



City of Charleston
South Carolina

April 27, 2018

Rev. Charles Heyward, Co-President
Charleston Area Justice Ministry [CAJM]
P.O. Box 71416
North Charleston, SC 29415

Dear Rev. Heyward:

Thank you for your concerns about the housing issues facing the Tri-County area and your willingness to propose ideas for consideration and implementation. The City of Charleston foresaw this housing challenge several years prior and has spearheaded several initiatives to address the issues while continuing to provide safe, decent affordable housing for its citizens. Mayor Tecklenburg and I, along with my colleagues on Charleston City Council have enhanced efforts to improve both access and availability of housing in the Charleston community. Outlined in this correspondence are some of the initiatives in which the City has been involved, either through direct financial investment and/or collaboration with strategic partners.

Housing Production – Since 1975, the City of Charleston has facilitated the production of rental, homeownership and rehabilitation of **10,034 units**, serving seniors, students, low- and moderate-income families, new and existing homeowners. During the next 5 years (2017-20220, the City anticipates the production of an additional 2,377 housing units using a combination of funding sources, programs, and partners.

Bond Referendum – In November 2017, the citizens of the City of Charleston approved a \$20 million bond referendum for the production of affordable housing. Approximately 800 housing units are anticipated to be produced from this funding source over the next five (5) years.

The City of Charleston continues to also implement its **First Time Homeownership Initiative** Program, providing First Time Homeownership Opportunities to persons and families. One hundred and thirty-three (133) households have been assisted through this program. The Roof Replacement Program assists on average thirty (30) households per year providing new roofs to enhance the livability and sustainability of residents' homes in the community.

Charleston Redevelopment Corporation (CRC) – has as one of its programs, a non-profit land trust, created in 2017 to acquire, develop and manage rental and ownership housing for a period of 99 years, contributing to long-term affordable homes in the community.

Mixed Use Workforce Housing Ordinance (MU-2 Zoning) – the City of Charleston recently updated its MU-2 zoning ordinance to increase the affordability period for workforce housing from 10 years to 20 years and the percentage of workforce housing from 15 percent to 25 percent. A “fee-in-lieu” and a “land-in-lieu” provision was added as an option for developers who would prefer paying for the production of affordable housing on alternate sites. To date, the City of Charleston has received over **\$1.5m to reinvest** into affordable housing in the community.

Additionally, the City of Charleston continues to partner with for-profit and non-profit entities to build and restore homes. Recently, **the City of Charleston City Council awarded \$250,000.00 to Oakside**, a 38-unit rental development providing housing to persons earning sixty (60%) percent and below the Area Median Income (AMI) in the Johns Island community. **A contract in the amount of \$1,300,000.00 was awarded to a Minority Contractor** to build seven newly designed homes in the Ashleyville community in the City of Charleston. These homes will be sold to first-time homebuyers earning eighty (80%) percent and below the AMI. **In June 2018, the City of Charleston in partnership with the Housing Authority** of the City of Charleston will break ground on the former Cooper River Bridge site, which will result in **62 homes**; six (6) for-sale and fifty-six (56) rental homes for individuals and households earning from thirty (30%) percent to one-hundred and fifty (150%) percent of the AMI for an investment of **\$2,350,000.00 from the City of Charleston leveraged with over \$14m from the Housing Authority.**

The City of Charleston also assists in facilitating the meetings of the **Mayors’ Commission on Homelessness and Affordable Housing**. The Commission is comprised of community representatives from across the Lowcountry and are appointed by Mayor John Tecklenburg, City of Charleston, Mayor Will Haynie, Town of Mt. Pleasant, Mayor Wiley Johnson, Town of Summerville and Mayor R. Keith Summey, City of North Charleston. The mission of the Commission is to effectuate change in the area of homelessness and affordable housing.

Regional Housing Trust – South Carolina Community Loan Fund, formerly, Lowcountry Housing Trust and Charleston Housing Trust was founded within the Department of Housing & Community Development of the City of Charleston in 2004 with the full support of then Mayor, Joseph P. Riley, Jr. The organization received \$1.5 million in seed funding from South Carolina Housing Finance & Redevelopment Authority and the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). After its inception, the City of Charleston provided a dedicated source of funds and federal funding to support the programs of the Trust. Today, South Carolina Community Loan Fund is a **state-wide Housing Trust and Community Development Financial Institution [CDFI]**, transforming and revitalizing communities throughout South Carolina by financing projects that provide decent, affordable housing, access to food and essential services, attract

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businesses, employ community members and stimulate economic activity. The Housing Trust is supported through a variety of contributions from local and national governments, foundations, corporations, and individual donations, as well as interest income earned from lending activities.

Further, the **Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with the Regional Development Alliance**, hired a Project Director to facilitate a Region-wide approach to solving prevalent issues in our region, which includes housing affordability, global fluency, quality of place and talent.

We support what you have outlined in your Housing Platform Strategy! However, we believe that most of these strategies are being implemented in the City of Charleston. A Regional Housing Trust has been established through the SC Community Loan Fund. We would encourage the participation of other local governments investing funding in the development of affordable housing before the issue becomes more prevalent. We would also ask the Charleston Area Justice Ministry to become more intricately involved by encouraging member- faith organizations to donate land or homes to cities or non-profit development organizations for the enhancement of affordable housing in our community.

Sincerely,



James Lewis, Jr., Mayor-Pro-tem
City of Charleston

jljr.:fp

cc: Mayor John J. Tecklenburg
Richard Jerue, Senior Advisor to Mayor John J. Tecklenburg
Joshua Martin, Senior Advisor to Mayor John J. Tecklenburg
Geona Shaw Johnson, Director, Department of Housing & Community Development