

Healthy, Dignified, and Welcoming Neighborhoods

OBJECTIVE: We need healthy, dignified, and welcoming neighborhoods that promote mental and physical well-being for all residents, particularly our elders, our youth, residents of color, LGBTQIA+ residents, those in public housing, those with low incomes, and those with physical and mental disabilities. We need homes that are safe and clean inside, with walkable and natural surroundings that are cared for, maintained, pleasant, beautiful, and bring us joy.

BACKGROUND: Currently, some residents in public housing and rental properties are living in unhealthy spaces with black mold, plumbing issues, lead paint, or high carbon monoxide levels. In addition, many residents see that their neighborhoods are not as aesthetically pleasing, cared for, or well-maintained as other neighborhoods. Seeing that some places are better cared for and more welcoming than others has a negative effect on physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Unhealthy housing contributes to a cycle of poverty where residents are forced to focus on immediate physical and mental health concerns, lessening their ability to get involved in and invest in their community, move out of poverty, or build generational wealth. It is hard or almost impossible for hopes and dreams to seed or grow in places that are not healthy and dignified.

We want affordable housing, including public housing, and resources for maintaining open and green spaces to be equitably distributed, visually welcoming, environmentally healthy, and able to provide dignified living throughout Durham.

Quotes from Durham Residents

“It can be mentally damaging if it looks and feels like you’re in prison when you haven’t done anything wrong and that changes your mental state.”

“Every human being desires a place to live that they can feel pride in”

“Now it seems there is a growing number of homeless that even while the city and state "grows," they are left behind.”

“People feel like the lost, forgotten, that no one cares about. Either people in control of the village will surround people to make sure they’re warm or the rebels will burn it down so they can be warm. Not because they’re malicious, but just because they’re cold. We don’t understand that we make people monsters in our society and our inability to act helps perpetuate that. There’s no human alive that doesn’t want their existence acknowledged in some way.”

“We’re still feeling displaced even though you have a roof. That’s not something people acknowledge. You might have a roof but you don’t want to go back to it.”

“Put the appropriate amount of pressure on Durham Housing Authority to make the necessary changes needed so people can live in a clean and healthy home. Also, I would like to see an accountability review board set up by the residents for Durham Housing Authority for each community that is stipended for the residents to go over the processes of requests that have been made for repairs, make sure that it is followed through and if not, it is re-reported so that it is accurately handled. There’s no process currently to review how these are handled and DHA is severely understaffed.”

“Please break up/space out low income housing. Having a large low income housing community isn’t helping anything but dividing people. Look to cities like Fort Worth and Dallas, TX who have made efforts to break up low income housing”

“The black community always get over looked or they tear it down and move people out of their home. What’s fair about that. Not having a lot of money, doesn’t mean u don t deserve a nice place and safe place to live.”