



The **Community Builders**, Inc.

Orchard Gardens – Boston, MA



ORCHARD GARDENS

Orchard Park, a dense, low-rise public housing development in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston, was suffering from abandoned units, an outmoded physical design, and gang violence. Modernization efforts at the site had stalled when it became clear that available funds were not adequate to resolve the project's physical or social needs. Today, the Orchard Gardens complex is thriving. Most of the old buildings have been replaced with new townhouses. Gardens are blooming where asphalt used to glint with broken bottles. Crime has been reduced dramatically. This transformation has been propelled by the HOPE VI program.

The genesis of Orchard Park's revival goes back to 1995, when The Community Builders was hired to assist the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) in redeveloping this troubled property. The Community Builders' initial engagement was to comprehensively assess how to improve both Orchard Park and the adjacent neighborhood which was plagued by numerous abandoned buildings and vacant lots. Community Builders organized a master planning process with BHA that identified the physical needs of buildings and infrastructure, financial resources for redevelopment, programs to empower residents to gain self-sufficiency, and ways to recreate links between this area and the rest of the city. The resulting neighborhood-wide revitalization program used HOPE VI as an engine for broader community improvement.

Community Builders structured a mixed finance program that linked HOPE VI funding with Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), and tapped limited amounts of other public resources for new public facilities and infrastructure. Community Builders assisted BHA prepare its successful HOPE VI application and initial application for tax credits in 1995 and has continued as program advisor and legal counsel to the Authority.

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Orchard Gardens at a Glance

- 524 new or substantially renovated mixed-income family rental homes connected to retail, community center, and a new public school.
- **TCB Role:** Development Consultant
- **Sponsor:** Boston Housing Authority (BHA)
- **Financial Participants:** HUD HOPE VI, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, MHFA mortgage financing
- **Total Development Cost:** \$45 million