

CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS FAQ



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Introduction

In June 2024, the Johnstown Housing Authority (JHA) will apply for a \$500,000 HUD Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant (www.hud.gov/cn) for the West End Neighborhood. The application will identify JHA's Coopersdale property as the Target Housing Site for redevelopment. This grant will help JHA and its partners create a vision for the future of the community and build significant positive momentum for revitalization.

What is the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative?

If awarded the grant, the Choice Neighborhood Plan would focus on planning for the potential redevelopment of JHA's Coopersdale property, whose 121 homes were built over 65 years ago. The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative is focused on three core goals:

Housing: The Plan would explore the possibility of replacing Coopersdale's current units with high-quality affordable housing as part of new mixed-income developments in the neighborhood, for both current and future residents.

People: The Plan would connect partners in the city and neighborhood to fill gaps in existing programs and services to ensure residents have access to a good education, affordable childcare, healthy food, safe places to play, and quality job opportunities.

Neighborhood: The Plan would create a vision for strengthening the neighborhood through new and improved parks, walkability, public transportation, stores, and other amenities.

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

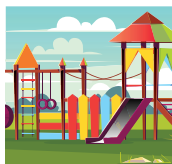
If awarded the Grant, The Planning Team would dedicate approximately **\$150,000** to identify and build an "Early Action Activity" in the West End starting in the Summer of 2025 that would have an immediate positive benefit for the community. This could include:



Public Art



Community Garden



Playground



Building Renovation



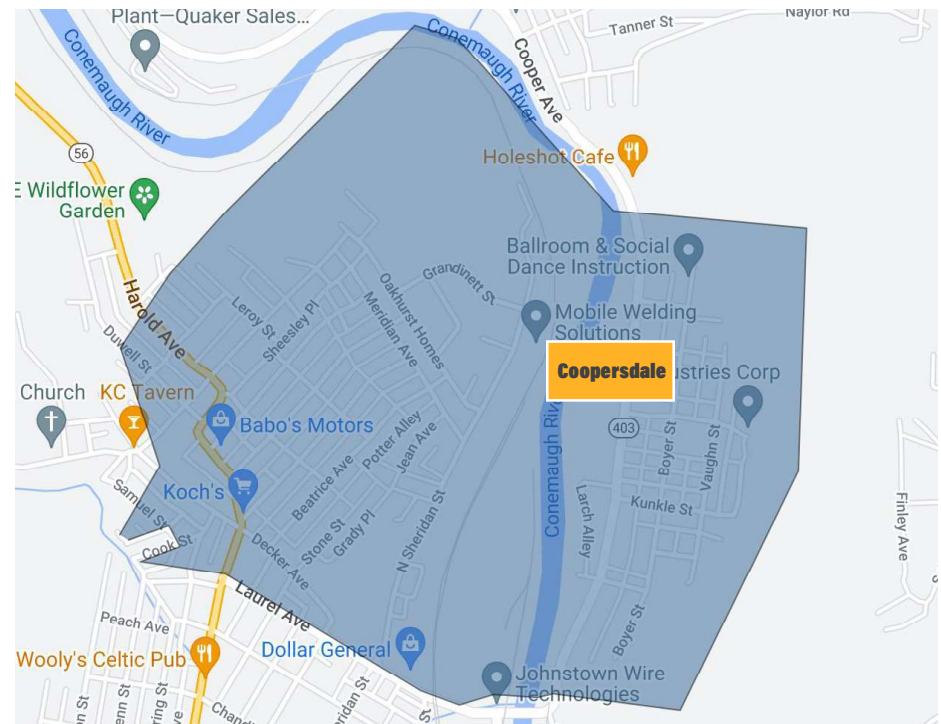
Hiking or Bicycle Trail

Where does Johnstown fit in?

If awarded, JHA would lead the development of a neighborhood revitalization strategy, or Transformation Plan. This Plan will become the guiding document for both neighborhood reinvestment and the revitalization of the public housing units into mixed-income housing. To successfully develop and implement the Transformation Plan, JHA will work with local residents, public and private agencies, community and philanthropic organizations, and other identified individuals and stakeholder groups to gather and leverage resources needed to support the strategic and financial sustainability of the Plan.

How would 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 West End, local residents will be engaged from day one, so that they can help to assume a leadership role in the process.



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Has anything been planned so far?

Nothing has been planned so far! If awarded the grant, we need you to tell us your concerns and goals for yourself and your community. Community involvement will be essential to help shape the Plan and make sure that it reflects local wants and needs.

What types of Neighborhood improvements could result from the Plan?

Recent Choice Neighborhood Plans have led to significant neighborhood improvements including the reuse of vacant school buildings, the development of grocery stores and other retail spaces, the creation of business incubators and health clinics, the improvement of parks and open spaces, and the implementation of safer streets including sidewalks, lighting and bicycle paths. What gets included in the West End Choice Neighborhood Plan would be up to the community members and stakeholders who help to create the vision.

What types of People Projects could result from the Plan?

Recent Choice Neighborhood Plans have led to the creation of people projects focused on expanding daycare options, building technical skills for the job market, improving transportation, and providing senior and youth programs. The Plan would include the collection of data through surveys that would help to identify what's most needed in the West End.

Will there be resident hiring opportunities as part of this process?

Yes, if awarded the grant, 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.



What is mixed-income housing?

Mixed-income housing is when people of all different income levels live in the same area in high-quality housing that is affordable for every household. People who currently have very low incomes live side-by-side with people who have moderate or higher incomes. This helps to provide access to improves overall quality of life and creates a mix of affordable housing options that better meet residents' needs. Mixed-income housing also allows residents to remain in the neighborhood or housing unit, even if their income goes up by receiving a raise or a new job. It allows for economic mobility without fear of displacement.

How much housing would be built overall and where would it go?

That would be determined through the planning process based on community input and informed by technical reports including a market study. The CN Plan would need to replace **100%** of existing Coopersdale housing units as part of new mixed-income developments.

Would residents need to move if we receive the Planning Grant?

No, this is just a planning process to explore options for future housing redevelopment. There would be no major changes to Coopersdale for **at least 5 years.**

What happens now?

The Grant Application will be submitted in June 2024. If awarded, the planning process would kick off in late 2024, and would last for **2.5 years** with the Plan completed in mid 2027.

What comes after the Plan?

Many grantees are able to begin taking positive action and identifying funding opportunities soon after the Plan is complete. By completing the Plan, JHA could also potentially apply for a Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grant to help bring needed resources to the community.

For questions please contact:



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