

# **Narrative Exhibit A: Executive Summary**

**Applicant:  
Housing Authority of the County of Sacramento**

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## **Exhibit A: Executive Summary**

Sacramento's River District – Railyards neighborhood is an area in transition. Located at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers just north of downtown, the target area is changing from a declining industrial area into one of the largest infill opportunities in the country. With the closure of the Sacramento Railyards and the limited street connections between the River District – Railyards and downtown, the area experienced limited investment, and its isolation and proximity to the rivers contributed to the presence of a large homeless population. Since 1990, the City has targeted the River District – Railyards as a redevelopment area, and with the adoption of Smart Growth Principles, the neighborhood has been re-envisioned as a vibrant, mixed-use in-fill community connected to the surrounding area by a network of local streets, light rail transit, and bicycle and pedestrian pathways. The expectation is to see the neighborhood bordered by a ribbon of parks along the rivers' edge and offer a wide range of employment, entertainment, retail, commercial, and housing opportunities.

The principles for redevelopment of the River District – Railyards were codified in the City's *2030 General Plan*, and the Specific Plans for the River District and Railyards adopted in 2011 and 2007, respectively, and significant public and private investment is currently underway. However, a concrete plan to revitalize the 218-unit severely distressed Twin Rivers public housing development and integrate it into the planned neighborhood is missing. Such a plan could focus efforts on revitalizing the site in a manner that capitalizes upon the planned investments and expands opportunities for residents to live and work and learn in a revitalized mixed-income and mixed-use environment rich with opportunities. Additionally, while the adopted Specific Plan address the River District – Railyards from a purely physical perspective, there is no attention given to how Twin Rivers public housing residents and other neighborhood

residents, including the homeless, can improve their employment, educational, and health outcomes through case management and supportive services including job training, connection to jobs, improved health care, access to excellent educational opportunities from early childhood to college and beyond. These are the reasons why a Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI) Planning Grant is needed for the River District – Railyards.

The CNI planning process will build upon a number of existing and planned neighborhood assets and initiatives in the River District – Railyards. Efforts include the construction of a new light rail line at 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Richards Boulevard that will connect the neighborhood to downtown and eventually the Sacramento International Airport; expanding the area's connectivity and access to employment and services; development of new public facilities, such as the recently completed California Highway Patrol and California Lottery headquarters and the planned Sacramento Superior Court building; bringing employment opportunities and an enhanced purchasing base to support new retail establishments; and developing residential options, like the Township Nine project, recently visited by HUD Deputy Secretary Ron Sims, currently in construction which will add over 2,500 housing units and nearly 1 million square feet of office/retail space to the neighborhood.

The Railyards is envisioned to be a hub for transportation, retail, housing, entertainment, business, culture, and commerce, and will be the location of the Sacramento Intermodal Transportation Facility that will provide user-friendly connections between nearly all modes of transportation, including bicycle, pedestrian, bus, light rail, taxi, and train. In the past two years, \$225 million in public and private funding has been allocated to the project for infrastructure improvements that will better connect the site with downtown and other neighborhoods. Currently, the City is constructing the re-alignment of the railroad track, new passenger rail

platforms, and new streets and bridges over the tracks to connect downtown with the River District. The CNI planning process will also work in tandem with Sacramento Steps Forward on the City's and County's 10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness to support various strategies to address the needs of this visible and vulnerable population.

The goal of the CNI planning process is to deliver a Transformation Plan for the River District – Railyards that identifies a specific approach to ensure that residents across all socio-economic levels, ages, and household types are integrated into the residential fabric of the community and offered enhanced housing choices; that these residents are afforded the appropriate type of quality supportive services, educational opportunities, and household supports to maximize their individual outcomes; and that the quality and type of amenities offered are appropriate for supporting a vibrant neighborhood including retail services like grocery stores, banks, health care, programmed open space, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly access routes, and effective public transit options that connect people to employment centers and services.

The vision for the River District – Railyards is that of a sustainable community offering a diverse residential experience where people come to live, work, and/or play and providing quality programs, services, and amenities that meet the needs of residents across all income levels, ages, and ability. The key partner organizations that will assist the Housing Authority of the County of Sacramento (HACOS) achieve this vision are the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA), the City of Sacramento, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), the Twin Rivers Unified School District, the California Endowment, California State University – Sacramento (CSUS), the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA), the River District Property and Business Improvement District (PBID), UC-

Davis Center for Regional Change, and Sacramento Steps Forward. These organizations are key leaders and implementers in the Sacramento region as well as within the River District – Railyards target neighborhood. Two other key stakeholders intimately involved in the planning process are the Twin Rivers residents and the HACOS Resident Advisory Board (RAB).

While a formal market assessment of the River District – Railyards has not yet been completed and will be commissioned as part of the CNI planning process, anecdotal evidence suggests that this neighborhood has locational advantages within the regional context because of renewed interest nationally in service- and amenity-rich in-town living, especially near or in downtown areas. Located in close proximity to the urban core of Sacramento, there is a strong employment base of federal, state and local government offices and the associated private employment opportunities. With regional transit focused around downtown, it is easy to access employment centers elsewhere via light rail, bus, bike, or car. As more housing is developed in the area, there will be the concomitant demand for more goods and services that serve the immediate neighborhood as well as visitor and employee needs.