

NJRA Annual Report



TRENTON MAKES

THE WORLD TAKES



2024

Dear NJRA Stakeholders,

As we reflect on the achievements of the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority (NJRA) throughout 2024, we have made significant progress in advancing the Governor's goal of a stronger and fairer New Jersey. The year 2024 was a rebirth for the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority. We welcomed Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Jacquelyn Suárez as chair of the NJRA Board. In 2024, the NJRA also allocated \$28.6 million in real estate financing to support the creation of 407 units of new housing and 15,00 feet of commercial space.

In 2024 the NJRA continues to successfully implement several innovative programs aimed at improving affordable housing access and supporting community revitalization. Programs such as the Affordable Housing Support Initiative (AHSI), the Redevelopment Investment Fund (RIF), and USA funds have streamlined development processes, benefiting municipalities and their residents.

In 2024 the NJRA remain focused on advancing equity and inclusion. By supporting emerging developers, engaging faith-based organizations, and prioritizing underserved communities, NJRA is working to ensure that all residents have access to affordable housing opportunities and can participate in the revitalization of their neighborhoods.

In looking ahead, the NJRA remains committed to further expanding our impact. As we move forward, we remain dedicated to strengthening our partnerships and expanding our initiatives to continue building a more resilient and inclusive New Jersey. In 2025 we aim to deploy the remaining funds from the Affordable Housing Support Initiative to fund additional and much needed affordable housing projects in our legislatively designated municipalities.



Leslie A. Anderson
President and CEO
New Jersey Redevelopment Authority



Jacquelyn A. Suarez
Commissioner
Department of Community Affairs
NJRA Board Chair

Vision

The Vision of the NJRA is to be the premier catalyst for investments that sustainably grow and develop urban communities.

Mission

The New Jersey Redevelopment Authority (NJRA) functions as a comprehensive resource center that focuses on improving the quality of life by creating value in New Jersey's urban communities. The NJRA invests financial and technical resources into redevelopment projects and plans that will create a positive impact in our eligible communities. Our primary goal is to ensure that projects are urban-focused, neighborhood-based, and investment-driven.

Creative Community Investment

Redevelopment Investment Fund (RIF) and Urban Site Acquisition Fund (USA)

The NJUSA Program is a \$20 million revolving loan fund that facilitates the acquisition, site preparation, and redevelopment of properties, which are components of an urban redevelopment plan in NJRA-eligible communities. Acting as a catalyst to jump-start urban revitalization efforts, the NJUSA Program provides for-profit and non-profit developers and municipalities with a form of bridge financing to acquire title to property and for other acquisition-related costs. The NJRA manages this flexible investment fund that provides debt and equity financing for business and real estate ventures. Through the RIF Program, the NJRA can offer direct loans, real estate equity, loan guarantees, and other forms of credit enhancements. These loan programs support urban revitalization and mixed-use developments, strengthening local economies and providing commercial opportunities. In 2024, the NJRA allocated over \$14 million, resulting in 327 new housing units and 15,800 square feet of commercial space.

Affordable Housing Support Initiative (AHSI)

The NJRA's Affordable Housing Support Initiative is a loan program that promotes the redevelopment of the NJRA's eligible municipalities by applying State resources to the affordable housing needs of community redevelopment projects. Through this initiative, for-profit and non-profit developers receive loans in their efforts to develop affordable housing units. The Initiative leverages State and other funding sources. In 2024, \$14.6 million was allocated to projects for the creation of 80 new affordable housing units. These units address the growing demand for affordable housing, providing secure and stable homes for low-income families.

NRA Training Institute

In 2024, the NJRA Training Institute celebrated its 18th anniversary, marking nearly two decades of empowering professionals in redevelopment and real estate. To date, the institute has educated over 4,000 participants. This year, NJRA-TI hosted six workshops focused on various real estate and redevelopment topics. These in-person training sessions engaged 377 participants and featured insights from 37 industry experts with diverse professional backgrounds.

The training participants included municipal officials, community and economic development practitioners, real estate developers, investors, nonprofit leaders, entrepreneurs, professional consultants, licensed practitioners, and city, state, and county staff focused on redevelopment.

In 2024, the NJRA-Training Institute partnered with the NJ Department of State's Office of Faith-Based Initiatives to deliver on its collaborative training initiative. This initiative educated and empowered faith-based leaders and practitioners across New Jersey, equipping them with fundamental knowledge of redevelopment and access to resources for enhancing housing capacity within their communities. These initiatives included events held in March and October of this year.

In March 2024, Kean University hosted the inaugural Faith in Action Symposium: Empowering New Jersey Communities through Faith-Based Housing and Redevelopment Conference. The event drew over 250 participants and various vendors. NJHMFA, NJEDA, and DCA were also sponsors of the symposium. This daylong event allowed religious leaders to learn how they can leverage and position themselves in the world of redevelopment. The day started off with a dynamic Fireside Chat between NJRA President and CEO Leslie A. Anderson and Dr. DeForest B. Soaries. Participants then went on to breakout sessions centered around specific development topics that engaged the interest of novice to the more seasoned attendees.

In October 2024, the New Brunswick Theological Seminary (NBTS) partnered with the NJRA and the New Jersey Office of Faith-Based Initiatives to host the 2024 Mark Kraai Lecture on the Rutgers University campus in New Brunswick. The lecture, titled Theological & Practical Principles on Community Development, focused on affordable housing and brought together diverse perspectives on faith-based community development. This event was attended by over 70 participants and various vendors.

Building on this success, the NJRA Training Institute will continue its strategic partnership with the Office of Faith-Based Initiatives and its partner agencies, NJHMFA, NJEDA, and DCA, into 2025, focusing on enhancing technical services and municipal consultations throughout the State of New Jersey.

NJRA Board Members

Jacquelyn A. Suarez, Esq., Chairman, Commissioner

Department of Community Affairs

Robert Asaro-Angelo, Commissioner

Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Kaitlan Baston, Commissioner

Department of Health

Matthew J. Platkin, Attorney General

Department of Law & Public Safety

Kevin Dehmer, Acting Commissioner

Department of Education

Elizabeth Muoio, State Treasurer

Department of Treasury

Shaw La Tourette, Commissioner

Department of Environmental Protection

Sarah Adleman, Commissioner

Department of Human Services

Francis K. O'Connor, Acting Commissioner

Department of Transportation

Paul Ceppi

NJ Economic Development Authority



May 2024 Board Meeting

Public Members

Barry E. Vankat

R. Andrew Marshall

William Sumas

Robert Sierra

In Person Board Meeting

In 2024, the NJRA hosted an in-person Board Meeting in Plainfield, NJ.

The City of Plainfield graciously opened the doors of City Hall for the NJRA Board to meet. After the meeting, Plainfield Mayor Adrian O. Mapp addressed the NJRA Board and told them about the development boom in Plainfield.

Following lunch, the NJRA Board, along with Plainfield Mayor Adrian O. Mapp and Economic Development Director Zenobia Fields took a tour of the city of Plainfield. Board Members were able to see and tour NJRA funded projects, ABC Supply, and Elmwood Gardens.

This in-person meeting also marked the last time NJRA board member William Sumas attended a board meeting. The NJRA mourns the loss of our beloved and longtime board member.



Project Spotlight

At the April 2024 Meeting, the NJRA Board approved a loan of up to \$4,516,541 from the Affordable Housing Support Initiative for the project named 566-572 13th Ave LLC. This project is located at 566-572 13th Avenue, Newark, NJ 07103.

The entity, 566-572 13th Ave LLC, is to construct a three (3) story low-rise multifamily building with parking spaces. The development will entail sixteen (16) affordable rental apartments with 16 parking spaces at 566-572 13th Avenue, Newark, New Jersey. The total development is 19,602 gross square feet, with each residential unit featuring two bedrooms and one bath. There is an estimated average of 860 square feet for each residential unit. Each unit will feature individually controlled central air conditioning and heating; a gas range; a washer and dryer; and a full kitchen with dishwasher and microwave built in. Each building will be equipped with an automatic sprinkler system. The community center will be a 560-square-foot unit containing a common space for the tenants. A media room with Wi-Fi will be included in this space, along with a conference/meeting room that has the flexibility to open to a gallery for an expanded multi-purpose room. Off-street parking will be all indoor surface parking located centrally in the development. Parking space will include parking spaces, of which one space will be a disability-accessible parking space and 15% electric vehicle-ready spaces. The proposed development will have security features as well. Each apartment will include security alarm-ready connections. Common exterior areas will include area lighting and a closed-circuit video monitoring system.

The construction and development of the multi-family property is an exciting vision and a focus on revitalization of the Fairmont neighborhood in the West Ward section of Newark. The proposed newly built development will aid in transforming the neighborhood. NJRAs' Affordable Housing Support Initiative funding will provide total project financing for the total project costs of \$4,516,541.

The ownership and developing entity is 566-572 13th Ave LLC. The respective owners of 566-572 13th Ave LLC are Ricardo Sosa and Dr. Ahmed Abdel Megid, with each at 50% ownership, respectively.

Ricardo Sosa is the founder and president of Gonsosa Development and Construction (Gonsosa), which is headquartered in Roselle Park, New Jersey. Founded in 2001, Gonsosa Development and Construction is a family-owned commercial real estate company that is a certified Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) firm. The respective company builds, develops, and manages community-enhancing residential and commercial real estate projects throughout the New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland markets.

The project is a pivotal driver of economic prosperity for the City of Newark. The project is one of several projects that will transform the Fairmont section of Newark's West Ward. The project will create a neighborhood redevelopment that will meet the community characteristics and needs, such as the close-proximity retail services, public transportation, kid day-care centers, elementary school, high school, and grocery stores, etc. This project will also create safe, livable, and sustainable neighborhood property for residents.

NJRA Staff

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NJRA Municipalities

Asbury Park
Atlantic City
Bayonne
Belleville
Bergenfield
Bloomfield
Brick Township
Bridgeton
Burlington City
Camden City
Carteret Borough
Clifton
Cliffside Park Borough
East Orange
Elizabeth
Garfield City
Glassboro
Gloucester City
Gloucester Township
Hackensack
Harrison
Hillside Township
Hoboken

Irvington Township
Jersey City City
Keansburg Borough
Kearny
Lakewood
Lawnside
Lindenwold
Lodi
Long Branch
Manville
Millville
Monroe Township
(Gloucester)
Montclair
Mount Holly Township
Neptune City
Neptune Township
New Brunswick
Newark City
North Bergen
Nutley Township
Old Bridge Township
Orange City
Passaic City

Paterson
Pemberton Township
Penns Grove Borough
Pennsauken Township
Perth Amboy
Phillipsburg Town
Plainfield
Pleasantville
Rahway
Roselle Borough
Salem City
Seaside Heights borough
Sussex
Trenton City
Union City
Vineland City
Weehawken Township
West New York Town
Willingboro Township
Winslow Township
Woodbridge Township
Woodbury

The Strategy Report

The New Jersey Redevelopment Authority is required to submit a strategy document that (1) sets forth the goals and priorities governing the selection of projects; (2) reviews and evaluates the projects undertaken and (3) forecasts and measures relevant indices of accomplishment of its goals of economic revitalization.

Including specifically

- The number of jobs created, or to be created by, or as a result of the project;
- The cost or estimated cost, to the state involved in the creation of those jobs;
- The amount of private capital investment in, or stimulated by, a project in proportion to the public funds invested therein

Background

The New Jersey Redevelopment Authority (NJRA) was created legislatively, through the New Jersey Urban Redevelopment Act in July 1996. NJRA became fully operational in March 1997. Established as a financing authority with a focus on urban revitalization, NJRA replaced the NJ Urban Development Corporation. NJRA is an independent authority allocated to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. The Authority consist of 21 members (10 specified ex-officio cabinet members, 7 specified appointees of the Governor, 2 appointees of the Senate President and 2 appointees of the Assembly Speaker). The Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs serves as the Chairperson of the Authority.

Strategic Mission

NJRA functions as a comprehensive urban resource center that focuses on improving the quality of life by creation value in New Jersey's urban communities. NJRA accomplishes this strategic mission through the investment of financial and technical resources in our eligible communities defined by its enabling legislation. The primary goal is to ensure that projects are urban-focused, neighborhood-based, and investment driven.

Business Development

The Division of Business Development creates prudent investment strategies by using the available resources to fund programs and initiatives. In addition, Business Development staff works closely with developers, nonprofits, community-based organizations, businesses, and other government agencies to structure projects that meet indemnified needs in the community.

Strategic Partnerships

Strategic Partnerships is responsible for identifying strategic business relationships and opportunities that enable the Authority to market its resources, establish and enhance NJRA branding, educate the redevelopment community, and grow its financial investments.

Technical Resources

NJRA's staff is comprised of professionals who are committed to providing technical assistance to its clients. These services include strategic neighborhood planning, plan implementation, project development, and financial modeling. NJRA also coordinates the efforts of local communities in obtaining technical and financial resources from other areas of state government. Additionally, NJRA uses its network of financial institutions, corporations, developers, utilities, and foundations to establish and develop meaningful public-private partnerships that serve the eligible municipalities. NJRA TI has been designed to provide real estate practitioners and industry professionals with a body of knowledge of the redevelopment and real estate development process. Since its inception, NJRA TI has taught nearly 3000 participants. The Division has been recognized as an approved training provider by the American Institute of Certified Planners , the New Jersey Department of Taxation, the New Jersey Supreme Court Board of Continuing Legal Education, and the New Jersey DCA Division of Local Government Services. NJRA TI offers a fee based customized training service to municipalities, non-profits, and private companies. This service allows for onsite training and one on one redevelopment consultations.

Goals and Priorities

The NJRA will focus on three key priority areas over the next biennium

- Expand our lending services to also provide Private Activity Bonds to applicants with eligible projects in NJRA legislatively designated municipalities
- NJRA anticipates tapping back into the New Market Tax Credit arena to provide special financing to applicants that are looking to invest in NJRA's distressed and low income communities.
- NJRA will also extend our portfolio to include a variety of projects, outside of the traditional mixed use developments, with a key focus on projects located in areas in need of redevelopment

The Authority will continue to provide its financial resources to the eligible municipalities. The resources include:

- New Jersey Redevelopment Investment Fund (RIF)
- NJ Urban Site Acquisition Program (NJ USA)
- NJ Bond Financing
- Working In Newark Neighborhoods (WINN)
- Affordable Housing Support Initiative

The NJRA will continue to provide direct support to eligible municipalities by providing Municipal Consultations and Customized Trainings, which are offered through the NJRA Training Institute. The NJRA will extend its technical resources to assist municipalities in maximizing the existing resources within their Legislated Designated Municipalities.

As per the New Jersey Urban Redevelopment Act, projects shall be prioritized in eligible municipalities as follows:

- Projects included in designated areas in need of redevelopment, designated redevelopment areas
- Projects that are included in the following areas: Urban Enterprise Zone; Transit Village and/or eligible municipalities with approved Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credits (NRTC) plans
- Projects without the noted state designations but that also incorporate partnerships with community-based organizations, municipalities, and real estate development entities

The NJRA shall use one or more of the following factors in deciding to provide financial assistance

- Community involvement in developing the neighborhood empowerment plan.
- Community input regarding the development of a specific project
- The extent to which the community stands to benefit by virtue of the development of the project
- The economic feasibility of the project.
- The extent of economic and related social distress in the area affected by the project.
- The degree to which the project will advance state, regional, and local development strategies.
- The likelihood that the project will become capable of repaying the financing costs incurred.
- The relationship of the project to a comprehensive local development strategy, including other projects.
- The degree to which the project interfaces with public transportation systems