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World Class Housing Collaborative Progress Report: Cumulative through June 2002

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World Class Housing Collaborative

Progress Report: Cumulative through June 2002

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Executive Summary

Halfway into its second year of operations, the World Class Housing Collaborative (WCHC) has built on its initial year of establishing the WCHC and has made significant progress on a number of important housing initiatives. Through scores of meetings with community leaders, neighborhood associations, community development corporations, and city agency personnel, the Collaborative has generated enormous enthusiasm for the services it is now offering all of these groups. As part of this activity, it is working on four separate housing development projects centered in the Roxbury and Dorchester neighborhoods of Boston. In particular, we can point to the following successful efforts during this period:

Major Completed and Ongoing Activities

◆ Staffing of the World Class Housing Collaborative

The WCHC retained a community liaison officer as promised in the original Fannie Mae/Fleet proposal, an executive coordinator for the Collaborative (through the end of 2001) and recruited from the Northeastern University faculty experts in architecture and construction, law, real estate finance, and civil engineering.

◆ Outreach to Boston Political Leaders

In anticipation of attending literally dozens of community meetings, the WCHC has met with Boston Mayor Thomas Menino on several occasions, with key members of the Boston delegation to the Massachusetts legislature, and with Boston City Council members. These meetings were used to introduce the WCHC and its mission to political leaders in order to assure them of our purpose and gain support for our community activities.

◆ Outreach to Community and Neighborhood Organizations

With guidance from its Community Liaison Officer, WCHC members have continuously met since the project began with literally dozens of community leaders in the Roxbury and Dorchester neighborhoods of Boston, the areas identified in our original Fannie Mae/Fleet proposal. The purpose of these meetings has been to introduce the WCHC to them and to provide them the opportunity to request pro bono assistance from the Collaborative. Included among these are many social service agencies that could be expected to provide “world-class” services to projects developed with WCHC assistance.

◆ **Established Strong Relationships with the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the Department of Neighborhood Development**

The WCHC has had numerous meetings with staff from both the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the Department of Neighborhood Development in order to coordinate our neighborhood activities with those of official city agencies. We became a major participant in the City's Housing on Main Streets initiative in Grove Hall and along Blue Hill Avenue, and have worked very closely with them the City's Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) in the planning for "missing teeth" developments.

◆ **Completion of "*Bridging the Gaps: The Revitalization of the Four Corners Neighborhood in Boston*" for the 2001 Federal Home Loan Bank/CHAPA competition**

This report for the Azuza Christian Community of Boston was sponsored by the World Class Housing Collaborative and carried out by graduate architecture and public policy students from five local universities including Harvard, MIT, Tufts, Northeastern, and UMass Boston. The report provided a conceptual plan for the development of a youth center and youth group home plus an affordable mixed-use affordable housing/commercial project (5 city lots) in Roxbury.

◆ **Completion of the *Geneva Avenue Urban Studio Visioning* for the Dorchester Housing and Open Space Action Team (DHAT)**

The Dorchester Housing and Open Space Action Team (DHAT) was selected as the Collaborative's first major "client". Under the direction of WCHC member and NU Architecture Professor, Peter Wiederspahn, twenty-one students led by three faculty members worked continuously with DHAT from September through December, 2001 to generate a plan for housing, open space, and commercial development along Geneva Avenue in Roxbury. The Geneva Avenue "urban studio" produced a vast array of demographic, transportation, crime, and open space reports for the community, complete architectural drawings and models for new housing, commercial development, street redesign, and open space improvements. This studio is now being used as the starting point for several comprehensive housing developments along Geneva Avenue, including provision for commercial buildings and open space redevelopment.

◆ **Completion of the *Grove Hall Gateway Affordability Project* for the 2002 Federal Home Loan Bank/CHAPA Competition**

This project, sponsored by the WCHC, centered on the generation of architectural drawings and economic analysis for a large-scale housing/commercial project on Warren Avenue near Grove Hall. The project

was completed for the private community-based owners of several large parcels of land on this site. Carried out by graduate students from Northeastern, MIT, and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, this report provides the conceptual scheme for a mixed-income, mixed-use housing/retail/office space development, serving as the gateway to Grove Hall. Planning for the actual Grove Hall Gateway projects is currently underway, with the assistance of WCHC.

◆ **Geneva Cliffs Housing Development**

Based on the Geneva Avenue Urban Studio, the WCHC is working to assist DHAT and the Dorchester Bay Community Development Corporation to acquire a parcel of land on an abandoned NStar (formerly Boston Edison) substation lot at Geneva and Bowdoin Avenues where 20-23 mixed-income owner occupied housing units can be constructed. Members of the Collaborative have met with officers of NStar and the City's DND on behalf of the community and Dorchester Bay to consider possible land swaps permitting NStar to relinquish the Geneva Cliffs site. The Collaborative will assist in the planning and design of the housing units. WCHC advocacy has been instrumental in encouraging City support for this effort.

◆ **The “Grove Hall Gateway” Projects**

The Collaborative has agreed to assist the owners of two of the most centrally located sites in the Grove Hall neighborhood to produce up to 200 units of mixed-income housing, plus retail and office space. The WCHC is currently providing background information on development techniques. We have assisted the owners in obtaining legal counsel, a professional architect, an affordable housing consultant, and potentially a management agent; and we will assist in architectural analysis, community participation and review, as well as assisting in locating financing for this Grove Hall “signature” project. Most recently, and still ongoing, Professor Shiawee Yang has assigned work on these projects as the core effort of her Summer, 2002 class in real estate finance at Northeastern's Graduate School of Business.

◆ **Fair Foods and ABCD sites at the Holland School Campus**

Working with DHAT, the city's official anti-poverty program Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD), and Fair Foods, a distributor of free food for the community, the Collaborative has begun to develop architectural plans for what has become known as the Geneva Avenue “Campus” project. Situated on Geneva Avenue between Columbia Road and Bowdoin Street is a large parcel of land now occupied by ABCD's Child Development Center, the Holland Elementary School, the Holland School Community Center, and Fair Foods. ABCD will break ground in September of this year for 48 units of senior housing

on this same site. Working with WCHC's full-time coop student architect and an NU Professor of Architecture, a complete set of architectural drawings and models is being readied for the area that will include a brand new façade for the Child Development Center and a relocation of Fair Foods to another site to make way for up to 26 units of affordable housing, a new convenience store, and a public plaza to serve the entire campus. New parking facilities and well-landscaped and well-lit pedestrian ways are being designed to make this site one of the most attractive in all of Boston. The model envisions a new central node for Geneva Avenue serving everyone from pre-school children and elementary school students to teenagers in the community center and senior citizens in the new ABCD housing development.

◆ **The “Missing Teeth” Sites**

Working with the Veterans Benefit Clearinghouse Development Corporation, WCHC is assisting in the planning, acquisition of site control, financing, and community process of a project to develop up to 100 units of small-scale housing on “missing teeth” sites in or near the target neighborhood of Washington/Bowdoin/Geneva. We hope to pioneer a development method that will result in more efficient development at lower cost by aggregating small sites into larger project applications and financings. Our collaboration with VBCDC began in the late Spring of 2002.

◆ **Codman Academy Site Search**

In early 2002, Codman Academy Charter School approached WCHC for assistance in finding a permanent home for this start-up charter school, many of whose students live in the WCHC target area. They will need a permanent location beginning in September 2003 and would hope to find a site that can also fulfill the goal of community revitalization. The WCHC has agreed to assist them with the community participation process as well.

◆ **Developers’ Clinic**

In October and November of 2001, WCHC carried out its first *Developers’ Clinic* attended by over twenty potential inner city developers. The Clinic, consisting of three four-hour sessions carried out in the space of three weeks at Northeastern, provided a basic introduction to the world of housing development and all of the requirements that must be met for successful mixed income housing construction and management. The response of the participants was uniformly positive; they requested that WCHC schedule additional sessions of the Clinic in the future.

◆ **Additional WCHC Fundraising**

In order to continue its efforts, the WCHC has stepped up its fundraising activities. WCHC has approached various foundations and corporations for completing the funding of the Collaborative and all of its projects. In December, 2001 FleetBoston Financial agreed to a second injection of \$50,000 based on the success of the Collaborative in its first year.

In summary, the members of the WCHC are excited by the progress in the first 18 months of its existence and encouraged by the prospects for making a meaningful contribution toward the development of a significant number of new and rehabilitated “world class” housing units in the years ahead.

World Class Housing Collaborative

PROGRESS REPORT: CUMULATIVE THROUGH JUNE 2002

Introduction

In its original vision in October 2000, the Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University (CURP) proposed the creation of a unique university-based institution to assist community organizations and developers to construct new and rehabilitated housing throughout the Greater Boston region -- beginning in Boston's Roxbury and Dorchester neighborhoods. The new institution would be known as **the World Class Housing Collaborative -- or WCHC**.

In part, the WCHC was spurred by the publication of a major study carried out by CURP for the Boston Catholic Archdiocese and the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce. That report, "A New Paradigm for Housing in Greater Boston" called attention to the growing housing crisis in the region. Home prices and rents were skyrocketing to levels that made it increasingly difficult not only for low-income residents, but for many working class and even middle income families, to afford. The report called for the construction of 36,000 net new units of housing over the next five years and noted that this could only be accomplished if literally dozens of social, political, and economic barriers to new construction could be overcome.

The World Class Housing Collaborative would be established to provide technical assistance to community groups, neighborhood associations, and community-based developers with help in overcoming all of the barriers identified in the CURP report.

From the beginning, we defined what we meant by World Class Housing.

**World Class Housing is more than a physical structure.
It is housing that is built around the life of a community.
It includes social services and economic opportunities.
It is housing that incorporates transportation efforts, public safety
measures, civic initiatives and the environment. World
Class Housing anchors, transforms and stabilizes communities.**

For housing to provide a strong and secure investment, it needs to be connected to the activities that make neighborhoods vibrant, safe, and creative – transit connections, parks and civic spaces, shopping and job opportunities, social services, educational programs, and recreational opportunities for young and old alike.

The World Class Housing Collaborative thus involves much more than the production of housing for it will also assure that revitalizing neighborhoods provide a range of social and community services to assure that no resident gets left behind in the transformation of blighted streets and sidewalks.

As a first principle, the Collaborative stated that it would always take its lead from the community. Every project to which WCHC lends technical assistance will have active community involvement. The Collaborative will take its direction from the community, partnering with local officials, neighborhood organizations, and individuals to realize a vision for neighborhood rebirth. Neither Northeastern University nor the WCHC will create the original idea for any individual development; all such ideas will be generated by entities within the community.

The Collaborative's day-to-day focus would be on *project-specific implementation*. WCHC will offer site-specific planning and development strategies for local construction projects that are in the works, as well as provide support to community organizations and neighborhood associations as they move from conception to construction.

The technical assistance services offered by the Collaborative would include help with financing, environmental assessments, community relations, and property management. The highly-experienced and respected members of the WCHC would also lend their credibility and relationships with decisionmakers to assure that the community's priorities are heard and understood at the highest levels of government. Ultimately, the Collaborative will develop an inclusive, community-based, streamlined process for housing development that can be replicated in neighborhoods throughout the region.

While the Collaborative would ultimately plan to offer services in neighborhoods throughout Greater Boston, assistance would first be provided to housing units in the Roxbury section of Boston and would involve the construction of a wide range of housing types on available vacant sites (including in-fill parcels) and buildings suitable for rehabilitation.

From the beginning, the Collaborative set out to assist in the creation of 200-300 new units of housing in stages over a three-year period. The goal was to create enough housing in a Roxbury neighborhood to support the business development and social services that are at the core of the "world class" concept.

The founding members of the new Collaborative included Northeastern University's Center for Urban and Regional Policy (CURP), the Urban Law and Public Policy Institute (ULPPI) and Housing Partners, Inc., a locally-based housing consulting firm with strong ties to the University. In the 18 months that WCHC has been actively operating, we have added members to the WCHC Coordinating Board representing our initial funding partner, FleetBoston Financial, as well as Northeastern faculty from the departments of Architecture, Law, Business, and Engineering.

WCHC Tasks

In its original proposal to the Fannie Mae Foundation and FleetBoston Financial, the World Class Housing Collaborative enumerated a set of tasks in order to meet its objectives during its first **three** years. We have restated these tasks here so that the considerable progress we have made in the first 18 months alone can be put in the overall context of the full program.

- Task 1 The WCHC will meet with representatives of all major community groups, advocacy organizations, and community development corporations in the area to assure that our pilot area -- the "Washington-Bowdoin-Geneva Triangle" has been designated correctly. This first set of meetings will establish the dynamic successfully used by the principals of Housing Partners, Inc. in the Inner-City Task Forces at the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) and will model the participatory process that will be used as the fulcrum of decision-making throughout the project.
- Task 2 The WCHC will work closely with the city of Boston, primarily through its Housing Chief, Charlotte Golar-Richie, and the staff of the Department of Neighborhood Development, to identify and inventory city-owned sites in the target area that are suitable for housing development, both single-family and multifamily. We will seek to identify suitable privately-owned sites as well. Based on the commitments contained in the city's recently-released housing strategy document *Leading the Way* (to which Eleanor White of Housing Partners contributed) we believe that we can help construct a fast-track process for city disposition of land and city permitting.
- Task 3 The WCHC will also work closely with community-based developers -- both nonprofit and for-profit -- to assure their interest and availability to develop available parcels and to rehabilitate suitable buildings. We will encourage them and help them to obtain control of sites within the target area and compete for available funding from public and private sources. They will be a strong presence to advocate with us for streamlined public approval processes. In return, the WCHC will assist them in identifying financing and funding vehicles and will help to create connections to community residents and services.
- Task 4 The WCHC will identify relevant social service, education, and health providers serving the community and assure that they become part of the planning process. In addition, they will be encouraged to present action plans to assure that their services are integrated into housing development and revitalization plans. Only in this way can the vision of world-class housing be realized. The WCHC will be available to advocate with them for resources within their own worlds.
- Task 5 The WCHC will work with local business leaders and business educators to assure that commercial and retail development will complement the new housing to be produced, and that employment opportunities can be generated for residents of the new housing, both youth and adults.

- Task 6 The WCHC will work with public safety officials to assure that the new housing will enjoy a high level of safety and security.
- Task 7 The WCHC will assure that as specific housing proposals are brought forward by developers, these proposals will be reviewed and critiqued in a timely manner by the Collaborative and that developers will be strongly encouraged to be responsive to legitimate concerns of the neighborhood. If this responsiveness is forthcoming, the Collaborative will actively advocate for project approval by the city and financing entities.
- Task 8 The WCHC will recruit design professionals to review designs for new, mixed income, and mixed use developments. The Collaborative will work with these architects to review designs that are cost effective and at the same time enhance the overall appearance of the neighborhoods where they will be constructed. In addition, the Collaborative will recruit from Northeastern University real estate finance experts, lawyers, civil engineers, economists, and other social scientists to assist in the development of world class housing.
- Task 9 The WCHC will convene public and quasi-public housing funders, to assure that all sources of development assistance are identified and used to their full potential. The Collaborative will work with its financial supporters to maximize the effectiveness of existing financing vehicles and minimize each partner's risk in the transaction.
- Task 10 Throughout the process, the WCHC will develop materials for use in other communities to explain the concept and experience gained from its initial projects and experience. Ultimately, the WCHC will develop a resource kit so that the process can be more easily replicated in subsequent locations. The WCHC will also establish a method for evaluating the various elements of the process: the viability of the holistic concept, effectiveness of the community participation process and financing arrangements, the degree of innovation and creativity resulting from it, and the bricks- and- mortar accomplishments in the neighborhood.
- Task 11 Assuming the successful development of the World Class Housing model, the WCHC will convene representatives at other area universities to collaborate with us on future housing projects.

To carry out these tasks, the WCHC was committed to hiring an executive coordinator for the Collaborative as well as a community liaison officer. The original executive coordinator, Gretchen Weismann, served throughout the first year, until December, 2001. While we have retained a community liaison officer throughout the life of the effort to date, due to lack of complete and full funding for the project (and with Ms. Weismann's enrollment in a doctoral program at MIT) the coordinating role during the last six months (January-June, 2002) has been filled by Professor Barry Bluestone of CURP and Eleanor White of Housing Partners, Inc.

Completed Tasks Through June, 2002

In its first year, the Collaborative completed the significant work of establishing WCHC, gaining acceptance and credibility both in the target community and in the larger housing/community development world, and laying the groundwork for project-specific production. In the last six months, we have built upon this base to accomplish the following.

Organizational Tasks

- **Maintained a Community Liaison Officer assigned to WCHC**

The Collaborative hired a community liaison officer in 2001(Boyce Slayman) to facilitate the relationship between the community, local developers, and the city. Recognizing the sensitivity of urban development issues, the community liaison was hired to serve as a resource for the community groups in their dealings with other interested parties as WCHC-assisted projects move forward. The liaison also articulates the concerns and aspirations of the community to the WCHC working group and participates in all development meetings. With Boyce's departure to a new opportunity in Washington, DC, in the Fall of 2001, WCHC recruited and retained David Wright, the Executive Director of the African-American Federation in Boston. David brings not only the same level of commitment to this community as we found in Boyce, he also brings extremely valuable relationships to neighborhood groups and organizations belonging to the African-American Federation.

- **Recruited and organized faculty resources from throughout the university to contribute to the provision of technical assistance to community groups and their developer partners.**

Since the Collaborative's founding, the idea of World Class Housing has been generating enthusiasm throughout many departments and centers at Northeastern. Professionals in the field of housing and community development have now joined together with faculty from the Department of Architecture, Civil Engineering, Political Science, Sociology, Law, and Business to contribute expertise in housing design, finance, law, economic development, public health, and environmental assessment. The Collaborative has thus provided an exciting opportunity to recognize and utilize numerous university resources and to build a new model of effective university-community partnerships. Together, this group has solid expertise in the design and construction of wooden structures and multi-unit family housing, community organizing, real estate law, real estate finance, site assessment, brownfield remediation, and the public sector decisionmaking process.

The Members of the Collaborative now include the following:

Barry Bluestone
Founding Member, WCHC
Director, NU Center for Urban and Regional Policy

Doris Bunte
Founding Member, WCHC
NU Center for Sport in Society
Former Member, Massachusetts House of Representatives
Former Director, Boston Housing Authority

Michael Glavin
Director, State and Local Government Affairs
FleetBoston Financial

Bill Fenton
Vice President
Regional Economic Development
Fleet Community Banking Group
FleetBoston Financial

David Langseth
Associate Professor
NU Department of Civil Engineering

Jim Rowan
Founding Member, WCHC
Clinical Director, NU Urban Law and Public Policy Institute

Marvin Siflinger
Founding Member, WCHC
Chairman, Housing Partners, Inc.
Former Executive Director, MHFA and Former Director, HUD Boston Area Office

David Wright
Executive Director, African-American Federation

James Wang
Assistant Professor
NU Department of Civil Engineering

Gretchen Weismann
Senior Research Associate, NU Center for Urban and Regional Policy

Eleanor White
Founding Member, WCHC
President, Housing Partners, Inc.
Former Deputy Director, MHFA and Former Acting Director for Housing Development at HUD

Peter Wiederspahn
Associate Professor
NU Department of Architecture

Dennis Wright
Founding Member, WCHC
Director, NU Urban Law and Public Policy Institute

Shiawee Yang
Associate Professor
NU College of Business Administration

Peter Enrich
Professor of Law, Northeastern University

- **Developed a brochure for use in explaining the World Class Housing concept and the services available from the Collaborative**

WCHC designed and produced a brochure to describe the mission of the Collaborative, its long range objectives, the working partners, and the services that the Collaborative brings together in a cohesive strategy to expedite housing production. The Collaborative is also maintaining a portfolio with all potential and active development projects, meeting notes, community contacts, requests for service, parcel information, development documents, and research related to World Class Housing. This portfolio will serve as a definitive history of WCHC and help provide the basis for replicating the WCHC model in other neighborhoods and cities.



- **Maintained organizational momentum through biweekly and monthly meetings**

For the first six months of WCHC's first year, there was so much activity that the Collaborative held biweekly meetings to keep all members aware of all WCHC projects and to approve projects. By July, virtually every WCHC member was involved in one or more projects often requiring a considerable time commitment. General meetings of the Collaborative are now limited to once monthly, although several special sessions have been organized.

Community Outreach

- **Convened discussions with city officials, elected officials and other community leaders, potential funders, social service and educational providers, architects, and planners to explore the challenges of the World Class Housing concept, with special reference to the Greater Boston setting.**

Members of the WCHC have met with the City of Boston's Department of Neighborhood Development (DND), the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the Boston Society of Architects, neighborhood residents, and potential financiers to discuss potential and on-going development projects. These meetings were designed to introduce WCHC and outline the elements of World Class Housing. The WCHC concept has generated considerable enthusiasm, particularly given the Collaborative's stated intention to put the community first by working to facilitate the development of housing connected to other vital community services and needs. We have received full cooperation from the Mayor of Boston, Charlotte Golar-Richie (Director of DND) and her staff, and Mark Maloney (Director of the BRA) and his staff.

The Collaborative has joined forces with the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the DND, and the Boston Society of Architects to help expedite the development of mixed income housing along the Blue Hill Avenue Mainstreets corridor – close to the original Washington-Bowdoin-Geneva Triangle area targeted by the WCHC.

The Collaborative has worked closely with the Dorchester Housing and Open Space Action Team (DHAT) to assist with the development of various DHAT properties along Geneva and Bowdoin Avenues. Based on a DHAT proposal to WCHC for architectural and site assessment assistance for major parcels in the area, WCHC voted to provide full assistance to DHAT on a "visioning" plan for Geneva Avenue between Columbia Road and Bowdoin (completed during the Winter of 2001), to help expedite the development of housing on the Geneva Cliffs site designated by DHAT, to assist with planning on a site between Vaughn Avenue and Columbia Road, and to assist with proposals for the Fair Foods and ABCD sites at the Holland School campus on Geneva Avenue. WCHC staff attend all DHAT meetings.

WCHC meetings have been held with the following federal, state, and local officials, community leaders, and housing experts:

Robin Drill and Jack Wilson, Fannie Mae Massachusetts Partnership Office
Michael Glavin, Bill Fenton, and additional staff, Fleet Bank
Gail Latimore, Executive Director, Codman Square Neighborhood Dev. Corp.
Deborah Jackson, the Boston Foundation
Patrick Lee, Trinity Financial
Milton Benjamin and staff, Community Development Finance Authority
Robert Pyne, MassHousing
Senesie Kabba, Executive Director, New Vision CDC
Ann Houston and staff, Mass. Housing Partnership
Esther Schlorholtz, Boston Private Bank

Thomas Menino, Mayor of Boston
Charlotte Golar Richie, Director, City of Boston Dept. of Neighborhood Development
Sheila Dillon, Bruce Ehrlich, Sandra Martin, and others, DND
Mark Maloney, Director, Boston Redevelopment Authority
John Dalzell and Lynn Berkley, BRA
Marie St. Fleur, State Representative
Byron Rushing, State Representative
Staff of Dianne Wilkerson, State Senator
Chuck Turner, Boston City Councillor
Staff of Charles Yancey, President, Boston City Council
Jeanne DuBois, Executive Director, Dorchester Bay CDC
Marvin Martin, Director, and others, Four Corners Action Coalition
Ralph Cooper, Ernie Branch, and Harold Raymond, Veterans Benefit Clearinghouse
Ray Weaving, Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation
Sherry Flashman, Consultant, Dorchester Housing and Open Space Action Team (DHAT)
Davida Andelman, Executive Director, DHAT
Richard DeAgazio and staff, Boston Capital
Donna Finnegan, Chairman, Fields Corner CDC
Sister Virginia Morrison, Executive Director, Grove Hall CDC
Rev. Eugene Rivers, Azusa Christian Church
Eva Thorne and Ken Johnson, Azusa Christian Church
Nancy Jameson, Director, Fair Foods
Michael Long, Bethel AME Church
Alyce Lee, community resident and former Chief of Staff to Mayor Menino
Donna Latson Gittens, CauseMedia
Theresa Brewer, Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation
David Wright, African-American Federation and his Board of Directors
Matt Thal, Director, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Boston Office
Michael Vance, Ruth Ann Burriss and John Wells, ABCD
Christine Araujo, BostonConnects (administrator of Boston's Empowerment Zone)
Bill Walczak, CEO, Codman Square Health Center
Meg Campbell, Head of School, Codman Academy
Brenda Gadson, Roxbury Multiservice Center
Crista Martinez, Dorchester CARES
Lois Lee, Grove Hall Family Resource and Activities Center

- **Black Legislative Caucus Lunch**

In February 2001, soon after its founding, WCHC members met with representatives from the Massachusetts Black Legislative Caucus to introduce the World Class Housing project. The attending representatives gave strong support to the Collaborative's mission and expressed an interest in maintaining and strengthening the relationship between the community and Northeastern University. There was also some concern about gentrification and parking and traffic problems in the Grove Hall area. The WCHC followed up the meeting with a letter to the City regarding the need for a Grove Hall area traffic study as requested by these public officials. (See Appendix 2)

- **Convened Meetings with Neighborhood Associations**

Members of the Collaborative, in some cases in conjunction with developers, have met with more than a dozen neighborhood associations, or representatives of neighborhood

associations, to outline the WCHC project and the types of community support that the Collaborative can offer. These groups range from small resident organizations to organized, well-established planning committees. Members of the Collaborative have also met with individuals from local pastors to the Vice President of the Franklin Park Zoo and the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO).



- **Held meetings with potential housing developers to explain the services available from the WCHC.**

Members of the WCHC have met with more than 20 local developers who are either in partnership with existing community groups or have an interest in working with a local community group on a specific site. These meetings have been used to ascertain their interest in working towards World Class Housing goals. The Washington-Bowdoin-Geneva Triangle area identified by the WCHC, as well as nearby neighborhoods, contains many separate neighborhood associations, with distinct boundaries and individual community leaders. WCHC has been working to include all neighboring groups and potential developers in initial discussions.

WCHC meetings were held with the following individuals:

Russell Gibson, community-based developer
Brother Shear Israel, community-based developer/property owner
Murphy Gregory, community-based developer/property owner
Fred Fairfield, community-based developer/property owner
Ralph Cooper, Ernie Branch, and Harold Raymond, Veterans Benefit Clearinghouse
Richard Taylor, community-based developer
Patrick Lee, Trinity Financial, inner-city developer
Dwayne Jackson, community-based developer
Caleb Clapp, inner-city developer
Jonathan Kaye, inner-city developer
Vu Cuong, inner-city developer
Carl Richard of Final Touch Construction, a local contractor

- **Held meetings with community leaders to identify specific sites for initial stages of the first housing development initiatives.**

The Collaborative has received many requests for assistance from developers and area community groups. These requests have ranged from an informal interest in working with the WCHC to a desire for specific types of assistance including architectural sketches of a busy intersection, mediation, and site assessment. In order to provide guidance to the community and determine appropriate development projects, the Collaborative has collected data about the community's socioeconomic makeup, the area's housing stock, and the availability of vacant parcels for housing development.

- **Partnership with the City and Housing on Main Streets**

Beginning in February 2001, the Collaborative began meeting with DND, BRA, and the BSA as part of their *Housing on Main Streets* initiative. This initiative, organized by staff at the BRA, is focused on creating housing opportunities along Main Streets in Roxbury, as part of a neighborhood revitalization effort. This initiative is beginning with Blue Hill Avenue, but will eventually extend to other neighborhoods, including Four Corners, part of the Washington-Bowdoin-Geneva Triangle area. There were eight major meetings with participants in this group, four of which included leaders from the Blue Hill Avenue region.

- **Participation in Meetings with Blue Hill Avenue Mainstreets Community Groups**

During the Spring and Summer of 2001, there were four scheduled meetings at Freedom House in Roxbury to introduce *Housing on Main Streets* to neighborhood residents and to gather community input on development and planning along Blue Hill Avenue. The WCHC participated in all of these meetings. Residents explained their interest in homeownership opportunities and affordable housing as well as mixed-use development and traffic calming measures. At least two members of the Collaborative have attended all community meetings, which usually drew participation of about 50 people at each meeting.

- **Participation in community meetings of the Dorchester Open Space and Housing Action Team (DHAT)**

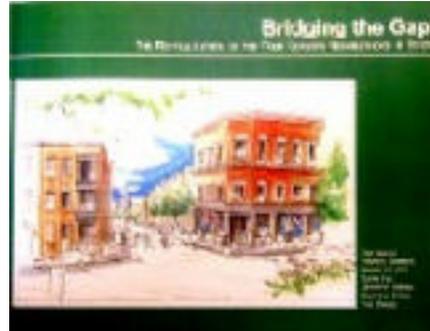
Beginning in the Spring of 2001, and continuing to date, members of the WCHC have participated actively in virtually all meetings sponsored by DHAT, some of them open community meetings and some focused on the Board of DHAT. Most recently, WCHC was asked to provide the keynote speaker for the DHAT Annual Meeting which took place in mid-July, 2002. We feel very proud of the strength of the relationship we have built with this grass-roots community group, and gratified that we have made significant progress on several of the projects they have identified as priorities.

WCHC Approved Projects

In its first 18 months, the WCHC approved participation in more than a dozen initiatives and projects and has begun or completed work on all of these.

- **Affordable Housing Competitions**

The Center for Urban and Regional Policy served as faculty and institutional sponsors in both the first and second annual affordable housing competitions sponsored by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston and Citizens Housing & Planning Association. Students from area universities including Northeastern, MIT, University of Massachusetts Boston, Harvard, and Tufts worked together on these WCHC sponsored projects.



In year one (2001), the student team took as its client the Azusa Christian Community, a group headed by Reverend Eugene Rivers. The client owns several buildings along Washington St. in Roxbury. In one of these, it would like to develop a center for troubled youth. The WCHC-sponsored student team suggested that the Azusa Community could renovate one of the buildings as the youth center, renovate a second as a youth residential facility for those in the youth center, and construct mixed income housing in the remaining buildings.

The team worked for six weeks on this project and produced an entire design for the project as well as cost estimates for their reconstruction. Architectural renderings of the buildings as well as a vision of the streetscape were produced as part of the project.

Based on this student effort, the WCHC has been asked by the Azusa Community to work with them when they are ready to proceed with actual construction on this project as well as a larger one that envisions the construction of a multimedia performance and training center on Washington St.

In the year two (2002) Competition, WCHC worked with a similar group of students to prepare a mock funding application for the Grove Hall Gateway project at the corner of Warren and Blue Hill Avenue, in the heart of Grove Hall. This project proposes two high-rise buildings at this pivotal corner, including retail space, office space, and housing for three demographic groups, including 20 percent affordability (although under the terms of the competition, the student work included 40 percent affordable units). Work on this competition provided valuable information for the Northeastern real estate finance class in the Summer of 2002 (see below), and also provided valuable information for the private community-based developers of these sites, who had requested assistance from WCHC.

- **Dorchester Housing and Open Space Action Team Projects (DHAT)**

In its first full-scale project, WCHC agreed to work with the Dorchester Housing and Open Space Action Team (DHAT) on the development of a vision of the long-neglected neighborhood from the intersection of Columbia Road and Geneva running South to the intersection of Bowdoin and Geneva streets, as well as the development of affordable housing on a two-acre site adjacent to the Bowdoin/Geneva intersection.



In order to assess the viability of development in this area, DHAT provided members of the WCHC with an extensive site tour of the area in late June, 2001. DHAT is a neighborhood-based planning and advocacy group for affordable housing founded in 1995. It is an informal collaboration of community agencies, resident groups, private and non-profit housing developers, and public officials dedicated to promoting affordable housing. Jeanne DuBois, executive director of the Dorchester Bay CDC, Marvin Martin, Director of the Four Corners Action Coalition, and David West from the City of Boston's Department of Neighborhood Development also attended the tour.

In a formal proposal to WCHC, DHAT asked the Collaborative for the following assistance:

Geneva Avenue “Visioning” Study

1. Prepare planning and urban design recommendations for Geneva Avenue, between Columbia Road and Bowdoin Street, to include :
 - Street edge treatments and set-backs for proposed new development
 - Traffic study and recommendations
 - Guidelines for off-street and any on-street parking
 - Improvements to street lighting, pedestrian crossings, sidewalks
 - Creation of an attractive focus for the Bowdoin/Geneva neighborhood and Main Streets at the Bowdoin St./Geneva Avenue intersection, e.g., through a combination of new building design features, improved traffic patterns, pedestrian crossings, and other public improvements.
 - Design guidelines for new buildings at the Bowdoin/Geneva intersection (e.g., height, massing, parking, buffers)
2. Propose alternative development scenarios and technical assistance for undeveloped and/or underused sites on Geneva Avenue. This would include options for new development of vacant land and redesign/redevelopment or

possibly relocation of some unsightly and incompatible existing uses on the Avenue in order to bring more appropriate commercial and/or housing development to these sites. Included in the design phase of this project is the consideration of building relocation and/or the improved site use of:

3. The Five Star Oil Company on Bowdoin Street (14/03194). At the base of Geneva Cliffs, the business located here 7-8 years ago. Local residents identify as problems the use of the site for oil trucks and for parking of tractor-trailers by friends and family of the owners.
4. Fair Foods, the non-profit food distribution organization currently housed in tractor-trailers between the Holland School and Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) Head Start building (14/00037 & /00038). This is a widely supported community enterprise in terms of its mission, but there has been the hope that site conditions and aesthetics could be improved. Immediately to the rear of Fair Foods, ABCD is now developing 40+ units of elderly housing (under the Federal Section 202 Program), and issues of access and buffers have been under discussion with Fair Foods. Even given existing uses, with ABCD Head Start and the Holland School as immediate abutters, the Fair Food site conditions are a problem. With all the new proposed development, this had become even more of an issue by 2001.
5. Private vacant land on Geneva Avenue (14/01121 and /01122; 27,097 sq. ft.), opposite Fair Foods are several adjacent parcels of privately-owned long-standing vacant land that has been proposed for new housing development by developers Vu Cuong and Jonathan Kaye.
6. Private vacant land (20,824 sq. ft.) owned by the Mayer Brothers at 453-479 Geneva Avenue between Tonawanda and Bloomfield Streets.

WCHC considered this set of DHAT proposals and agreed to the following:

Northeastern's Department of Art and Architecture offered to use the DHAT site area as the location for the department's Fall 2001 urban design studio. This studio course, open to junior year architecture students, involves a complete analysis of a particular neighborhood and development of architectural renderings and scale model construction for new buildings, streetscape design, open space uses, etc.



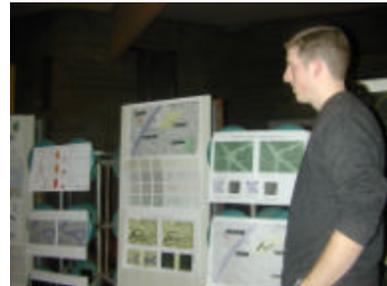
Beginning in September, twenty-one students working under the direction of Professor Peter Wiederspahn and two adjunct faculty from the Harvard Graduate School of Design, met with members of the Geneva Avenue

community to learn about the neighborhood and to hear the concerns residents had about their community.

From mid-September through late October, the students undertook a number of key studies of the neighborhood and constructed a three dimensional model of the entire community.

- ❑ A *traffic study* was conducted to understand traffic congestion and pedestrian crosswalk problems
- ❑ Working with the MBTA, a *commuter study* was conducted to ascertain the average mass transit home to work commute times
- ❑ Working from Boston Police Department data, a *crime study* was conducted revealing where every reported crime took place in the neighborhood
- ❑ A *youth study* was conducted to ascertain what facilities could be developed to provide alternative meeting places for young people in the neighborhood
- ❑ A *green space study* was conducted to ascertain what sections of the neighborhood could be developed as public recreation space

At the end of this process, an all-community meeting was held at the Holland School on Geneva Avenue where the urban studio students presented all of their findings. In addition to more than 35 community residents, the meeting was attended by the Director of the City's Department of Neighborhood Development, senior staff from the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and staff from Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD). By all accounts, and especially those of community residents, the students had done a superb job of understanding the issues most important in the neighborhood.



From November through mid-December, the urban studio shifted its focus to develop architectural renderings and 3-dimensional models of various alternatives for housing projects, commercial development, a new subway stop (of great interest to community residents), and green space renewal for the community.

All of these designs were presented at a second all-community meeting in the Holland School community center on December 13, 2001. Altogether more than one hundred people attended this evening event including dozens of neighborhood residents as well as many officials and staff from a variety of city agencies. Of particular note, we understand that Fair

Foods' participation in this meeting represented their first appearance at any community meeting in many years, in spite of many invitations from local groups. They pledged cooperation with any planning efforts in the future. Again, the student teams received very positive reviews for their efforts.

In a very exciting development, Mayor Menino asked to see a presentation of the students' work. The meeting was held in the Mayor's office in May, 2002 with the Mayor and Charlotte Golar Richie attending. The Mayor was impressed with the students' work, which served as a visual jumping-off place for a broad-ranging discussion about the Bowdoin-Geneva area. The Mayor also seemed supportive of the "missing teeth" concept (see below), and was open to considering housing on the Vaughn Avenue site, perhaps in conjunction with a multi-service center for the Haitian community. Moreover, the Mayor agreed to contact the CEO of NStar to assist the community in gaining possession of the Geneva Cliffs site for housing development. (He did this immediately, leading to high level talks with NStar regarding disposition of this site as part of a possible land swap. See section on Geneva Cliffs below)

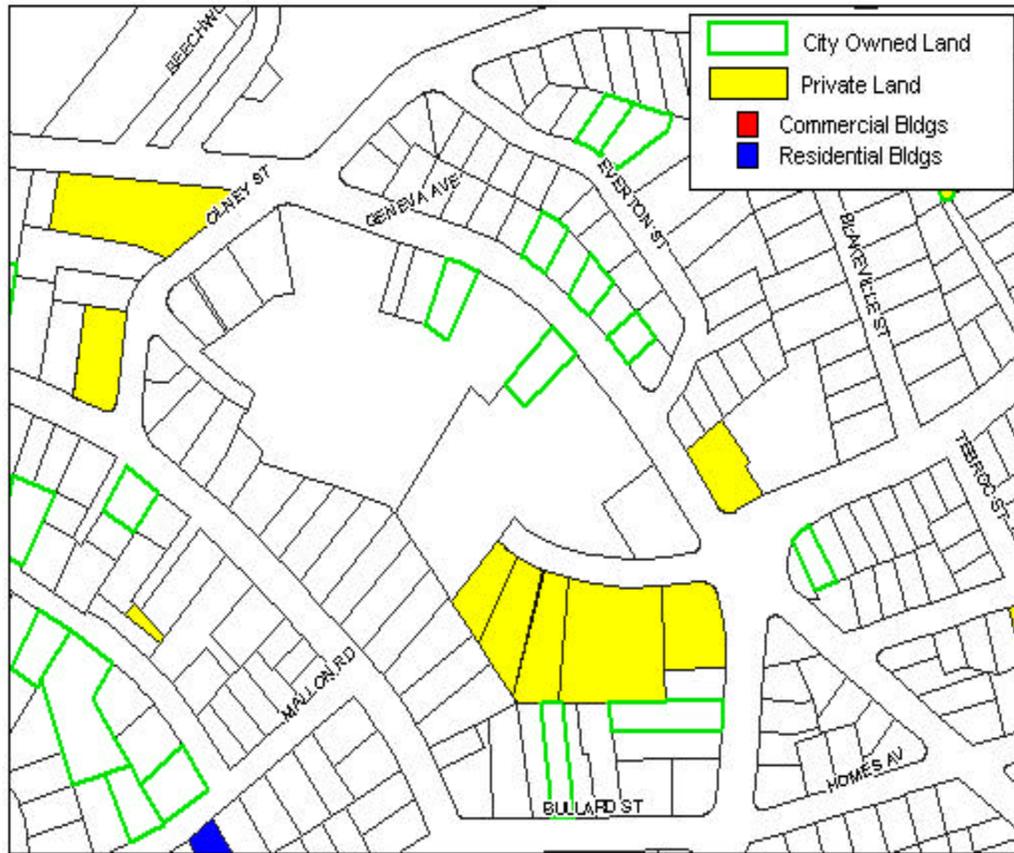


In the next step in this process, the WCHC is funding the publication of all of the plans drawn up by the students. These large format bound volumes will be made available to DHAT and to various city agencies. Based on these plans, WCHC is now working with DHAT to initiate development of the most promising of these designs.

Finally, as an outgrowth of the "visioning project", DHAT was approached by an urban designer—Mark Favermann of Favermann Designs—who presented interesting ideas about doing a "branding" project in the Bowdoin-Geneva area with new signage, information icons, etc. to give people a renewed "sense of place". We are impressed by the potential of this kind of initiative, and will keep this in mind for possible implementation after some of the construction projects get underway. We were very encouraged that a nationally known urban designer shares our sense of the potential of this neighborhood.

Over the months since December, 2001 (details follow), WCHC has worked to expedite decisions needed for the development of the Geneva Cliffs development; has begun discussions relative to a project on Vaughn Avenue; has initiated detailed discussions with Fair Foods and ABCD; and has participated in meetings on the privately-owned site across Geneva from the Holland School with the owner, Vu Cuong; and has begun planning for development of "missing teeth" sites elsewhere in the neighborhood, as envisioned by the student teams.

Geneva Cliffs



The WCHC has agreed to work with DHAT on its Geneva Cliffs project. Geneva Cliffs refers to an almost two-acre site at the major intersection of Geneva Avenue and Bowdoin Street that has great potential for new affordable housing and improved community open space. The site includes a 51,000+ square foot site, currently owned by NStar Electric utility (formerly Boston Edison) that had a transformer located on it (which has now been removed). Boston Edison had previously indicated an interest to sell this site and Dorchester Bay CDC, with support from DHAT and Four Corners Action Coalition, was involved in active negotiations to acquire the site. However, NStar put the negotiations on hold following the summer brownouts of 2001. The Collaborative agreed to assist DHAT in negotiations with NStar for transfer of ownership of this site. Through our efforts, Mayor Menino has asked NStar to consider relocation and active negotiations are now ongoing regarding the site.

The site is adjacent to 75,000+ sq. ft. of City Conservation Commission land designated as an “urban wild” permanent open space. This site has been neglected for years and is an eyesore rather than an amenity in the community. DHAT is promoting a plan to improve

the whole site, integrating a plan for new affordable housing on the NStar site and a greatly improved Conservation area. WCHC will assist in designs for this conservation site.

Dorchester Bay has estimated the ability to create 20- 23 affordable townhouse homes. The City's Parks and Recreation and Conservation Commission Departments are enthusiastic about the possibilities DHAT presented them with and are eager to work with them cooperatively. Since December of 2001, WCHC has had many discussions with the City of Boston, resulting in Mayor Menino's stated support for the transfer of this site for housing reuse as noted above.

The site presents an unusual opportunity to create a unique housing community that is integrated with and complemented by an upgraded urban wild site, which can serve the larger community as well as the new development. The residents surrounding the site in the Mt. Bowdoin Betterment Association area and in the newly renovated 60-unit Geneva Avenue Apartments on the other side of Geneva Cliffs have a great stake and interest in seeing major improvements and accessibility to this site.

Most of the land is cliff or ledge that extends from the beginning to the end of the area and is visible along Geneva Avenue. There is a severe grade, making access difficult. Major challenges and needs for the site include:



- Geotechnical assessments to evaluate the ledge and determine options and feasibility for road access.
- Site assessment is needed and full 21E studies, given the considerable likelihood of contamination remaining from the transformer, even though Boston Edison reported the site was clean. The oil company (Five Star) at the base of the sight also raises concerns.
- Alternative funding sources to complete these assessments and address the issues that arise will also be needed.

The WCHC has begun to assist DHAT with these three tasks.

The geotechnical and environmental analyses are crucial components of a full feasibility study to determine development options and designs for Geneva Cliffs. Members of the Collaborative, David Langseth and James Wang from Northeastern's Department of Civil Engineering and Peter Weiderspahn from the Department of Art and Architecture have done preliminary assessments of the site. All feel that while the physical issues are challenging, they can be overcome with careful design. Among them, these three Northeastern faculty members represent extensive expertise in environmental contamination, and have a special interest in brownfields development (Langseth and Wang),

as well as a particular interest in methods of wood-frame design and construction (Weiderspahn).

Further, WCHC member Peter Enrich of the Northeastern Law School has structured a class project for the Fall of 2002 in which a class of law students will do in-depth research into brownfields liability, funding sources, etc. This project will be focused particularly upon the Geneva Cliffs site and others with which WCHC is working. We expect the product of this classwork to be enormously helpful to local developers faced with contaminated sites.

- **Vaughn Avenue**

Based on the relationship established with WCHC, in early 2002 DHAT asked us to think about coordinating discussions among the tenant groups at Geneva Apartments, Theroc Apartments, and Codman Square NDC's housing developments in the area, particularly around issues of security and public safety. This was seen as especially necessary in relation to a possible housing proposal for a site on Vaughn Street, just off Geneva Avenue. We feel that this a critical step in (1) getting resident buy-in to a development proposal on Vaughn Street and (2) creating a nucleus of resident interest in developing an anti-crime strategy for the neighborhood, an issue becoming more important every day. In this connection, we have had in-depth meetings with Sheila Dillon and David West of DND. As a result of meetings with Charlotte Golar Richie and Mayor Menino, we believe that we have City support for housing on this site. Through staff at Dorchester Bay CDC, resident organizing will begin in the target existing housing developments, with WCHC involvement to follow. As always, we will be following the lead of the community in this effort.

- **Fair Foods**

In our initial discussions with DHAT regarding new developments along Geneva Avenue, it was made clear to us that the community wished to see the Fair Foods distribution center next to the ABCD Child Development Center and the Howell Elementary School cleaned up or relocated. However, attempts by DHAT to work with the owner of Fair Foods were repeatedly rebuffed. WCHC pledged an attempt to meet with the Fair Foods owner to discuss improvements in the site or relocation. Such a meeting was ultimately arranged and over the past six months a close working relationship between WCHC and Fair Foods has developed. Fair Foods is now showing strong interest in relocating to a different site and allowing its current location to be used to help develop the Geneva Avenue "Campus" including new affordable housing, convenience store, pedestrian plaza, and parking. WCHC staff are helping to assess the condition of an identified alternative site and have engaged Fair Foods staff in the design of the campus. Moreover, Fair Foods is now regularly attending DHAT meetings.

- **ABCD Child Development Center Site**

Earlier this year, WCHC staff met with senior staff from Action for Boston Community Development, the city's official anti-poverty agency. ABCD operates a pre-school and child

development center on Geneva Avenue on land adjacent to Fair Foods and near the Holland School. ABCD knew of our work along the street and asked to meet with us to discuss what role the agency could play in helping redevelop the area now designated as the Geneva Avenue “campus.” Based on these meetings, WCHC agreed to have the Collaborative’s full-time coop architecture student design an entire new façade for the building in order to improve its appearance and to better fit in with the other structures planned for the neighborhood. Architectural renderings and a model will be complete for inspection by August 1, 2002. ABCD has initial funding in hand to begin renovation of the façade this fall.

• **Vu Cuong Site**

The site owned by Vu Cuong opposite Fair Foods on Geneva Avenue is not a WCHC project. However, we have been providing some assistance to DHAT in its review of the proposal. The community had been very anxious for him to reduce the number of units, and he is now looking at 10 units or so, down from 14. He is planning market sales prices of \$175,000. Affordable units would be about \$150,000. Members of the group emphasized that they wanted to see adequate yard space for children, adequate parking and egress, and units set back from the sidewalk. The site is extremely challenging and will have a significant effect upon the streetscape of Geneva Avenue.

• **The “Missing Teeth” Project**

One of the results of the Geneva Avenue Visioning Project in the Northeastern Urban Studio class was the suggestion of various ways to deal with “missing teeth” sites in the neighborhood. Some city-owned, some privately-owned, many of these small vacant sites had become at best missing elements in the streetscape, and at worst, eyesores, trashdumps and safety hazards. Historically, these sites had been unattractive to real estate developers because of the cost to develop them. Many community groups had asked WCHC to think about strategies to create housing on these properties.



In early 2002 this activity became a real project when we were approached by Veterans Benefit Clearinghouse Development Corporation, a well-respected and experienced nonprofit developer of affordable housing with services in Roxbury and Dorchester. VBCDC had just completed a scattered-site development in Dorchester and was looking for new opportunities. Virtually at the same time we were meeting with David Galler of the architectural firm of Prellwitz/Chilinski in Cambridge. Galler’s firm is experienced in the design of affordable 2- and 3-family structures and agreed with the WCHC notion that a packaging of many sites together to make one project for financing purposes could go a long way toward feasibly utilizing the “missing-teeth” vacant sites in our target area. Following a meeting of WCHC, VBCDC, and David Galler, Harold Raymond of VBCDC indicated that Veterans Benefit was interested in this type of partnership and that the next step should be a meeting with the City of Boston DND. The goal of the partnership would be the

identification of multiple vacant lots, preferably city-owned, that could be conveyed to VBCDC at little or no cost for the production of up to 100 housing units – many in 2-family structures. VBCDC would, of course, have to respond to an RFP and be selected competitively to develop any city-owned sites.

In May, 2002, several productive meetings were held to brief DND staff on the concept of combining scattered sites into a single development program. Charlotte Golar Richie offered encouragement, and suggested that VBCDC look at the Norwell/Washington Streets area, where the City has several vacant parcels in addition to privately-owned lots. Planning proceeded during May and June, including discussions with local neighborhood residents, the 4 Corners Action Coalition, and Trinity Financial, the developer of a large parcel at Norwell and Washington Streets. All have been supportive of the concept and we look forward to responding to a DND-sponsored RFP in the near future. Of particular interest is the pioneering of cost-saving methods of construction and financing to assure as much affordability as possible.

In the course of these discussions, we have also explored ways in which WCHC/VBCDC could assist the city in its Home Ownership program, administered by Sandra Martin at DND. Under this program, DND makes available City-owned sites for \$1 to eligible families who agree to build their home on the site. We are exploring ways in which the nonprofit VBCDC could take on the burden of homeownership planning and construction and perhaps provide a “turnkey” model of homeownership, hopefully cutting time and costs for the families.

- **Grove Hall Gateway Project**

In November of 2001, the WCHC agreed to work with a number of property owners in Grove Hall to assist them in developing a major mixed-income, mixed-use project that ultimately could include up to 200 units of new housing.

WCHC’s introduction to these projects came out of the City of Boston’s Housing on Main Streets initiative in Grove Hall. WCHC members Eleanor White and Boyce Slayman participated in more focused meetings at the request of property owners Murphy Gregory, Fred Fairfield, and Brother Shear Israel and Walter Little of the Grove Hall Board of Trade. Mr. Gregory, Mr. Fairfield, and Brother Israel are proposing an ambitious project (or projects) of elderly and family housing with ancillary retail and commercial space. The properties they own-- adjoining the Silva Building and going up Warren Avenue from Blue Hill Avenue, and vacant land/storefronts across Warren Avenue from the Silva Building -- if appropriately redeveloped could have a significant impact upon Grove Hall and the surrounding area. These owners, (with the



These owners, (with the

exception of Mr. Fairfield) are not experienced developers. They are, however, committed to providing job opportunities for local residents in both construction and management of the properties, units spanning a range of incomes from affordable through market levels, social amenities and services for future residents (in line with the world-class housing concept), and sensitive architectural treatment that would create a gateway into Grove Hall from the North. Further, they are committed to entering into an active community review process as well. They are very clear, however, in needing assistance in accessing available planning and financing programs and in structuring the kind of community process that they understand is a fundamental part of the world-class housing concept. WCHC is especially enthusiastic about this project because of the market segments it seeks to serve: young professionals who grew up in the community and would like to find quality market rental housing, seniors who are currently living in large single-family homes and would also like to find quality market rental housing, and small low-and moderate-income families for whom affordable rental housing is always a serious concern.

WCHC has agreed to provide assistance to the property owners and work with them to find appropriate professionals and consultants for the project. We have already provided assistance with engaging a lawyer, architect, affordable housing consultant, and property management company. The Collaborative will also assist with contacts with the relevant city agencies. A class of WCHC member Professor Shiawee Yang's in the Northeastern Graduate School of Business has taken on this project as the sole class activity for the Summer term of 2002. Teams of students are developing market and feasibility information, as well as financial pro formas for the affordable housing, retail, and commercial components of the project. The development team seems to be very pleased with the help they have received to date from the Collaborative.

- **Developers' Clinic**

Based on Collaborative discussions with principals in the Grove Hall Gateway project, it became clear that the WCHC could assist neighborhood property owners, contractors, and small scale developers with a clinic on the basics of housing development. The idea for the clinic brought forward such a positive response that the Collaborative quickly developed a three-session, 12-hour program to meet the revealed need.



The developer clinic presented by the WCHC was meant to serve as either a primer or refresher course on inner-city affordable or mixed-income housing development in Boston. The Collaborative brought together an extremely distinguished faculty of experts and practitioners in the field. Our goal was that at the end of the three four-hour sessions participants would have a good grasp of the range of disciplines needed for a successful development, how to access the technical experts, and how to

coordinate an effective development team. The participants/students (totaling approximately 20 people) had a range of experience, although most had not carried out large-scale development to date.

Participants invited and attending the clinic were:

Brother Shear Israel	(Grove Hall property owner)
Murphy Gregory	(Grove Hall property owner)
Fred Fairfield	(Grove Hall property owner)
Harlon Jones	(Potential developer, Grove Hall)
Walter Little	(Potential developer, Grove Hall)
Leslie Lewis	(Grove Hall property owner)
Sister Virginia	(Grove Hall CDC)
Frank Thomas	(Contractor/Developer, Roxbury)
Russ Gibson	(Developer, Roxbury)
Robert George	(Franklin Park Zoo)
Marc Germaine	(Azusa Christian Church)
Faubert Smith	(Grove Hall property owner)
Don Muhammad	(Boston Nation of Islam)
Virginia Parks	(Fields Corner CDC)
Donna Finnegan	(Fields Corner CDC)
George Chen	(Crosswinds Company)
Robert MacArthur	(Crosswinds Company)
Marvin Martin	(Four Corners Action Coalition)
David Wright	(African-American Federation)
Davida Andelman	(Dorchester Open Space and Housing Action Team)
Senesie Kabba	(formerly with the New Vision CDC)
Troy Butell	(New Vision CDC)
Lisa Davis	(Codman Square CDC)

The Clinic was very successful, if we can judge from the reaction of the students. All speakers were interesting and exactly on point, and the participants were fully engaged and very appreciative of the opportunity to attend. They were particularly grateful at the opportunity to ask a lot of questions and get very candid answers from active practitioners in this complicated field. All three sessions in fact went over their allotted time, due to extensive questions and discussion from the audience. We believe that the Clinic has had a very positive effect upon the relationship that WCHC has so far established with the community in Roxbury and Dorchester, as well as with the City of Boston and Fleet (both of which have been represented at these sessions).

At the final session of the Developer Clinic, the attendees requested the following:

1. That we keep them together as a “class” with follow-up, more advanced, sessions
2. That we put on more of these introductory clinics with new groups of participants

3. That we call on them as needed for “testimonials” on the effectiveness of the clinics when dealing with potential funders, etc.

To the extent that WCHC can identify required financial support, we would be interested in conducting more of these developer clinics, both introductory and advanced.

- **Codman Academy**

WCHC was approached in January, 2002 by Meg Campbell, the Head of School and Bill Walczak Board Chairman of the Codman Academy Charter School, currently housed in the Codman Square Health Center in Dorchester, of which Walczak is the CEO. This charter school will begin operations in September, 2002 with a 9th grade class, many of whom live in the WCHC target area. The plan is to add one grade per year until Codman Academy is a full 4-year high school. They asked if WCHC could provide help in locating a permanent home for the school and perhaps lending assistance in the development and relocation process. At the top of their list is a City-owned building at 305 Talbot Street. The building, currently in very poor condition and a blighting influence on the neighborhood, is around the corner from the Health Center. As a result of initial discussions between WCHC and DND, the Academy is engaged in an extensive community process to enlist community support for this concept. Since the City currently has alternative plans for this building, this attempt will be challenging. Nonetheless, we feel that the community process will be a healthy one and may raise other possibilities for the Academy.

- **Research and Evaluation**

Members of the Collaborative have collected a variety of data on the Geneva Avenue-Bowdoin-Washington Street “triangle” area including land maps showing vacant, city-owned, and BRA-owned parcels and zoning maps for the WCHC development area. The BRA and the DND have prepared special maps for the WCHC to our specifications. The Collaborative has also amassed demographic information on several neighborhoods, detailing socio-economic characteristics based on census data and neighborhood studies. An inclusive database of university-community partnership projects, comparable world class housing models, and local financing options is underway building on the knowledge and experience of collaborative members, as well as primary research by staff and interns at the Center for Urban and Regional Policy. The Collaborative is working to catalogue all current city and local development projects in the area, and their stage of development, drawing from city records and conversations with local developers, and community groups. Finally, the Collaborative is amassing all of the reports and strategic plans that pertain to the Roxbury development area.

- **Fundraising**

Two members of the Collaborative, Barry Bluestone and Eleanor White, have been involved in raising additional funds to support the work of the WCHC. During the past six months, we were extremely pleased to receive additional financial support from FleetBoston

Financial, who remains our biggest sponsor. The Northeastern University Development Office has offered support in the effort to find additional sponsors. Currently, several Boston-area foundations, corporations, and individual families are reviewing the WCHC proposal.

Fundraising meetings and discussions have been held with:

Jack Manning & Richard DeAgazio, Boston Capital, Inc.
Charlotte Kahn, Boston Foundation
Carey Shea, Surdna Foundation
Michael Glavin & William Fenton, FleetBoston Financial
Robin Drill, Fannie Mae Corporation
Jeffrey Sacks, Brown, Rudnick, Freed & Gesmer
Matt Thal, Local Initiatives Support Corporation

Continued fundraising activities will be needed to assure sufficient funds to maintain the high level of effort put forward by the WCHC and to bring to fruition the major projects now underway.