

River Street Residences – September 2009 Update

What We Heard at the Community Meeting

Approximately 130 people attended a Community Informational Meeting on May 20, 2009 at the Beretania Community Park. A Question & Answer Session provided an opportunity for people to voice their perspectives, questions, and concerns. The main themes we heard were:

- ✓ **Support for the concept of the River Street Residences** as an affordable housing project for the chronically homeless was voiced by several community members.
- ✓ The “**housing first**” approach addresses the **chronically homeless**, the target population for the proposed Project, and goes beyond a transitional homeless shelter.
- ✓ Several people emphasized that we need to **support homeless persons** in Chinatown and realize that **each individual is worthy**.
- ✓ It was noted by several community members that **homelessness is not the root of all crime** in Chinatown, and that the Project may actually **improve overall safety** in the immediate surrounding area.
- ✓ Several people emphasized that the **location of the River Street Residences is a major concern** – the Project would impact the **historical and cultural significance** of the neighborhood. A couple of community members also felt that there are **already enough services for homeless and mentally ill persons** in the area.
- ✓ The **need for community involvement and upfront dialogue with the City** on the Project throughout the planning and development process was expressed by several community members.
- ✓ Several people wanted assurance that the **safety and security** of residents, visitors, and businesses would be adequately addressed.

- ✓ Chinatown is a designated **Weed and Seed neighborhood** and there is concern that the **River Street Residences does not support the initiative to “seed” the community** with services that support neighborhood revitalization.

What’s Next?

In July 2009, the Downtown Neighborhood Board voted to oppose the River Street Residences. As a result, plans to solicit proposals from non-profit agencies interested in developing and operating the River Street Residences have been put on hold. The City is continuing to meet with business and community groups, interested parties, and individuals. If you would like a presentation or want to learn more about the project you are encouraged to contact the Department of Community Services at 768-7760.

Selection of a nonprofit developer through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process would be the next step. Once a developer is selected, specific information on the design and operations of the River Street Residences, including the provision of 24-hour security, the methodology for selecting persons for residency, and the program of supportive services, would be presented to the community.

Estimated Timetable

Milestone	Months										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Issuance of RFP											
Proposals Due to City											
Select Developer											
City Council Approval of Lease Execution											
Agreements Signed											

Website Updates

We are continually posting articles and videos related to chronic homelessness and the “Housing First” approach on the Department of Community Services website <http://www.honolulu.gov/dcs/homeless.htm>. Please visit us again soon!