

City of Richmond



DWIGHT C. JONES
MAYOR

May 5, 2015

Dear Community Partners,

Thank you for your continued engagement and interest in the East End transformation process. This effort will succeed with the full engagement of residents, neighborhood organizations, and citywide institutions. We appreciate the time and energy you have already invested in this process.

The East End transformation process is about far more than bricks and mortar. Both the Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority and the City of Richmond share this belief. Our shared goals are to improve quality-of-life and access to opportunities for residents, both those who now live in RRHA housing and those who will live in the redeveloped community.

As we begin the redevelopment of Creighton Court, it is critical that the City, Housing Authority, and key community partners work together to develop a strong "People Plan" to provide comprehensive support and services to residents during this transition. Having a strong People Plan is a critical component of being competitive in a potential Choice Neighborhoods Initiative application. More importantly, it is the right thing to do for our residents and for our community.

Here are the next steps we will be taking over the next two months:

- On May 20, the nationally respected consulting firm Urban Strategies will visit Richmond to meet with key stakeholders. Urban Strategies has a successful track record in leading People Plans in other cities engaged in public housing redevelopment. Part of this visit will include participation in an East End retreat scheduled for that date. The primary aim of this initial visit is for Urban Strategies to learn more about Richmond, our stakeholders, and our capacity.
- In June, Urban Strategies will meet with community leaders once again to share some general recommendations on how Richmond might effectively craft and execute a People Plan. By July 15, we intend to reach consensus on both the key components and timeline of the People Plan and on designating an agency or organization to implement it. While the role of Urban Strategies is advisory, their expertise will help us craft our plan. We wish to stress however that our goal is to develop the best plan *for Richmond*, given our own particular set of assets and needs. Our aim is to advance the Creighton Court project, and also bolster our long-term local capacity to engage residents and meet their needs in the process of public housing transformation.

RRHA and the City are partnering in this effort together. During this interim period, T.K. Somanath and Thad Williamson will together take responsibility for communicating with community partners. This effort is in full collaboration with other City staff working on other components of the East End process. Both the RRHA and the City are committed to developing a strong People Plan that will be at the very heart of the redevelopment process.

Thank you again for your commitment. We look forward to working with you on this important effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dwight C. Jones".

Dwight C. Jones

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "T.K. Somanath".

T.K. Somanath