

# New Columbia

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IN NORTH PORTLAND'S PORTSMOUTH NEIGHBORHOOD

## New Columbia Fact Sheet

### Background

- The Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) has been the primary provider of low-income housing in Multnomah County since its inception in 1941. Currently, HAP provides more than 6,400 units of rental housing and administers more than 7,800 Section 8 rental subsidy vouchers.
- The former Columbia Villa public housing community, located in the Portsmouth neighborhood of North Portland, was built in 1942 for World War II defense workers. At the start of relocation, Columbia Villa was home to almost 1,300 residents who lived in 462 units scattered over 82 acres.
- In 1993, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) created funding, in the form of HOPE VI grants, to revitalize the country's aging public housing.
- In late 2001, after a twelve-month process to prepare an application for the highly competitive grants, HUD notified HAP that it had been awarded a \$35 million HOPE VI grant that has served as the anchor for the \$153 million investment in New Columbia.
- In June 2002, HUD and HAP signed the \$35 million grant agreement adopting the project schedule.

### Project Goals

New Columbia will create an improved and viable neighborhood of diverse housing types and residents by concentrating on four principles:

- Replacing unattractive, impersonal, barracks-style buildings with townhouses, garden-style apartments and single-family dwellings that blend aesthetically into the environment
- Reducing the concentration of poverty in the former Columbia Villa by building a neighborhood of varied types of housing, rented and owned, to attract economically diverse residents
- Providing services to residents to increase their skills through education and training, leading to better employment while building assets and equity in the community
- Establishing and maintaining high standards of personal and community responsibility through explicit lease requirements and home ownership.

## **Housing Mix**

The housing mix of 852 units on the New Columbia site will include public housing, affordable rental housing, elderly housing and homes for sale.

In addition to new parks, public facilities will include community centers, recreational facilities, day care, and adult learning centers. An additional 92 public housing units will be built off-site to help lessen concentrations and make sure that there is no net loss of public housing in the city.

## **Economic and Community Benefits**

While pursuing the project goals that HAP has identified, the project will also have a positive impact on the local economy. The expenditure of \$100 million on construction and construction-related activities creates jobs and economic opportunities for local businesses, including minority and women-owned firms. Further, the market rate homeownership aspects of New Columbia will result in a net increase in the property tax receipts currently derived from this 82 acre-site.

## **Project Timeline**

- In April 2003, HAP began, at its own expense, relocating residents, offering them a choice of other public housing or Section 8 rent vouchers. Each household will receive extensive assistance and ongoing supportive services for 42 months.
- Construction began in December of 2003 and is expected to last three years. HAP has worked with residents, Portsmouth neighbors, and its many partners on a final plan for the development.
- Former and new residents will begin returning to New Columbia in May 2005 when the first phase of residential buildings is complete.
- HAP is serving as master developer, working with an array of government, financial, and community partners and is creating economic development opportunities by encouraging participation by local businesses in all phases of the work.
- A Community Advisory Committee and associated task forces are the key link between the project and the public as project plans are finalized. The CAC started meeting monthly in July 2002 and transitioned to quarterly meetings in January 2004 in order to review and discuss different aspects of the project. Minutes of these meetings are posted on the New Columbia website at <http://www.hapdx.org/newcolumbia/>

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