

Edison Housing Authority Resident Questions and Answers for the Robert Holmes Gardens RAD Application Process Resident Meetings held April 21 & June 23, 2022

1) Are all the buildings going to be demolished?

- No that is not the plan, there will be renovations, but demolition will not occur unless there are underlying issues found we do not know about.

2) One tenant believes the unit only needs painting, and they are concerned about the move due to health issues.

- The units do need more than just paint. Since the central boiler that supplies heat and hot water is going to be replaced, all units will need work as new HVAC is being installed in each unit. More than just painting will be done for all units. If there are health concerns regarding a move, specific accommodations will be made for any household that need such accommodations.

3) When a family is placed into another unit or hotel, is the family guaranteed the same unit?

- That is the intention, however, families will be right sized, which means if you are currently in a 3-bedroom unit and only are eligible for a 2-bedroom you will be moved to a 2-bedroom. This may be done now pursuant to the EHA's Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy. Also, the intention is to create assessable units where possible. Some residents have informed us that they would prefer to move one time to a newly renovated unit and not move back to their original unit. These concepts will be reviewed with the residents as part of developing a relocation plan for the site.

4) Who pays for the move, furniture, and rent? Concerned about personal items.

- The relocation plan will be developed in additional meetings with residents. The tenants will not pay anything for the move. The EHA will have funds in the project budget to cover all relocation related expenses.

5) Will the tenant association still be allowed to function?

- Yes, the housing authority will also continue to fund \$25/unit per year to the tenant association.

6) Are units going to be exterminated before moving into a unit that was occupied by a previous family? Concerned about medical issues.

- Yes. All units will be inspected and cleaned and exterminated as necessary when a family moves out so another family can move back in without concern. The current extermination plan will continue.

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7) If someone chooses to use their voucher, can they return to EHA?

- The vouchers in the RAD conversion will be project based. Therefore, they stay with the units and all residents have the right to stay on site with these project-based Vouchers, there will not be a requirement to move off site. To accommodate the renovations the EHA may need to have some units vacant during the rehab period and may offer to residents that want to move out of the site permanently a tenant-based voucher to do so. This would be limited and only for those that desire to leave Robert Holmes Gardens.
- We reviewed Choice Mobility in the presentation. After one year in a project-based unit, if a household desires to move, it can notify the EHA and the EHA will give said household a preference on the Section 8 tenant-based wait list.

8) With the Section 8 Choice Mobility, can a resident move out anywhere.

- Yes, after one year a resident can request to be put on a list for an available tenant-based voucher and use that voucher to move to a different rental unit in a different location. You can move anywhere in the U.S. as long as rent is compatible, and funding is available.

9) If we have to be placed out of the complex, where would we go? A hotel or another apartment complex?

- There is no intention to move residents off-site. Offsite moves will only be for the residents that request them and only on a limited basis. If more residents want to move off-site, then the EHA has available tenant-based voucher, and or, more than need to move to accommodate the rehabilitation, a lottery will be held to choose the applicants. Said residents will use a Section 8 voucher to find suitable housing.

10) With a voucher is the rent going to be subsidized?

- Yes, the voucher subsidizes the rent.

11) Can we move from one EHA complex to the other? Meaning from Robert Holmes Gardens to Engel Gardens?

- Yes, if there are vacancies at Julius Engel Gardens.

12) During renovation, will you consider adding certain accessibilities, like stair lifts?

- We will assess the wants and needs of the residents and the condition of the units and make reasonable accommodations.

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13) Can we get speed bumps built?

- That can be a consideration to be made once we begin the detailed planning for the renovations.

14) Suggestion: a stackable washer and dryer can be put in the closet in the units.

- We believe this is a good idea, if there is adequate funding available.

15) If you want to relocate, do you have to stay in Middlesex County? Can you go anywhere with a voucher? What is the process?

- You can go anywhere with your voucher as long as the amount covers the rent. EHA will assist with porting your voucher to another housing authority that is located where you want to move.

16) If you want to move, how long do you have to relocate, what if you can't find a place?

- If you cannot find a place to move, you will not lose your current unit. To be clear, there is no plan to relocate residents from Robert Holmes Gardens. The plan is to rehabilitate Robert Holmes and the existing residents get to stay in the newly renovated units. There is not going to be an option for residents to choose to just relocate off-site.

17) What happens if no residents want to leave?

- Usually there are more than enough residents intending to move out and during the normal course of business there are usually vacancies. There is not a need for that many vacancies for the rehabilitation, however, if there are none, we will have to change the temporary relocation process. Most work can be done with tenants staying in place.

18) Is the EHA leaving apartments vacant at this time or accepting new tenants?

- The EHA will fill the current vacant units with new tenants from the waiting list.

19) How long is the entire process?

- We are still early in the process so the time line can change. The estimate is for a year to convert to RAD and then an 18-month renovation process.

20) Could we change the siding color during renovation?

- That can be a consideration, once renovation plans are started.

21) Is the expectation of the renovation process to improve the curb appeal?

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- Yes, and the residents through a series of design charrettes with the architects will be part of the process on the final plan design.

22) What will be done to address the safety issue? Residents here do not feel safe.

- We can have a more thorough conversation down the line regarding safety and what we can do to improve it. Certain renovations, like front porches, can be made to increase the number of eyes outside. We will also look into upgrading the camera system and creating a location for community policing.

23) Can the renovations include increasing the size of the bathrooms?

- That cannot be answered until reviewed by architects.

24) Are workers (contractors and architects) going to be coming into units to look inside and do assessments?

- Yes, once HUD issues a CHAP, a more detailed review of the property will be completed.

25) Will all apartments be made to look the same?

- Yes, all apartments will be renovated to the same level.

26) I currently have Section 8 applications in other places, is this an advantage? If I'm offered one, should I take the voucher?

- This is a decision for you and your family. If you want to move out of the site even knowing that it will be rehabilitated and a housing authority offers a voucher, there is no reason not to take advantage of that. The EHA is not making tenant-based vouchers available to everyone at the site.

27) Is making assigned parking a possibility?

- Yes

28) Will you provide a call-in number or put in writing what was discussed at the meeting?

- The housing authority has set up a special RAD phone line at (908) 444-0723. The questions asked will be answered in writing and will be sent as a newsletter to the residents. Also, all information about EHA's RAD program can be found on their website at www.edisonha.org.

29) Who is going to own the property?

- The EHA will own the property; however, an entity will be set up to collect the rent and your lease will be with said entity. The entity will be an affiliate of the EHA.

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30) Where do you get the money for renovation?

- As the plan stands now, the housing authority intends to obtain a mortgage on the property to cover renovation costs. It will also discuss gap funding from local and state sources, as well as potentially apply to the Federal Home Loan Bank's Affordable Housing Program.

31) What about smoking units? Will the policy or rules change?

- Currently, the same no smoking policy will remain the same. Residents and their guests are not allowed to smoke in their units. All smoking must be done outside, 20 feet from the building.

32) Can we still live in the unit while it is being redone?

- Our expectation is that you have to be out of the unit for 4-6 weeks, but we can discuss accommodations if needed. We have been moving residents of their units at other housing authority projects due to the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, much of the projects were done with tenants remaining in the unit during the renovations. This will be reviewed and discussed with the EHA administration and residents to find the best approach.