

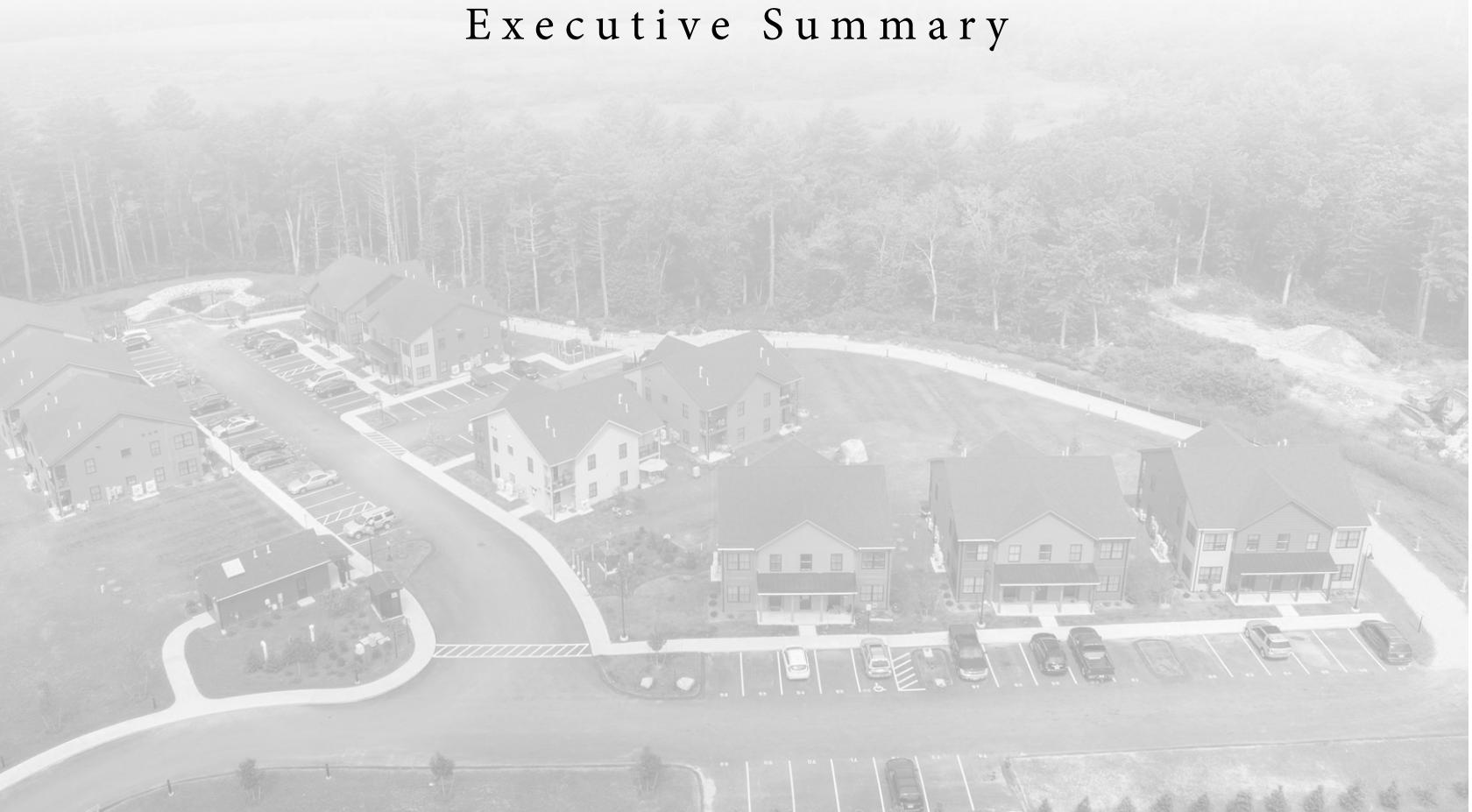


# Strategic Framework

HONOR THE PAST | ANALYZE THE PRESENT | BOLDLY ENVISION THE FUTURE

2026 - 2028

Executive Summary



## Purpose & Process

Women’s Development Corporation (WDC) and Housing Opportunities Corporation (HOC) completed a comprehensive strategic planning process in 2025 managed by Kaplan Consulting to focus the next three years of growth and impact. The purpose of the process was to **create a transparent, data-informed, and adaptive strategy** that ensures organizational resilience, strengthens operations, and positions WDC/HOC to respond effectively to rapidly changing environments.

Using an **adaptive strategy methodology**, the planning process emphasized learning, agility, and collaboration. Rather than producing a static plan, the process involved cycles of reflection and adjustment as new realities emerged—including significant policy shifts and a federal lawsuit that unfolded during planning. This approach enabled the organization to evolve in real time while staying grounded in its mission and values.

### Research and Strategic Context

The strategy was grounded in rigorous research and broad stakeholder engagement. Interviews and focus groups with board members, staff, residents, partners and sector leaders revealed both the scale of the regional housing crisis and the organization’s distinctive strengths.

#### External Landscape:

Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts face severe housing shortages, rising homelessness, and escalating costs. Despite record public investments—such as Rhode Island’s \$120 million housing bond—demand far outpaces supply. At the same time, nonprofit developers face declining federal funding, rising construction costs, and increased competition from for-profit firms. Yet the environment also offers opportunity: state housing reforms, new financing mechanisms like RAD conversions and social impact capital, and growing partnerships and potential for innovation with the health and philanthropic.

#### Internal Assessment:

WDC/HOC is highly respected for its decades-long statewide track record of quality development, thoughtful design, and care for vulnerable residents. The organization’s integrated model—covering real estate development, property management, and resident services—enhances financial sustainability and deepens community impact.

Financial dependence on unpredictable developer fees, low public visibility, and operational strain from growth signal the need for sharper focus, stronger systems, and more diversified funding. Challenges also include more consistent investment/re-financing for aging housing stock, bringing the pipeline of real estate projects to completion, and stabilizing staffing with quality training to improve operations that translate to increased rent collections, full occupancy, rent subsidy approvals, improved audit rating and consistent tenant satisfaction.

## MISSION

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### **Why We Exist**

At the heart of our work is a deep belief that everyone deserves a safe, stable place to call home. We create, manage, and sustain affordable housing for those who need it most because we understand that housing is the foundation for hope, health, and opportunity. We've been proud to serve Rhode Island for nearly fifty years and are energized by our growth to address needs in communities in Massachusetts as well.

Grounded in a commitment to dignity and fairness, our mission is rooted in the stories of real people—seniors seeking comfort in their later years, families working hard to give their children a better future, and vulnerable people who need a helping hand.

We don't stop by providing housing. We engage with partners to offer supportive services that empower residents, strengthen neighborhoods, and help people thrive.

## VISION

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### **The future we strive to create**

Our vision is a future where everyone has a safe, affordable and supportive place to call home and residents thrive regardless of age, ability or circumstance.

## VALUES

### **Guiding principles that define our core identity and guide decisions, actions and culture.**

#### **Housing is a Human Right**

We value housing as a human right and strive to ensure that everyone, regardless of background, has access to safe, stable, and affordable housing.

#### **People First**

Whether it's our team, our residents, or our community, we lead with empathy, kindness, and respect. We listen and care deeply. We aim to help others feel confident and supported.

#### **Innovation and Sustainability**

We show up with dedication and creativity and embrace innovative solutions. We work to build and manage housing that is environmentally and financially sustainable for long-term community impact.

#### **Accountability and Collaboration**

We strive to be transparent, responsible stewards of our resources, ensuring that our housing remains affordable and well-maintained. We achieve these goals through the power of partnerships with residents, community organizations, policymakers and investors to create lasting solutions.

#### **Grounded in Growth**

We embrace personal and professional development. We are open to new opportunities, stay open-minded, and strive to evolve.

# Honor the past. Analyze the present. Boldly envision the future.

## Founding Story

WDC was pioneered by professional women deeply committed to social justice with expertise in architecture and design, community planning and historic preservation. Founded in 1979 by Susan Aitcheson, Katrin Adam, and Joan Forrester Sprague, Alma Felix Green joined soon after as the first Executive Director. In the early years, WDC concentrated on the Elmwood neighborhood of Providence, which had a high percentage of single, widowed, or divorced women. According to Susan Aitcheson in a 2025 interview with MJ Kaplan, the goal was to prevent gentrification that pushed out women and children. The leaders engaged residents to participate in design discussions to develop housing that met their needs and destigmatized poverty. Their activist approach to community development was featured in a recent exhibit that toured the country, *Not What?! Advocacy Activism and Alliances in American Architecture since 1968*. Throughout the decades, a commitment to thoughtful design ensures that buildings fit within a neighborhood and are functional and attractive.



*Founders Alma Felix Green and Susan Aitcheson*



## Expanded Property Management

As WDC grew its real estate portfolio, it took on property management and structured a separate business line, Housing Opportunities Corporation (HOC). By managing the properties that they developed, they could better serve residents, gain ongoing feedback about neighborhood needs and build relationships. Property management also provides a complementary income stream. Eventually, the housing portfolio began to expand geographically and serve new constituencies. In 2025, WDC owns 727 affordable homes across Rhode Island and in New Bedford, MA serving women, veterans, the elderly and families. WDC also has a robust and diverse pipeline of 292 units in the current development pipeline.

For the last decade, Housing Opportunities Corporation started providing third party management services to mission driven owners. HOC currently manages 420 units for other owners.

### **Expanded Resident Services**

Housing is central to an individual's well-being. As a property owner and manager, WDC/HOC further supports residents by connecting them to services that enhance their physical, emotional and economic well being. For the past five years, WDC/HOC has increasingly focused on this opportunity by investing in staff to build robust service networks in the communities in which we have properties and link our residents to these services.



*Photograph by Devon McWilliams*

Ribbon cutting at Pine View Apartments in 2022. Through partnerships with the Town of Exeter, Wood River Health and others, residents receive comprehensive support services.

## Alexandria

Alexandria is a thirty-one-year-old mother of an eleven-year-old girl and sixteen-month-old boy. The first thing that struck her about WDCHOC's Pine View affordable family housing was the beautiful location, including an abundance of trees and open green space. She enjoys "watching her children and the neighborhood kids have so much fun" knowing they are safe and surrounded by nature. She grew up in Cranston and she is glad her children have "the freedom of exploration" away from "the concrete jungle". The other families at Pine View are good neighbors, and it means a lot to her that "if you are struggling you will never be by yourself here - even if it is just someone to give an ear."

Alexandria got on the waiting list for affordable housing at sixteen when she was in an unsafe situation, and her daughter lived with her mother until an apartment opened up eight years later. It made a big difference for her to be able to get a place of their own. After a difficult hospitalization when she was pregnant with her son, Alexandria said that the Resident Services Coordinator was helpful to ensure that she could stay in her new home.

Alexandria is relieved that she no longer has to worry about affording housing. Instead of figuring out 'do I have to pay rent or buy food', she can do both. It's reassuring to know that bus transportation and childcare is nearby in case she cannot afford to keep her car.

Despite some concerns about the future, Alexandria is grateful that WDCHOC has helped her with a wide range of support, including 'getting the kids to school, accessing continuing education for myself and finding childcare.' Daycare makes it possible for her to work as a Store Associate at The Salvation Army part-time and to begin a bookkeeping certification at Rhode Island College. She wants her children to know "that there is help whenever they need it, but not to have to need it. My future is to build a career for myself so my children can be focused on what they want to do, not what they have to do. I am thankful every day I have been blessed with this opportunity and safe space."



*Alexandria Suggs, Pine View Family Housing  
7 Pine View Lane, Exeter*

## Adam

Adam moved into Sadwin Supportive Housing six years ago. WDC is the property manager for Community Care Alliance, the property owner, and they work closely together to meet residents' needs. He is a soft spoken fifty-one-year-old man who suffers from late-stage schizophrenia. Before moving into Sadwin, he had been hospitalized at Eleanor Slater and received treatment that allowed him to stabilize and move into step down housing with full time staff. Eventually he no longer needed that level of support and was ready to live more independently. Sadwin affords him the ability to live as independently as possible, in the least restrictive setting. He continues to rely on significant support from Sadwin owner Community Care Alliance and his doctors. It can be very difficult for those with schizophrenia to find the right combination of medications, as Adam says is the case for him, and working is not currently an option for him. However, with the right housing and supports from collaborating service organizations and WDC/HOC, he is able to live safely and comfortably in the community.



*Adam Morton, Sadwin, 138 Elm Street, Woonsocket (Supportive Housing)*

Adam grew up in Australia and was a go-getter at a young age. He began working on the pit crews for drag races at sixteen, completed his high school degree and apprenticeship in mechanics and was quickly hired by an American car company. This work brought him to the United States on a work visa and he stayed on for 20 years. He still loves the sport, and watches drag racing whenever he can. Over the years it became clear his career and community were in the US and received his green card fourteen years ago. Late onset schizophrenia upended his life and plans, yet he was able to get the support he needed to continue to live a safe and full life.

He enjoys living in Sadwin because the supportive housing, combined with clinical supports from Community Care Alliance, enable him to live as independently as possible. He feels it is a friendly and safe community, and he gets along with the other residents. He enjoys daily walks. His doctor's offices and grocery stores are all in walking distance of Sadwin. In his words, "I can live how I want to live here."

## Patricia

Patricia Irish is 78 years old and has lived in WDCHOC's Esperanza Senior Housing for eleven years. She said, "it was beautiful when I first came here." Like many seniors, she worked her whole life and relies on social security. It meant a lot to her to find affordable housing in the community of West Warwick, where she grew up, and still has many family members living nearby. She said that family living close is a big help when she is sick or has an age-related injury. She also likes most of the other people in the building and generally feels that it is a safe place to live. Patricia is proud that she is able to pay independently for \$350 monthly rent, groceries, a car and other needs. She enjoys cooking her own meals at home and the apartment has all the amenities she needs. Esperanza is not easily accessible to bus transportation, so having her own car is important for trips to Market Basket, the Mall, and her doctors' offices on Toll Gate Road.

Despite frustrations with the time it takes to make needed updates to the building, Patricia said she would "never want to move" because of the location and the fact that there simply are not other affordable options for seniors in the community., "Now people can't even get a place at all."



*Patricia Irish: WDCHOC Senior Housing, Esperanza, 58 Tiogue Avenue, West Warwick*

The 2026–2028 Strategic Framework reflects a pivotal moment for WDC/HOC. Building on a 50-year legacy rooted in social justice, community design, and partnership, the organization will strengthen its financial and operational foundations, grow its capacity to deliver high-quality, affordable homes, and deepen its impact on residents’ lives.

As the housing crisis intensifies, WDC/HOC’s mission—to ensure that everyone has a safe and supportive place to call home—has never been more urgent. This strategy positions the organization to lead boldly, act collaboratively, and deliver lasting change for our communities.

**Board and Executive Leadership Partner to Accelerate  
Excellence, Growth, Accountability and Impact**

# Strategic Alignment

## MAJOR PRIORITIES

### Stabilize and Refine Financial Management and Operations

- Strengthen financial and asset management to support quality & growth
- Develop property-based plans for facility needs, compliance and resident services

### Pursue Measured Growth

- Identify robust RI & MA development pipeline
- Increase properties under management that meet rigorous criteria
- Expand Strategic Partnerships

### Diversify and Innovate Funding

- Quality affordable housing development
- Preservation of portfolio
- Quality property management and resident services

### Enhance Visibility and Stakeholder Engagement

- Target outreach to key partners
- Rebrand
- Deepen engagement
- Leverage visibility from litigation

## SECONDARY PRIORITIES

**Partnership and Service Integration**

**Management Excellence and Strategic Responsiveness**

**Board High Performance**

## WDC/HOC Owned

(727 homes)

- 1 Charlestown, RI (11)**  
Shannock Falls—Shannock Village Cottages
- 2 Exeter, RI (40)**  
Pine View Apartments
- 3 Hopkinton, RI (53)**  
Saugutucket Springs
- 4 Johnston, RI (52)**  
Allegria Apartments
- 5 New Bedford, MA (30)**  
Willis Street Apartments
- 6 Pawtucket, RI (18)**  
Neighborhood Preservation Apartments
- 7 Providence, RI (293)**  
Adelante Apartments  
Arch Street Apartments  
Dean Street  
Elmwood Commons  
Historic West End II  
Lexington Ave Apartments  
Villita Apartments  
Villa Excelsior  
West End Preservation Apartments
- 8 Richmond, RI (32)**  
Shannock Falls—Richmond Ridge
- 9 South Kingstown, RI (70)**  
LaCasa  
Rodman Commons
- 10 West Warwick, RI (103)**  
Plaza Esperanza  
Wildberry Apartments
- 11 Warwick, RI (7)**  
School House Place
- 12 Westerly, RI (18)**  
North Glen Apartments  
Pierce Street



## WDC/HOC Managed

(420 homes)

- 13 Providence, RI (39)**  
Open Doors  
Operation Stand Down—Bissell Street  
Russo (AP Morin)
- 14 Pawtucket, RI (289)**  
Pawtucket Central Falls Development Corporation
- 15 Woonsocket, RI (92)**  
Boucher  
HPPL  
Sadwin  
Sutherland  
Tanguay