



## CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS

### Introduction

In December 2022, the Flint Housing Commission (FHC) and the City of Flint were awarded a \$500,000 HUD Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant for the Northeast Flint Neighborhood. The application identified FHC's River Park Apartments property as the Target Housing Site for redevelopment. This grant will help FHC and its partners address the clear inequities that exist within the community and build significant positive momentum for revitalization.

### What is the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative?

The HUD Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CN) employs a comprehensive approach to neighborhood transformation. The program helps communities by revitalizing distressed public housing while investing and leveraging investments in:

- Well-functioning services and public assets
- High quality public schools/education programs
- High quality early learning programs/services
- Public transportation and mobility
- Improved access to jobs

The CN will ensure that current residents will be able to benefit from this transformation by preserving affordable housing or providing residents with the choice to move in to affordable and accessible housing in another existing neighborhood of opportunity.

### The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative is focused on three core goals:

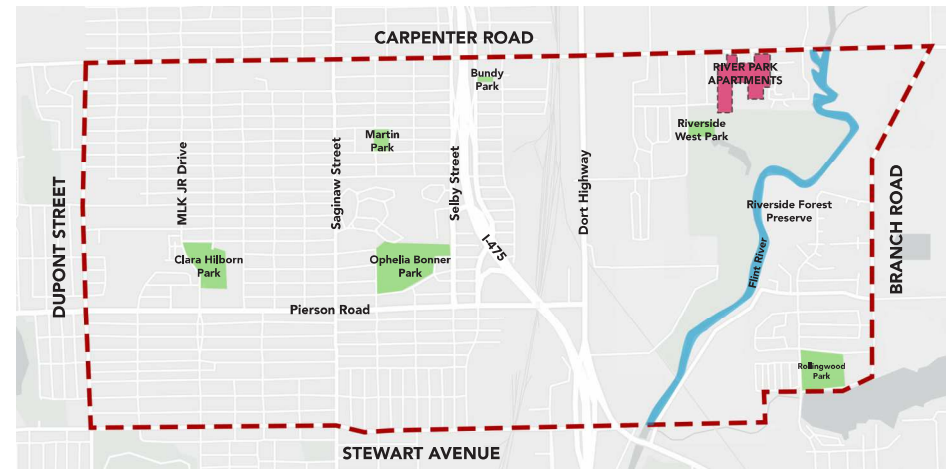
- 1) Housing:** Transform distressed public and assisted housing into energy efficient, mixed-income housing that is physically and financially viable over the long term.
- 2) People:** Support positive outcomes for families who live in the target developments and the surrounding neighborhood, particularly outcomes related to residents' education, health and recreation, safety, employment, and mobility; and
- 3) Neighborhood:** Transform distressed neighborhoods into viable, mixed-income neighborhoods with access to well-functioning services, high quality public schools and education programs, high quality early learning programs and services, public assets, public transportation, and improved access to jobs.

### Where does Flint fit in?

The FHC and the City of Flint are required to develop and implement a comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy, or Transformation Plan. This Plan will become the guiding document for the revitalization of the public housing units while simultaneously directing positive transformation of the surrounding neighborhood. To successfully develop and implement the Transformation Plan, FHC will work with River Park Apartments residents, public and private agencies, community and philanthropic organizations, neighborhood residents, and other identified individuals and stakeholder groups to gather and leverage resources needed to support the strategic and financial sustainability of the Plan.

### How long will the process take?

Typically a CN is a 2-year planning process from the grant award date. The Northeast Flint Community planning process kicked off in early 2023 and will be completed in late 2024.



### How is the Northeast Flint community unique?

The Northeast Flint Neighborhood was selected because it possesses the attributes necessary for successful and meaningful transformation. The Northeast Neighborhood includes community area on both the east and west sides of Interstate 475, Flint's primary interstate highway. While the communities on both sides of I-475 are distressed, the area on the east side is very isolated and lacks basic amenities such as schools, stores, services, and infrastructure. While there is a lot of natural open space in the eastern area, there is very little improved/programmed park space. The intent of this Choice Neighborhoods Plan will be to provide the residents of the River Park Apartments with full community services within a well-functioning neighborhood.



## What do we hope to achieve with the Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant?

The grant will be used to bring the community and planning partners together to create a viable and actionable Transformation Plan for the Northeast Flint community, which can be implemented utilizing a variety of local, state and national resources. The grant will also be utilized to develop and construct a catalytic early action project that will benefit all residents of the community.

River Park Apartments includes 180 units of low-income housing built in 1969. The CN Plan will seek to replace **100%** of those housing units within the neighborhood, or in other areas of opportunity as part of new mixed-income developments.

## How will we work with the community?

When residents are genuinely at the center of a planning process, a unique outcome unfolds. Relationships become the focal point of the work. This is because for residents, planning is personal – it’s about their children, their families, their homes, their neighbors and their streets. It is about making their day-to-day lives better in real time. As we envision, design, and seek to implement the investment and physical changes necessary to revitalize the community, local residents will be engaged from day one, so that they can help to assume a leadership role in the process.

## How will this impact River Park Apartment Residents?

The Choice Neighborhoods program requires a one-for-one replacement of the existing public housing units as part of the revitalization efforts. The residents will be an integral part of the planning process, making major decisions in shaping the vision for the plan, and developing implementation strategies. As part of an implementation strategy dependent on securing construction funding in the future, a Relocation Plan for each household will be developed. The Plan will prioritize a “Build New First” strategy to construct new housing before any demolition and/or renovation of existing buildings to minimize relocation.

## How can this benefit the neighborhood in the short-term?

The planning team will dedicate approximately **\$150,000** to identify and build an “Early Action Project” in the Summer of 2024 that will have an immediate positive benefit for the community. We need your involvement to help come up with these important ideas!

## Does the planning process include construction of new housing?

No, this process **ONLY** involves planning and the implementation of smaller “Early Action Projects.” Construction of housing, retail, and other larger improvements would happen later based on community input and available resources.

## What is the CNI Implementation Grant?

Following completion of the CN Plan, the FHC will be eligible to apply for a CNI Implementation Grant, which could provide approximately \$30-\$50 million towards Housing, People, and Neighborhood Initiatives.

## Are there resident hiring opportunities as part of this process?

Yes, we will be looking to identify a set of Community Ambassadors to assist with resident engagement, data gathering and Plan feedback. Ambassadors would be provided a stipend for their effort.

## For more information, please visit the website:

[www.flinthc.org/ne-flint-community-plan](http://www.flinthc.org/ne-flint-community-plan)

You can join the listserve to receive updates and notifications throughout the process.