



Virginia Beach Community  
Development Corporation

**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**2015-2020**



## FOR NEARLY 30 YEARS

the Virginia Beach Community Development Corporation (VBCDC) has worked diligently to provide quality affordable housing opportunities for low and moderate income families in the City of Virginia Beach. We have housed over 6,200 individuals in safe, decent, and affordable communities and have provided supportive services including case management and direct financial assistance to over 8,000 individuals who experienced a housing crisis. VBCDC has emerged as the largest affordable housing property owner in the City of Virginia Beach. Our ongoing efforts will bring housing stability to individuals and communities alike and serve as a crucial step in making communities whole.

The 2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan of the Virginia Beach Community Development Corporation was developed through a collaborative effort of the Board of Directors, VBCDC Executives and employee partners, and internal and external stakeholders. The plan lays out three strategic themes that shape our work over the next 5 years and reaffirms our commitment to community revitalization and organizational excellence.



### Dear Stakeholders -

We take pride in our work and are excited about the future of the same as we continue to provide quality housing in the city of Virginia Beach. We are honored to present the 2015 - 2020 strategic plan that will guide us in providing housing for all of our neighbors now and into the future.

This is a bold agenda that affirms the vision of the Virginia Beach Community Development Corporation – that of creating a Virginia Beach with quality homes for everyone and to be champions for a supportive community where our neighbors not only survive but are empowered to live their best lives.

Our new plan focuses on serving more people in more ways through senior housing, employer-sponsored housing, and comprehensive neighborhood revitalization initiatives. This plan is inspiring and achievable. It is accountable and flexible.

Thank you for all you do every day, to service so many.



Addie Wright Thomason, CEO



Chris Beale, President

### Quality Affordable Housing

Virginia Beach Community Development Corporation  
2400 Potters Road • Virginia Beach, VA 23454  
Ph: (757) 463-9516 • Fax: (757) 463-1382 • www.vbcdc.org

## EXECUTIVES

**Addie Wright Thomason** Chief Executive Officer

**Jessica Guglielmo** Chief Operating Officer

**Casey Golliher** Chief Finance Officer

**Sharon Shoff** Executive

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Christopher Beale** President

**Pastor Terron Rodgers** Vice President

**Alex Kalasinsky** Secretary/Treasurer

**James Banks** Director

**Jill Eyer** Director

**Mark Johnson** Director

**Anthony Nero** Director

**Robert Williams, Jr.** Director



**MISSION** Our mission is to provide affordable housing opportunities for low and moderate income families in the City of Virginia Beach.

**VISION** Our Vision is to create a Virginia Beach with quality homes for everyone and to be champions for a supportive community where people can not only survive but are empowered to live their best lives.

**VALUES** Our work requires passion for all humanity, inclusivity, equal opportunity, trust, justice, courage, and respect for our partners and our neighbors.



## Looking Back and Understanding the Past

VBCDC has been “Building, Supporting, and Preserving Communities since 1985.” We were created by the Virginia Beach City Council to assist the City’s Department of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation with community development and housing revitalization. VBCDC’s rich history includes the development and operation of housing and supportive services programs for low and moderate income individuals and families.

### 1987

In 1987, our first programs began operation. In partnership with the City’s Housing Department and Citizens Advisory Committee, VBCDC constructed and sold homes to low and moderate income buyers on an in-fill basis in several of the City’s target neighborhoods. Also in 1987, our Transitional Housing program began. This program which is still in operation today serves neighbors needing short-stay housing and supportive services as they transition out of homelessness and into permanent housing. Neighbors in the program receive case management, advocacy, and financial assistance.

The Transitional Housing program was developed using a scattered site model which we would continue to use as a basis of design for rental housing developments for the next 15 years. This scattered site strategy was attractive for many reasons. In the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, there was a growing number of HUD, VA and bank owned foreclosures in the City of Virginia Beach. These vacant and poorly maintained properties were blighting neighborhoods and impacting the value of the housing stock. By purchasing and rehabilitating scattered site foreclosures, VBCDC helped to stabilize and revitalize neighborhoods in the City and provide quality affordable housing for our neighbors.

### 1992

In 1992, VBCDC created an affiliate non-profit organization known today as Second Act Communities<sup>SM</sup> (SAC). SAC was created to receive a special allocation of funding under the Federal HOME program for organizations meeting the Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) requirements. SAC acquired and rehabilitated properties then transferred ownership to VBCDC to lease, manage, and maintain as affordable housing.

### 1996

In 1996, ten years after VBCDC was first established, we owned and managed a total of 135 rental properties with a staff of 16 and an operating budget of nearly \$2 million. At that point, we had sold over 60 homes since the inception of the VBCDC Homeownership program. We entered our first joint venture project with the City of Virginia Beach Community Services Board. VBCDC assumed the ownership, mortgages and management of two small multi-family apartment buildings, Atlantis Manor and Beach Park, which serve adults with mental illness disabilities. The Department of Human Services provides supportive services to these individuals and VBCDC owns and maintains the buildings.

### 2001

By the year 2001, VBCDC’s portfolio of properties had grown to over 150 rental housing units, and we had sold over 100 homes to first time low to moderate income homeowners. Additionally, our operating budget which at one time had been 100% grant funded was now funded only 30% by governments grants. The remaining 70% of the revenue at this time was largely from rental income with a small percentage earned from developer fees and private contributions. Rental housing development had clearly emerged as a successful strategy to fulfill our mission and to become less dependent on grant income. It was in 2001 that VBCDC received its first allocation of Low Income Housing Tax Credits for the acquisition and rehabilitation of 32 units in the Citywide Homes 2001 program.



*Rental housing development creates affordable housing for neighbors, and funding for ongoing programs in the community.*

2001

It was also in 2001, that VBCDC recognized a need to shift new development projects from a scattered site model to a model of multifamily development. Over the next decade, we would successfully develop two small award winning multifamily developments to include an Intermediate Care Facility and a 10 unit multifamily development both in partnership with the City's Human Services Department.

2011

In 2011, VBCDC received its second allocation of Low Income Housing Tax Credits for the development and construction of 32 units of permanent supportive housing for homeless and disabled veterans. This development called Cedar Grove Apartments was co-developed with Second Act Communities<sup>SM</sup> and is an award winning community which celebrated its grand opening in October of 2013.

## The Present

Today, we own and operate over 400 units of housing for low income individuals and families, persons with developmental and mental health disabilities, homeless families and individuals, and homeless and disabled veterans. The total assessed value of our properties exceeds \$41 million, making us the largest affordable housing property owner in Virginia Beach.

In addition to the housing programs owned and operated by VBCDC, we operate programs and services that qualitatively change the lives of our neighbors. The Veterans First program

provides a permanent rental housing subsidy with comprehensive case management and advocacy for homeless and disabled veterans. The Owner Occupied Rehabilitation program provides low interest loans for income qualified homeowners to assist them with correction of code deficiencies, emergency repairs, and other needed rehabilitation. The Support Services For Veterans Families program provides homeless prevention, rapid rehousing and intensive case management and advocacy for homeless and at-risk veterans and their families.

Although we have made a measurable impact in the community through our housing and services programming, we have more work to do. Every day we receive inquiries from families and individuals who are in need of suitable and stable housing that is affordable.



*VBCDC housing programs and services are changing the lives of our neighbors, and making a real difference across the region.*

## Where we stand today

### STRENGTHS

VBCDC's strengths include our ability to develop and operate award winning housing and supportive services programs that profoundly change the lives of our neighbors. We employ highly qualified and fully committed professionals who are dedicated to our mission. VBCDC's Board of Directors are leaders in the community and are committed to the organization. Finally, VBCDC has a proven track record of stewardship and fiscal responsibility.

### WEAKNESSES

Organizational weaknesses include insufficient technology, the inability to compete against for-profit developers for land and projects due to lack of capital, and reliance on grant funding and developer fees to support operations.

### OPPORTUNITIES

There are a number of national and state wide initiatives which offer opportunities for housing and programmatic development. One such initiative includes the Veterans Administration's plan to end homelessness among veterans. With the development of Cedar Grove Apartments in 2013, VBCDC has emerged as a leader in developing permanent supportive housing for homeless veterans and has been approached about replicating the development in other localities through its partner organization, Second Act Communities<sup>SM</sup>.

Federal and state funding for housing has steadily declined and may lead to opportunities to offer services to Housing Authorities and localities as they downsize or shift operations and staffing in response to decreased funding.

Affordable housing remains a need in the City of Virginia Beach. In 2013, data from the U.S. Census, American Community Survey, and the Virginia Tech Center for Housing Research shows that more than half of all renters in the City of Virginia Beach are cost burdened and are paying more than 30% of their income for housing related expenses. Additionally, in households with incomes less than \$50,000, 55% of renters are cost burdened. These cost burdened households include many private sector employees as well as municipal employees, teachers and first responders.

### CHALLENGES

Community misperception and opposition remain a threat to our continued development of quality housing that is affordable. Lack of developable land and the high cost of the remaining developable land is a threat that remains constant. When land or a suitable project is identified, VBCDC lacks the development capital to compete with for-profit developers. We are unable to quickly assemble the funding needed to be competitive when bidding against other for-profit entities for the purchase of existing multifamily portfolios on the market.



*Cost-burdened renters in Virginia Beach include municipal employees, teachers and first responders*



## Our Stakeholder Process

VBCDC engaged both internal and external stakeholders in the creation of our new five year strategic plan to ensure broad input. VBCDC and our partner organization, Second Act Communities<sup>SM</sup>, engaged in Community Conversation events during the months of March 2015 and April 2015 and invited partner organizations, local civic leaders, banks and foundations, representatives from local, state and federal government, ecumenical leaders, social and human service organizations and current and former neighbors to gain insights, ideas and feedback about the proposed direction of our plan. Each session was moderated by a facilitator who engaged stakeholders in a dialogue. We hosted three events and heard from more than 125 individuals representing different sectors of the community and different localities in Hampton Roads. In addition to the Hampton Roads community, VBCDC employee partners from all levels of the organization were invited to participate and give feedback on the plan. This comprehensive engagement process produced constructive reflections on the new strategic direction.

Some common themes emerged from stakeholder discussions. There is a need for housing that is affordable and well maintained for young professionals and entry level workers. The City of Virginia Beach risks losing talent to other geographic areas due to the cost burden of housing in our City. There is a growing need for housing for persons with disabilities, young adults aging out of foster care, teachers, adults 55 and better, and ex-offenders. Housing needs to be developed for all citizens including those who are financially burdened and vulnerable. Newly developed housing that is created for persons with disabilities should be diverse and integrated. VBCDC along with its advocates and supporters need to work hard to dispel the images that affordable housing and persons occupying affordable housing lack a sense of community.

## Looking Forward

Our new five year strategic plan is ambitious. VBCDC is committed to serving more neighbors in new ways by creating additional housing options with programs and services that profoundly change the lives of those we serve. We are equally committed to our employee partners who are the foundation of our organization. VBCDC strives to retain the best and brightest talent and strengthen our organizational infrastructure to better support our employee partners and operations through advancements in technology and knowledge management. Through the efficient use of resources, we will reduce paper consumption, increase recycling, and be good stewards of the environment. This plan is a roadmap that leads us to financial sustainability through its strategies and key initiatives. We will continue to work hard each and every day to further our mission and to build, support, and preserve communities.

## Strategic Themes

We have identified three strategic themes that provide the framework for our operations over the next five years. They define the major organizational direction and represent key areas of focus as we strive to achieve our vision and desired future.



**VBCDC will serve more neighbors in new ways.**



**VBCDC will attract and retain the best and brightest talent for its staff and board.**



**VBCDC will remain financially sustainable.**



VBCDC will serve more neighbors in new ways.

- 1**  
STRATEGY Develop 450 new multi-family rental housing units owned by VBCDC or Second Act Communities<sup>SM</sup> by 2020.
- 2**  
STRATEGY Develop profitable initiatives to increase unrestricted income by 10% year over year beginning in 2016.
- 3**  
STRATEGY Increase public awareness and support for quality housing for all in geographic service area beginning September 2015.
- 4**  
STRATEGY Expand capacity of Community and Family Supportive Services programs to serve 15% more neighbors year over year beginning 2016.
- 5**  
STRATEGY Create additional programs to serve and support neighbors in new ways.



**VBCDC will attract and retain the best and brightest talent for its staff and board.**

STRATEGY **1**

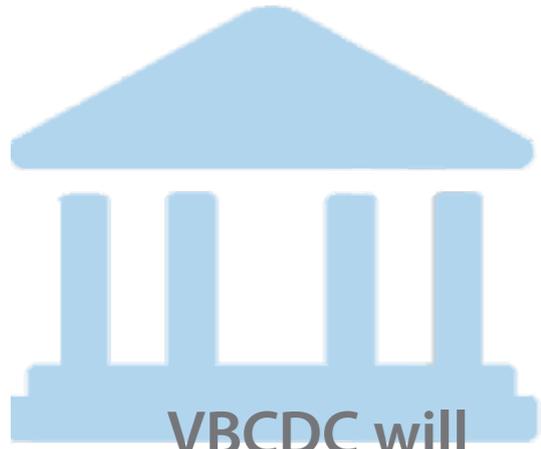
VBCDC will be designated as a “Best Place to Work” by 2020.

STRATEGY **2**

Develop a Board Recruitment and Retention Plan by July 2017 in accordance with Virginia State Code and the Virginia Beach City Council.

STRATEGY **3**

Develop information technology, knowledge management and efficiency functions by July 2017 to reduce the organization’s environmental footprint.



VBCDC will  
remain financially  
sustainable.

STRATEGY  
**1**

Implement a funds development plan with Second Act Communities<sup>SM</sup> to increase philanthropic and individual donations by 15% year over year beginning 2015 to fund an endowment.

STRATEGY  
**2**

Develop sound business models for new projects by July 2015.

STRATEGY  
**3**

Develop creative financing options for VBCDC in partnership with SAC to support development and operating activities.