

LIVE AS IF
YOU WERE TO
DIE TOMORROW.
LEARN AS IF
YOU WERE TO
LIVE FOREVER.
~ GANDHI ~

GCRA Board Meeting
October 27, 2026

November 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 Administration Committee meeting, 12:30	11 Veterans' Day (Office Closed)	12 Operations Committee meeting, 12:30	13	14
15	16	17	18	19 Board Annual Meeting, 12:30	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 Thanksgiving Day (Office Closed)	27 Day after Thanksgiving (Office Closed)	28
29	30					

December 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		¹ Board Holiday Luncheon, 12:00 Noon, Roost @ Hyatt	²	³	⁴	⁵
⁶	⁷	⁸	⁹	¹⁰	¹¹	¹²
¹³	¹⁴	¹⁵	¹⁶	¹⁷	¹⁸	¹⁹
²⁰	²¹	²²	²³	²⁴	²⁵	²⁶
			(Office Closed for Christmas holidays)			
²⁷	²⁸	²⁹	³⁰			

**GCRA Board Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, October 27, 2026 – 12:30 p.m.
GCRA Board Room**

- 1) Call to Order Chair Jane Kizer
- 2) Invocation
- 3) *Approval of September 22, 2026 Board Minutes (Pages 5 – 8)
- 4) *Approval to Sell 312 Lion Heart Lane, Greer (Handout)
- 5) Administration Committee (Pages 9 – 12)
 - a) *Approval of the 2027 Holiday Schedule
 - b) Financial Highlights – KPI (Page 13)
- 6) Operations Committee (Pages 14 – 16)
- 7) Other Business
 - a) Executive Director Updates
- 8) Executive Session. When necessary, the Board convenes in Executive Session for the discussion of negotiations incidental to proposed contractual arrangements and proposed sale or purchase of property, the receipt of legal advice where the legal advice relates to a pending, threatened, or potential claim or other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege, settlement of legal claims, or the position of the public agency in other adversary situations involving the assertion against the Redevelopment Authority of a claim, or other matters authorized by the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.
- 9) Adjournment

Minutes
Greenville County Redevelopment Authority
Regular Session
Tuesday, September 22, 2026

Board Members Present: Jane Kizer, Chair
Denise Ernul, Vice Chair
Diana Weir, Treasurer
Barry Coleman
Dean Doolittle
David Doser
James Hammond
Robert Julian
Matthew Nocella
Joanna Reese
Paul Schweikardt
DeAndra “DJ” Wilson

Staff Members Present: Joe Smith, Executive Director
Beverly Robertson, Human Resources Manager
Pamela Proner, Finance Director
Francisco Arnaiz, Program Director
Julie Hallman, Senior Property Supervisor
Meg Macauley, Senior Executive Assistant & Office Manager

Guests Present: Russell Dodds, prospective board applicant
Ken Martin – Martin, Smith, & Co.

1. **Opening and Roll Call.** The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 12:30 p.m.
2. **Invocation.** The invocation was offered by Ms. Ernul.
3. **Approval of the August 25, 2026 Board Minutes.** On a motion by Mr. Doser, seconded by Ms. Weir, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the August 25, 2026 Board meeting as presented.
4. **Approval of Fiscal Year 2026 Audit Report.** Ms. Proner introduced Mr. Ken Martin of Martin, Smith, & Company who then presented the Fiscal Year 2026 Audit Report. Mr. Martin stated that his firm conducted an audit following general and government standards, gathering enough evidence so as to provide an opinion of GCRA’s financial statements. GCRA’s internal

control system is a positive one with detailed tests; no instances were found where controls were not followed. Myriad transactions flow through GCRA, but our accounting is straightforward, so the auditing is straightforward. Based on all testing and evidence gathered, the firm provided an unmodified opinion, which is the best assessment that can be given. Mr. Martin noted that he met with the Audit Committee just before the board meeting, giving more details about his firm's process, interim work, etc. and answered their questions.

Mr. Martin added that the organization had a strong financial year, with revenues down to just over \$11 million. Significant funding was received from the City of Greenville in the last couple of years; it was significant this past year but less than in previous years. He noted that GCRA had exercised careful cost controls, and that looking at the past several years, he sees that we have a history of living well within our means.

On a motion by Ms. Weir, seconded by Mr. Schweikardt, the Board unanimously approved the Fiscal Year 2026 Audit Report as presented.

5. **Approval of New Construction Change Order.** Mr. Smith referenced the memorandum on page 9 of the packet and stated that, under advisement by GCRA's engineers, staff intentionally omitted water tap fees from the original bids for Gridley Place construction; this expense was included in the overall project budget and was always anticipated as a project cost. The pricing has been analyzed and is in range of what we would have paid if we had included it originally. The change order timing is to allow work to continue, as contracts for vertical construction are already in place and site work is underway. Mr. Smith noted that GCRA will be reimbursed for a portion of the costs from ReWa; staff can apply for reimbursement after work is complete.

On a motion by Ms. Reese, seconded by Mr. Nocella, the Board unanimously approved the change order of \$345,373 for Upland Builder Group for the completion of utility connections for all 11 homeownership and rental units at Gridley Place.

6. **Administration Committee.**

- a. **Approval of Fiscal Year 2027 Consolidated Budget.** At their September meeting, the Administration Committee approved the 2026 Consolidated Budget as it was presented. Ms. Proner explained how the current year's Annual Action Plan funding and carry-forward appropriations from previous years combine to create the new fiscal year's consolidated budget, which for fiscal year 2027 is \$29,571,247. She stated that in committee, she reviewed the largest activities, including New Construction and Housing, Special Projects, Administration, Infrastructure, and Developer/Housing Partners. She noted the addition of the New Construction and Housing line item which helps to better express the nuances of all activities that contribute to housing.

On a motion by Ms. Weir, the Board unanimously approved the Consolidated Budget as presented.

Ms. Proner provided explanation about the timing for various elements of reporting and approvals. The Annual Action Plan was developed in conjunction with the Program Department in March and approved by the board in the spring. When the fiscal year is closed out at the end of June, the carry-forward budget is finalized by the Finance Department. Then the final consolidated budget is brought to the board in September after the auditors have completed their review.

- b. Financial Highlights/KPI.** Ms. Proner presented the Financial Highlights for the month of July, noting that we continued to have expenditures and activity during the month, and that our HUD funding allocation had just been received, so staff can now resume requesting reimbursement drawdowns. Ms. Kizer inquired as to the color-coding criteria for the report. Ms. Proner responded that green is not necessarily indicative of positive versus negative numbers, but that the colors draw attention to areas of concern or normal parameters and activity.

7. Operations Committee.

- a. Approval of Public Works Change Order.** Mr. Doser stated that the City of Greer requested additional items beyond those which were previously approved, and are requiring the changes in order to close out the site permit.

On a motion by Ms. Reese, the Board unanimously approved the public works change order of \$54,565 for the Fairview Townhomes infrastructure project as presented.

- b. Approval of Amendment to the Operations Program Guidelines.** Mr. Doser provided history regarding lease purchase agreements that were provided to prospective home buyers in the past and how the program was archived years ago when staff determined that it was no longer needed. However, staff have requested to now reinstate the program as it can assist clients once again.

On a motion by Mr. Schweikardt, the Board unanimously approved reinstatement of the Lease Purchase Program into the Operations Program Guidelines.

- c. Approval of Lease Purchase Profile.** Mr. Doser explained that there is a candidate for the program who is close to being able to qualify for bank financing to purchase a home but needs a bit more time for complete financial readiness. The proposed lease purchase arrangement will give the applicant one year with a potential six-month extension if needed, during which time she will participate in credit counseling and a homeownership course. Her rent payment will be reduced by \$400 per month, which can then be used to pay off other debts and increase her credit score, which should allow her to then qualify for a bank mortgage.

On a motion by Mr. Julian, the Board unanimously approved the lease purchase profile as presented.

8. Other Business – Executive Director Updates.

- a. Washington, DC Trip Takeaways.** Mr. Smith stated that he was pleased with the trip, having been very impressed by the Chamber of Commerce’s efforts and noting that a great deal of work in Washington of course takes place behind the scenes. Unfortunately, HUD Secretary Scott Turner, and Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy were unavailable, so sessions were held by undersecretaries who assist with forming policies. Mr. Smith believes that our federal funding is safe. He spoke about an after-hours tour of the Rotunda, Statuary Hall, and House Chamber that was fascinating and moving from a history perspective. Mr. Smith noted an excellent presentation by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce regarding national demographics, immigration changes and how this affects our GDP, and projections for the future; he has requested a copy of the presentation slides and will forward this to the board upon receipt. Most of the attendees were associated with housing in some way: architects, home builders, and leaders of housing agencies; there was ample opportunity for conversation regarding local projects, successes, and concerns.
- b. Partner Projects.** Mr. Smith stated that he will be taking Councilwoman Flemming on a site visit to provide details about United Ministries’ plans for the Project Railroad property. He will meet with Councilwoman Belge on Thursday and ultimately plans to meet with each member of Greenville City Council as well as Mayor White to ensure they all have thorough knowledge of the proposed project before Council reviews the annexation and rezoning applications.
- c. Operations Director Hiring Update.** Mr. Smith stated that the job posting is live online and will be open for several weeks, with interviews to be held likely in November, and with the hope of making an offer and hiring a successful candidate by December.
- d. Marketing/Sales.** Mr. Smith stated that there are four Fairview townhomes under contract, two of which should close this month and two more of which should close in October. Mortgage Loan Fund (MLF) financing is available for up to two buyers if that is necessary to sell the remaining units.
- e. Other Questions.** Mr. Julian asked if there is an update regarding investment rentals. Mr. Smith responded that there have been conversations recently regarding State Housing making their programs easier and about the hope that more LIHTC applications will be approved in the Upstate. Mr. Smith noted that we need local, state, and federal dollars to make a dent in the need for affordable housing.

- 9. Adjournment.** There being no further business, on a motion by Ms. Weir, seconded by Mr. Doser, the meeting was adjourned at 1:19 p.m.

Secretary

Memorandum

To: GCRA Board Members

From: Joanna Reese, Administration Committee Chair

Re: Administration Committee Meeting, October 13, 2026

Date: October 13, 2026

1. **Opening and Roll Call.** The Administration Committee met on Tuesday, October 13, 2026, at 12:30 p.m. Committee members present were Joanna Reese, Chair; Barry Coleman; Jane Kizer; Paul Schweikardt; and Diana Weir. Dean Doolittle was absent. Staff present were Joe Smith, Executive Director; Francisco Arnaiz, Program Director; and Meg Macauley, Senior Executive Assistant & Office Manager.
2. **Invocation.** The invocation was offered by Ms. Weir.

Action Items: The following item which was considered by the Administration Committee must be approved or ratified by the Board.

3. **Approval of 2027 Holidays.** Referencing the memorandum on page 5 of the packet, Mr. Smith stated that the proposed holidays are the same as they have been for many years with no additions or changes. One item of note is that the date for observation of New Year's Day 2028 will fall in 2027, so Friday, December 31st is included for this year's holiday list.

On a motion by Ms. Weir, seconded by Mr. Coleman, the committee unanimously approved the 2027 holiday schedule as presented.

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Please review the following items of business discussed at the Administration Committee meeting. These items will not be discussed in the Board Meeting unless there is a question or comment about them.

4. Administration Reports

- a. **Subrecipient Report.** Mr. Arnaiz stated that we have received our HUD grant funding and can begin to reimburse subrecipients for expenditures under their new contracts. He shared details about some of the agencies and what they can use their GCRA funding towards. Ms. Reese asked about required oversight. Mr. Arnaiz responded that staff conduct site visits every year to ensure that each agency is run in accordance with federal requirements and that they are spending their funding allocations appropriately.

5. Financial Reports

- a. **Financial Highlights – KPI.** Mr. Smith shared that Ms. Proner is absent from the meeting because she is participating in a training this week. He stated that the bank note for the Fairview Townhomes was paid off and two more units have been sold towards repaying ourselves back; the final sale necessary for full payback is scheduled for next week. With the number of current contracts and closings, by the end of November all but one Fairview townhome should be sold; they may all be sold by the end of the calendar year. Mr. Smith praised staff and GCRA's realtor for their diligent work towards this effort.

Mr. Smith added that \$54,778 in interest was earned for the month in the LGIP account, for a total of \$109,735 for the fiscal year, at an average interest rate of 3.9 percent.

- b. **August Financials.** There were no questions posed regarding the financial statements.

6. Other Business – Executive Director Updates.

- a. **Partner Projects.** Mr. Smith stated that Project Railroad went before the City of Greenville Planning Commission two weeks ago, with the unanimous decision to annex the property and change its zoning. It moves to full City Council in several weeks when Mayor White can be in attendance. Mr. Smith stated that he has spoken with everyone on City Council and all are impressed with the project. He added that United Ministries have already raised \$4.7 million towards their \$6.5 million budget before even going public with their fundraising efforts. The City may provide sidewalk assistance through their "In-Step" program, which would help the future residents safely reach their nearest bus stop. Mr. Smith noted that this partnership project will not generate any money for GCRA but perfectly aligns with our mission and raises GCRA's profile in the community.

Mr. Smith shared the exciting news that LIHTC funding was awarded for the Worley Road project; implementation meetings will begin soon.

Mr. Smith stated that he and Mr. Arnaiz will meet soon with an interested party who has a proposal for the Project Drive-In site.

- b. Marketing/Sales.** Mr. Smith noted in addition to the Fairview Townhomes updates above, the lease-purchase candidate for the Bramlett Road house has moved in and loves the home.
- c. City of Greer.** Mr. Smith shared that City of Greer representatives shared a letter with him several weeks ago indicating that they have been invited by HUD to be an entitlement community; this is triggered by census tract size and other demographics. They have just recently executed a new three-year agreement for GCRA to administer their federal funding but would like to investigate the potential to manage it on their own. Meetings and conversations will likely be ongoing, and Mr. Smith will keep the board informed.
- d. Neighborhood Outreach.** At Mr. Smith's request, Mr. Arnaiz provided an update about neighborhood outreach. Mr. Arnaiz stated that members of Program staff, along with a representative from Greenville County long-range planning, will attend a District 25 neighborhood meeting on the 24th at Upstate Circle of Friends, who have taken on the role of "hub" for the area in light of many neighborhood associations in the area not meeting regularly post-pandemic. Councilman Fant visits quarterly with citizens of his district via "Vision 25" meetings to share information. GCRA staff were invited to speak about our current activities, potential projects, and plans. Fliers and neighborhood surveys have been distributed. Mr. Smith noted the excellent relationship GCRA has enjoyed with Upstate Circle of Friends over the years and what an excellent service they provide for the community. He also noted the connection to District 25 via Ms. Ernul, and that Councilman Fant has always been a staunch supporter of GCRA.

Mr. Arnaiz also shared that he recently stood in for Mr. Smith at a Chamber of Commerce event regarding what Greenville wants to look like in 25 years, discussing interconnectedness of infrastructure, housing, place-making, and community growth. The event was mostly attended by business leaders, with some Council members present as well. The last session was regarding housing and why affordable housing matters, in particular to the business community.
- e. Heatherly Drive Replacement Housing.** Mr. Smith shared that the replacement house currently under construction at 106 Heatherly Drive in Judson may be sold instead of returning to the rental portfolio.

- f. Interest Rates.** Mr. Smith spoke about a recent article regarding interest rates in context of average home prices and average wages. A home that was once \$120,000 is now \$300,000 and wages have not increased at remotely the same pace. He noted a memorable quote from the consultant who produced housing studies for both the City and County of Greenville several years ago: “you don’t have a housing problem in Greenville; you have a poverty problem.” Mr. Smith stated that GCRA will continue to produce quality housing units and do all we can to get qualified applicants into them. He also noted that while we do not realize any financial return on the home repair program, we can save units and keep them in the housing stock a bit longer while keeping residents in safe homes.
 - g. Operations Director Hiring Process.** Mr. Smith shared that Find Great People are doing a wonderful job handling applications and initial interviews for the position. They have identified qualified candidates, and he anticipates holding interviews in the next week or two and still hopes to make an offer by December. Mr. Smith noted that he appreciates the board’s patience while he and Ms. Robertson along with Find Great People work to ensure the right person is identified and selected.
 - h. Board Reappointment Interviews – County Council.** Ms. Macauley noted that board member reappointment interviews will be conducted at the Committee of the Whole meeting on October 20th, likely at 4:00.
- 7. Adjournment.** There being no further business and on a motion by Ms. Weir, seconded by Mr. Coleman, the meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

GCRA Financial Highlights
Month at a Glance August 26

<u>Government-Wide</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Change from Prior Month</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Change from FY26 (FYTD)</u>	<u>%</u>
Total Cash	16,598,907	Decrease	-3%	Increase	243%
Total Assets	48,162,363	Decrease	-1%	Decrease	-2%
Notes Payable	4,370,411	Decrease	-9%	Decrease	-10%
Debt-to-income			7%		7%
Net Position	40,884,412	Increase	0%	Increase	0%
Net invest. in capital assets	11,829,335	Decrease	0%	Decrease	0%
Unrestricted net assets	29,055,077	Increase	1%	Increase	0%
<u>Governmental Funds</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Change from Prior Month</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>YTD</u>	
Revenue	285,264	Decrease	-67%	575,899	
Expenditures	295,163	Decrease	-61%	610,644	
Net change in fund balance	(9,899)	Decrease		(34,745)	
<u>Rental Portfolio</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Change from Prior Month</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>YTD</u>	
Net Income (loss)	(14,824)	Decrease	-659%	1,406	
<u>Local Government Invest. Pool</u>				<u>Interest</u>	
LGIP Balance:	16,199,064	% of total cash:	98%	54,778	Month
		Avg Interest rate:	3.90%	109,735	YTD



Memorandum

To: GCRA Board Members

From: David Doser, Operations Committee Chair

Re: Operations Committee Meeting, October 15, 2026

Date: October 15, 2026

1. **Opening and Roll Call.** The Operations Committee met on Thursday, October 15, 2026, at 12:30 p.m. Committee members present were David Doser, Chair; Denise Ernul; Matthew Nocella; and DeAndra “DJ” Wilson. James Hammond and Robert Julian were absent. Staff present were Joe Smith, Executive Director, and Meg Macauley, Senior Executive Assistant & Office Manager.
2. **Invocation.** The invocation was offered by Mr. Doser.

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Please review the following items of business discussed at the Operations Committee meeting. These items will not be discussed in the Board meeting unless there is a question or comment about them.

3. Operations Reports

- a. **Rental Portfolio and Delinquency Snapshot.** Mr. Smith stated that some extensive renovation work is being carried out for several Project 43 units after previous tenants passed away; the units will soon be ready for occupancy. He showed photos of construction underway at 106 Heatherly Drive, which should be completed by November 15th, and stated that consideration is underway regarding the possibility of selling it instead of returning it to the rental portfolio. Mr. Doser suggested excluding units that are under repair or reconstruction from the occupancy calculation for reporting.

The Rental Delinquency Report for September reflected a balance of \$17,256, an increase of \$2,231 since August.

- b. **Home Sales & Development Snapshot.** Mr. Smith referenced the summary and stated that of the 14 original Fairview townhomes, six were sold last year, one closed in September, another closed last week with two more to close next week. This leaves four remaining to be sold after that, for which three may soon have

signed contracts. As of the closing scheduled for the 19th, GCRA will be able to pay ourselves back for the bank loan payoff we covered with unrestricted funds. By the end of November, all but one unit should be sold. The lease-purchase candidate for the Bramlett Road house has moved in and loves the home.

- c. **Public Works, Partners, & Repairs Snapshot.** Mr. Smith showed photos of infrastructure and grading work underway at Gridley Place, noting that the graders and right-of-way contractors are working at the same time.

21 applications for the repair program are in progress, in various stages of vetting documentation, contract execution, etc.

- d. **Loan Portfolio Report.** Mr. Smith presented the 1st Quarter loan portfolio report, noting a delinquency rate of 2.0 percent, down 1.8 percent from the previous quarter. Five accounts were paid off in the amount of \$117,837.

Mr. Nocella asked if there are any trends or factors we notice from previous years. Mr. Smith responded that we typically see delinquency increase at Christmas time, when children return to school, and sometimes over the summer around vacation time. Most folks work to catch up, but we do have some chronically delinquent accounts we must manage closely.

4. **Other Business – Executive Director Updates.**

- a. **Partner Projects.** Mr. Smith stated that Project Railroad went before the City of Greenville Planning Commission two weeks ago, with the unanimous decision to annex the property and change its zoning. It moves to full City Council in several weeks when Mayor White can be in attendance. Mr. Smith stated that he has spoken with everyone on City Council and all are impressed with the project. He added that United Ministries have already raised \$4.7 million towards their \$6.5 million budget before even going public with their fundraising efforts.

Mr. Smith shared the exciting news that State Housing had awarded LIHTC funding for the Worley Road project; it was the number one application in the state.

- b. **City of Greer.** Mr. Smith shared that the City of Greer may accept HUD's invitation to become an entitlement community. They have just recently executed a new three-year agreement for GCRA to administer their program and federal funding but would like to investigate the potential to manage it on their own. Meetings and conversations will likely be ongoing, and Mr. Smith will keep the board informed.

- c. **Board Reappointment Interviews – County Council.** Ms. Macauley noted that board member reappointment interviews will be conducted at the Committee of the Whole meeting on October 20th, likely at 4:00.
 - d. **Operations Director Hiring Process.** Mr. Smith stated that he expects to conduct interviews next week with candidates identified by Find Great People. Mr. Doser inquired about staff morale regarding the upcoming hire and discussion ensued.
- 5. **Adjournment.** There being no further business and on a motion by Ms. Ernul, seconded by Mr. Nocella, the meeting was adjourned at 1:14 p.m.

The New York Times – Opinion: We Know How to Fix Homelessness. Look at Denver.

October 13, 2026 – German Lopez



Jack Fox for The New York Times

Homelessness, all appearances to the contrary, is a long-solved problem. We know both the causes and the cure. You wouldn't think that's the case from visiting many U.S. cities. Stymied by political and financial hurdles, progressive bastions — including Los Angeles, Seattle and Burlington, Vt. — appear to have given up. They have surrendered public spaces to the homeless and their encampments to the point that it's difficult to describe these spaces as truly for the public anymore.

Denver shows what happens when a city puts into place proven policies with determination and focus. Not only has it significantly reduced homelessness; it embarrasses every other urban jurisdiction that has failed to deal with its Covid-era surge of homeless encampments. Other cities no longer have an excuse.

Denver has recorded the biggest recent drop in street homelessness among the largest U.S. cities, according to my analysis of local data. The city's drop was roughly 13 times the national rate in 2025, the most recent year for [federal statistics](#). Since 2023, Denver's unsheltered population is down 64 percent. "What they're doing is working," said Samantha Batko, a senior fellow at the left-leaning Urban Institute, which is independently evaluating the city's progress.

Since Mayor Mike Johnston of Denver took office in 2023, he has focused on getting unsheltered homelessness to zero. He has done so by using some fairly standard ideas. Police officers break up homeless encampments, warning that repeated violations could lead to arrest. With the help of social workers, the city connects those people to services and shelters. Crucially, it has expanded those services to ensure that officers and social workers have something to connect people to.

By successfully combining enforcement and social services, Denver demonstrates that cities don't need to choose between those binaries. They should do both.

Politically, none of this is easy. On the policing side, progressives remain skeptical of using law enforcement to deal with what they see as largely an economic issue. On the housing side, the constraint is money. Building housing and shelters requires public and private funds that cities often don't have and aren't willing to prioritize over other spending and tax cuts.



Mayor Mike Johnston of Denver outside Elati Village. Credit...Jack Fox for The New York Times



Jack Fox for The New York Times

Speaking from an office stuffed with Colorado memorabilia, Mr. Johnston said he wanted to go further. He laid out a vision to ensure that all people are housed and that public spaces are actually available to the public. “Our fundamental mantra when we started was our belief that all of our problems are solvable and we’re the ones to solve them,” he told me.

On a Monday afternoon, Mr. Johnston played tour guide. He wanted to show me the city’s new homeless shelters and how they differed from traditional facilities. We walked 10 minutes from City Hall — the mayor stopped to congratulate a wedding party on the way out — to a block of tiny houses known as Elati Village.

Each resident there gets a small house that offers a level of privacy not typical for homeless shelters. Valentino Ortiz, a former Elati Village resident and a transgender man, said privacy was important for his safety. He recalled a previous stay at a more traditional shelter. “The third day, I was already getting sexually assaulted,” he said. At Elati, “you have a beautiful tiny home to call your own. You have hot showers. You can cook your own meals and do laundry.”

Next, Mr. Johnston took me to the Aspen, a city-owned hotel. For residents, it is like an apartment complex. The rooms weren’t too different from places I lived in before. Mr. Johnston said he wanted the city’s shelters to feel like real homes — “a room of one’s own.”

As we walked through the building, residents told the mayor they finally had been able to get their lives in order. Staff members at the Aspen and other shelters spend much of their time preparing people to leave. They help residents get the documents they need to find a job and permanent housing. They connect them to training, education programs and additional government aid, including housing vouchers and rent subsidies. Residents don’t face hard limits on how long they can stay, but providers are, under their contracts, evaluated on how many people they help get on the right path.

The goal is to keep people off the streets for good. To that end, the city still has to address [the high cost of housing](#). Denver has enacted some reforms, but buying and renting a home remain too expensive for much of the poor and middle class.

Ana Miller, an organizer for the homeless rights group Housekeys Action Network Denver, criticized the Aspen for some of its rules and their enforcement, particularly the staff’s room inspections. She also panned the shelter’s provider, Urban Alchemy, which [has faced criticism](#) in other cities for its unorthodox tactics, including its hiring of ex-convicts as staff members. Ms. Miller said Elati Village offers a better model than typical shelters, but she worried about resistance from neighborhoods to building more such communities. The neighbors living in apartments near Elati “literally point cameras at the community and watch them,” she said.



Valentino Ortiz, a former Elati Village resident.
Jack Fox for The New York Times



Jack Fox for The New York Times

Still, the numbers speak for themselves. Mr. Johnston said that no one has declined an offer to move into one of the new facilities and that they are consistently at or near capacity. The city's biggest problem is how it can buy or build more places like Elati Village and the Aspen to meet demand.

Much of the tens of millions of dollars the city has spent on shelters came from temporary federal funds that have expired. The Trump administration has also moved to cut housing subsidies across the country. The financial constraints have led some local officials [to question](#) whether the cost of the city's efforts is worth the benefit. If that sentiment spreads, it could doom progress.

At 6:30 a.m. on Tuesday, I met with a Denver police squad to see the enforcement side of the city's strategy. Officer Michael Nierenberg, who led the group, told me his goal was not to arrest people. Tall and imposing, he said the threat he presented was only an incentive to push people to get help. Social workers rode along.

Early in the patrol, we came across a tent. Inside, a couple slept with all their belongings scattered across the floor. Officer Nierenberg waited patiently as they woke up, and then he explained the consequences of breaking laws against camping outside: a verbal warning, then a written warning, then a ticket or arrest. He started asking about the couple's situation. They were from Texas, they said, and still had family there. They would like to go back, but they didn't have the means to do so, they added.

Officer Nierenberg told them to pack up their tent and said he would see what he could do. He sat in his car, making calls and looking through his computer. After about 15 minutes, he came back with a bus ticket. The man, who identified himself as Chance, cried tears of joy.

We continued like this for the rest of the morning. Sometimes the encounters were less pleasant. One man told the officers, in colorful language, to go away. Other times, people were cordial. "It has been a typical morning," the officer told me as we headed back to the police station.

Progressives tend to view the enforcement side of anti-homelessness strategies with disdain because it can involve criminalizing an economic or a mental health issue. At the same time, other residents don't want encampments clogging up parks and sidewalks. Progressive cities have tried to get around the dilemma by flooding the streets with social services, hoping that offers of help would get people on the streets to pack up. The reality, as cities [have painfully learned](#), is that people often need a stronger push to abandon their tents.

The balanced approach has shrunk the number of encampments across Denver, the Urban Institute’s evaluation found. From 2023 to 2025, the number of active encampments fell by nearly half. The number of large encampments, with 10 or more tents or structures, dropped by 91 percent. “It’s pretty much night and day,” said Anthony Mantelli, whose family runs the West Saloon and Kitchen in the city’s 16th Street Mall. “I close the restaurant four or five nights a week. I don’t deal with many issues at all.”

Mr. Johnston described his strategy through his perspective as a former school principal. “Your job is to keep everyone safe,” he said. “That means I love every single kid in the building. And if there’s one kid who’s making other kids in the building feel unsafe, my job is to either help him change his behavior or hold him accountable for it.”

I asked Mr. Johnston if it’s realistic to think a city as large as Denver can eliminate street homelessness. “I genuinely believe we can do it,” he said.

The next phase will be more difficult. Those who continue to live on the streets are much more likely to suffer from mental illness and addiction. They need more than a roof over their heads.

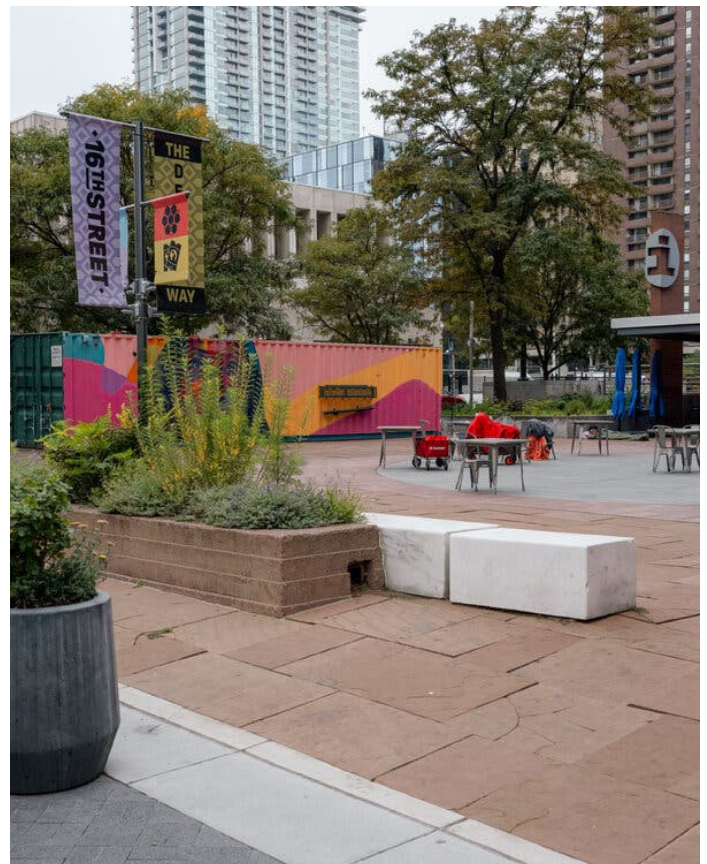
For this step, Mr. Johnston has begun an initiative that focuses on connecting people to mental health and addiction treatment. That will be hard to execute. Many of the sick and addicted are resistant to treatment, and getting them to accept help can require a kind of coercion and policing of low-level crimes that many progressives are uncomfortable with.

I came away from Denver convinced that the mayor’s focus and determination are the most crucial factors. I’ve seen this happen nationwide: Policies that work in one place fail in another because officials can replicate the law or the money but not the leadership — the force of will — behind the original success.

But Democrats around the country should figure out how to copy Denver’s program. The party’s failure to tackle homelessness and public disorder more broadly has haunted it nationwide. It’s one reason the party is unpopular, even as President Trump has approval ratings in the 30s, leaving many voters with two options on the ballot they don’t particularly like.

“When you see a problem in front of you every day and nothing happens, your only option is either to blame your neighbor or to blame democracy,” Mr. Johnston said. Mr. Trump “has proved that if things are bad enough, Americans are open to both of those arguments.”

He added: “I think the opposite’s also true. If you can prove that there’s something hard to do and we work it out together and it gets better, you train people’s muscle memory to turn to each other — not to turn on each other.”



Jack Fox for The New York Times

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The Greenville Journal – Greenville Housing Fund building duplexes in historic Sterling neighborhood

October 22, 2026 – Megan Fitzgerald



Photo provided by the Greenville Housing Fund

The Greenville Housing Fund, in partnership with The Sterling Land Trust, plans to build affordable duplexes in Greenville’s historic Sterling neighborhood.

The Huddle at Sterling will consist of 10 long-term rental units arranged in five stacked duplexes on Jenkins Street. The homes will target individuals earning between 60% and 80% of the area median income, approximately \$44,640 to \$91,920 annually. Tenant-based vouchers will also be accepted.

The Greenville Housing Fund and the Sterling Land Trust officially closed on construction financing for the \$3.3 million affordable housing project in late October. A groundbreaking ceremony for The Huddle at Sterling is scheduled for Nov. 5.

The Sterling Land Trust owns the three parcels of land slated for development and partnered with the Greenville Housing Fund in 2024 to bring more affordable housing to the Sterling neighborhood. The organization will remain the landowner and reinvest rental proceeds back into community programming.

“This is a historic day in our community,” said James Thompson, president of The Sterling Land Trust. “We are honoring Sterling’s rich history while investing in its future and creating opportunities for generations to come.”

The Huddle at Sterling received financial support from various public, private and philanthropic partners, including a \$250,000 grant from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation in 2025. The project's financing partners include the city of Greenville and Community Works. Other key partners include:

- Hollingsworth Funds
- Abundance Capital
- The Helga Marston Foundation
- The Community Foundation of Greenville
- The Jolley Foundation
- The Jim and Kit Pearce Endowment Fund
- NeighborWorks America Capital Grant

For more information, visit greenvillehousingfund.com.