

Sustainability Plan Listening Sessions for Resident and General Public Feedback and Comments

One of the terms of the Recovery Agreement between the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) and the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) requires HACM to engage residents and other community stakeholders in providing feedback on the draft Sustainability Plan that identifies place-based solutions, steps, and resources to support the agency's recovery.

To provide maximum opportunity for residents and the general public to comment on the draft Sustainability Plan, HACM provided presentations on the Plan at three Board meetings in the month of April that included special Listening Sessions to solicit feedback from HACM residents and the general public.

One of the meetings was at the regular Board of Commissioners meeting at City Hall on April 9th, and two additional meetings were set up as special Board meetings on different days of the week and at different times of day. One of the two special meetings was at the Hillside Terrace public housing development north of downtown, and the other was at the Lincoln Court public housing development on the south side in the Bayview neighborhood. At each session, an opportunity was provided for both HACM residents or other members of the community/public to comment on the Sustainability Plan.

HACM has summarized the comments from residents and the public below, as well as HACM's responses to each comment.

Based on our review of the comments, we do not believe that any revisions need to be made to the current draft of the Sustainability Plan as agreed to by HACM and HUD.

Listening Session #1: Wednesday, April 9, 2025, 4:00 PM: HACM Board of Commissioners, Public Listening Session—Sustainability Plan

Location: City Hall, Room 301A

Acting Secretary-Executive Director Ken Barbeau provided context regarding the Recovery Agreement and an overall summary of the corrective actions in the current draft of the Sustainability Plan between HACM and HUD.

Comment #1: Cornelius Sawyer (Highland Gardens resident): Only one member of the public signed up to provide comments on the Sustainability Plan. Overall, Mr. Sawyer stated he found the Plan to be clear and understandable. He added that he and other members of the RAB were pleased to see the provision that calls for nominations of two remaining open positions on the HACM Board of Commissioners by June 30, 2025, and stated that they are looking forward to those nominations.

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HACM Response to Comment #1: HACM agrees with the comments of the resident that the actions discussed in the Plan are clear and understandable, and will work to enhance HACM's recovery from Troubled Status. While the board nominations are not completely in the control of HACM, and subject to actions of others (Mayor and Common Council), HACM is looking forward as well to benefiting from a full board in the near future. HACM does not believe there is a need to revise the Sustainability Plan based on the comment.

Listening Session #2: Thursday, April 17, 2025, 5:00 PM: HACM Board of Commissioners, Public Listening Session- Sustainability Plan

Location: Hillside Terrace Family Resource Center, 1452 N. 7th Street

Acting Secretary-Executive Director Ken Barbeau provided context regarding the Recovery Agreement and an overall summary of the corrective actions in the current draft of the Sustainability Plan between HACM and HUD.

Comment #1: Rachel Spell (Hillside Terrace resident) requested information regarding the unit inspections process that was mentioned in the Sustainability Plan. She asked how long the inspections are planning to take, whether management has identified which developments would be inspected, and what the standard protocol is for conducting the inspections. Additionally, she inquired whether residents would be notified once an inspection has been completed in their unit, particularly if they are not home at the time, such as by leaving a written note.

HACM Response to Comment #1: Under the rules for public housing developments, HACM must conduct self-inspections annually (self-inspections are inspections done by HACM staff or contractors) on ALL units in all public housing developments, and must address any deficiencies identified in that annual inspection. In Corrective Action PHYS-04, HACM must develop an inspection process or procedure specific to meet the NSPIRE annual inspection requirement.

The procedures will include HACM's notification process to residents both to give advance notice before the inspection and to notify residents post-inspection of the results and proposed actions to resolve any deficiencies noted.

HACM does not believe there is a need to revise the Sustainability Plan based on the comment.

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Comment #2: Bonnie Cooper (Hillside Terrace resident): Ms. Cooper inquired about the possible future remodeling of the building/development and asked when the work is expected to begin. She expressed concern that residents continue to experience issues with rats, roaches, and bed bugs, and questioned whether the remodeling efforts would address these conditions. Ms. Cooper noted that HACM has discussed rehabbing and repairing the building for several years, yet no visible progress has been made. She requested an update on the status of these plans.

Additionally, Ms. Cooper voiced concerns regarding staff behavior, stating that some employees have been rude and disrespectful toward residents, and emphasized the need for improved staff training and professionalism.

HACM Response to Comment #2: While HACM will not be able to begin repositioning of Hillside Terrace for the next few years until its operations and financial position has been stabilized, HACM has identified a number of improvements and capital repair items in its 5-Year Action Plan for 2023 to 2027 for the Capital Fund Program for Hillside Terrace. These include security cameras and lighting; smoke and carbon monoxide detectors; downspouts/gutters; pest control; HVAC system improvements; façade repairs on the highrise building; and other improvements.

A number of the concerns of the resident regarding improvements will also be addressed via the corrective actions CFP-1 and CFP-2 in the Sustainability Plan requiring updated physical needs assessment and a procedure on preparing capital planning updates, and corrective action GOV—07 regarding a comprehensive asset management strategy. Thus, HACM believes this is already addressed in the sustainability plan and no revisions are needed.

Regarding staff conduct/professionalism, HACM has a commitment to providing excellent customer service to its residents/clients and has incorporated this into its goals in the 5-Year PHA Plan. HACM has provided customer service training in 2024 and will follow it up with additional customer service training in 2025.

HACM agrees that customer service training is of the utmost importance and we are taking actions to provide additional training and hold staff responsible for their professionalism and conduct.

Since it does not necessarily directly impact the Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) score or Troubled Status, HACM believes that this issue of customer service is best addressed as part of the Annual PHA Plan activities. Therefore, HACM does not believe that revisions are needed to the draft Sustainability Plan.

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Comment #3: Yolanda Moffett (Lapham Park resident): Ms. Moffett inquired about capital money planned to bring the building up to standard. She asked whether improvements would include ventilation and plumbing upgrades, as well as the installation of high-quality filters to help reduce dust and odors throughout the building. Ms. Moffett also noted that her unit's filter has not been replaced in over a year.

HACM Response to Comment #3: HUD Capital Fund Program funds are specifically for the public housing program. Since Lapham Park is a RAD development with project-based vouchers and redeveloped with Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), any major improvements will be made via the replacement reserves for the Lapham Park LLC. Centralized air conditioning was put into the Lapham Park property as part of the renovations to the building that were completed approximately 10 years ago.

HACM will review the status of the plumbing and ventilation system in determining the capital needs of the building to be funded via the replacement reserves. In addition, property management staff will follow up with the resident regarding her concern about filter replacement. Items such as filter replacement will be incorporated into the preventative maintenance standard operating procedures and schedule that will be developed as part of the Sustainability Plan (see Corrective Action PHYS-03).

Therefore, HACM does not believe there is a need to revise the Sustainability Plan based on the comment.

Listening Session #3: Friday, April, 25, 2025, 1:00 PM: HACM Board of Commissioners, Public Listening Session-Sustainability Plan

Location: Lincoln Court public housing development, 2325 S. Howell Avenue

Acting Secretary-Executive Director Ken Barbeau provided context regarding the Recovery Agreement and an overall summary of the corrective actions in the current draft of the Sustainability Plan between HACM and HUD.

No Comments: While a number of residents and members of the public signed up to speak on other issues in the general listening session, no interested persons signed up to provide any comments on the Sustainability Plan.