

## Upper Valley Services Grant Report

### Third Quarter Report: 4/1/24 - 6/30/24

1. Update on suitable housing locations and collaborate with other partners to ensure the project remains within constraints and continues through completion.

UVS in partnership with Downstreet Housing continues work to develop the Water Street property in Randolph Center and to advance the Waterbury apartment project. Both projects are progressing on schedule.

2. Update how Downstreet Housing and Community Development pre-development activities on the Water Street location to ensure progress is being made and there is collaboration, assigning roles, delegation tasks and effective communication.

With the collaboration of Downstreet Housing's Nathan Davidson and Nicola Anderson, Downstreet; Brice Blaisdell, UVS and Greg Montgomery, OSSO Studio they have finalized program requirements for the Randolph home and the ADU. The design includes the following elements:

- Home to be fully ADA compliant on first floor, to include accessible bedrooms, bathroom and kitchen for two individuals.
- Second floor living space dedicated for live-in support staff to include a kitchen, bathroom and bedroom
- Garage to be renovated into fully ADA compliant one-bedroom Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) with full kitchen, bathroom and living room
- Partnering with Efficiency Vermont to dramatically improve the energy envelope of the home through insulation and mechanical upgrades.
- Minimal change to the outside appearance of the home.
- The town of Randolph approved the zoning permit for the renovations of the home.

Issues and Challenges with this work:

- Because the home is in a historic district, all renovation is subject to review by the Vermont Department of Historic Preservation (VDHP). The plans were submitted to VDHP in early May for a 30-day review. They have asked for additional information around some external details (windows), but have been generally supportive of this project

- VDHP required an archeological assessment of the property. Proposals from archeological consultants have come in at an estimated cost of \$16,000, and this is outside of the scope of our pilot planning grant budget.
- Septic System: The septic system required extensive investigation that found it to be outdated and probably failing. Further, design of a new septic system to accommodate both the home and the ADU would be prohibitively expensive. Our civil engineers have proposed a solution that would have the home tie into a neighbor's forced main system that connects to the town sewer system. UVS will need to explore an easement agreement with the neighbor for this to happen. UVS has incurred costs of \$1225 for the septic evaluation outside our pilot planning grant budget. Legal fees for the development of easement and shared maintenance agreements will be \$5,000 – 10,000.
- It is expensive to renovate this property and create an ADU. The entire renovation drawings were submitted for an estimate in early June. The numbers provided by our estimator are key to determining the economic feasibility of the project. The current estimated cost for the project is \$1.1 million dollars.
- The Operating Budget for "Reverse Shared Living" – using the unlicensed Room and Board rate of \$814.65 per month per person does not generate sufficient income to cover the full cost of a home when owned or rented by the developmental services agency. In the traditional Shared Living model, all the costs associated with the property (mortgage, utilities, care and upkeep, phone and internet, taxes) are borne by the shared living provider and the individual living in their home contributes "room and board" – rent and meals and supplies needed for everyday life. This figure is far from adequate when factoring in the true costs of housing and board. To provide new residential models, DAIL will need to support exploration of other funding sources for the property costs separate from the costs of the embedded support services funded by the Medicaid Waiver. This predicted and ongoing budget gap is a barrier that will limit adoption of this desirable housing model. Is it possible to create a new level such as Unlicensed Agency Owned that is in line with the Licensed Care Home rate of \$979.63 per month? This could generate an additional 6K annually towards the operating of the home in this three-person scenario. While that may not close the full gap, it could be one recurring income stream that acknowledges this fundamental difference in cost.

Having a housing voucher with the Vermont Housing Authority or a local housing authority is helpful and yet these are not a guarantee and require a new type of lease agreement and property management as well as a consistent approach for the individual "board" costs. It is also not clear if a person who is in a two-resident home is eligible for a voucher and therefore only reliant on the room and board rate.

We have more questions than answers related to these new models and how to work within a Room and Board structure for the ongoing operating of these homes and this is

an annual cost that does not consider the cost to develop and provide the house or apartment. Another significant hurdle.

Next Steps with this project:

- Grant Application to Fund the Renovation Costs: An application for grant funding for this project was submitted to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board on July 9. This is the deadline for all submissions to be reviewed before their October board meeting. Applicants awarded grant funds will be notified by mid-to-late September. UVS is lead on this grant with Downstreet as collaborator.
- UVS is investigating grant funding through the Vermont Housing Improvement Program. The Vermont Housing Improvement Program 2.0 (VHIP 2.0) provides rental property owners up to \$50,000 per unit to cover the costs of bringing rental units up to Vermont Rental Housing Health Code guidelines or to create new units, including Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). This program is designed to help increase the supply of affordable, safe rental units in the State and offer avenues for willing participants to support households exiting homelessness.

Collaboration and Communication: The team of UVS Executive Director, Gloria Quinn, Housing and Services Coordinator, Deb Reed, and Facilities Technician, Brice Blaisdell, along with Downstreet's Director of Real Estate Development, Nicola Anderson and Assistant, Nathan Davidson have a weekly standing meeting to ensure collaboration, communication, and momentum on these two projects.

### 3. Update on the progress of the housing development documentary.

This is on track. Video is in the forming status with Skip gathering additional footage prior to sharing a final draft of the story board prior to its creation. Due to this work's nature, it is heavily front-loaded before having a finished product. Skip is attending the August 6<sup>th</sup> Charrette, and this will be another key event for gaining valuable footage.

### 4. Update on the planning workshops for parents and providers and the benefits it is providing to families to create new and innovative housing projects. How will work include collaboration with architects Ward Joyce, and Taryn Barrett.

- Charette with all stakeholders scheduled for August 6<sup>th</sup> from 1:30-4:00pm and power point presentations have been created, collaborators secured to include design professionals, developers, parents, service providers, board members, people with lived experience and wanting housing options. The invitation has gone out and we anticipate upwards of 40 participants.
- A brainstorming session on "How can housing options be better?" bringing together individuals with I/DD, parents, caregivers, UVS agency staff, and design professionals to:
  - i. Learn about current projects in development

- ii. Give parents and individuals with I/DD the opportunity to describe their real-life situations
  - iii. Discuss housing options and desired adaptations/technology
  - iv. Review design models and schematics
- GOAL: Consolidate information that will be used to develop a "toolkit" for everyone to use as they pursue, develop, and build housing for individuals with I/DD.
- Jim Caffery, Special Needs Attorney, has been contacted to provide critical information to the "toolkit" and this is something that we did not budget for in the initial grant, but our work has flagged key questions that he is well positioned to assist with. We request consideration of an additional \$3,500 for this work.
- Technology as a tool to support skill development, build greater independence and self-management in personal care, household skills and routines, medication management and other applications as needed is something that we have gained a better understanding of and seek additional funds to initiate work with Grand Care for up to 12 individuals who have been identified and will have funding for the ongoing monthly software costs of Grand Care but do not have funds or a mechanism to generate the one-time hardware and staff training and development required to design, install, interface and troubleshoot individualized use of this well vetted platform. The one-time cost to get this started is \$27,597.
- A stipend of \$3500 for people with lived experiences will be allocated for people who are involved in the 3-hour charette on August 6<sup>th</sup> and follow up evaluations and reflection work.

Ward Joyce, Taryn Barrett, Skip Whitman, Ellen Riley, Brice Blaisdell, Deb Reed are the core members of the Education and Engagement workgroup. This group meets monthly to advance this work funded by the grant.

#### 5. Update on any unknown fees and services related to the above goals.

- Archeological study at Randolph property costs approximately \$16,000 that was not budgeted.
- Grand Care, as previously mentioned, is a key interim step that we can take now with individuals who want to gain greater autonomy in their self-management and independent living skill development. To fund the "starter proposal" that will benefit up to 12 individuals will cost \$27,557.
- Jim Caffery has valuable expertise that we want included in the final "tool kit" and engaging his services on this project will cost an added \$3,500.
- Septic system design costs to bring system to meet future needs will cost an added \$5 – 10,000 in legal fees to explore and draw up easement agreements and shared maintenance agreements with abutting property owners and this discovery of need is not in the current pre-development budget.

6. Update on consultation with an individual with lived experience and how they have provided advice and guidance during the development of UVS projects.

We are planning a charrette on August 6<sup>th</sup> with local families, peer mentors, and a group of individuals seeking housing options to give input into the scope and content of the “Tool Kit” or guide that is being developed by the team of Ward Joyce and Taryn Barrett and members of the Education and Engagement Work Group. Participants will be given a stipend in a gift certificate.