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Housing group to march in downtown Yonkers tonight

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YONKERS - An organization seeking a greater voice for low-income residents in downtown redevelopment will hold a march and protest tonight.

City offices will be closed because of the Lincoln's Birthday observance, but Community Voices Heard will nonetheless lead a march from the Chicken Island parking lot to City Hall. The nonprofit organization's members and supporters will demand that city officials include housing and jobs for low-income families in the redevelopment of downtown and the waterfront.

"We want to be included in what's going on," said Shateema Sherril, a member of the group who lives in the Nodine Hill neighborhood.

The group also wants to ensure that no more public housing is demolished, as is currently the plan with the Mulford Gardens complex. In addition, state-subsidized mortgages for private apartment buildings in Yonkers that offer affordable rents are expiring and some units' rents are rising to market rates.

The march and protest is a follow-up to a public housing tour that the group held for state Sen. Andrea Stewart-Cousins, D-Yonkers, in July. The group organized that tour in response to concerns of public housing tenants about the future of public housing in Yonkers.

The Municipal Housing Authority for Yonkers is developing security plans for two of its largest housing complexes, based on one already in place at the Schlobohm Houses.

The authority's director, Joseph Shuldiner, said last year that if crime cannot be reduced in the city's largest public housing complexes, then the authority would have to consider other options, including razing public housing and giving tenants rent vouchers.
