

Senate Urban Affairs and Housing Committee
Public Hearing on Urban Modernization

March 18, 2010

Good morning!

I am Rose Gray, Vice President of Community and Economic Development for Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha, Inc., also known as APM. APM was founded in 1970 and this year is celebrating 40 years of providing health, human and social services to the residents of Eastern North Philadelphia. APM's community and economic development component was established in 1990. I appreciate the opportunity to share with the members of this Committee some examples of APM's exciting housing and economic development revitalization efforts that have incorporated the vision of our community and our board and have been supported by numerous public-private partnerships.

Since 1990, APM has secured over 70 million dollars of investment which has resulted in the completion of 210 units of affordable rental housing, 138 units of home ownership targeted to first-time homeowners at or below 80% of median income, the preservation of over 70 homes through the Targeted Basic Systems Repair Program, 20 acres of vacant land stabilization, and various greening initiatives. APM has also developed a 44,000 square-foot retail center currently housing a supermarket, laundromat and TruMark Financial Credit Union. All of these projects met the basic energy and housing quality standards of their time. Until recently, the opportunity to incorporate innovative energy and environmentally-conscious building standards was considered cost-prohibitive when constructing housing in low-income communities. In response, the City of Philadelphia, the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency and the William Penn Foundation provided funding to challenge our industry to design a product that incorporated "green" building construction and/or LEED standards which would both be marketable to the community and provide significant energy savings to homeowners. APM's Sheridan Street project is one answer to this challenge.

For the Sheridan Street project, APM will break ground on a 13-unit LEED Gold initiative that incorporated in its design a green vegetative roof, solar panels, recycled materials, sun shades, pervious paving, an Energy Star HVAC system, and barrels for rainwater collection. The City of Philadelphia's new storm water management system requirements will also be implemented in the project. The Sheridan Street development has received the AIA Gold Award for design as well

as various other awards. More importantly, the homes will be sold to first-time homebuyers whose incomes are at or below 115% of median. Housing prices will range from \$150,000 to \$160,000.

Another exciting project under pre-development represents a partnership among APM, the City of Philadelphia and the Jonathan Rose Companies of New York City. This partnership has embarked on a Sustainable Transit-Oriented Development project at the SEPTA rail station at 9th and Berks Streets, adjacent to Temple University and our community. When complete, this initiative will contain 164 units of mixed-income rental housing available to low to moderate income families. Residents will benefit from access to the transit system nearby, as well as from planned amenities on the first floor such as retail, social services, space for community meetings, and other elements that will support the housing component.

One goal of the project's sustainable design is to provide a healthy indoor living environment that ensures improved air quality and a reduction in water and energy uses. The project will maximize the use of sustainable elements that promote the health of residents. The development team will pay careful attention to the selection of materials that reduce environmental contaminants and focus on ventilation and air quality, which can reduce environmentally-triggered health conditions that often occur among low-income populations. The project will employ an environmentally responsible design that includes an energy-efficient building envelop, MEP systems, sunshades to mitigate solar gain, a "green" roof, photovoltaic solar panels, rainwater collection, and the use of local recyclable and renewable materials. We will be seeking an LEED designation for this project as well.

With the Sheridan Street and Sustainable Transit-Oriented Development projects, APM is committed to sustainable community building that we hope will be a model for other low to moderate income communities throughout the Commonwealth. We believe that green technology, storm water management and community engagement are the elements of a healthy environment in which to live and work, and which contribute to the vibrancy of a community and of a city.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak with you today.