

Attachment 3 – 2025 Five Year/Annual Plan and MTW Supplement

Resident Input/Comment Sessions

Deaverview Apartments: July 17, 2024, 6pm-8pm

Aston Park Towers: July 22, 2024, 6pm-8pm

Pisgahview Apartments: July 23, 2024, 6pm-8pm

The Housing Authority of the City of Asheville, as part of our 5-Year and Moving to Work Plan submission to HUD invite Resident Councils, Residents and the public to open comment sessions to gather input and suggestions from our communities.

Ms. Pierre welcomed everyone and thanked them for their participation and time for the process of setting goals in the 5 Year Annual Plan. As each goal was discussed, each resident could comment and offer their suggestions.

1. Provide affordable rental housing for households earning 60% of median family income or less.

- Several residents expressed concerns about rents going up and they are concerned that they would have to move if they cannot afford it and concerns about working.
 - a. We want to focus on workforce housing and what that means is that we are going to work with our residents. Whether someone wants to be a stipend worker or go through our resident training program. We have residents that work for us now and they do a wonderful job. One of the things we will be doing is to put a work requirement in place and this does not apply to everyone. If you are under/over age, you are disabled or caring for a disabled person or have children under the age of 6 or not of school age, you are exempt. We are encouraging residents to go through FSS (Family Self Sufficiency) program with Ms. Jackson and her team to look at how we can get residents the support they need. Economic independence does not come easy, but we want to make sure we provide you with every opportunity and support to achieve. The idea is that we are moving to workforce Housing.

2. Provide Special needs housing opportunities

- One resident asked about being incarcerated and having a record. Is that what you are referring to?
 - a. Ms. Pierre's response: When I talk about special population, I am talking about youth aging out of foster care and disabled. I am talking about other populations that are sometimes overlooked, severely disabled individuals who need their special vouchers or other special programs for them. I will say that this goal is especially

important because every type of housing is not for everyone, and we are continuing our commitment to serve as part of that whole housing safety net throughout the city. However, I will say is we want people to be well housed, not warehoused, so our commitment is to support third party developers and nonprofit partners who are also working to provide housing for all populations that we cannot help. One important thing while you give your feedback is when I send you to the next meeting. We are getting ready to publish our Administrative Plan update on our website and preparing for another public meeting about that. That is when you should really come because HUD (Housing and Urban Development) does require certain things we just cannot do, like if there is a certain history of things that have happened, we cannot allow potential manufacturing and distribution of methamphetamines and it is a lifetime ban from federally funded programs, lifetime sexual offender registry is a lifetime ban. There are certain things in federal regulations that we have no choice but to have some leeway on. There are options to the rules that are all dictated by the offense, type of offense and how long since the offense occurred or since the exit from incarceration.

3. Redevelop, expand, and improve Asheville Housing communities

- Residents voiced concerns about redevelopment and timeline.
- Why was Deaverview was chosen to redevelop first as it was not the oldest, like Pisgahview
- Why not invest in what we already have and what happens to the residents who have PTSD and cannot live in a building with proximity to one another.

a. We are looking at 2025 to be able to start planning our grant process. It is going to take some time, and it is not going to happen overnight. If we receive the planning grant, those dollars will be to prepare the vision for this community, and you must be me at the table. We tabled the original redevelopment plan. One of the reasons is there was not enough money to build these units, and we said Ok, what if we just do the first building which consisted of 49 units of 1-bedroom. That is not for the residents who live here. Some residents may need one bedroom but when you have townhomes with front and back doors it is more of a family site. The population target is going to serve families who need two or three bedrooms on a family site. Deaverview is a family site, not a senior site. The plan was not for you. Our new application potentially with Choice Neighborhoods will allow for complete redevelopment. It is a two-step process. We apply for a planning grant. The planning grant will help us to get true community involvement. You will be at the table to say, "I like having a front and back door." You get a say in what we will do moving forward. Maintaining Deaverview is costly. The cost of maintenance exceeds the new construction cost and building codes have changed. It is about visibility and livability.

I am not going to tell you anything that I have not experienced myself and I am going to try to be as honest as I can. I will also take the criticism when it comes to whether there is something that we are not doing well. My feelings may get hurt. I am going to take that feedback and listen because I am not you, have not lived in your shoes, and cannot see through your eyes. Only you can. If I tell you that I am trusting, you because that is your perspective just as I hope you will trust and respect me and what my perspective or lived experience has been for me and for everybody on my staff. It is hard and we are not perfect. We want residents to feel that they are well housed, not warehoused.

- Resident commented that she appreciates that HACA's vision includes room for residents' vision.

4. Promote equity through homeownership

- Several residents wanted to learn more about homeownership and wanted to know what that means for them.
 - a. When we redevelop, one of the reasons we partner with cities is they also have additional land, and we want to make sure that we can try to promote home ownership as well. We have talked with them, and I told them this is one of our residents' main concerns. Some of you do not want to live in an apartment forever. You want to buy a little house so grandkids can visit, or their family can come and feel ownership, grow equity, own something of their own. It is hard because everything is so expensive. Well, the way you get around is that you partner so you can build houses using public dollars to help buy. That is one of the reasons we want to partner with them so residents can have a house of their own. That is a sincere desire, and it is something that if we really want, that can happen as well.

5. Preserve and improve existing Asheville Housing opportunities

- Resident expressed concerns about replacing her refrigerator from another unit. Her concerns were being unsanitary and potential pests that would be introduced to her unit.
- Residents expressed concerns about living next to people that are mentally ill with addictions
- Residents expressed concerns about chronically homeless
 - a. When redevelopment was initially on the table, managers were told not to put money back into the site but that is no longer the case. If you need a new refrigerator, call the office, and request a new one. What we are committed to doing and what the goal says is to preserve and improve existing Asheville Housing communities. That's us just doing our jobs to maintain it and one that demonstrated by hiring and training

more maintenance staff. HACA's goal is to ensure families are housed well in environments that can meet their needs.

The Housing Authority are not experts in disorders, substance abuse, chronic homelessness, or mental health. We leave this to the experts. Although, there are people in here with some expertise, so do not let me take away from anybody's degrees and certifications and their licensing, but we are not experts in that right. What we are supposed to be able to do well is provide a safe, decent, and sanitary place to live. We are workforce housing, and most residents will work at least 15 hours per week. We welcome you to complete an application online or come to the central office as we are always hiring

- One resident stated that his family will not visit here. They are afraid to park their car and walk in.
- Another resident comment" It is saying investing in the public sector management of 0 tolerance for violence and criminal activities, what does that mean?

a. It is a two-part answer. We are making investments, and some things are going to have a bigger impact than others. Investing in more cameras for our blind spots, Ms. James said that more cameras are needed so we can make sure residents are safe and not get hit on the head while taking out the garbage. Investing in making sure we get more patrols from the city. We are not security patrols. We do not carry handcuffs or badges. My only tool is to clean up a community and get people out who do not need to be here or want to be disruptive or do not want to live well or cooperate with others and be a good neighbor is to evict them. A lot of people do not want to hear that. I was recently accused of being heavy-handed towards eviction. You have a choice. Residents that we are evicting have received our letters and violations. We take documented proof with us because we must follow the federal government's rules. We must follow the letter of the law when we issue summary ejections. Yes, we have compassion for them, but they do not need to live here, and it can take 3-4 months to get someone out because once appeal, our attorney must get involved, so now we are paying legal fees.

- Resident says he wants healthcare workers assigned to certain developments to develop a relationship with. I may feel a certain kind of way when the police show up and they could help keep the situation from getting worse. I would like to see police more active in the community.

a. Ms. Pierre comments that we have healthcare workers in place now and they are assigned to all our developments and that may be something that you want to speak to Ms. Jackson about. She is the Director of Resident Services.

Ms. Jackson said all healthcare workers are certified and have the same customer service training as site managers. They are not out in the development at 8, 9 and ten o'clock at night.

- Resident comment is that is my whole idea. Sometimes, someone just being there helps the situation.

a. Ms. Jackson comments that this is something that the police must do as it is a liability for HACA. I am not sending my staff into an active shooting, and I do not expect them to go in there. Most of my staff are natives of Asheville and have been on the streets, so they know the people. We do not get paid enough to go into those situations.

b. Ms. Pierre says: You must remember we are people too and want to get home to our families.

6. Support Asheville Housing youth and children

- Resident comments about the programs that would hire kids for the summer. They would cut the grass and do odd jobs. Is that something you still do?

Ms. Jackson said it is something we can work on in the future. In terms of the grounds, once HACA gets their foundation built for the maintenance and grounds crew and all of that because they need someone that can partner your kid with, you cannot just let them loose on a lawnmower by themselves underaged. Once they get that established, we will determine if there is something else, we can do. We do have youth working at the Edington center, Hillcrest and Maple Crest. The funding came from the city, and they put them in those places, not HACA.

b. Ms. Pierre stated that we are doing our part. We started hiring kids and every kid needs some type of something to do. I think if they are getting more involved in the work that they are doing, they are less likely to get involved with other things.

- Residents commented about sitting around and getting bored with nothing to do but cannot work because she has small children and no childcare help.

a. That is why we just went through this whole thing about getting full day childcare because we want you to know if you need childcare and you are ready to go to work, and schools out, these things we are putting in place so that when you are ready to go

to work, you have childcare. We will get the resources on our properties to ensure it is available to our residents.

- What if my name came up on the waiting list that I am all right with, but my kids may not be able to visit their daddy because the kids here may not like my kids to come over. I want to see my kids. It comes down to choices.

a. Ms. Pierre commented that it comes down to our administrative plan. One thing changing in our admissions is that when applications are filled out, we will try to give you more choices so that you can pick where you want to be.

7. Provide excellent customer service

- Ms. Pierre said we are trying to provide excellent customer service. You have asked for better customer service. What are your thoughts?

a. As a mindset, I think people in different housing have noticed that if you do not have a poor mindset, you do not expect certain basic dignity. That helps contribute that housing wants to change the mindset, I assume.

- Ms. Pierre stated that we are hiring more office assistants. People that can answer the phone because we are running around doing all kinds of things and a lot is coming at managers all at once. That is one of the things that we are committed to doing better. Customer service does not just mean smiling and being nice. I know what it can feel like to rushed when you are trying to do everything right but at the same time, if we do not hire adequate staff to be able to address the need, that is what we are committed to doing. We get better customer service by hiring more staff, by hiring people to be able to help, support and receive when the manager is pulled in ten different directions. I am hopeful that the efforts and steps that we are taking can continue.