

McDonough Homes Modernization FACT SHEET



ABOUT THE ST. PAUL PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY

- Serves over 20,000 St. Paul residents
- Owns and manages 4,248 public housing units
- Achieved “High Performer” status under HUD’s Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) for the 20th consecutive year in FY 2010
- Attained a 100% resident satisfaction rating on work orders in FY 2011



The St. Paul Public Housing Agency (PHA) has invested \$37 million over nine years to modernize the 580 family townhome-style apartments at McDonough Homes, to preserve them for future generations of low-income families. Funding included \$25 million from HUD’s Capital Fund Program, \$3 million from selling PHA scattered site homes and \$9 million from an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) grant. No local, state or borrowed funds were used to complete the work. McDonough Homes maintained 99% occupancy throughout the modernization.

Summary of McDonough Homes Modernization

Located north of downtown St. Paul, the John J. McDonough Homes development has 580 multi-bedroom units in 123 two-story buildings on a 70-acre tract, with mature trees and lawns surrounding the residences.

The PHA built the original 484 townhome-style apartments and the community center in 1952. Despite some renovations in the 1970’s and ‘80’s, their appearance was monotonous and by 2000 the buildings were showing signs of wear. Plumbing and light fixtures were reaching the end of their useful life. Now all 484 original units have been

renovated inside and out, and the exteriors of 96 other townhomes added in the 1960’s were also upgraded.

The site work enhanced the safety and the quality of life of the residents. Mechanical and electrical systems were updated, storm water drainage was improved and more parking and street lights were installed. Handicapped accessibility was also improved.

Fortunately, the good design and solid construction of the original units, the attractive site and the quality of the surrounding area formed a good

foundation for the modernization and insured the future viability of the site.

Master Plan. The PHA hired Adsit/Schrock DeVetter Joint Venture in 2001 to create a Master Plan for the modernization. Focus groups generated advice and support from residents, maintenance and management staff, service providers and police officers from the ACOP community policing program. The St. Paul Zoning Committee,

Department of Safety & Inspections, Police Department and Fire Marshal each provided guidance that shaped the final scope of work.

Communication With Residents. The PHA and the design team held open houses and community meetings, with interpreters present. Staff created a video in two languages to explain the work. The designers provided samples of materials and drawings to help residents

understand the planned improvements in and around their homes.

Maintaining Site Occupancy. A maximum of eight McDonough Homes units (“hotels”) were held off the rental rolls for temporary relocations. These “hotel” units were used to house each family for 28 calendar days while the interior work at their apartment was completed.

Outcomes

Resident Satisfaction. Residents are delighted with their renovated homes as shown by comments like these:

- “McDonough Homes is safe and beautiful. My friends tell me it does not look like public housing.”
- “I like to spend time on my porch and talk to people.”



(Before)

Above:
McDonough Homes
before modernization

At left and right:
McDonough Homes
after modernization



- “The kitchen has plenty of work space and storage.”

Safety. St. Paul Police Officers from ACOP are also very pleased with the public safety improvements:

- Relocating play lots, increasing site lighting and street access all make the site safer and easier to patrol.
- New parking lots resolved longstanding parking issues.

PHA Maintenance and Operations.

Vandalism and graffiti have decreased. Maintenance calls are less frequent. Replacing all of the plumbing supply and waste lines and fixtures has reduced emergency calls. Vacant units can be prepared quickly for rental because of the fresh paint, new cabinetry, doors and fixtures.

Step Up Program. Thanks to the willingness of the contractors to provide apprenticeship opportunities, five residents were able to develop new job skills while earning paychecks.

Financial. The average per-dwelling-unit cost for the extensive modernization of the 484 original units was \$73,750. The exterior modernization of the 96 newer residences cost \$13,600 per unit. ARRA funding shortened the project schedule,

saving three years of inflation and general condition costs. New construction of a similar number of townhomes would have cost more than twice as much as modernizing them.



PROJECT DETAILS

Interior Renovation:

- Replaced interior finishes: cabinetry, doors, flooring and paint
- Installed new lighting
- Upgraded electrical and plumbing systems

Exterior Renovation:

- Varied the color and exterior detailing of buildings
- Changed flat roofs to pitched roof construction
- Replaced high-maintenance exterior materials

Site Modernization:

- Expanded parking options
- Streamlined traffic circulation
- Installed light fixtures for improved security
- Replaced broken sidewalks
- Improved overland drainage to eliminate wet basements
- Replaced trees and sod

Below:
McDonough Homes
before and after modernization

At right:
McDonough Homes
interior modernization work



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