

Palm Beach County Department of Economic Sustainability

SUSTAINABILITY NEWS

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Palm Beach County and Westgate CRA to Celebrate Completion of 13 Homes March 20

On Wednesday, March 20 at 10 a.m., the Board of County Commissioners, the Department of Economic Sustainability (DES), and the Westgate/Belvedere Homes Community Redevelopment Agency (WCRA) will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 440 Cherry Road in West Palm Beach, to celebrate the completion of the rehabilitation and reconstruction of 13 affordable single-family homes in the Westgate community.

The county partnered with WCRA to rehabilitate seven homes and reconstruct six new housing units. The group completed six three-bedroom/one-bath and seven three-bedroom/two-bath homes. The new homes feature 10-foot ceilings, ceramic tile floors, ceiling fans, and Energy Star appliance packages. Other amenities include large lots, lush landscaping and irrigation, neo-traditional architecture, newly paved streets, and connection to the new Belvedere Homes sanitary sewer system. These homes will provide additional quality infill housing to the permanent housing stock for the area.

The project received \$2.44 million through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 Residential Rehabilitation Grant Program (NSP2 RRG) administered by DES. Gap financing was also provided by the Palm Beach County Housing Finance Authority (HFA). Permanent financing is provided by EverBank, Chase and Iberia banks to the prospective buyers and a 30 percent direct subsidy will be used to make the homes more attainable.

Under NSP2 RRG, the WCRA is responsible for the acquisition of foreclosed or distressed properties, rehabilitation of the units, and resale of those properties to eligible homeowners. The Westgate NSP2 RRG project furthers the goals of the NSP2 program to help revitalize older urban communities hard hit by the economic and foreclosure crisis since these areas will be least likely to rebound due to poor structural conditions and obsolete infrastructure. Per program guidelines, 50 percent of the units will be sold to households with incomes no greater than 120 percent of the area median income (AMI) and 50 percent of the units will be sold to households with incomes no greater than 50 percent of AMI. HUD has determined that the county's AMI is \$64,600 for a family of four.

To promote sustainability, the homes include green features such as energy efficient construction techniques and products, improved indoor environments, and increased water efficiency. In addition, this project implements smart growth principles by reusing existing infrastructure improvements and promoting alternative modes of transportation by collocating live, work, and entertainment facilities in a compact urban environment. A notable accomplishment of the project is redevelopment without displacement since a majority of the prospective homeowners will be making the move from being renters in Westgate to future Westgate homeowners.

The agency has approximately nine of the thirteen properties under contract and the remaining four units are pending income certification and financing. The WCRA anticipates closing on all of its units by the by the end of the year.

DES estimates that this project will have a five-year economic impact of \$5 million. It is projected that overall, the county's NSP2 program will generate more than \$161.3 million over five years.

