HOUSING AUTHORITY WORK SESSION

Monday, October 6, 2025 at 4:30 PM

MEETING LOCATION

1101 Broad Street, Meeting House, Milliken, CO 80543

Zoom Meeting Details

To Join via Zoom

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82772437636?pwd=FwsPJSqw2UT2PTHHDzs8gcpFZkUQTk.1

1. **Discussion Agenda**
   a. **Milliken Housing Authority Strategic Plan**
      Sloane Hawes, Housing Authority Chair

Milliken Housing Authority Strategic Plan

Draft 09.19.2025

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Prepared by Ayres Associates

Introduction

The Strategic Plan for the **Milliken Housing Authority (MHA)** outlines the organization's mission, goals, and strategies to expand affordable housing options in the Town of Milliken. On August 27, 2025, MHA board members participated in a strategic planning workshop facilitated by Ayres Associates. The purpose of the workshop was to:

- Clarify MHA's role in supporting and leading affordable housing efforts within the community.
- Define specific goals and actionable steps to guide future initiatives.
- Identify targeted strategies, development approaches, and key actions to help fulfill MHA's mission.

The input and the discussion at this workshop inform the content of this strategic plan.

Attendees of the Strategic Planning Workshop on August 27, 2025

Workshop Summary

The following summary captures key insights and themes from the strategic planning workshop discussion. These reflections provide essential context and help shape the direction of this Strategic Plan by highlighting the priorities, challenges, and opportunities identified by MHA board members.

Participants were encouraged to be fully present, set aside stress, silence devices, and let go of expectations for a perfect session. Many expressed a desire to approach the workshop with openness and focus to foster thoughtful dialogue and strategic thinking.

Participants outlined what they hoped to achieve with the workshop:

- **Clarity:** Develop a clear picture of the organization's role and where it is going.
- **Simplicity:** Identify simple actions to take, not overcomplicated.
- **Plan:** Build a roadmap to guide the work of the organization.

Participants engaged in a series of structured exercises designed to foster creative thinking and collaborative dialogue. The primary objective was to identify shared priorities and areas of alignment that could inform the strategic direction of the Milliken Housing Authority.

The discussion revealed a need for greater organizational **focus**, enhanced **capacity**, and a more intentional approach to identifying and aligning **priorities and opportunities**.

Attendance

The following were in attendance for the workshop held on August 27, 2025, at Milliken Town Hall:

Sloane Hawes	Chair, MHA Board of Commissioners
Kellie Matthews	Secretary and Treasurer, MHA Board of Commissioners
Tami Burns	Administrative Assistant, MHA Board of Commissioners
Lori Vandiveer	Commissioner, MHA Board of Commissioners
Jordan Cashman	Planner, Town of Milliken
*Chad Wilson	Commissioner, MHA Board of Commissioners *attended virtually via Zoom
Chris Wilson	Facilitator and Community Planner, Ayres Associates

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Michael Scholl	Economic Development and Redevelopment Lead, Ayres Associates

Roles and Skills

Participants used Insight Cards as visual prompts to reflect on their role in the MHA mission. Participants selected a card that best represented their unique role in advancing the mission of the MHA.

Shared roles included:

- Strategic decision-making
- Community building
- Advocacy and listening
- Historical perspective
- Direction and insight

Identified skill gaps for future board appointments:

- Event planning and organization
- Marketing and promotion
- Fundraising and grant writing
- Practical "how-to" knowledge

Organizational Identity

A discussion about MHA's current identity highlights both its strengths and limitations, including its advocacy role, idea generation capacity, and community engagement focus. These insights provide a foundation for understanding the organization's aspirations, revealing areas where MHA seeks to enhance effectiveness, clarify its scope, and expand resources to better fulfill its mission.

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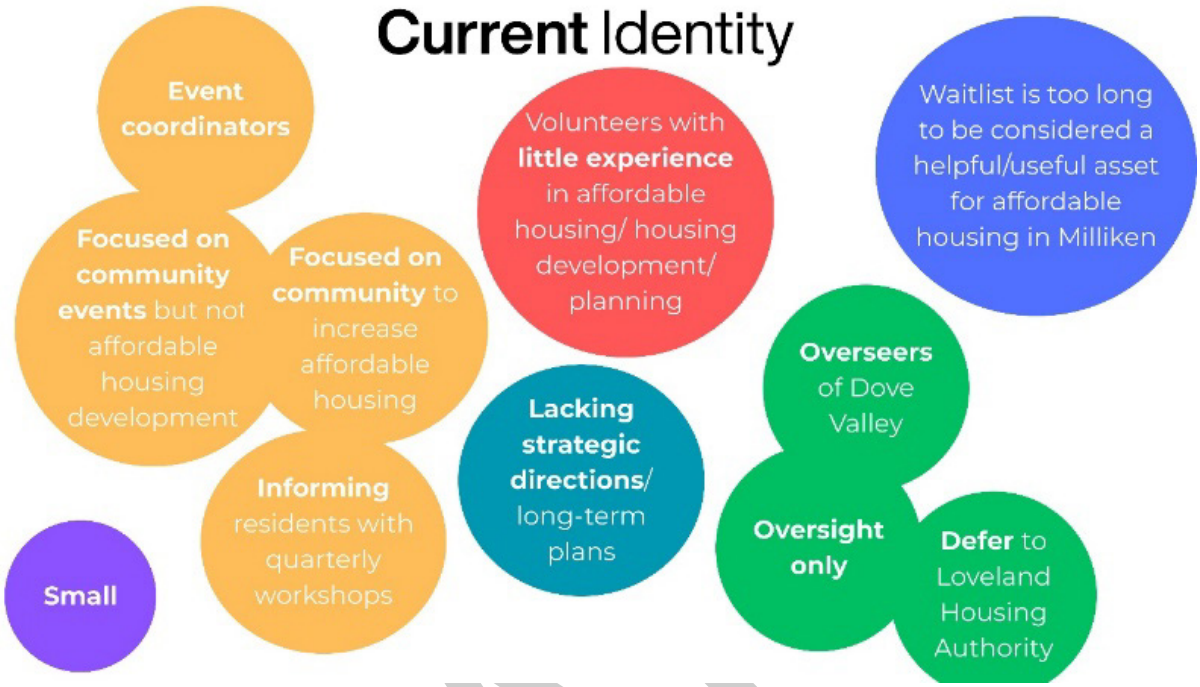

Pre-workshop survey responses to the question, "What is the current identity of the organization?"

Key Themes – Current Identify of MHA:

- **Advocacy without Decision-Making Authority:** MHA advocates for and oversees Dove Valley but has limited authority to make major decisions, creating a gap between responsibility and control.
- **Strength in Idea Generation, Challenges in Implementation:** The organization generates creative ideas but struggles to implement them, indicating a need for greater execution capacity.
- **Significant Investment in Community Events:** MHA devotes substantial time and resources to community events, which build engagement but may divert focus from broader organizational goals.

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Pre-workshop survey responses to the question, "What identity would you like to see the organization step into?"

Key Themes – Aspirational Identity of MHA

- **Effective Advocacy and Action:** MHA aims to deliver tangible results, reduce bureaucracy, and build trust in its advocacy efforts.
- **Clarity of Scope and Collaboration:** Clear understanding of roles and trust-based partnerships are essential to strengthen impact.
- **Expanded Resources:** Success depends on increasing funding, knowledge, and housing inventory to support organizational goals.

Comparing MHA's current and aspirational identities highlights opportunities for growth. Strengthening implementation capacity, clarifying decision-making authority, and strategically allocating time and resources will help MHA move from idea generation to measurable outcomes. Focusing on trust-based collaboration and expanding funding, knowledge, and housing inventory will position the organization to achieve its advocacy goals more effectively and enhance its overall impact within Dove Valley.

Strategic Challenges

Participants identified challenges and envisioned opportunities using Insight Cards as visual prompts. They responded to four guiding questions, shared their answers with the group, and discussed alignments across responses.

What are the challenges holding MHA back?

- Lack of focus and too many competing priorities
- Scattered efforts and unclear direction

If a hurdle is removed, what is possible?

- Expanded board and community engagement
- Improved tenant services
- Clear goals and project execution

What will it take to get there?

- Strong leadership and strategic planning
- Land acquisition and partnerships
- Increased organizational capacity and knowledge

What resources and partners will MHA need?

- Compliance and operational expertise
- Community buy-in and education
- Teamwork, shared goals, perseverance, and collaboration.

The discussion highlighted that MHA's challenges stem from scattered focus and competing priorities. Addressing these could enable expanded board and community engagement, improved tenant services, and clearer goals with effective project execution. Success will require strong leadership, strategic planning, organizational capacity, partnerships, and operational expertise, along with community collaboration.

Future Vision

The Milliken Housing Authority board members expressed a clear and thoughtful vision for the type of affordable housing they hope to develop. Their priorities reflect a desire for housing that goes beyond basic shelter to foster well-being, community, and inclusivity.

Key themes:

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- Peaceful, nature-integrated environments.
- Intergenerational living that brings seniors and youth together.
- A strong emphasis on social health, safety, and belonging.

Participants also highlighted the importance of walkability, access to gardens and exercise, and spaces that promote active lifestyles and community engagement. The group envisions affordable housing that is responsive to resident input, built around shared goals, and inclusive of pets and communal gathering spaces. High standards for quality and repair were also emphasized, indicating a commitment to maintaining dignity and pride in housing.

Overall, the type of affordable housing this group is seeking is holistic, designed not only to meet financial needs but to support vibrant, connected, and resilient communities. It reflects a forward-thinking approach that integrates physical, social, and emotional well-being into the fabric of housing development.

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Participants discuss the categories created in their frequency matrix.

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Current Conditions

While the Milliken Housing Authority (MHA) board expressed a strong interest in evolving into a dynamic developer of affordable housing, several foundational challenges must be addressed to make this goal viable. Chief among these is the organization's reliance on volunteer labor and the absence of dedicated, full-time staff. This limits MHA's ability to manage even basic day-to-day requirements of a housing authority.

Additionally, the board identified a lack of technical expertise in housing development, which constrains their capacity to plan, execute, and oversee new projects effectively. Compounding these challenges is the limited availability of assets—particularly land—which restricts opportunities for site acquisition and project initiation. Overcoming these barriers will require strategic investment in staffing, skill-building, and resource development to position MHA as a capable and sustainable housing developer.

Relationship to Dove Valley and Loveland Housing Authority

In 2005, the Town of Milliken entered into a partnership with the Loveland Housing Authority (LHA) to develop a 20-unit affordable rental housing project on a five-acre site within the town. This led to the creation of the MHA as a limited partner in the Dove Valley development.

Under the terms of the agreement, LHA serves as the managing partner and property manager, while the MHA retains ownership of the development. The project generates approximately $250,000 in annual revenue, resulting in a net cash flow of $30,000 to $40,000 per year.

While property management has occasionally been a source of tension due to perceptions of insufficient attention to the site, it is important to recognize that the Loveland Housing Authority (LHA) manages over 1,400 units across the Front Range. LHA has developed substantial organizational capacity to meet the reporting requirements of affordable housing programs and to oversee the general maintenance and operations of its properties.

The MHA has considered assuming the general partnership role for Dove Valley as a way to address ongoing maintenance concerns. However, this transition is not recommended at this time. The MHA lacks the operational capacity to effectively manage the Dove Valley units. Additionally, given that the development is now over 20 years old, it is likely that significant capital improvements will be required within the next five to ten years to maintain quality and functionality. For context, affordable housing developments of this type typically require a portfolio of around 200 rental units to achieve the scale necessary for efficient property management and operational sustainability.

Current Budget

The MHA currently holds a balance of just over $100,000, primarily derived from fees and distributions associated with the Dove Valley project. Most of the expenditures are directed toward marketing and advertising, with some preliminary consideration given to a potential Phase II expansion of Dove Valley.

The organization does have some capacity to bring on limited staff support, but this will need to be carefully reviewed.

Moving Forward

Based on the outcomes of the strategic planning workshop, we recommend that the board formally adopt the following strategic plan to guide its actions over the next five to ten years. By committing to a clear and forward-looking plan, the board will demonstrate its intent to advance the organization's vision and strengthen efforts to expand affordable housing in Milliken.

Mission

The Milliken Housing Authority is committed to fostering inclusive, high-quality, and affordable housing opportunities that reflect the values of community, dignity, and sustainability. Through collaboration, innovation, and resident engagement, MHA works to create vibrant neighborhoods that support intergenerational living, promote social well-being, and enhance the quality of life for all Milliken residents.

Vision

The Milliken Housing Authority envisions a thriving community where every home strengthens the whole—uplifting residents, fostering connection, and building a better future one home at a time.

Goals and Strategies

The following goals and strategies are recommended based on the Milliken Housing Authority's long-term vision and the current realities facing the organization. They reflect both the aspirational direction identified during strategic planning and the practical needs for organizational focus, capacity building, and opportunity alignment. These recommendations are intended to guide MHA in making informed decisions, prioritizing resources, and advancing its mission to provide inclusive and impactful affordable housing in the Town of Milliken.

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The goals and strategies are organized around three basic concepts**, focus, capacity and opportunity.**

GOAL: FOCUS THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BOARD AND THE MHA

Over the course of the strategic planning workshop, it became evident that the MHA is currently navigating multiple, and at times competing, priorities. This lack of a unified direction has contributed to a lack of internal alignment and limited progress toward long-term goals. Participants recognized the need to establish a clearer focus, streamline efforts, and build internal capacity to better align with the community's housing needs and aspirations.

By identifying areas of overlap and shared values, the workshop helped illuminate opportunities for MHA to refine its strategic approach. Moving forward, the organization will benefit from prioritizing initiatives that reflect its core mission, leveraging partnerships, and developing the leadership and resources necessary to deliver impactful, community-centered affordable housing solutions.

Recommended Strategies:

- **Refocus Board Role Toward Strategic Leadership**
  Reevaluate the board's role as direct advocates for Dove Valley residents. While resident concerns are valid and important, addressing them during board meetings may detract from broader strategic discussions. Consider referring operational or site-specific issues directly to the Loveland Housing Authority, allowing the MHA board to concentrate its time and energy on long-term planning, policy development, and organizational growth.

- **Establish a Resident Engagement Protocol**
  Develop a formal process for collecting and addressing resident feedback outside of board meetings. This could include regular listening sessions, surveys, or a designated liaison role. By creating a structured channel for resident input, the board can remain informed while maintaining its strategic focus.

- **Implement a Strategic Agenda Framework**
  Adopt a meeting structure that prioritizes strategic topics that address the Mission and Vision of the organization, such as housing development opportunities, funding strategies, and organizational capacity. Limit operational updates to written reports or consent agendas, ensuring that board time is used effectively to advance MHA's mission and long-term goals.

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- **Set Clear Housing Targets and Define the Board's Role**
  Clarify the Milliken Housing Authority Board's role in advancing affordable housing within the community. While becoming a direct developer is an aspirational long-term goal, it requires significant resources, expertise, and time. In the short term, the board can pursue impactful alternatives such as forming strategic partnerships with private developers interested in affordable housing, collaborating with the Town to support housing incentives, and advocating for policies that expand housing access. Establishing clear housing targets will help guide decision-making and ensure alignment between board activities and community needs.

GOAL: BUILD ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Advancing affordable housing in Milliken requires more than vision, it requires sustained effort, expertise, and resources. While volunteer commitment has been instrumental in MHA's progress, it alone cannot support the scale and complexity of future initiatives. To carry forward strategic priorities effectively, MHA must invest in building organizational capacity. This includes seeking dedicated staff, expanding operational ability, and developing systems that enable consistent execution and long-term sustainability. Strengthening capacity will empower MHA to move from planning to implementation with greater confidence and impact.

The board should regularly assess gaps in its collective knowledge and expertise, identifying areas where additional skills or perspectives could strengthen decision-making and strategic direction. Over time, these gaps can be addressed through thoughtful recruitment of new board members, targeted training, and collaboration with subject matter experts. By intentionally building a more well-rounded and informed board, MHA will be better equipped to navigate complex housing challenges, pursue innovative solutions, and fulfill its mission with greater confidence and impact.

Recommended Strategies:

- **Plan to Hire Dedicated Staff or Secure Contract Support**
  To advance its strategic priorities and improve operational effectiveness, the Milliken Housing Authority should develop a plan to transition from a volunteer-led model to one that includes paid staff or contracted professionals. Key functions such as board administration, project development, grant writing, and community engagement require consistent expertise and dedicated time—resources that are difficult to sustain through volunteer labor alone. With a current budget balance of approximately $100,000 and ongoing revenue from

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developer fees and distributions, MHA is well-positioned to invest in staffing solutions that will build capacity and accelerate progress toward its mission.

- **Conduct a Board Skills Audit and Recruit Strategically**
  Regularly assess the board's collective expertise and identify gaps in areas such as finance, housing development, legal compliance, and communications. Use this insight to guide recruitment of new commissioners and target training opportunities. Consider opportunities for technical assistance training through both the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority and Housing Colorado.

- **Develop Operational Systems for Sustainability**
  To maintain a consistent focus on developing affordable housing opportunities in Milliken, the Milliken Housing Authority should prioritize building robust internal systems for budget management and project tracking. These systems will enable the organization to monitor financial activity in real time, assess progress against strategic goals, and ensure accountability across all initiatives. By implementing tools and processes that support transparent reporting, resource allocation, and timeline management, MHA can improve decision-making, streamline operations, and better position itself to deliver impactful housing solutions to the community.

GOAL: SEEK OUT FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES AND BE OPORTUNISTIC

The Milliken Housing Authority has articulated a bold vision to evolve into a proactive housing developer focused on creating welcoming, safe, and inclusive communities. This vision goes beyond simply building affordable units, it emphasizes the importance of designing neighborhoods that foster connection, dignity, and a sense of belonging for all residents. MHA aims to be known not just for its housing developments, but for cultivating environments where people of all ages (and their pets), backgrounds, and abilities feel supported and valued.

By prioritizing thoughtful design, community engagement, and long-term stewardship, MHA seeks to lead with purpose and compassion. Its future developments will reflect this commitment by integrating features that promote safety, accessibility, intergenerational living, and social well-being, ensuring that affordable housing in Milliken is not only attainable but truly enriching.

To achieve this goal, the MHA will need to be opportunistic and strategic as it seeks to build capacity and increase affordable housing opportunities.

Recommended Strategies:

- **Form Strategic Partnerships with Local Housing Developers**
  To accelerate the development of affordable housing in Milliken, the Milliken Housing Authority should proactively form strategic partnerships with key local housing developers. These collaborations can leverage private-sector expertise and resources while aligning with MHA's mission. The Town may consider offering incentives, such as fee relief, expedited permitting, or density bonuses to developers who commit to setting aside a portion of units as affordable or donating land for future MHA-led projects. These partnerships will be essential in expanding housing options, reducing development costs, and fostering a shared commitment to community well-being.

- **Form a Plan Regarding the Future of Dove Valley**
  With Dove Valley approaching its 20th anniversary in 2027, the Milliken Housing Authority (MHA) is entering a pivotal moment in its relationship with the development and its investors, particularly the Loveland Housing Authority, which has served as the managing partner. It is common for limited partners to exit housing partnerships around the 20-year mark, creating an opportunity to reassess ownership and governance structures.

  Colorado does have a 30-year affordability threshold so the units will need to be maintained as affordable through 2036 regardless of ownership changes. However, MHA should explore options such as restructuring the partnership to assume greater control or pursuing a property acquisition from the general partner. Either path could position MHA to play a more direct role in Dove Valley's future, aligning the development more closely with local housing priorities. Additionally, this transition could yield financial benefits, such as increased revenue or equity, that could be reinvested into new affordable housing initiatives in Milliken, further advancing MHA's mission.

- **Invest in Community-Centered Design and Engagement Practices**
  To ensure future developments reflect the values of inclusion, dignity, and connection, MHA should prioritize community-centered design and resident engagement throughout the planning and development process. This includes hosting listening sessions, incorporating feedback into site plans and amenities, and designing spaces that promote intergenerational interaction, accessibility, and social well-being. By embedding community voices into the design process,

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MHA can create housing that not only meets physical needs but also fosters a strong sense of belonging and pride among residents. This approach will reinforce MHA's reputation as a developer that builds with purpose and compassion.

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