

RAB Comments on Revised 5 Year Plan 2020 to 2024

On April 23, 2020, the HACM Resident Advisory Board held a virtual meeting (conference call) that included a discussion of the proposed revisions to the 5 Year Agency Plan. Below are comments and suggestions from the discussion:

Comment #1 regarding Goal 2.1. RAD Implementation

One member of the RAB suggested that the word “close” as in the phrase, “Close and start rehabilitation of Becher Court” is not explained. To the layperson, it sounds as though the building will physically close. The suggestion was to explain it or change the wording to better explain the nature of a financial closing.

HACM Response: We agree with the comment and will modify the language in the goal surrounding closings.

Comment #2 regarding Goal 2.2 Continue to Improve Westlawn Gardens using the CNI grant

Members of the RAB stated that while the number of units are included, it would be helpful to explain more detail on the phases, such as what type of units (multifamily building, townhomes, etc) and what type of program funding (RAD replacement, tax credit only, market rate).

HACM Response: We agree with the comment and will modify the goal to include additional details, where those details are known.

Comment #3 regarding Goal 2.3: Implement portfolio repositioning

All members of the RAB felt that they needed to understand the pros and cons of Section 18 disposition as an alternative way to reposition public housing and wanted a document that listed the pros and cons of Section 18 vs RAD. They also wanted clarification that there needed to be more communication with residents (both RAB, resident organization and residents in general) if HACM moves beyond exploration of this alternative into recommending and implementing it. There was also a question as to whether HACM is proposing tearing down any buildings/highrises at this point, and HACM staff responded that at this time, there are no plans for that.

HACM Response: HACM agrees that more information on RAD versus Section 18 disposition needs to be provided and will work to do so. In addition, any portfolio repositioning, whether RAD or Section 18, includes requirements for resident communication prior to a housing authority being able to move forward with it. Therefore, HACM will be communicating with both the RAB and with residents directly impacted by any repositioning prior to the Housing Authority being able to submit an application to HUD for the repositioning.

Comment #4 regarding Goal 2.11 Grants

One member suggested that HACM look into funding for the ABLE program which promotes business startups for those with disabilities by allowing them to save up to \$100,000. He stated that many other public housing authorities use this program.

HACM Response: HACM wants to know about any program that can benefit its residents and will check into the ABLEnow program. In general, ABLEnow accounts help individuals with disabilities save money to pay for qualified expenses, without being taxed on the earnings – and in most cases, without losing eligibility for certain means-tested benefit programs.