

HUD
Award Total
\$30M

Larimer/East Liberty

Choice Neighborhoods Initiative



The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded a **\$30 million Federal Choice Neighborhoods Implementation (CNI) grant** to revitalize the Larimer and East Liberty neighborhoods as part of the **Larimer/East Liberty Choice Neighborhoods Initiative**.

Revitalization included:

- Construction of 334 housing units
- Large neighborhood improvements and quality of life upgrades for residents
- Construction of 3 parks: Village Green, Larimer Playground, and Liberty Green

Stakeholders created a **\$401 million transformation plan** called the Vision-to-Action Plan, which had a goal of being a “21st Century Green Neighborhood that Works.” It involved a **comprehensive effort to address the neighborhood, housing, and people needs** of the disinvested Larimer community.

The URA managed the Neighborhood Plan and critical community initiatives (see page 2). The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh and the City of Pittsburgh were Co-Grantees. McCormack Baron Salazar and Allies at Ross Management and Development Corporation were the developers. Urban Strategies was the People lead.

Overview

The Neighborhood Plan consisted of 6 critical community initiatives:

- 1) Park development
- 2) Homeowner Assistance Program
- 3) Green infrastructure
- 4) Job creation via real estate development
- 5) For-sale homes strategy
- 6) Redevelopment of key community assets



The URA's Alicia Majors works with homeowners to close a Homeowner Assistance Program loan.



Phase III and IV of Cornerstone Village housing construction underway in Larimer, 2021

The Housing Plan consisted of 334 units of high quality, forward looking, mixed-income housing that was built in four phases:

- Phase I was completed in 2016. This phase consists of 85 units in 18 buildings.
- Phase II was completed in 2019 and includes 150 units.
- Phase III and IV will complete the final 99 units in 2022.
- The housing will be built to Green Enterprise Community Standards and feature a range of buildings.

The People Plan/Resident Support Services consisted of the following programs:

- Case management activities
- Wellness support and health promotion activities
- Workforce development services
- Customized training and flexible career pathways
- Early childhood services
- School and community connections
- Ready students for the Pittsburgh Promise scholarship
- Mobility support services



The URA is collaborating with Food21 to create a banquet hall, catering incubation center and culinary education space at the former Larimer School gymnasium.

Liberty Green Park



Liberty Green is a **brand new 3.25 acre park** located at the intersection of the Choice Neighborhood Initiative's East Liberty and Larimer neighborhoods. The open space system **serves over 4,000 residents**, who live within a five-minute walk, with **health and recreation activities**. Liberty Green includes urban neighborhood park conditions, as well as a more natural greenway that complements the woods, historic stream valley, and steep slope at the edge of the neighborhood.

The park is **bounded by new mixed-income housing** and features plaza and assembly space, open lawn and play mounds, and an **extensive play area** for children. Playground equipment is challenging and **accessible** to increase motor skills and creative play.

The park incorporates **significant green infrastructure** that captures and manages stormwater from the park/ adjacent streets, and culminates in a **community-driven art exhibit**. The exhibit **showcases innovative solutions for stormwater management** while capturing the community's history through a design that sets an example for water stories of the future. All phases of the park were completed and opened by Q3 2021.

River Roots Art Project



Artist Alisha Wormsley led community outreach and the design process for the River Roots rainwater project. Wormsley met with nearly 350 youth from the neighborhood and Lincoln Elementary School, and the youth created



pictures and sculptures of sea creatures. Their artwork was then developed into concrete molds to be hidden throughout the park's rainwater infrastructure as a discovery feature.

Homeowner Assistance Program

The Choice Neighborhoods Homeowner Assistance Program and the Residential Façade Program provided grants to Larimer homeowners to assist with property beautification and basic maintenance. This grant allowed existing residents to update their homes to reflect the look and feel of the Choice Neighborhoods development within their community.

In 2016-2020, the URA worked with 90 homeowners, including Larimer resident and Veteran Rodney Greene (pictured right), to provide grants up to \$20,000 to complete façade, roof, sidewalk, and other exterior repairs and improvements.

The program helped to improve family safety and health, increase energy efficiency and resource conservation, create homeowner equity and wealth, and increase neighborhood market appreciation.



Completed façades of participating homeowners



Including existing homeowners in the neighborhood's growth was key.

“I thought that the program was awesome. The program helped me and others to keep us in our homes. I tell my grandchildren that having a home is one thing, but being able to keep it up is another thing. I am very grateful for the assistance that the program provided and I give thanks to those who provided the funding,” said recipient, Eugenia Newman.