

**Public Housing Designated Housing Plan Submission for NJ042
Franklin Township Housing Authority
Draft for Public Comment**

The Franklin Township Housing Authority (FTHA) intends to make the following Designated Housing Plan Request. The public is invited to comment on this submission. Written comments should be mailed Dan Toto at 25 Parkside Street, Somerset, NJ 08873 or emailed to dan@ftha.org by midnight September 11, 2023. A public hearing on this submission and the FTHA Annual Plan will be held at the above address on September 12 at 3:00 p.m.

FTHA seeks to designate the 20 public housing units at Parkside Senior Village (NJ042000002) as Elderly Only. HUD allows housing authorities to request a designation of some of their units as "elderly only". FTHA was under the belief that it had that approved designation for Parkside Senior Village but was notified by HUD that it did not and neither HUD or FTHA could find documentation of a designation submission or approval. Therefore, we are submitting this application as a new request for a 5-year designation, unless directed by HUD to seek redesignation for two additional years.

Parkside Senior Village was completed in 2011 and the 20 public housing units there have operated as senior only (age 62 and over) since the beginning. The remaining 50 units are tax credit units for persons aged 55 and up.

About FTHA

The mission of the FTHA is "to provide quality affordable housing that contributes to the betterment of our community and improves the quality of life for our families and seniors". FTHA is a small agency employing only two full-time employees.

FTHA's Parkside Village was built using the land that was an original public housing development in disrepair. Using a mix of 9% tax credits, HUD replacement housing Factor Funds, and other sources the New Parkside Village is comprised of 2 phases. The first was a 70-unit senior building (with the tax credit units accepting those aged 55 and up). This phase has 60 one bedroom and 10 two bedrooms. There are 20 public housing units and 50 tax credit units. The senior building was constructed with the promise that the existing seniors from the original development would only have to move once directly into a new unit. This promise was fulfilled by the creation of Parkside Senior Village which allowed existing public housing seniors to move to the new facility directly from their older units.

The second phase is a 70 unit general occupancy development completed in 2012. In this phase 40 units are tax credits and 30 are public housing.

FTHA has a total of 50 ACC units, 30 of which have been operated and designated as general occupancy and 20 which had been thought designated as Elderly Only. We are requesting that these 20 units be designated as Elderly only. Additionally, FTHA operates 90 Non-ACC tax credit units and a HCV program of 234 vouchers.

Justification for Designation

The FTHA is seeking the designation to further our mission and fulfill promises made to the original elderly public housing residents who were relocated to Parkside Senior Village. Further we believe that

the impact on non-elderly households is de minimis and addressed by other resources that the FTHA has at our use. Parkside Senior Village was designed to allow seniors to age in place and live in a safe environment during their golden years.

Elderly Design and Service Features of Parkside Senior Village

From the beginning of the design process, Parkside Senior Village was designed with seniors in mind and provide a safe living environment as they age in place. Below are a number of features incorporated into the design of Parkside Senior Village:

- There are extra wide hallways which allow for 2 wheelchairs to pass or travel side by side.
- All of the units feature roll in showers to allow wheelchair access.
- All of the units have emergency pull cord stations in bathrooms and the primary bedroom.
- All elevators feature operating panels that are lower to facilitate use from a wheelchair.
- The laundry facilities on each floor feature ADA accessible design,
- There are grab bars in bathrooms.

In addition to the design features for the elderly, from the beginning services for elderly were thoughtfully coordinated and provided. Below are a number of services for elders currently available at Parkside Senior Village:

Somerset Seniors Transportation has a stop at the building which provides transportation for day trips and weekly trips to the pharmacy and grocery store.

FTHA has arranged for pharmacy deliveries onsite.

- Service providers provide a range of medical and geriatric services, screenings, and clinics.
- Assisting in providing better nutrition to our seniors, FTHA's services partners provide a \$50 farmers' market voucher monthly.
- FTHA service partners provide a free hot lunch every Thursday.
- The Somerset Food Bank provides monthly fresh fruit and vegetable delivery.
- Additionally, FTHA and our partners provide popular chair yoga sessions, art therapy classes, and bingo.

Needs Assessment

According to the US Census Bureau, Franklin Township has a population of 68,578 persons made up of 25,465 households. 69.9% of the population live in owner occupied housing. 17.7% of the population are over 65 years old. 5.3% of the population under 65 have a disability. The poverty rate is 6.4%.

The racial makeup of Franklin Township was 44.76% White, 26.55% Black or African American, 0.29% Native American, 19.98% Asian, 0.01% Pacific Islander, 5.11% from other races, and 3.29% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 12.92% of the population.

The housing market in Franklin Township is difficult for low-income households. Most of the homeownership opportunities are beyond the reach of a low-income household. The rental market is also difficult for many low-income households. The 50 units of public housing that FTHA provides are unique in Franklin Township as they can serve low and very low-income groups. Most of the other

affordable housing in Franklin Township is through the LIHTC program and target households with higher incomes than our public housing residents.

The need for low-income senior housing in Franklin Township has been demonstrated over the years by our waiting list and low vacancy rates. We currently have zero vacant units and over the course of the last 2 years have never been below 98% (which was the case in only 5 of the 24 months). Our experience is that between the 50 ACC units we can expect 1 or 2 vacancies a year which are promptly filled in less than 30 days.

Waiting list information as of 7/1/2023

The public housing waiting list was opened for just two weeks in June 2020 and has been closed since. FTHA anticipates reopening the waiting list this year.

Public Housing Central Waiting list

BY BEDROOM (BR)				
1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR	5BR
408	420	178	36	3

FAMILY STATUS			
Elderly	Elderly Disabled	Non-Elderly	Non-Elderly Disabled
30	32	847	136

ETHNICITY	
Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
%26	74%

PRIMARY RACE				
White	Black	Indian	Asian	Hawaiian
13%	75%	2%	1%	1%

Current demographics

The current occupancy demographics are shown below:

DEV CODE	% MINORITY	% BLACK	% NATIVE AMERICAN	% ASIAN	% HISPANIC	% DISABLED ALL
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NJ042000003	75	58.33	0	0	16.67	6.82
NJ042000002*	90	55	0	5	30	33.33
NJ042000004	100	62.5	0	0	37.5	4.92

*Parkside Senior Village

In the general occupancy units 10% (3 units) are currently occupied by disabled households.

Additional Housing Resources

The additional housing resources are the other 70 general occupancy units owned by the FTTHA. Additionally, we operate a 234 unit voucher program. The voucher program is currently serving 39 non-elderly disabled household members which is 7.68% which is higher than the percentage of elderly disabled households (5.12%). The majority of those served by the voucher program are non-elderly non-disabled (75.39%)

Estimate Vacancies:

As stated above FTTHA's public housing has a very low vacancy rate. Parkside Senior Village on average would experience one vacant unit per year. For the five-year period of the elderly only designation we would expect approximately 5 vacant units. Using our experience, and turnover data and waiting list data if there was no designation, we could expect that 0-1 (0.65 of a household) disabled households would have received a housing offer during that time. This is based on formula that determines any household's chance of a housing offer (1045 households versus 5 vacant units over five years at the designated units X the number of non-elderly disabled households, 136, on the waiting list).

Accessible Housing

FTTHA believes that the impact on non-elderly disabled households is very small and is met through our voucher program and non-designated units. We have 4 fully ADA units in our other phase of Parkside Village. Because of the lack of accessible affordable housing for seniors in our market this development is needed for the elderly residents of Somerset.

Balancing the needs of the community

We believe that FTTHA has balanced the total needs of the community with this plan. Of the 374 units under our control (vouchers, ACC & LIHTC) we are only seeking to designate 5% as senior housing through this application. When combined with the tax credit units designated for 55 and up that is a total of 18.7 percent designated for seniors and those over 55. There are unmet housing needs of both elderly families and persons with disabilities. We believe that we have demonstrated that we will make reasonable efforts to provide housing choice voucher assistance or other appropriate resources to the non-designated group and given the small impact on non-elderly disabled households there is a sufficient basis for the elderly only designation of Parkside Senior Village.

Fair Housing

FTTHA is committed to Fair Housing and considered if this proposed designation (or redesignation) would increase minority concentrations. We do not believe that it would. The FTTHA is not subject to a Title VI or Section 504 voluntary Compliance Agreement, or any court order related to Fair Housing.

The FTHA will not evict or terminate the lease of any tenant lawfully living in the unit as a result of this designation. There are currently no households that would require relocation as result of this designation. If there were, FTHA would provide the relocation options outline in the HUD notice.

Community Engagement

FTHA announced its intention to designate these units by public announcement and intends to hold a public meeting held on September 12 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. FTHA is accepting public comment through September 11 at midnight as described above.