

CHA board OKs '02 plans to rehab, build 6,500 units ; Activists, experts raise questions over funds, land:[South Sports Final Edition]

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The Chicago Housing Authority board approved its redevelopment plans for 2002 on Tuesday, as researchers and housing advocates questioned whether the agency has enough funding and land to reach its long-range goals for transforming public housing.

The CHA will step up its renovation and construction of units, from about 2,000 housing units this year to more than 6,500 in 2002, according to the plan approved by the board Tuesday. The program is part of a 10-year plan approved in 1999 and begun last year that calls for building or renovating 25,000 apartments, using \$1.6 billion in federal funds and additional state, local and private dollars.

Members of the Coalition to Protect Public Housing, an activist and residents group, noted on Tuesday that the CHA is well behind schedule in relocating families from most high-rise developments to private housing.

But the CHA said it delayed moving many families because of concerns raised by resident leaders.

Coalition members on Tuesday also cited an analysis of the 2002 plan by the Chicago Rehab Network, an umbrella group for Chicago affordable-housing developers, which contends the CHA will be unable to complete 25,000 units unless it finds an additional \$1 billion in funding.

Also, a University of Illinois researcher said a preliminary analysis of the CHA redevelopment plans shows the agency does not have enough land secured to build the replacement housing it is planning at high-rise complexes.

CHA spokesman Derek Hill disputed that finding, pointing out that only 10,000 new units will be built. The rest are units that will be rehabilitated for senior citizens. "We do have enough land," he said.

In addition to acting on its 2002 redevelopment plan, the CHA board Tuesday approved a \$25 million increase in its maintenance budget, to reflect increased repair work on its complexes in response to resident complaints this spring. The money comes from the authority's capital budget and is in addition to its current property management budget.