



## CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE

*To be a place where everyone thrives*

Human Rights Commission  
P.O. Box 911  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902  
Telephone: 434-970-3023

Dear Mayor Wade and City Councilors,

Pursuant to Sec. 2-433.(c) of the Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance, it is the role of the Human Rights Commission to “identify and review systemic issues, policies, and practices of the City of Charlottesville and advise its boards, commissions, and other public agencies within the City on issues related to human rights.” During our annual planning meeting on March 22, 2025, Commissioners identified *“Housing Access and Stability Across Protected Classes and Economic Status”* as the primary focus of their work in 2025. Commissioners sought feedback from community members and subject matter experts regarding specific, city level priorities that may have both local and regional impacts on housing across protected classes and economic status.

The Commission is deeply grateful for the ongoing efforts of City Manager Sam Sanders and City Council in the area of preventing homelessness and resolving Charlottesville’s housing affordability crisis.

At its work session on November 6, 2025, the Commission voted to recommend the following:

### 1. **Expand access to immediate shelter**

- **Open an equitable and low-barrier year-round shelter.**

We consider the purchase and renovation of the property at 2000 Holiday Drive a positive development.

The Commission recommends that an array of services be made available on-site regularly, including three hot meals per day; laundry and shower facilities; a way for community members experiencing homelessness or housing instability to receive mail; and regular opportunities to meet with caseworkers to help navigate social services, legal challenges, and next steps to finding stable housing.

Given that the site is located a distance away from services offered in more central locations, we recommend that a door-to-door shuttle be made available, or that every effort to be made to ensure the nearby bus stop is fully accessible to residents.

We understand that City management is currently in dialogue with local service providers to determine how to use this site to best serve the community. The Commission supports that ongoing dialogue.

- **Multi-sited effort to provide shelter in additional locations.**

Whereas the development of the site at 2000 Holiday Drive will be a long-term process, the need for housing and immediate shelter is acute. For this reason, the Commission recommends that the City continue to move forward to develop housing and shelter options at additional sites including Cherry Avenue, Avon Street/Levy Avenue, and Zero East High.

We recommend that the Council support the exploration of different shelter options, especially emergency shelter for families experiencing homelessness.

## **2. Expand opportunities for community-members to obtain stable housing, or to remain housed.**

- **Expand Charlottesville Supplemental Rental Assistance Program (CSRAP) to increase the total number of vouchers.**

This program makes affordable rental housing a reality for low-income, elderly, disabled, and veteran members of our community.

- **Explore a pilot program to incentivize landlords to rent to individuals facing barriers to housing access.**

The Commission is aware that the Housing Advisory Committee (HAC) is exploring the feasibility of a risk reduction fund that is geared toward incentivizing landlords to rent to voucher-holders. The Commission supports this effort, and we hope to engage with HAC to explore the possibility of expanding the incentive program to reach other populations that face barriers to accessible housing, such as prior evictions, large judgments, poor credit, and previous involvement with the criminal justice system.

- **Increase City-funded rent relief for those experiencing evictions.**

Raise maximum City-funded rent relief available through the Pathways Program from \$1,000 per request to an amount commensurate with an average month's rent in Charlottesville.

- **Continue to encourage the building of housing, including affordable housing.**

We recommend that Council continue to support efforts to address the housing shortage, with an emphasis on housing that is affordable to individuals earning 0-20% AMI, Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE) households, and voucher holders. For voucher holders specifically, consider ways to increase the availability of housing priced within the voucher payment standard and maintained sufficiently to pass HUD inspection.

Sincerely,

Heather Roberson Gaston  
Chair  
Charlottesville Human Rights Commission