



**District of Columbia Housing Authority**  
1133 North Capitol Street, NE Washington, DC 20002-7599  
(202) 535-1000

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**Tyrone Garrett, Executive Director**

**Q&As\***

**First Round RAD Resident Meeting**

**Potomac Gardens Senior & Potomac Gardens Family – Wednesday, August 25, 2020**

*\*Questions and Answers have been paraphrased and summarized*

**2PM MEETING – POTOMAC GARDENS SENIOR**

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- 1. Q: [Ms. B]: Is there talk of any vouchers if you do not want to come back? Is there going to be an improvement in the security around this place?**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** In a RAD conversion, there are no tenant protection vouchers; instead, RAD conversions come with project-based vouchers. If you want to transfer to another public housing site, we can try to accommodate this; however please note that there is a transfer application process and waiting list for the public housing transfer waiting list. [Note: the overall waiting list for public housing and HCVP has been closed since 2013.] [OCP is taking comment regarding improved security into consideration.]

- 2. Q: [Ms. L]: [Inquired about removing garbage.]**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** [Property Management is addressing issue offline].

- 3. Q: [Ms. W]: Will they transfer some or all of us to a different building while the renovations are going on?**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** We aren't doing any work currently, so there is no immediate need for anyone to move right now. When we go ahead with the CHAP application, it will likely take anywhere from 1 ½ to 2 years before we convert. Any renovation work we preform would likely be after that time period.

Currently, there are a limited number of vacant units at the senior building. We do not currently have enough vacant units available to do a complete phase, meaning we prepare a certain amount of temporary units that were formerly vacant for residents to move into while their original unit is renovated. Because of this, we are looking at Kentucky Courts, and possibly Hopkins, to renovate units there for residents to temporarily move into during their unit renovation. You always have the right to return to your original property and our current plan is to return everyone who wants to return to Potomac Senior building. Potomac Senior requires some significant improvements in order to bring the



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property up to 20-year viability [meaning that the property would be in good condition for the next 20 years]. Each phase of renovation will likely take 4-6 months, but again, this work will probably not start for another 18-24 months pending RAD approval.

**4. Q: [Ms. H]: [Inquiry regarding pest control.]**

**A: [Rochelle Berry, DCHA]:** [Ms. Berry is addressing issue offline with resident.]

**5. Q: [Ms. C]: Is there a plan for pest control with the rehabilitation?**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** When we do a full building rehabilitation, it should address the root of the pest problem because we will be going into the walls and replacing everything. Property Management will discuss what will be done in the meantime. Pest issues are not just a one-time fix, they are long-term management issues. While pest control should actively continue through renovation, we hope that the full building renovation will address the underlying pest issues. [Property management is addressing the issue offline.]

**6. Q: [Ms. C]: Are they going to keep the balconies?**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** We are intending to do a full building rehabilitation of the Potomac Senior and Family Mid-Rise Buildings, which means we will essentially be putting the building back to the way it was when it was new. This means that the layout, including balconies, will not change, but there will be new floors, kitchens, baths, etc. within the apartments. The only spaces that may see layout changes would be landscaping, parking lot, and the community spaces, if it was determined that a new layout would better suit resident needs.

**7. Q: [Ms. C]: [Expressed concern regarding air quality].**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** [OCP is taking air quality concerns into consideration].

**8. Q: [Ms. M]: [Inquired regarding if residents can provide input into the renovation plans for the unit layouts.]**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** [Expressed that resident input is welcome as DCHA moves into the design and planning phase.]

**9. Q: [Ms. H]: [Expressed concern that aides cannot use downstairs bathrooms].**

**A: [Rochelle Berry, DCHA]:** [Ms. Berry is addressing matter offline with resident].



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**10. Q: [Anon]: Does rehabbing mean gutting it?**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** Our rehabilitation plan is still being worked on, but the rehabilitation would probably be extensive in order to put the building and apartments into good condition. In the case of similar projects we are currently working on, the rehab work is extensive enough to require a resident to relocate into a temporary unit for up to 6 months.

**11. Q: [Ms. J]: We submitted a number of questions to the transformation plan website. How long will it take to get responses to those?**

**A: [Jose Sousa, DCHA]:** There were a lot of questions, and we will work together as a team to get these questions answered. These were very thoughtful and regulatory-based questions, and will help us shape our content for our next resident engagement meeting. Hard copies of your questions and answers will be provided to residents, as well as distributed via e-blast. [Note: Answers to the questions submitted to the transformation plan mailbox will be provided in a separate written communication and also posted to the website.]

**12. Q: [Ms. W]: Are you all just doing work to the senior building and high-rise at 700, and nothing to other apartments?**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** The RAD conversion will affect the Potomac Gardens Senior building and the 700 building [AKA Potomac Gardens Family Mid-Rise]. This meeting is for the senior building and the 6PM meeting will focus on the 700 building. We don't have plans for the walk-ups yet, but we will keep residents informed along the way as we determine a plan for those units.

**13. Q: [Ms. M]: Will there be minutes from this meeting? [Likewise inquired about the elevators.]**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** Yes, we will provide links to the meeting as well as the Q&A. Regarding the elevators; we just successfully completed a rehabilitation of a single elevator in the Potomac Gardens Family 700 building. We are now conducting the scoping on the two elevators in Potomac Gardens Senior. We will rehabilitate these elevators one at a time over the next year.

**14. Q: [Ms. J]: Is it too early, or did DCHA determine if Potomac Gardens Family will be a total demolition?**



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**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** In order to determine the level of rehabilitation needed at all of our properties; DCHA conducts physical needs assessments every five years. We will do another assessment this year to assess the condition of Potomac Gardens along with all of DCHA's other properties. In addition to the data we collect from the physical needs assessment, we will talk with residents as well and take comments. For example, residents may make suggestions similar to the ones mentioned at this meeting such as: recommending that we change the internal apartment layout to allow persons to access apartment bathrooms without having to walk through bedrooms, add range hoods in kitchens, and address lack of good heat and AC in hallways. Based on what we know about the current conditions at Potomac Gardens, and based on what residents have said, we believe that the project will require a pretty extensive rehabilitation. To accommodate this extensive rehabilitation, residents will need to relocate to temporary units during the renovations. We will do renovation in phases. Similar to the Judiciary House rehabilitation [also a RAD conversion property] we will be doing phases by vertical "tiers" of units instead of floor-by-floor. We have to do the renovations this way because of the need to address building utilities and services which run vertically through the building. Once we have a plan for how we are going to phase the project, we will present it to residents at a future meeting. Based upon our experiences at similar projects we expect it will take about 6 months to complete each phase.

**15. Q: [Ms. J]: Does this mean it will be a gut-rehabilitation?**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** Given the age of the building, we can expect the renovations to be fairly extensive. We might very well get to the level of a gut-rehabilitation. In order to do a RAD conversion, we have to put the building into "20-year viability." By HUD definition, this means that for the duration of the next 20 years, the building will be in state of good repair with no major renovations, other than minor scheduled replacements of equipment and basic maintenance. So we would be looking for 20 years of no major system upgrades.

**16. Q: [Ms. M]: Could you tell me, when it comes to PBRA why would FSS not continue? Is it in funding formula? Is it just they don't have room in escrow savings? We know that once the contract ends, FSS is not available unless DCHA wants to have its own FSS. Also what is the difference between PBV and PBRA?**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]: [Background Information:** The HUD RAD notice issued by HUD sets forth HUD requirements for treatment of the Family Self-Sufficiency "FSS" under the RAD program. It should be noted that in RAD conversions to date, DCHA has pursued PBV conversion and continued FSS programs. We will continue to update the residents. The differences between PBV and PBRA are summarized in the HUD RAD Fact Sheet # 10 [see answer below]. [*Sources:*



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<https://www.hudexchange.info/trainings/fss-program-online-training/1.2-what-is-fss.html>  
and [https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/FSSFACTSHEET\\_FEB2016.PDF](https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/FSSFACTSHEET_FEB2016.PDF)].

**A: [Andrea Powell, DCHA]:** PBV and PBRA are both project-based contracts between project owner and provider assistance, but they differ in the way they are administered. The Project-Based Rental Assistance (“PBRA”) program is administered directly through HUD and the Project-Based Voucher (“PBV”) program is administered through DCHA with funds provided by HUD. **[Further Information:** PBV is part of the Housing Choice Voucher (“HCV”) Program and is operated by DCHA under HUD guidance. DCHA can use some of this funding under HCV to establish subsidy contracts with properties. Thus, the voucher is project-based, meaning that the “voucher” or subsidy stays with the building and cannot be taken by the tenant out on the open market. A defining feature of PBV is that DCHA administers the program. PBRA on the other hand, is administered by HUD’s Office of Multifamily Housing. Much like in PBV, the subsidy or rental assistance or “voucher” is still tied to the property and not the tenant. Another key distinction is that with PBRA, the property is typically operated and owned by private owners.] *[Source: HUD RAD Fact Sheet #10,* [https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/RFS10\\_PBV\\_PBRA.PDF](https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/RFS10_PBV_PBRA.PDF)].

### **6PM MEETING – POTOMAC GARDENS FAMILY**

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1. **Q: [Ms. L]: Will there be central air conditioning in the renovated buildings? [Also expressed concern about wattage capacity.]**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** We appreciate the feedback, and want to continue to hear resident feedback on what people think we should include in the renovations. We are conducting a physical needs assessment for the property which will be done this year. Regarding the AC, we will be looking to put in a new HVAC system and plan to incorporate central air into the building. In terms of wattage, the building was built in the 1960s when there was a lower requirement electricity than there is today. We plan to upgrade the property’s electrical system as part of any renovation in order to bring it up to 21<sup>st</sup> century standards.

2. **Q: [Mr. G]: When will you be moving people out? And will we be able to move back?**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** If we apply for RAD, it will be at least a 1 ½ to 2 years until closing and conversion. Our current plan involves performing what we call an “in-place” rehabilitation; where most or all of the residents stay in the building and temporarily relocate as work progresses around the building in sequential phases. Residents will be notified when their unit is up for renovation and they need to move. Residents will not





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have to move until we start preliminary work to prepare for renovation. This will most-likely start sometime around the middle of next year at the earliest, and will only occur for residents in a portion of the building's units. If you are interested in transferring from the property, this is a separate conversation from RAD, and we can discuss this option with you separately. Additionally, one of the benefits of RAD is the right to return, so we will ensure that everyone is able to exercise this right.

**3. Q: [Ms. I]: If we need work done, will that have to wait until the full renovation takes place or will we be able to get plumbing and leaks repaired in the meantime?**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** If you have a maintenance problem, such as a leak or pest issue, those are maintenance items and we will continue to address those issues as they occur. The "big" fix may not happen until renovation, but we want to continue to address issues in the meantime to ensure residents are living in a safe, comfortable environment and all components of their apartment is functioning properly.

**4. Q: [Ms. J]: Will the new units have in-unit washing machines? There are not currently washing machines in my building.**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** We will make note of this comment and try to accommodate in-unit washer-dryer closets in a rehab plan for the apartments. That is a great suggestion.

**5. Q: [Ms. P]: How long does the RAD conversion process take?**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** The RAD conversion takes about 1 ½ to 2 years. Full renovation work will mostly occur AFTER that conversion takes place.

**6. Q: [Ms. J]: I currently live in a two bedroom in the 700 building. Will I be relocated to a one bedroom or the senior building?**

**A: [Alex Morris]:** [Recommended that resident speaks to Ms. Jackson or Ms. Jeter of the Mobility team if she is interested in transferring in advance of RAD conversion.]

**A: [Andrea Powell, DCHA]:** You do have the opportunity to live at Potomac Gardens and we will try to make sure that you are right sized to the proper unit size. You can live off-site, if you choose, but one of the benefits of the RAD program is that every resident will have the right to return and have a place on the site.

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** Also, note that there are no one bedrooms in Potomac Gardens Family, so you might be able to relocate to a one bedroom at the senior building, but there are also other options in our public housing portfolio. Whatever scenario is most



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appropriate for you, we will make sure you are offered housing options that work for you and your family.

**7. Q: [Ms. D]: If we want to participate in the Voucher Program or the Homeownership Program, do we have to wait for the RAD conversion?**

**A: [Ron Fisher, DCHA]:** We can assist residents at the property who may be interested in purchasing a home. Also, you don't need a voucher in order to participate in the Homeownership Program. The contact information for your Community Navigator, Mr. Friday, is found earlier in the presentation, presented by Ms. Eboni Bordon. I highly recommend you contact Mr. Friday to get the ball rolling.

**8. Q: [Mr. T]: I live in senior building. Can I transfer from one apartment to another unit? Can I stay in the new apartment if I don't want to move back?**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** We will do a phased renovation of units. During the phased renovation, you will have to go to another apartment for a period of time while your apartment is renovated. In similar in-place rehab projects we are currently working on, that duration of time has been less-than 6 months. There are vacant units in the building which will be fully-renovated along with the project phases. Because of this, there may be certain limited instances where there is an opportunity for a resident to remain in that unit and only move once. We will provide more information regarding this option as we get closer to renovations. If you wish to transfer out of Potomac Gardens completely, that is a separate consideration than RAD, and we encourage you to reach out to property management to find out more information on the transfer process.

**9. Q: [Ms. B]: If I want to be relocated where would I go? I currently live in the walk-ups. I don't have a voucher and no special aid. What is going to happen?**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** We have another round of meetings to talk to you and other walk-up residents about your options. We are looking at other options for the low-rise. If you want to leave the site, it would be a voluntary transfer and we can put you in contact with someone about that. What we are talking about tonight is the RAD conversion for the Potomac Gardens Senior high-rise and the Potomac Gardens Family high-rise.

**10. Q: [Ms. W]: [Made personal inquiry regarding transfer.]**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** [This inquiry will be addressed with the resident offline.]



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**11. Q: [Ms. C]: How long will the Potomac Gardens stay open? During the renovation will I get a temporary voucher? Will there be any changes for folks who have no income? Does DCHA offer any resident programs?**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** We have no plans to change the building in such a way that it would not stay open. The rehabilitation of the building would occur in phases, with most, if not all, residents remaining in the building during phased renovation work. One of the benefits of the RAD program, where we convert the building from Section 9 Public Housing to Project-Based Section 8, is that you have the right to return. Because of this, you will not be provided with a temporary voucher, but instead you will be temporarily moved to another unit that fits your family composition. After the renovation, we will move you into your newly refurbished unit. Regarding rent, you will continue to pay 30% of your income after the RAD conversion, no matter what your income looks like. However, if you have an issue with rent payment, we encourage you to reach out to your property manager. Regarding DCHA programs, Ms. Eboni Bordon described these programs in the meeting. This meeting will be recorded, and we will make sure you have a copy of the recording to review this information.

**12. Q: [Ms. C]: [Suggested security cameras on each floor, also asked personal question about changing family composition.]**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** We will make note of that and can do that.

**A: [Rochelle Berry, DCHA]:** [Ms. Berry is following up with resident offline.]

**13. Q: [Anon]: [Provided suggestions for renovations, and expressed concern over rodent issue.]**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** [OCP is making note of suggestions].

**14. Q: [Ms. W]: [Resident expressed concern with general safety of property, as well as various maintenance issues.]**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** [DCHA made note of resident's concerns and is addressing them offline.]

**15. Q: [Ms. H]: [Expressed concern with water and window issues]**

**A: [Dawn Boyd, DCHA]:** PMO is responding to Emergency Work Orders at this time. If it is an emergency request residents should call (202) 535-1000 for Emergency Repairs.





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**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** Regarding the question about the windows, we will look to replace the windows as part of a full rehab of the building under RAD. As I mentioned earlier, the RAD process will take approximately 1 ½ to 2 years to complete the conversion and then the major rehabilitation work can start. As Ms. Boyd stated, please reach out to property management with any immediate concerns.

**16. Q: [Ms. L]: Will the renovated units be smaller than the current units in the Senior Building?**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** No, the units will not be smaller. The dimensions will be the same. The renovations will make upgrades to the units but not change the overall layout. That being said, while we may add a laundry closet or a small element to a room that may reduce other living spaces slightly, we will not be changing the unit bedroom count or unit mix.

**17. Q: [Ms. V]: What is the lifecycle of RAD?**

**A: [Alex Morris]: [Clarification:]** The initial term of the RAD HAP contract will be not less than 15 years. Renewal of the HAP is required by HUD, so the term of the HAP, including the first renewal, will be not less than 30 years and can be extended further based upon availability of funding.]

**18. Q: [Ms. I]: Who makes the decision about which HUD funding Potomac Gardens will receive, PBV or PBRA? If so, when will we know?**

**A: [Alex Morris, DCHA]:** [DCHA ultimately chooses to pursue PBV or PBRA. At this time we have not yet determined which avenue to pursue.]