

## Comments and Responses to the BHA FY 2023 Federal Annual Plan.

The following document contains the comments and responses received on the BHA's FY 2023 Federal Annual Plan. BHA staff met with the Resident Advisory Board from September through December discussing the Plan process and documents and sent copies of the Plan to the RAB and Local Tenant Organizations. The Plan was put out for public comment on November 1, 2022 and the comment period closed on December 15, 2022 with a virtual public hearing held on zoom December 12, 2022 at 11 am and another at 6 pm. In the draft, BHA included a revised tenant participation policy but is withdrawing that from the submission as it received a large number of comments. The BHA will take more time to consider the comments and submit the new version to the public for review in the near future. Therefore, this response does not include any of the comments on the proposed revision.

The BHA took several steps to notify the public of the FY 2023 Federal Annual Plan and the opportunity to comment. The BHA placed an advertisement in the Boston Globe, included a notice with the rent statement of public housing residents, requested mixed finance partners to share the same notice with their BHA ACC-subsidized tenants, sent a mailing to Leased Housing participants in Boston and nearby towns notifying them of the Public Hearing. The BHA also sent letters to many local officials and advocacy groups. The Plan was made available for review at Boston Public Library Copley Square branch, BHA's headquarters at 52 Chauncy St., and on its website [www.bostonhousing.org](http://www.bostonhousing.org).

Many comments are specific to Plan attachments:

**AP:** Annual Plan template

**5Y:** Five-Year Plan Progress Report

**RAD:** RAD attachment

**S:** Supplement

### **Administration**

Comment: AP p. 2: In Section B.1(b), this should also include the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP) as a supporting document, since BHA is proposing some revisions to that document.

Response: This is updated in the final plan.

Comment: S: Section B.1.1 Statement of Housing Needs and Strategy for Addressing Housing Needs Pp. 2-10: On pp. 2-3, is the census data relied on here from the 2020 census? If it is not from the 2020 census, please say why, and when BHA will begin to

use 2020 census data. You may also wish to change the reference from Department of Neighborhood Development (DHD) to the Mayor's Office of Housing (MOH).

Response: Census data from 2020 is still in the process of being released. Reference to MOH has been updated.

Comment: S: On p. 7, I believe the language here about using Faircloth authority and "green" funding was included last year, but it may be helpful, somewhere in the plan or in response to comments, for BHA to provide more detail about what it's done in FY 2022 on this and what's anticipated in FY 2023.

Response: The BHA retained a consultant to model Faircloth subsidy in various development scenarios in FY22. The BHA is seeking to partner with the City of Boston around pilot projects and exploring other opportunities in FY23.

Comment: S: Section B.2.26 Organization Chart p. 91: As in the past, there are a number of changes on the organization chart, and I would ask that RAB members review this carefully to ask any questions. Is there any guess when the Director of the Office of Civil Rights position will be filled?

Response: Thank you for the comment. The BHA has recently reorganized staffing in its Civil Rights and Human Resources department in order to meet organizational needs.

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: Explore voter registration at re-certification.

Nothing was done on this in 2022, and it may be that the continued use of multiple means of recertification (both in-person and virtual) for public health reasons pose additional challenges. BHA should establish firm timelines to get this done in 2023 (and should see if any other agencies, like MHB, or other PHAs are exploring this, as well as how it can be carried out with privately managed or Mixed Finance sites). The Mayor's Office of Housing may be interested in having this be something generally available where recertifications occur.

Response: Thank you for the comment. The BHA is committed to promoting civic engagement, including voting. The BHA did review the Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) law to understand the nuance between AVR organizations and any opt-in, voluntary registration it might offer to residents. The BHA will consider how to encourage voter registration in 2023.

### **Admissions including ACOP**

Comment: ACOP: Chapter 4 – Establishing and Maintaining Waiting Lists 4.2.3 (pp. 19-20) – Added to the title to state that this section, Removal of an Application from the Waiting List, is for the federal programs only and not state (state removals are governed through DHCD’s CHAMP system). This is fine.

Response: Thanks for your comment.

Comment: ACOP: Chapter 5 – Determination of Eligibility 5.3.4 (p. 51) – This section is titled Social Security Numbers. It was renumbered as it previously had repeated the number of the prior section. This is fine.

Response: Thanks for your comment.

Comment: ACOP: 5.4.9 (pp. 58-60) – The changes here are a bit more extensive than what’s in the summary of changes. What was 5.4.9. Verification of Medical Deductions, is stricken, and what was 5.4.10, also entitled Verification of Medical Deductions, is renumbered as 5.4.9. What was Section 5.4.11, Permissive Deduction in Excess of Monthly Stipend, is renumbered as 5.4.10. And what was Section 5.4.12, Income Exclusions, is renumbered as 5.4.11. While the elimination of duplicative language and renumbering seems fine, I have a few questions: (a) In the Section 8 Administrative Plan, BHA has simplified identifying what can count as a medical expense by referring to an IRS publication. Shouldn’t that same language be added to the ACOP? (b) The exclusion of excess stipend payments referenced in 5.4.11, which I had failed to notice in prior ACOP revisions, says that it operates solely during the pandemic and in hardship situations. Is this provision still operative, or is it no longer being used? (I understand BHA may want to retain the language for future use.)

Response: The BHA will consider with its Operations team whether to adopt IRS standards for medical deductions with respect to Public Housing. The stipend provision was intended to deal with guaranteed income pilots that were running during the pandemic and the language cannot be adopted for continued use without an approved waiver from HUD.

Comment: ACOP: 5.5.3 (pp. 61-65) – This section is titled Criminal History, and there are a number of changes to different subsections:

Response: Correct.

Comment: ACOP: Subsection (a), entitled Use of Criminal History, would be revised to add a sentence at the very end (on p. 62), that BHA will not review any juvenile offender information. Note that there is a typo here, and “and” should be “any”. This change is welcomed and is required by state and federal law.

Response: Thanks for pointing out the typo.

Comment: ACOP: Subsection (c), entitled Look Back Period, on p. 63, is revised to change the criminal record lookback periods from 5 years to 3 years for misdemeanors and from 10 years to 7 years for felonies, in line with the standards set forth by DHCD housing programs and changes that were made by the State Legislature a few years back about after what time period someone could seek to seal records. As with BHA's prior language, this language would not require an applicant to affirmatively seek to seal convictions; BHA would automatically not review/count such records if they were beyond the sealing period, unless they fell within the mandatory federal exclusions for certain types of convictions covered in the prior section. There is also clarification that the look back periods run from the date of conviction or the release date, whichever is later. While advocacy groups like Justice 4 Housing believe that BHA should go farther in this area, and want to continue to dialogue with BHA on this, the proposed changes are desirable and are needed to conform to revisions in state law, recognizing that after these periods, such criminal history records should not be barriers to housing or employment. Moreover, as is included in the rest of this subsection, even if an applicant has a more recent conviction that is not excluded from the lookback period, BHA should consider mitigating factors and what the applicant's likely lease compliance will be based on current circumstances.

Response: We agree with the comment that the BHA is moving in the right direction on this issue and we welcome continued dialogue. We also believe that the mitigating process we have in place works well and allows BHA to house many families and individuals that have a history in the criminal justice system.

Comment: ACOP: Subsection (g), entitled Denial for Criminal Activity, on p. 65, is revised to add three new paragraphs at the beginning, with existing language appearing at the end. In the first paragraph, consistent with HUD guidance beginning in 2015, language is added that "BHA shall not automatically deny an applicant based on the presence [sic] criminal history". (The word "of" should be added between "presence" and "criminal history".) The second paragraph clarifies what BHA will look at: "The BHA review of criminal history only considers convictions and charges awaiting trial for drug related, violent, and other criminal activity that could affect the health and safety of others potentially living nearby." Thus, if there is a pending criminal matter that is not drug-related or violent and does not have a health/safety impact, the applicant could ask that BHA not hold up processing the application just due to the open case. Finally, the third paragraph adds the following: "The BHA shall not consider arrests, cases that were continued without a finding as a means of probation, or charges that did not get prosecuted. Convictions for crimes such as larceny and other non-violent, non-drug related criminal activity are generally not considered unless, the BHA determines that the activity might affect the health and safety of other in the area. For example, illegal possession of a firearm or ammunition is not dangerous in itself, but may be considered to affect the health and safety of others." It is helpful to add this language so that reviewers are guided as to what would not be relevant in criminal history screening. As noted above, while it may be that further changes on criminal history screening should be discussed, the changes here are welcome and should assist in giving more applicants who will not pose a risk to their neighbors be able to obtain needed housing.

Response: Thank you for the comment. The “of” shall be added to the ACOP as suggested.

Comment: ACOP: Chapter 6 - Offers 6.2.1 (p. 72) – This section is titled Allocation of Offers to Different Applicant Types. It generally covers the counter system that BHA uses to allocate every eighth apartment offer for special circumstances transfers. BHA is striking all but the first sentence of the second paragraph. As BHA’s parenthetical note explains, BHA had intended to delete this language last time after ACOP changes were approved, but the final edit was overlooked. The edit is necessary as otherwise the language would be internally inconsistent and confusing. This change is fine.

Response: Thanks for the comment.

Comment: ACOP: Chapter 7 – Transfers 7.9 (p.87) – This section is titled Transfer Waiver/Reasonable Accommodation. The language describes when a disabled family may seek to remain in its existing apartment when not over-housed by more than one bedroom. Prior language said this was done through a reasonable accommodation request, but also seemed to limit the request to cases of advanced age or seriously infirm health of a household member; this restriction is eliminated, and a waiver can be considered as long as it would be a reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability. This is a desirable change, since the limiting language might be viewed as barring BHA from granting the relief even if allowing the over-housed waiver would otherwise be an appropriate accommodation.

Response: Thanks for the feedback.

Comment: (also Lsd Hsg) My name is Jeremy Otridge, and I am writing on behalf of Justice 4 Housing Inc.. We are a grassroots nonprofit in Massachusetts that ensures formerly incarcerated people have equitable access to affordable housing. Our work is borne from the lived experience of our executive director, Leslie Credle, who is a formerly incarcerated Black woman. Our work also responds to research that has found that formerly incarcerated people are 10 times more likely than the general public to experience homelessness. Part of this disparity comes from barriers enacted by Public Housing Authorities in the name of public safety. However, rather than promoting public safety, excluding formerly incarcerated people poses a public health threat. Housing has also been recognized as a critical component of reducing recidivism, particularly in the first year after release. Furthermore, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has recognized that there is no connection between a history of criminal activity and being a successful tenant.

Advocating from these facts, we had the opportunity to collaborate with Boston Housing Authority to reduce barriers to housing for formerly incarcerated people. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to David Gleich, Joel Wool, Lydia Agro, and Barbara Sheerin for dedicating the time and energy to engage with us. Guiding these conversations was our Far From Home Report, which was produced in collaboration with the Harvard

Tenant Advocacy Project and tells the stories of formerly incarcerated people. It produces 12 recommendations that housing authorities and legislators can enact to make public housing more accessible to formerly incarcerated people. Some of the updates included in the 2023 annual plan resulted from these recommendations and conversations with BHA. I would like to take a moment to recognize each of these changes:

Lookback periods (Chapter 5 of the annual plan) : “Subsection (c), entitled Look Back Period, on p. 63, is revised to change the criminal record lookback periods from 5 years to 3 years for misdemeanors and from 10 years to 7 years for felonies, in line with the standards set forth by DHCD housing programs and changes that were made by the State Legislature a few years back about after what time period someone could seek to seal records. As with BHA’s prior language, this language would not require an applicant to affirmatively seek to seal convictions; BHA would automatically not review/count such records if they were beyond the sealing period, unless they fell within the mandatory federal exclusions for certain types of convictions covered in the prior section. There is also clarification that the look back periods run from the date of conviction or the release date, whichever is later.”

We commend the Boston Housing Authority for making this reduction in lookback periods from their previous standard of 5 years for misdemeanors and 10 years for felonies. The lookback period is a significant barrier to housing for many formerly incarcerated people. It can be used to deny people because of a past a conviction for which they have already served a sentence when what they need most is housing and support. We urge Boston Housing Authority to move beyond the standards set by DHCD and consider lowering their lookback periods to 2 years for misdemeanors and felonies alike. BHA should look to the successful Stable Housing and Reintegration Program (SHARP), which it created with Justice 4 Housing, as an example of how housing can benefit formerly incarcerated people. Housing people released from incarceration within the last 3 years, all of SHARP’s participants are housed and there is a 0% recidivism rate, significantly below the state average and local average recidivism rate. While we commend BHA for recognizing the success of this program by expanding it, we also encourage them to lower lookback periods given the evidence that providing housing to formerly incarcerated people increases, and does not decrease, safety. On this point, we would also like to point to successful reforms in other parts of the country. Seattle and New Orleans have taken steps to lower their lookback periods and have had no adverse reports after these changes. Boston is rightfully recognized as a trendsetter in Massachusetts (and the country) as evidenced by BHA being among the first housing authorities to adopt Small Area Fair Market Rent to address affordability issues. We urge BHA to continue this tradition and take the next step in lowering lookback periods and allowing formerly incarcerated people equal access to a necessary resource for reintegration.

Response: Thank you for your comments. BHA very much appreciates the ongoing dialogue held with Justice 4 Housing that has resulted in the commenter’s above-referenced reforms to BHA policy related to applicants and residents with a history

attached the criminal justice system. While BHA has made reductions to lookback periods in order to align with the State time frames that permit a criminal record to be sealed, it is unclear to BHA that further reductions are necessary. Based on BHA data from Leased Housing programs over the prior 5 years, more than 75% of the 2,727 applicants with a criminal record were ultimately approved for BHA housing. This evidence shows that the BHA process works to support those with a history in the criminal justice system with housing benefits. The BHA does not deny housing solely based on the presence of a negative criminal history. The existing process allows the applicant with a negative criminal history within the prescribed lookback periods to gather evidence of mitigating circumstances, help the BHA to make an informed decision on eligibility that considers other program participants, but also may help the BHA to direct an applicant towards housing with particular appropriate services or other appropriate programs. The process of confronting the criminal history at the BHA program eligibility stage also prepares the applicant for whatever scrutiny may come from a private landlord, who may be more strict with respect to review.

While BHA does not fully agree with the reforms proposed by the commenter, we do agree with the overall nature of the work and agree that necessary reforms are needed in housing policy and within the criminal justice system. It is unquestionable that the criminal justice system has been historically inequitable to the low income and minority populations that BHA serves.

Comment: (also Lsd Hsg) Consideration of non-convictions in admissions: “Subsection (g), entitled Denial for Criminal Activity, on p. 65, is revised to add three new paragraphs at the beginning, with existing language appearing at the end. In the first paragraph, consistent with HUD guidance beginning in 2015, language is added that “BHA shall not automatically deny an applicant based on the presence [sic] criminal history”. (The word “of” should be added between “presence” and “criminal history”.) The second paragraph clarifies what BHA will look at: “The BHA review of criminal history only considers convictions and charges awaiting trial for drug related, violent, and other criminal activity that could affect the health and safety of others potentially living nearby.” Thus, if there is a pending criminal matter that is not drug-related or violent and does not have a health/safety impact, the applicant could ask that BHA not hold up processing the application just due to the open case. Finally, the third paragraph adds the following: “The BHA shall not consider arrests, cases that were continued without a finding as a means of probation, or charges that did not get prosecuted. Convictions for crimes such as larceny and other non-violent, non-drug related criminal activity are generally not considered unless, the BHA determines that the activity might affect the health and safety of other in the area. For example, illegal possession of a firearm or ammunition is not dangerous in itself, but may be considered to affect the health and safety of others.” It is helpful to add this language so that reviewers are guided as to what would not be relevant in criminal history screening.”

We commend Boston Housing Authority for specifying that it shall not consider arrests or other non-convictions in admissions. This change is supported by evidence by HUD that finds arrests to be unreliable records of criminal activity and not equivalent to an

admission of guilt. We also appreciate the explicit inclusion of how BHA considers different “classifications” of convictions in its admissions procedure. A remaining question we have is how BHA might use the conduct surrounding an arrest. While BHA will no longer consider arrests, will it still consider “supporting evidence” around an arrest? If so, how does it interpret this evidence to be more reliable than an arrest and grounds for denial? We believe that BHA should not consider an arrest nor its circumstances in admissions because they are prone to the same flaws and can lead to unnecessary housing denials.

Response: This comment speaks to the evidentiary standards BHA utilizes in order to make decisions regarding eligibility. From time to time, the BHA is presented with detailed police reports, such as search warrant affidavits, providing evidence of violent or firearm related criminal activity or illegal drug distribution that cannot be ignored solely because a conviction has not yet occurred. The BHA will continue to use the preponderance of the evidence standard afforded under the current laws, weighing the evidence to determine credibility and ultimately make a decision on eligibility.

Comment: (also Lsd Hsg) Juvenile Record Review: On page 68, section 5.7, the following paragraph is modified to include the underlined segment: The BHA will request CORI for an Applicant who is fourteen (14) years of age or older in accordance with State and federal law. The BHA will not review any juvenile offender information. The BHA shall only review CORI for an applicant who is 14 or older than has been tried as an adult.

We appreciate that Boston Housing Authority has provided clarification about their use of CORIs for household members under the age of 18. While BHA may be within its rights under state and federal law to review CORI for an applicant 14 or older, it is not required to do so. Furthermore, this is not the standard practice of DHCD or other housing authorities in the state, which do not review CORIs for any household members under the age of 18. We encourage the BHA to update this policy to match the rest of the state and DHCD, in a similar manner as its updates with the lookback period.

Response: The BHA does not believe there is harm in continuing this practice since the query will only return records for those juveniles 14 or older that may have been tried as an adult. This is a simple safeguard preventing the BHA from subsidizing an individual that may be currently incarcerated or have committed a serious crime that should be evaluated in eligibility determination.

Comment: (also Lsd Hsg) FAQ and Mitigating Letter: Beyond these changes in the annual plan, we would also like to commend Boston Housing Authority for changes made to its FAQs and mitigating circumstances letter. Updates to both of these sources made them easier to read and understand such that formerly incarcerated people can be properly informed about their rights and opportunities in the housing process.

The changes made in BHA’s 2023 annual plan are a step in the right direction. We appreciate that the BHA took the time to meet with us throughout the year to receive our



input on updates related to formerly incarcerated people. There is still much to be done and we look forward to continuing our collaboration.

Response: Agreed. Thanks for the positive feedback.

Comment: S: Section B.1.1 Statement of Housing Needs and Strategy for Addressing Housing Needs Pp. 2-10: On pp. 3-4, since so few persons are admitted from the Section 8 tenant-based waiting list (and the list is closed), it may be more useful to list information as well for the Section 8 project-based waiting lists, since those are open and that is the main way that applicants obtain Section 8 assistance through the BHA. This is particularly important given the issue that GBLS has identified for a number of years (and which BHA incorporated into its AFFH Goals and Objectives), i.e., that the Priority 1 category used for entry to the Section 8 program might not well fit the emergency housing needs of low-income Asian households. BHA has tweaked the priority somewhat, but unless patterns of make-up of the Section 8 project-based list are tracked over time, it will not be possible to see if this strategy is affirmatively furthering fair housing.

Response: HUD provides the template for HA's to complete. BHA staff note the point and expect to continue the discussion as BHA moves forward with work on affirmatively furthering fair housing.

Comment: S: On p. 5, on the public housing waiting list, it may be helpful to explain more what the high turnover number means—this does NOT mean that the number of public housing units available for new lease up is that high (it is a much lower number as shown elsewhere in the Supplement), but that that number of applications are processed (applicants may be withdrawn as they are placed elsewhere, reject offers, do not respond, or are removed because they do not qualify for priority or eligibility). On the housing needs by bedroom size (pp. 5-6), it must be noted that the Section 8 subsidy standards by bedroom are generally more restrictive than for public housing, i.e., a family with a number of members of different generations and/or genders may end up being assigned a larger unit for public housing than it would for the Section 8 program.

Response: BHA agrees that the high turnover figure largely represents wait list maintenance.

Comment: S: On p. 8, it would be helpful for BHA to review the list of special programs listed to see if any of these no longer apply (for example, does SAMHSA still exist)?

Response: The Plan indicates that there are various Supportive Housing Programs in the Public Housing program. These programs will be posted to the BHA website and linked under the Admissions and Leased Housing menus. The BHA consistently works with partners to develop housing pathways for vulnerable families and individuals so the list of programs may change from time to time. The SAMHSA program is different as it

was funded by a time-limited grant from the federal government. There is no SAMHSA funding at this time.

Comment: S: Section B.1.2.Deconcentration and Other Policies that Govern Eligibility, Selection and Admissions: Pp. 11-23: In Section A.(1)c. (p. 11), as well as in the similar Section B.(1)b. (p. 18), it may make sense to eliminate the reference to using local law enforcement for admission screening, since criminal history screening is done through the Department of Criminal Justice Information Systems (DJCIS) and not through local law enforcement.

Response: The BHA will research this issue further and make a change during the next iteration of the plan if appropriate.

Comment: S: In Section A.(2)c.1 (p. 12), the reference to non-BHA waiting lists just says HOPE VI, and this is likely no longer a useful way to list these, given the range of different Mixed Finance options involving private partners that are not HOPE VI; the description at A.(2)c.4 (pp. 12-13) is better, and appears to be updated to include Phase IV for Old Colony. (BHA should review to see if any others need to be included.) There is a reference to public housing waiting lists at Heritage and Lower Mills; since these have been fully converted, presumably everyone who had listed for public housing at these sites should get shifted over to the PBV lists here, and the same should occur at Patricia White and any other subsidy conversions (such as at Lenox/Camden).

Response: The following language has been added, stating, “The BHA has additional housing units within its portfolio. Application information for those sites can be found on the BHA website.” The reference to HOPE VI has been deleted.

Comment: S: On pp. 19-20, under Section B.(4)b.2, would it also make sense to include any transfers from the City-funded voucher program where needs cannot be adequately addressed within that program? BHA has included insufficient funding as one basis in its Administrative Plan, but as noted in GBLS’ comments, there may be times where because of domestic violence, reasonable accommodation needs, or the like, a family cannot continue to be served through the City-funded voucher program and a transfer to the regular Section 8 program may make sense. I cannot recall if category 9 on p. 20 (applicants who are residents of expiring use developments who have been converted to PBRA, where BHA administers the waiting list) was in the prior draft or is adequately captured in the Administrative Plan—could BHA provide detail about which sites are involved?

Response: Thanks for the comment. The BHA will consider changes for future iterations of the plan as necessary. The BHA administers the site-based waiting list for Concord Houses, an expiring use site that converted to PBRA. In exchange for choice-mobility the BHA requested the ability to manage the site-based waiting list in accordance with BHA priorities and preferences.

Comment: S: In the chart on pp. 20-21, it appears some of the language has been cut off, and so it should be edited so all relevant language is captured. In the asterisked note on p. 21, take out the words “Housing Choice” before “Voucher”, since the terminology is “Project-Based Voucher”, not “Project Based Housing Choice Voucher”. I don’t believe the categories or points for preference/priority on p. 22 have changed, but if they have, please highlight.

Response: Thanks for the comment. The necessary adjustments will be made to the plan.

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: Streamline and simplify the housing application process to maximize transparency for applicants and focus staff efforts on working with applicants who are most likely to be housed in the near future.

It’s not clear from this draft whether the various policy changes that were adopted in the past few years (in the ACOP and Administrative Plan), along with the related changes to the application and on-line features, have all been implemented, or if not, what the implementation date will be. As noted above, some other questions (such as whether policy changes may improve acceptance rates) can’t be answered without knowing what’s in place. It would also be helpful for BHA to convene a general workshop/training open to residents and community partners explaining what it has done, what the changes are, and how the new system works. BHA held similar regular briefings prior to the pandemic, but it is not clear if there are continued forums like this.

Response: The BHA will put out an implementation guide to track the progress on various policy changes. We understand the comment, as there have been many policy changes, some of which have taken longer to implement than others. Additionally, the BHA will put together regular public workshops on the application process. We have created a position, Intake Manager, to take on some of these responsibilities, but are waiting for union approval before advertising and hiring. We anticipate workshops to begin around April 2023.

## **Budget**

Comment: (S) Section B.1.3, Financial Resources p. 24: While BHA has not yet proposed any change here, I understand John Kane will be getting us updated figures, since these are the ones from last year.

Response: Yes, the table has been updated and information shared with the RAB and posted online.

Comment: S: Section B.2.18 Conversion of Public Housing to Tenant-Based Assistance Pp. 81: It looks like the calculation here needs to be updated, since it is providing PUM as of September, 2021, and should use a 2022 figure. In addition, the capital amount per unit seems low. My assumption is that the bottom line is the same—it is not cost effective to simply do a public housing to Section 8 tenant-based conversion—but the data needs to be current and accurate.

Response: The calculation has been updated.

### **Capital**

Comment: AP p.3: In Section B.4, there is reference to the most recent 5-Year Action Plan in EPIC approved May 23, 2022. It should be noted that this would be AFTER the usual date for the FY 2022 PHA Plan approval, and it may be that BHA made certain revisions to the 5-Year Plan that was reviewed by the RAB last year, based on updated information from HUD about available funds or due to technical issues. Can BHA provide clarification on this and make sure that the RAB has access to the 5-year Action Plan in EPIC approved on May 23, 2022?

Response: The date that HUD approved the 5-year Action Plan for 2022 was received after the “usual” date to receive FY 2022 PHA Plan approval as appropriation funding from HUD was not awarded until May of 2022. The approved 5YAP in EPIC will be posted on-line and shared with the RAB.

Comment: (5Y) Subgoal: Complete a portfolio-wide capital needs assessment for all properties not currently slated for redevelopment. Devise a strategic plan to fund these capital needs over the long term.

We’re glad to hear that the Capital Needs Assessments (CNAs) are mostly completed and will be finalized by December, 2022. We would ask that BHA share these with resident organizations and the RAB when completed. It may be helpful to convene a special session, after the information is shared, in case there are questions and to help explain how the CNAs will be used for use of the Capital Fund, for prioritizing spending of other money that may be made available to the BHA, and to help identify what subsidy conversion strategies may be appropriate at particular sites.

Response: The Capital Needs Assessments (CNAs) will be finalized shortly, and BHA plans to share these with the LTOs and RAB as soon as possible on-line and via appropriate distribution. A special meeting/presentation to the RAB can be made in early 2023 (in February or March RAB meetings) to review how the CNAs will be used for planning.

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: In furtherance of BHA’s commitment to sustainability, continue to reduce carbon emission toward 38% of 2008 level; and continue to explore climate resiliency, moving from identifying vulnerabilities toward implementing solutions. This discusses reduction of carbon emissions at a number of sites—it would be helpful to know what time frames are involved here (estimated start and completion times). It may be that BHA would want to move several state sites included here out of this report and into the State Plan report. There only appears to be one federal family development included (Barkley); is there a strategy for other federal family sites that are not otherwise undergoing redevelopment? On climate resiliency, there is a reference to DHCD—here again, it may make sense to move this to the State Plan, unless this involvement may also impact BHA’s federal portfolio (if that’s so, BHA can say that). In addition, the City of Boston is exploring tree resources in its communities, and studying how to preserve/foster healthy trees at BHA sites is an important redevelopment element.

Response: The sites listed represent large-scale utility-funded projects through the MassSave/MA Low Income Multifamily Program (administered by LEAN/ABCD) to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. The projects were started and completed during the progress report period. Future reports will add estimated start and completion timeframes to the list for projects at federal sites (and state sites can be removed from this report). Completing projects through the MA Low Income Multifamily Program is one strategy among many. An additional high-impact strategy is the review of another Energy Performance Contract (BHA completed a successful ~\$70M project between 2010 and 2013) that could potentially include the majority of sites not within the redevelopment pipeline. Also under review is a strategy to “green” the electricity used at the sites, which would effectively zero-out emissions related to that fuel source. The reference to DHCD can be removed from this report. In addition, we have been working with the City of Boston on incorporating green infrastructure/storm water management principles into our operations. Staff are receptive to a RAB presentation request on the topic.

## **Communications**

Comment: (5Y) Subgoal: Continue to develop information systems, communications tools, and interactive forums to enhance collaboration, efficiency and productivity across departments.

If BHA could provide an update on: (a) which sites are using the “One Call Now” software on a pilot basis; (b) what the projected expansion would be over 2023 (that is, which sites by expected start-up dates); and (c) which additional department will also begin using it (and expected time frames), this would be helpful. Residents and users can then compare notes about what’s working well and what may need tweaks.

Response: BHA has rolled out the OneCallNow messaging software at 11 sites, including Ausonia, Charlestown, Doris Bunte, Fairmount, Franklin Field, Hassan, Mildred Hailey, Ruth Barkley, St. Botolph, Torre Unidad, and West Broadway. By the end of 2023, BHA expects to have the program implemented at all BHA developments and is working on scheduling the rollout of the next set of sites in the coming weeks. The tool is also available to be used to reach employees, Section 8 voucher holders and Section 8 landlords and is anticipated to be rolled out to the Section 8 program following the rollout of the public housing program. Current expectation is for the tool to be used primarily by communications and operations staff.

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: Provide additional opportunities for customer feedback.

Can BHA share with the RAB what results it got from Section 8 participants in its texting survey (on housing search and the lease up/relocation process)? As additional surveys are developed, BHA should share them with the RAB (in case there is resident feedback on edits) and the results of any surveys conducted. This refers to a customer service tracking service that was expected to be in place in early 2022—did that happen, and what would it do—and if it didn't happen, what's the reason for the delay and the expected start up? (It may be that this is addressed in other items above, but it is not clear if this is the same item reported as "One Call Now" above).

Response: BHA recently completed its second annual Resident Satisfaction Survey, which is designed to measure resident satisfaction with BHA's performance in terms of operations, maintenance, customer service etc...The 2022 survey results are still being tabulated, but the 2021 results are available at:

<https://www.bostonhousing.org/en/21surveyresults.aspx>

In mid-2022 BHA rolled out a customer service ticketing system called Zendesk, which is currently being used by Communications, the Leased Housing Department and parts of the Operations Department to respond more effectively to customer requests and complaints. We are using this tool to keep a centralized record of all customer service-related calls, emails and other messages that come to BHA staff in Chauncy Street. The tool is now in place and has been built into BHA's internal processes. It provides deadlines for our responses, keeps track of ongoing and past issues by client, and keeps a central database for BHA staff to ensure that BHA is responding in an effective and timely manner.

### **Designated Housing**

Comment: (S) Section B.2.17 Designated Housing for Elderly and/or Disabled Families Pp. 78-80: Please advise as to what changes were made here. I'd note that in the Hailey redevelopment, affirmative fair marketing/tenant selection and relocation plans, of the units shifting from public housing to Section 8 PBV under the HUD approved demolition/disposition plan, there is no designation of any of the PBV units as

specifically elderly/disabled, and I think (but I am not sure) that this includes some of the currently designated units—but it may be a while yet before these are reached.

Response: The BHA’s recently approved designated housing plan includes the developments identified in the table in the Supplement. With respect to the Mildred C. Hailey Apartments, HUD has approved for demolition and disposition the 253 existing public housing units in the redevelopment footprint. Included in those 253 Demo/Dispo-approved units are the 56 elderly/disabled units at 295-297 Centre Street. All 253 existing public housing units will be replaced with Section 8 Project-Based Voucher units as part of the redevelopment. It is not currently anticipated that any of the replacement Section 8 PBV units will be restricted to elderly/disabled occupancy; however, that is an issue that BHA and the redevelopment team will consider further as the redevelopment proceeds. The 53 existing elderly/disabled public housing units will not be demolished until the final phase of the redevelopment, which will not get underway for at least 6 years from now (and likely longer than that).

### **Family Self-Sufficiency Action Plan**

Comment: S: In the asterisked note on FSS (p. 34), does this mean that in future years, the turnover figure should be roughly 100 per year? (See GBLs separate note on this in the Progress Report comments.)

Response: BHA has enrolled over 1250 families into FSS over the past 4 years. This means that these families will begin to graduate as they reach the 5-year term of their contract beginning in 2023. The graduation rate will follow the enrollment rate with the peak of graduations slated to occur in 2024-2027. That said, families may request an extension of their contract of up to 2 years if they have not yet reached their goals.

Comment: 5Y: Introduction (pp. 1-2) I believe this is unchanged. BHA may want to add something about its enhancement of Family Self-Sufficiency and asset-building efforts, in partnership with Compass, since this has been a significant new development over the 5-years (there is some discussion of FSS in the last few bullets, but it may be helpful to add more to the text.

Response: Noted. We will seek to build this out in future versions.

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: Increase Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Participation from 200 to 800 households.

This has been a huge success, far beyond what was planned for in the 5-Year Plan. See also GBLs separate comments on the AFFH Goals and Objectives regarding FSS. On the projection of 200 graduates in 2024, this is likely a great achievement given what

the scope of the program was then, but since the expanded program will be much larger, it may help to list goals for future years. Moreover, if there is some expected “drop-out” aspect to FSS (families’ plans or economic circumstances change), it would be good to share with the RAB both: (a) what is a realistic participant-to-graduate rate; and (b) what steps BHA takes to try to address barriers to continued participation. For example, is it possible to “pause” while under a Contract of Participation, but then to resume status (say if a participant had to drop out of the workforce temporarily to address family health needs)?

Response: This is helpful feedback. (a) We will review enrollment to graduation rates to provide additional context for the RAB and other stakeholders. (B). BHA believes that the FSS regulations do provide flexibility for families as barriers arise during their participation as evidenced by the interim disbursement allowance, as well as the ability to modify goals throughout the course of the family’s participation. Additionally, although it is not possible to “pause” participation, the regulations do permit an extension to the Contract of Participation of up to 2 years at the family’s request if they need additional time to meet their goals.

### **Grievance Procedures**

Comment: (S) Section B.1.6 Grievance Procedure Pp. 37-38: While BHA has not proposed any changes in this section, I would urge, as I have in the past, that BHA specifically note that there are two different standard Grievance Procedures: one for BHA public housing, and the other for Mixed Finance sites. There are different templates for each of these.

Response: The Plan does reference both the BHA public housing Grievance Procedure and the model “Mixed-Finance” Grievance procedure. In practice, the latter has been adapted slightly from site to site.

### **Human Resources**

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: Proactively plan for future staffing in light of property repositioning and pending retirements; identify areas where BHA needs to hire for new capacities and functions.

While this is not the focus of this section (and perhaps should be elsewhere in the Progress Report, such as under resident training and employment opportunities), it’s good to see that Building Pathways is being used as a means to recruit people to regular BHA maintenance positions. BHA may want to see if any private management companies that operate BHA or Mixed Finance sites may also want to link up with



Building Pathways for BHA public housing and Leased Housing graduates. Has the Onboarding Initiative started (this says fall 2022)? There's a typo here—several times the word “tract” appears, and it should be “track” (like “training track”). BHA also wants to think how these initiatives integrate with efforts to address youth training and employment (including internships) and transition into the BHA workforce where appropriate.

Response: The spelling has been updated. Thanks for the comment. Yes, the onboarding initiative has started in fall 2022. We continue to build on our internships in a few departments including HR, Operations, MIS, fiscal, and Public Safety and have hired several interns into full time employment.

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: Institute additional mentoring and training for the current and the next generation of BHA staff.

It would be good to share with residents what's included in the Management at Its Best training.

Response: The Managing at Its Best Program is a leadership development program to prepare BHA staff who oversee direct reports to become more skillful with managing but also being a BHA leader. Through a combination of group lessons and individual coaching, it also offers BHA managers and supervisors an opportunity to enhance their self-awareness, mentoring, conflict resolution, prioritizing and establishing developmental relationships. The Management at its Best training is available Authority-wide.

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: Continue to promote diverse hiring and employment opportunities for BHA residents.

There may be items under the first bullet in this subsection above which should be shifted here. Moreover, there are some impressive statistics included in the AFFH Goals and Objectives report on Section 3 accomplishments that should be included or cross-referenced here. There have also been some robust discussions in conjunction with Bunker Hill redevelopment about how to develop the workforce of the future and make sure that BHA residents have as many chances as possible—it would be good to draw other partners into this conversation (adult education, Youth Build, Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology, Wentworth, BPS, etc.)

Response: Thanks for the comment. BHA does actively reach out to partners around workforce and hiring of residents. BHA is also conducting outreach to residents directly regarding workforce opportunities.

## **Language Access including Four Factor Analysis**

Comment: No comments on A. Mission Statement, or B. Background—both look fine.

Response: Thank you.

Comment: C. Four Factor Analysis 1. Number or proportion of Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons served or encountered in the eligible service population. (Encompassing both a. Eligible Service Population, and b. BHA Determination of Interpretation/Translation needs of service population). Pp. 1-2: BHA is using data here from the 2020 census—it's not clear that BHA is using 2020 data for other aspects of its PHA Plan (or AFFH Goals and Objectives), and it would be best that all aspects of BHA's Plan use the most current data available.

Response: BHA uses Census data as a reference to learn and confirm what are the most spoken languages in the area (Boston, Suffolk County). The Language Access Division collects its own data from internal databases that shows languages spoken by BHA clients in the wait list, public housing, and Leased Housing. In addition, BHA has its own internal database to collect records of interpretation and translation requests, and assistance provided over the phone.

Comment: -- It is also good for BHA to separate out language needs at different public housing developments, since it can be that particular sites have different language population concentrations. CAN BHA PROVIDE THIS DATA TO THE RAB?

Response: BHA has this data, and can provide this data to the RAB.

Comment: --BHA should take the same approach for its Project-Based Section 8 assistance, particularly as a number of sites convert from public housing to Section 8, so that it is aware of any unique language needs at particular sites, whether they are in the public housing or Leased Housing portfolios. CAN BHA PROVIDE THIS DATA TO THE RAB?

Response: Yes, PBV residents are now counted with Leased Housing. BHA staff will take the comment under advisement and will continue the discussion with the RAB.

Comment: --On oral interpretation, it should be recognized that Arabic may require a number of different dialects depending on whether LEP applicants come from—someone from the Maghreb in Northern Africa, for example, may require a different dialect than a speaker from Lebanon, Syria, or Iraq.

Response: BHA already does this. Clients may request a specific dialect of Arabic. The most frequent request we get is Moroccan Arabic. For the report, it will only be identified as Arabic.

Comment: 2. Frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with the program.

p. 2: On Language Identification Cards, it must be recognized that this is an imperfect mechanism of identifying LEP needs, since some individuals may not be literate in their original language. In addition, sometimes communications barriers can be a mix of a disability and LEP, and it may be necessary to bring in additional resources to negotiate the complexities.

Response: Thank you for the comment. In the 12 years of our program, fortunately, we have not had issues finding the correct language to assist our clients. The Language ID Card has been used successfully in our housing center and public housing sites. Clients are also very good at telling us orally the language they speak. We have also met with members of some communities who requested to be added to the Card. Throughout the last 12 years we have updated our Card to add languages such as Afaan Oromo, Cape Verdean, Tigrinya, etc. Our Language ID Card is modeled after the I Speak Card from the US Department of Justice.

Comment: --In addition to the Departments/Divisions mentioned here, BHA staff may be interacting with managers of Mixed Finance sites, who may have their own LEP policies. BHA will periodically review those policies, standard LEP notices & practices of those providers to make sure that they are consistent with BHA's practice and that all applicants and participants served by the BHA, whether directly or through Mixed Finance partners, have equal access.

Response: BHA has reviewed some Language Access Policies for sites that went through conversion and are now privately managed. BHA has most recently worked with Lenox (Beacon) and Maverick (Trinity). BHA is happy to assist with any training needed to facilitate the transition.

Comment: 3. Nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program.

p. 2: In the first sentence, I would include language about "continued assistance (including transfer or exercise of mobility options)", since this is also a very important aspect of BHA portfolio operations/.

Response: Noted and text has been amended.

Comment: --It is good that BHA mentions some return to in-person interactions, as well as through phone, email, or by zoom. It should be recognized that, at times, hybrid options may be desirable—it may be, for example, that a number of residents could attend a briefing in person, but others due to health or other challenges may need to participate remotely. This can pose translation/interpretation challenges, since the need may exist within the physical space where the meeting occurs or may be on line. It may be that an interpreter can be arranged who can only participate remotely. At times equipment may be available which can enable smooth communication with LEP individuals without meeting interruption (headsets), but this may not always be available, and those running the meeting will need to be respectful of the need for

pauses (and pace meeting timing and content accordingly) to accommodate translation and understanding.

Response: Thank you for your comment. In any resident event, we always remind speakers to be mindful of the interpretation.

Comment: p. 3: It's encouraging to see the Wellness Connects program for Chinese-speaking elders, funded through an Age Strong grant—but it would be important to make sure that all language groups has similar access, and that BHA and partners such as Age Strong are also exploring whether there may be other language groups that may be better able to access a combination of BHA and City services through language support. (For example, a number of BHA's elderly/disabled public housing and PBV sites may have a significant LEP population of Russian or Haitian Creole speaking elders and may have similar needs.)

Response: Thank you for your comment. BHA recently received a grant from Age Strong called Creating Connections, which has allowed us to expand Wellness Connect and invite ALL residents of the site. Our goal is to have at least one event at each elderly/disabled site by the end of the grant in May 2023.

Comment: Pp. 6-7: Regarding interpretation by phone, a challenge here may be the operation of hotline services, such as for public housing workorders, particularly where a resident is calling during nigh hours due to an emergency and the staff on the hotline is only English-speaking. Can BHA discuss at greater length how this is handled? Moreover, similar issues can arise where there is inspection (common to both public housing and Leased Housing) and repairs, where, for example, appointments are being made by email, text or phone or the person may be on the way and there are questions about having quick but effective communication to avoid missing service (or possibly facing a a sanction due to a failure to connect). BHA has, in its Progress Report, discussed new technologies that it's planning on implementing to enhance communication options, and it would be good to lay out how LEP elements are incorporated into that new technology and what the anticipated roll-out will be for particular sites (and any piloting approach to work out any issues).

Response: Thank you for your comment. Our Work Orders Department is in the process of being trained in the use of Language Line Services, a 24/7 interpretation service over the phone they can use after hours. They will also be included in the LEP training in January 2022. The next step is working with Inspections, which should be completed by the Spring of 2023.

Comment: p. 8: It should be noted that the number of interpreter/translation requests in 2022 for particular Departments (particularly Legal and Division of Grievances and Appeals) are lower than what might normally be expected. BHA has only initiated a very limited number of emergency court matters (and processed some cases that were filed prior to the pandemic where required by the court), and the normal operation of Grievances and Appeals is also affected by the pandemic. While we encourage BHA to

continue with efforts to divert cases to resolution outside of court and the formal grievance/hearing process, obviously these numbers are likely to change.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: 4. Resources available to the recipient and costs to the recipient.

Pp. 8-9: It should be noted here that local tenant organizations (LTOs) are often expected, under the Resident Participation Policy (RPP), to provide for interpreters and translation for their meetings/materials out of available Tenant Participation Funding (TPF). However, TPF funds are limited and LTOs may have a difficult time meeting all of their needs out of the LTO budget—so often BHA has attempted to assist LTOs (whether the event is considered to be a “BHA/Developer” matter or one with the LTO. It is best to try to avoid undue strain on limited LTO budgets, particular for election-related LEP needs.

Response: BHA and LTOs do the best they can with limited resources.

Comment: --The RPP has also been amended to allow for use of LTO funds, like TPF, for stipends to residents who are helping make sure that community events/meetings can go smoothly (such as through flyering, providing day care, or interpreter/translation service). This likely may require some more discussion about when this is appropriate and when a more skilled/professional interpreter/translator is required.

Response: BHA staff welcome continuing the discussion around stipends as the BHA continues to consider revisions to the current Tenant Participation Policy.

Comment: p. 9: This discusses Spanish language access for the Tech Goes Home computer skills program. As with the Wellness collaboration with Age Strong discussed above, this is great that there is added capacity, but need to assess what may be needed for other language groups to fully take advantage of these programs.

Response: Thank you for your comment. It is a goal of our department to increase the participation of LEP residents in our programs. Recently we had a Tech Goes Home class at Mildred Hailey in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole. We will continue to assess our outreach to continue expanding our services.

Comment: p. 10: For the Volunteer program, as well as for other aspects of the 4-Factor Analysis, it would be good to have comparisons with other years since the Four-Factor Analysis has been used to see how BHA is doing (and if there is any reduction, etc., for BHA then to explain why and what the longer-term plan is).

Response: We will take the comment under advisement.

Comment: p. 11: There is no longer an Occupancy Department, and this should be replaced by the Admissions Department.

Response: Thank you for your comment. Noted and text has been amended.

### **Leased Housing**

Comment: Section 3.3.5(b)(1)(v) (pp. 21-22): This eliminated language in the existing Super Priority that said why a reasonable accommodation couldn't be provided within public housing, and merely describes the super-priority as someone who can't get the reasonable accommodation within BHA's public housing portfolio but could if switched to the Section 8 program. This is fine.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: Section 3.3.6(b)(1)(vi): (p. 22): This adds a Super Priority for public housing households who otherwise qualify for the criteria for the Section 8 homeownership program later described in the Admin Plan. This is fine.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: Section 3.3.5(b)(2)(v) (p. 23): This adds a Super Priority for Section 8 Mod Rehab households who otherwise qualify for the criteria for the Section 8 homeownership program later described in the Admin Plan. This is fine.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: Section 3.3.5(b)(4) (p. 23): This adds a Super Priority for City-funded voucher program participants who are losing subsidy because of insufficient funding from that program. I think it's fine to have this after the verification section (3), since there wouldn't need to be special individualized verification on this—BHA could quickly verify which cases came into this category. This is fine, but BHA may also want to add language here for the City-funded voucher program for some of the other possibilities where linkage to the regular Section 8 program would be helpful, such as if the person needs to flee domestic violence, where a reasonable accommodation cannot be accomplished within the City-funded program but could with the regular voucher program, or if there might be City-funded voucher participants who should be considered for the Homeownership program. I am also not sure if there is any reference to the City-funded voucher program elsewhere in the Admin Plan, or any reference to where the operating documents would be for that program, and it may be helpful to add that.

Response: Thank you for your comment. There are no other references to the City-funded Voucher program in the Administrative Plan. The City funded program documents can be found on the BHA's website. <https://www.bostonhousing.org/en/For-Section-8-Leased-Housing/Voucher-Programs/City-of-Boston-Voucher-Program.aspx>

Comment: Section 3.3.7(c)(1-2) (p. 33): This revises the Working Preference to make clear that you could only get it for households based on Working Preference status for head of household, spouse, or sole member (i.e., not for another adult), to eliminate the requirement that the employment has lasted at least 6 months, and to indicate that “full-time employment” for these purposes means at least 30 hours per week. Phrasing in section (2) (on counting elderly/disabled households as also qualifying for this preference) is cleaned up. These edits are fine.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: CHAPTER 5, DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY 5.5.1(j) (p. 58): This adds an additional exception to very-low income (VLI) targeting, and provides that VASH referrals from the Veterans Administration may be low-income (up to 80% of Area Median Income (AMI)), as opposed to the usual 50% of AMI for VLI. This makes sense and will help with effective utilization of the VASH program.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: 5.5.3(l) (p. 63): This simplifies the language on medical deductions, and eliminates a number of paragraphs of description, instead referring to an IRS publication on the subject (Topic 502). While simplification (and flexibility) is desirable, it's likely that many participants and BHA staff will not be familiar with this publication, so it will be important to have it readily available so that it can be quickly determined if a household qualifies for medical expense deductions or not.

Response: Thank you for your comment. Staff will receive training on the change and be provided with the appropriate IRS publication.

Comment: 5.7 (pp. 67-68): This makes a number of changes to CORI screening: (a) it makes clear that BHA will not review juvenile records, and will only look at records of those age 14 or older who have been tried as adults; (b) changes the lookback period (except where there is a mandatory denial category under applicable law that might be longer) from 5 years to 3 years for misdemeanors, and from 10 years to 7 years for felonies, consistent with CORI sealing laws, and provides that the time period either runs from the date of conviction or the date of release, whichever is later. BHA may also want to switch the reference on p. 67 from the Criminal History Systems Board to the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCHIS), since DCJIS has replaced CHSB. It may be that Justice 4 Housing may have additional suggestions here.

Response: Thank for your comment. The BHA has revised accordingly.

Comment: CHAPTER 7, FINDING AND LEASING APPROVABLE HOUSING 7.4.1(a)(3) and 7.4.2 (p. 89): BHA is proposing to eliminate its Section 8 Model Lease. HUD certainly authorizes owners to use their own leases as long as they comply with

state/local law and are supplemented by the HUD tenancy addendum. The HUD tenancy addendum also can override any lease which is inconsistent with its terms. However, many small landlords may not have a form lease, or may use lease forms which in fact would be contrary to Massachusetts law (because they are drawn from other states or countries, etc.). There is value to BHA continuing to provide a model lease for those who may need it.; Metro Housing Boston and DHCD also do so for their Section 8 programs HUD allows a PHA to provide a model lease where an owner doesn't have a standard lease form. If the landlord has its own lease form, obviously there may be times where the BHA or the tenant may identify problems with the lease not complying with state law; when this occurs, BHA should be able to insist that the owner revise/correct the lease.

Response: Thank you for your comment. The BHA will consider this moving forward.

Comment: CHAPTER 8, RENT 8.5 (pp. 96-97): The current language provides that exception payments could go up to 120% of the Small Area Fair Market Rent (SAFMR). BHA is proposing, instead, that this would be capped at 120% of the FMR. It would be helpful to get an explanation why BHA made this change, since BHA and advocates generally had favored use of SAFMRs to increase housing opportunities and recognize the difference in prices in different communities.

Response: The BHA's review of the regulation at 24 CFR 982.505(d) made it clear that the PHA may approve up to 120% of the FMR, not SAFMR, as a Reasonable Accommodation.

Comment: 8.7.1 (b) (pp. 99-100): This is revised to say that there will not be retroactive increases in the tenant rent share due to failure to timely report on income changes. Instead, BHA will have the discretion to require repayment of what should have been paid. If there has been a change in the tenant rent share due to relocation, it is effective as of the date that the new lease took effect. This change is a good one as it will simplify things since otherwise the owner would have already been paid a higher subsidy for the months by the BHA.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: CHAPTER 10, RENEWAL 10.1 (p. 117): This provides that the annual recertification date will be switched to a new date as of relocation or exercise of portability options. This is helpful since otherwise the annual review date will not coincide with the normal lease cycle.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: CHAPTER 11, CONTINUED PARTICIPATION 11.1.1.(a) (p. 122): This provides that if someone is being added to household composition through an interim recertification, that persons' income will be counted in determining the rent and the rent



will be adjusted to reflect that. This makes sense and is one of the few times where rent could increase on an interim basis.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: 11.2.2 (p. 123): BHA has not proposed any changes here. However, in May 2022, GBLS had submitted some recommendations to BHA's Office of Civil Rights about some desirable improvements in how it addresses the situation of HAP contract terminations for owner noncompliance, particularly where the family includes a person with disabilities who is having a difficult time securing a replacement unit. This would include, consistent with BHA's reasonable accommodation duties under 24 CFR 8.28 providing or referring the person to housing search assistance and allowing such individuals priority for other project-based or public housing units that are within BHA's control as a Super Priority. We are concerned that without these steps, such persons may end up losing their assistance because they are unable to find suitable housing on their own without voucher search periods. BHA has not responded to that letter, and we would ask that BHA do so as part of its Annual Plan process.

Response: The BHA now has staff that directly assist participants with housing search. The focus is on those participants who are residing in units that have been terminated due to owner non-compliance. The BHA is also very liberal with respect to voucher search time extensions in these situations. BHA will continue to monitor these terminations.

Comment: CHAPTER 13, TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE 13.7.3(a) (p. 153): BHA has proposed new language here which would require that if the tenant wishes to dispute the tenant rent share, a request for a private conference must be made within twenty (20) days. A couple of thoughts here: a) It will be important that any BHA form notices advise the tenant of this deadline; (b) a tenant's failure to request review within this time period should not foreclose later relief (or entertaining a late request for review). For example, BHA might conclude that staff had made an error in rent setting that requires review. Or it may be that a tenant wasn't aware of a potential issue about rent accuracy until she was in the midst of a nonpayment eviction with her owner, and as part of the process of identifying potential rental assistance, a calculation issue (such as whether the earned income disregard for persons with disabilities should have been applied) arises. It should be possible for BHA to provide appropriate relief and not to leave the resident solely with court remedies which may be difficult for unrepresented individuals.

Response: Thank you for your comment. The BHA will typically review these upon request despite the formality of the 20 day request.

Comment: CHAPTER 14, PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE LEASED HOUSING DIVISION AND SPECIAL HOUSING TYPES 14.1.3 and 14.1.5 (p. 158-159): BHA is changing the terminology to Department of Children and Families (DCF) from the former

title of Department of Social Services (DSS) for the Family Unification Program (FUP). That obviously makes sense.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: 14.1.6 (pp. 159-161): This adds language about the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) program. This obviously makes sense. BHA has previously reported about this initiative in its 5-Year Progress Report in the fall of 2021.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: 14.3.2 (p. 162): This revises the description of who is eligible for the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program to include those in the Section 8 Homeownership program, as well as those in the Section 8 Mod Rehab program. These changes make sense.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: 14.3.3 and 14.3.5 (pp. 162-164): There are a couple of FSS amendments here: a) BHA may partner with outside organizations to provide additional supportive services; and (b) the FSS Participant may be someone different than the original Head of Household (for example, an adult child household member who is now pursuing self-sufficiency goals). Both of these make sense.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: 14.8.5 (pp. 181-183): This provides for certain waivers that BHA is applying to its Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program, as permitted by HUD. This includes allowing for self-certification of income eligibility upon admission, with subsequent back-up verification, as well as alternate forms of initial verification for social security numbers and citizenship (or eligible non-citizen) status. These make sense as they did for the EHV program established in 2021.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: CHAPTER 15, HOMEOWNERSHIP OPTION 15.1 (p. 187): Language in the 2nd paragraph is revised to refer to “first time homebuyers” (as opposed to “homeowners”), and to include public housing residents in the pool. The language should be tweaked to include BHA Section 8 Mod Rehab participants. The third paragraph is revised to describe how the program will be marketed, and what was the 4th paragraph (which limited the program to FSS participants) is eliminated. These edits are fine.

Response: Thank you for your comment. This section has been revised accordingly.

Comment: 15.1.1 (pp. 188-190): This section, which described why it was necessary to be an FSS participant in order to be part of the Homeownership program, is eliminated, since FSS participation will no longer be a pre-condition. This is fine. However, BHA may wish to redesignate the next section (which was 15.1.2) as the new 15.1.1.

15.2.1(b) (p. 190): Language which referred to what was necessary to obtain a waiver from FSS criteria is removed (since the Homeownership program is no longer linked to FSS participation). This seems fine. However, I am not sure that the “and” is needed after paragraph (a), since a person must meet all the criteria in the lettered list, and including an “and” after just “(a) may cause people to misinterpret that.

Response: Thank you for your comment. This section has been revised accordingly.

Comment: 15.2.3 (pp. 192-194): The first paragraph is revised to update the minimum income requirement for the Homeownership Program, and the second paragraph is eliminated. This seems fine.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: 15.2.4 (p. 194): The title is changed to add the word “Requirement”. I wonder if the title should also refer to the exemption for an Elderly or Disabled Family (so that someone doesn’t quickly scan the title of the section and decide not to apply).

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: 15.2.5 (pp. 194-196): This is being eliminated, and was all language related to required participation in the BHA’s FSS program as a precondition of Homeownership participation, and described various FSS aspects. This is fine, but it may be that the next section would need to be renumbered.

Response: Thank your comment. This section has been revised accordingly.

Comment: 15.2.6 (p. 196): This eliminates certain eligibility restrictions for the Homeownership program, i.e., you don’t have to be in the FSS program, the homeownership counseling you obtain does not need to be through a City of Boston program, and there is no minimum period of time that you need to have been receiving tenant-based rental assistance through the BHA or another PHA for at least a year. These are good, but a couple of other edits are needed: (a) There is reference in paragraph (a) to being in good standing for the BHA tenant-based program, and this should be changed, since there may be BHA public housing residents or Mod Rehab participants as well, and it may be that “good standing” has been replaced with other language; and (b) since certain paragraphs have been eliminated, the remaining paragraphs should be redesignated. In addition, as mentioned above, this should likely now be 15.2.5, with the elimination of the prior 15.2.5.

Response: Thank your comment. This section has been revised accordingly.

Comment: 15.3 (pp. 196-197): The end of this section, which had to do with what the close-out process would be for FSS participants who are doing into the Homeownership program, are eliminated. This makes sense, since: (a) FSS participation is not a precondition of participation in the Homeownership program anymore; and (b) it may be that someone is in the Homeownership program and is utilizing FSS services.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: 15.4 (pp. 197-198): Language here is deleted about suggested topics for homeownership counseling. I agree that this is not needed and what may be involved in homeownership counseling can vary from time to time and program to program. It may be helpful to have sample materials for families to review who are thinking of participating and don't know what counseling may involve, but of course those materials may be with third parties who are operating such programs. And 15.8 (pp. 199-200): Language in the first and second paragraphs is revised to be consistent with current practice on mobility/portability where a unit may be located outside of BHA's jurisdiction. I'd suggest reviewing this again, since one statement says "jurisdiction" and the other "jurisdictions", and courts have determined BHA's jurisdiction to be Commonwealth-wide.

Response: Thank you for your comment. This section has been revised accordingly.

Comment: 15.10 (pp. 200-201): BHA staff included a comment bubble about whether the information listed in the next to last paragraph was still relevant. That comment should be reviewed and reconciled.

Response: Thank you for your comment. We have reconciled this and found that is a requirement for home ownership.

Comment: 15.11 (pp. 201-202): In the opening paragraph, language is edited so that the funding is provided to the Family, rather than to the Lender. I believe there are two typos here ("to" is listed twice, and is not inserted later where it should be) and it should read "provided monthly to the Family to meet Homeownership expenses". A later paragraph is deleted as redundant, and that's fine.

Response: Thank you for your comment. This section has been revised accordingly.

Comment: CHAPTER 16, PROJECT-BASED VOUCHER (PBV) PROGRAM 16.5.6(b) (p. 239): There are edits here to the form of lease, and again BHA has stricken any reference to a BHA model lease. As noted above, there are good reasons to retain a BHA model lease for owners who may not have a standard lease. Moreover, BHA and GBLS are continuing to work on getting a modified standard Mass. Housing Occupancy agreement that would mesh well with the PBV program; Mass. Housing's standard lease works well for the project-based rental assistance (PBRA) program where the owner has a direct contract with HUD or Mass. Housing, but not where the PBV contract

is with a PHA such as BHA. This will be important for public housing subsidy conversions.

Response: Thank you for your comment. The BHA is working with MassHousing to create a version of the MassHousing lease that includes BHA's PBV provisions. It is anticipated that this lease would be used with converted BHA properties whether owned by a BHA affiliate or a private developer.

Comment: CHAPTER 19, GLOSSARY "Appointment" (p. 265): This is added as a new definition, and makes clear that it covers a number of different means of communication (both in person and remote). It's helpful to add this.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: S: Section B.1.7 Homeownership Programs Pp. 39-42: In Section B, it does not appear that the description of the Section 8 homeownership program completely matches what has been proposed in the Section 8 Administrative Plan (for example, it will be possible, if the Administrative Plan changes are adopted, for a BHA public housing tenant to participate in the Section 8 homeownership program). BHA may also want to replace references to DND (Department of Neighborhood Development) with MOH (Mayor's Office of Housing), to reflect changed terminology. I would ask that BHA review the draft text here to ensure that it is consistent with the proposed Administrative Plan. If the issue is that the text here needs to describe the existing program, and cannot yet incorporate proposed changes until they are approved, BHA should include a reference to the proposed changes in this section.

Response: Thank you for the helpful feedback. Staff have reviewed the section to ensure consistency and replace references.

Comment: (also Ops) S: Section B.1.9 Safety and Crime Prevention including Violence Against Women Act Policy and Description of VAWA activities, services or programs Pp. 48-60: It should be noted that survivors of domestic violence who reside in public housing can, in addition to getting administrative transfers, receive a super-priority for a tenant-based voucher, and the same is true for Section 8 Mod Rehab participants. While PBV participants do get the benefit of Choice Mobility after a year, there may be times where this is not sufficient because of an emergency transfer need due to domestic violence or other reasons which occur within the 1st year of occupancy. Allowance for tenant-based voucher transfers in circumstances other than those covered by Choice Mobility is necessary.

Response: When the BHA implemented the VAWA for all state and federal public housing, the Administrative Plan was revised to allow public housing domestic violence survivors to be referred to the Section 8 Tenant-Based voucher waiting list as super-priority applicants.

Comment: S: Section B.2.23 Project-Based Vouchers Pp. 85-87: There are revisions here to what the PBV unit cap at 20% will be (3,100), as well as the number and timeline at which additional units may become PBV but wouldn't count against the cap because of HOTMA or RAD (see p. 85). It's not clear if the "end of the year" here is the end of calendar year 2022, the end of FY 2022, or the end of either calendar year or fiscal year 2023. It would help to know that, and to have a breakout about the specifics (i.e., names of specific sites and unit numbers at each), so in case things change, appropriate revisions can be made.

Response: Thank you for your comment. The BHA has revised this section accordingly. Further, if you are seeking project specific details please see Attachment to D to the BHA Administrative Plan for Section 8 Programs.

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: Maintain 100% utilization of Section 8 resources. It's not clear whether BHA is already at the 98% expenditure/unit month threshold or is just projecting to reach this by the end of 2022; it would help to have a current figure. It would help to know why BHA hasn't been at 100% and what steps are being taken in 2023 to get to that level.

Response: We will likely be at 98.5% utilization at the end of 2022 once all retroactivity is settled. Remaining funds will be carried over for use in 2023. While it is always difficult to anticipate the expenditure of funds and leasing throughout the year, one of the contributing factors in 2022 has been related to staffing and operational stability resulting in a slight reduction in internal capacity to determine eligibility and issue vouchers. Currently BHA is fully staffed in the admissions department. We have plans that have ramped up already to begin additional issuance of vouchers through our BPS initiative and Leading the Way Home initiative where we plan to issue at least 1000 voucher in 2023.

Comment: 5Y: Goal 3: Increase Housing Opportunities through the Leased Housing Program. (pp. 9-12) Subgoal: Apply for additional vouchers as opportunities arise.

It's very encouraging to see these additional awards for Non-Elderly Disabled (NED), Veteran Administration Supportive Housing (VASH), Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV), and other vouchers, and the positive results with Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) utilization which should help with future funding rounds. Is BHA tracking its mitigation vouchers for non-elderly disabled public housing applicants who have longer waiting times due to the Designated Housing Plan—are these folded within the NED and Mainstream portfolios, or maintained separately? Since BHA is only partway through full utilization of EHV's and the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) vouchers, it would be good to get periodic reports on how BHA is moving toward full lease-up and whether additional collaborations with Continuum of Care (CoC) partners on housing search or elimination of barriers may help for those who've received vouchers but haven't yet leased up. Since it's now after October 1, 2022, BHA should confirm if it received the additional 55 HCVP vouchers listed.

Response: The BHA has not tracked mitigation vouchers since the initial conversion of the designated housing plan, when letters were sent to 300 disabled applicants on the designated lists for the offer of a voucher. From that outreach less than a handful came forward and many were already in the process of being housed in a PBV unit or other BHA housing, including public housing. In response to this comment the BHA will review the historical data regarding the housing of disabled in public housing and PBV as well the increase in vouchers intended for the Non-elderly disabled population.

The BHA has received the additional 55 HCVP vouchers. There are now 12 FYI vouchers leased as of January 1, 2023.

The chart below provides some statistics with respect to EHV issuance and lease up as of January 1, 2023.

<b>EHV Program Status</b>	<b>BPS Families</b>	<b>Individuals: CAS, DV, RRH*</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total Vouchers Issued	231	235	466
Leased-Up	189	115	304
<b>% of EHV Program Vouchers Issued</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>97%</b>
<b>% of EHV Program Leased Up</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>63%</b>

Coordinated Access System, Domestic Violence, Rapid Rehousing Program

It has been difficult to secure rental housing recently and the BHA has ongoing conversations with search providers. The BHA is beginning to use the Special Fees associated with EHV's for landlord incentives in addition to brokers fees.

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: Maintain high occupancy rates in the Project-Based Voucher (PBV) portfolio while decreasing turnover times.

The owner portal referenced here (to track PBV owner vacancies so there can be rapid referral of BHA-approved PBV applicants for any additional owner screening and lease up) should be valuable in avoiding delays. It can also be anticipated, because of the design of the PBV program, that in any site, on the initial anniversary of lease up, there may be PBV residents who wish to exercise Choice Mobility and obtain tenant-based vouchers to relocate. While demand may exceed turn-over supply, and not all such residents may be successful in lease-up, it will be important to track this as it may lead to a number of vacancies at a site. Similarly, there needs to be a good system for reporting as BHA identifies that PBV households are in wrong-sized units, and what units are available for transfer for right-sizing, so the owner portal (and regular BHA-owner information sharing) can serve multiple functions. One thing that has arisen, with the City's recent Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing zoning amendment and new tenant selection protocols, is that this may affect PBV owner screening, and particularly whether a unit needs to be "held open" during the appeals process, as opposed to being assigned to another BHA-approved PBV applicant who passed owner screening (and, if

the rejected applicant is successful with appeal, that applicant getting the next available right-sized unit). There may be unintentional consequences of the tenant selection protocols in a delay in filling a vacancy, and there should likely be some discussion of that issue.

Response: The BHA executive team reviews PBV vacancies on at least a monthly basis as well as the issuance of vouchers related to requests for Tenant Based Vouchers (TBVs). Historically, the vacancies created by issuance of PBV to TBVs are gradual rather than a mass exodus and utilization for PBV to TBV is typically much lower than new admission vouchers. The owner portal does not yet have a mechanism to track issues regarding unit size but we do have the internal capacity to complete that reporting and review with our owner partners on a regular basis.

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: Optimize the use of PBVs to preserve and create affordable housing in Boston.

This refers to the Mercantile Wharf preservation, but does not provide specifics on what other income-restricted housing was preserved (if some of this is still up in the air, it would be helpful to have details). If BHA has specific projections about anticipated projects in 2023, based on “pipeline” discussions with the Mayor’s Office of Housing (MOH), it would be helpful to add that detail somewhere in the FY 2023 Annual Plan.

Response: Yes, this includes Mercantile Wharf and similar projects like Babcock Towers (where city vouchers were used), Newcastle Saranac which went under HAP Contract, and the Forbes building where there is still some interest from stakeholders in PBVs. The BHA collaborates with City and State stakeholders on a regular basis to track projects that may need resources to be preserved as affordable housing. Andrew Gouldson leads the efforts on behalf of BHA tracking the pipeline and can be reached to discuss further details at [Andrew.gouldson@bostonhousing.org](mailto:Andrew.gouldson@bostonhousing.org)

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: Implement ECHO—Expanding Choice in Housing Opportunities pilot program—and Small Area Fair Market Rents to promote access for voucher holders to a wider array of neighborhoods.

It’s encouraging to hear about how the ECHO team will assist with housing search for Section 8 participants who need to relocate because their landlords haven’t keep their units in repair (see GBLIS separate comments on the Section 8 Administrative Plan) and for public housing tenants who need to relocate due to domestic violence. As noted in our separate comments on the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) Goals and Objectives, it is not clear how large the ECHO program is now, how large it is expected to be, and how certain other initiatives (such as the Housing Choice Initiative and Expanding Choice Communities) relate to this. A fuller discussion, either here or in response to the AFFH comments, would be helpful.

Response: We expect ECHO to remain fairly small as compared to the larger BHA portfolio of vouchers because the BHA does not have the necessary funding to provide



the robust counseling necessary to serve a larger volume of residents. However, staff recognize the importance of this limited resource for interested ECHO families as well as those facing required or emergency moves and it is a resource we intend to maintain.

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: Simplify applicant and resident forms; improve program marketing materials and briefings.

Can BHA share what's in the on-line Briefing Session, as well as what the revisions are in the Request for Tenancy Approval (RFTA), transfer, SPAR, and residual tenancy forms? When did the BHA start using the BHA Leasing Guidebook, and is it available for review and comment?

Response: Most of those materials were brought into use in 2018 and can be found at [www.bostonhousing.org/newvoucher](http://www.bostonhousing.org/newvoucher). We welcome any comments.

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: Improve landlord recruitment and retention strategies.

How many landlords attend the monthly landlord briefing sessions? In the past, BHA collaborated with other City partners in trying to break down landlord barriers for participation (and to make sure landlords knew about rights and responsibilities). BHA may want to collaborate with others, such as MHB or MOH, on this, and may also want to consider periodic recognition for owners who are using best practices that serve the community well (as MHB has done for a number of years). Moreover, while the landlord portal and use of on-line systems for tracking rent increases and requests for lease approval may aid in reducing barriers to timely/effective communication, it may be helpful for BHA to seek out landlord feedback on what steps it can take in the area of retention.

Response: Last month, for example we had 78 landlords in attendance. We are regularly asking for feedback from landlords around retention and some of those comments around retention come through at the monthly conferences. We have started working with various landlord groups and reached out to real estate boards in seek of partnership, but also appreciate the comment to seek partnership with other city agencies.

## **Legal**

Comment: S: Section B.1.9 Safety and Crime Prevention including Violence Against Women Act Policy and Description of VAWA activities, services or programs Pp. 48-60: While BHA has not proposed any revision to its VAWA policy, given Congressional reauthorization and recent HUD guidance, it may make sense to do so in 2023, and to also review related forms.

Response: BHA staff will take the comment under advisement.

## Operations

Comment: (also Lsd Hsg) S: Section B.1.4 Rent Determination Pp. 25-30: BHA has not proposed any change here. However, I would note that the language on ceiling rents at Section A.(1)e. (p. 26) does not work, as it says that the exception to having ceiling rents (which is the same as flat rents) is for HOPE VI and redeveloped sites. However, the exception is also for anything that had a subsidy conversion, even if it didn't go through redevelopment (such as Patricia White); Section 8 rules do not authorize continuation of a flat rent. However, there will have to be a transition phase-in over several years for any rent increase related to the loss of flat/ceiling rents. BHA should therefore revise this part. I am also note sure that the language at A.(1)f. (p. 27) also matches BHA's current interim recertification policy for public housing, which I believe may have changed in the last PHA Plan. In addition, interim recertification (and a likely change in rent) would occur if there is a proposed change in household composition. In Section A.(2)1. (pp. 27-28), here too, the reference is to HOPE VI developments as an exception to flat rents, and this should be revised to reflect any Mixed Finance or subsidy conversion sites where public housing rules can no longer be applied. Moreover, in addition to having the transition language here (which addresses significant increases in rent due to a change in the flat rent formula), there should also be articulation of the phase-in for switching out of flat rent to an income-based rent associated with subsidy conversion. Under Section B.(1)b., p. 29, BHA should remove the check boxes next to other options, and just say "not applicable"--i.e., BHA doesn't set payment standards below the FMR—or if the payment standard is lower because the SAFMR for that area is lower than FMR, it should say that.

Response: As noted the HOPE VI or other redeveloped sites that include ACC units do not use BHA flat rents. The BHA has not established a phase-in of higher income based Section 8 rents for Public Housing flat rent payers. The BHA will execute affordability agreements for such residents that maintains their rent at 30% AGI. Appropriate revisions will be made to the plan.

Comment: S: Section B.1.5 Operation and Management Pp. 31-36: Changes here are apparently in the various numbers served by different programs. The list of BHA and privately managed sites on pp. 31-32 has been updated to reflect the switch in certain sites in the form of subsidy (for example, PBV and RAD at Heritage and Lower Mills, and no longer any public housing units there; 100% PBV at Patricia White). Under Section B (pp. 33-34), this says that this will be the number of units under BHA administration as of April 1, 2023—do the figures here need to be revised to reflect expected conversions/closings that have not yet occurred, but are expected between now and that date? If they are projected (as is indicated in the first asterisk), it may help to track what those differences will be between now and then, so in case things do not occur on the anticipated timeline, that can be tracked.

Response: The plan draft is prepared in October for the coming fiscal year beginning in April 2023. It is accurate per staff projections. In future plan submissions staff will continue to update information.

Comment: (also Grievance and RED) S: Under Section C., Policies, on p. 35, I believe the Sexual Harassment Policy has been retitled “Anti-Harassment Policy”, and it is an important one to train everyone on, including residents and LTOs and vendors, since it can encompass interactions among BHA staff and residents/vendors. The Tenant Participation (LTO) Policy should be retitled Resident Participation Policy, and the Mixed Finance Grievance Procedure and the two forms of Memoranda of Agreement (Mixed Finance and regular) should also be included. This refers to specific Demolition/Disposition and Resident Relocation and Rehousing Policies, but I don’t think those exist any longer as free-standing policies: instead, the BHA carries out each demolition and disposition in accordance with HUD or DHCD requirements as supplemented by the Resident Participation Policy and then site-specific negotiated Relocation and Management Plans (which also involve the LTOs and affected residents); it may be, however, that the BHA would want to include the Toolkit for Resident Empowerment in Redevelopment and various items that are included there (such as the Letter of Assurance, Ground Lease, etc.) BHA may also want to change the placement so it’s clear that certain of these policies also apply to Section 8/Leased Housing.

Response: The BHA will review the list of policies and ensure they are correctly named. The Resident Relocation and Rehousing Policy also applies to non-redevelopment relocation, for example relocation required by capital work. The policy also serves as the over-arching policy that guides the individual site relocation plans for those properties undergoing redevelopment.

Comment: S: Section B.1.8 Community Services and Self-Sufficiency Pp. 43-47: Is the sole change here in the number of participants in different programs? Have any programs been added or removed?

Response: Yes, the updates are to the number of participants.

Comment: S: Section B.1.10 Pet Policy Pp. 61-62: The change here incorporates a reference to HUD regulations about the exception for service and assistance animals that either are used by residents or accompany visitors to the property. At some point, BHA may want to revisit whether it makes sense to continue to have the one-time pet fee. It’s also important, as sites convert to Mixed Finance or new forms of subsidy, that pet ownership rights similar to that for public housing be retained and that LTOs have a role in setting site-specific policies.

Response: The change to the Pet Policy makes it clear that this policy does not apply to service or assistance animals.

The BHA continues to review its policies and make changes as needed. The BHA makes commitments to residents facing redevelopment that changes in their living situation will be minimized as much as possible. To that end pet policies are always part of the discussion among the BHA, developers and residents.

Comment: (also RED) S: Section B.2.24 Units with Approved Vacancies for Modernization Pp. 88-89: This lists various units at Mary Ellen McCormack, Eva White, and Mission Main in this category. It would help to know more when units need to be listed here, and when vacancies don't need to be so listed. For example, there are significant vacancies at Bunker Hill (Charlestown) and Mildred C. Hailey Apartments, but these sites also have partial or full demo/dispo applications that have been approved, and it may be that such action means that units don't need to be listed here. If so, if the pending demo/dispo applications for McCormack, Eva White, and Mission Main are approved, it may be they would drop out of future reporting.

Response: For Mary Ellen McCormack the listed units are part of a funded modernization program, but are still awaiting HUD approval. This is separate from units that are removed from PIC as units eligible for occupancy following approval of a demo/dispo application. BHA will update the unit counts as the approvals are received.

Comment: The residents are requesting that the HUD and the BHA re-open all of the Commonwealth Family buildings trash chutes. Although HUD is providing Housing Authorities less funding, residents believe the Purchase of new equipment or the repair of the current equipment is a reasonable request. The placing of cameras in the trash rooms would ensure the proper use of chutes. It is the BHA's responsibility to train workers on how to safely maintain the trash chutes, due to the "employee injuries," and the "awkward placement and layout of the trash room."

Response: BHA management addressed this matter with Commonwealth residents in mid-2021. The decision to close the chutes was reviewed within the BHA and the reasons for the closure were shared with residents. The use of trash chutes at Commonwealth is consistent with that throughout the BHA. Chutes are in use at the elderly/disabled elevator buildings but not in family buildings. The BHA works with residents who need assistance with trash disposal through the Reasonable Accommodation process.

Comment: (also Admissions) 5Y: Goal 1: Achieve and Maintain High Performer Status for the Public Housing and Leased Housing Programs (pp. 3-5) Subgoal: Maintain 97% or higher occupancy rates.

It is only at the end of the 2nd paragraph that the key data is included—that BHA currently is at 95.5% occupancy. So the first goal needs to be to RETURN to 97%, and stay at that level. HUD factors in some level of vacancy due to redevelopment/capital work, so this is a troubling number. In terms of the rejection rate, last year BHA made certain changes to the ACOP where applicants and transferees would be penalized for rejecting an offer by loss of ability to claim priority status for a

period of time—has BHA implemented that, and how has this affected acceptance rates? If, on the other hand, applicants and transferees have legitimate grounds for rejection because offered units are not fully up to code, that too is cause for concern. As in the past, we would ask that BHA share data by site/program as well as any development-specific strategies. Getting feedback from applicants and those recently placed on their experience should be helpful, and BHA may want to share draft survey questions and results with the RAB. It is unclear, from the summary, whether there may be problems where there are a number of units that may be ready for placement but then not a pool of screened applicants ready to be placed, and obviously that should NOT be the case.

Response: The BHA is focused on increasing the occupancy rate in its public housing portfolio by addressing the number of units ready for assignment and the number of fully screened applicants ready to be assigned. The ACOP sets out several circumstances that allow an applicant or transfer to reject an offer for good cause, including the condition of the offered unit. The BHA has instituted a quality control program that entails the reinspection by senior management before a vacant unit is shown to a prospective applicant. Refusals because of the condition of the apartment have all but disappeared.

Apartments are removed from the available inventory only after demo/dispo approval is received. Relocation activities impact occupancy insofar as the BHA makes sure there is an adequate pool of vacant units to be offered to relocatees.

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: Continually improve toward achievement of high performer PHAS status.

This includes data on the recent physical inspections and scores for BHA public housing under PHAS (overall score of 79, and 28 points out of 40 for PASS). BHA should share the results and any BHA response with the RAB, as it has in the past when PHAS scores have come out. The scores are troubling and BHA is a long way from high performer status (and needs to ensure that it does not slip into “troubled” status overall or at any particular site). I don’t believe the rest of the PHAS indicators are back yet—BHA should clarify on this—but a report from BHA to the Monitoring Committee a few months ago raised some red flags in that area as well, where particular revenue streams had to be dedicated to particular sites to make sure that their overall reserves were within acceptable limits. BHA Operations Staff also discussed data on regular work order performance that affects PHAS performance, and that should be shared with the RAB and incorporated here. It would be important for BHA to have frank conversations with residents about its situation, realistic expectations, and how residents can help (such as the rodent remediation discussion that occurred in Charlestown in October, and making people understand how additional City resources, like \$50 million set aside at Hailey, are only a drop in the bucket and will have to be prioritized.

Response: The BHA has not yet received its comprehensive PHAS score that includes Capital Construction and Finance indicators as well as the public housing management issues mentioned above. At the RAB's request, BHA staff can review the PHAS score once received.

This year's HUD Physical Inspections were out of the ordinary. Because of COVID, no HUD inspections were completed in the previous two years so 100% of BHA developments were inspected in a six-month period rather than the lower percentage, closer to 60%, inspection in each of the prior years. High scoring properties are exempted from inspection for one or two years depending on the score. BHA's ability to inspect apartments and perform routine maintenance was also inhibited by COVID protocols.

The BHA is committed to transparency in its partnerships with resident organizations. We will discuss with them maintenance priorities and costs whenever asked or when it is required by circumstances as we have with the Mildred C. Hailey Tenant Task Force.

Comment: 5Y: Goal 2: Strengthen and preserve BHA's portfolio of public housing. (pp. 5-9) Subgoal: Formalize asset management staffing and systems within BHA's organizational structure.

It may help to say what such formalization of staffing and systems would mean—how it would be different from BHA's current structure—so that residents and members or the public understand this. Establishing a time frame by which this would be accomplished, and then evaluating how the BHA is doing against that time frame would also be helpful. That can be affected by factors outside of BHA's control, such as when a redeveloped site gets planning approvals or is able to start construction (affected by a range of cost and supply chain issues due to COVID), but this would make it easier for people to evaluate how BHA is doing against what it planned to achieve. Have any overarching goals or case studies been articulated enough so that BHA would feel comfortable sharing them outside of its internal discussion? This is important to foster understanding and dialogue.

Response: BHA Senior Management continues to work to develop an appropriate structure and tools to administer and monitor performance for all redeveloped or refinanced properties. Recently the BHA has procured technical assistance for this process and we will be meeting to address some of the issues in the comment in early 2023.

Comment: 5Y: Goal 6: Continue to improve customer service in all areas so that the BHA is consistently experienced by residents, applicants, landlords and vendors as an efficient, pleasant and responsive organization. (pp. 16-19) Subgoal: Develop a Customer Service Policy to promote client-focused and consistent service delivery.

Who is the new Customer Service and Program Compliance Manager, and can the person be introduced to the RAB? Which BHA department is the person located in, and

to whom do they report? (This is relevant particularly because of the person's role on the Reasonable Accommodation Policy and past efforts to ensure uniformity of approach through a centralized review role for Office of Civil Rights staff where accommodation requests are rejected). Is there an estimated date for when a Policy may be available for review and comment? This should be integrated with any resident satisfaction surveys (which have in the past been part of PHAS review—see also the reference to such surveys in the AFFH Goals and Objectives report).

Response: The Operations Customer Service and Programs Compliance Manager is Jamie DeLude and Director of Compliance is Gloria Meneses and they work within the Operations Department reporting to the Director of Public Housing Operations. They have been providing training, support, and guidance to the Operations staff as well as assessing needed policy and/or business process changes to ensure a uniform approach through the BHA's public housing and PBV owned properties. Both would welcome a RAB invitation.

The authority-wide Customer Service Policy is being drafted by BHA staff from a wide-range of departments.

Comment: (also Lsd Hsg) 5Y: Subgoal: Optimize technology to transform interaction with the agency—e.g., landlord and tenant portals, vendor tools, on-line rental payment and direct deposit.

The move toward on-line options for rent payment and automatic debit have been long-needed and are much welcomed, along with the conversion to digital files for ready exchange of information with appropriate releases and without the need to schedule appointments for file checks. I believe BHA has similar arrangements for Leased Housing files and this should be added here. On the resident portals and the new Operations work-order system, details on what this will allow and time frames for implementation would be useful.

Response: At the RAB's request, the BHA will provide an update on the status of resident portals and the work order system. The new work order system highlighted in the Progress Report is not so much a new system as one that shares the same platform as other BHA information systems and thus integrates more fluidly with them. The outward facing experience for residents has not changed at this time.

## **Public Hearing**

Comment: Hello, my name is Steven Tracy. I'm a member of the Resident Advisory Board Lease Housing Section eight group.

The 2023 Yearly plan has its origins [00:00:30] in the 2017 plan. At that time, the B.H.A. Was trying to diversify with R.A.D. voucher and mixed income development. At that

time, it was seen as an honest effort by the city government. Since then, COVID showed up in our lives, red lines followed by supply interruption, and, finally, high inflation.

At this time, the 2023... we still have COVID and thankfully the B.H.A. is [00:01:00] still committed to the mixed income housing and to not forsaken R.A.D. voucher funding. But with the homeless crisis added to the... lack of available housing shortage, we can only hope the BHA agenda can survive the social forces of the age. With the backdrop, we can only hope to [inaudible 00:01:24] the 2028 plans. Thank you for your kind attention.

Response: Thank you, Steven. I really appreciate your comments. Thank you for participating and thanks for those comments.

Comment: I'm not going to say much 'cause I've given you all a lot of [00:03:30] written comment and questions and things like that, but I just wanted to focus on one particular issue. So in the past, BHA has had something that they call a "model lease" for the section eight program. And HUD rules don't require landlords to use a model lease. Landlords are free to come forward with their own lease and, particularly, it's encouraged that if the landlord has a standard [00:04:00] lease like the Rental Housing Association or something like that, that's perfectly fine as long as the lease doesn't otherwise violate state law and as long as it's supplemented by what H.U.D. has that they call the H.U.D. tenancy addendum that has all the special terms that apply to the section eight program.

The problem that we've run into is that there are a number of landlords that are kind of small and may not have a standard lease that they use at all. And I know that in the past [00:04:30] when the Mass Rental Voucher Program didn't have a model lease, there were real problems with that program where landlords basically had no lease at all. And so, it then made it very difficult for doing any kind of enforcement, figuring out what the basic terms were, how long did the lease go on for, who was covering what utilities, all those sorts of basic things. And [00:05:00] so I understand from David speaking on this issue to the resident advisory board recently, or a group of the resident advisory board, that B.H.A. didn't want to be in the position of telling people, "oh, this particular lease is our model," because the model that they came up with was a number of years ago, I think in the early eighties was when B.H.A. had come up with [00:05:30] that model. And obviously there may have been changes since then, but I would encourage B.H.A. to have an open door on this to come up with something that could be used as a model or work to develop a model that landlords can then be pointed to.

I know that Metro Housing Boston and D.H.C.D. have a section eight model lease and it's been really important to have that model lease over time in [00:06:00] order to have consistency of approach, and again, to avoid the problem with smaller landlords that may not know what they're doing and then may go to stationery stores or go online and pull things that are really not appropriate like coming up with things that might be the



law in Kentucky or even the law in another country, but not the law in Massachusetts. So I think I'll just stop there.

I also did want to acknowledge that I saw several people on the call [00:06:30] from Justice for Housing and I would encourage them if they have any comments that they would like to submit that this would be a good opportunity to do so.

Response: With respect to the model lease, the BHA has not entirely ceased review of private market leases. The BHA randomly samples leases to review them for illegal provisions. We have also provided guidelines to owners in a cover letter to the HAP regarding typical illegal lease provisions that should be avoided. BHA is also willing to work with GBLS or other partner organizations to identify a source for a model lease to use for the program.

Comment: I have one thing to say. Hi. Good morning everybody. I am a Justice for Housing participant and I just wanted to briefly say that I am super, super, super appreciative of B.H.A. working with Justice for Housing because Justice for Housing has changed my life [00:09:30] and my children's life tremendously. Even just mental health wise, I don't have to worry about where I'm going to live. I've been in shelters for over five, almost over 10 years and I really just wanted to send out my appreciation to Justice for Housing, but then also Boston Housing for collaborating and working with [inaudible 00:09:54].

Response: Thank you so much for your comment Ms. Cooper. BHA is glad to hear that our programs have provided you and your children some stability. BHA is proud of the work we have done with the Justice 4 Housing organization and we'd like to lift up the work we've done as a model for other Massachusetts housing authorities and those nationally as well.

Comment: My name is Joanne [inaudible 00:10:55]. Yes, I would like to say thank you for the justice and the B.H.A. and the Boston Housing because I've been in the shelter. I was in the shelter for four years with my child, but they always take care and then make sure we safe even we move, we in the apartment right now, they always checking everything is good, everything is safe with us. The children are safe, we have a [00:11:30] good place, not any kind of place to live, but they make sure that place we staying is appropriate and the kids, they're safe and they secure and they living in a good... How you say that... it's like it was your house. So I would like to say thank you and I appreciate everything like you guys did for us. Thank you so much.

Response: Thank you for your positive comment on the work that BHA has done with Justice 4 Housing.

Comment: Thank you. Well, I have a lot of experience and as you may know, my landlord was one of the tumultuous landlords that was very difficult to deal with. He tried to get rid of his tenants for eight years. I called up different law groups, and they had told me that they only help the severe mental illness and criminal [00:00:30] record. And

that's wrong. All people should get representation, and they should know how to do a good job.

And the other thing is the English proficiency program, the Housing for Justice, and I believe they represent career criminals and sex offenders. Jail is not a reform place, so if you had a residential rehab facility until the health professionals recommend the tenant leaves. There is also some anger management people [00:01:00] that think it's okay if they're offended that they're doing something wrong, that they can just create a muck and beat up other people at the T stations, it's ridiculous. Throwing things at cars, skateboarding, all that nonsense.

And I really would like to see us have a better reputation. There have been emails stating that there's discrimination in the state and federal [00:01:30] level, and I could not disagree more. That is not the case, it's with the real estate agents themselves. And especially being a Section 8 tenant, with real estate, they get angry if you even ask them about a low income and they say all kinds of derogatory things, they make all kinds of excuses and it [00:02:00] doesn't get any better.

I would like to have some ideas on progress and I would like to have HUD take them into consideration in terms of better tenants getting a better representation in terms of being excellent tenants, maybe recognizing good tenants instead of recognizing all these other things. We need to concentrate more on housing, not on services, on housing. [00:02:30] And there's no reason... I think it's totally unfair that certain groups, whether it's English proficiency or Housing for Justice, claiming discrimination is not a way to jump the waiting list, and that's really what I feel.

And I also want to challenge these landlords because my community is across the street, but I love my building and I'm the only one that I know [00:03:00] that loves my building. I'm the watchdog, I'm in the tourist bureau, I'm a helpful neighbor, I have excellent credit, but I'm considered illegal, why do I have to choose between chaos under my window or chaos in my building being public housing.

So I want to challenge Boston University, Brookline and all the housing authorities to create a place for the studios who tell me they want a quiet place [00:03:30] to study, and being near elderly, I like quiet in my house. So I want to challenge them to give back the Boston Police armory, which is actually across the street in Brookline. And I would like something that... like my building, it includes all utilities and it's spacious for preference with us tenants. Thank you.

Response: Thank you for your comments. Fortunately, BHA has been able utilize its resources to preserve affordable housing like the property that the commenter references above. BHA is also proud of the work it has done to fight against housing discrimination and promote housing opportunities in neighborhoods that are not typically serviced by housing choice vouchers. It is unfortunate that BHA has limited resources, preventing the agency from serving all those who are financially eligible for our programs. Due to the lack of resources to serve everyone, the BHA has focused on

serving the most vulnerable population. BHA resources are focused on serving homeless, disables, elderly, those facing imminent displacement, and other underrepresented populations that may have other barriers beyond finances to obtain housing.

Comment: Hello. Given the over overview that was at the beginning, I'm a bit unsure of exactly what questions [00:04:30] I could ask, but I have a issue with corrupt management serving me a no-fault eviction after harassing me multiple times.

Response: I think because the comments... I think you have an issue that's not necessarily related to the annual plan process, I'm going to have you go ahead and [00:05:00] send... If you could put your email and telephone number in the chat directly to me, I can communicate with you after the meeting's over and I can troubleshoot your issue and figure out how to best resolve it.

Generally commenters that had comments unrelated to the annual plan process were provided with email contact information. BHA followed up with several commenters outside of the meeting time to try to address specific tenancy or application issues.

Comment: Yes, that is correct. Well, basically I have to say that Jackie does kind of have a bit of a point since I do have some of that over where I live in the Mildred C. Hailey development where basically [00:06:00] we have it where now... I don't know if you remember but I was the tenant who had some very serious gas problems in my apartment that wasn't being addressed. And then we finally did get that addressed, but only because it wound up, basically, having to go to the papers.

But even now it's basically, there's still issues in which there's basically musical chairs being played [00:06:30] with the heating. There's basically elderly and disabled people who are still trapped in high floor apartments where the elevators don't work or there are just no elevators at all, and they basically haven't been in, even though my father and myself personally basically made these things known, they still have not been moved.

And basically I'm kind [00:07:00] of wondering because, basically, BHA has had enough funding to just basically turn up a whole lot of the parking lots within the neighborhood. But you have the things like the elevators. There are some people who have appliances that are falling apart and everything, and yet that still has not [00:07:30] been addressed or hasn't been dealt with. And there's even a neighbor that I have where her apartment has gotten to the point where it's falling apart and it's basically invested and yet she still hasn't basically gotten anyone to help her with that, so [inaudible 00:07:53].

Response: Ms. Wheeler, I think, again, similar to Ms. Winguard, I think some of the issues [00:08:00] would probably... I don't want to discourage anybody from commenting, but I think some of the issues that you're raising we can try to deal with offline. If you could go ahead and email me.

The commenter above was provided direct BHA contact information, but did not follow up with specific complaints that needed to be addressed.

The BHA and City of Boston are also investing substantial resources specifically in capital repairs to the Mildred C. Hailey development in the coming years.

Comment: Well, sir, basically, I think that this does have something to do with it because it's just my thing is that if it's going to go into... because I did a little skimming [00:08:30] and everything, if we're going to be talking about budget and things like that, I was wondering if anything is going to be set aside to settle those type of things? Because maintenance and everything is supposed to be something that's supposed to be discussed within this report, and that's it.

Response: I just wanted to say if there are specific issues with your apartment or with others, I want to also just offer the ability for me to help you try to navigate those problems. And so I can communicate with you over the chat or we can get a line of communication through my email. BHA is obligated to keep the unit compliant with Mass state sanitary code.

The BHA's Capital Plan shows that \$2.7 million is budgeted for elevator repairs at Mildred C. Hailey for 2023. Money for routine repairs and appliance replacement is in the property budget that is not part of the Annual Plan. Ms. Wheeler, the commenter, should let BHA management know about the maintenance problems she is aware of so we can make sure the work items are included in our work order system. Site staff can remind residents to call the work order center with any maintenance concerns.

BHA will reach out to Ms. Wheeler to see if she can provide any specific information about the maintenance problems she indicates are being experienced by residents of Mildred C. Hailey Apartments.

Comment: Yes, I unmuted. Can you hear me? Okay. I am 68 years old. I'm still working. It doesn't meet the limit of subsidized, but I have a licensed [00:10:00] substance abuse counselor, so I put work at a halfway house every now and then. It's like during COVID, and when I asked these questions like a lease the NEMA people, there was a rent increase and I can't sign that until... my tenant share wouldn't change it. I stated the questions more [00:10:30] clearly in writing. Do I need a separate lease with these people if they go up and I sign it and BHA doesn't approve it? And it's hard to reach... I've had like five caseworkers in the last year, COVID really messed everything up.

And will we get any leeway? My company during COVID paid us [00:11:00] and gave us extra money because they knew we were up against it. And does that gross would, is there any leeway for... or do I have to cut my hours? Because if I cut my hours I lose benefits. I have a lot of questions that I've asked, and my caseworker doesn't answer.

Response: Sure. So, I think again similar to some of the other issues here, I think we need [00:11:30] to drill down a little bit. And so if you want to put your email in the chat, I can help navigate this so we can hopefully try to answer your specific question because

obviously I think we'd have to look at your specific file and the details therein to figure that out. So if you could drop your email into the chat for me, I will email you [00:12:00] while we continue this discussion so we can start an open line of communication.

Comment: Hey [00:12:30] there, I'm an activist with the group, United Front against Displacement, as are others on this call. I wanted to speak to what we've seen up close recently in recent weeks at the Bromley-Heath development or Mildred Haley, of what you call your temporary relocations for renovations, or as I would call it, forced displacement of the working poor for your, basically, inclusive version of urban renewal. And I think what we've seen here is pretty much the same [00:13:00] as what's going on in all the developments around Boston. So we've seen residents being given a week's final notice to pack all of their things and move out, being forced pressure to accept units with very little notice even though they had received some notices in the past, but very vague ones, units that don't even meet their needs and then when they do not accept those units, being threatened to be taken to court.

We've seen some families offered only [00:13:30] one unit for their temporary relocation, which lasts two or three years, which is against BHA's own guidelines where they say they're supposed to offer residents three relocation units. We've seen other families moved into units that lack basic amenities such as a refrigerator. This was a family that needed a refrigerator to store their basic medications for their families, let alone food, and then [00:14:00] told that they needed to commute back and forth to their old apartment to use their refrigerator.

In another building, we had residents told with only six weeks notice, this was a building that relocations were not supposed to be planned for a while. They were told with six weeks that they needed to move by Thanksgiving and they were handed boxes, they all frantically packed up, then two weeks later, some of them were told, "Well, actually, you don't need to move."

Some of them didn't even hear anything back, heard nothing since [00:14:30] the original notice. People were unsure whether to pack or not to pack. They couldn't even decorate their own houses for Christmas. Their children didn't know whether they were moving or not. And only now they've been told, "Oh, now you have to move in four months." And why were these people told at the last minute that they would need to move in an emergency situation because you're destroying, you're demolishing the community center that has the boiler that heats their building, and you were too [00:15:00] incompetent to even figure out a plan to give them a replacement boiler. What did you do? Did you delay the demolition of this community center, at the very least? I'm almost finished.

At the very least, did you delay the demolition of this community center until you could not relocate people on six weeks notice? No, you didn't do that. You did exactly what I just described. So I think it's [00:15:30] pretty ridiculous all this language around thoughtfulness, resident-centered process, it's really a load of garbage.

I find it very offensive the way that you're basically trying to push tenants out of their neighborhoods so you can gentrify them, then you tell the press that these basic things that you're doing to people are lies. You're saying that our group is lying by talking about them. You're saying that it's misinformation to even use the word privatization. You're saying we're just trying to spread fear [00:16:00] to residents. But you can say whatever you want, it doesn't change the basic reality that your actions on a daily basis are creating fear, are creating anger, and are just basic abuses of working class people.

This is the only opportunity that people even have to talk about it because you're legally required to hold these public hearings, but we're going to speak about what we can. And I also just wanted to say, I find it doubly offensive that people like Mac McCreight from Greater Boston [00:16:30] Legal Services are supposed to be providing legal protection to residents to helping ensure even their basic interests are carried out and instead are just helping the Boston Housing Authority do this stuff right in the contracts and ignoring all of these horrible things that are happening to people. Thank you.

Response: BHA has previously responded to, and continues to dispute, numerous inaccurate claims made by UFAD. Most notably, BHA notes that residents in the Mildred C. Hailey development and other redeveloped communities have a right to return established in writing, that there will be 1:1 replacement of public housing units and that the total number of affordable units at Mildred C. Hailey will increase. In general, the Authority is pursuing multiple strategies to address a multi-billion dollar capital backlog. These include, among others preservation, redevelopment, and various public-public partnerships. In recent years and for several of its family sites, the Authority has required resources beyond what is available in order to invest in improvements that provide residents with the quality housing they deserve. In these scenarios, BHA preserves or adds to the total number of affordable units and protects the affordability levels of the public housing units. The affordability and tenants' rights are protected via a ground lease agreement. Notably, BHA maintains ownership of the land beneath the housing, allowing it to assert affordability controls in perpetuity.

Additionally, the resident organizations with independent legal representation are included in discussions with the developer and the BHA about many aspects of the redevelopment such as the relocation plan, management plan, the lease and house rules. The BHA ensures that as many of the rights and privileges of public housing residents as possible are retained even if not required by the new subsidy method. This process is in place at Mildred C Hailey.

Comment: Yes. Good evening, everybody. I have a bunch of things to say. I'll try to make each item quick. I agree with Gabe, [00:19:00] and I also am a member of UFAD, and I'm on the RAB, and I'm on my tenants group here at Commonwealth. And I see things that BHA says, and I see things that UFAD says, and I'm beginning to understand that the privatization of all the developments throughout the country and in Boston, it's not what it's cracked up [00:19:30] to be. And I know BHA is helping to some degree, but once a development is privatized and we go somewhere else, some people do not end up coming back to the development.

There's a lot of issues, and I don't think they're addressed. I think BHA wants to paint [00:20:00] a positive picture, and I don't think BHA wants to let anyone on the RAB know anything that's negative whatsoever. And I think it's only fair to tell the good and the bad when all you hear from BHA at these meetings is how wonderful it is, and then you don't hear the other viewpoints, that's really a disparity that needs to be corrected.

One thing, [00:20:30] I live at Commonwealth in Brighton, the elevators have not been working well for years. I've gotten stuck on my elevator three or four times. I'm claustrophobic, it was a nightmare. I think it ought to be upped in time to have these elevators fixed in priority. The trash chute is being shut down. I've said this many, many times, there's absolutely no reason. B, it happened [00:21:00] when BHA moved in here, they made a bunch of excuses, and it's not safe for people to go out in the winter. And they tell people, "Oh we can relocate you if you're disabled or you have a problem." And I'm like, "No, get the trash chutes up and running." And I'm trying to find out what the laws are, and I think we are our rent, we are required to have open trash [00:21:30] chutes.

The other thing I wanted to bring up is that since BHA has taken over, my development has gone downhill. I could give you about 12 things that have gone downhill. And it's just disgusting. I'm so angry at what the staff... the maintenance staff is not doing their job half the time, and when you talk to them, they have attitudes. [00:22:00] And although I like my manager here a lot, his hands are tied. He's got to go to about two people above himself in order to get anything done, so he doesn't have a lot of power.

And we were privately managed before by Cochrane Management, and that guy, that manager had a lot of power to do things, and it's not fair that you bring in a manager, and he has to [00:22:30] go two or three people above him, and that doesn't get things done. They took away all of our outdoor barrels and those were supposed to be replaced. I could name about 20 things that have changed. And I'm really sad about it because the place is going down the tubes, and I know eventually it's going to get so bad so that BHA can say, "Well your development isn't very good, we're going to take over [00:23:00] and privatize it."

And this is the last thing I want to say. I really want to find out when Commonwealth is up to be privatized. They claim that it's not going to be done, and I don't think we're on the chopping block, but I know that BHA and Kate Bennett and everybody up top knows when Commonwealth Development, when they're looking at privatizing us. And do [00:23:30] you know something, there ought to be a list. And I know there is a list of developments that are going to be done soon. I know that, I appreciate that, but all the rest of the developments that aren't being done, we also have a right to know approximately when you're going to be done. David, I just want to say, when are you going to comment? How are you going to comment? What questions are you going to address? How are you going to address everything that I said? I thought this was the forum to do it.

Response: There are no redevelopment plans for the Commonwealth development. The BHA welcomes input on both maintenance and management as well as long-term capital investment plans. The trash chutes are addressed elsewhere in the responses. BHA staff meet with the Commonwealth Tenants Association regularly and welcomes and addresses comments and concerns received. The commenter is a tenant organization member as she says but she will be contacted directly so her concerns can be explained in more detail.

Comment: Are you going to call me up and go through it one by one?

Response: No, that's not typically how it works, but I think once the comments are completed, they'll be posted to our website. So if you'd like to just check back to the website and see if the comments are there, I think that's probably the best way to [00:25:30] do it.

Comment: But David, who is going to address my concerns and do something about them? Who's going to do that?

Response: The BHA Director of Inspection made in person contact with Ms. Archibald on the following day in an attempt to address any specific issues raised by Ms. Archibald.

Comment: And if you would, last thing, if you could put your email address also in the chat, I'd appreciate [00:27:00] that too.

Response: Yes, I will add my email to the chat.

Comment: Oh yes, thank you. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. First of all. I want to say that since I've had a time to listen to some of the people speak about their concerns and everything, I came to the conclusion that we live [00:27:30] in America, which is a democratic society, so there's going to be some people that like situations and some people that don't, that's why we come together like we are right now. And Karen made a comment, which I agree with a lot of stuff that she said, but she made a comment saying that groups like Justice for Housing are jumping the line for some of these services.

[00:28:00] And I would just like to clear up one thing up about that because I am a Justice for Housing resident that actually had the opportunity after I believe being on the list has Section 8 over 30 years to finally get the opportunity to get my voucher. And it's just because of the system, it's just the system, it's just the way it is, and we are trying to change that. And if we don't have organizations like that, it's not about jumping the line, it's about giving opportunity [00:28:30] to people who don't have that opportunity.

And Gabe, he made very valid points about the cons of how people are being displaced. People in this community been displaced for multiple decades, we can go back '40s, '30s and whatever, but if we do not have the opportunity [00:29:00] to be in a place, how



are we ever going to have a voice? How are we ever going to be able to live? That's the number one thing as human beings that we need is housing. Just like Karen said, everyone deserves a chance. Everyone deserves housing. So I just wanted to make the comment so that whatever has to be done with this public hearing for this budget, for [00:29:30] anything that goes on that, like she said, everyone deserves the opportunity and chance for fair housing, and that's all I'd like to say.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: Hi. Hi. Yeah, thank you everyone for being here. I had a couple of comments to make. First of [00:30:00] all, I believe that Jeanie's question was not adequately answered about how people are going to hear directly back about the specific comments they have. I also wrote in the chat that they're recording this meeting with all of the answers to individuals questions should be published publicly because there are also people who weren't necessarily able to make it to this meeting and people may have very similar questions.

I have seen across the board in BHA housing that there are issues regarding maintenance and repairs, which you have refused [00:30:30] to answer here because you say that they are personal questions, but these are in the funding part of the annual plan for 2023 and they are not being answered even though that's what this meeting is supposed to be about.

I also have a lot of concerns about the privatization, and the fact that a lot of these repairs are not being made because Boston Housing Authority is using the excuse that these places are getting run down in order to sell them off to private developers [00:31:00] later. And the idea that letting these places run down is not in the budget right now, it is in the budget, it is in the 2023 budget that is published, and you have not been answering where that funding is going to. You have not answered how that is being specifically applied in each of these developments. And it is really unclear where this money is going. This money is said to go to repairs, but all these people have issues with heating, they have issues with doors not fitting in their [00:31:30] frames properly, and they have issues with windows that don't keep insulation. There are issues with cracks in the ceiling and water pipes and infestations that are not being taken care of.

All of these things should be more specifically laid out in the budget of how specifically this funding is being applied and when it is getting done because I know people who have waited months and months for specific repairs that you said would get done and have not [00:32:00] happened. So yeah, this really does go to the concern of how BHA is handling this, how these places are purposely being run down, and how that leads to the excuse for privatization like Mildred Hailey as being right now, and how there have been so many other developments that are sold off to private developers in order for BHA to leave that responsibility to someone else.

Response: The written responses to comments is submitted to HUD as part of the annual plan and will also be posted on the BHA website.

Across the nation, the capital backlog for public housing authorities is estimated at upwards of \$70 Billion due to long-term, structural underfunding. Notwithstanding this severe deficit, the Authority is pursuing multiple strategies to address its own multi-billion dollar capital backlog. These include, among others preservation, redevelopment, and various public-public partnerships.

The BHA will continue to work with its public housing capital and operating grants to deploy property improvements. Most recently, the City of Boston has supplemented BHA's own investments by including record capital investment in the FY23 and ARPA budgets. The BHA also received modest investments in the state portfolio and is using these resources to conduct repairs. The BHA looks forward to continuing its fruitful partnerships with Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

For several of its family sites, the Authority has required resources beyond what is available in order to invest in improvements that provide residents with the quality housing they deserve. As such, the BHA has pursued public-private partnership. In these scenarios, BHA preserves or adds to the total number of affordable units and protects the affordability levels of the public housing units. The affordability and tenants' rights are protected via a ground lease agreement. Notably, BHA maintains ownership of the land beneath the housing, allowing it to assert affordability controls in perpetuity.

Additionally, the resident organizations with independent legal representation are included in discussions with the developer and the BHA about many aspects of the redevelopment such as the relocation plan, management plan, the lease and house rules. The BHA ensures that as many of the rights and privileges of public housing residents as possible are retained even if not required by the new subsidy method. This process is in place at Mildred C Hailey.

Comment: Yeah, my name is Jose Lorenzo. I [00:33:00] am also a constituent of Justice for Housing. Sorry I had to adjust myself for a second. Yeah, so I just wanted to chime in regards of programs like Justice for Housing, it's advocating and housing individuals through a partnership with BHA, really making a difference in reducing recidivism [00:33:30] and so on and so forth. And even with comments that were said tonight, those are still comments that are discriminatory.

The same things that are being said that are said not discriminatory actions taking place. The perspective still sounds discriminatory, and that's exactly what it is that's being said. Opportunities aren't being given to people that have to start from scratch. And me, myself, I can [00:34:00] truly say that thanks to being housed for the first time, I don't have any form of recidivism, I'm closer to obtaining housing for my children who ended up in the system throughout my incarceration, and so on and so forth. Maintaining a job.

All these things weren't possible without the stepping stones of programs like Justice for Housing. And it's really a small percentage of people that's being helped. It's not even

taking away from [00:34:30] the larger majority of people that are still receiving any forms of assistance outside of those that are being equated to individuals who wouldn't have an opportunity, who are starting from scratch, and are told that, "You were sent somewhere to be reformed. You were sent somewhere to be so-called fixed, and a debt was [00:35:00] paid to a society."

And then you're asked to start from scratch, from the very bottom, from the beginning as an adult, as a member of your household, the head of your household. And opportunities are rarely given to individuals. And we see how people thrive once given those opportunities. We see how people can change their lives, and that's changing the community in the long run. As people change their lives and they come back, and they have an opportunity to have stability, [00:35:30] have a peace of mind that anybody else could that's been having that and hasn't had to start from scratch. They wouldn't be granted that opportunity if it wasn't for programs like that. And so I just wanted to chime that piece in. I'm truly grateful, I wouldn't be where I am if it wasn't for such an opportunity. Thank you.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: Hi. So I have in my hand a document that says, "Notice of Public Hearing. The Boston Housing Authority invites all tenants and the general public to a review of the authorities [00:36:30] proposed annual plan for fiscal year 2024." And then it goes on to list some of what we got in the mail. The exact thing was posted on the BHA website, it says, "The proposed annual plan is comprised of the following elements. Number one, proposed capital improvement plan. Five-year proposed [00:37:00] maintenance and repair plan. Number three, current operating budget. Number four, responses and so on and so on and so on.

This has everything that we need to get the answers to questions that we have. Now, we may not be able to understand every detail, but it is there in public. It is not hearsay, [00:37:30] it is not speculation, it is fact. I have in my hand, you can hear me rustling a piece of paper that says, "Work items by development," and I can pick up the small print, I will try to just pick up any one of them. Charlestown, all of them, Charlestown, Ruth Barkley, Alice Taylor, Mildred, oh here's Mildred C. Mildred C. is listed and it says, "What about bathroom ventilation in the apartment?" [00:38:00] Then it says, what is this? Envelope repair, repoint masonry facades. And what else does it say? And you could go down the list and see everything that is proposed as maintenance for Mildred C. Hailey, and for every other BHA development.

Now I, as a member of the residents advisory board, I know, and this is not hearsay, this is not speculation, I know that many RAB members have [00:38:30] sat on the redeveloped committees that the BHA puts together at every housing development that has been redeveloped. There are always tenant members on this redevelopment committee, and they are involved in participation from the ground up. I was on the committee from the old colony. We got together and chose the developer. We chose the

tile for the bathroom. We chose the furnishings. We chose who would move people out [00:39:00] of the development, and that is how it goes.

There are members of the RAB, who are members of the BHS monitoring committee. The monitoring committees, the governing committee for the BHA, they're the boss of the BHA, aside from the city council. And so they know. So many people in the RAB actually know what is happening with BHA. None of us are mouthpiece for BHA. People on this call cannot attest to the fact that sometimes BHA has gotten so [00:39:30] upset with me, sometimes they don't matter even want me to come in the building. We are no mouthpieces for the BHA, and so when we speak, we know what we are talking about.

Now, if I have an individual complaint in my apartment, this is not going to be on the annual plan because I live in a housing development, and if my maintenance for the housing development is part of the schedule, it's going to be part of the schedule at the time when it is supposed to be done. I may want my plumbing fixed, but BHA may have a [00:40:00] plan to fix the plumbing of the entire development. So yes, while I may have an issue with my plumbing and it is close to my heart, it is not necessarily reflected individually in the annual plan. So I just want to end by saying that I'm very grateful to the BHA. There is no landlord we can find anywhere in Boston who is perfect and who has everything taken care of. Any tenant you go to will give you issues that they have in the building and I am thankful to BHA for doing [00:40:30] the best that it can with the limited resources that it has at its disposal. Thank you.

Response: Thank you for your comment.

Comment: Sure, sure. Yeah, I don't think I heard anybody on this call say that the RAB is a mouthpiece of the Boston Housing Authority, and this is just a response to the overall conversation, I think. Just the fact [00:41:30] that people are coming onto this hearing to talk about the problems they have in the apartment really shows how totally negligent BHA as the landlord. We've talked to people who have their entire bathrooms coated with molds, so the entire walls are black and they report for years and years and housing says, "Oh we'll come, we'll come, we'll come," and they never come or they come and paint it over and the mold comes back, or they call the inspection services and the inspection services just ignore it or say it's a black substance [00:42:00] and refuse to test for mold, refuse to do any sort of thing that would actually fix these problems.

So I think the fact that people are here to speak to these problems really shows how dire these issues are and how totally unresponsive BHA is as an organization. Obviously, they have limited funding. There's a federal agenda that's been going on for decades with the government complicit, with banks and real estate developers all working together to make sure that public [00:42:30] housing is no longer viable as a form of housing at all so that they can take over the land in the cities. So clearly this is happening at many levels, but also in the housing agencies themselves, in the housing authorities, we can see every day people who don't do their jobs, people who stand around all day.

And it's not just the fault of those workers, it's the fact that there's clearly a culture at every level of the organizations of, "Well, it doesn't really matter if anything ever gets [00:43:00] fixed. It doesn't really matter if people are living with mold in their apartments, that's poison. It doesn't matter if like in Tia's situation you have a carbon monoxide gas leak that constantly causes the alarm to go off and the people just come and replace it and say that the carbon monoxide detector was faulty," which is obviously absurd. These are just a couple of many, many problems that people have seen.

So yeah, that's all [inaudible 00:43:28]. Well, additionally, [00:43:30] just one other thing, quite an undemocratic process overall, do people really, they can't even get the basic problems in their apartments fixed. Do people really have any sort of democratic control over where the funding is going overall in their development, towards what sorts of improvements are being made, towards the question of whether or not their developments are going to be privatized, whether federal funding is going to be given over to developers and banks giving all these different tax [00:44:00] breaks to financial institutions so that they can take over these developments?

No, there's no real control by the average resident. Most people don't even know this stuff is going on, they've never even heard about it. And these sorts of meetings are really just a formality. When there are meetings that are held, they go and they're told, "This is what's going to happen to you, take it or leave it. You're poor this is just the situation."

Yeah, it's [00:44:30] pretty absurd. Obviously, the funding is bad but we can't just say, "Oh, Boston Housing" they can't do anything one way or another because there's decreasing funding for public housing. Why don't they actually fight that?

Response: Thanks for the comment. The BHA will continue to attempt to be as transparent as possible with respect to notification of residents related to any redevelopment and/or relocation. BHA will also continue to focus on quality of life issues for existing residents, continuously improving processes and reporting so that maintenance issues are addressed in timely fashion, despite the lack of funding resources.

The BHA and its Capital Construction Department hold resident meetings at each development annually as part of the creation of the Capital Plan which is part of the Annual Plan document. At these meetings the residents express their opinions about development needs.

Comment: Hi, my name is Hafeeza Shaheed. I just want to thank Mr. Fields for his response to Ms. Paul. Although I am not living in [00:46:00] a BHA, it sounds like I have BHA buildings and tenants who reside in them. I am a BHA client because I possess a Section 8 from Boston Housing Authority. And while my landlord is not BHA, I'm here to find out where I can get information on the rules and the policies that the landlord has to follow as a client of BHA receiving funding for tenants. [00:46:30] All too many times

when I run into issue with my landlord, I'm being told, "Well, that's not something we can cover." I'm talking about from coming to into my apartment without notes, refusing to allow me into the building.

I'm thinking if I'm a Section 8 tenant, BHA pays. Right now I'm not working, so they pay 100% of my rent. And so if my landlord's [00:47:00] not allowing me into the building, if they're refusing my packages, if they come into my apartment without permission, I don't understand how that is not a BHA issue or problem. For the last four years I've been fighting this issue by myself. The last time I was on this meeting was January 2021, I never attended another meeting because everything I was told and heard did not fall to fruition.

I was told all types of things. I believe... [00:47:30] I might go and start calling names out here that I see on the Zoom link. However, I received no assistance at all, no help at all, and I don't think it's fair. So I no longer want the runaround. I want to know if someone can send me the rules and regulations that my landlord has to follow because I'm just not believing what I'm being told. They are violating every almost right I have. [00:48:00] And I want to read for myself the rights that BHA or the policies or the restrictions and the rules and the procedures, the policy that BHA has for landlords who have Section 8 tenants in their apartment.

And I want to see if they don't follow one of those rules, I want to see what is the punishment or the reprimand or the sanction. I believe as a Section 8 tenant, [00:48:30] I should have the right not just to see how I'm going to be punished if I don't follow rules and regulations as a Section 8 tenant, I should also have the right to see what my landlord is supposed to follow and what the BHA response to them is going to be for not following it because as of right now I have NCAD cases, I have a housing court against them.

They tried to settle just the week before Christmas, then we tried to settle. But they [00:49:00] did say they wanted to try to mediate a \$10,000 settlement, but that's if I drop my MCAD case altogether. If I do that then people will never hear how this landlord does not offer me the same rights that my market tenant neighbors have. They will never see the struggles that I go through here as a Black single woman living in a seaport getting a Section 8 from BHA, living in one of these affordable City of Boston luxury [00:49:30] amenity apartments, constantly being violated and disrespected and neglected. So I don't want to hear no one telling me nothing, no sorrys or nothing. I want to know where you can point me so I can read myself BHA responsibility when it comes to landlords not following rules. And I want to also read what they are supposed to do when they do not. That's all I want. Thank you.

Response: [00:50:00] Thanks for your comment. I will say that the majority of that language is covered in the lease and that housing assistance payments contract and that BHA can stop payment to the landlord when they're not following the obligations in that lease and have contract, we can also terminate the contract itself. And Ms. Shaheed, I [00:50:30] can have copies of those documents sent to you for your review.

Comment: Thank you. And to clarify, when you say lease, because I live on the Section 8 City of Boston Affordable Housing Unit, my lease comes from BPDA, it's never really a lease that's renewed through BHA. So every lease I have is like when I first moved here in 2018, yes, BHA did have a addendum to the lease with [00:51:00] the City of Boston Affordable Housing unit. But after 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022-

They've never put an addendum. It's been me solely working with the leasing management and the City of Boston.

Response: The terms of that addendum continue to control, as so does the HAP contract, so long as that lease is in effect and renewed. Okay.

Comment: Okay. [00:51:30] So that gave me to my next question then. And nowhere in that lease or addendum does it talk about the landlords coming into your home and what BHA does for that. It does talk about utilities. It does talk about, for example, rent. And let me give a blatant example. Last year, my- Can I just say one thing? Some of the things that I'm going through is not in that lease. So when people are coming into my home, refusing my package, and not allow [00:52:00] me to come into the building. Those things are not in the Section 8 lease. All it talks about them misappropriating funds for example [inaudible 00:52:07] which they have done, but still no one has reprimanded them. And it does talk about them, basically, if they raise the rent, they have to let you all know, which they didn't do, and they added it to my rent and tried to say, "Well this is the new rent."

They're doing so much, but nevertheless there's only two things out of a dozen things that they are doing to me, but still with those two things I don't see in it, [00:52:30] what happens if they do it? I report it, but still nothing has happened. So I want to see what is the reprimand because it's not in my lease. And then two, I want to see about these other things.

Response: Okay, Ms. Shaheed. So Ms. Shaheed, do you have my email correct?

Comment: Yes, sir. But I had it before when I came to this meeting, sir. Y'all do this to me all the time, that's why I stopped coming. Y'all do this to me all the time, "We're going to email you, we're going to talk to you." You can see the email I sent you today [00:53:00] for this Zoom link, it just gave me flashbacks because I was reading the thread and it was like, you saw the thread. I was like, "Wow, look what I went through in January 2021, and they still haven't even touched the issues that I've brought to y'all in 2021.

And now you're talking about you see my email. I need action and I'm not asking for much, I'm asking y'all to do what everyone else on the Zoom is doing. I'm just asking for some information, and I'm begging y'all Mr. John Kane, [00:53:30] we spoke last year. Ms. Gail, we spoke last year. Mr. David, we spoke last year, I have the email, January

20th, 2021. None of you all act like y'all said y'all would. None of you all. None of y'all got back to me.

Response: Ms. Shaheed, I'll send you the documents that you asked for, okay? And you can continue to follow up with me. In addition, we'll respond to your comment in writing, okay?

Comment: And I have you all... I know Ms. Gail is over you all because that's the far as I got [00:54:00] last time, but I need you all's boss name and number. Y'all saying there's a monitoring or program that's over you all, I think you said. You said besides the state or city something, there's a monitoring something over y'all. Can you put that email in this chat right now because I want accountability and checks and balances because once again I'm waiting over a year... It's December. Wow. So next month is going to be two years. I'm sorry. Next month is going to be a whole year since y'all last told me that y'all was going to help me. No, I'm correct, next year it'll [00:54:30] be 2023. Next year will be two years, sir, since I last spoke to Mr. David, Mr. John, and Ms. Gail about my issues with Section 8. I have the emails. I'm looking at them right now.

Y'all told me y'all would get back to me, y'all will help me, y'all bounced me around. No one ever did. This is my first time coming to a meeting since because that's how much my heart is broke, why I keep coming here? So I've been struggling by myself fighting these people who have an attorney from a law firm by myself. Two cases with housing [00:55:00] court and one with NCAD. I just won one of them with housing court, the judge granted me the waiver for me to break my lease, when I find a place and they cannot charge me. But now we have another housing court case and I still got my MCAD case.

I did all this in the last two years by myself after them broke over 12 violations against me with none of y'all's help after y'all promised me in the same Zoom call almost two years ago that y'all would. So that's why I'm [00:55:30] still talking and that's why I'm refusing to stop until I get something in this email that is regards to you all's boss. Y'all said it was a monitoring program, a monitoring something that was over you all, I need that email in this chat because when y'all start emailing me, supposedly what I'm asking for, I'm going to make sure this person is CC'd in it until I get it.

Response: All right. Ms. Shaheed, the monitoring committee? You'd like to speak to the members of the monitoring committee? I'm not sure that's the right body to address your problem. To be honest with you, I don't have their email right now, and I don't know where to find the specific members of the monitoring committee that they have some oversight of the BHA but they're not going to help solve your problem. I'm going to help you-

Comment: I'm not going to trust anything you tell me, sir, about who's going to help but not help me. I'm just asking you to get me that number. You saying you can't get that number for me. Is that all you're saying? Because I don't want to waste so much time,



there's a lot of people here, I don't want to be disrespectful to their time. So can you just say yes or no? Are you not able to direct...

Response: Following the meeting, the commenter was sent information about the monitoring committee and their meeting schedule and the contact for the BHA staff who works with the Monitoring Committee. A BHA staff person also reviewed with her the content of the documents she requested that is familiar with the circumstances outlined in the comment. BHA continues to work with Ms. Shaheed in an attempt to resolve her issues.

Comment: Can you hear me? All right. I [00:57:00] kind of lost my thought that last call. I don't want to minimize anybody's comment, everybody's comment is... I feel their concerns, but I just wanted to say that I've been to ... I'm a RAB member, by the way, my name's Betty Ray Wade, I'm a RAB member, I've been on the Boston Housing Authority Resident Advisory Board for a number of years, [00:57:30] at least 10, I think.

But what I wanted to say is that I attend very a lot of conferences and I know for a fact that the BHA and all the housing authorities throughout the countries that I've been to, for instance, New Orleans, New York, and all these different places, I know for a fact that that HUD, Congress [00:58:00] is giving each state less and less money to run our housing developments. As I said, and I'm not speaking against any groups, but I'm not sure someone made a comment that the RAB is... I think I heard that the RAB is for the BHA. I'm just [00:58:30] here to say that I'm grateful for the BHA for living in this housing.

I know for a fact, I've been to other places, and I've heard other concerns. Just like I'm listening to all these comments that I'm hearing tonight, I don't want to ramble because I'm now running out of time, but every state is getting less and less money from HUD. So I keep hearing privatization, [00:59:00] not sure if people understand what's happening. BHA simply don't have the money to keep putting into certain buildings that's just not working. It doesn't help to keep putting money into buildings that they can't afford to keep up. I think privatization is the wrong word to use, [00:59:30] maybe it is. But I do know that HUD is not giving them enough money to take care of our buildings, folks.

And I just want to say that, as a RAB member, I'm not defending them, but I'm grateful that I had a place to live that I don't have to go out and pay \$5,000 a month for rent or 3,000 or whatever these buildings are costing me, that's coming up around me. I do believe that [01:00:00] Mac McCreight has been very helpful to us, I heard his name mentioned. I'm not talking against what anybody else says, but he's been very helpful to the RAB since I've been there.

There's a lot of things that I would like to see happen in my own particular developments, and I have complaints just like all of you, but the truth of the matter is the BHA just don't have the money [01:00:30] coming from HUD. The resources are just not there like they were 10, 40, 20, 30 years ago, it's just not like that. The money is less

and less. I hear this from the tenants in New York, I've heard this from the tenants in Louisiana. Like I said, I've heard it from the tenants in Chicago. There are other states that I've been to, but it's not that the BHA don't want to do... [01:01:00] and I'm not saying, yes. Please call your landlord and tell them if you need repairs done, you have that right.

I just think that we all have to try to work together. I'm not defending the BHA, I'm not defending the cause. I think that we have to work together so that we can help each other make this work [01:01:30] and have a better living. We all want to live better, basically. And we're trying to live better. We all want to live better. We want to be in a clean building. We want nicer communities. We want to see the green grass. We want to see better trees in our community.

We have to work together. The annual plan that we all [01:02:00] should be looking at spells out what we're going to be doing. There are things that I would like to see on this group, this [inaudible 01:02:09] that's not there. I've talked to people about that. But I'm just telling people from what I've seen, I know that HUD is giving less and less money to every state's housing authority. And I do believe that they're doing, [01:02:30] the BHA I should say, I believe they're doing the best they can with what they have. That's all I wanted to say.

Response: Thank you for the comment. We agree that continued collaboration and transparency is the way to move forward. As stated above, the BHA and many other Housing Authorities across the nation are facing massive deficits in capital funding, preventing the necessary repairs of Public Housing units. In order to preserve these affordable units in an acceptable condition, redevelopment that leverages private capital is a tool that has been employed in some cases. The goal is to redevelop in a way that provides updated and resilient communities that we can all be proud of and that are free from backlogs of significant capital needs.

Comment: Just to briefly respond to Ms. Wade. I think just to reiterate what I said before, it's pretty clear that this stuff is happening both on the federal level [01:03:00] and at the city level where the HUD and the federal government and the Congress are working together to decrease the funding for public housing. And then at the local level that the housing authorities are bureaucratic, corrupt, also tied up with the developers and the banks and waste money every day, they're just throwing money at all these different people that are not doing anything.

But I just wanted to speak because I wanted to speak [01:03:30] to the treatment of the woman before. I didn't catch her name. But I think it's quite horrible to see the way that she's being treated and the way that you all are responding to it. It's something that we see across all this sort of quote-unquote "mixed income" development where the developers, they make a lot of money off of having some low-income people in them, but they'll have things like poor doors.

They've got poor doors, doors for only the poor people that enter through. They treat people totally [01:04:00] different, very discriminatory. And then when people try to complain about this treatment or get any sort of justice, they're confronted with this horrible bureaucracy. They're stuck in the labyrinth where every door they open doesn't get them anywhere. And then you see it brings people to the edge where they snapped like this woman did. And then you can just say, "Oh, well she's just a crazy Black woman. She's just hysterical, so we just have to boot her off the call and mute her." And it's just really disgusting.

Response: Thanks for your comment. As stated, the BHA continues to work with Ms. Shaheed based on the issues she raised. Her comments were unrelated to the proposed annual plan. It is important to note, that many BHA clients face various issues related to disabilities. The BHA works with all of our clients to ensure they have an equal opportunity to utilize our housing program no matter their disability, race, gender, or other protected class.

The BHA, a bureaucracy by definition, is not working to decrease funding for public housing. Budgets from federal and state sources have increased across the board. With respect to the voucher portfolio, for example, the BHA has maximized funding formulas, applied for new funding and programs, implemented a City funded program, resulting in an increase of more than 2,000 housing opportunities for low-income families and individuals.

BHA is not aware of any internal corruption. Specific allegations of corruption should be forwarded to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

Comment: Oh, okay. Sorry about that. I just wanted to say that I know that funding is going down with HUD, I get it. But by law, BHA has to take care of work orders and emergency situations such as [01:05:30] carbon dioxide that almost killed Tia and her sister and her father. That really happened. And the only way that BHA took care of it, was it was publicized. And they kept coming in and replacing the carbon monoxide box and would not take care of the problem, [01:06:00] which was behind the stove.

So things like that, there's no excuse, and things like black mold have to be taken care of. I'm sure there are laws governing this, but that being said, BHA has enough money to take care of these problems and work orders. And ethically and morally, if you own developments, not you personally, [01:06:30] but BHA, and is funded by HUD, work orders have to be done in a timely fashion. And I've gone in people's apartments, I've seen a lot in the last few months, and I've seen things that I can't believe, and they're not being addressed by BHA and work orders.

And I personally think someone should come here to Commonwealth and [01:07:00] we can show you around and show you some of the conditions. And maybe then you'll say, "Wow, we're going to fix these." But there are problems that BHA has to, in my opinion, morally and ethically has to address. And I know that this development is one of the better developments, but if we're one of the better developments and have this many

problems, I hate to see the ones that are [01:07:30] more run down and have terrible problems. And that's all I have to say, and thank you for listening.

Response: Thank you for your comment once again, Ms. Archibald. Appreciate it. [01:08:30] Okay, well I do appreciate everybody attending the public hearing and providing comments. Very robust discussion and lots of comments we have to consider and respond to with respect to [01:09:00] the annual plan. So I just want to thank everybody for their participation.

Comment: So I just got a question from Ms. Epstein in the chat and it's just asking if the answers to the questions will be public.

Response: And yes, the answers to the comments will be public [01:09:30] information. Obviously, we're not going to disclose any personally identifiable information, and where I've received information about specific issues, I'm going to deal with those on the side. They're going to be published, I don't know if anybody can give me an exact place on the website that they can be published? John, [01:10:00] could you maybe put that in the chat if you have an opportunity to which webpage the responses to the comments will be published? [The link to where the responses will be posted was added to the chat.]

Comment: Well, since you basically opened up it up for comments, I think I'll take it. So yeah, I apologize for that. Yeah, so since this is about the annual plan and everything, and because maintenance [01:10:30] repairs and stuff, it's also in there, I want to know if there's going to, basically, in light of hearing all of this stuff, if the BHA is going to start considering exactly putting in funds and actual effort into... because as we were saying, a lot of this stuff sounds basically really serious [01:11:00] emergency stuff, and if there will basically be actual... Okay, what am I trying to say? Basically, if there'll be timelines or basically any transparency as to when all of these emergency repairs will be done?

Because I can say for myself and as Jeanie was saying, [01:11:30] that did happen. The fire department came in here, they basically found that the carbon monoxide levels in my apartment were basically way past the levels that it could have killed me and my father and my sister. In another building, a person I talked to who heard about our story, basically said that that happened to her too. Only, she basically had went completely unconscious, and her neighbor had to, basically, literally break through her door to rescue her in other places. So basically, [01:12:00] will this also be something that you're going to consider with this annual plan and things like that, if that makes any sense?

Response: No, it makes a lot of sense, Ms. Wheeler. And so what I'll say is that the BHA will absolutely respond to the comments we've received tonight. And I think, I can't say [01:12:30] exactly what the responses will be because as I mentioned at the outset of this, I'm in charge of some stuff at the BHA, but not in charge of everything. But what I do know is that the BHA is committed to continuing to improve processes and

responsiveness to our tenants and reducing the time it takes to repair [01:13:00] things that need to be repaired. And so I would just say that I think the response that you get in writing will speak to some of that information.

Unfortunately, like I said at the outset as well, I'm not going to necessarily be responding to your comments this evening. It's really an opportunity for the BHA to listen, take in the comments, have an opportunity to [01:13:30] think about the comments and then be responsive.

BHA Operations will address any specific maintenance or other property management complaints received this evening or by follow-up contact from the commenters.

Comment: Yes, David. The only thing I wanted to mention was to reiterate what you had mentioned at the beginning of the hearing, which is the written comment period continues until the 15th. So written comments on anything that came in tonight or anything that's anywhere in the plan [01:14:00] can be taken by the BHA up until the 15th. I know our office has submitted a lot of comments to the BHA. I know Justice for Housing also submitted written comments to the BHA, and I would encourage people to take advantage of that opportunity by using the emails and sending them to [john.kane@bostonhousing.org](mailto:john.kane@bostonhousing.org).

Response: Thank you, Mac, that's [01:14:30] very helpful, and that's a good way to, obviously we have some limited time here, but we do accept those comments in writing and all those comments that are in writing will also get a public response as well.

Comment: Yeah, I just wanted to say one last thing. I just wanted to invite everyone on this call to please try to attend our RAB meetings. It's an invitation [01:15:00] to all residents throughout BHA Section 8. If you're tenant of the BHA, if you've got a voucher, Section 8, whatever it may be, please attend one of our meetings on Thursday evenings that will give you an opportunity to also learn a lot more about what we are, and what we do, and what we try to share with our communities [01:15:30] when we come home, or when we get off our meetings. So I just want to invite everybody to try to make an effort to come to our RAB meetings, and get involved if you can. Thank you. That's all I wanted to say.

Response: Thank you, Betty. [01:16:00]

Comment: I'm just backing up, Betty, with the idea that BHA tenants and Section 8 tenants should come to the RAB and let their concerns be [01:16:30] heard about BHA and be put on the agenda. It's the second Thursday of every month at 6:00 PM and we can get the link out to you. And it's a good thing because I voiced my concerns out there, people listen, people respond. People that are high up in the administration at BHA have heard what I've said, [01:17:00] and sometimes done stuff, sometimes not done stuff.

But it is a way to get your voice heard. And the last thing I'll say is when you get on different boards, like your own board in your own development or Section 8, and you get on the RAB, you have more of a voice and people really hear you and it's better for you as [01:17:30] a tenant because I just think people listen to what you say. So it's just an idea, but I really recommend it.

Response: Thank you, Ms. Archibald.

Comment: And I just put in the chat, and I forgot to mention, January's RAB meeting will be on the first Thursday. He just put that in the chat, and I forgot to say that. So the first Thursday in January.

Response: Thank you. Once again, I just want to again reiterate if there are current issues of disrepair related to specific apartments [01:18:30] that need to be resolved, I did put my email in the chat so that folks can email me, and I can try to do my best to facilitate those issues.

Comment: I think it would be very helpful because most meetings are open, but there's a few RAB meetings that are closed. So maybe make sure that you have which is which posted on the website so people will know.

Response: Thank you, Karen. Appreciate that. Okay, with that being said, I [01:19:30] think we're going to close out this meeting. I want to, once again, thank everybody for attending. I appreciate everybody's participation. I look forward to receiving your comments, the ones we got tonight. But also, if you want to send another comment in writing or further comments in writing, please do not hesitate to do so. You can direct those as Mr. McCreight said to john.kane K-A-N-E @bostonhousing.org, and the BHA will be responsive to those.

Mr. Kane also [01:20:00] posted the link where the responses to the comments will be posted. And again, just reiterating that there's specific issues related to maintenance issues or other issues specific related to individuals. If you want to email me, my email is also in that chat. But again, thanks, everybody, for attending. Hope everybody has a good evening.

## **Public Safety**

Comment: S: Section B.1.9 Safety and Crime Prevention including Violence Against Women Act Policy and Description of VAWA activities, services or programs Pp. 48-60: I understand there was a change to refer to consulting with the Boston Police Department (BPD) generally, as opposed to the BPD gang unit, about crime prevention strategies.

Response: That is correct.

## **Real Estate Development**

Comment: RAD Attachment Introduction: Should the reference to Replacement Housing Factor (RHF) funds be replaced with the current HUD term (Demolition & Disposition Transitional Funding (DDTF), as appears on the various pages of the report?

Response: We have that reference to Replacement Housing Factor funding because BHA in fact utilized RHF funds in connection with the RAD units created at Old Colony Phase 3A. You are correct that HUD no longer awards RHF funds. Instead, when there's a demo/dispo action, HUD allocates DDTF funds as part of the CFP award. But in the past BHA used to get separate RHF awards, and it was some of that past RHF funding that BHA at Old Colony 3A.

Comment: p. 2: This report for West Newton shows a changed "CFP Allocation", presumably because BHA removed certain sites from having any CFP allocation and likely then redistributed the net among all of the sites proportionately—is that correct? Could BHA explain what the term "CFP allocation" means—is that fund taken from the current year's Capital Fund, or the net loss of Capital Funds from the site's disposition? The report is also updated to show that the conversion was completed in 2022.

Response: Every year HUD awards the BHA a Capital Fund Grant, the amount of which changes based on that year's Congressional appropriation. For each CFP grant, HUD publishes a breakdown showing how much funding was awarded for each public housing site. HUD makes those calculations, not BHA. The amounts reported in the FY2023 RAD attachment are from BHA's FY2022 CFP grant. HUD asks housing authorities to include in the RAD attachment the most recent CFP allocation because upon a RAD conversion a site no longer receives CFP funding. However, when public housing units are removed through a Section 18 Disposition, those units do continue to earn Demolition-Disposition Transitional Funding (which is part of the CFP award) for five years. The reason that West Newton has continued to receive a CFP allocation in FY2022, even though the RAD conversion happened in 2019, is because of DDTF funding. The RAD conversion at West Newton was actually a RAD/Section 18 Blend. Of the total 146 units, 110 converted to RAD (and no longer receive CFP funding) and 36 went through Section 18 (which makes them eligible for five years of DDTF funding, which is part of the CFP grant). Those 36 units accounted for \$157,588 of the BHA's FY2022 CFP award (which is \$4,377.44 per unit times 36 units).

Comment: p.3: This report for Ausonia shows a changed CFP Allocation (see comment/question above), and also shows closing now in 2024. Can BHA explain why the closing for Ausonia has been pushed back? Did HUD approve the demolition/disposition application which was submitted in 2021?

Response: HUD did approve the disposition application—it was in September 2022. BHA is pursuing procurement of an architecture and engineer consultant team, which we aim to do in such a way as to permit a future procurement of a “construction manager at risk.” The process has been somewhat slower than past procurements as we have needed to develop a new set of contract documents. At this point we do not anticipate a closing before 2024.

Comment: p.4: This report for Old Colony (Anne M. Lynch Homes at Old Colony), eliminates any CFP Allocation, since the units in this phase were previously converted. This update says that Phase 3A was completed in 2022.

Response: That is correct, the 28 RAD units at Old Colony no longer receive a CFP allocation. The 28 newly construction RAD units at Old Colony were completed in 2022

Comment: p. 5: This report is for Orchard Off-Site Phase II, otherwise known as Long Glen Apartments in the Allston/Brighton neighborhood. The update zeroes out the CFP Allocation because conversion of the public housing units to Section 8 PBRA (which I believe is BHA’s sole PBRA) already occurred in 2021.

Response: Yes, that is correct, Long Glen is the BHA’s only RAD site to convert through a PBRA agreement (as opposed to a PBV agreement). Since that conversion happened in 2021, BHA did not receive any CFP funding for Long Glen in FY2022.

Comment: p. 6: This report for Heritage reflects a revised CFP Allocation (see note/question above), and that the closing here occurred at the end of September, 2022. All of the non-agency, non-employee units at Heritage have now been converted to PBV, and there are no public housing units left there.

Response: Yes, that is correct. The amount listed is the amount of the BHA’s FY2022 CFP grant that is attributable to the 31 public housing units that had been at Heritage. The RAD conversion closing occurred at the end of September 2022. In future years, Heritage will receive only RAD and Section 8 funding—in other words, no public housing capital grants will be awarded beginning with the FY2023 CFP grant.

Comment: p. 7: This report for Lower Mills, like the one for Heritage, reflects a revised CFP Allocation, a closing at the end of August, 2022, and that all of the non-agency, non-employee units have now been converted to PBV, with no public housing units left.

Response: Yes, that is correct. In FY2022, \$22,600 of the BHA’s CFP grant was attributable to the 19 public housing units at Lower Mills. The RAD conversion happened at the end of August 2022, meaning that BHA will not receive CFP funding for Lower Mills in future years (but will receive RAD and Section 8 funding instead).

Comment: p. 8: This report for Mission Main Phases I, II, and III, reflects a changed CFP Allocation, and projects a closing date for December, 2022. The RAB should be



updated, prior to the submission of the final FY 2023 PHA Plan to HUD in January, 2023, if the closing in fact occurred or if there is a revised closing date. This is the first use of RAD/PBV blend for a site that was previously redeveloped through the HOPE VI program. As noted below, BHA is starting a similar process for Orchard Gardens.

Response: Yes, that's right, and I'm happy to report that the closing did indeed happen at the end of December.

Comment: p. 9: This report for Eva White Apartments reflects a changed CFP Allocation, and has a projected closing date in 2023 instead of 2022. BHA should update the RAB about why the closing date has changed.

Response: The closing date has been postponed as the development team has needed to modify its construction plans somewhat in response to supply-chain issues and other complications. The conversion is on track to happen in 2023.

Comment: p. 10: This report for Orchard Gardens, Phases I, II, and III, is new—BHA had not previously placed Orchard Gardens in its proposed conversion list. As with Mission Main, this is a site which was redeveloped through HOPE VI where it would make sense to bring in new financial resources and deeper subsidy. There is a typo in the document that refers to "Mission" which should be changed. More details will likely come to the RAB about this, and for now this is likely a "placeholder" for a RAD/PBV "blend" conversion expected to occur by 2024.

Response: Yes, that is exactly right. (And thank you for pointing out the typo. We have corrected that for the final Plan.)

Comment: p. 11: This report is for Mildred C. Hailey Apartments. The CFP allocation here is quite large, and BHA is not yet in the position to be submitting for a Section 18 conversion for the entire site; I believe the figure here is for what HUD approved in the Phase 1 demo/dispo application. It may be helpful to separate out the expected closing date for Phase 1 (anticipated prior to the end of 2022) and the expected time frame for any demo/dispo submissions for other phases of the site. If, on the other hand, BHA is not intending this to be a "placeholder" at this time for the balance of the site, it should say so.

Response: In September 2022, HUD approved disposition (and demolition) of the 253 units that make up the "phase one" redevelopment footprint at Hailey. As reported elsewhere in the Annual Plan, BHA intends to submit a disposition application for the remainder of the site in 2023 in order to pursue the higher subsidy that would come from a Section 8 conversion. (BHA does not intend to demolish any of the buildings outside of phase one, but rather will pursue a program of modernization.) In the meantime, BHA wants to preserve as a back-up the option for a RAD conversion or a RAD/Section 18 Blend in the event that a full Section 18 disposition is not approved by HUD. (Section 18 refers to HUD's disposition approval process.) In that sense, we are including the remaining units at Hailey in the RAD Attachment as a "Plan B" rather than

as a placeholder. The dollar amount listed in the RAD Attachment comes from HUD's breakdown of the FY2022 CFP grant which included \$4,082.88 per unit attributed to Hailey.

Comment: S: Section B.2.14 HOPE VI or Choice Neighborhoods

p. 65: This just discusses the HOPE VI that was an early phase of Old Colony redevelopment (the HOPE VI phase is now completed) and the Choice Neighborhoods redevelopment at Whittier Street (still underway). Please advise as to any changes here (perhaps the only change was that HOPE VI at Old Colony was done).

Response: There were no changes to Section B.2.14 from the FY2022 version. As you say, the Old Colony HOPE VI grant is complete, while the Whittier Choice Neighborhoods grant is still underway.

Comment: S: Section B.2.15 Mixed Finance Modernization of Developments

p. 66: I assume the changes here are as follows: (a) that Phase IV and V at Old Colony will begin in late 2022 or early 2023; and (b) that the Mission Main RAD/PBV conversion is expected before the end of 2022. In addition, since BHA is bringing the McCormack draft demo/dispo application to the RAB in its November, 2022 meeting, BHA should provide a McCormack update (either here or in the next section). BHA may also, here or in the next section, want to include the likely prior to end of 2022 closings for Phase 1 at Hailey and at Bunker Hill.

Response: Yes, Section B.2.15 includes select updates on the current status of initiatives that have been previously presented in past Annual Plans. A new item this year is BHA is exploring how to use its Faircloth capacity to create new public housing units. BHA will continue to provide the RAB with ongoing updates about specific progress at each redevelopment site.

Comment: S: Section B.2.16 Demolition and/or Disposition Pp. 67-77: Some breakouts here: On p. 67, the first demo/dispo is described as Anne M. Lynch Homes at Old Colony, Phase Three, but then in Section 7.a, there is a reference to Phase 4. Moreover, elsewhere in the Supplement, there is reference to Phase 5. Would these require separate demo/dispo submissions? If, on the other hand, the title is meant to reflect the full range of Old Colony activities (other than that which was under HOPE VI), it may be good to change the opening and be clearer.

Response: BHA redeveloped phase one at Old Colony through an ARRA grant awarded by HUD, and then phase two through a HOPE VI grant awarded by HUD. Upon completion of the HOPE VI redevelopment, BHA applied for (and received) Demo/Dispo approval of the entire remainder of the Old Colony site, which has been advancing in separate phases. Phase Three is complete. Phases 4 and 5 reached financial closing in late 2022 and are not in construction. The final phase, Phase 6, is in predevelopment.

Comment: S: For Whittier (pp. 67-68), BHA may want to cross-reference what's in Section B.2.14 (p. 65 above).

Response: Yes, that's right, Whittier appears in separate sections because the redevelopment entails both a Choice Neighborhoods Initiative grant and a Demo/Dispo approval which are tracked in different sections of the Annual Plan supplement. BHA also mentions Whittier in the Mixed-Finance Development section.

Comment: S: For Charlestown (p. 68), is there any need to refer to the HUD waiver request about AHAP execution, either here or elsewhere in the PHA Plan?

Response: No, the waiver request is not something that would typically be presented in the Annual Plan. The request was for HUD approval to begin demolition prior to execution of a Section 8 AHAP (which is the "Agreement to enter into a Housing Assistance Payment" contract under the Section 8 program); it was a waiver request because Section 8 regulations specify that demolition can only occur after an AHAP has been executed. At Charlestown, BHA was able to demonstrate to HUD's satisfaction that it would be best to begin demolition in advance of the AHAP(s), and HUD granted the waiver on 11/23/2022.

Comment: S: The Amory description (pp. 68-69) seems fine with the updated schedule for disposition of the remaining vacant parcels to develop affordable housing.

Response: Yes, the updated schedule is based on our current best information.

Comment: S: For West Newton (pp. 69-70), I can't tell if there is a discrepancy between what's reported here or elsewhere in the PHA Plan—this makes it appear that everything is not complete (34 E. Springfield outstanding but expected to be finished in 2023), but other reports made it appear that everything was done.

Response: Originally there was a single public housing "AMP" (which stands for Asset Management Project, which is how HUD groups public housing units) that included properties on West Newton Street, Rutland Street, and East Springfield Street. There were 149 public housing units total. Of those, the 3 units at 34 East Springfield Street had long been vacant (more than 10 years) due to structural damage at that property. At the time of the RAD Conversion/Section 18 Blend, HUD approved the following for the 149 public housing units that made up the AMP: 110 would convert to RAD; 36 would convert to Section 8 through a Section 18 disposition; and the 3 vacant units on East Springfield Street were deemed a "de minimis" removal given that they could not be easily renovated. That said, in the months and years following the RAD conversion, BHA and the City of Boston have partnered to rehab 34 East Springfield Street. BHA designated a developer who has since taken control of the property and is currently rehabbing it from 3 long-vacant public housing units to 5 Section 8 Project Based Voucher units for occupancy by homeless veterans (using VASH vouchers).

Comment: S: Mildred Hailey (pp. 70-71) is broken into two parts—Phase 1 (253 units), for which HUD has approved a demo/dispo application, and where there is an expected closing prior the end of 2022, and the balance of the site. For the balance of the site

(526 units), the reference to the 2021 physical needs assessment should be replaced either with the date that the assessment came out or the projected date it will be complete, and this should be regarded as a placeholder. The related RAD Attachment should include similar language. BHA should also discuss with residents that it is planning on using the \$50 million in city funds as part of this, as they may otherwise anticipate that this would be used for emergency repairs.

Response: That's correct: BHA is pursuing a modernization program that will go beyond just emergency repairs.

Comment: S: Mary Ellen McCormack (p. 71): BHA has indicated that the draft demo/dispo will be brought to the RAB meeting in November, 2022—will it be submitted prior to the PHA Plan submission in Jan. 2023? If so, this should be revised. Since I haven't seen this yet, I don't know if the submission will be for all units—even though there is no overall redevelopment submission to BPDA, but only for one-half of the site—or for just Phase 1 with a later submission for the balance of the site (i.e., an approach like Bunker Hill, which was for the full site, or like Hailey, which is piece-by-piece)?

Response: We aim to submit the Demo/Dispo application in the coming several weeks, but likely not prior to submission of the Annual Plan. We anticipate submitting an application that would cover all units. First we need to finalize the required HUD Environmental Review and also compile the various components of the application. We will provide the RAB with frequent updates.

Comment: S: Eva White (pp. 72-72): Does BHA have any projection as to when it will decide it is seeking an 80/20 PBV/RAD blend or a 100% PBV conversion? (There's some ambiguity in the text, where the opening seems to indicate that both options are on the table, but the end of the text seems to elect RAB/PBV blend.) This says that the application will be submitted in 2022, but there is very little time to get this to the RAB prior to the end of the year (given other things on the RAB calendar given Annual Plan submissions).

Response: BHA has been pursuing a RAD conversion for a few years now. Since 2021, HUD has introduced greater flexibility to combine RAD and a Section 18 blend, and we expect to take full advantage of that flexibility; such a blend would not involve a formal stand-alone Section 18 Disposition application, but rather it would be processed by the RAD team at HUD who would coordinate any needed Section 18 approvals with their HUD colleagues. BHA will provide updates to the RAB on this project as part of its regular periodic updates about redevelopment activity.

Comment: S: Lenox (p. 72): It would be helpful to know what the strategy is for Lenox to get back to full PBV. At the time of the subsidy conversion in February 2021, BHA had to utilize a mix of PBV and HCVP options so that it could "turn on the tap" for Section 8 without having to wait for right-sizing of families who are currently in wrong-sized units (use of HCVP, plus the owner's agreement not to require the tenant to pay

any difference, allowed this to happen). It was anticipated, however, that over time the HCVP units would be replaced with PBV for the fiscal soundness of the site, but BHA was also in a situation, in 2021, where it could not be sure that the replacement vouchers were available. It would be helpful if BHA could address this in its response to comments.

Response: As you say, some original residents could not qualify for PBVs at the time of the conversion due to a mismatch between household size and apartment size (number of bedrooms), and instead they were accommodated through other means such as mobile Housing Choice Vouchers to ensure ongoing affordability. We expect that most if not all of those mismatches will be corrected over the course of completing the rehabilitation work. As they do, the right-sized apartment units may be added to the PBV Housing Assistance Payment contract. BHA would use its available Section 8 budget authority as opposed to Tenant Protection Vouchers. In that way, all 285 units at Lenox will ultimately be on the HAP contract. BHA can provide a more detailed update upon completion of the rehab work.

Comment: S: J.J. Carroll (pp. 72-73): Can BHA update with how far along construction is and what the likely time frame is for return of residents to the site (and beginning lease up of additional deeply affordable units)?

Response: Construction began in January 2022, and as of 11/30/2022, construction was just over 50% complete. We expect completion before the end of 2023. BHA's relocation team will begin outreach to returning residents by midyear.

Comment: S: Patricia White (p. 73): Does this need to remain on the list, since the conversion has now taken place (it's helpful to have the information here about what portion of the Section 8 is tenant-protection vouchers and what is project-based out of BHA's existing Section 8 resources)? As a reminder—steps should be taken at the site to revise the LTO bylaws to reflect the subsidy conversion.

Response: The entire property is Project Based Voucher section 8. The distinction about tenant protection vouchers only had to do with the fact that BHA was not eligible to receive TPVs for all 225 units; nevertheless, BHA was able to project-base the entire property using its existing Section 8 resources. BHA continues to pursue plans to renovate the property. While perhaps Patricia White may be removed from the Disposition section of the Annual Plan, it will be important to continue to report on progress at the site. BHA staff note the comment regarding revised LTO bylaws.

Comment: S: St. Botolph (pp. 73-74): Residents of this site have been waiting a LONG TIME for the rehabilitation and subsidy conversion. Can BHA provide more details on the 2023 start date? BHA may to draw on the internal transfer protocols that were used at Amory Street for the likely shifts within the property (both here and at other elderly/disabled sites with a subsidy conversion, such as Bunte, Patricia White, and Ausonia), and LTO bylaws should be revised to reflect the subsidy conversion.

Response: BHA originally put the rehab work out to bid in 2021, at which time the bids received far exceeded BHA's budget. In 2022 the renovation project was rebid. We are currently working to secure construction loan financing. Our target for construction start is no later than April 1, 2023; but the exact date will depend on successfully closing on construction financing in the first quarter of the year. We expect minimal (if any) need for offsite transfers, but will work with residents on an individual basis. Thank you for the comment about the LTO bylaws.

Comment: S: Doris Bunte Apartments (formerly Walnut Park) (p. 74): See note above on St. Botolph and internal transfers, as well as the need to revise LTO bylaws if there is a recognized tenant organization.

Response: Similar to St. Botolph, we expect minimal or no need for offsite transfers. There is no recognized LTO at the site currently.

Comment: S: Ausonia (pp. 74-75): This summary is confusing. It shows that there was an approval in 2022, and presumably it was for a PBV/RAD blend, but it also refers to a Section 18 conversion that is also being pursued. BHA should clear this up as to what was approved, whether it is still planning on pursuing a separate application, and what the likely start date is in 2023. As with several other sites, there should be use of internal relocation protocols that worked well elsewhere (such as at Amory Street) and revision of LTO bylaws (to reflect the subsidy conversion).

Response: The confusion stems from the fact that BHA was pursuing both a RAD conversion and a Section 18 disposition as two parallel paths. In the event that the Section 18 disposition were not approved, then BHA would fall back on the RAD approval. In fact the Section 18 disposition received HUD approval in September 2022.

Comment: S: Torre Unidad (p. 75): This was included as a "placeholder" in the FY 2022 PHA Plan. When is BHA planning on bringing a draft demo/dispo application to the RAB? Does BHA have any idea what this will look like—an 80/20 PBV/RAD blend, a Section 18 conversion, or something else?

Response: BHA is still exploring options at Torre Unidad. One constraint is that Torre is a site where BHA invested resources through the 2010 Energy Performance Contract. An EPC does not mean that a demo/dispo application is impossible (indeed several successful demo/dispo applications have been at sites that were originally part of an EPC) but it does mean that we need to closely examine options. In the meantime, BHA's Capital Construction Department is advancing plans to address physical needs at Torre through BHA's CFP funding.

Comment: S: Mission Main (pp. 75-76): As noted elsewhere in comments, this would be the BHA's first switch of a traditional HOPE VI redevelopment from the 1990's into a 60%RAD/40% Section 8 PBV blend. If the closing does not occur by the end of 2022, I'd ask that BHA report back on the projected date.

Response: The closing at Mission Main happened in the last week of December 2022.

Comment: S: Adams Orchard Parcel 2D (p. 76): This was included in Amendment 1 to the FY 2022 PHA plan, and would involve the disposition of a vacant parcel for non-housing use. BHA should report back to the RAB any information on HUD approval.

Response: Approval has just been received and the RAB will be updated.

Comment: S: Orchard Gardens (pp. 76-77): As asked elsewhere, should this also include Orchard Commons? The approach here would be similar to Mission Main—converting a HOPE VI development into a RAD/Section 8 PBV blend. I understand that BHA will need more information about the scope of work needed to know what blend is proposed. I don't know if the Capital Needs Assessments (CNAs) that are mostly complete (and are expected to be final by end of 2022) include this site, or if due to its HOPE VI status, a separate assessment is required and what the time frame is for completion and likely submission of a plan to the RAB.

Response: Orchard Gardens and Orchard Commons are owned and operated by separate organizations. To date it has only been Orchard Gardens that has expressed an interest in a RAD/Section 18 refinancing, but as you suggest Orchard Commons may also be a good candidate in the coming years. Neither site was included in the CNA commissioned by the BHA, as BHA does not directly manage capital planning at HOPE VI sites.

Comment: S: I also understand that the Supplement that was sent out on October 31, 2022 is missing a site, and that BHA is updating the submission to include the General Warren elderly/disabled site in Charlestown. Here, too, it would be helpful to have information about when the capital needs assessment will be available and, based on that, what particular type of rehabilitation is planned, as well as the likely time frame for submission to the RAB.

Response: Yes, that's right. In the weeks since the first draft of the Annual Plan was released, the residents of General Warren have met with BHA staff and indicated an interest in exploring opportunities to partner with a third-party developer as other sites have done in past years. BHA intends to issue a Request for Proposals in 2023 to procure a developer partner. The results of BHA's capital needs assessment will certainly inform the options, but it is too early to predict which (if any) disposition options will be the best fit of the site and its residents.

Comment: S: Section B.2.25 Other Capital Grant Programs: BHA has not proposed any change here, but may want to update this, since there refers to things that were expected to occur at Old Colony by the end of 2021; moreover, it may want to replace the term "Replacement Housing Factor (RHF) funds" with "Demolition & Disposition Transition Funding (DDTF) funds" to reflect current HUD usage.

Response: There was no change because the RHF funds were expended in past years, although there may be some ongoing HUD reporting in connection with those grants. Upon confirmation that all reporting has been completed, BHA will remove references to RHF in future Annual Plans.

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: In all redevelopment transactions, provide for BHA's financial stability in order to preserve public housing character and associated tenant protections into the future.

This is a good summary of the ISHI collaboration between BHA, GBLS, and CLVU. There are still pieces that need to be worked on Authority-wide. For example, the mention of House Rules here is NOT an endorsement of having House Rules (it is preferable to have things either in the lease or in a resident handbook), but a recognition that changes should not be imposed unilaterally and there needs to be a robust dialogue, and in the best-case scenario, a tri-party arrangement between the BHA, developer partners, and residents about how change will be handled at the site. We are hopeful that BHA can move from the initial collaborations over the Mixed Finance Tenant Participation MOA and Grievance Procedure and the Letter of Assurance to include similar templates on Mixed Finance Management protocols (or model Management Plans, including tenant selection plans consistent with BHA/City best practices) that carry over important, resident-friendly elements of BHA's public housing practices.

Response: Thanks for the comment. The BHA is working to improve its capacity in this regard and use the documents we have now as templates for new redevelopments in the future. BHA certainly intends to further the work of the ISHI collaborative, and we welcome the opportunity to advance our work with GBLS, CLVU, and Local Tenant Organizations.

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: Add new deeply affordable units where possible during redevelopment.

This is very exciting and a positive development with "net-new" housing. It used to be part of the trade-off in public housing development that you had to "give up" part of the supply in order to get funding (such as in HOPE VI) --no more. It's important to distinguish between what may be "affordable" and what is "deeply affordable" (such as in the Holtzer Park description). Both are needed in the City, but it is only the "deeply affordable" units where tenants' rents are capped at 30% of income that would be comparable to public housing standards. BHA should continue to push for as many deeply affordable units as possible, and particularly to expand those options in portions of the city with little deeply affordable housing. It would be helpful for BHA to include, in its response to comments, how it intends to work with the City of Boston on utilizing Faircloth authority to create "net-new" housing, and any anticipated new development in the coming year.



Response: Thank you. BHA has been working with staff from the City to utilize Faircloth authority, and we aim to advance those initiatives in 2023.

Comment: 5Y: Subgoal: Institutionalize resident protections and participation in all redevelopment projects; advance internal BHA systems to ensure long-term compliance by new owners.

See comment above, regarding ISHI. There is still work to be done on what are sometimes called Mixed Finance Management Protocols and sometimes called Management Plan issues, to try to standardize what is reviewed and approved by BHA in consultation with residents on new owner policies and practices in the area of tenant selection (including transfer policy), lease terms, and continued occupancy policy. This may include things like preserving BHA's approach to out-of-court resolution of evictions where possible, meshing how owners and BHA will handle right-sizing and other transfer issues, and consistency in how all residents are treated (particularly if a multi-phase redevelopment site has multiple owners, or where there is a mix of market and deeply affordable tenants). It would be good for BHA to develop a set of protocols which sets expectations Authority-wide, while having sufficient flexibility for site-by-site departures as may be necessitated by funding sources or regulatory requirements.

Response: Thank you for the comment. This is an area of great importance to the BHA and we will continue to expand our work. BHA agrees that there is still work to be done to build off the valuable work completed through the ISHI collaborative.