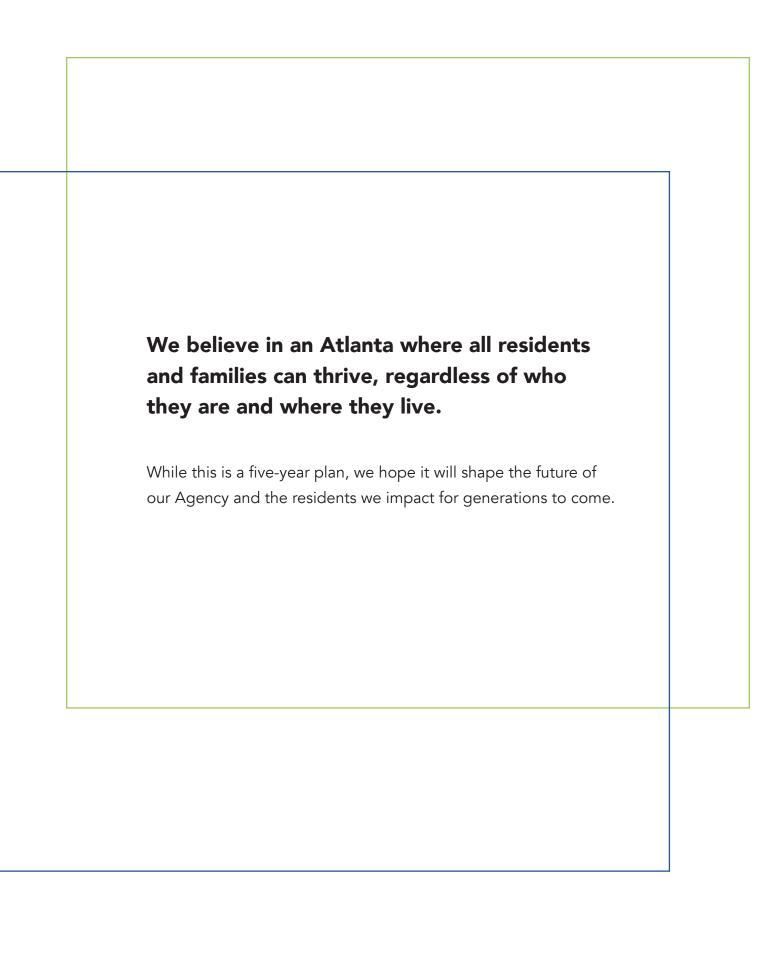


FY 2023-2027

Atlanta Housing Strategic Plan







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On Cover: Atlanta Housing-assisted teen scholars, who served as summer interns

Message from

Our Chair



Dear Partners,

Atlanta has a longstanding history as a city of promise, a place to raise a family, and an anchor upon which you can build your future. While that continues to be true, the Federal Reserve Bank recently listed Atlanta as an "unaffordable city" for the first time ever. The factors that create that inequity and lack of affordability place our beloved city at a crossroad. As such, Atlanta risks losing its standing as a place where all people, no matter the income strata they occupy, will have the opportunity to live and prosper here.

Mayor Andre Dickens has set forth a vision of building and sustaining healthy, thriving neighborhoods, where all families have opportunities for economic mobility. His passion for affordability in the housing of its citizens is critical to our efforts to break the cycle of poverty and to widen the aperture for all partners – civic, nonprofit, business, community, religious, education – in service to the equitable improvement of each and every one of our 242 neighborhoods' health. This strategic plan for Atlanta Housing supports that vision and provides a road map for the next 5 years that shows Atlanta Housing's share in the delivery of our Mayor's vision.

I want to thank the incredible leadership and staff of Atlanta Housing for the hard work reflected in this document and for putting their hearts on their sleeves in implementing a plan that focuses on data, equity, and preservation of our values to drive outcomes, not just activities. As our Mayor often says, "Atlanta is a group project" and alongside each of you, I know that we can preserve our city's standing as a difference-maker in the lives of our residents and our City!

Sincerely,
Larry Stewart
Chairman of the Board

Message from the

President & CEO



Dear Partners,

This Strategic Plan is Atlanta Housing's commitment to you.

We know that many Atlanta residents are struggling to make their rent and mortgage payments while others are thriving. We know that far too many residents have not had opportunities to access high-performing schools, quality grocery stores, and well-paid jobs. And we know these challenges are complex and inter-related.

However, we are not defined by these challenges. To move toward a different future, we have developed a Strategic Plan to chart our course for the next five years. The Plan covers more than just housing, but also how we show up in our community, how we partner, and how we build not just homes, but build better neighborhoods and better lives for residents. It reflects the true spirit of AH: compassionate, committed, and ready to serve.

This Strategic Plan is the product of countless hours of conversations with our residents, staff, the City, public agencies, stakeholders, advocates, and community partners. I am hopeful they will set our trajectory for the years to follow and establish a human-centered framework that puts the good of our residents above all else.

This plan is for all of us. I am grateful for the leadership of the Atlanta Housing Board of Commissioners for their bold direction and for the dedication that the Atlanta Housing staff demonstrates every day. This work cannot be done alone. We look forward to working with you as we strive to make our City more affordable for all.

Sincerely, Eugene E. Jones, Jr. President & CEO

Executive Summary

As we look around the nation, we see major cities facing a crisis of housing affordability. Atlanta cannot continue to allow that to happen here. Mayor Dickens understands that our collective future depends on Atlanta being a place that is open to everyone, regardless of how much money they make. He has set forth a vision of "safe, healthy, connected neighborhoods with an expansive culture of equity." In support of this vision, Mayor Dickens has established a goal of creating or preserving 20,000 affordable units over eight years.

A summary of our strategic goals over the next five years follows.

Goal 1: Create or Preserve 10,000 Affordable Housing Units

Atlanta Housing (AH) will play a major role in achieving the Mayor's affordable housing goal. Accordingly, this strategic plan provides a road map for AH to achieve half of the Mayor's housing goal within five years, by **creating or preserving 10,000 affordable housing units**. This ambitious plan will stretch AH as it creates more affordable units on publicly owned land than at any other point in more than a decade. And we will focus on preserving our existing portfolio of affordable housing units.

Goal 2: Enhance Housing Assistance Resources for Atlantans in Need

While we build and preserve affordable units, AH will also provide ownership opportunities for families with lower incomes. We will provide deeply affordable housing accessibility to the families with the lowest incomes by maintaining and even improving one of the best Housing Choice Voucher programs in the country. A key goal of this plan is to **enhance housing assistance resources for Atlantans in need**. In doing so, AH will serve families with special needs and support the City's goal of reducing homelessness.

Goal 3: Create Opportunities for Individuals, Families, and Children to Thrive

We will lift up our residents by providing better services, better connections to opportunity, and a better quality of life. We understand that families need support and community to break the cycle of poverty. Recognizing these needs, a key goal of AH is to **create opportunities for individuals, families, and children to thrive**. Since the needs of each family are different, we will solicit and work with our partners who provide specialized competencies in delivering the best possible services.

Goal 4: Build or Expand Partnerships to Pool Resources and Maximize Impact for the Benefit of Families

AH will also forge new partnerships while building upon our existing ones. Atlanta is fortunate to have strong business and philanthropic partners that work together to better Atlanta. This plan recognizes the importance of partnership by including the goal of building or expanding partnerships for the benefit of families.

Goal 5: Communicate the Impact of AH's Work to Atlanta

In an era of increasing competition for resources and compassion, we will work intentionally to **communicate the impact of our work to Atlanta.** We will increase visibility into our work to support more people who might need assistance, and to partner more effectively with organizations who want to be involved. We also know that, with the implementation of this plan, we hold ourselves accountable to the public.

Goal 6: Strengthen Atlanta Housing Operations

In order to do all these things, AH will have to find new sources of funding, and will have to find ways to stretch our existing dollars to maximize their impact. Underlying all the work is a dedicated team that ensures that the management of the agency is effective and efficient. Therefore, we will work towards the goal of **strengthening AH's operations** to better serve residents.

We look forward to working with our residents, partners, and stakeholders, family by family, neighborhood by neighborhood. And we need you—to push us, support us, and work with us. Together we can make this ambitious plan a reality.



AH's President & CEO and Chief Operating Officer celebrate the unveiling of a historical marker at the site of the former Techwood Homes, the first federally funded public housing site in the nation

Who We Are

Vision

Our vision is a city where all Atlantans have a place they are proud to call home and can thrive, regardless of their income or address.

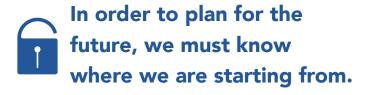
Mission

The mission of Atlanta Housing is to open doors to safe, quality affordable homes, build inclusive communities of choice, and create opportunities for economic mobility.

Values

We are a team of bold, compassionate, and committed change-makers dedicated to working collaboratively to serve the Atlanta community with our unique resources.

Where We Are



Over the past two years, Atlanta Housing (AH) has heard from our residents about what is important to them, interviewed other stakeholders and partners about their perceptions of Atlanta's housing landscape, and worked to understand the complexities and challenges of Atlanta's housing market.



A child in an assisted community poses for the camera



This strategic planning process began during the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed and exacerbated income inequality while adding fuel to a soaring housing market. Families with the lowest wages, who were already cost-burdened prior to these dramatic shifts, have been hit the hardest. Understanding trends in the housing market and the housing needs of Atlanta residents is essential as AH looks to the future.

Atlanta's Rapid Growth and Increased Cost of Living

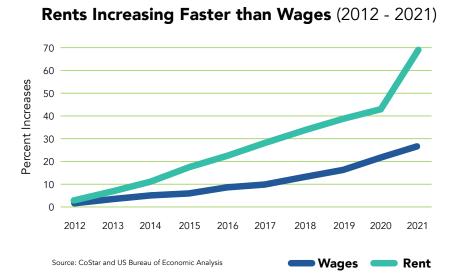
According to a 2021 study by Freddie Mac¹, Atlanta is at the heart of the fourth-fastest growing metropolitan area in the country. Furthermore, the Atlanta Regional Commission projects that the region will remain a national leader in both population and employment growth for the next 30 years².

Atlanta's growth has contributed to significant increases in housing costs, but wages have not kept up. Per Apartment List, between 2017 and 2021, the average rent in Atlanta climbed from \$1,147 to \$1,419 per month (23%)³. The median home sales price increased from \$232,500 to \$385,000 (66%) during that time⁴. In the same period, Atlanta's average hourly wage increased less than 10%, from \$28.84 to \$31.50, an increase of about \$2.70 an hour (meanwhile, the typical AH family earns the equivalent of \$11.07 an hour). As property values increase and neighborhoods experience gentrifying pressures, homeowners and landlords are incentivized to sell their properties, which results in less affordable housing.



Newly developed housing at Ashley Scholar's Landing

In March 2022, the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's Home Ownership Affordability Index listed Atlanta⁵ as an "unaffordable city" for the first time.

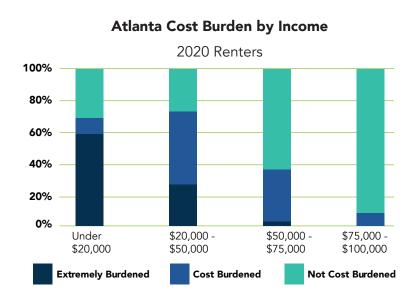


More recently, Atlanta has become the focal point of investor-led acquisitions of single-family homes in the U.S. In the first part of 2022, investors bought one-third of all single-family homes that sold, the highest rate in the country. This pattern is leading to evictions, displacement, and the rapid gentrification of historically

affordable neighborhoods⁷. Additionally, Atlanta leads the country's multi-family property sales by volume⁸. This is driven in part by perceptions that rents are too low and can be raised to increase returns for investors, further destabilizing the rental markets.

The Highest Burden Falls on Those with the Lowest Incomes

According to federal guidelines, households spending more than 30% of their incomes on housing are cost burdened. The 2020 American Community Survey found that nearly half of all households in Atlanta making less than \$50,000 per year were cost-burdened. However, the amount of available public subsidies and housing assistance resources have not increased to match the need.



Source: "The State of The Nation's Housing 2020," Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard Graduate School of Design/Harvard Kennedy School, © by the President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2020, p.3.

^{5.} Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta Home Ownership Affordability Index, March 2022, https://www.atlantafed.org/center-for-housing-and-policy/data-and-tools/home-ownership-affordability-monitor.

^{6. &}quot;Investors Bought a Record Share of Homes in the First Quarter, Despite 17% Decline in Purchases from Pandemic Peak," June 15, 2022, businesswire.com.

Gentrifying Atlanta: Investor Purchases of Rental Housing, Evictions, and the Displacement of Black Residents,"
 Elora Lee Raymond, Ben Miller, Michaela McKinney & Jonathan Braun, Housing Policy Debate, April 15, 2021.

^{8.} CoStar Atlanta Multi-Family Market Report, November 16, 2022.



While meeting with residents, housing experts, and other stakeholders during the development of this plan, we heard several themes emerge around AH's role in providing affordable housing for residents today and investing in the future of the city. In response to Atlanta's rapid growth, Mayor Dickens has made the stabilization of Atlanta neighborhoods and affordable housing opportunities an imperative hallmark of his administration. Called "Moving Atlanta Forward," the Mayor's vision is driving the allocation of resources and priorities, all of which present a unique moment in time for AH to join forces as thought leaders, expert advisors and catalysts towards that vision.

Atlanta's Affordable Housing Ecosystem

Over time, a rich ecosystem of leaders and organizations have developed to respond to Atlantans' housing needs and has strengthened communities. AH, who developed the nation's first federally-funded public housing, is positioned with unique resources, including more than 400 acres of vacant and underutilized land across the city. As development costs and property values rise, these assets are critical – and can be leveraged in collaboration with others.

Across sectors, we heard stakeholders emphasize the importance of meaningful partnerships between public sector agencies (i.e., the City, AH, Invest Atlanta, MARTA, Atlanta Public Schools, Metro Atlanta Land Bank, and Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.), key non-profits (e.g., Atlanta Land Trust, Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership, Summech Community Development Corporation) and private and philanthropic leaders. Across the public sector, the co-investment program established by AH, Invest Atlanta, and Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. has enabled the layering of public sector resources while streamlining application processes for developers. HouseATL was created in 2017 to build a "big tent" coalition of advocates, civic leaders, business, educational, religious and healthcare leaders, practitioners, community developers, and policymakers aligned around shared goals.

While the public sector brings subsidy and land, collaboration with non-profit and for-profit developers is needed to reach scale and speed to developing new units. And as most local and federal finance tools, including Low Income Housing Tax Credits, do not support permanent affordability, non-profit and private partners who are also focused on preservation are essential.

Building Stronger Communities

Another theme we heard from stakeholders is that affordable housing is about more than providing shelter – it must be about building a more inclusive city with a higher quality of life. Homes are not built in isolation. They are the building blocks of neighborhoods and as many are concerned about gentrification resulting in both physical and cultural displacement, it is critical that investments in housing are made with deliberate intention and purpose. Likewise when new development occurs, it should strive to be a catalyst for other improvements in the neighborhood.

We also heard community leaders reiterate the value of holistic care beyond providing affordable housing. Residents with lower incomes often face barriers to quality educational and job training opportunities, as well as health and wellness resources. Building and strengthening partnerships with other service providers and philanthropic and religious partners can increase residents' access to higher-paying jobs and improve their quality of life.



A rendering of Madison Reynoldstown, as seen from the Atlanta BeltLine

Who We Serve



The mission of Atlanta Housing (AH) is more important than ever.

When AH was established in 1937, its primary mission was to provide housing and rental assistance to Atlantans who need it most. Our focus and mission has remained to serve extremely low- to moderate-income households, including but not limited to, families, seniors, veterans, individuals with disabilities, and those experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. Many of our families are considered essential workers. yet they struggle to find affordable housing. But AH doesn't just house people, we also support economic mobility and provide pathways to building wealth, such as through homeownership. Over time, through our land, investment capital, and expertise, AH evolved to serve local communities and the housing sector, providing for safe, healthy and diverse mixed-income housing options for all, while retaining our specific focus on families at the lower levels of the income scale.



The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) annually defines the area median income (AMI) of metro Atlanta, which considers the size of a household. This standard informs who is eligible to live in various types of affordable housing, as well as how much they pay for rent. The above table provides examples of different households compared to the 2022 AMI.

Various Households Compared to the 2022 Area Median Income (AMI)

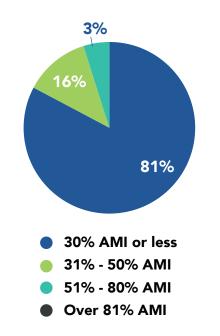
	Retiree on Fixed Income	Service Industry Worker	Sanitation Worker	Single Parent With Child	Family 4 People	Young Married Couple
No. in Household	1	1	2	2	4	2
Estimated Household Income	\$20,250	\$33,750	\$46,320	\$61,700	\$96,400	\$92,640
% of Area Median Income	30%	50%	60%	80%	100%	120%
Max Rent They Can Afford	\$506	\$844	\$1,158	\$1,543	\$2,410	\$2,316
Max Home Price They Can Afford	\$58,725	\$97,875	\$115,800	\$178,930	\$279,560	\$268,656

In FY 2022:

- AH ensured the housing stability of 26,619 households (almost 44,000 individuals), providing more than \$194 million in housing assistance and operating subsidies.
- About 97 percent of AH households earned less than half the area median income – average earned incomes were just over \$23,000, and average fixed incomes were approximately \$12,500.
- AH's project- and tenant-based voucher program served about 21,179 households, of which 36 percent were elderly, and 19 percent were disabled.

AH Households

by Area Median Income (AMI) | 2022



Our Toolbox

As a public housing authority, AH's primary source of funding comes from an annual allocation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) - in our case, totaling about \$300 million per year. Roughly 75% of this annual allocation is committed to directly reducing the cost of housing for thousands of Atlanta families in units owned by hundreds of landlords large and small across Atlanta. This assistance comes in the form of voucher subsidies, operating subsidies, and the maintenance and upkeep of properties. Remaining funds are dedicated towards resident services (including early education, workforce development and senior services) and housing development (including predevelopment, gap financing and low-cost loans), among other things.

A small portion of AH's budget includes income earned from a variety of activities, including repayments of previous investments, which provide flexibility to support discretionary activities beyond our HUD mandate, such as scholarships, direct emergency assistance, and pilot programs that test innovation. AH owns about 400 acres of land scattered across the City of Atlanta, from strategic acquisitions, land transfers, and legacy sites. AH's rental subsidies, capital investment and land are crucial tools, allowing us to serve in many capacities, from emergency housing in a crisis, to comprehensive neighborhood transformation.



A rendering of Abbington at Ormewood Park

Strategic Goals

The people of Atlanta need affordable housing now more than ever. We want to make Atlanta a more inclusive community by connecting our residents to safe, quality homes across the city. We know we must think and act differently, and do so with urgency, if we are to maximize our impact and deliver on our vision of a more affordable Atlanta with healthy, thriving neighborhoods. The following six goals will guide our work for the next five years. While executing these six goals, we will develop guiding principles to direct our work, and provide consistency, fairness, and transparency to our decision making.

GOAL 1: Create or Preserve 10,000 Affordable Housing Units

GOAL 2: Enhance Housing Assistance Resources for Atlantans in Need

GOAL 3: Create Opportunities for Individuals, Families, and Children to Thrive

GOAL 4: Build or Expand Partnerships to Pool Resources and Maximize Impact for the Benefit of Families

GOAL 5: Communicate the Impact of Atlanta Housing's Work to Atlanta

GOAL 6: Strengthen Atlanta Housing Operations

Goal 1

Create or Preserve 10,000 Affordable Housing Units

Mayor Dickens has set forth a vision of healthy, thriving neighborhoods, which consist of affordable housing as a seamless component of mixed-income housing, opportunities for education and economic mobility, and access to amenities like grocery stores and parks. AH will work with the City and other partners to make this vision a reality, especially in the Mayor's four priority areas for action: the Donald L. Hollowell Corridor, the Campbellton Road Corridor, Downtown, and Thomasville Heights.

AH will create new mixed-use, mixed-income developments and preserve existing affordable units with a focus on serving households with incomes of 0 percent to 60 percent of the area median income or lower. We will intentionally use our assets, work with urgency, and collaborate with partners to build a more affordable Atlanta. In the process, we can help revitalize underinvested neighborhoods and create places in areas of opportunity for lower-income families and individuals to call home.



Columbia at Mechanicsville Crossing

In alignment with Mayor Dickens' goal of creating or preserving 20,000 affordable units, AH has set a target of creating or preserving 10,000 units over the next five years. In order to reach the 10,000 unit goal, AH will activate more than 300 acres of its vacant land to achieve 5,000 new units, or half of the overall goal. The other half will come from preserving existing units. Both creation and preservation of units will require an AH investment of \$250+ million, with \$220+ million allocated towards creation, and \$30+ million allocated toward preservation.



1.A: Produce 5,000 new affordable units

To meet the ever-growing need for homes that are affordable, it is critical to increase the overall supply of new affordable housing. We must also deliver it faster and use innovative construction techniques and financing while coordinating with our partners to increase our affordable housing production quickly. Tactics to reach this target include, but are not limited to:

- Complete Co-Investment pipeline projects, such as Heritage Village at West Lake, Sylvan Hills II and 360 Peachtree
- Execute new HomeFlex agreements with private property managers and developers
- Redevelop former public housing sites, such as Bowen and Thomasville

1.A.1: Repurpose 300 acres of AH-Owned vacant land toward housing and create healthy, thriving neighborhoods

With land values across the City rising dramatically, AH has the chance to leverage our considerable land resources to create communities with opportunity and a mix of housing that are welcoming to people of all incomes. Since land is one of the top expenditures in new development, developing, leasing, or even selling AH property can spur housing production.

And because our land is in a variety of neighborhoods, AH can assist in transforming struggling communities into healthy, thriving neighborhoods and make high-income areas more economically inclusive. For sites that may not be suitable for housing, AH will consider disposition of the land to fund activities that further its mission.

AH will collaborate with other public agencies, non-profits, and private sector partners to expedite the development of its vacant land, with an added emphasis on sites that align with the Mayor's priority geographies. Those sites include, but are not limited to, Bowen, Hollywood, and Thomasville Heights. AH has placed the sites in a tiered priority based on their proximity to major public investment--like the Atlanta BeltLine and Westside Park--where market potential has shifted, or the opportunity to leverage prior investment, such as communities already under development.

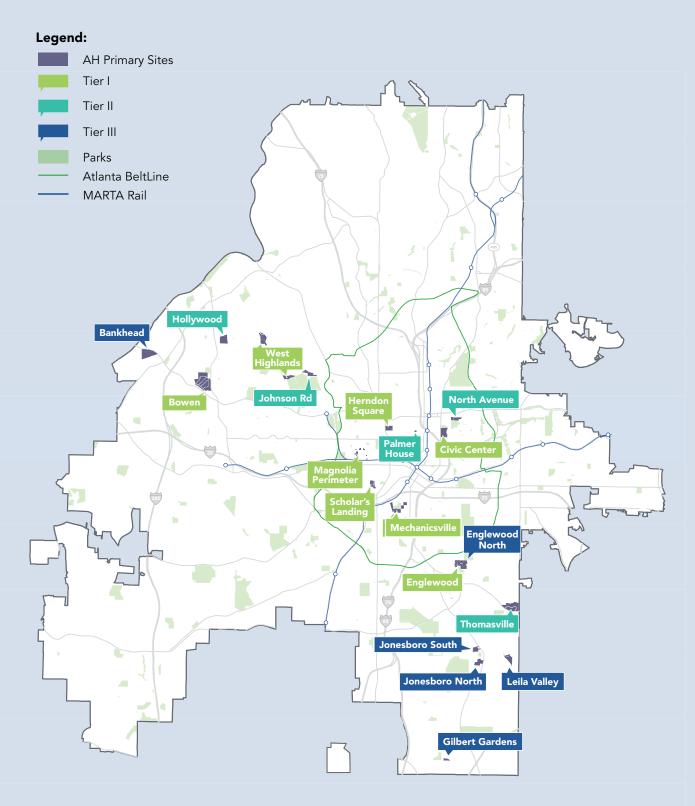
AH has organized our priority assets into three categories (see table below):

- Tier I there are currently eight sites, totaling ±177 acres, for which AH has already selected a development partner and are within active development, several of whom have already broken ground and/or brought units online. AH anticipates that, when complete, these sites will create approximately 2,628 new affordable units (approximately 5,316 total units).
- Tier II these five sites, totaling ±74 acres, are sites where, based on planning and due diligence, AH is preparing to seek a development partner or is in the process of doing so. When completed, AH estimates that there will be created 950 new affordable units (1,564 total units) on these sites.
- Tier III AH is currently conducting due diligence on other sites, totaling ±105 acres, including Bankhead, Englewood North, Jonesboro North and South, Leila Valley, Gilbert Gardens Annex, and various scattered sites that may or may not be developable.

AH Priority Sites as of December 2022

Site	Acreage	Neighborhood	Current Status (As of FY2023 Q2)
Scholars Landing	8	Atlanta University Center	Tier I
Herndon Square	10	English Avenue	Tier I
Englewood Manor	30	Chosewood Park	Tier I
West Highlands	24	West Highlands, Rockdale	Tier I
Mechanicsville	8	Mechanicsville	Tier I
Magnolia Perimeter	4	Vine City	Tier I
Civic Center	19	Old Fourth Ward	Tier I
Bowen Homes	74	Brookview Heights	Tier I
North Avenue	4	Old Fourth Ward	Tier II
Palmer House	1	Downtown	Tier II
Johnson Road	13	Rockdale	Tier II
Hollywood Courts	20	Scotts Crossing	Tier II
Thomasville	36	Thomasville Heights	Tier II
Bankhead Courts	35	Bankhead Courts	Tier III
Jonesboro North	9	Lakewood	Tier III
Jonesboro South	15	Browns Mill Park	Tier III
Leila Valley	14	Leila Valley	Tier III
Gilbert Gardens Annex	4	Poole Creek	Tier III
Englewood North	11	Chosewood Park	Tier III
Scattered Sites	17	Various	Tier III

Creating Thriving Communities on Our Vacant Land



 $\textbf{Note:} \ \mathsf{Tier} \ \mathsf{III} \ \mathsf{scattered} \ \mathsf{sites} \ \mathsf{are} \ \mathsf{too} \ \mathsf{small} \ \mathsf{and} \ \mathsf{spread} \ \mathsf{out} \ \mathsf{to} \ \mathsf{appear} \ \mathsf{on} \ \mathsf{this} \ \mathsf{map}.$

Spotlight on Creating Thriving, Healthy Neighborhoods: Bowen

In 1964, hundreds of families were relocated from Buttermilk Bottom in Atlanta's Old Fourth Ward, to make way for the Atlanta Civic Center. Thus began Bowen Homes, named for a theologian and educator, and first president of Gammon Seminary. It became part of the epicenter of hip hop's migration South in the 1990's, with famous artists referencing Bowen in music videos, verses, and iconic images. However, by 2009, it became the last public housing project demolished in Atlanta due to blight and rising crime.

Today, Bowen Homes is again the epicenter of attention, this time in the revival of Atlanta's westside, and as an anchor of the West Hollowell corridor revitalization. Over the past two years, AH has worked with hundreds of former residents, held focus groups of community members and local businesses, and listened to advocates and stakeholders. Based on their input, AH envisions 2,000 units of mixed-income, mixed-

use development, retail and community space, parks and trails, centered around a memorial plaza, honoring the history of Bowen Homes and its residents.



A rendering of the revitalized Bowen Homes

1.A.2: To support the creation of 5,000 units, invest at least \$220 million over five years to support AH's development strategy

Cost pressures in the current environment are enormous, and include inflated material costs, supply chain delays and increased labor costs. This makes adequate investment imperative to bring down development costs and increase financial viability. By committing our land, breaking ground on multiple sites, and setting a goal of leveraging at least \$220 million in AH funding, we can support the creation of new inclusive communities.

- Allocate capital reserves and future capital funding toward housing production
- Collaborate with the City of Atlanta and other partners to assist in identifying and deploying funds for the construction and infrastructure needs of new developments

1.B: Preserve and improve 5,000 units in AH's existing portfolio

It is not enough for a home to be affordable; it must meet our high standards of quality and stay affordable for future generations. In many cases, this means re-investing in our existing assets or extending our commitment of assistance into the future. We believe that investing in our buildings and houses will strengthen neighborhoods and communities.

- Preserve units at Cosby Spear, Westminster, Georgia Avenue, East Lake, Cheshire Bridge, Marian Road, Martin Street Plaza, and Villages at Carver through the Rental Assistance Demonstration program
- Collaborate with existing partners to renew HomeFlex agreements to extend the period of affordability
- Seek out new partners and encourage them to negotiate new HomeFlex agreements with already existing quality units

1.B.1: To support the preservation of 5,000 units, invest at least \$30 million over five years

No single organization can solve Atlanta's housing affordability challenge alone, but working together, we can bring our different resources and various skillsets to bear to have the greatest possible impact on Atlanta's affordable housing goals. The preservation of units within AH's portfolio is essential to maintaining the overall supply. That is why AH will commit funds to leverage investments from the private sector that will keep our properties affordable for years to come.

- Maximize Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) funding to recapitalize and stabilize the AH-owned portfolio
- Pursue funding sources that prioritize preservation and stabilization of existing units



Mayor Andre Dickens, AH partners, the AH Board, and AH leadership celebrate a groundbreaking creating new affordable units



AH's Board Chair, senior leadership, and officials from the Georgia Historical Society and Emory University gather at the site of the former Techwood Homes

1.C: Increase designation of sustainability-certified units in our portfolio to 33% in order to lower the overall cost of living of our residents

The households with the lowest wages have disproportionately higher utility burdens, which in turn increases their overall cost of living. Energy efficiency and sustainability measures not only help to lower energy bills but are also proven to improve indoor air quality, safety, and comfort. Lower energy consumption can also help AH reduce our operations costs. With our increased focus on sustainability, AH is working with partners to make a conscious effort to help improve conditions for our planet and our residents.

- Establish and enhance partnerships with funders and subject matter experts
- Prioritize the energy efficiency of new buildings developed with AH funding and incentivize AH landlords to invest in energy efficiency upgrades
- Encourage and expand compliance with sustainability standards for existing AH multi-family properties, such as LEED and EarthCraft standards



Enhance Housing Assistance Resources for Atlantans in Need

AH is committed to continuously enhancing the housing assistance programs it provides to help reduce housing costs for low-income Atlantans. We know that every household has different challenges and needs.

Some face homelessness and need help getting a roof over their heads, while others have had to defer their dream of homeownership as rising prices have put their goal further out of reach. Others want to be able to afford housing in a neighborhood better served by retail and transit.



A homeowner poses in front of her new house purchased with AH down payment assistance

While AH currently provides ongoing rental subsidy to more than 21,000 households, we will continue to use our resources to support more households and offer more targeted resources to reduce their housing costs and improve their quality of life.



2.A: Continue to provide stable housing for 1,900 families and individuals per year experiencing or at heightened risk of homelessness

Through the innovative use of our special vouchers, AH already has infrastructure in place to support our partners, who are leading the charge to reduce homelessness in our city. Having a safe and stable place to stay is the first step in overcoming other barriers and challenges, including lack of access to services for mental health treatment, among others. Our HAVEN program matches stable housing with appropriate case management and support services. Because special purpose voucher programs often start up and expire in time, AH will seek ways to sustain these important housing options throughout the period of the Strategic Plan.

- Create new dedicated permanent supportive housing units in partnership with Partners for Home
- Explore project basing Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers
- Seek new public, private and non-profit funding opportunities when they become available

Spotlight on Homeless Services

Academy Lofts at Adair Park is an innovative project that offers 35 residential micro-units, office, event, and commercial space. Originally constructed around 1911 as the George W. Adair School, the historic building has been preserved and adapted to include five HomeFlex units through the HomeFirst initiative, offering supportive housing to formerly-homeless households. These newly-renovated homes are located across the street from Adair Park, a neighborhood that was added to the historic registry in 2000, and are within walking distance to the Atlanta Beltline.

A coordinated effort with Partners for Home, Invest Atlanta, the United Way Regional Commission on Homelessness and other partners, HomeFirst is one of our most recent initiatives aggressively aimed at creating 550 new permanent supportive housing units to reduce homelessness in Atlanta. Through a service partnership with Fulton County, each participant will be given the option of supportive services as they transition from homelessness into permanent stable housing.

2.B: Provide emergency assistance to 1,800 families and individuals facing eviction over five years

AH will extend and increase its Home Again program, which currently serves almost 300 families annually with emergency assistance. Atlantans with the lowest wages have been hit the hardest by pandemic-related unemployment at a time that rents continue to rise. Even now, many are still trying to catch up from the impact. In most cases, receiving short-term rental assistance (for one to six months) can be the difference between staying in a home and becoming unsheltered. These shorter-term and targeted interventions are most cost-effective as it becomes more challenging and expensive to house families after they have already lost their housing. Therefore, the low-cost, ideal scenario is to identify and assist these households before losing their housing.

- Increase outreach to people in need of emergency rental assistance
- Provide incentives to landlords who participate in the emergency housing voucher program and streamline administration

2.C: Increase the number of AH households living in amenity-rich and transit-connected neighborhoods to 3,500

AH knows that proximity to higher-paying jobs, high-performing schools, quality services, and access to transit and amenities can dramatically improve a person's quality of life. However, all too often families and individuals receiving housing assistance have limited housing opportunities, contributing to a cycle of deepening racial and income inequality. About 2,800 families are now located in neighborhoods characterized as areas of opportunity thanks to development opportunities and our landlord partners. We will prioritize creating opportunities for our residents to continue to move into into amenity-rich areas, either by developing new units or by conducting outreach and providing incentives to landlords to make housing assistance available in such areas. Our strategy uses housing as a pathway to open opportunity and address inequality.

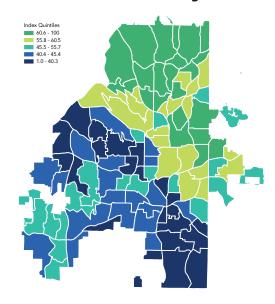
- Focus recruitment efforts for Housing Choice landlords in areas of opportunity
- Prioritize development of new AH supported units in transit-connected and amenity-rich neighborhoods
- Update AH payment standards, where feasible, to make the Housing Choice Voucher program more competitive to rents in the open market

Spotlight on Economic Mobility

Studies reveal that economic mobility is often stifled in areas lacking access to certain assets, including good jobs, schools, and health facilities. In 2020, in partnership with Bloomberg Associates, Invest Atlanta launched an "Economic Mobility Index" to identify areas that offer "better economic mobility pathways to achieve better economic and social outcomes."

In addition to assisting residents seeking housing in areas of higher economic mobility, AH's land development will help expand economic mobility to lower-ranking areas. We will use this index as a means of measuring and improving impact in whatever context we work.

Economic Mobility Index



More information on the Economic Mobility Index is available at https://neighborhoodnexus.org/atl-econ-mobility/.

2.D: Provide 1,400 new families with homeownership opportunities to help build wealth and combat displacement

Homeownership is a key to building intergenerational wealth, yet homeownership is simply out of reach to most low- and moderate-income Atlantans, who all too often find it challenging to save for a down payment when already stretched thin covering rent and other basic needs. Last year, AH provided over 200 households with down payment assistance, averaging \$22,000. AH will provide down payment assistance awards to help break down barriers to homeownership and help families invest in their futures, so we will extend and increase the number of awards annually over the life of this plan. (Please note that housing opportunities created via down payment assistance are also counted toward Goal 1.)

- Increase funding for AH's down payment assistance program
- Explore homeownership programs focused on helping residents transition from rental housing to homeownership, such as Family Self-Sufficiency grant escrow accounts
- Create affordable for-sale homes on land owned by AH, including the vacant portions of sites known as Mechanicsville, Magnolia Perimeter, Englewood, and Herndon



Create Opportunities for Individuals, Families, and Children to Thrive

AH recognizes that housing can be a platform to break the cycle of poverty. Recognizing that families and individuals with lower incomes face the highest barriers to opportunities, economic and otherwise, AH is prioritizing strengthening the health, economic, and social wellbeing of AH residents. We will connect residents to resources, helping them to attain their goals and enhance the quality of their life.



An AH volunteer takes a moment to connect with young residents



3.A: Advance efforts that address youth achievement by coordinating a cradle-to-career educational pipeline of programs and services for AH-assisted youth.

All of Atlanta's young people deserve a great shot at life. AH is committed to ensuring that the 15,000 children and young adults living in AH-assisted housing are no exception. AH will create partnerships that will connect children in AH-assisted housing to services that will benefit them from early childhood through early adulthood. These partnerships will provide access to high-quality learning opportunities for young children, youth, and young adults to increase educational performance, improve career readiness through college and technical training, and encourage lifelong well-being.

- Award up to \$200,000 in AH scholarships, and increase scholarship contributions for AH youth, from other partners, such as religious organizations, educational institutions, healthcare organizations and philanthropic foundations
- Provide access to resources that support and promote academic achievement, educational enrichment, and career readiness to 3,000 children and young adults over five years

3.B: Through increased partnerships, support residents to prepare for, connect to, and succeed in jobs and careers.

More than 15,000 working-aged, non-disabled adults live in AH-assisted housing. Many of our residents want to improve their job skills and earn better pay, yet many lack the support and resources needed to increase their income and improve economic mobility. By expanding partnerships, AH will create and broaden programs that help residents acquire skills and secure better paying jobs. Together, we can provide training and conduct outreach to local employers to identify a pool of jobs for which residents can apply for stable work with competitive wages.

- Expand training and career opportunities for residents to identify entry-level positions with potential for upward mobility
- Create and expand pilot programs targeting training and exposure to higher paying jobs, such as the ACCESS initiative
- Connect 2,000 AH residents to career exploration, job preparedness and placement on a path to earning a livable wage

3.C: Provide a continuum of care for AH-assisted seniors to enable them to stay healthy and live independently and with dignity in their homes.

More than 8,000 seniors live in AH-assisted housing units. Our goal is to enable our senior residents to live independently while improving their health, wellness, and quality of life. Therefore, AH will find new ways to support assisted seniors to age in place and remain connected to others. AH will continue to provide programs offering access to nutritious meals, life enrichment classes, health education, and fitness activities that promote healthy aging. Through expanded partnerships, AH will expand and offer new opportunities to reduce social isolation, increase civic engagement, and improve overall wellbeing.

- Personalize outreach to AH-assisted seniors to connect them to the services of greatest interest to them
- Provide digital literacy classes to improve social connections
- Serve 1,000 seniors over five years with service referrals, in-home services, and delivered meals



Spotlight on Resident Services

Our partnerships have a powerful impact on the families and individuals we serve. AH partners with some of the city's and the nation's most effective, experienced, and most innovative service providers to deliver excellent and timely services.

Through the pandemic, AH's resident service partners worked to stabilize families impacted by job loss, health concerns, shifting childcare and education needs, and social isolation. For example, the YMCA and Boys and Girls Club rose to the challenge and provided in-person programming for youth during this period. This allowed our youngest residents to complete their virtual learning at one of our partner locations with access to stable internet, meals, and academic coaching. The program also provided childcare for working parents.

The Fulton County
Department of Senior
Services provided home and
community-based services for
seniors. During this past year,
we relied on them heavily
to provide home delivered
meals to seniors during a time
when the pandemic impacted
seniors' wellbeing.



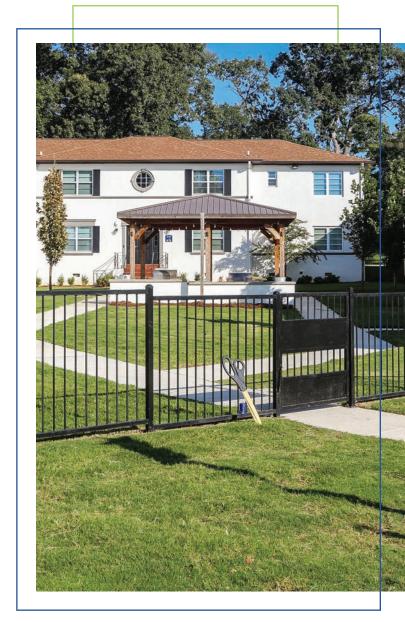
AH volunteers distribute free books to children in an assisted community



Build or Expand Partnerships to Pool Resources and Maximize Impact for the Benefit of Families

Mayor Dickens often states that Atlanta is a "group project." AH alone cannot achieve all of the ambitious initiatives described in this Strategic Plan. We are committed to collaborating with residents, stakeholders, governmental entities, community agencies, foundations, philanthropies, corporate, educational, religious and health-care partners.

AH will engage organizations with mutual interests to enable and support activities that benefit the people we serve. Partnerships will focus on solving interconnected issues, while leveraging resources to advance the mission of AH and our collective partners.



A renovated community in Adair Park, made possible through partnerships with the City, Invest Atlanta, Enterprise Community Partners, and others

Committed partners can also help bring efficiency, innovation, new ideas, and new solutions.



4.A: Secure a minimum of \$500,000 in new funding annually to support AH's mission

AH will seek out new sources of funding to make our work go farther. That funding can support a range of activities, from resident services to wealth creation for residents to infrastructure for affordable housing development. Often, what we want to do, or what we are called to do, goes beyond what are able to do or are allowed to fund. Diversified funding will allow AH to respond to the incredible need for affordable housing and associated support services. Providing on-site day care or health services and offering a continuum of care for seniors create ideal opportunities for philanthropies and others seeking to make a difference in the lives of Atlanta's residents to step in or collaborate.

- Actively pursue competitive municipal, state, and federal grant opportunities
- Obtain commitments from mission-aligned partners providing private and philanthropic support to communities experiencing hardship

4.B: Collaborate with public agencies and other organizations to leverage resources and align efforts

Over the past few years, collaborations among public and private agencies have proliferated at the local, regional, and statewide levels. These collaborations can foster understanding and ease workflow, expedite access to funding, and leverage efforts. The alignment of the City, Invest Atlanta, and the Georgia Department of Transportation to support the redevelopment of Bowen Homes is one example. AH will increase its level of participation in these collaborations to ensure that the experiences of Atlanta's lowest-income residents are included in solutions.

- Actively participate with the Mayor's working groups and task forces to advance AH development
- Host a "State of Atlanta Housing" convening to connect with a broad base of existing and potential stakeholders
- Foster improved relationships with county and state government and their respective agencies

Spotlight on Partnerships: ACCESS

AH recognizes that many essential products and services are now offered online, from education to telehealth. The internet is no longer a luxury, but a necessity, no different than electricity and water. AH's Achieving Connectivity to Create Equity and Self Sufficiency (ACCESS) program is designed to ensure digital inclusion for our residents, and it would not be possible without partnerships. ACCESS has three primary strategies: give residents digital devices, increase access to Wi-Fi, and provide technical and job training.

Our incredible partners include TechBridge, Diversity Cyber Council, Braintrust, WrightNow Solutions, and Generation USA. The collaborative partnership provides in-kind services, network building opportunities, and program funding. Their contribution allows AH families to participate in summer camps for coding, attend tech career seminars for teens, and receive basic computing skills training (for all ages) and IT workforce development for adults. It also provides access to high-speed internet and computers.

Our partners' dedicated focus on digital equity will not only afford our residents the best opportunity for economic mobility, but it will also improve our communities and the City as a whole.



AH staff, partners, and youth convene at an event to foster digital inclusion

4.C: Raise \$2 million to improve energy efficiency in AH units

A commitment to more efficient housing can lower residents' utility bills. It can reduce the negative effects of older, inefficient homes, including asthma, allergies, and missed work or school days. It also creates a window for AH to support job opportunities in the green sector.

- Identify areas to improve energy efficiency in housing technology, design, and awareness
- Partner with organizational leaders in climate change, sustainability, and resilience such as SouthFace to obtain resources that helps to improve energy efficiency
- Adopt policies that incentivize energy efficiency in building design and housing program

Children in an assisted community gather at an AH event





Communicate the Impact of Atlanta Housing's Work to Atlanta

We also understand the need to raise awareness about AH, our work and our contributions to Atlanta. If potential partners and stakeholders are unfamiliar with our work, aligning missions, visions and initiatives are difficult and opportunities are missed. In addition, we know that visibility and accountability go hand in hand.



AH's President & CEO, Eugene Jones, Jr., speaks at a dedication ceremony



5.A: Increase visibility into our progress and key successes to foster confidence in AH's work

We will increase visibility into our work because the broader the audiences we reach, the more people who might need assistance will know about the opportunities we provide, and those who might wish to partner know how to get involved. We also believe we should hold ourselves accountable in this key area.

Accountability means we are upholding our promises, showing our work transparently, spending taxpayer dollars effectively, and that public trust in AH is well-placed.

- Provide public dashboards and bi-annual reports that show progress on key performance indicators
- Implement a messaging and advocacy campaign that provides consistent, compelling, and uplifting content to the public and various stakeholder constituencies, including resident associations
- Provide details on our recent work at least quarterly at housing forums, public meetings, neighborhood meetings, AH public update meetings, blogs, podcasts, social media, speakers' bureaus and similar events
- Highlight and publicize our partnerships with other entities in Atlanta doing significant work to help create or preserve housing, and/or provide economic/life-style resources to vulnerable families

5.B: Provide targeted communication and frequent updates to key stakeholders

Our work requires coordination among many partners and good communication is essential in any relationship. AH will increase the frequency of its updates and refine its strategy for communicating with key stakeholders to make sure everyone is on the same page, knows when to lead and when to support, and can direct concerted action toward the highest priorities.

- Provide frequent updates to the Mayor's Office and City leadership on the progress in priority corridors and the Choice Neighborhood initiatives, and on other redevelopment activities
- Provide quarterly updates to the Community Development Human Services Committee of the Atlanta City Council highlighting AH's activities and its alignment with the Mayor's housing vision
- Provide semi-annual updates to the public, and more frequent updates to the Board of Commissioners and AH staff, on the progress of AH initiatives



Spotlight on Communications: Affordable Housing Dashboard

Atlanta Housing is developing a system to automate data gathering to produce timely and consistent reports on key performance indicators. As part of the process, AH will release a public-facing dashboard that show our progress on the goals laid out in this Strategic Plan. We will also provide a dashboard with a map showing the location of all AH affordable housing sites, the number of units, the income level served, and our priority development activities, among other data points.



Goal 6

Strengthen Atlanta Housing Operations

AH puts residents at the heart of everything we do while searching for better and more efficient ways to operate. We boost housing and economic opportunities for our residents when we make smart decisions about our assets and our operations.

Innovative approaches can make our dollars go farther, and we can direct more resources to the people we serve. And when we use our purchasing power to create opportunities for residents and small businesses, we can help to move the needle on economic mobility. A more intentional development focus may also call for internal realignments of skills and expertise.



AH staff help residents build a community garden at a senior highrise

Finally, our renewed focus on sustainability can potentially save money overall, while reducing the energy burden of our households and improving resilience to the climate emergency.



6.A: Increase efficiency, improve access to programs and services, and foster staff interactions with AH families

AH will enhance its resources and services to our residents by working more efficiently. And, realigning our business units to make it easier for residents to access key programs and services. We will also prioritize training and volunteer opportunities for staff that bring them into contact with AH families because we believe these opportunities can lead to better communication. By operating intentionally and responsibly, our resources will create and preserve housing and access to AH programs for our residents.

- Prioritize staff training that has the highest impact on residents and services
- Prioritize real-time staff interactions with residents and resident programs
- Elevate AH as a corporate citizen through its volunteer efforts

6.B: Create economic opportunity for AH families and minority businesses by achieving 35% participation in eligible AH contracts for minority-, women-, and resident-owned small businesses

AH's development activity is often one of the largest sources of economic activity within a given neighborhood. Specifically, new construction, substantial rehabilitation, and significant modernization projects is a catalyst for neighborhoods and can create an enormous impact for residents, minority and small businesses. AH is intentional about creating employment and contracting opportunities for our residents and small businesses to thrive.

- Increase training and technical assistance for AH contractors on how to increase participation from small, disadvantaged, and resident-owned businesses
- Focus training efforts for AH residents towards skills needed by AH contractors
- Establish a pool of qualified residents and small businesses interested in working with AH contractors

Spotlight on Supporting Minority Businesses and Sustainability: Roosevelt Hall

For 72 years, Roosevelt Hall served as the community center for University Homes. University Homes, which opened in 1937, was the nation's first federally funded public housing for African-American residents. The 19-acre site, renamed Scholars Landing, is nestled in the heart of the Atlanta University Center neighborhood that includes 606 affordable for-sale and rental units.

The re-development of Roosevelt Hall is an example of AH's commitment to its minority business enterprises and local resident entrepreneurship goals as the project architect and general contractors are minority-business enterprises. Furthermore, several residents were hired to complete the construction of this re-imagined community center.

The adaptive reuse of this historic building will offer 18,000 square feet of community and office space, in addition to a small business hub for the Scholars Landing community. Its renovation is designed to achieve LEED Gold certification and will feature sustainable design elements, including the use of permeable pavers, a new rain garden, and a new 15,000-gallon cistern that will collect rain water for reuse. The design includes a new active roof that features raised planters and "green" screen walls.



A rendering of the renovated Roosevelt Hall

6.C: In support of the City of Atlanta's 2019 Clean Energy Resolution to achieve 100% clean energy by 2035, AH will reduce its carbon footprint by 25% in five years

AH will incorporate more sustainability and energy conservation efforts into our daily practices and long-term decision-making processes. Doing so will help us make more cost-effective investments, take innovative approaches to complex challenges, and create healthier living and working environments for residents and staff.

- Establish a baseline carbon footprint and set carbon reduction targets for our operations and our procurement partners
- Reduce energy consumption in AH operations, including buildings and fleet, and migrate towards renewable energy sources

Our Commitments

- **1.** We are committed to responding to Atlantans' affordable housing needs with compassion, urgency, and integrity.
- **2.** We are committed to supporting the health, wellness, social, and economic well-being of our residents.
- 3. We are committed to transparency and accountability.
- **4.** We are committed to collaborating with residents, stakeholders, and public, private, religious, educational and healthcare partners as we turn this Strategic Plan into reality.



Children playing at an AH-assisted community



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