

# Public Housing Overhaul Approved

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The board of the Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority has unanimously adopted the master plan that will guide the extensive overhaul of Charlottesville's public housing in hopes of creating a range of housing types and increasing residents' quality of life.

The housing authority maintains 376 public housing units across its sites, the largest and oldest of which is Westhaven, built in the 1960s. The master plan states that overall housing could be expanded from 376 units to between 558 and 720 units, and change from all public housing into a mix of that, affordable housing and market-rate housing.

The number of public housing units would stay the same, based on the plan.

The Board of Commissioners took up the resolution adopting the plan Monday. Housing officials have said the end result would likely be a combination of more than one proposal, and that the master plan is a fluid document that will serve as a jumping-off point for the next part of the process.

"The master plan ... is not the final be all, end all," said Amy Kilroy, the housing authority's redevelopment director. "It's our new baseline for conversation."

Those involved in the planning of the housing overhaul, the talks about which have been going on for years, have said they want to see scenarios with higher densities as a way to diffuse poverty with mixed-income neighborhoods.

The plan's drafts show different scenarios for redevelopment, with some areas being completely torn down and rebuilt, such as Westhaven, while others, such as Crescent Halls, are proposed to be rehabilitated.

Total cost estimates have been pinned at about \$115.8 million to have 558 units and \$150.8 million for 719 units, according to the master plan. In November, consultant [Wallace, Roberts & Todd](#) released the first draft master plan to have a redevelopment price tag attached.

Officials have also agreed to abide by the Residents' Bill of Rights for Redevelopment, a document created by the city's Public Housing Association of Residents that says, among other things, that there will be a one-for-one replacement of all public housing units that are affected and that displaced residents will be guaranteed replacement housing.

Some residents still thought the plan needed more public input and that the document would actually shape a redevelopment contrary to the idea of deconcentrating poverty and providing a range of housing options.

"Many feel that the proposed master plan should not be approved until there is further community input and acceptance," Belmont resident Greg Jackson said.

Last month, Belmont residents came out in droves to protest a previous part of the plan — turning a Garrett Street parking lot, known as the housing authority's Levy Avenue site, into 36 public housing units. That was proposed to provide a place for public housing residents to relocate when

other sites are being redeveloped, though Kilroy said the plan for the site has since changed and could end up being mixed-income.

Kilroy said upcoming meetings would be scheduled with the city neighborhoods that will be affected by redevelopment, though no dates have been decided. Such a meeting already took place with Belmont residents earlier this month.

Of the master plan, Commissioner Jason Halbert said, "I think we should view this document as a beginning, not an end."