

Celebrating affordable housing opportunities in Chelsea, **YESTERDAY AND TODAY**

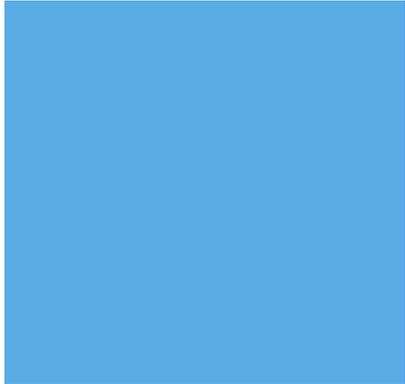


PROGRESS REPORT 2020-21



How the renewed commitment to our historic mission is working

When World War II ended, many military heroes and their families came home to unacceptable living conditions. The CHA, formed in 1946, stepped up to help, providing affordable housing. Today, we carry forward that spirit of service for all our residents with a safe, sanitary, affordable place to live as well as services spanning social, independence-minded and emotional needs. We are proud of the progress we are making each day to stay true to our original mission.



CHA housing residents Natalia and Yasmine Calvo are attending Princeton and Harvard universities - and demonstrating what is possible when afforded the fundamental platform of housing in this great land of ours.



Executive Director's Letter

February, 2021

To the Chelsea Community:

The Chelsea Housing Authority (CHA) was established in 1946 to serve the needs of low-income families in the City of Chelsea. The first development proposed and developed was the Fitzpatrick Apartments, which consisted of 70 two-story townhouse units known as “The Woodies” and built as state-aided family housing for returning WWII veterans.

Since that time, to continue to serve and meet the needs of low-income elderly, disabled and families in our community, we expanded our programs to include state and federal family and elderly/disabled housing, Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, Massachusetts Rental Vouchers, Alternative Housing Vouchers for the disabled, and VASH Vouchers for homeless veterans. Our federal self-sufficiency program is now being replicated for our state residents. This allows our residents to take financial literacy classes, attend school, partake in job training programs, or save money to pay off debt, start a business or purchase a home.

As we observe our 75th year of service to the Chelsea community, we are mindful of how difficult and challenging 2020 was for so many people in our community. Our thoughts and prayers go out to everyone who was affected by the coronavirus, through illness or the loss of a family member or friend. Many community members lost their jobs or their small businesses. Some faced food insecurity or had difficulty home schooling their children. And many found it challenging to work remotely from home, or worse, not being able to work remotely.

This report highlights some of the partnerships and programs that we have created in support of our mission to make a difference in the lives of the people we have committed to serve. Our staff members are conscious of our fiduciary responsibility as trustees of CHA resources. We will strive to earn and maintain the trust of the community by *doing things right and always doing the right thing* to make Chelsea a better place to live.

Regards,

Albert R. Ewing

Albert R. Ewing
Executive Director

CHA Commissioners

We welcome new Board members Sharon Caulfield and Betzaida Acevedo.



Chairman,
Bertram Taverna



Antonio Hernandez



Juan Vega



Sharon Caulfield



Betzaida Acevedo

Pandemic Response

The strength and integrity of any individual or organization is best tested during times of challenge.

The pandemic of 2020 was of historic proportions. It affected people from all walks of life and all countries. Only through hard work, vigilance, planning, partnerships, and some luck, were we able to continue to serve our residents.



Even isolating partially completed puzzles was part of the effort to keep residents safe.

The CHA, as did all local housing authorities, closed its door to the public but did not stop serving its residents. By year's end, Covid-19 had taken over 300,000 American lives, and our city at one point was the epicenter of the horrific virus. Our courageous staff accepted the challenge and developed a plan to keep residents and staff safe. From the start, the CHA maintenance staff thoroughly cleaned touch points in our eight developments twice a day. We hired an outside contractor who deep-cleaned our most densely populated developments that house our vulnerable elderly/disabled residents. We stocked up on masks and distributed masks each month to all residents. Via robo calls, we reminded our residents to wear masks, physically distance, avoid large crowds and wash their hands regularly.



Distributing brown bag groceries from Chelsea Senior Center to ease lockdown restrictions.



Don't touch! Warnings like this helped residents avoid risk and stay mindful of best practices.

We set up partnerships too, joining forces with: the Senior Center (food for seniors); the Chelsea Collaborative (food for families); the City's public health nurse (sharing of information); the DPH, the MGH and Fallon Ambulance (to help us with free on-site testing); and the CFD and CPD (first responders).

As of the printing of this report we stay in the fight. We are proud of the leadership displayed by all team members, partners and residents for the action they took and still take for the safety of our community.



We took all reasonable precautions to keep everyone safe.



We partnered with Mass General Hospital, the City of Chelsea, state agencies, and Fallon Ambulance to conduct Covid-19 testing at the Buckley Building in March.



Protecting the vulnerable was especially important as medical professionals provided testing to the elders at our Margolis Apartments.

Residents of the Year



We honor three residents for 2020: Natalia and Yasmine Calvo and their mother Ana. The Prattville development residents and twins are attending Princeton and Harvard. Their story is compelling.

Ana Romero is a proud single mother who instilled in Natalia and Yasmine at a young age the importance of academics and hard work. They learned this early lesson well. Yasmine attends Princeton in-person, while Natalia, due to Covid-19 restrictions, studies remotely at Harvard.

The two earned a reputation for being studious kids who wanted to make the world a better place. Both were part of the founding class of Excel Charter High School, both graduated with high honors, and both won math and science awards. Beyond academics, they were members of the National Honor Society and the Model UN Team. They also co-founded their high school's technology club, serving as co-presidents.

It should come as no surprise that their smarts, ambition and accomplishments led to acceptance at prestigious universities. We are thrilled to name them and the mother behind their success Residents of the Year.



Elevators Upgrade



Last year, we began the process to replace the elevators at our Margolis Apartments for the elderly and disabled. This large task grew out of resident meetings and internal staff discussion and required cooperation and tight coordination between departments.

The \$968,712 in funding is being used effectively to improve the lives of residents for whom reliable elevators are critical. This investment builds on the previous improvements which include a security camera system, keyless entry system and electronic messaging boards.

The project is slated to be completed by the end of 2021.



Community Partnership with Chelsea Collaborative



Residents appreciate the kindness.

Our partnership with the Chelsea Collaborative helps enable CHA residents to form and join tenant associations where they can have a voice in the direction and management of the agency.

As the Collaborative's Executive Director Gladys Vega explains, "The protection of affordable and well-maintained housing is at the core of the Chelsea Collaborative mission. For this reason, the Collaborative has been an ongoing partner of the Chelsea Housing Authority, working with its public housing tenants to support the development of tenant associations all around the city. We empower tenants through trainings and workshops and host social events such as summer BBQ, Mother's Day celebrations and of course voter engagement initiatives all year round. The past few years we have been working tirelessly with the Housing Authority tenants of Central Ave. We have been meeting on a regular basis supporting the tenants in coordinating the pieces of their massive redevelopment project. We hope this redevelopment project serves as an example for many more in our city and that we continue to work in partnership with the public housing community of Chelsea."



Many helping hands make light work.



Volunteers unload food from the Collaborative truck for distribution to CHA residents.



PROFILE IN SERVICE: Richard Russell



Turn the faucet, and water comes out. Turn the knob, and the door opens. Flick the switch, and the room lights up. Across 900 units, we would not take these things for granted without our maintenance staff always at the ready.

Behind these daily essentials stands Director of Maintenance and Modernization Richie Russell, a man whose 37-year record with the CHA is distinguished by resolute professionalism. It is said that perseverance is his middle name!

He joined the CHA as a maintenance aide 37 years ago and rose through the ranks to earn his department's top position. Since becoming a maintenance supervisor in 1998, he has been on call almost 24/7 ever since to handle fires, evacuations, power outages and floods. His advice for anyone looking to do this job is "be flexible, roll with the punches, and absolutely enjoy the variety that comes with it."

Richie consistently scores grants and other forms of additional funding that enable us to go the extra mile in serving our residents. Thanks to his leadership, the Maintenance Department is a major contributor to the overall success of the Chelsea HA.

After so many years of dedicated service, Richie retired in December, 2020. He is looking forward to outdoor adventures with his wife of 38 years, Antonette, as they take on the challenge of visiting all US National Parks. When not traveling, he will be spending time as the adoring grandfather of eight grandchildren. We thank Richie for his service and leadership.

Commissioners Donald Kingsbury and Barbara Salisbury retire

Donald “Donnie” Kingsbury served on our Board of Commissioners as the resident representative from 2013 through February 2020. He leaves a rich legacy of contributions.

His life story is one of volunteerism and helping others. Growing up in Roxbury’s Orchard Park housing project, Donnie recalls, “Even at an early age, I considered it a duty to do volunteer community service.”

He served his country by enlisting in the Army at 17. After honorable discharge in 1961, he and his family moved to a Maine town where he served on its Board of Selectmen.

Endlessly energetic, passionate and enthusiastic, Donnie Kingsbury’s compassion and concern for others is palpable. Throughout his CHA tenure, Donnie unfailingly advocated for the agency’s programs, services and opportunities. We salute a valued team member and wish him well in his retirement.



Donald Kingsbury (r) receives a Chelsea Clock from Executive Director Albert Ewing.



Barbara Salisbury shows off her Chelsea Clock retirement gift.

Barbara Salisbury served on the CHA Board from 2012 to 2020. No stranger to government, Barbara served as state budget director for former Governor Michael Dukakis and was a dean at the Harvard Kennedy School. She is quick to point out that while she was part of the board that provided top-notch support to the management team, it was the management team that applied long hours and endless dedication into righting our organization and setting the stage to become an efficient and effective Authority able to succeed at complex, innovatively financed projects like the Innes re-development. Best wishes for a wonderful retirement, Barbara.

MILESTONES: The Union Park Modernization Project

Celebrating our 75th anniversary also means reckoning with 75-year-old infrastructure. Our renewed agency has become creative in this regard, not relying solely on limited federal government funding, but actively seeking grant money for modernization purposes.

In 2016, for example, we prioritized the full modernization of our 56-unit Union Park residence for elderly residents and individuals with disabilities. Our goal was to provide services that would enable residents to age in place. Demonstrating the need for capital beyond Formula Funding, we applied for and won a Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development ModPHASE grant – funding designed for preserving and improving existing public housing and expanding resident access to supportive services.

The DHCD awarded \$7,128,450 in grant money – one of only four such grants awarded in the state.

Fast forward to 2020. With cost estimates and construction plans approved, we began construction in the fall of 2020.



Spanning apartments, common spaces and grounds, the full modernization includes:

- Exterior door and window replacements
- Interior painting
- Kitchen and bath replacement
- New flooring
- Mechanical improvements such as plumbing, electrical switches and wiring
- Baseboard heating and thermostat replacement and new fire protection systems
- New electronic door access system for all building doors
- Community room improvements
- Exterior improvements including new lines for the fire suppression system and asphalt re-grading for ADA accessibility
- Converting two existing units to ADA Accessible Units

UPDATE:

The Innes Apartments Redevelopment Project

In keeping with our city's economic renaissance, we, in 2020, completed much of the planning and design phases to redevelop our Innes Apartments from the ground up.



An aerial view of the proposed Innes Apartment community.



A street-level conception of the new apartment complex.

The \$135 million project is a public/private partnership and is being financed largely with private capital. It will complement our revitalized city, and offer:

- Replacement of the 96 existing public housing residences
- 40 additional middle-income “workforce” residences (for households earning 120% or less than AMI)
- 194 market-rate apartments
- 2,000 sq. ft. of street-level small-business retail space
- On-site daycare facility
- Public green space
- Modern playground
- Resident center that houses job training, educational and youth services
- Stand alone parking facility with 256 spaces and capacity for 50 additional offsite parking spaces as needed
- Amenities such as a fitness room, community room and bike storage

The mixed-use, mixed-income community is ideal for working residents and has been designed to foster upward economic mobility. The project has already begun to create jobs, and we see a development that contributes to the city's tax revenue and invites further investment in the Chelsea renaissance.

In partnership with the Commonwealth, the City of Chelsea, Joseph J. Corcoran Company, and the Innes Resident Association, the redevelopment team continues to work with Innes residents on the relocation process in anticipation of a mid-2021 construction kickoff.

75 Years of Service

COMMITTED THEN. COMMITTED NOW.

April 10, 2021 marks CHA's 75th anniversary.

That April day in 1946 put in motion our original purpose of providing affordable rentals to Chelsea's military veterans of World War II. In 1948, soon after Governor Bradford signed the Massachusetts Veterans Housing bill, the city of Chelsea was prepared, and became the first in the state to file an application to build veteran housing units. Led by Mayor Thomas Keating and CHA Chairman Alfred Sartorelli, the city soon provided housing for hundreds of veterans and their families in the city's Prattville area. Monthly rents were set in the \$40 to \$45 range!

The governor proclaimed that "...the families of thousands of Massachusetts veterans will be living in homes built by local communities... Families who have been living in shacks, trailers, attics and garages, families who have been living doubled up, tripled

up and quadrupled up with their relatives and in-laws, will now have a home they can call their own."

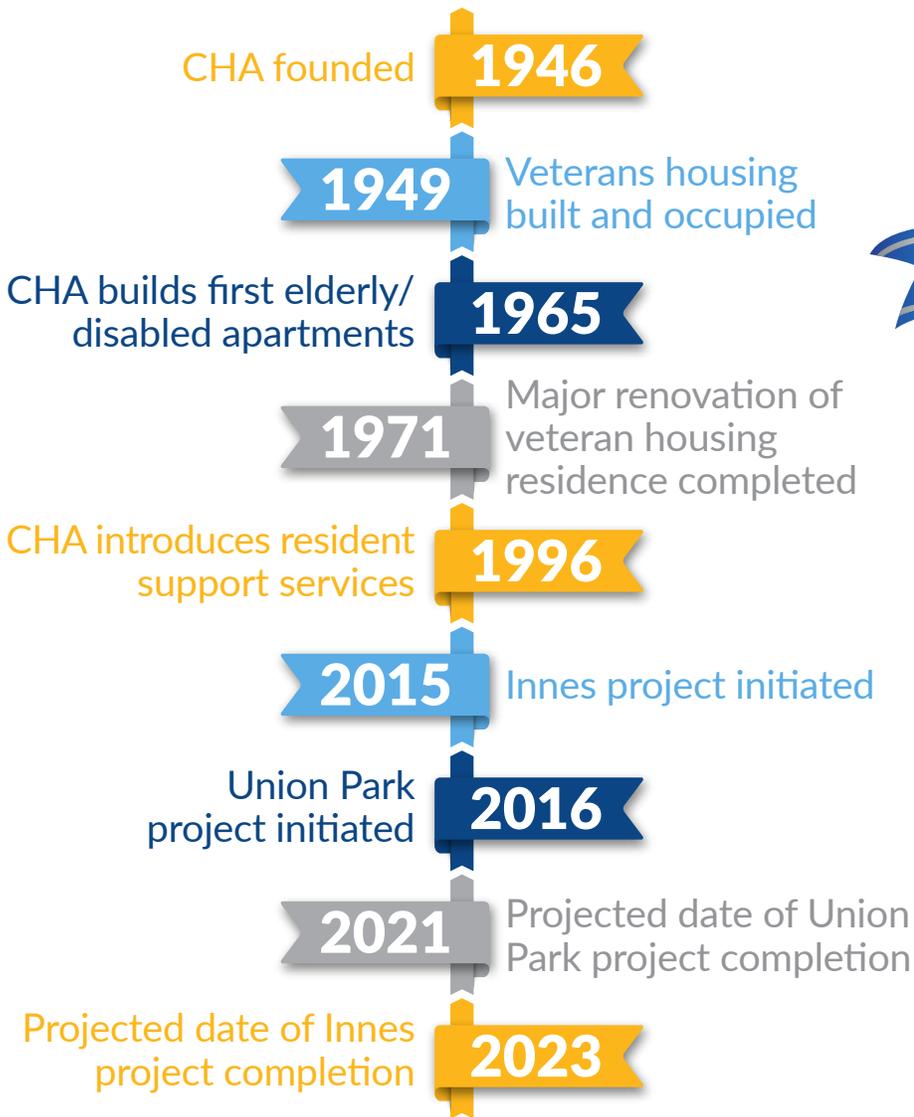
From that first pledge to serve those who served, today's CHA continues to grow and expand its role beyond veteran housing to assist any city resident in need of affordable housing. We stand tall as public servants working for the betterment of Chelsea residents.



Homecoming meant many military members and their families were in need of housing.

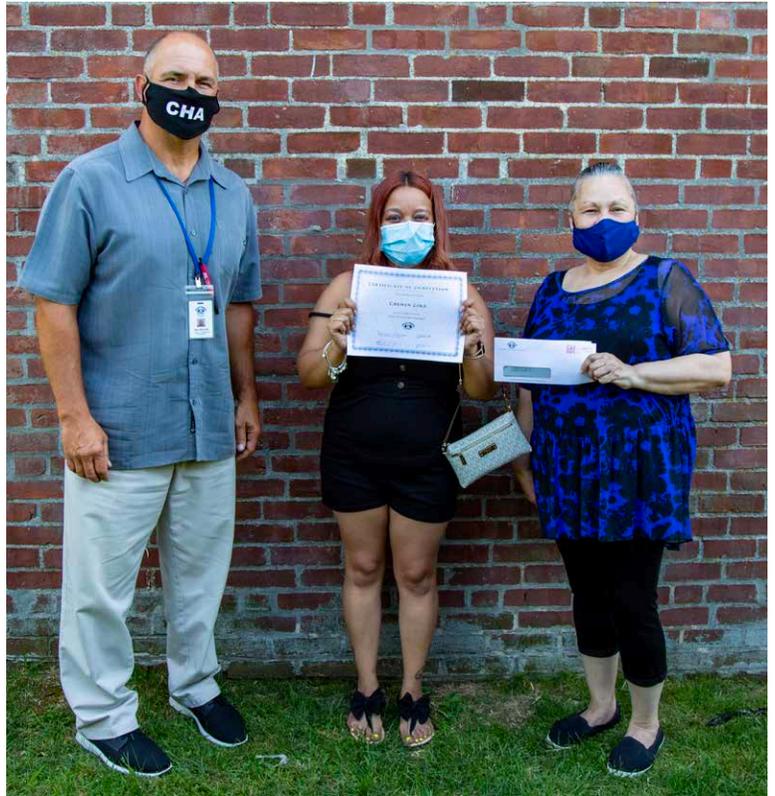


75TH ANNIVERSARY



Still proudly serving our vets. With the Margolis apartments in the foreground, the crescent moon sets behind the Chelsea Soldiers Home.

Family Self-Sufficiency: A pathway to greater independence



Director of Operations Paul Nowicki poses with graduate Carmen Lima and Carmen Torres, FSS Coordinator.

The Family Self-Sufficiency program is powerful. It is life affirming and life changing.

Each year, dedicated residents take advantage of this great CHA program dedicated to helping people improve their lives and become economically independent. Our graduates applied themselves and “learned and earned.” With guidance from FSS Coordinator Carmen Torres, they took educational courses to get a good job, saved money for a mortgage down payment, and learned the ins and outs of purchasing a home.

Congratulations go to our recent FSS graduates who include Eugene Dawson, Maria Rodriguez, Carmen Lima and Flor Palacios.

Serving those who just need a little help to take big steps in life is what the CHA is all about.

Staff by department

In Memoriam



We honor CHA family member and former Chairman of the Board, Tom Standish, who passed away May 26, 2020. His legacy of achievement was significant, and he will be greatly missed.

Retirements



Richie Russell



Denise Ferdinand



Damaris Gonzalez

Executive Department

Albert R. Ewing, *Executive Director*
Diane L. Cohen, *Deputy Director/ Records Access Officer*
Gregory Beatrice, *Director of Maintenance and Procurement*
James Krasco, *Maintenance & Modernization Supervisor*
Paul Nowicki, *Director of Operations*
Iris Perez-Feliciano, *Manager of Leased Housing*
Arnaldo Velazquez, *Director of Finance & Administration*
Diane Goodrich, *Receptionist*

Property Management

Alexandra Jimenez, *Property Manager*
Jackie Matos, *Property Manager*
Carmen Ortega, *Property Manager*

Occupancy

Ineudira Barbosa, *Occupancy Manager*
David Hospedales, *Occupancy Specialist*

Section 8

Stephanie Santos, *Program Representative*
Chyneatha Perry, *Program Representative*
Celina Hernandez, *Program Representative*

Finance

Leslie Esturban, *AP/AR Clerk*
Meriam Mehaya, *AP/AR Clerk*

Supportive Services

Matt Frank, *Supportive Services Manager*
Carmen Torres, *FSS Coordinator*

Maintenance

Iris Rivera, *Receptionist/Maintenance Coordinator*
Eric Montefusco, *Mechanic/Painter*
Angelo Zirpolo, *Maintenance Mechanic*
John Faulstich, *Mechanic/Plumber*
Ibro Omeragic, *Mechanic/Carpenter*
Song Soung, *Maintenance Mechanic*
Wayne Brooks, *Mechanic/Painter*
Sean Landry, *Maintenance Mechanic*
James Granara, *Mechanic/Electrician*
Damon Webster, *Maintenance Mechanic*
Guillermo Romero, *Groundskeeper/Custodian/Mechanic*
Jason Rosario, *Groundskeeper/Custodian/Mechanic*
Anthony Dichiara, *Maintenance Mechanic*
Jason Travis, *Maintenance Mechanic*
Roberto Figueroa, *Groundskeeper/Custodian/Mechanic*
Mark Thompson, *Groundskeeper/Custodian/Mechanic*
Tony Tiro, *Clerk of the Works/Housing Inspector*
Dennis Bankus, *Groundskeeper/Custodian*
Anna Chirinos, *Groundskeeper/Custodian*

Modernization/ Maintenance Department Report

The Modernization/Maintenance Department has been implementing a five-year plan to upgrade living conditions and enhance resident safety and quality of life at the CHA's eight developments. The project is made possible by grants from the DHCD (state developments) and HUD (federal developments).

For example, the CHA completed a yearlong project in 2019 that greatly enhanced resident safety at the Mace, Scrivano and Margolis developments. The \$949,291 project included these improvements:

Scrivano Family Apartments 16-1 and

- Mace Family Apartments 16-2:** Stairway doors replacement
 Electronic door access system installations
 New video surveillance system installations

Margolis Elderly Apartments 16-4: Apartment balcony repair

The project has enabled Mace and Scrivano residents to control building access and open doors with their cell phones. Replacing metal building door keys with electronic fobs has eliminated the possibility of intruders duplicating mechanical keys. Video surveillance systems now provide eyes on common-area hallways and building exteriors, and help prevent and solve crimes. Safety concerns have been alleviated with balcony repairs at the Margolis apartment building.



The Scrivano Apartments in the fall.

Additional projects completed in 2019

Fitzpatrick Apartments 200-1:	Roof replacement	\$490,450
Buckley Apartments 667-2:	#3 Elevator & Wheelchair Lift	\$351,420
Buckley Apartments 667-2:	Kitchen & Bath GFCI Installation	\$168,773
Prattville Apartments 200-2:	Boiler Replacement – National Grid	\$462,000



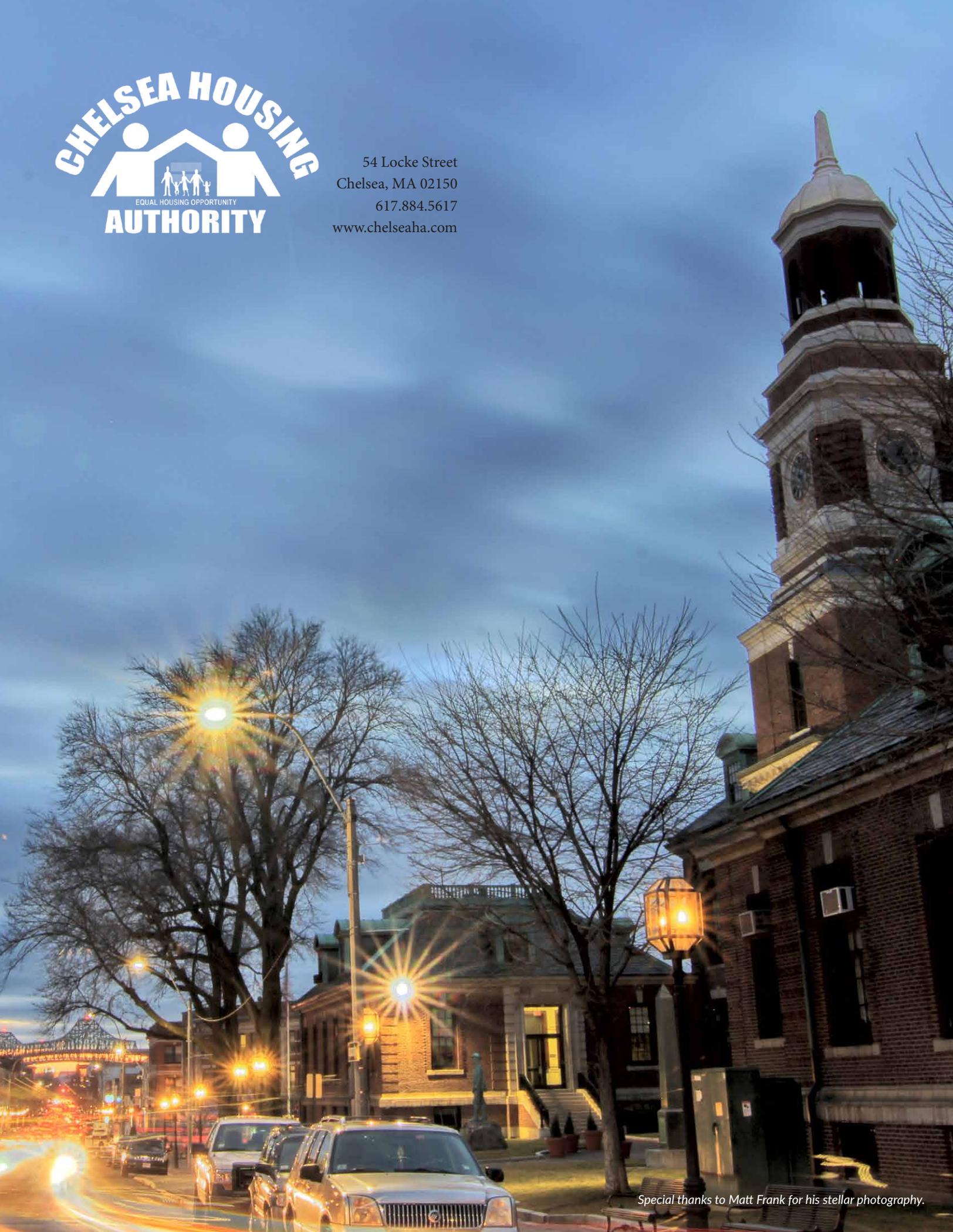
Works in Progress

Prattville 200-2 & Union Park Apartments 667-1:	Sanitary Sewer Upgrade	\$384,579
Scrivano 16-1 & Mace 16-2 Apartments:	Fire Alarm Replacement	\$1,149,985
Buckley Apartments 667-2:	Exterior doors and Stairwell Heat Replacement	\$96,084
Prattville Apartments 200-2:	Window Replacement	\$868,000
Fitzpatrick Apartments 200-1:	Asbestos removal -Boiler Rooms	\$487,800
Fitzpatrick Apartments 200-1:	Heat & H.W. Boiler Replacement	\$768,000
Buckley 667-2 & Fitzpatrick 200-1:	H&S 2020 – Paving	\$109,468
Margolis Apartments 16-4:	Elevator Replacement	\$968,712
Union Park Apartments 667-1:	ModPHASE	\$7,128,450
Prattville Apartments 200-2:	Flood Proofing	\$109,000
Buckley 667-2 & Prattville 200-2:	Exterior Cameras	\$638,000
Buckley Apartments 667-2:	Mailboxes	\$50,000
Buckley 667-2 & Fitzpatrick 200-1:	Spot Paving	\$109,000





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Special thanks to Matt Frank for his stellar photography.