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Housing Accessibility Increased in Richmond and Hampton Roads

HOME, NFHA, and the Breeden Company Reach Agreement to Avoid Litigation and Promote Accessibility

RICHMOND, VA – Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia, Inc. (HOME) and The National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) have agreed to a settlement with the Breeden Company, Inc. (Breeden) that will avoid litigation, promote and ensure accessibility at eight Breeden properties, and provide \$87,000 to further the missions of HOME and NFHA.

HOME and NFHA began an investigation of Breeden properties in 2014. In August of 2016, HOME and NFHA made Breeden aware of potential concerns at eight properties under the accessibility requirements for new construction under the Fair Housing Act. Breeden leadership immediately agreed to work collaboratively with HOME and NFHA to promote accessibility and ensure fair housing compliance.

As part of the Settlement Agreement, Breeden has agreed to certain modifications at these properties in order to ensure accessibility. These modifications ranged from changes to common areas and amenities, parking areas, routes throughout the properties, entrances to buildings and units, routes into and throughout certain units, as well as certain kitchen modifications.

Breeden also agreed to compensate HOME and NFHA \$55,000 for investigation costs, and to contribute an additional \$32,000 to HOME's accessibility fund, which HOME will use to increase accessibility at other homes in the Hampton Roads and Richmond regions. Breeden has also agreed to send all key employees to a fair housing training on design and construction legal requirements.

Helen Hardiman, vice president of HOME stated, “We commend Breeden for their willingness to come to the table so quickly to promote and ensure compliance with fair housing accessibility requirements. HOME and NFHA are proud to have worked with Breeden to ensure open and equal housing opportunities in the commonwealth for people of all abilities.”

Morgan Williams, general counsel for NFHA stated, “We are pleased that these Breeden properties are being modified to increase accessibility for the units in these eight complexes. We believe this settlement is an excellent example of what can be accomplished when a developer such as Breeden agrees to work collaboratively with NFHA and HOME to promote accessibility. We continue to hope that NFHA and HOME’s recent activity in Virginia will send a clear message to other architects, builders, and developers that apartment buildings must be designed and built so people with disabilities can travel around the property and maneuver through their apartments without encountering barriers.”

Properties in settlement include (maps below):

Newport News: Villages of Stoney Run

Virginia Beach: Red Mill Landing and Cambria at Cornerstone

Chesapeake: Red Knot at Edinburgh

Hampton: Briton Trace

Carollton: Eagle Harbor Apartments

Glen Allen: Marshall Springs at Gayton West

Henrico: The Reflections of West Creek

Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia, Inc. (HOME), founded in 1971, is a statewide fair housing non-profit. HOME's mission is to ensure equal access to housing for all people. HOME investigates housing discrimination and provides support for victims of discrimination. You can learn more about HOME and all of its services at www.HOMEofVA.org.

The National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA), founded in 1988, is a consortium of more than 220 private, nonprofit fair housing organizations, state and local civil rights agencies, and individuals from throughout the United States. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the National Fair Housing Alliance, through comprehensive education, advocacy, and enforcement programs, provides equal access to apartments, houses, mortgage loans, and insurance policies for all residents in the nation.

The Breeden Company has over 50 years of expertise in every facet of the industry. Breeden Property Management, Breeden Realty and Breeden Construction are the three major subsidiaries of The Breeden Company, with a combined portfolio of nearly 10,000 apartments, over 2 million square feet of retail and office space and an additional 1,700 residential homes.

Additional Information

The Fair Housing Act requires all “covered multifamily dwellings” designed and constructed for first occupancy after March 13, 1991 to be readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. In buildings with four or more dwelling units and at least one elevator, all dwelling units and all public and common use areas are subject to the Act’s design and construction requirements.

Requirement 1: Accessible building entrance on an accessible route.

Requirement 2: Accessible and usable public and common use areas.

Requirement 3: Usable doors.

Requirement 4: Accessible route into and through the covered dwelling unit.

Requirement 5: Light switches, electrical outlets, thermostats and other environmental controls in accessible locations.

Requirement 6: Reinforced walls for grab bars.

Requirement 7: Usable kitchens and bathrooms.

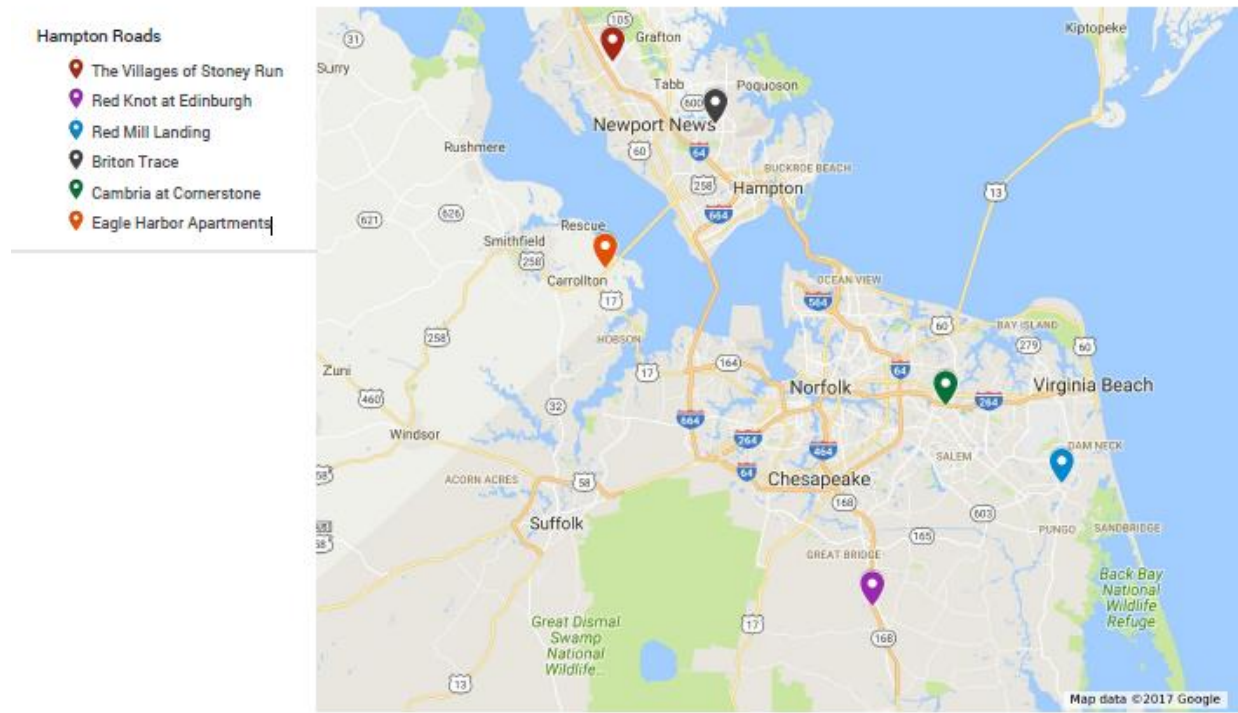
More details can be found in the Joint Statement of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Justice Accessibility (Design and Construction) requirements for covered multifamily dwellings under the Fair Housing Act:

<http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=JOINTSTATEMENT.PDF>

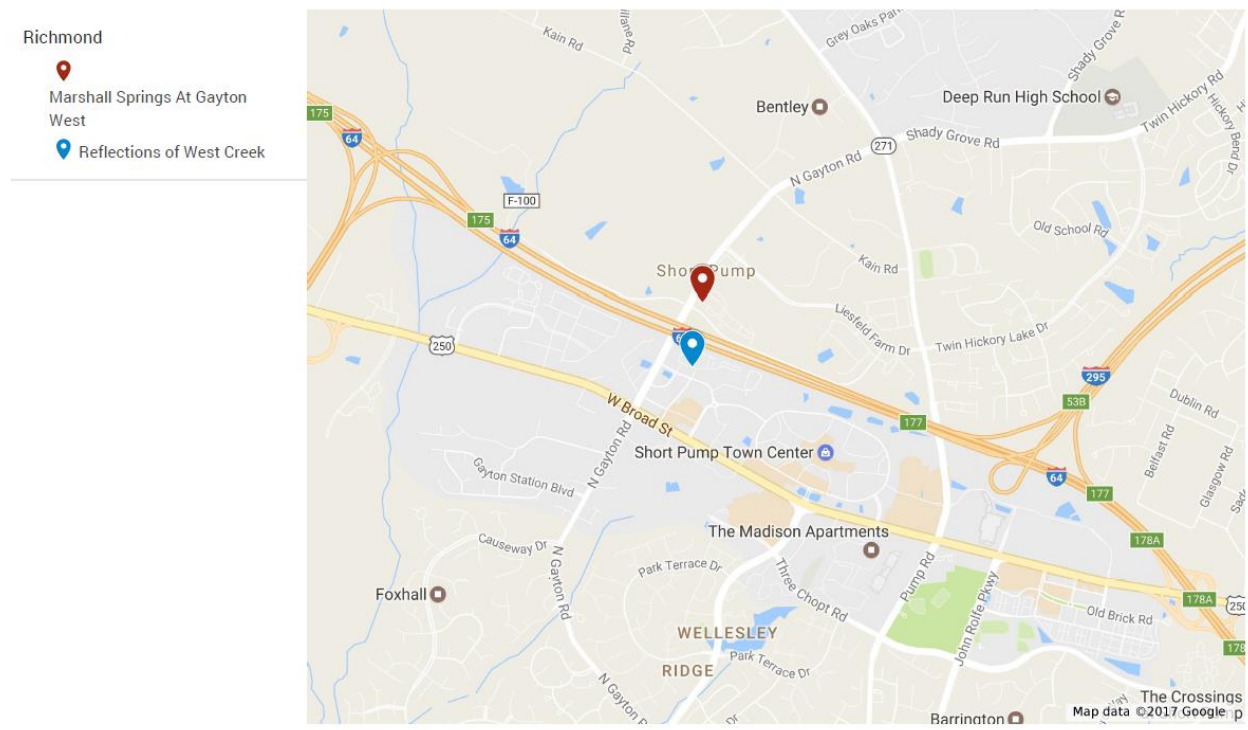
In considering the 1988 disability amendments to the Fair Housing Act, Congress stressed that enforcement of the civil rights laws is necessary to protect people with disabilities from the “devastating” impact of housing discrimination, including “architectural barriers” erected by developers and builders who fail to construct dwellings and public accommodations accessible to and adaptable by, people with disabilities. H.R. REP. NO. 100-711, at 25 (1988), reprinted in 1988 U.S.C.C.A.N. 2173, 2186.

According to the Americans with Disabilities 2010 Study conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 56 million Americans (nearly one in five) have some form of disability, and one in eight has a severe disability. Of that number, more than 3.6 million people over the age of 15 years use wheelchairs, and that number is expected to increase as the population ages and medical care allows people with disabilities to live longer and fuller lives. Another 11.6 million people use canes, crutches, walkers, or other mobility aids. Accessible housing is an essential means of ensuring that the many members of the community who have disabilities can fully participate in community life.

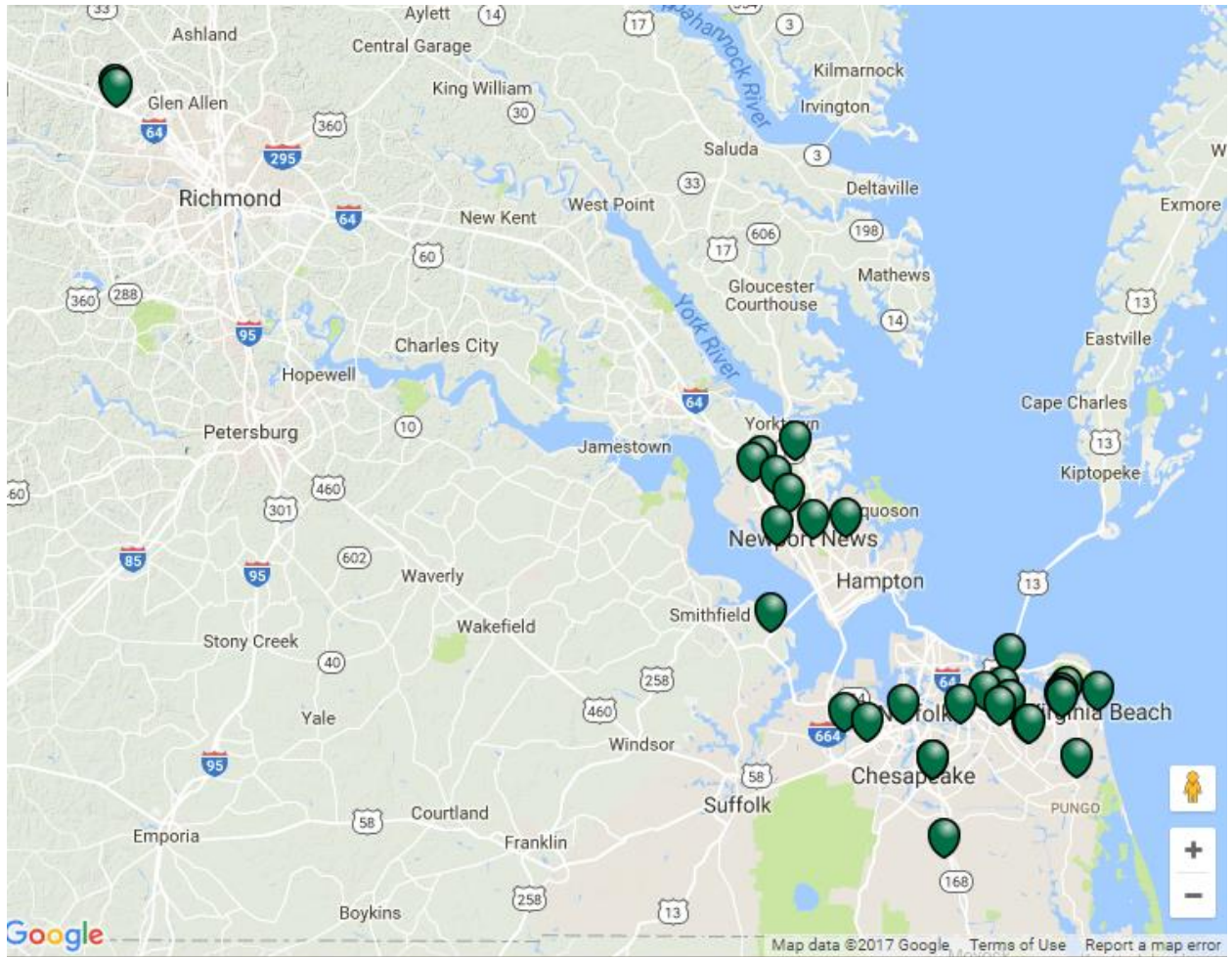
Six Hampton Roads properties in settlement



Two Richmond properties in settlement



35 Breeden properties in Richmond and Hampton Roads regions:



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