

Building More Than Just Homes: Transformative Revitalization

Rhode Island Housing
Special Achievement

HFA Staff Contact

HeeJin Kim

hkim@rihousing.com

Overview

In March 2018, after years of systematic disinvestment, mismanagement, and deferred maintenance in one of Upper South Providence's best-known affordable housing developments, HUD foreclosed on the deteriorated Barbara Jordan II complex. RIHousing, recognizing the importance of this development to the neighborhood and the city, stepped in and took over the blighted 74-unit development on 2.75 acres, with the goal of bringing all the agency's tools to bear on efforts to preserve the property. RIHousing spearheaded a community-centered redevelopment process and in April 2022, Omni Development Corporation broke ground on the future Jordan Caffey Townhomes and Joseph Caffey Apartments. This new development reflects the collective vision of community members, neighborhood groups, non-profit organizations, public and private investors, and elected officials and will serve residents at a range of incomes.

Upper South Providence's Story

From the 1960s to 80s, Upper South Providence was a lively neighborhood with working class and immigrant residents. An increasing trend of suburbanization coupled with the rising use of automobiles caused many residents to move outside of the neighborhood. At the same time, unemployment doubled as manufacturing jobs also moved out of the city. Crime and arson increased, causing a loss of businesses and housing. As a result, investment in the neighborhood dwindled.

In the past few decades, the City of Providence and community developers made efforts to revitalize the neighborhood by improving the streetscapes and rehabilitating homes, leading to an increase in families and businesses returning to the area. However, there was a notable exception: the Barbara Jordan II housing development. Developed in the 1980s on vacant, trash-filled lots in the neighborhood, the then-aspirational development added 74 apartments in 26 buildings scattered across Upper South Providence. As years passed, the development declined due to mismanagement and neglect, leaving the property severely distressed. It lacked sidewalks and landscaping, became a dumping ground for waste, and was the site of regular criminal activities.

After multiple interventions, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development foreclosed on Barbara Jordan II's original owners in 2018 and ownership was transferred to RIHousing. This was only the third time in RIHousing's history that the Agency took title to real estate and the transaction required our legal team to navigate complicated issues involving title, taxes, and code violations.

Upon taking ownership, RIHousing performed an extensive survey to assess the structural damage, health hazards, and utility issues and immediately began work on stabilization activities, taking full advantage of the Agency's technical expertise and experience. The Loan Servicing Division began securing the property from trespassing and dumping, particularly of tires. Perimeter fences were erected, debris was removed, and a third-party vendor was hired to monitor the development. Outreach was conducted to address the immediate needs of abutters and for 2+ years RIHousing worked to maintain the property as legal hurdles were addressed and a new owner/developer was identified.

It Takes a Village

RIHousing felt strongly that a multi-pronged community engagement effort was needed to ensure the redevelopment of Barbara Jordan II into safe, quality housing that would be responsive to the community's needs and preferences.

From July 2018 to March 2019, an eight-month community engagement process took place which enabled Upper South Providence residents to share their feedback on the former development, their lived experiences in the neighborhood, and what they wanted to see moving forward. These actions built trust, alleviated concerns of gentrification and displacement, and helped residents understand RIHousing's commitment to creating housing that would meet the needs of both the existing residents and the community moving forward.

Key principles guided the effort:

- Engage in a meaningful dialogue about how the redevelopment could improve the community.
- Develop a vision that will improve the quality of life for current and future residents.
- Prepare a Developer Request for Proposal that incorporates feedback from the Community Engagement Process. And,
- Solicit a Developer to successfully implement the redevelopment of Barbara Jordan II.

Two consulting firms experienced in community engagement, urban design and planning assisted in actualizing design concepts based on the feedback.

Five community meetings were held. These meetings were conducted in both English and Spanish and included presentations, group discussions, polls, and hands-on activities.

Twelve one-on-one interviews with key community stakeholders allowed for a more in-depth opportunity to incorporate feedback from those working day to day in the community.

A steering committee brought community organizations and leaders together, including residents, property owners, service providers and public officials to help guide the engagement process and provide key feedback.

Lastly, RIHousing engaged two community stakeholders and Community Liaisons. These paid community liaisons served as a bridge between RIHousing and the community. We also engaged high school students as "leaders-in-training" for community engagement activities with youth to ensure their voices were heard.

We understood that the success of the redevelopment effort relied on building a trusted partnership with the community that gave residents a sense of ownership in the process.

See Attachment for the full timeline and details of the engagement process.

From Feedback to Reality

With each community engagement event, consistent themes regarding the development emerged. These included: emphasis on the importance of catering to a diverse range of incomes; involvement of stakeholders throughout the planning and development process; and ways to increase economic activity or employment of residents.

Many residents noted that the major challenges for redevelopment would be increasing civic capacity to drive change, the threat of crime, and funding sources available to sustain the revitalized area. Specifically, participants desired an increase in the number of units, addition of open spaces, sidewalks, safety features and on-site service providers, all of which were previously lacking.

By the end of the engagement process, a 34-page report, the Barbara Jordan II Community Engagement Summary Report was published. The information in this report was used to craft the Request for Proposals (RFP).

The RFP echoed many of the community concerns. It required that at a minimum, the proposal provide a one-for-one replacement of existing units and that the units must be affordable for incomes at or below 80% of the Area Median Income, enforced by a 30-year deed restriction. This answered key community concerns regarding units not being available to very low-income families. The proposal also encouraged up to 50% participation of minority and women-owned construction firms, to provide opportunities to local contractors.

Developers were required to have experience in community engagement and relationship building, rehabilitating troubled properties, and constructing mixed-income or mixed-use developments. Applicants were encouraged to review the feedback from residents contained in the Barbara Jordan II Community Engagement Summary Report to help ensure their proposals aligned with community needs.

In Spring 2020, four eligible project proposals were reviewed by a Selection Committee comprised of representatives from RIHousing, the City of Providence, and other local and state organizations. Several members of the Selection Committee were participants in the community engagement process. The selected developer was also approved by the RIHousing Board of Commissioners and HUD.

The winning proposal outlined the demolition of all existing structures to construct the Jordan Caffey Townhomes (JCT) and Joseph Caffey Apartments (JCA), an affordable 79-unit development spread across 11 buildings. JCA would be a 54-unit four-story building making room for a city block of open space, while the remaining JCT units would be housed in 10 townhouse buildings. A later phase will add 4 homeownership units available for residents earning up to 100% AMI. The remainder will be affordable rental units restricted to households earning between 30% and 80% AMI. RIHousing awarded \$27.5 million dollars in financing (includes tax credit equity) to this project and despite setbacks from the COVID-19 pandemic and supply chain issues, construction began in early 2022. The JCT portion of the development came online in 2022. The JCA development is projected to be complete by Spring 2024.

Building a Future

The redevelopment of Barbara Jordan II into the Jordan Caffey Townhomes and Joseph Caffey Apartments exemplifies our mission to build not just homes, but communities that support and connect their residents. This was a multi-divisional effort, with additional collaboration from consultants and community partners, with the most critical input provided by the community that surrounds the development and the residents that will live there.

The result of these efforts is a development that will not only be affordable but create conditions for residents to succeed. Families will have access to amenities such as resident services, green and open spaces, and community areas. Planned streetscape and green improvements will dramatically alter the perception of the neighborhood from street level. The development builds upon existing community assets such as social service agencies, faith-based organizations, and local schools. The process was public and transparent and was well documented using a dedicated [web page](#). RIHousing sees this as a model that can work for future developments – both preservation and new buildings – to ensure we are listening to and meeting the community's needs.

Community Engagement Timeline and Materials

<u>Stakeholder Kick-Off Meeting</u>	July 23, 2018
<u>Community Meeting 1 – Presentation</u>	August 27, 2018
<u>Community Meeting 1</u>	August 27, 2018
<u>Steering Committee 1</u>	September 17, 2018
<u>Community Meeting 2</u>	October 15, 2018
<u>Steering Committee 2</u>	October 16, 2018
<u>Community Meeting 3 – Presentation</u>	January 14 & 16, 2019
<u>Community & Youth Engagement Meeting 3</u>	January 14 & 16, 2019
<u>Community Report Back Meeting</u>	March 11, 2019

Community Engagement Sessions - Photos





What is Barbara Jordan II?

Barbara Jordan II is a housing redevelopment project in Upper South Providence which includes 26 two- and three-story apartment buildings situated on scattered sites totaling 2.75 acres. The 26 buildings contain a total of 74 apartments, all of which are currently vacant. After years of neglect and mismanagement, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) finalized a foreclosure of the Barbara Jordan II housing development and RIHousing was transferred ownership in June 2018.

Overall community engagement goals:

1. Engage in a meaningful dialogue about how the redevelopment of Barbara Jordan II properties could improve the community.
2. Develop a vision that will improve the quality of life for future residents, as well as current residents of Upper South Providence.
3. Prepare a Developer Request for Proposals (RFP) that incorporates feedback from the Community Engagement Process.
4. Solicit a Developer to successfully implement the redevelopment of Barbara Jordan II.

Housing Related Feedback from the Community

Several concerns were consistently shared throughout the engagement process. A comprehensive list of all housing-related feedback can be found in the Barbara Jordan II Community Engagement Report located at rihousing.com/BarbaraJordan2.

This report will be shared with the RFP to ensure developers take all feedback into consideration.

1 What We Heard: Concerns the redeveloped Barbara Jordan II will have rents too high for members of the community

What we know: This development will receive federal assistance which has strict guidelines regarding the income levels of those it serves. 74 units must be replaced, and all will be affordable for households earning 80% of the Area Median Income or less. RIHousing is working with the Providence Housing Authority to retain as many Project Based Section 8 vouchers as possible and will explore opportunities for further resources. The income levels ultimately served will depend on the resources secured.

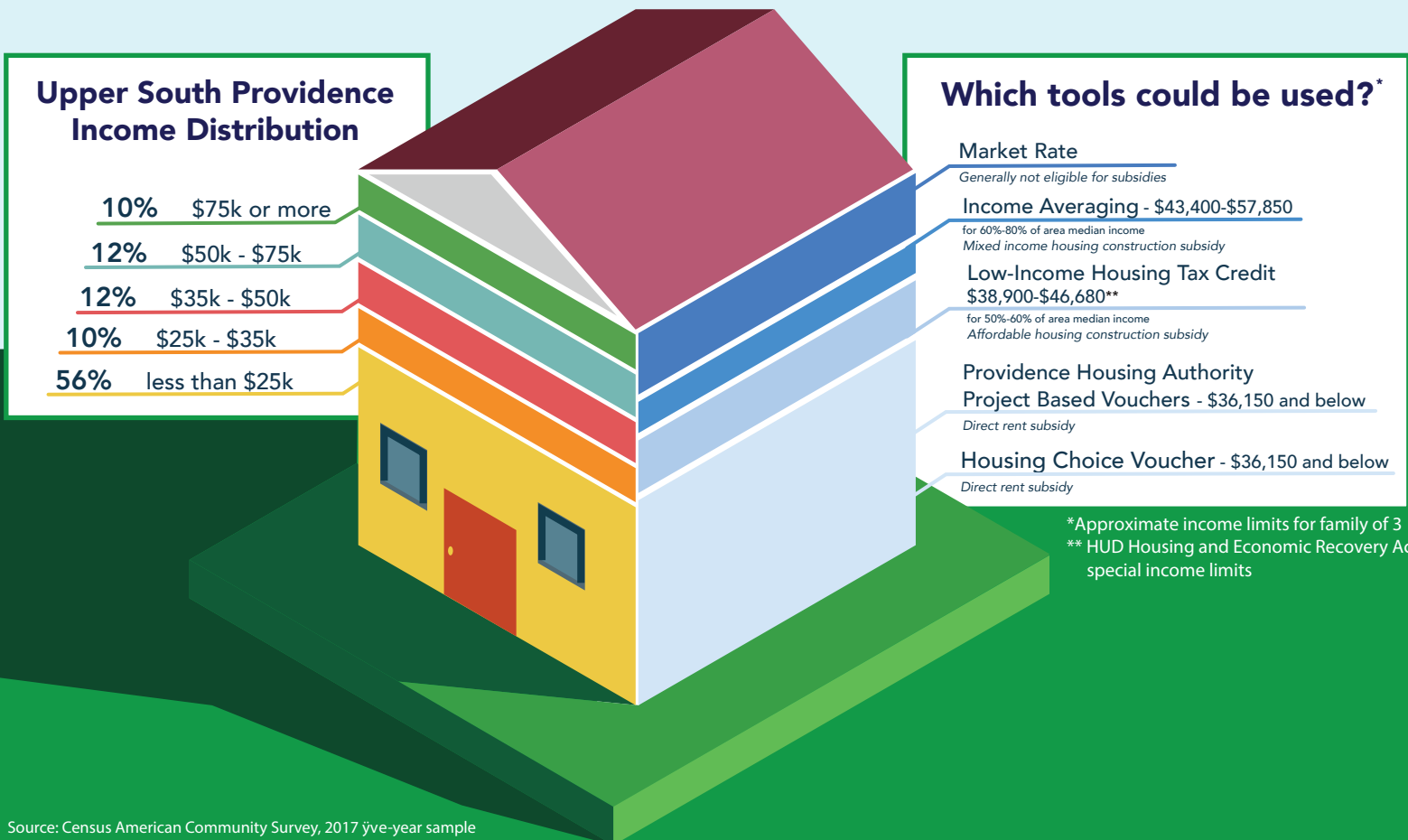
Below is a graphic that highlights the current range of household incomes in Upper South Providence, with some of the corresponding government tools that could be used to keep the rent affordable. There are tools available that would allow the development to serve all income levels below market rate rent. Also, the table on the next page highlights the Providence area HUD income ranges, which federal programs must generally adhere to.

2 What we heard: Concerns of previous residents' rights to move into the new housing

What we know: At the time of foreclosure, only 34 of the 74 Barbara Jordan II units were occupied. Those 34 households were given tenant-based vouchers to move to an apartment of their choosing. Previous residents were contacted and invited to be a part of the Community Engagement Process. Once redevelopment is complete, previous residents can assess their accommodations. Some may wish to return and some may wish to remain where they are currently living.

3 What we heard: Preference that the buildings be rehabilitated and preserved as opposed to being torn down and rebuilt

What we know: Many of the buildings are in extreme disrepair and, because of this, renovating them may not be an option. Additionally, many of the current apartments are large apartments with 4 or more bedrooms. The average size of families has changed. Seventy-five percent of households in this neighborhood are made up of less than 4 people and many of those large apartments don't make sense for today's families.



Source: Census American Community Survey, 2017 5-year sample

4 What we heard: Renovating the apartments is quicker and we need housing now

What we know: Rehabilitating an existing building is not always quicker than tearing down and building new and RIHousing encourages rehabilitation and preservation when possible. Ultimately the developer will assess which option makes the most sense for each building. Regardless of those choices the timeline required by HUD to begin construction is the same. Construction must be completed by December 2021.

5 What we heard: Desire for an increased number of apartments above the original 74 units, coupled with thoughtful consideration for housing types. Residents expressed a preference for townhouses.

What we know: A minimum of 74 homes will be replaced. The final number of homes, how many more than 74, and their style will ultimately be determined by the developer. These choices will be based on community feedback, zoning requirements, availability of resources, etc. The developer will conduct a market study to inform these choices.

6 What we heard: Desire for a tenant-controlled development, through a tenant's union and eventual cooperative

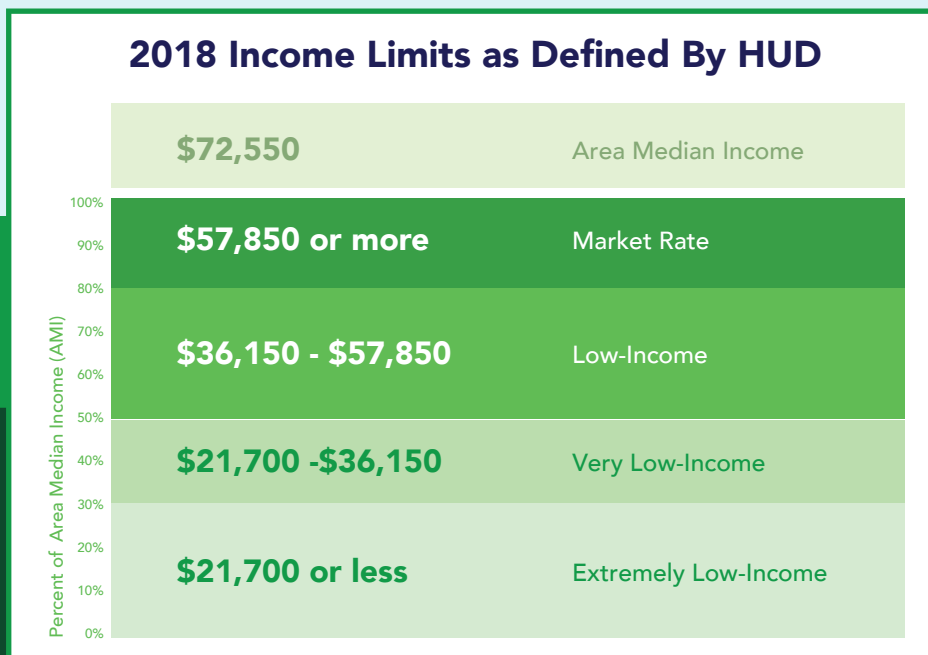
What we know: All tenants have a right to organize. Ultimately, RIHousing will not be the owner of the property. Tenants will work with the developer to determine the level of involvement residents have in property decisions and what that formal structure looks like.

7 What we heard: Strong desire for the development to be permanently affordable

What we know: The resources used to build affordable housing require that the homes remain affordable for a minimum of 30 years and are codified with a deed restriction. RIHousing works with all of the developments we have financing in to extend that period for even longer whenever possible. The redevelopment of Barbara Jordan II will meet these requirements.

8 What we heard: Preference to hire local contractors and businesses to conduct the redevelopment

What we know: RIHousing will include scoring criteria in the RFP addressing this feedback.



Source: HUD FY'18 Income Limits – Providence/Fall River HUD Metro Area

* Federal programs must generally adhere to the income ranges

* Approximate income limits for a family of 3

Developer Request for Proposals

Community Feedback Related Criteria

It is anticipated that the criteria below will be integrated into the RFP. It is unlikely a developer will be able to achieve all items, but the scoring criteria incentivizes them to incorporate as many as they can and preference will be given to financially feasible projects that address the feedback we heard during this engagement process.

HUD Requirements

Per the contract between RIHousing and HUD regarding the redevelopment of Barbara Jordan II, the following criteria are required of the developer:

- At least 74 homes must be replaced as affordable housing
- The redevelopment of 74 homes must be completed by 2021

Household Incomes

- Housing for households earning at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (\$57,850 for a household size of three)

Design

- Renovation of buildings, where possible, as opposed to tearing buildings down
- Design incorporates best practices regarding safety and accessibility, particularly Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design standards
- Building design is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood
- Inclusion of open space and courtyards

Building Components

- Mixed-use component
- Space for resident supportive services

Rhode Island Based, Minority Contractors

- Preference given to Rhode Island based contractors
- Commitment to award contracts to RI certified Minority Business Enterprises, Women Business Enterprises or Disadvantaged Business Enterprises
- Commitment to hiring local workers and apprentices for entry level employment

Commitment to the Community

- Continue to solicit community input in community relationships, including responsiveness to community needs and concerns
- Responsive to the needs of the community (rentals, homeownership opportunities, etc.)
- Creating a high-quality housing development for both residents and the surrounding community
- Experience in housing revitalization efforts

Neighborhood Related Feedback

The engagement process yielded broad feedback regarding the neighborhood and its community. While not specific to the Barbara Jordan II housing redevelopment, it is important. We hope community partners will take advantage of this information to inform their work in Upper South Providence.

Strengthen the Neighborhood

- Create places for everyone to avoid further displacement
- Achieve cohesion through community-developed neighborhood marketing and branding efforts
- Eliminate homelessness – housing for all
- Increase safety

Create Jobs

- Address need for workforce and job training programs
- Further support for youth-run and social enterprise businesses

Enhance Community Assets

- Add local grocery store
- Revitalize parks, Grace Cemetery, vacant storefronts and other vacant properties (particularly those adjacent to Barbara Jordan II properties)
- Increase opportunities for exposure to the arts
- Increase walkability, add more sidewalks

Contact

BarbaraJordan2@rihousing.com

www.rihousing.com/BarbaraJordan2

Barbara Jordan II – Before Construction

Units on 28 Somerset Avenue



Units on 22 Portland Street



Jordan Caffey Townhomes & Joseph Caffey Apartments – Start of Construction



Jordan Caffey Townhomes & Joseph Caffey Apartments – Groundbreaking



Construction Progress



Construction Progress - Video



Watch the Video 

Renders and Site Plan



Barbara Jordan II
Providence, Rhode Island

Joseph Coffey Apartments



Barbara Jordan II
Providence, Rhode Island

Jordan Coffey Townhomes





Barbara Jordan II
Providence, Rhode Island

Jordan Caffey Townhomes



Press Kit



The Joseph Caffey Apartments and Jordan Caffey Townhomes project includes the redevelopment of the former Barbara Jordan II development into a total of 79-units of affordable housing located in Upper South Providence. The Barbara Jordan II development was foreclosed upon by the U.S. Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the property was transferred to RIHousing in 2018. Following an extensive community engagement process, the site is being redeveloped by Omni Development and Wingate Capital Associates.

The planned redevelopment of the former Barbara Jordan II development has brought a diverse group of community members, neighborhood groups, non-profit organizations, public and private investors, and elected officials together to create a vision for how a neighborhood of vacant and abandoned properties could be reimagined and transformed to offer safe, healthy and affordable housing to the families that will live here.

As we break ground on these new homes, we are beginning that new chapter. We are building on a process begun several years ago to transform this neighborhood and bring the vision created through the community engagement process to life.

The Joseph Caffey Apartments and Jordan Caffey Townhomes are named in honor of Joe Caffey and Barbara Jordan. Joe Caffey was the Executive Director of Omni Development Corporation for many years and dedicated his life to revitalizing communities through the development and preservation of affordable housing. In naming this project, the development team also wanted to preserve a link to Barbara Jordan for whom this project was originally named. Congresswoman Barbara Jordan was one of the first U.S. Congresswomen, a leader in the civil rights movement and a passionate advocate for all Americans.

PROJECT TIMELINE

April 24, 2018	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) foreclosed on the original owner of the Barbara Jordan II development
June 2018	HUD transfers Barbara Jordan II to RIHousing in order to redevelop the property as affordable housing
July 23, 2018	Eight-month community engagement process begins with a community engagement kick-off event
June 2019	RIHousing issues a Request for Proposals (RFP) to designate a qualified developer for the redevelopment of Barbara Jordan II
June 18, 2020	Omni Development Corps and the Wingate Companies selected as developers of former Barbara Jordan II properties
December 2020	Omni/Wingate submit application for 9% Housing Credits
May 20, 2021	RIHousing preliminary commitment of 9% Housing Credits
November 10, 2021	RIHousing firm commitment of 9% Housing Credits
March 24, 2022	Closing date
March-May 2022	Demolition
Beginning May 2022	Construction (18-24 months)
Fall 2022 - Winter 2023	Lease-Up

FUNDING

Joseph Caffey Apartments	
First Mortgage	\$1,775,000
LIHTC Proceeds	\$12,104,971
Total Sources	\$13,879,971

Jordan Caffey Townhomes	
RIHousing First Mortgage	\$2,700,000
RIHousing HOME Loan	\$1,600,000
Capital Magnet Fund	\$999,999
Housing Trust Fund	\$1,960,000
Providence HOME	\$880,000
LIHTC Proceeds	\$6,349,335
Total Sources	\$14,489,334

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Sponsor(s):
 Omni Development, Wingate Capital Partners, LLC (Upper South Providence Partners, LLC)

Architect:
 DBVW Architects, Inc.

General Contractor:
 Pezzuco Construction Inc.

Management Agent:
 Wingate Management Company, LLC

Syndicator:
 National Equity Fund

Consultant:
 Barbara Sokoloff & Associates

