

Comments and Responses to the BHA FY 2019 Annual Plan Amendment #2.

The following document contains the comments and responses received on the BHA's FY 2019 Annual Plan Amendment #2. BHA staff met with the Resident Advisory Board in June to discuss the Plan amendment process and documents and sent copies of the Plan amendment to the RAB. The Plan was put out for public comment on August 12, 2019 and the comment period closed on September 25, 2019 with a public hearing held September 16, 2019 at Boston Public Library Copley Square at 6 pm.

The BHA took several steps to notify the public of the FY 2019 Annual Plan Amendment #2 and the opportunity to comment. The BHA placed an advertisement in the Boston Globe. The Plan was made available for review at BHA's headquarters at 52 Chauncy St., and on its website www.bostonhousing.org.

Real Estate Development

Comment: My name is Ann Moy, President of the Castle Square Tenants Organization (CSTO) and we are partnering with the WinnCompanies to hopefully purchase Eva White Apartments and renovate the

property and keep it affordable for the neighborhood. On behalf of CSTO, I want to thank BHA, especially to Kate Bennett and Caitlin Curran, for all their support to us so far.

It is great to see Eva White redevelopment and renovation is being included the RAD program and to be integrated in your agency's overall plan. CSTO very much supports this amendment.

CSTO is all about preserving affordable housing and resident leadership and empowerment. We have been around for over 30 years and is one of the strongest tenant-led organizations in Massachusetts and around the country.

Both Eva White and Castle Square are adjoining properties. It is a natural setting for CSTO to see Eva White as part of the Castle Square community, and we have been. Eva White residents for many years have been participating in our senior activities, and it means a lot to us to see them active and enjoying their surroundings.

Both our partner WinnCompanies and CSTO are deeply committed to preserving Eva White and supporting the Eva White residents. CSTO's partnership with Winn has been a great resident-led housing preservation model. We hope HUD sees the importance and significance of our efforts.

We look forward to working with your office and HUD in transitioning and redeveloping EW, and thank you again for

your tremendous effort in keeping housing affordable in Boston

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: In general, I don't recall seeing a summary provided for the RAB/resident community/members of the general public, beyond the flyer, and it's a bit daunting to digest the 100-plus redlined pages of the PHA Plan supplement to figure out what BHA has done. I am not sure if BHA sent the RAB the specific pages changes (p. 65-77 and 82-117, it appears from reviewing the document—the summary "change" pages seems to say all pages up to 114 were subject to revision, but don't see that).

Response: A brief summary was provided on the BHA's website under the heading "Plan 2019 Amendment #2 Overview." Similar information was contained in the Boston Globe advertisement, a copy of which was provided to members of the RAB. The actual amended language is in the Plan Supplement beginning with Section 15 on page 65 with additional updates to Section 16, and 19. These three sections cover mixed-finance, Section 18, and RAD. The updates reflect BHA's evolving intentions for using these tools in furtherance of carrying out renovations and

redevelopments. As BHA staff discussed with the RAB at its 06/13/19 meeting—as well as other RAB meetings on an ongoing basis—BHA wants to create flexibility to leave open the possibility of using each of the tools that HUD provides (mixed finance, RAD, and Section 18) at various sites. Amendment 2 accomplishes that by explicitly listing several sites under each relevant section of the Plan Supplement.

Comment: 2. Grievance Procedure (Part 6, pp. 36-37)

While BHA has not proposed any change here, in fact the BHA, working with private development partners and residents, agreed to adopt a revised Mixed Finance Grievance Procedure which will extend grievance protections to all “affordable”/replacement units in Mixed Finance sites, including those done through RAD, Section 18 conversion to Section 8, etc. It’s worth including this here to avoid the need for a later amendment.

Response: The intention of Amendment 2 is to address matters related to Mixed-Finance Modernization and Redevelopment, RAD, and Section 18 specifically. BHA will review the Grievance Procedure section in the context of the next year’s Annual Plan.

Comment: 3. Mixed Finance Modernization or Development (Part 15, p. 65)

This adds to the heading for RAD that it may be RAD/Section 8 modernization as with the 75/25 “blend” referenced in HUD’s RAD materials, or it may be purely Section 18 modernization. This keeps BHA’s options open in case deeper analysis shows that a site is obsolescent and may qualify for Section 18 demolition/disposition assistance, which would support a greater level of subsidy for preservation than the RAD “blend”. BHA has also explicitly added both options for Lenox (which previously only mentioned the “blend”), and J. J. Carroll and Patricia White elderly/disabled developments in Brighton are added as sites where RAD/Section 18 is being considered/pursued. Residents support this approach as long as there is full preservation of deeply affordable housing which will be targeted to those of very low income for the longest possible period (in perpetuity, where possible) and with the same level of rent and tenant protections that residents currently have.

Response: Yes, that’s right. And, yes, BHA’s aim is full preservation of deeply affordable housing for very low-income households for the longest possible period.

Comment: 4. Demolition and/or Disposition (Part 16, pp. 66-77)

Portions of this are the same as previously and portions are new. Existing was; (a) Anne M. Lynch Homes at Old Colony, Phase 3; (b) Whittier Street; (c) Vacant parcel at Mary Ellen McCormack (O’Connor Way); (d) Charlestown; (e) Amory; (f) Clippership Units at Heritage; (g) West Newton/Rutland/East Springfield; (h) Mildred Hailey Apts. Phase 1; and (i) Mary Ellen McCormack.

At Eva White, language is added that demolition/disposition is approved in conjunction with RA conversion, and there would be a planned Section 18 disposition application. If it is done as “RAD blend”, 26 out of 102 units would be converted to Section 8 Project-Based Vouchers (PBV), and that under the Section 18 application, if approved, all units would be converted to PBV. The time frame is shifted from 2019 to 2020.

At Lenox Street, language is added that there is a planned Section 18 disposition application, and that 71 out of 285 units would be converted to Section 8 PBV if “RAD blend”, and all would be converted if the Section 18 application was approved. The time frame work start date is shifted from 2021 to 2022.

The section for J.J. Carroll is new, and appears to say that a disposition application will be submitted; however, BHA indicated at the September 12, 2019 RAB meeting that this would be demolition and then new construction to replace both the existing units and to create more affordable housing. This lays out either 16 units as Section 8 PBV if “RAD blend”, or 64 if the Section 18 application is approved. While the application is slated for submission some time in 2019, and this states “TBD” (to be determined) for the time of construction.

The section for Patricia White is new, with a disposition application yet to be submitted. Here again, 56 units would be Section 8 PBV if “RAD blend” conversion, and all 225 units would be Section 8 PBV if a Section 18 application is approved. Here again, the application is slated to be submitted some time in 2019, and “TBD” for construction start date.

Language is added to the St. Botolph, Doris Bunte Apartments, and Ausonia, proposals but it is not identical with that done for the other sites, and BHA should review these so all the language is consistent (while the bottom sections refer to using either RAD or Section 18, the top parts refer only to the number of Section 8 PBV units depending

on “RAD blend” and are silent on the numbers if there are Section 18 approvals).

Similarly, for the Malone, West Ninth Street, and Annapolis proposals, while there is reference in the bottom sections to utilizing either “RAD blend” or Section 18 disposition, there are no concrete numbers given elsewhere about the number of Section 8 PBV units either with “RAD blend” or with a Section 18 approval, and to be consistent, BHA should follow the same approach as it has earlier in the Supplement amendment.

Response: Thank you for your suggestion we have revised the language to be consistent throughout. Furthermore, we removed language regarding Malone, West Ninth Street and Annapolis. At this moment in time BHA will not be pursuing a RAD or Section 18 approval for those sites.

Comment: 5. Designated Housing for Elderly and/or Disabled Families (Part 17, pp. 78-80)

As discussed at the RAB meeting on September 12, 2019 when BHA made a presentation on the J.J. Carroll plans, BHA and its development partner, To Life Communities, are discussing the demolition of this site and its replacement with additional units of deeply affordable assisted housing.

However, To Life has been explicit that these units are to be exclusively for elders (those age 62 and over), and would not include non-elderly disabled persons, except to the extent necessary to address the needs of existing households who are non-elderly and have the right to return. This is a different approach than the Designated Housing Plan approved by HUD, which provides for maintenance of a specific 80% elderly, 20% non-elderly disabled mix at the BHA’s federal elderly/disabled public housing complexes. Where BHA has done or proposed Section 8 or RAD/Section 8 conversions at other elderly/disabled sites, it has provided for a carryover of the 80/20 designation to these sites and has included language in the Section 8 Administrative Plan. BHA had included language in its DHP Plan to address how non-elderly disabled applicants who would have longer waiting periods due to changed designations would be addressed (through the set-aside of additional Section 8 vouchers for non-elderly disabled applicants). The J.J. Carroll change would need to be factored into the DHP Plan and an appropriate revision sought. Moreover, the DHP excluded persons in need of wheelchair accessible units from the 80/20 designation—any such applicants would be assigned to wheelchair accessible units regardless of

age. While the current J.J. Carroll units are not accessible, one of the rationales for J.J. Carroll modernization is so that there will be accessible units at the new development, consistent with needs identified in the Greater Boston area. There should be similar exclusion of such units from the “elder only” designation.

Response: BHA and the 2Life Community Team are actively discussing language to adopt the 80/20 housing designation to the redevelopment of J.J. Carroll. They are committed to preserving the existing housing as elderly/disable housing.

Comment: 6. Conversion of Public Housing to Project-Based Assistance under RAD (Part 19, pp. 82-117)

Here again, much of this is the same as what was previously provided to the RAB in the FY 2019 PHA Plan. The new descriptions on pp. 91-92 are for J.J. Carroll and Patricia White. Again, there is the question whether the J.J. Carroll description should say “disposition” as opposed to “demolition”, since as presented to the RAB on September 12, 2019, the proposal would be for demolition of the site and building of replacement units (and additional affordable units). Moreover, for both sites, the language here is not consistent with the discussion in Part 16, above, in that there is

only reference to “RAD blend” and the “RAD blend” number of units, and both this and the Section 18 demolition/disposition application approval options should be included to be consistent.

Back in the fall of 2018, BHA added the language on pp. 92-117 to include here the language required from HUD’s RAD notices regarding various policies and carryovers for Mixed Finance housing developed through RAD. HUD has recently revised its RAD guidance, and rather than have to redo this another time, BHA may want to use the opportunity to review the latest revisions and tweak any of this section as necessary. In addition, as noted above, BHA has now revised its Mixed Finance Grievance Procedure to explicitly apply to all “affordable”/replacement units, rather than be limited to the units that still receive “public housing” annual contributions contract (ACC) funds, and this should also be referenced here.

Response: Thank you for your suggestion. We have revised the language to be consistent throughout. The description for J.J. Carroll has been revised to indicate both demolition and disposition. BHA has reviewed the latest RAD revisions, and we do not believe changes are needed specifically for this Amendment 2, since any

required language was already included. That said, the latest RAD guidance does seem to suggest ways that public housing authorities may best incorporate RAD requirements into their Plans; as part of updates to be made with the FY2020 Annual Plan, BHA will review the sample approaches that HUD provides in the latest RAD guidance, and we may use those samples as a model for the FY2020 Plan.

Comment: 7. Organizational Chart (Part 26, p. 126):

Here again, BHA hasn’t proposed any change, but this chart is outdated, and still has Bill McGonagle as Administrator and Kate as Senior Deputy Administrator. This should be revised, and BHA should share with the RAB any plans for filling senior vacancies/coverage.

Response: BHA will certainly update the Organizational Chart as part of the FY2020 Plan.

Comment: Everyone here is very familiar with me. I want to state how terrible this housing crunch is. I live in private mixed income housing and I like it. I’ve never had problems with my indoor neighbors. We live in the only expiring use building that hasn’t been rescued. BU wants my building. Globe will be happy to feature us when we become homeless but not before. I am a minority but do

not get minority preference. When there was a housing lottery there were hundreds of people in each category by bedroom size. Not fair at all. People from this state should get preference over people displaced by a natural disaster in another part of the country or from another country. Local residents are being displaced. Metro people should live locally. I've worked hard to find a place to live and I've get excellent credit. I speak for the other 150 people in my building and we should be considered part of the urban renewal in terms of priority. I've no place to go. It's about taking care of your existing residents. Again, it's not fair. We are your good tenants and we've been here a long time. No one will help me. I don't want supports. I don't want people to control my life. So I did apply for To Life Communities similar to my home being mixed income. To Life said I could apply and I filled out their four page application and then they tell me it's only for elderly. I talked to other places but no luck, that's why I feel like there are very few mixed income opportunities in private buildings. I can't get a doctor's note because I'm not in a wheelchair and I'm not a psycho. Some people have a touch of Asperger's and some are PHDs and some can't put things together too well and it's not possible to get a doctor's note. I've been in my home for

about thirty years now. Thank you.

Response: Thank you for your comment.