



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ONE Neighborhood Builders expands beyond Providence, into East Providence, with purchase of Sutton Place and a project that helps city meet state's affordable housing target**

**PROVIDENCE, RI**—April 7, 2021—ONE Neighborhood Builders (ONE|NB), a community development leader, has purchased a 36-unit development in East Providence for \$3.3 million from Rissport I, LLC, and will renovate the units that will now become deed-restricted affordable housing.

The purchase of Sutton Place—two identical buildings located at 54 and 60 Sutton Avenue—with assistance from RIHousing ensures that the 36 units in the buildings will remain affordable for the long-term. This renovation will make East Providence only the seventh of Rhode Island's 39 communities to meet the state goal that 10 percent of each city's or town's housing stock qualifies as low- and moderate-income housing.

This is the first project outside of Providence for ONE|NB, which is headquartered in the capital city's Olneyville neighborhood. ONE|NB President and Executive Director Jennifer Hawkins said the project begins to fulfill the organization's strategic direction, identified last June, which includes expanding its real estate portfolio into other communities. ONE|NB plans renovations to the 22 one-bedroom units and 14 studio apartments in the buildings located between East Providence's Downtown and Rumford neighborhoods.

"We're excited to announce our first project outside of Providence, and we're thrilled to be collaborating with the city of East Providence and with RIHousing to create more opportunities for affordable housing in Rhode Island," Hawkins said. "We were recently designated the developer for another project in East Providence—a Brownfield site that we intend to fully remediate and develop into 14 mixed-income rental apartments along the East Bay Bike Path."

East Providence Mayor Bob DaSilva said he views the renovation project and the relationship with ONE Neighborhood Builders as an entirely new approach to creating affordable housing. Known in the housing world as Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (or NOAH), this concept is to purchase modest homes that are presently meeting the needs of the affordable housing market but are at risk for escalating rents as the housing crunch mounts. The city has been hovering near the state's 10-percent goal for its housing stock—needing just 35 more units, according to the 2020 Housing Fact Book by HousingWorksRI at Roger Williams University.

“These 36 units at Sutton Place will put us over the top,” DaSilva said. “We are committed to creating affordable housing in our city. This purchase and ONE|NB’s pledge to renovate these units and keep the rents affordable to working class residents prevents two undesirable outcomes—the buildings might otherwise fall into disrepair or be purchased by another developer who begins charging much higher rates, which ultimately may displace the current tenants.”

This project works because of RIHousing’s financial assistance, which helps cover the costs of ONE|NB’s purchase and renovations. The financing from RIHousing requires that the apartments be leased to households not earning more than 80 percent of the Area Median Income, which is currently \$48,450 for a single person.

Total development costs are approximately \$5,842,700. ONE|NB has secured the following commitments to fund the project: \$200,000 from The East Providence Waterfront Commission; RIHousing HOME Funds (\$1,392,490) and Housing Trust Funds (\$1,189,920), as well as a first mortgage of \$1,918,300 and a Preservation Loan of \$1,080,000—both via RIHousing.

The cost per unit for the purchase and rehabilitation is \$162,298—far below what it would cost to develop a new affordable apartment. Going forward, the rents will be restricted so that roughly 30 percent of a tenant’s gross income will go toward their housing costs. Households that spend more than that percentage on their housing are considered “cost burdened,” according to HousingWorks RI.

“We’re pleased to find partners in both ONE Neighborhood Builders and the city of East Providence,” RIHousing Executive Director Carol Ventura said. “RIHousing offers this type of financing as a crucial part of our mission to help ensure that Rhode Islanders can find housing that they can afford. Structuring these deals can be complicated, but they reap rewards for Rhode Island residents who need safe, viable places to live and thrive.”

Rehabilitation work will include upgrades to meet compliance standards for electrical wiring and the state fire code, all new windows, new landscaping, parking lot repairs, and a new roof on 54 Sutton Avenue. Apartment renovations will include new flooring, as well as new kitchens and bathrooms.

#### **ABOUT ONE NEIGHBORHOOD BUILDERS:**

ONE|NB is a community development leader whose mission is to develop affordable housing and engage neighbors across Greater Providence to cultivate healthy, vibrant, and safe communities. Founded in 1988, ONE|NB has developed 409 affordable apartments, 129 homes, and more than 57,500 square feet of commercial and community space. Additionally, the organization is completing 47 new affordable apartments this year. ONE|NB created [the first free community wireless network](#) in Rhode Island; is the convenor of the [Central Providence Health Equity Zone](#), which brings together residents, community organizations, health professionals, and others to address root causes of health disparities; and is the backbone organization of the [Central Providence Opportunities](#), an \$8 million pilot initiative to increase social and economic opportunity in two Providence zip codes.