



Atlanta Regional Housing Forum



The Role of Housing Authorities in Addressing Metro Atlanta's Housing Crisis

Thursday, March 7, 2019 9:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.
St. Luke's Episcopal Church
435 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta, GA

with Presentations from



Bill Bolling
Food Well
Alliance
(Moderator)



Lejla Prljaca
Lawrenceville
Housing Authority



Brandon Riddick-Seals
Atlanta Housing



Pete Waldrep
Marietta Housing
Authority



Pete Walker
Housing Authority of
DeKalb County



Bambi Hayes-Brown
Georgia ACT
Legislative Overview



Sarah Kirsch
ULI Atlanta
HouseATL

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Food Well Alliance

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Georgia Department of Community Affairs

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Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership

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WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bill Bolling, Moderator
Food Well Alliance

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Bambi Hayes-Brown, President & CEO, GeorgiaACT

HouseATL UPDATE

Sarah Kirsch, Executive Director, ULI Atlanta

PRIORITIES AT ATLANTA HOUSING

Brandon Riddick-Seals,
Interim President & CEO, Atlanta Housing

PANEL CONVERSATION

WITH REGIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITIES

Bill Bolling, Moderator

Lejla Prljaca, Executive Director
Lawrenceville Housing Authority

Brandon Riddick-Seals, Interim President & CEO
Atlanta Housing

Marion C. "Pete" Waldrep, Jr., Executive Director
Marrietta Housing Authority

E. P. "Pete" Walker, President & CEO
Housing Authority of DeKalb County

AUDIENCE Q&A

ADJOURN

Forum Presented by



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The Role of Housing Authorities in Addressing Metro Atlanta's Housing Crisis

Born out President Roosevelt's Depression-era New Deal program in 1937, public housing authorities have played a critical role in housing low-income families across the country. Atlanta blazed the trail in public housing, opening the first government-owned housing project in 1936 - Techwood Homes. Starting before the 1996 Olympics under the leadership of Renee Glover, by 2011 Atlanta's large-scale public housing communities were either demolished or replaced with attractive mixed-income communities. Leveraging Federal Hope VI funding, the City was first in the nation to demolish its public housing properties.

Some 83 years after the opening of Techwood Homes, the importance of housing authorities in the entire metro region cannot be overstated, as the need extends far beyond the City limits. The Brookings Institution's Suburbanization of Poverty suggests that more than 80 percent of the region's poor live in the suburbs, underscoring the importance of all housing authorities in the metro.

Today we talk with housing authorities from around the region. Why has housing authority development activity dropped in the last decade? Atlanta Housing has some 400 undeveloped acres of land. How do they plan to activate these spaces and create new housing opportunities? How are housing authorities in Cobb, DeKalb and Gwinnett counties leveraging their assets? How can collaboration and innovation help housing authorities serve more low-income families? What are the barriers to increasing housing authority development activity?

Housing authorities are also responsible for executing rental assistance voucher programs.

Recent trends suggest that voucher holders are having a difficult time finding homes and apartments, encountering landlords that all too often will not accept their vouchers. HUD representatives in Atlanta and beyond have held listening tours with properties owners to learn why acceptance of voucher programs has decreased. What did they learn in these discussions and what changes, if any, are forthcoming?

In addition to our conversation with housing authority representatives from around the region, we will also share the latest updates and action needed from the HouseATL initiative. Lastly, we will ask the experts what state legislative policies are needed or are barriers to creating housing affordability and stability.

We are glad you are here for today's discussion.



From the Archives: Techwood Homes, Building No. 5, 457 Techwood Drive, Atlanta, GA

Presenter Bios



BILL BOLLING is the founder and moderator of the Atlanta Regional Housing Forum. Bill served as executive director of the Atlanta Community Food Bank since founding the organization in 1979 until June 2015. Over the span of 36 years, he led the Food Bank's distribution of more than half a billion pounds of food and grocery products through a network of more than 600 local and regional partner nonprofit organizations that feed the hungry across 29 Georgia counties. As a charter member of Feeding America, the national network of food banks, Bill was instrumental in the start-up of food banks across the country. He is a frequent speaker on topics related to hunger, poverty, regionalism, affordable housing and public policy reform.



BAMBI HAYES-BROWN, President & CEO of GeorgiaACT. Bambi previously served as Executive Director for Crisp Area Habitat for Humanity, Inc. She has 20 years of experience in rural and urban community and economic development including the Housing Choice Voucher Program, Public Housing, HUD-VASH, LIHTC, CDBG, HOME Investment Partnership, Tax-Exempt Bonds, and public/private deal structuring. She previously served as Interim Executive Director for the Southwest Georgia United Empowerment Zone, Inc. where she played an instrumental role in obtaining a \$20 million rural Empowerment Zone designation for Crisp and Dooly Counties. Later, she served as the Homeownership and Special Programs Manager for the Housing Authority of DeKalb County. Ms. Hayes-Brown managed a \$48 million dollar housing program for low-income families assisting thousands of families in purchasing their first home and transitioning homeless veterans and victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita into permanent housing. She is a Certified Economic Development Finance Professional, Grant Writer, Homebuyer Educator and Comprehensive Housing Counselor. Ms. Hayes-Brown is a native of Cordele, Ga., and graduated from Shorter University with both a Bachelor's in Business Management and an MBA. She completed additional studies in Secondary Education and is a Doctor of Business Administration student majoring in Organizational Leadership.



SARAH KIRSCH is the Executive Director of ULI Atlanta, one of the largest and most active district councils of the Urban Land Institute. The Urban Land Institute provides leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is an independent global nonprofit supported by members representing the entire spectrum of real estate development and land use disciplines. Sarah began working with ULI Atlanta in 2012 as Director of the Center for Leadership and Director of the Livable Communities Council (LCC). Prior to joining ULI, Sarah spent twelve years with RCLCO (Robert Charles Lesser & Co.), the nation's leading independent real estate advisory firm. For the last three years, she served as the senior principal of RCLCO's Atlanta office and was responsible for leading consulting practice and business development activities for the southeast.



LEJLA PRLJACA - As the Lawrenceville Housing Authority's (LHA) Executive Director and CEO of the Gwinnett Housing Corporation (GHC), Lejla Prljaca is responsible for the planning, organizing and directing of operations of one of the largest affordable housing agencies in Gwinnett. Her realization of the growing need for affordable housing inspired her to expand GHC's programs to include roles as Gwinnett County NSP3 Asset Manager and the Gwinnett County Community Housing Development Organization. She is the co-lead for City of Norcross program with the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH). Lejla is also active in state and national housing associations. As a Legislation Chair of the Georgia Association of Housing and Redevelopment Authorities (GAHRA) she has lobbied the state and federal government for deregulation of public housing and adequate funding. She is a Board member of the GA Department of Community Affairs Homeless Continuum of Care and serves on the Regional Housing Task Force. Lejla holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Georgia and a Bachelor's Degree from Georgia State University.



BRANDON RIDDICK-SEALS is the interim president and CEO of Atlanta Housing, where he oversees the largest public housing authority in Georgia—and one of the largest in the United States—which provides equitable housing resources for nearly 22,000 low-income households and approximately 50,000 people. Driven by a passion for people and the built environment, he heads the agency as a seasoned commercial real estate development and construction executive, having led business development, external affairs and corporate diversity and inclusion as the first African-American partner at Brasfield & Gorrie, LLC, one of the nation's largest privately held construction companies. His leadership and collaboration on landmark development projects, such as Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Egleston, the Georgia Aquarium and SunTrust Park, have helped shape Atlanta's skyline. A past vice chairman of the Atlanta Business League, a former commissioner on the Executive Board of Directors of the Atlanta Housing and member of Leadership Georgia Class of 2015, Brandon holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Building Science and Construction Management from Auburn University, where he was a Presidential Scholar. He also earned an International Economic Development Council Advanced Certificate in Commercial Real Estate Development and Reuse from the Georgia Institute of Technology.



MARION C. "PETE" WALDREP, JR. - As Executive Director, Pete supervises, manages, and directs all activities and operations of the Marietta Housing Authority, to carry out policies established by the Board of Commissioners, and to ensure compliance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations. His thirteen-year tenure at MHA has been marked by his leadership in ensuring successful completion of 11 tax credit projects. His experience as a former Vice President of Fulton Federal Savings and Loan, homebuilder (over 500 homes), Vice President of Southern Structural, and 12 years as a Marietta City Councilman has been invaluable in leading MHA through the often complex process of tax credit apartment development.



E.P. 'PETE' WALKER, JR. - Pete was appointed Executive Director of the Housing Authority of DeKalb County in October, 2010 and has since led the agency in applying innovative business practices in its approach to affordable housing and development – expanding the Authority and its Affiliates' missions to maximize opportunities for impact and growth. Mr. Walker began his career in affordable housing development and finance in 1989 as Finance Director for the Urban Residential Finance Authority of the City of Atlanta, where he was responsible for maintaining the Authority's \$300 million tax-exempt bond portfolio and all of its other fiscal affairs. From 1998 to 2002, Mr. Walker was the Managing Director and Chief Financial Officer for the Atlanta Development Authority. Reporting to the President of the City of Atlanta's commercial and residential development arm, he was responsible for all fiscal and financial affairs supervising the Authority's Finance, Accounting and Administration departments as well as overseeing the financial operations of the Authority (including 52 bond issues totaling more than \$800 million in assets) and its nine subsidiaries in implementing approximately \$250 million in development plans and projects throughout the city. Mr. Walker founded Millennium Development Partners (MDP) in 2003, where he specialized in development consulting and facilitating the production of affordable housing by creating development/project partnerships between Authorities, Developers and/or Nonprofits by structuring and implementing financings using tax exempt debt with tax credits, conventional debt along tax credits and tax exempt revenue bond structures. Prior to joining the Housing Authority, Mr. Walker served as President of Mercy Housing Southeast (MHSE) from 2007-2010. Mercy Housing, Inc. (Mercy) is one of the top nonprofit developers of affordable housing with assets of nearly \$2 Billion and properties in 41 states. In Mr. Walker's capacity as President of MHSE, he was responsible for setting the strategy and direction for expanding Mercy's southeastern affordable housing development footprint while maintaining a quality portfolio. During his 3 year tenure he grew MHSE from five (5) properties to 18 properties located in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama and Ohio, spearheading development of more than 10 affordable housing projects of which seven (7) were 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credit projects. A native of Georgia, Walker received a BA degree from Clark Atlanta University where he graduated cum laude.



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