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Future Housing Initiative Strategy: Executive Summary

Building industry stakeholders (e.g. policymakers, building owners, nonprofits, and lenders) cite a lack of real-world performance data as a key impediment to building decarbonization. **Future Housing is an initiative to create a comprehensive national database of real-world performance data on low-carbon multifamily buildings.** This database will include data on resident quality of life, health, and affordability alongside energy use and carbon emissions. The initiative will center perspectives from affordable housing residents and community leaders to deliver data and analysis that supports equitable decarbonization of the multifamily building sector. This document presents a strategy for the Future Housing Initiative.

Future Housing received initial funding in 2022 and 2023 for **three ongoing projects**:

- Bank of America Foundation grants to Building Energy Exchange (BE-Ex):
 - \$250,000 to develop a strategy for Future Housing (this document) and conduct field research to incorporate resident priorities into the data framework.
 - \$150,000 to work with building health experts to integrate health metrics into the Future Housing data strategy.
- NYSERDA provided \$300,000 to Bright Power to build a seed data set of 30-50 low-carbon multifamily properties in the northeast and create low-carbon underwriting benchmarks for NY State lenders and housing agencies.

Key Future Housing Initiative operating principles are:

- Fully fund ongoing data collection, quality control, and maintenance
- Make the data work for users, don't make the users work to understand the data
- Prioritize resident voices in the development of data structure and definitions
- Present building data in context, highlighting the connections between carbon, energy, equity, health, and resident quality of life

32 organizations are advisors or partners on the two ongoing Future Housing projects:

- Government agencies (EPA, FHFA, NYSERDA, HPD, HCR, PNNL, LBNL)
- Affordable housing owners and trade groups (Winn, Riseboro, NHT, SAHF)
- Academics (MIT)
- Energy experts (BE-Ex, RMI, Rewiring America, VEIC, Cadence OneFive, SWA)
- Lenders and lending trade groups (Fannie Mae, Mortgage Bankers Association, NY Green Bank, Wells Fargo, HDC, Trinity Financial, CPC)
- Environmental and community advocates (NRDC, Montana Human Rights Network, CoEquity Consulting, Simpson Strategic, Kinetic Communities Consulting)

The centerpiece of the initiative will be the Future Housing Data Hub, a user-friendly, information rich website with real world information on a set of specific low-carbon multifamily properties. The Data Hub will present visualizations, data exports, and offer an API. Free access would be provided to individuals, nonprofits, and government agencies while for-profit companies might be charged a licensing fee. The initial database will include five categories of data:

1. **Property Information** (e.g. contact information, location, size, building and system types, green certifications, financing, occupancy)
2. **Building operation** (e.g. energy and water consumption, spending, carbon emissions)
3. **Neighborhood characteristics** (e.g. income, household size, public transportation)
4. **Resident quality of life and experience** (e.g. resident perception of safety, thermal comfort, experience of building management, quality of life measures).
5. **Health** (pending, development underway)

Key activities of Future Housing will include:

1. **Building the data set.** Future Housing will fully support high quality building data collection, including whole property utility information for properties in all regions of the United States.
2. **Maintaining the data set.** Future Housing will fully support high quality data maintenance to ensure accurate and up to date holistic building data including whole property utility information.
3. **Data Hub (website) maintenance.** Future Housing will maintain the Data Hub website platform, including managing access for free and paid users.
4. **Research and user cultivation.** While the data set will be transparent and available to a variety of users, Future Housing will work proactively to engage with intended audiences. It will collaborate on research and implementation projects to ensure the data is useful and to refine the data collection and presentation to better serve users. The current NYSERDA project is an example of this - working closely with underwriters to make use of utility data for underwriting. Analogous efforts should be made to engage with community organizations, policymakers, and others to use of the data.
5. **Marketing & outreach.** Future Housing will need a sustained effort to ensure the Data Hub and related projects are publicized and can reach a wide audience.
6. **Finance & fundraising.** In the near term Future Housing will require grant funding. Over the long-term Future Housing is expected to become self-supporting with revenue from consortium members and/or paid users, but may require ongoing foundation support for associated user cultivation and research.

In the first 5 years, Future Housing aims to establish itself as the go-to national resource on performance data on multifamily buildings aiming to meet decarbonization standards. Once the data set is expanded nationally and the Data Hub is created, we anticipate that it will become a valued tool for policymakers and financial markets to guide large scale investments in building decarbonization. Environmental justice and community advocates will cite Future Housing as an example of how to use data to promote a just climate transition. In 10 years we envision the database has played a crucial role in establishing decarbonized housing standards in multiple jurisdictions and serves as an industry benchmark for building carbon and resident well being.

From 2023 through 2028, we estimate a total cost of \$6.1 Million for Future Housing from grant, consortium, and user revenue. This will fund the following activities:

- Incorporate health into Future Housing strategy and data elements.
- Build and launch the Future Housing Data Hub website.
- Identify or create a home organization for Future Housing.
- Build a robust dataset of real performance information from low-carbon multifamily in all US regions for all five data categories.
- Develop a long-term approach to resident data collection.
- Secure data sharing commitments from building owners and programs.
- Maintain a data set and Future Housing Data Hub for 5 years.
- Cultivate user base through collaborative research and implementation projects.
- Pilot and refine a long-term user and consortium revenue model to reduce reliance on grants.

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