



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-5000

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING

APR -9 2015

Mr. Curtis O. Law
Executive Director
Housing Authority of the City of Norwalk
24 ½ Monroe Street
Norwalk, CT 06854-2926

Mr. Timothy Sheehan
Executive Director
Norwalk Redevelopment Agency
125 East Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06856-5125

SUBJECT: Critical Community Improvement Plan
Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant
Grant Number: CT1E002CNG113

Dear Mr. Law and Mr. Sheehan:

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has completed its review of the Critical Community Improvements (CCI) Plan for the Norwalk Choice Neighborhoods Grant. Your plan is approved, subject to the conditions contained in this letter.

Overall All Plan

Critical Community Improvements are activities designed to support and enhance housing and neighborhood initiatives and to promote economic development. CCI funds are more flexible than other Choice Neighborhoods funds and grantees are encouraged to use these funds for innovative initiatives. Up to 15% of your Choice Neighborhoods grant funds may be used to fund CCI initiatives.

Norwalk's CCI Plan includes six specific, but coordinated, activities designed to directly address both neighborhood challenges and resident concerns. The CCI strategy resulted from the Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant process previously undertaken. A total of \$3,200,000 of Norwalk's Choice Neighborhoods grant funds have been committed to the CCI Plan.

Specific Approvals

1) Redevelopment of Ryan Park

Ryan Park is a city-owned park and is the only significant public open space within the Choice Neighborhood. It is directly across the street from Washington Village, the target public housing development. There are limited facilities at the park and residents consider it unsafe.

CCI funds will be used to fund redevelopment of the park. A consultant will be hired to manage a community participation process to be led by an advisory committee. The

redevelopment will be administered by the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency (NRA). Once completed, the park will be maintained by the City Recreation and Parks Department. The project budget is projected as follows, though will be finalized once the planning process is complete.

Source of Funds	Use of Funds	Amount
Choice Neighborhoods	Pre-development	\$ 70,000
Choice Neighborhoods	Construction	\$930,000
TOTAL		\$1,000,000

CCI funds will be authorized in the HUD Line of Credit Control (LOCC) system for release as follows:

- a) Upon execution of this letter predevelopment funds will be released.
- b) Upon city approval to construct, the remaining funds will be released.

2) Improvement of South Norwalk Community Center/Public Art Installation

The South Norwalk Community Center (SoNoCC) is located in the center of the Choice Neighborhood near Washington Village and Ryan Park. It is heavily used for after school activities, provision of resident services, and community programming. However, the facility has fallen into disrepair.

Work has begun on interior renovations. In conjunction with this work CCI funds will be used to create a permanent public art installation on the exterior of SoNoCC. This work is part of a larger art installation at the entrance to SoNo, which will help “brand” the neighborhood. A “Call for Artists” was released and an artist selected, who will hold a series of public forums to determine the final design. The project will be administered by the NRA and maintained by the city. The project budget is as follows:

Source of Funds	Use of Funds	Amount
CDBG	Interior Renovations	\$300,000
Choice Neighborhoods	Exterior Art	\$100,000
TOTAL		\$400,000

CCI funds will be authorized in LOCCS for release as follows:

- a) Upon execution of the artist contract, predevelopment funds will be authorized.
- b) Upon city approval to construct, the remaining funds will be authorized.

3) Complete Streets

The City prepared a “Transit Oriented Development Program” to enhance public streets consistent with the “Complete Streets” concept. Work on Phase 1 of the program is underway. Lighting is a critical element of Complete Streets to increase safety, aesthetics and “placemaking.” Decorative street lights are being installed by the city throughout SoNo. Developers will also fund additional lights along the perimeter of their new developments.

To support the Complete Streets initiative, CCI funds will be used to pay for an additional 40 decorative street lights on streets not included in the city lighting budget. This will allow the entire street grid of SoNo to be completed. The CCI project will be administered by the NRA. The city Department of Public Works will handle construction/installation. The lighting will be maintained by South Norwalk Electric Works. The project budget is as follows:

Source of Funds	Use of Funds	Amount
DOT	TOD Program	\$ 486,000
CDBG	Phase I Improvements	\$ 500,000
City	Phase I Improvements	\$ 714,000
Developer	Lighting	\$1,265,000
Choice Neighborhoods	Lighting	\$ 765,000
TOTAL		\$3,730,000
TBD	Remaining Phase I projects	\$2,770,000

CCI funds will be authorized in LOCCS for release as follows:

a) Upon submission of final City approval for purchase and installation, all funds will be authorized.

4) Small Multi-Family Preservation Program

The need to preserve affordable housing in SoNo is critical given the growing pressure of redevelopment. Many homes in SoNo have been subdivided into affordable apartments, but have deteriorated and become a blight on the neighborhood. Some homes have gone into foreclosure and are being purchased by investors or higher income families.

To preserve housing for moderate and low income families, the NRA will acquire and rehab small, one-to-three unit homes in the Choice Neighborhood and sell the homes to owner-occupants with incomes up to 120% of AMI. A 20-year use restriction limiting the income of the property owner to 120% of AMI or will be placed on the property. The non-owner occupied units will also be rented to tenants with incomes up to 120%. The project will be administered by the NRA. Acquisition of eight units is anticipated. The project budget is as follows:

Source of Funds	Use of Funds	Amount
Choice Neighborhoods	Acquisition & Rehab	\$ 875,000
CDBG	Acquisition & Rehab	\$ 400,000
Connecticut HFA	Acquisition & Rehab	\$ 600,000
State Dept of Housing	Acquisition & Rehab	\$1,000,000
TOTAL		\$ 2,875,000

CCI funds will be released as follows:

a) Initial Home Purchase: A first home located at 24 Haviland Street has been identified for purchase. This home is in foreclosure and for sale by a bank. NRA has an option to purchase this site through April 30, 2015. A project budget has been prepared and the federal Environmental Review process has been completed. NRA has requested HUD approval to move forward with acquisition of the home using city funds, which will subsequently be reimbursed

with Choice Neighborhood funds, assuming all HUD requirements have been met, as identified in paragraph b, below. HUD's approval for NRA to acquire the home is hereby granted.

b) NHA will prepare Program Guidelines, including project goals, administrative procedures, funding sources, selection criteria, due diligence, etc., which will be submitted to HUD for approval. Following approval, funds will be authorized in LOCCS for release.

5) Residential/Façade Improvement Grants

There is a relatively low rate of homeownership in SoNo and many homes have deteriorated and become a blight on the neighborhood. To assist moderate and low income families in maintaining their properties, CCI funds will be used to provide grants up to \$25,000 to homeowners in the Choice Neighborhood with incomes at or below 120% of AMI. Grant funds will be used for exterior façade improvements. The project will be administered by the NRA. The budget is as follows:

Project Budget

<i>Source of Funds</i>	<i>Use of Funds</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Choice Neighborhoods	Grants to Homeowners	\$375,000

CCI funds will be released as follows:

a) NHA will prepare Program Guidelines, including project goals, administrative procedures, funding sources, selection criteria, due diligence, etc., which will be submitted to HUD for approval. Following approval, HUD will authorize funds in LOCCS for release.

6) Community Policing Program

The incidence of crime in SoNo is the highest in Norwalk. The Norwalk Police Department (NPD) wants to strengthen its community policing and outreach program. NPD wants to revive its mobile substation program by purchasing a new vehicle to replace the non-functioning one purchased with Weed and Seed funds 15 years ago. The mobile substation will be based in SoNo and host neighborhood meetings, deliver programs, assist homeless, work with neighborhood schools, address individual resident concerns, provide a visible police presence, etc. NPD also wants to purchase five bicycles to supplement its neighborhood patrols. The budget is as follows:

Source of Funds	Use of Funds	Amount
Choice Neighborhoods	Mobile Substation	\$80,000
Choice Neighborhoods	Bicycles	\$ 5,000
City (Capital Budget)	Mobile Substations	\$120,000
TOTAL		\$205,000

While fully supportive of the NPD's desire to strengthen its community policing and outreach program, HUD feels the need to fund the mobile substation and bikes with CCI funds is not fully demonstrated at this time, given the location of the police station in the middle of SoNo and within a few blocks of Washington Village, and given the other initiatives planned for SoNo which should result in a decrease in crime and an increase in resident involvement in the

neighborhood. Therefore, CCI funding for the Community Policing Program is not approved at this time, but will be revisited as the other Choice Neighborhoods activities advance.

Next Steps

Please continue to work with Luci Blackburn and other members of the HUD team as you move forward with your CCI projects. Note that as you meet milestones for release of Choice Neighborhoods funds for specific CCI activities, you must submit a Choice Neighborhoods budget revision requesting authorization of these funds in LOCCS. Once authorized in LOCCs, you may draw down funds to cover expenses as outlined in the Choice Neighborhoods Grant Agreement.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on the redevelopment of South Norwalk. Should you have any questions, please contact Ms. Blackburn on (202) 402-4190.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mindy Turbov", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mindy Turbov
Director, Choice Neighborhoods Program
Office of Public Housing Investments