems and ensure full staff engagement by providing sufficient resources, encouragement, training, and support.
- Adopt opportunities for flexible schedules for staff and remote work.



Housing

- Proactively research and address the opportunities and challenges we anticipate in the next 3-5 years in Real Estate Development and develop strategies to address them.
- Create working groups for the following areas:
 - Innovative financing models in the development of affordable housing
 - New and emerging development opportunities such as Project Homekey (a new funding source administered through the state of California), housing that targets households earning above 60% Area Median Income (the historic upper limit of the Low-Income Tax Credit Program), and adaptive reuse
 - The viability of geographic expansion in other areas in California
 - RCD's involvement in advocacy to determine priorities and identify resources



Residents

- Develop and implement a process for reviewing the evolving needs and demands for Resident Services and for assessing Resident Services partnerships, resources, and staffing. This will inform the planning for and provision of an RS structure and program that is responsive to the unique needs of our properties and residents, particularly those who are formerly unhoused and living with mental health and other challenges.



Board

- RCD's Board of Directors will take steps to enhance its knowledge of all aspects of affordable housing, build its understanding of the communities we serve, grow its capacity for inclusive leadership, and develop a thoughtful process on its future composition and activities.



Continuous Improvement of Property Design, Construction & Maintenance

Maintain High Standards • Increase Efficiency



Housing

- Research and evaluate options for streamlining our Real Estate Development and Asset Management work to ensure that we maintain our high standards while managing costs.
 - Develop standardization of design guidelines and specifications, apartment types, and program models where possible.
 - Create systematized assessment of properties including physical conditions and periodic evaluation of property management
- Establish a cross-functional planning group with our 3rd party Property Management company, the John Stewart Company (JSCo), leadership and staff focused on strategic, long-term property management and accountability.
- Increase our capacity for overseeing large renovations in our portfolio using alternative funding rather than just low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC).



Elevate Residents and Community Voices

Community Representation • Leadership Development



Organization

- Explore and develop a strategy for increasing RCD residents’ involvement in organizational and programmatic governance, including expanding resident representation on the RCD Board of Directors.



Housing

- Develop systems and strategies for soliciting resident feedback on the physical quality of new developments, property conditions, management, and other on-site activities. Conducting a survey of all RCD residents is a key element of this work.
- Adopt and implement RCD policies to increase the diversity of our business partners, expand the participation of low income, local, and/or people of color in the workforce at our projects, and require our housing development construction contractors to further these goals.



Residents

- Expand resident leadership development opportunities at RCD properties and at the organizational level .



Community

- Dedicate the majority of RCD’s new commercial spaces to local non-profits and to enterprises led by people of color, and build our internal capacity to support our growing community-focused commercial portfolio.
- Identify and partner with non-profits and small businesses that are vital to communities surrounding RCD’s new developments and offer lease terms that support their stability and longevity.
- Support the continued development of My Eden Voice (MEV), a grassroots community organization that will be increasingly sustainable and independent from RCD, the current fiscal sponsor, as part of our investment in the unincorporated Eden Area of Alameda County.
- Strengthen and implement a standardized community engagement strategy for all new RCD real estate developments that includes participants that are reflective of the community.
- Advocate for policies that enhance the quality of life and reduce poverty in the unincorporated Ashland and Cherryland communities of Alameda County based on the issues and needs identified in our engagement and community organizing efforts.

Invest in Staff and Promote a Values-Driven

Inclusive Hiring • Professional Development • Equitable Leadership Pathways



Organization

- Elevate core values into our organizational fabric and use as a lens for decision-making, strategy development, communications, and infrastructure.
- Attract and recruit qualified and diverse candidates for RCD positions by developing a consistent and authentic employee value proposition and investing in proactive recruiting resources.
- Create a leadership development program to support staff with current work challenges, build their leadership skills, and prepare them for advancement at RCD and in their careers.
- Cultivate strategies to enhance staff retention including the creation of a Professional Development fund.
- Attract a diverse pipeline of potential staff by updating and standardizing RCD’s hiring practices and policies to incorporate industry best practices, participate in diversity-focused internship programs, and seek new, non-traditional sources of talent.
- Enhance our inclusive workplace culture by adopting policies and practices to promote staff satisfaction and retention, including the creation of an ongoing DEI learning program, and other practices that affirm individual and group achievements.
- Ensure equitable compensation and promotional pathways for staff development and growth.



St. Paul's Commons in Walnut Creek



Support and Empower our Residents and Communities

Increasing Resources and Services



Residents

- Develop new and enhance existing strategies to support RCD residents at risk of eviction and help those struggling with aging, illness, or disability related challenges to retain their housing.
- Leverage the impact of resident's housing affordability by investing in education, wealth building programs, and other services offerings to realize improved economic stability.
- Create a welcoming process for new RCD residents that is consistent across all properties to ensure that residents have the basic household items needed to thrive in their new homes and are aware of Resident Services programs and other local supportive services.
- Explore the feasibility of providing broadband connectivity for our residents in newly constructed buildings and at existing properties.
- Improve our resources and processes devoted to emergency preparedness to support the safety of RCD's residents in natural disasters and on-site emergencies.



Community

- Identify and test a potential new community to select a new location appropriate for the expansion of RCD's Community Development programming.



Utilize Data to Increase and Communicate Impact

Data-driven Decision Making



Organization

- Improve data collection for measurement and analysis of programs, track progress through standardized processes, and train staff to effectively use new platforms.
- Transition to updated and/or new databases and systems that meet our current and future needs and empower staff to lead this effort in all RCD Departments.
- Enhance accountability of departments and individuals by linking organizational strategies to work plans and evaluating staff performance through quantifiable goals.
- Create a marketing plan to communicate our development and programmatic impact to stakeholders and raise awareness in communities surrounding our properties and developments.



Housing

- Evaluate our recent real estate developments to understand cost drivers and identify and track metrics for benchmarking cost reductions.



Residents

- Enhance the collection and utilization of resident input and services data, to inform Resident Services' logic models, program planning and implementation.
- Invest in updated systems to collect and analyze Resident Services data to support program planning, implementation, and reporting.
- Communicate the impacts of RCD's housing and services externally to partners, donors, and other stakeholders to increase awareness and support fundraising to expand Resident Services capacity and resources.



Berrellesa Palms, Martinez