



Montreal Hi-Rise Modernization

F A C T S H E E T

About the St. Paul Public Housing Agency

- Serves over 22,000 St. Paul residents
- Owns and manages 4,273 affordable homes and apartments
- Maintains 99% occupancy in public housing - 20 consecutive years and counting
- Collects 99% of all rents
- Completes approximately 30,000 (emergency & non-emergency) maintenance work orders each year
- Partners with SPPD for community policing - ACOP - 28 years



1085 Montreal Avenue

Summary of Montreal Hi-Rise Plumbing Modernization

Located in the Highland Park neighborhood of St. Paul, Montreal Hi-Rise has 185 one bedroom apartments in an 18 story building that sits on a two acre plot of land. The plumbing system in Montreal Hi-Rise had not been renovated since installation with the original construction of the building in 1969. After modernization, the plumbing, kitchens, and bathrooms in all 185 apartments have been renovated, greatly enhancing the quality of life of the residents. New solid maple kitchen cabinetry gives the apartments a modern look; water pressure throughout the building is improved; and new toilets were installed throughout the building.

The St. Paul Public Housing Agency (PHA) invested \$5 million to fund plumbing modernization in the 185 apartment homes and common areas at Montreal Hi-Rise, to preserve the building for current and future generations of low-income residents of St. Paul. Funding included \$4.25 million from HUD's Capital Fund Program and \$750,000 subsidy from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines' Affordable Housing Program. Montreal Hi-Rise maintained high occupancy throughout the modernization.



Progress photo



After photo

Master Plan

The PHA hired Steen Engineering in 2017 to create a Master Plan for the plumbing modernization. Focus groups generated advice and support from residents, staff, and service providers. Staff met with the Montreal Hi-Rise Resident Council to provide updates on the project plan.

Maintaining Unit Occupancy

A maximum of 37 Montreal Hi-Rise apartments (“hotels”) were held off the rental rolls for temporary relocations. This allowed residents to stay at Montreal Hi-Rise while plumbing modernization work was completed in their unit. These “hotel” units were used to house each resident for 7 weeks while the renovation work within their apartment was completed.

Communication with Residents

The PHA and the design team held open houses and community meetings, with interpreters present. The designers provided samples of materials and drawings to help residents understand the planned improvements in their apartments and common spaces.



Outcomes

Resident Satisfaction

Montreal Hi-Rise residents are delighted with their renovated apartments as shown by comments like these:

- “The construction crew kept it on schedule and the employees of the construction crew were very nice.”
- “If there were any issues from the project, they took care of it right away.”
- “It made our building much nicer.”

Project Details

- Replaced 50-year-old supply and waste piping with new cast iron waste and copper supply piping
- Renovated kitchens with new maple cabinetry and stainless steel sinks
- Renovated bathrooms with new flooring, sinks, toilets, shower wands, and medicine cabinets
- New paint throughout the units
- Installed new under-cabinet lighting

PHA Maintenance and Operations

Maintenance calls for plumbing leaks and backups at Montreal Hi-Rise have been greatly reduced. The installation of all new water shut-off valves throughout the building will save time and cost for any future plumbing calls. Vacant units can be prepared quickly for re-rental because of the fresh paint, new kitchen and bathroom flooring, and new cabinetry and plumbing fixtures. Replacing existing building materials with longer-lasting materials such as copper supply piping, solid maple cabinetry, and new sinks and toilets should save maintenance costs in the future.

Financial

The average per-dwelling-unit cost for the extensive plumbing modernization of the 185 housing units was \$24,324. The \$750,000 Affordable Housing Program forgivable loan funding from Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines assisted in covering construction costs and shortened the project schedule, saving years of inflation and additional costs.

