

**Resident Centered Resolution to Keep Public Housing Public:
Making Minneapolis a National Leader in Protecting Public Housing as a Public Good**

WHEREAS, housing is a human right; and

WHEREAS, the City of Minneapolis is facing a housing crisis; and

WHEREAS, this housing crisis has caused a homelessness crisis; and

WHEREAS, ensuring all residents have decent and stable housing that is affordable (30% of their income) to Minneapolis residents is an important priority concern of this Mayor and City Council; and

WHEREAS, building more public housing that is 100% publicly owned is the best way to do so; and

WHEREAS, 25,000 Minneapolis residents currently live in public housing, with tens of thousands more on the waiting list; all are poor, and over 80% are people of color, immigrants, refugees, seniors and people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, it is important to clarify that housing that is most often publicly described as “affordable” is not affordable for low-income households; and

WHEREAS, there is an increased support for funding public housing at the Federal, State, and Local levels; and

WHEREAS, indicative of this change the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority received increased funding from HUD in 2018, including a 45% increase in Capital Funding; and

WHEREAS, the Draft 2019 Federal Spending Bill approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee further increases Federal funding for public housing; and

WHEREAS, preventing the long term loss of homes requires building more public housing as a public good; and

WHEREAS, over 18,000 people have signed a petition to keep public housing in Minneapolis public; and

WHEREAS, the City Council rejects the notion that preserving or expanding public housing requires privatization, including any method of privatization, be it Section 8 privatization, RAD, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Section 18 Disposition, and others; and

WHEREAS, MPHA has recently informed members of the City Council and Mayor of their “Strategic Vision and Capital Plan for 2018-2020,” a plan to privatize public housing properties by transferring ownership of its publicly owned properties to a private non-profit corporation pursuant to the HUD-administered Rental Assistance Demonstration program (RAD) and to cancel all current public housing leases and replace them with Section 8 vouchers, a process which was rejected by residents at the Glendale Townhomes in 2015; and

WHEREAS, Section 8 has failed residents throughout the nation and Twin Cities, and MPHA’s current plans to displace low-income seniors on fixed incomes out of public housing, and their community, and give them Section 8 vouchers would worsen the chronic homelessness crisis among seniors; and

WHEREAS, residents of public housing have rights as guaranteed under Federal, State, Local, and International Human Rights laws which must be respected and enforced; and

WHEREAS, relocation is displacement, and research from the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs has found that as few as 1 in 5 relocated residents may return to their homes, but the real experiences of these residents is that they never come back; and

WHEREAS, MPHA is unable to make any promises as to the future of residents at any properties whose ownership and control has been transferred to private entities; and

WHEREAS, the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority was created by the City Council and in significant part relates to the Minneapolis City Council and Mayor pursuant to the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Chapter 420; and

WHEREAS, the MPHA has responsibility as a public agency to maintain public housing properties as a public good and, pursuant to Minneapolis Code of Ordinances, Chapter 420, to file quarterly reports with the City and comply with the City's community engagement process; and

WHEREAS, in violation of the Chapter 420's reporting requirements MPHA has not filed quarterly reports with the City Council and, in violation of MPHA, HUD, and City community engagement policies, and has failed to actively encourage resident and community participation in the 8 month redevelopment planning process that produced MPHA's "Strategic Vision and Capital Plan," a plan which will displace thousands of people from MPHA's high-rises through RAD and Section 8 privatization and displacement; and

WHEREAS, MPHA has deliberately hid the dangers of the RAD privatization mechanism from public housing residents as documented by their decision to file a Letter of Intent to privatize the Elliot Twins, located in Ward 6, in 2017 without informing either residents or the city; and

WHEREAS, public housing in Minneapolis is important to its residents, and the City Council and Mayor seek an open working partnership with resident leaders and organizers who are working hard to save public housing; and

WHEREAS, the City Council are not persuaded that any form of privatization of Minneapolis public housing stock, whether via transfer of ownership to a private, non-public entity, sale to a private developer, or otherwise, is warranted; and

WHEREAS, a February 2018 GAO report called for by Rep. Maxine Waters documents the lack of accountability for the dangers of the RAD program because HUD has been unwilling or unable to take responsible steps to ensuring the safety of residents in the nation-wide RAD redevelopment process, which underlines the importance of City Council and Mayoral vigilant involvement; and

WHEREAS, the residents at the first two properties scheduled for privatization through RAD (Elliot Twin Towers and Glendale Townhomes) include a high percentage of East African Somali and Oromo seniors and elders, and MPHA's plans would result in disparate impact as defined by the Fair Housing Act; and

WHEREAS, the City of Minneapolis has long prioritized subsidies for landlords and developers over funding for public housing;

NOW THEREFORE be it resolved by the City Council and Mayor of Minneapolis:

1. That any plan for public housing that is not created, supported, and approved by residents is not legitimate.
2. That any plan that require residents to be relocated for redevelopment purposes is displacement.
3. That any plan that transfers public housing to private Section 8 ownership, or any other form of privatization, dismantles public housing as a public good.
4. Section 8 vouchers are not a replacement for public housing.
5. That “deeply subsidized” or “deeply affordable” housing is not the same thing as public housing or income based housing at 30% of income for rent.
6. The City of Minneapolis will exercise its authority, good offices, and public voice to oppose all forms of privatization of public housing in Minneapolis, including RAD, LIHTC, removal of DOT, and to
 - a) screen disinvestment history and any plans for public housing, including but not limited to Glendale in Ward 2, Elliot Twins in Ward 6, Rainbow Terrace in Ward 5, and Friendly and Spring Manors in Ward 3, for disparate racial, ethnic, religious impact;
 - b) protect all public housing and build more; and
 - c) oppose the sale and lease or transfer of ownership of public housing buildings;
 - d) eliminate future displacements;
 - e) fund public housing as a public good;
 - f) hold MPHA accountable to fix and repair properties (such as Elliot Twins and Glendale Townhomes)
7. Exercise due diligence in monitoring that the requirements of a) Chapter 420; b) MPHA’s Community Engagement obligations; The 1980 Minneapolis City’s special law that limits the power of MPHA and d) federal safeguards are followed.
8. Earn a position of state and national leadership by guaranteeing housing as a human right by funding public housing , keeping public housing public as a public good, and adhering to this Resolution.