



October 28, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of Homeward Bound I write to express our support and endorsement of the proposal to develop deeply affordable housing at 339 W. Haywood Street as envisioned by Haywood Street Community Development.

Homeward Bound is the community leader in best practices to end homelessness, and has been using the Housing First model since 2006. Our mission is to prevent and end homelessness in our community through permanent housing and support. Through our work every day, Homeward Bound is keenly aware of the urgent need for all forms of affordable housing in our community. We are familiar with the plans of HSCD to fill some of the particularly critical unmet need for deeply affordable housing by constructing 45 units on the lot at 339 W. Haywood Street.

This location provides excellent access to residents who need to live near the city center to access essential services. We also note the following specific reasons:

- The Bowen Report underscored the significant deficit in housing available to those at the lowest AMI levels, including that 90% of subsidized housing operates with a waiting list.
- Housing such as that envisioned on this site is essential to address the unmet needs of those with low incomes in our community. In particular, we endorse the vision of HSCD to provide housing “designed with dignity, built for belonging, and created to frustrate poverty.”
- The plan allows for community meeting space and engagement with community partners such as Homeward Bound to address needs for residents such as access to food, legal services, health care, mental health services, and other critical support.
- The project will be primarily voucher-based. The federal housing voucher program provides a type of payment that low-income individuals can use to pay for rent in the private market. Currently, the number of landlords in Buncombe County who will accept vouchers is extremely limited and many low-income residents are unable to use vouchers that they hold. Experts suggest that 55% of vouchers are unused because of the lack of places willing to accept vouchers.

We support and endorse this project and look forward to it addressing this critical need for housing in our community.

Sincerely,

Cindy McMahon
Interim Executive Director