

Women's Community Revitalization Project



Strategic Plan 2023-2025

100 West Oxford Street, Suite E-2300
Philadelphia, PA 19122





Women's Community Revitalization Project

Strategic Plan

2023-2025

Table of Contents

Planning in a Time of Change: <i>Overview of Our 2023-2025 Strategic Plan</i>	1
How we developed our strategic plan	
Highlights of our strategic plan	
Steady Growth: <i>Our Work Has Been Productive</i>	4
Affordable housing: Growing & managing a sizable portfolio	
Capable constituents: Cultivating stable families & able leaders	
Equitable development: Sowing the seeds for policy change	
Stable organization: Sustaining a productive & accountable CDC	
Climate Change: <i>Our Work Has Been Resilient</i>	8
A challenging environment for housing development	
A punishing environment for low-income families	
A demanding environment for property management	
A destabilizing environment for nonprofit CDCs	
Vital Roots: <i>Our Work Is Sustained by People & Values</i>	11
Mission: What we do	
Constituents: Who we serve	
Values: How we do our work	
Governance: How we remain inclusive and accountable	

**Fertile Ground: *Building Leadership, Building Buildings
Across the City*** 15

Criteria: Selecting neighborhoods in which we work

Community: Reaffirming the value of place

Sturdy Branches: *Our Work Is Planned* 18

Real Estate development: Three-year goals & objectives

Property management: Three-year goals & objectives

Supportive services: Three-year goals & objectives

Organizing & advocacy: Three-year goals & objectives

Organizational sustainability: Three-year goals & objectives

Green Leaves: *Our Collective Vision of Our Impact* 24

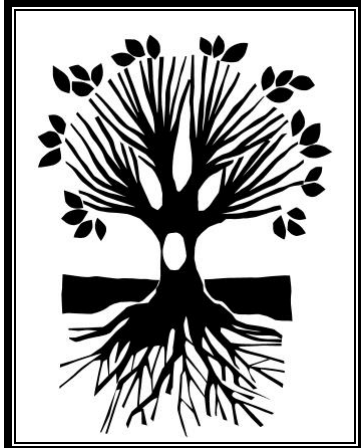
People: Our vision for individuals and communities we serve

Place: Our vision for the neighborhoods in which we work

Policy: Our vision for the changes we seek

Partnerships: Our vision for the coalitions we support

WCRP: Our vision for operating from a “position of strength”



Planning in a Time of Change

Overview of Our 2023-2025 Strategic Plan

For over thirty years, the Women's Community Revitalization Project (WCRP) has done community development in a different way. We have:

- ✦ Embraced an organizational mission that places women and their families at the center of our work.
- ✦ Pursued a three-fold strategy of physical, social, and political development, believing all three to be essential, equal, and complementary in revitalizing neighborhoods and in securing equity and dignity for women and their families.
- ✦ Developed close and constructive relationships with the people we house, supporting them as they pursue personal growth and economic wellbeing.
- ✦ Developed grassroots leaders and built collective power, advocating for policies that support affordable housing and equitable development.
- ✦ Created an organization that is led by women and accountable to the constituencies and communities we serve.

Our unique approach to community development has had considerable success. We have:

- Developed 309 units of affordable rental housing and 13 homeownership units, have 33 units in construction and another 92 homes in our development pipeline;
- Preserved 167 units of affordable rental housing by upgrading their major systems, roofs, bathrooms and kitchens
- Supported over 2500 individuals in achieving greater economic and family well-being through our tenant supportive services;
- Engaged 50-100 individuals each year in leadership development activities, while offering opportunities to use those skills in helping to guide WCRP and in playing key roles in our advocacy campaigns;
- Spearheaded and staffed multiple coalitions that have engaged dozens of organizations in campaigns resulting in new resources for affordable housing; and
- Established the Community Justice Land Trust to ensure lasting affordability of the housing we develop.

The environment in which we work has continued to change, in some ways predictably and in other ways we couldn't have imagined when we wrote our last strategic plan:

- ❖ The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the precarious economic circumstances of the families we serve and the number of families in need of affordable housing has expanded.

- ❖ The opportunity to develop affordably priced housing has shrunk, constrained by a combination of rising construction costs, supply chain delays, and significant competition for limited public funding.
- ❖ Finding sites for new projects serving low-income people has continued to be difficult due to growing gentrification and rising land prices in neighborhoods in which we work.
- ❖ The continued ebb and flow of political support for affordable housing from local officials, and their ability to control land use and local funding for low-income housing continues to bring a degree of unpredictability to the development process.

How We Developed Our Strategic Plan

WCRP did a major re-write of the Strategic Plan for the period covering 2015 – 2018. In our following Strategic Plan, and again in this one, our executive committee and senior staff have decided to update it and to extend it, *not* to start from scratch in creating an entirely new Strategic Plan. During the process to create the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan the Board recommitted to our mission and values while grounding in the changing conditions under which WCRP is doing our work.

WCRP's staff, board, and advisory committee met for a day-and-a-half planning retreat on December 3 -4, 2021, and another day-and-a-half on May 13-14, 2022, to consider the staff's recommendations for the goals and objectives that will guide WCRP's work in the years ahead. The retreat's participants also tackled a pair of issues that are crucial for the organization's future work:

- *How has the COVID-19 pandemic shifted our work and what do we anticipate the short and long-term impacts will be on our tenants, our staff and our organization?*
- *How should we begin to think about succession planning for our Executive Director and what will we need to do over the course of this next Strategic Plan to prepare us for an eventual transition?*

The answers that emerged from deliberations of the retreat's participants shaped the contents of the current Strategic Plan. A preliminary draft of the Plan was reviewed by WCRP's board of directors on September 7, 2022 and was unanimously approved.

Highlights of Our Strategic Plan

Where We Work. WCRP maintains our commitment to working in multiple neighborhoods during the next three years, depending on the availability of buildable sites, the sufficiency of financial subsidies, and the dependability of local support from a neighborhood's residents, its civic organizations, and the councilperson who represents that area. While WCRP is no longer rooted in just one neighborhood, we still approach our work with an emphasis on building resident power and being a good neighbor.

Who We Serve. We shall continue to serve, as our highest priority, low-income women and their families. We shall continue to be responsive to the needs and concerns of the people who reside in the housing we provide, as well as listening with respect and cultivating the support of people who live in the neighborhoods in which we hope to do development. In this way, our work may range across an ever-wider geography, but it will still be embedded in place.

What We Do. We shall continue to do community development in the distinctive way that WCRP has always done it, pursuing the following goals:

Real estate development that is aimed at (1) constructing rental housing that is truly affordable for low-income families and (2) where feasible, expanding homeownership opportunities for low-income families.

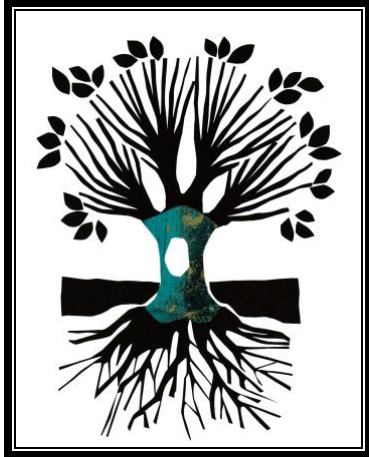
Property management that is aimed at managing and maintaining a housing portfolio of 309 rentals that will grow to 342 by the end of 2022.

Supportive services that are aimed at preserving the stability and improving the lives of the families housed by WCRP, as they strive to achieve their self-defined goals for the future.

Organizing and advocacy that is aimed at winning new resources for affordable housing, developing a new cadre of grassroots leaders, and building a base of support for WCRP's work.

Organizational sustainability that is aimed at increasing and diversifying WCRP's revenues, raising our visibility in the public eye, and solidifying our reputation as a champion for equitable and sustainable development.

Work Plans. WCRP's staff, board, and committees will develop annual work plans, identifying how the goals and objectives contained in our Strategic Plan are to be implemented. Our Strategic Plan is not stored away on a dusty shelf for three years after its completion, but is regularly consulted in helping WCRP to guide our work and to evaluate our progress.



Steady Growth

Our Work Has Been Productive

Over a span of three decades, WCRP has earned a unique reputation, both for developing and managing high-quality housing *and* for building collective power and grassroots leadership, especially among low-income women. Our multi-faceted approach to community development has helped to make the neighborhoods in which we work more affordable and livable. It has also sown the seeds of policy change, elevating equitable development and permanent affordability on the public agendas of our city and state. This is a solid trunk of capacity and accomplishment that should allow WCRP to weather a changing climate in the years ahead.

Affordable housing: *Growing & managing a sizable portfolio*

WCRP has built 322 two- three- and four-bedroom affordably priced rental homes. Eight were sold to tenants, 5 were sold to Community Justice Land Trust homeowners and 309 are presently managed and maintained under the direction of WCRP's staff.

Most recently, WCRP has:

- Completed the construction of 35 lease-to-purchase homes, the second residential project in which the underlying land was conveyed to WCRP's Community Justice Land Trust.
- Completed construction on and sold our first 5 homeownership units in Point Breeze, selling them to homebuyers through our Community Justice Land Trust.
- Gained control of new sites on which at least 92 affordable housing units can be built.
- Received zoning approval and \$9 million in Low Income Housing Tax Credits for the development of 33 townhomes, with construction having begun in 2022.
- Focused increased attention on preventive maintenance and on capital improvements within WCRP's existing portfolio of rental housing.
- Developed a plan and received funding for a major renovation of the Lilia Crippen Townhomes (46 units), completed in 2022, and for the Karen Donnelly/ Iris Brown Townhomes (44 units) currently under renovation.
- Completed financial packaging for 27 lease purchase homes in Gray's Ferry to begin construction by the end of 2022.

- Securing \$1,200,000 for our newly created Acquisition & Pre-Development Loan Fund which has already resulted in allowing us to purchase a site for affordable housing development.

Capable constituents: *Cultivating stable families & able leaders*

Since the completion of WCRP's first housing development, we have offered customized case management services that support our tenants in achieving greater family and economic wellbeing. We have also provided employment support, case management and housing counseling to other low-income women through special initiatives and outside contracts. Together, these efforts have helped over 2500 women and members of their families to improve their immediate circumstances. Our most *recent accomplishments* include:

- Providing services to our current 309 tenant families, totaling 1,015 individuals.
- Supporting more than 100 families each year in resolving issues that threaten their housing stability, which is a mounting problem in a challenging economy.
- Completing our 2020 analysis of changes in tenant income, which showed an average increase in household income of 52% during a family's first four years of living in a WCRP home. The increase in income is significant and still less than in years past – a sign of the pandemic's deep impact on our tenants.

WCRP's tenants, along with other neighborhood residents, are encouraged to join our leadership development activities. We offer training and immediate opportunities to put new leadership skills into practice.

Equitable development: *Sowing the seeds for policy change*

As far back as 1999, after numerous battles to secure resources for our own housing projects, WCRP realized that our efforts would have a greater impact if we joined with others to fight for systemic change. Since then, we have formed, joined, and supported multiple coalitions that have conducted successful campaigns shaping the city's Consolidated Housing Plan that guides the annual investment of \$20 million in federal and state funds in Philadelphia; creating the city's Housing Trust Fund, which has made available \$100 million in new funding for affordable housing since the Fund's inception in 2005; and creating the Philadelphia Land Bank.

More recently, WCRP has:

- Spearheaded the Philadelphia Coalition for Affordable Communities (PCAC), a city-wide coalition of 74 organizations that won \$450M in new resources for affordable housing.

- Through PCAC, worked to introduce, and ensured the passage of, a minimum annual contribution to the City’s Housing Trust Fund- more than doubling the resources available for affordable, accessible housing.

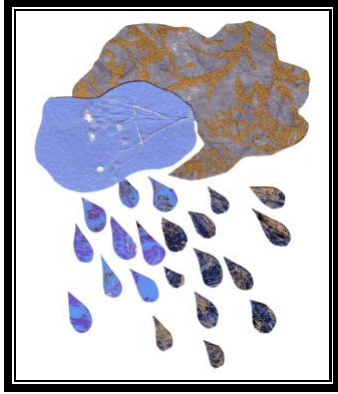
Stable organization: *Sustaining a productive & accountable CDC*

WCRP has been remarkably successful in doing what most other community development corporations have *not* been able to do, namely provide housing for *very* low-income families. At the same time, we have built a record of success in bringing our constituents and allies together to improve the neighborhoods in which we work and to advocate for policies that promote equitable and sustainable development. These results have been achieved by building and sustaining an organization with a unique set of characteristics and commitments:

- **INTEGRITY.** WCRP’s reputation is built on the integrity of our leaders, who display vision, determination, and dedication on behalf of our constituents.
- **INCLUSIVENESS.** WCRP has an unwavering commitment to the participation of our constituents in planning and decision making that promote projects and programs designed to improve the lives of women and their families.
- **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT.** WCRP provides training and meaningful opportunities to put leadership skills into practice so that low-income women are confidently prepared to participate in the fight for equitable policies in the future.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY.** WCRP is an organization that is responsive to community needs and reliable in following through on our commitments. This attitude permeates every level of the organization and plays a role in WCRP’s solid standing in Philadelphia.
- **INNOVATION.** WCRP is an organization that has pioneered models of supportive services, leadership development, and equitable development. One of our most notable innovations has been the use of a portion of our developer’s fee to establish an internal rent subsidy that deepens affordability. We also established the Community Justice Land Trust and have continued to promote the CLT model through trainings for policymakers, community activists, and our CDC peers.

More recently, WCRP has improved organizational stability by:

- Strengthening our capacity for financial forecasting and financial planning.
- Tracking our progress in implementing the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan.
- Publicizing our achievements through various media with 192 stories about WCRP’s work.



Climate Change

Our Work Has Been Resilient

During the course of preparing our 2023-2025 Strategic Plan, we examined the extent to which our environment has changed. We then weighed the implications of those changes for WCRP, crafting a Plan that adapts our programs and our capacity to an economic and political climate that has clouded prospects for the work we do, while still holding out hope for new opportunities for equitable and sustainable development.

A challenging environment for housing development

Developing affordable housing has never been easy, especially housing that is within the financial reach of low-income families, WCRP's priority since the very beginning. Challenges that seemed new at the beginning of our last strategic plan have only continued, often exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- ***Construction costs are higher than ever***, with major supply chain issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic still increasing costs and delaying project timelines.
- ***Competition has continued to be high for the tax credits used by WCRP in developing rental housing.***
- ***Costs & competition have increased for buildable sites.*** Gentrification has come to neighborhoods where WCRP used to work and to neighborhoods where WCRP hoped to work. Luxury condominiums are being built and sold. New stores and restaurants are opening up. Affluent residents are moving in. Housing prices are rapidly rising, along with the cost of buildable land.
- ***The political environment for affordable housing development continues to be unpredictable.*** The uncertainty caused by Philadelphia's long tradition of "councilmanic prerogative" has always made development difficult. Changing demographics, as gentrification takes root in one neighborhood after another, has undermined support for affordable housing development among several members of the City Council, making it harder to secure buildable sites, public funds, and regulatory approval for proposed projects within their wards.

- ***The cost and risk of planning new projects continue to be high.*** With increased competition for public funding, a nonprofit developer like WCRP often has to prepare multiple applications for tax credits and governmental grants for every one that is eventually funded. The predevelopment costs incurred in unsuccessful applications are not recoverable.

WCRP has adjusted to this changing environment in two ways, all of which are reflected in our current Strategic Plan:

- **PRE-DEVELOPMENT LOAN FUND.** With scarce resources in high demand and competition to quickly take control of buildable land, WCRP has developed a pre-development loan fund, designed to give the organization the liquid resources needed to take advantage of opportunities to own buildable land. WCRP has already used this loan fund to purchase a property that will allow us to build 33 units of affordable rental housing.
- **LOCATION OF PROJECTS.** We continue to explore opportunities in an expanded geography. We currently have projects constructed or in the pipeline in Eastern North, Northwest, South and West Philadelphia. During the next three years, we will be receptive to pursuing opportunities for affordable housing development where the appropriate mix of conditions exist. (See later chapter in the current Strategic Plan entitled “Fertile Ground.”)

A punishing environment for low-income families

The tenants in WCRP’s rental housing are more financially precarious than they’ve ever been. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic many of our tenants were already struggling to meet their basic needs. Jobs with family sustaining wages have been scarce, public assistance has declined, public services have been reduced, and the Philadelphia school system remains chronically underfunded. In 2020 conditions rapidly and even more drastically shifted. Services our tenants counted on were suddenly moved online with many of our tenants lacking the technology they needed to access services. Over the course of the pandemic every single family we serve has needed support and in 2020, 143 of our families needed rental assistance.

WCRP has adjusted to the economic precariousness of the low-income families in our housing by keeping the focus of our supportive services program on tenant stability. We shall continue to support our tenants who request assistance in reaching self-defined goals for personal, family, and financial well-being, but our priority must be on helping tenants to solve rent delinquencies, to apply for rental and utility assistance, and to retain their housing.

A demanding environment for property management

During the pandemic our property management staff became essential workers, a condition not unique to WCRP and, still, one for which we had not prepared. While Philadelphians were being asked to stay home our staff was at work ensuring our tenants maintained stable, healthy homes to stay in. We continued the work we had planned, leasing up 33 rental units and managing 167 relocations for renovations while developing COVID safety protocols for our staff and navigating the precarity of going into people's homes during a pandemic.

Over the course of the pandemic a significant number of our tenants have become in arrears and, while we were able to keep everyone housed for the last two years, our developments have struggled to bring in enough to cover the cost of our bills.

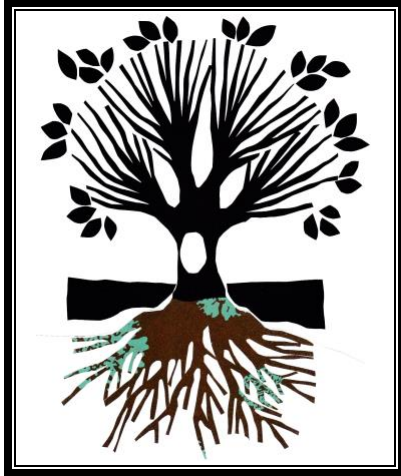
WCRP adjusted to this adverse environment by improving and adapting our systems without abandoning our values. Our property management team focused on meeting the needs of our tenants with care and welcoming new households into WCRP homes. Additionally, we have needed to use a reserve fund to cover the costs of operating our properties.

A destabilizing environment for nonprofit CDCs

WCRP is hardly alone in finding it harder to fund its projects and to sustain its operations in the current economic and political environment. Most of Philadelphia's community development corporations face similar challenges. This is a difficult time for CDCs.

Cutbacks in public funding for affordable housing development have meant that any nonprofit like WCRP that depends on developer's fees to subsidize rents and to cover a portion of the organization's operating costs has been hard-pressed to replace these lost revenues.

WCRP has adjusted to this harsh environment that has undermined the stability of many of the city's CDCs by taking actions and making plans that are designed to increase the organization's resiliency and sustainability in the tumultuous days ahead. The temptation in an uncertain time of climate change is to hunker down and to avoid anything risky or new, but that has never been WCRP's way. Innovation is one of the reasons we have survived so long and accomplished so much. Over the next three years, we shall explore new places and new projects. We shall look for new ways to capitalize and to grow the Community Justice Land Trust. We shall support new campaigns to secure additional funding for affordable housing and to promote policies of equitable development and permanent affordability. Resiliency isn't achieved by standing still, but by adapting in creative ways to a changing environment.



Vital Roots

Our Work Is Sustained by People & Values

Our environment has changed in challenging ways, making it necessary and prudent for WCRP to change as well. We have adjusted our plans, adapted our programs, and fine-tuned our internal capacity to ensure the continuation of WCRP's important work. What has *not* changed is WCRP's commitment to low-income women and to core values that have nourished, guided, and sustained our work for over 30 years.

Mission: *What we do*

WCRP is committed to social and economic equity for low-income women and their families. We develop affordable housing; provide supportive services; advocate for policy change; and honor and promote leadership, dignity, and justice in our communities.

Constituents: *Who we serve*

WCRP is working to create communities that are diverse, inclusive, and fair; places where the fruits of development are equitably shared by everyone who lives, works, or worships in a neighborhood, rather than going primarily to a fortunate few.

Equitable development does not happen by accident, however. It must be planned and promoted. And it must be fought for, often in the face of market forces that can empty neighborhoods of precisely the sort of racial, ethnic, and economic diversity to which WCRP is committed.

What this means in practice is fighting to *include* people in a neighborhood's revitalization who would otherwise be excluded or displaced.

We serve low-income people

WCRP develops and manages affordable rental housing for low-income families, with a priority for serving people as far down the income ladder as a household's finances

and a project's subsidies will allow. WCRP will continue to find the funds to develop *owner-occupied* housing in the years ahead via the Community Justice Land Trust, the people who are able to qualify for mortgages and to buy our homes will necessarily have a somewhat higher income than the population served by WCRP in the past. Low-income families will remain a priority, however, in both the design and implementation of WCRP's homeownership program.

We serve women

WCRP has an organizational priority on serving **women** – housing them, supporting them, advocating on their behalf, and developing their potential as leaders within their communities and within WCRP itself.

We serve families

WCRP provides housing and services for **families** – households with at least one adult and one or more dependent children.

We serve people who live, work, or worship in neighborhoods in which we have already developed (or are likely to develop) affordable housing

People with a priority claim to WCRP's resources, whether for housing development, property management, family support, or community organizing, are those who are directly connected to a neighborhood in which WCRP is developing and managing affordable housing – or is planning to do so in the next three years.

We serve people of diverse backgrounds who share our values and who want to work collectively with WCRP

WCRP encourages active participation in its activities, campaigns, and governance by people who support WCRP's mission, many of whom reside outside of the neighborhoods in which WCRP is developing or managing affordable housing.

Values: *How we do our work*

Values anchor, nourish, and sustain the work of the Women's Community Revitalization Project. They shape our relationship with the people we serve. They sharpen our selection of the strategies we use.

The values that are most essential to how we plan to do our work during the next three years are:

Family	Respect	Honesty
Equity	Openness	Inclusion
Community	Listening	Accountability
Diversity	Learning	Justice
Unity	Growth	Leadership
Collective power	Self-determination	Permanent affordability

WCRP makes change happen by staying true to these values. They guide our work in ten particular ways:

1. We believe that equitable community development requires three strategies that are essential, equal, and complementary:
 - **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**, transforming neighborhoods with inclusive and affordable housing;
 - **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**, supporting the self-determined goals and leadership skills of low-income people, especially low-income women whose voices have often not been heard; and
 - **POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT**, building collective power to realize our vision for neighborhood revitalization and social change.
2. We believe that land, housing, and community facilities that have been made available and affordable through public dollars or private donors should be *kept* affordable for future generations of low-income people.
3. We uphold the principle of self-determination: people who are the most directly affected should have a voice in determining the goals and paths to be pursued.
4. We believe we must build our collective power to have our voices heard and must sustain our collective strength to realize our vision of social and economic equity.

5. We welcome the participation of people of different races, ethnicities, skills, incomes, and backgrounds who can make a difference by working together.
6. We value learning, commitment, and growth as we build a sense of unity and community that is inclusive of everyone who lives, works, or worships in the neighborhoods we serve.
7. We know that people who have the lowest incomes often have the most powerful and fairest visions for creating lasting and needed social change.
8. We value the leadership, dignity, and culture of women, both in the way we work and in the community development strategies we pursue.
9. We believe in the potential of every individual to develop leadership and we seek to create an organizational environment in which established leaders share power and new leaders arise, even as we recognize a diversity of leadership roles, traditions, and styles.
10. We understand the importance of openness, honesty, and taking the time to listen – really listen – to one another, as together we learn what justice means to each of us and together we seek to transform relationships of inequality into relationships of mutuality and respect.

Governance: *How we remain inclusive and accountable*

WCRP has created inclusive structures and procedures for planning and governance that encourage the active participation of the people we serve. We make a particular effort to maintain an environment that is welcoming, nurturing and safe for women so they may discover and develop their leadership skills and potential.

WCRP is governed by a **Board of Directors** that has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that WCRP fulfills its mission and remains fiscally strong and institutionally sound. A majority of our current board is made up of individuals who have had first-hand experience of poverty.

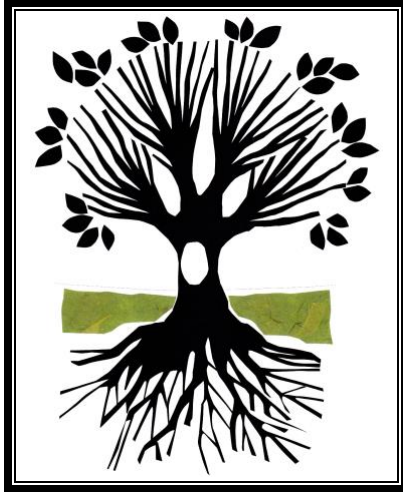
An **Advisory Committee**, recruited from the neighborhoods served by WCRP, from the rental housing managed by WCRP, and from the business, financial, and nonprofit sectors, works alongside the Board, attending its meetings, participating in its discussions, and assisting with planning and decision making. Members of the Advisory Committee are also encouraged to serve on one of the Board's

subcommittees: Executive, Advocacy, Housing, Finance, or the advisory committee of the Community Justice Land Trust.

New members of the Board of Directors are drawn primarily from the organization's committees and subcommittees, all of which are open to anyone who shares our values and who wishes to contribute to our work. Active participation in the meetings of WCRP's Board, committees, and subcommittees is encouraged and enabled by:

- Providing child care, transportation, Spanish-English translation for anyone who needs these services;
- Providing dinner for participants and their children;
- Facilitating meetings to maximize participation;
- Making decisions through an inclusive process and modified consensus; and
- Offering customized training that develops meaningful and needed capacities.

These structures and procedures, in addition to promoting participation, are vehicles for strengthening the leadership skills of the participants and for building new leaders who can act and advocate on behalf of WCRP, the people and neighborhoods WCRP serves, and the campaigns it sponsors.



Fertile Ground

Building Leadership, Building Buildings across the City

During the process of creating the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, a consensus was reached that WCRP would shift from attempting to find a single neighborhood in which to put down roots. Instead, WCRP's staff were given the freedom and flexibility to pursue buildable sites throughout Philadelphia, wherever an opportunity to develop affordable housing seemed likely to match WCRP's own criteria for choosing a neighborhood in which to work.

Over the last three years WCRP has had an opportunity to test this criterion by expanding from Eastern North Philadelphia and Germantown into South and West Philadelphia. During this strategic planning process WCRP re-affirmed our criteria for choosing a neighborhood in which to develop affordable housing.

Criteria: *Selecting neighborhoods in which to work*

To declare that WCRP will be receptive in the future to pursuing housing development opportunities throughout the city is not to say that *any* neighborhood in Philadelphia is a place where WCRP will be able to work or will want to work. WCRP will carefully weigh at least seven criteria when considering whether to venture into a new area of the city.

1. **BUILDABLE LAND.** The neighborhood should have at least one vacant site with the potential of being available for constructing affordable housing and attainable by WCRP.
2. **CRITICAL MASS.** The available site(s) should be large enough to accommodate the construction of multiple units of housing, allowing WCRP to build a "critical mass" of affordable housing in that neighborhood.
3. **ECONOMIC DIVERSITY.** The neighborhood should not already be so thoroughly gentrified and economically exclusive as to make the development of affordable housing practically impossible.

4. **POLITICAL SUPPORT.** There should be a high probability of gaining *political* backing for WCRP and the project(s) it hopes to develop in the neighborhood, especially the on-going support of the city councilperson representing that area.
5. **FINANCIAL SUPPORT.** There should be a high probability of gaining *financial* backing for WCRP and the project(s) it hopes to develop in the neighborhood, whether those resources are provided through tax credits, private foundations, state funding, and/or funds controlled by city government.
6. **COMMUNITY SUPPORT.** There must be a critical mass of residents and civic organizations that welcome WCRP into the neighborhood, supporting both the organization and its project(s).
7. **ESSENTIAL SERVICES.** There must be services, facilities, and resources in the neighborhood that would serve WCRP's residents, complementing the affordable housing to be developed there.

Community: *Reaffirming the value of place*

WCRP's work will continue to value and practice what it means to be embedded in place even as we work throughout Philadelphia. Our whole approach to community development is one that *combines* physical development, leadership development, and grassroots empowerment, so we understand the value of place and the necessity of working hard to be welcomed into a new neighborhood and to win local support for our projects – and for WCRP itself.

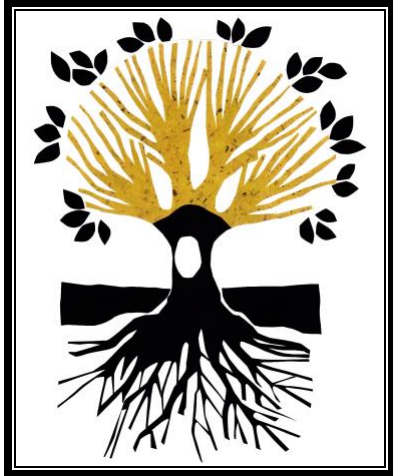
In any neighborhood where WCRP proposes to develop affordable housing, we shall continue to pursue a deliberate five-fold strategy to prepare the ground for working in that place. The elements of that strategy are:

- **OUTREACH.** Meet with the neighborhood's residents, churches, civic groups, social service organizations, and other community development corporations. Build a relationship with municipal officials and political leaders who represent the neighborhood in the City Council and state government.
- **RESEARCH.** Establish the need for additional affordable housing. Study the neighborhood's patterns of land use and land ownership. Map available sites for new housing development.
- **LISTENING.** Solicit the opinions, preferences, and needs of a neighborhood's residents through door-knocking, informal surveys, and public meetings.

- **COMMUNICATING.** Convey a clear and consistent message about WCRP's mission and values, its proposed project(s), and its exemplary performance in maintaining completed projects, screening prospective tenants, and supporting the families who live in its housing.
- **ORGANIZING.** Identify, recruit, and train local leaders who are likely to support the development of affordable housing and to fight for physical, social, and political changes that improve the quality of life for everyone in the neighborhood.

By taking sufficient time and by working diligently to pursue this five-fold strategy, WCRP has learned over the years that we gain a better sense of a neighborhood's needs, we win greater acceptance and support from a neighborhood residents, and we build enduring relationships with individuals, civic organizations, and political leaders that are essential when attempting to develop affordable housing.

WCRP recognizes, too, that our work is necessarily embedded in place when managing and maintaining the rental housing we have already built and when supporting the low-income families who occupy that housing. That has remained true as WCRP has pursued opportunities for development throughout the city. WCRP's long-standing commitment to the quality of its housing, the success of its tenants, and the vitality of the neighborhoods in which its projects are located remains unchanged.



Sturdy Branches

Our Work Is Planned: 2023-2025

WCRP's staff prepared and proposed for consideration by WCRP's board and committees a full complement of goals and objectives to be achieved over the next three years. These goals and objectives were reviewed and refined during the December planning retreat and then ratified by WCRP's board of directors on September 7, 2022. Annual work plans will be developed by WCRP's staff, board, and committees, establishing measurable outcomes and anticipated timelines for implementing each of the goals and objectives identified below.

Real Estate Development: *WCRP's three-year plan*

Development goal #1: Expand and preserve WCRP's portfolio of affordably priced rental housing for low-income women and their families.

Objective #1: Complete the construction, and lease-up of the Arlene Thorpe Townhomes (27) units of housing.

Objective #2: Continue financial packaging for 2 West Philadelphia development sites.

Objective #3: Identify 1 additional site for new development.

Development goal #2: Continue to build the asset base for the Community Justice Land Trust (CJLT) through the development of housing utilizing the Acquisition and Predevelopment Loan Fund (APLF):

Objective #1: As seen above, complete 27 units as part of CJLT.

Objective #2: Continue predevelopment of 2 West Philadelphia sites for at least 50 units as part of CJLT.

Objective #3: Obtain site control of one additional site housing development.

Development Goal #3: Assess sites and development opportunities for new ways to innovate:

Objective #1: Evaluate financial feasibility of additional sustainability features, especially where they could generate savings for tenants

Objective #2: Evaluate feasibility and optimal design features as related to working with new very low-income constituencies (i.e. possible intergenerational communities, seniors, etc.).

Property Management: *WCRP's three-year plan*

Property management goal #1: Manage and maintain WCRP's portfolio of high-quality, affordably priced rental housing for families that are low-income or very low-income.

Objective #1: Develop and manage operating budgets, a preventive maintenance schedule, and complete annual capital improvements for WCRP's housing portfolio.

Objective #2: Maintain a monthly rent collection rate of 75% at all sites.

Objective #3: Administer systems and procedures that achieve an average occupancy of 90% or higher across WCRP's entire portfolio of rental housing.

Property management goal #2: Carry out activities associated with the development of WCRP's affordable rental housing.

Objective #1: Manage the marketing, tenant selection, and lease-up for 27 new units at Arlene Thorpe Townhomes.

Property management goal #3: Strengthen the capacity of WCRP's Property Management.

Objective #1: Continue to assess the added challenges that are arising as a result of the pandemic and determine how to address those challenges.

Objective #2: Continue to assess the issues arising due to managing residential projects that are dispersed across a wider geography.

Supportive Services: *WCRP's three-year plan*

Supportive services goal #1: Provide services to support families who rent from WCRP in achieving and maintaining housing stability.

Objective #1: Provide orientation and complete assessments for 75-90 new families, including:

- 15- 20 families each year to fill vacancies that open up in WCRP's existing portfolio; and
- 27 families when they move into the newly constructed Arlene Thorpe Townhouses.

Objective #2: Support families who fall behind in their rent, helping them to resolve delinquency:

- Serve ~ 120 families each year who are delinquent.
- Administer internal emergency fund for tenants with a priority for families who aren't able to access public rental assistance.

Objective #3: Support families who are in crisis to resolve their issues.

Supportive services goal #2: Support families who rent from WCRP in achieving greater personal, family, and financial well-being.

Objective #1: Provide services to support tenants in reaching self-defined goals for personal, family, and financial well-being.

Objective #2: Track tenant income over time as part of measuring WCRP's impact. This objective will be met by recording the income of every WCRP tenant and analyzing this data at the end of each year.

Supportive services goal #3: Expand community resources as needed to meet changing needs of tenants and new geographic locations of WCRP developments.

Objective #1: Develop new referral sources in South Philadelphia and West Philadelphia to meet the needs of WCRP tenants moving into those neighborhoods.

Objective #2: Strengthen referral relationships with housing counseling agencies so that tenants living in Rent-to-Own units will begin to prepare for homeownership.

Organizing & Advocacy: *WCRP's three-year plan*

Organizing & advocacy goal #1: Through a city-wide organizing campaign, win additional resources, including money and land, that WCRP can utilize to

create more permanently affordable housing for low-income women and their families.

Objective #1: Support the Philadelphia Coalition for Affordable Communities (PCAC) in developing and launching its next campaign. Meeting this objective shall involve identifying campaign goals and maintaining a PCAC membership of at least 60 organizations.

Objective #2: Develop the leadership skills of 40 leaders in the coalition.

Objective #3: Generate 30 media stories about WCRP's issues, constituencies, organizing, and advocacy.

Organizing & advocacy goal #2: Build the individual and collective skills of a network of low-income women and men who will help to shape and to lead WCRP's work.

Objective #1: Develop the leadership skills of 30 leaders in WCRP's Advocacy Committee, connecting them to neighborhood organizing and citywide campaigns.

Objective #2: Maintain relationships with 25 existing leaders from communities where WCRP is developing affordable housing.

Objective #3: Develop 50 new leaders in neighborhoods where the opportunity arises to gain control of buildable land for the development of affordable housing in the future.

Organizing & advocacy goal #3: Support the work of the Development Team to ensure that WCRP is able to obtain zoning approvals and to gain community support for its development efforts. *For each new affordable housing project in WCRP's development pipeline:*

Objective #1: Collect 200 community signatures in support of WCRP's proposed housing project.

Objective #2: Recruit at least 20 people to attend community meetings and to speak in favor of WCRP's proposed project.

Objective #3: Recruit at least 5 people to testify in support of WCRP's proposed project at zoning hearings.

Organizing & advocacy goal #4: Support the growth and development of the community land trust model, both in Philadelphia and statewide.

Objective #1: Convene statewide CLTs once per year at the Homes within Reach Conference, or another convening, to maintain relationships.

Objective #2: Support developing CLTs in Philadelphia to build relationships, grow their skills and engage in campaigns to win more money and land for permanent affordability and community control.

Objective #3: Explore how to connect the CJLT homeowners to WCRP's work.

Organizational Strength & Sustainability: WCRP's three-year plan

Sustainability goal #1: Strengthen WCRP's finances.

Objective #1: Continue to strengthen the organization's finances to sustain WCRP's operations and maintain an adequate level of staffing.

Objective #2: Focus on financial planning, improving the organization's ability to predict and to manage cash flow.

Objective #3: Develop a set of criteria to review and to monitor the organization's fiscal strength and to ensure a prudent balance between allocating revenue for WCRP's operations and allocating resources for the pre-development of affordable housing.

Sustainability goal #2: Maintain WCRP's local preeminence in designing policies and programs for equitable development.

Objective #1: Continue to play a leadership role in the Philadelphia Coalition for Affordable Communities and in partnership with other city-wide and state-wide allies to ensure a priority for permanent affordability in developing rental housing and owner-occupied housing.

Objective #2: Offer the expertise that WCRP has gained in establishing its Community Justice Land Trust to provide assistance to other nonprofit organizations that might be interested in creating new CLT programs of their own.

Objective #3: Offer the expertise that WCRP has gained in developing rental housing to established CLTs that are interested in gaining skills in real estate development.

Sustainability goal #3: Publicize WCRP’s achievements.

Objective #1: Increase the organization’s visibility among private funders, government officials, and the general public.

Objective #2: Continue to implement a public relations plan to raise WCRP’s profile and to trumpet its accomplishments, using social media, video, television, print media, and presentations.

Sustainability goal #4: Implement, evaluate & update WCRP’s 2023-2025 Strategic Plan on an annual basis.

Objective #1: WCRP’s staff, board, and committees will develop annual work plans with measurable outcomes for the implementation of the goals and objectives identified in the Strategic Plan.

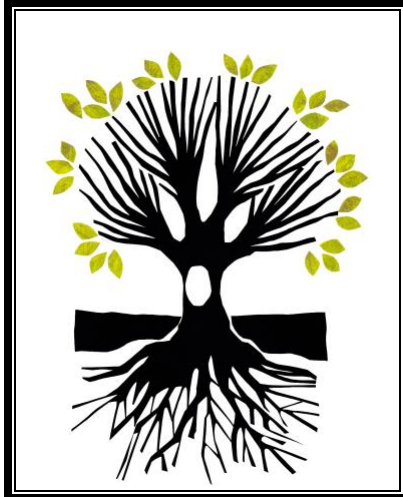
Objective #2: WCRP’s staff will track WCRP’s progress in meeting the goals and objectives in its Strategic Plan and will annually report on that progress to WCRP’s board and committees.

Objective #3: WCRP’s staff, board, and committees will make adjustments to these goals and objectives as opportunities arise and as conditions change.

Sustainability goal #5: Plan for an Executive Director transition.

Objective #1: WCRP’s board will develop a plan and timeline to successfully and smoothly transition to a new Executive Director.

Objective #2: WCRP’s staff will provide the board with the information they need to develop a plan and timeline that meets the needs of the organization and keeps WCRP strong.



Green Leaves

Our Collective Vision for the Impact We Hope to Have

By 2025, as our current Strategic Plan comes to an end, WCRP will have had a significant impact on the people we serve, the places we work, the policies we support, the partnerships we have formed, and the strength we hope to build within our own organization.

People: *Our vision for individuals and communities we serve*

We envision a diverse and inclusive community where there is respect for differences, where self-determination is possible, and where all individuals have the confidence, stability, resilience, and resources to reach their highest potential. All basic needs are met. Decent, affordable housing, food, clothing, child care, education, health care, employment, and recreation are abundant. There is creativity, group action, and joy. All people have hope for their own futures and for their children's futures. The community is built upon the idea that everyone has enough information to make informed choices and hard decisions about the future; everyone has the opportunity to participate in shaping that future, channeling righteous anger at injustice into collective power and positive change.

Place: *Our vision for the neighborhoods in which we work*

We recognize the value of place and shall continue to cultivate a strong base of local support wherever we work. WCRP will fight for greater social and economic equity for the people and places we serve, striving to realize our long-term vision of opportunity, prosperity, safety, and power that are shared by all who live, work, or worship in any of the neighborhoods in which we work.

Policy: *Our vision for the changes we seek*

By the end of our three-year Strategic Plan, WCRP and our allies will have fostered a policy environment that favors development that is fair, inclusive, generous, and sustainable. We will have succeeded in increasing the amount of public land for affordable housing and in decreasing the threat of displacement that faces low-

income residents in Philadelphia’s neighborhoods. We will have succeeded in weaving into public policy a priority for housing that is *permanently* affordable whenever lands, grants, or low-interest loans are provided by a governmental or quasi-governmental agency to create affordable housing.

Partnership: *Our vision for the coalitions we support*

WCRP is committed to creating, joining, and supporting strong, collaborative, grassroots coalitions among like-minded organizations as a means of building collective power and bringing systemic change. Our vision for the Philadelphia Coalition for Affordable Communities, in particular, is to continue to be a powerful, diverse coalition that presses for measures that compel the developers of market-rate housing to contribute their fair share toward the production and preservation of affordable housing. Our vision for the state-wide coalition of community land trusts in which WCRP has played a leading role is raise the profile of CLTs throughout the state and to increase both public funding and private financing for CLT projects.

WCRP: *Our vision for operating from a “position of strength”*

WCRP will create a solid foundation for organizational stability and longevity. We will have strong leadership, a capable staff, a balanced budget, and adequate reserves for our properties, all of which will be well-managed and well-maintained. We will create a housing development pipeline, aided by enough working capital to seed future projects. The Community Justice Land Trust will hold multiple parcels of land beneath renter-occupied and owner-occupied homes.

WCRP will raise up a new crop of leaders. We will draw dozens of new people into our citywide campaigns, helping them to develop individual leadership skills and to build their collective power. We will maintain strong, collaborative relationships with our partners and allies. We will welcome onto WCRP’s board and committees additional tenants and new homeowners from the housing we manage, as well as additional residents from the neighborhoods we serve. Meetings will remain informative, inclusive, productive, and fun.

By the end of our three-year Strategic Plan, WCRP will have increased its visibility and solidified its preeminence as an innovator and thought leader to whom others can turn to learn about permanent affordability and community land trusts. We will have an engaging, up-to-date website. We will have maintained our distinctive approach to equitable and sustainable community development. We will be transparent in our dealings with others. We will remain true to the values we hold dear.

