



Press Contact:
Jo Ann Driscoll, Consultant
Office 510-663-1473
Cell 510-459-8144

For immediate release:
September 19, 2008

**OAKLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY CONSIDERS PLAN TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE 1,554
UNITS OF HOUSING FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES IN OAKLAND**

**PROPERTY DISPOSITION APPLICATION TO HUD
AND TENANT PROTECTION VOUCHERS ARE LINKED
IN INNOVATIVE OAKLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY PLAN**

(Oakland, CA) Recognizing the ever-growing need for public housing in Oakland, along with the out of balance costs for the care and maintenance of decaying housing stock, the Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) is developing a plan in partnership with US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to protect, preserve and improve affordable housing for low-income families in Oakland. The Oakland Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners will soon submit a Disposition Application to HUD, with a primary goal to maintain the availability of 1,554 units that serve as homes to some of the poorest families in Oakland. These units are located in 254 public housing sites which are scattered throughout the City. In order to make sure that its current tenants would not suffer hardships as part of process, the OHA has linked any action on the actual disposition of housing units to the approval of HUD Section 8 vouchers for each involved family and has made clear that no one would be required to move.

OHA currently provides a total of 3,221 public housing apartments and 11,142 Section 8 leased housing units, totaling 12,747 families in the City of Oakland. The OHA serves 37,000 people.

"This is a very innovative way for the Oakland Housing Authority to make much-needed improvements and at the same time care for the wellbeing of those who live in public housing," said Moses Mayne, Jr., Chair of the Board of Commissioners.

“There are lots of rumors circulating, and so we want to make it very clear that this plan will not require any resident to move who does not want to move,” said Jon Gresley, Executive Director. OHA’s disposition plans are contingent upon the receipt of Section 8 vouchers from HUD for tenants use in place or to move if they wish. If the disposition application is approved by HUD, but the request for vouchers is not, OHA will not move forward with the disposition and the units will remain in the public housing program. Nothing will change.

The impetus for the disposition program is two-fold. The OHA has been under funded by the federal government for 14 years, creating a significant backlog of maintenance and repair projects. While the federal government cuts its funding of the public housing program, funding for Section 8 vouchers receives strong federal support. The planned disposition will re-position Oakland’s scattered site apartments to be funded by Section 8 instead of Public Housing.

As part of the disposition plan, OHA will transfer ownership of the properties to a registered 501(c)(3) housing organization, that will be affiliated with the Housing Authority. The non-profit affiliate will be responsible for the management and maintenance of all the units on sites scattered throughout the City of Oakland and work closely with the OHA under binding agreements. Any excess cash flow associated with these properties, not needed for operation, maintenance or repair, will be restricted to use by the OHA to develop new low-income housing. For any unit that is taken out of service in the future, OHA will commit to replace these units one for one, with any replacement unit to be made available to the same low income populations served by OHA today.

Over the next five to ten years, or perhaps longer, OHA will examine each of its properties on an individual basis to determine what options there are to preserve, repair or replace units. All future planning for these scattered site units will be done through a public process and with resident consultation.

The Board of Commissioners will consider the plan at its meeting Monday night, September 22, 2008. The Commission meets the fourth Monday of each month at 6:00 pm at 1619 Harrison Street, Oakland.

Many questions can be answered by referring to the OHA document, *Frequently Asked Questions regarding the Planned Disposition of Public Housing Scattered Sites*. To view this document or to see “before and after” photos of OHA facilities and to review documents related to programs and future planning for the agency, visit the website at www.oakha.org or call (510) 847-1512.