

November 2, 2021

Asheville City Council
70 Court Plaza
Asheville, NC 28801

Dear Council Members,

On behalf of United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County, we write to express our enthusiastic support and endorsement of the proposal for deeply affordable housing on Asheland Avenue envisioned by the Haywood Street Community Development Corporation (HSCD).

United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County is committed to our vision for a community where everyone belongs and everyone thrives. We are aware of the urgent need for all forms of affordable housing in general, and deeply affordable housing in particular, in our community. We are familiar with the plans of HSCD to fill some of that unmet need by constructing 45 units on the lot at 339 W. Haywood.

We support this project because more deeply affordable housing options are needed in Asheville and this location would be very convenient for lower income people who need to live near the city center to access essential services. We also note the following more 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, and that there is no availability of affordable housing units in our city.
- Housing like that envisioned on the Haywood property is essential to address the unmet needs of those living in poverty 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 activity space for relationship and community building for residents, the neighborhood, and the greater Asheville area.
- 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 endorse this project and appreciate Council’s consideration of the many ways it will address the need for housing in our community. Should you have any questions or concerns, please be in touch.

Sincerely,



Dan Leroy
President and CEO



Susanne Swanger
Board Chair

UNITED WE WIN

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