

## **General Overview of the Reese Davidson Community (Most Asked Questions)**

### **What is affordable and supportive housing?**

Affordable housing generally serves people earning less than 60% of the area median income (AMI) in Los Angeles County, and can further target individuals or families, seniors, artists, and others. Supportive housing is a category within affordable housing, where tenants are homeless at the time they move in, and can include or target families or individuals, veterans, transition aged youth (TAY), people with disabilities and/or serious health conditions, or people who have been homeless for a very long time (“chronically” homeless). Supportive housing has a higher level of on-site services, to support people in maintaining housing long-term, having access to meaningful opportunities, and contributing to their communities. All residents in affordable and supportive housing are tenants, with legal tenant rights and responsibilities.

### **What is proposed for the Reese Davidson Community?**

Reese Davidson Community (RDC) will include 140 apartments for low-income households as detailed below. The beautifully designed site, co-developed by Venice Community Housing and Hollywood Community Housing (VCH/HCH), will greatly enhance the existing surface parking lot and surrounding area as well as provide much needed housing. On-site, trained professional staff will provide social services to the residents of RDC, property management, and general oversight of the properties. In addition to housing, there will be open space, the Gregory Hines Community Arts Center, community meeting rooms, small-scale retail, public parking and resident parking.

Specifically, our proposal includes:

- 140 total apartments
  - 68 supportive housing apartments, home to those who have experienced homelessness
  - 34 apartments for low-income artists
  - 34 apartments for low-income households
  - 4 apartments for staff living on site, providing 24-hour staffing to ensure high quality, healthy and safe buildings
- Office space for 4 additional on-site staff to provide support and social services directly to tenants
- 3 community rooms for tenant services, recreational opportunities, and community meetings upon request/reservation
- 1 flexible community arts space
- 3 to 4 community-serving retail spaces

### **Where is it and who owns it?**

The proposed development will be located on a City-owned parking lot located between North and South Venice Boulevards, and Dell and Pacific Avenues (excluding 3 private properties on the northeast corner of the site). The parking lot is part of a larger effort by the City of Los Angeles to better utilize public property and address its housing crisis. The City will retain ownership of this site and will enter into a ground lease with the development team. VCH/HCH were selected, in a competitive bid process initiated by the City in 2016, to pursue approvals for an affordable and supportive housing development on the site.

### **How will the Reese Davidson Community be staffed?**

There will be 8 full-time, on-site professional staff, including four case managers as the main social service point person for tenants and they will have offices on site. The other four members of the staff will occupy apartments set-aside for on-site personnel. VCH/HCH will be responsible for the management of the building and the overall provision of services, and additional staffing and supervision will be provided to the site as required. The property will have 24-7 onsite staff.

### **How does the proposal enhance the site and community?**

The current site is a public parking lot, closed at night, and lacks lighting, 24-hour staffing, and any other amenities. The Reese Davidson Community will preserve and improve the existing public parking, but also provide much-needed housing, a community arts center with flexible design for multiple uses, community meeting rooms, open space, green space, wide and well-lit sidewalks, community-serving retail, and other improvements. It will also create a unique and inviting environment for the public to enjoy.

### **Why should we build on this site instead of others, or in less expensive communities?**

We can and should do both. Affordable and supportive housing are primarily being built in other communities. There are more than 8,000 permanent supportive housing units (PSH) operating Countywide, and only 42 units, or 0.5%, are in Venice. In other Westside communities, Santa Monica has more than 350 PSH units, Del Rey has at least 85 PSH units, and more than 1200 units are existing and planned on the VA campus near Brentwood. However, the large majority of PSH units have been produced in communities in Downtown Los Angeles, South Los Angeles, and the Valley. There hasn't been significant affordable housing production in Venice since the 1990s. The City-owned land program allows for housing to be built in all neighborhoods, which makes sense because every community is negatively impacted by the lack of affordable housing and the rise in homelessness.

### **What happens to the current public parking spots?**

The redevelopment plans for the site include a 1-for-1 replacement of the current public parking and a possible increase in the amount of public parking. Additional parking will be

provided for residents and commercial uses. Parking garages will be built on both sides of the canal, and surrounded by the housing to enhance the pedestrian experience and the vitality of this block.

### **What types and sizes of units will be included?**

The proposed units include:

- 34 artist lofts, averaging 400 square feet
- 51 studio apartments, averaging 300 square feet
- 32 one bedroom apartments, averaging 540 square feet
- 23 two bedroom apartments, averaging 785 square feet

The proposed square footage of all units is at or just above the minimums required by affordable housing funding sources.

### **How will Reese Davidson Community be approved and what is the status of that process?**

In December 2016, the City approved the Venice-Dell-Pacific site to be included in its Affordable Housing Opportunity Sites Program, and selected VCH/HCH to pursue an affordable and permanent supportive housing development on the site. The City's program also requires that any development proposal include the provision of public parking spaces in an amount equal to the current public spaces provided on the surface lots. In January 2017, the City and VCH/HCH entered into an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement (ENA) for the site.

Starting in July 2018, it is anticipated that an application will be submitted to the City and the process to approve the development proposal for RDC will begin. After the application is filed with the City, we will provide a detailed timeline.

### **How will be people be able to apply for and/or referred for housing at Reese Davidson?**

Application procedures will be announced later in the development process, and will include specific steps for low-income artists and other low-income households. Units designated for people who are currently homeless will be filled through the Coordinated Entry System (CES) for the County's Service Planning Area 5 (Westside communities), so individuals and families should ensure they have completed the process to be in that system. Individual questions about application procedures will be answered at [ReeseDavidson@vchcorp.org](mailto:ReeseDavidson@vchcorp.org).

### **What is the square footage of the proposed development and each of its components?**

As of now, the designs include the following:

- Housing: 69,775 square feet
- Offices for on-site staff: 685 square feet
- Community-Serving Retail: 4,565 square feet
- Community Art Space: 3,155 square feet
- Public Parking: At least 188 public parking spaces will be provided in a new structure.

- Residential/Commercial Parking: In a separate structure, residential and commercial parking will be provided to accommodate the Reese Davidson Community

**Will the development seek to use the new Permanent Supportive Housing Ordinance to streamline approvals?**

No. The site does not qualify for streamlined approvals or other benefits under the new PSH Ordinance.

**Is this the most efficient use of funds? Are there better alternatives?**

Based on substantive research over the past decade, development of permanent supportive housing is a cost effective intervention that saves local governments money and successfully ends homelessness for most. There are also other cost-effective programs and interventions, but the development of new supportive housing units has been extremely limited in the past decade and more and is greatly needed to supplement other programs in Los Angeles in order to end homelessness.

**Who are Reese and Davidson?**

Venice Community Housing and Hollywood Community Housing decided to name the development in honor of two amazing leaders who were instrumental in building and maintaining a diverse, inclusive and innovative community in Venice.

Arthur Reese was a community leader and Venice resident from 1905-1963. As a decorator, inventor, entrepreneur and more, he contributed substantially to the history, culture, vibrancy and diversity in Venice. Reese is among the founders of Venice and was the first African American homeowner in the neighborhood.

Rick Davidson was a community leader and Venice resident from 1961-1999. As an advocate, architect, poet and more, he worked tirelessly toward a more equitable Venice, region and world. Davidson is one of the founders of Venice Community Housing.

**How can people get involved with the look and feel of the buildings and open spaces?**

Venice Community Housing will be convening meetings focused on aesthetics, public art possibilities, and other ideas for ensuring welcoming and safe spaces, as well as other things that create a good fit for Venice, after the application for land use changes is submitted to the City.

For involvement in the overall development approval process, there will be public meetings and hearings. An approximate schedule will be shared after the application is filed with the City.

## **Services and Supports for Tenants**

**What social services that you know of will have to be on site for the chronically homeless? Please be specific.**

There will be four on-site case managers and a 24-hour crisis response system. The case managers work with tenants to identify actions and services that can improve their health, mental health, and address other needs and goals as well as ensure their housing stability. Community partners will also provide services on site to provide a comprehensive and accessible service approach for tenants. Also, the case managers connect people to off-site services they may need such as health care, food assistance, and others. For the proposed Reese Davidson Community (RDC), we will create a detailed service plan once the size of the project is determined and the specific groups of people to be housed are identified. We will share that as part of the project proposal.

**Will these services be available to any homeless person in the area regardless of whether they have housing at the site?**

The services provided onsite will be for formerly homeless tenants and other low-income tenants who are residents of RDC.

**Is food/nutrition included in social services for supportive housing or other tenants?**

Yes, food and nutrition resources will be included in the social services collaborative. Examples are food pantries, community gardens and kitchens, nutrition workshops, weekly transportation to grocery stores, Meals on Wheels services, and others. We are also looking into how the social enterprise/retail on site could meet food and nutrition needs for people with low income levels.

**Who funds the supportive services provided in supportive housing?**

A large variety of public and private funding sources, including the LA County Departments of Health and Mental Health and private foundations. The County's Measure H funds, from the March 2017 ballot measure to raise sales tax by ¼ cent to fund services in permanent supportive housing (PSH), is another funding source for supportive services.

**Is there a possibility that there won't be services provided at this site because Proposition HHH can only fund construction of units, not social services?**

No. Proposition HHH created a dedicated source of funds in the City of Los Angeles for the capital costs of constructing supportive housing. But supportive housing is funded by multiple sources, which are blended together to ensure funding for both construction and ongoing staffing needs and services for tenants in the building. Measure H, passed by County voters in 2017, provides funding for services for homeless and formerly homeless residents living in

supportive housing. The Reese Davidson Community has a letter of commitment for supportive services funding from Los Angeles County.

### **City of Los Angeles Actions and Processes**

#### **What Has Not Been Approved by the City?**

The City has not approved the specific development proposal. The final project proposal will be submitted to initiate the City approval process and it will have to be approved through all of the regular public approval processes with the Planning Commission and City Council, as well as separately with the State's Coastal Commission. Once the application is filed, it will be available on this website.

#### **Will the Site be Developed as a Homeless Shelter?**

No. The City's program requires the development of affordable and/or supportive housing which is permanent housing where each household enters into a standard lease agreement, pays rent and abides by house rules

#### **What was the process for selecting VCH and HCH to develop this property?**

The City Administrative Officer (CAO) released a Request for Qualifications/Proposals (RFQ/P) and VCH and HCH submitted a proposal as co-developers of the site. From the CAO's public report, "The five-member Selection Panel for the RFQ/P consisted of four City staff and one non-City staff engaged in housing work. City staff consisted of representatives from the CAO, CLA, HCID, and the Department of City Planning (DCP). The non-City panelist was from the County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office (County CEO) Homeless Initiative." The public documents and meetings related to the RFQ/P are available here: <https://cityclerk.lacity.org/lacityclerkconnect/index.cfm?fa=ccfi.viewrecord&cfnumber=16-0600-S145>

#### **Will the existing public boat access and access to the City maintenance contractor be maintained in the canal?**

Yes, both will be maintained, including the required parking for both. The exact layout and logistics have not yet been determined, but will be incorporated into the final design.

### **Parking**

#### **Where will beach-goers park?**

All existing public parking on the surface lots will be replaced on a one-to-one basis in a new public parking structure. Beach-goers will have access to the same number of parking spaces, if not more.

## **Building Operations**

### **Will tenants be referred through the County's Coordinated Entry System (CES)?**

For the 68 supportive housing units, referrals will be received through the Service Planning Area 5 CES system.

**What are the boundaries for Service Planning Area (SPA) 5?** SPA 5 serves the communities of Beverly Hills, Brentwood, Culver City, Malibu, Pacific Palisades, Playa del Rey, Santa Monica, and Venice. The website is here: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/CHS/SPA5/index.htm>.

### **How Does the County's Coordinated Entry System (CES) Work?**

The CES system created centralized wait lists for permanent supportive housing throughout LA County. Although the CES system is Countywide, the wait lists are regional. This site is in Service Planning Area 5 (SPA 5), and therefore would receive referrals for permanent supportive housing tenants from the SPA 5 wait list, which includes people who are currently without housing and living in Westside communities. CES is not one Countywide wait/referral list.

### **What are the specific groups of people that housing units can be legally dedicated for, both in affordable housing and supportive housing?**

Supportive housing provides affordable housing with wrap around social services to formerly homeless individuals and families. Under current regulations, supportive housing units can be specifically dedicated for the following groups: chronically homeless people, people with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, people with or families including a person with mental illness, people with chronic health conditions who are high utilizers of the County health system, seniors, transition aged youth, Veterans and families.

\*Note: Chronically homeless refers to individuals or heads of household that have a disabling condition and have been homeless continuously for at least 12 months or on at least four occasions in the last three years, where the combined time of occasions is at least 12 months.

Affordable housing generally serves individuals and families with incomes at or below 60% of the area median income (AMI) for Los Angeles. Under current regulations, affordable housing units can be specifically dedicated for the following groups: extremely low-income (household income below 30% of AMI), very low-income (household income below 50% of AMI), low-income (households earning up to 60% of AMI), seniors, families, and artists.

### **How many units will be rented and how many will be free?**

Affordable and supportive housing is planned for this site. All affordable and supportive housing units are rented by low-income tenants, none are free.

**What percentage or number of units could be set-aside for a master lease with Venice-specific outreach teams, as a method to target Venice street dwellers for this housing?**

We don't have a percentage or number for the master lease idea yet, as we are researching that piece of the project and that decision would be made much later in the development process. We are committed to pursuing this option.

**How is a disruptive tenant evicted?**

Both VCH and HCH occasionally have to evict tenants that are negatively impacting the peaceful enjoyment of the building for others, or otherwise violate their lease. We follow required legal procedures and engage outside counsel to ensure that we follow the relevant laws and ordinances.

**Is Reese Davidson a new property? How do I apply?**

Yes, this will be a new property. Application procedures will be announced later in the development process, after construction begins, and will include specific steps for low-income artists and other low-income households. Units designated for people who are currently homeless will be filled through the Coordinated Entry System, so individuals and families should ensure they have completed the process to be in that system. Individual questions about application procedures can be submitted to [reesedavidson@vchcorp.org](mailto:reesedavidson@vchcorp.org).

**Where can we find information about the impacts and success rates of permanent supportive housing?**

The Corporation for Supportive Housing has published studies, research results and other information available online at [www.csh.org](http://www.csh.org).

**Community Context**

**Will the rents be subsidized at the current market rate in Venice? What are the specific rent and income limits for affordable and supportive housing units?**

No, the rents will not be subsidized at the current market rate in Venice. The maximum rents are set Citywide and Countywide by the government funding programs. For example, the maximum rent that can be collected on a 2-bedroom unit intended to house a family making 50% of the area median income is about \$900 – no matter if the unit is built in Venice or in Lancaster. As another example, the City's Housing Authority only subsidizes an individual household's rent for a 1 bedroom unit up to a maximum of \$1,300, no matter the neighborhood. No government funds would be allowed to subsidize rents at anywhere near the current market rent for vacant units in Venice.

In affordable and supportive housing, there is a maximum rent that can be charged for an apartment and a corresponding maximum income for all members of a household residing in that apartment. The maximum rents that can be collected are set Citywide and Countywide by

the government funding programs. For example, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) is a key source of financing for affordable rental housing. Each year a state agency, the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee (TCAC), publishes maximum incomes for the residents (income limits) and maximum rents the landlord may charge (rent limits).

Most recent maximum income limits are

here: <http://www.treasurer.ca.gov/ctcac/rentincome/16/income/post20160328.pdf>

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### **How many affordable and permanent supportive housing units does Venice Community Housing have in Venice now?**

Venice Community Housing owns and operates 93 affordable and permanent supportive housing units in Venice. Of those, 43 are general affordable housing, 42 are permanent supportive housing, and 8 are crisis housing units for homeless families. Venice Community Housing owns and operates an additional 123 affordable and permanent supportive housing units in the Mar Vista and Del Rey communities.

### **Why not just buy existing apartments or motels and house homeless people there?**

Both VCH and HCH, as well as many other non-profit organizations, can and do renovate apartments and motels to create PSH when the circumstances warrant such an approach, however, there are some practical obstacles to consider. For example, we cannot pay more than fair market value for a property and many owners of multifamily properties and motels are not interested in selling because they either want above market prices today or they want to sell in the future when property values have reached new heights. Secondly, vacancy rates are very low in multifamily properties and it is problematic to displace existing households so that their unit can be renovated and re-rented to a formerly homeless household. Existing buildings will continue to be purchased and renovated by affordable housing developers, but, as stated above, this must happen in conjunction with the development of brand new units in order to address LA's severe housing shortage.

### **Why should we spend so much money on constructing new permanent supportive housing?**

Multiple studies have shown that the funds spent to create and operate new permanent supportive housing actually save governments money, as it costs more in emergency health care, arrests or jail stays, emergency shelters and other public costs of people remaining homeless. Additionally, there is a severe housing shortage at most all income levels in the City of Los Angeles, especially at the lowest income levels. We can and do provide public funds and social service support for homeless people to move into existing housing, but the housing stock is too limited to be able to house everyone by this method. Even people with Section 8 vouchers have a hard time finding available housing, often facing the expiration of their

voucher and remaining homeless. We need to build more homes and use the existing housing stock to address homelessness, and this approach saves Los Angeles money in the long run.

## **Design and Layout**

### **What has changed from your original concept submitted to the City?**

To date, several changes or additions have been made, based on community input and further investigation of the site and best practices. These include, but are not limited to: a slight reduction in the total number of units; supportive housing serving families in addition to individuals; a change in unit mix from all 1 bedrooms to a mix of studios and 1 and 2 bedroom units; the inclusion of low-income artist housing and community arts space; ground floor usage East of the canal to incorporate live-work space for artists and contribute to sidewalk activation and safety; the inclusion of social enterprise/job training as a part of the community-serving retail; isolating public parking primarily on the East side of the canal instead of mixing parking uses on both sides; site layout and design elements that respond to heavy traffic in the area; a focus on innovative tools to prioritize people currently homeless in Venice while adhering to fair housing regulation; incorporating and prioritizing shared space and shared uses between tenants and the larger community(ies); limiting the height of buildings and providing a varied roofline; multi-level landscape features with an increased focus on ground-level green space; creating wider setbacks between the sidewalks and buildings; providing 24-hour staffing; exploring public art components for the property and buildings; and enhancing the social service plan.

### **Will units for people with disabilities be included at this site?**

Yes. At a minimum, we will provide a specific number of units that are fully accessible, along with accessible common areas, as required by law. We are also likely to use funding for development and/or rental subsidies that further target and/or prioritize people with disabilities, such as the new No Place Like Home state funds, the County's Housing for Health program, and others. However, we are not yet at the point of financing the project, so the specifics of the populations to be served aren't yet known. We will provide updates as we go through the process, but it is certain that people with disabilities will be served by this project.

Updated as of June 1, 2018 to include most recent information and to remove Q&A no longer relevant. Please submit or resubmit questions, as needed, to [ReeseDavidson@vchcorp.org](mailto:ReeseDavidson@vchcorp.org)