

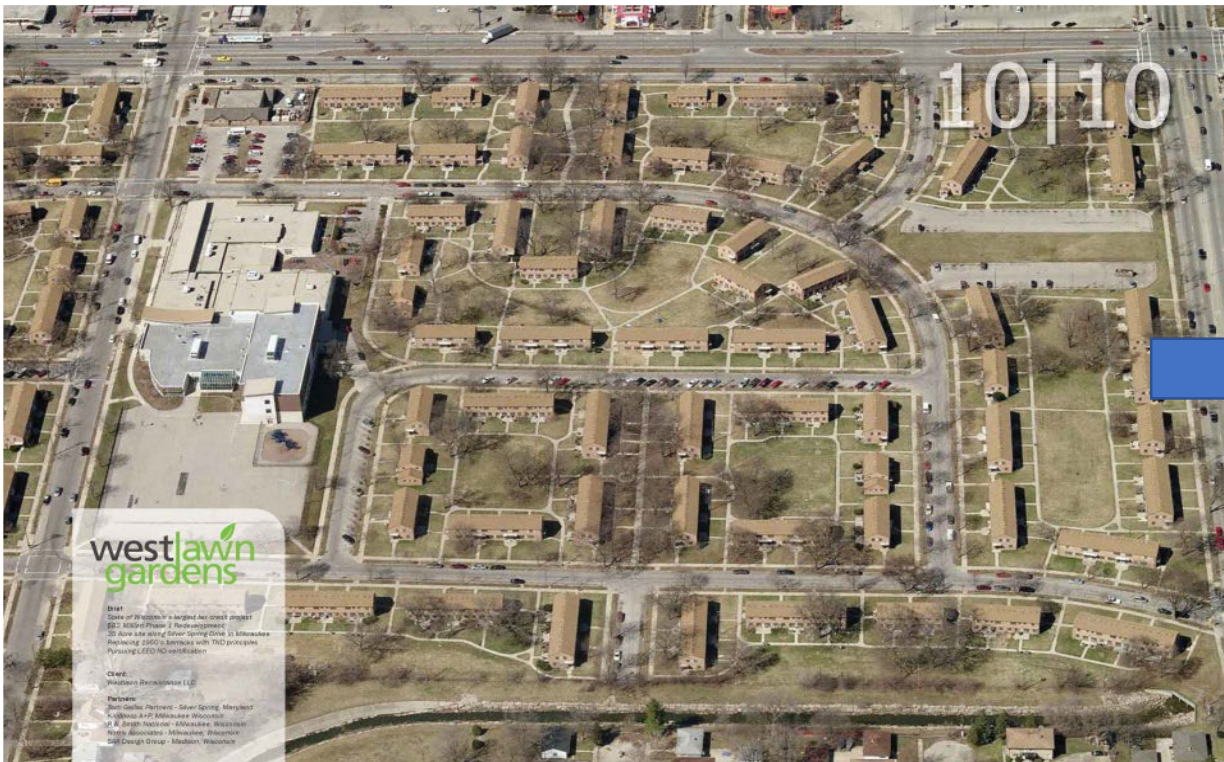
Successful Reoccupancy Best Practices and Challenges

Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee
Choice Neighborhood Property: Westlawn Gardens





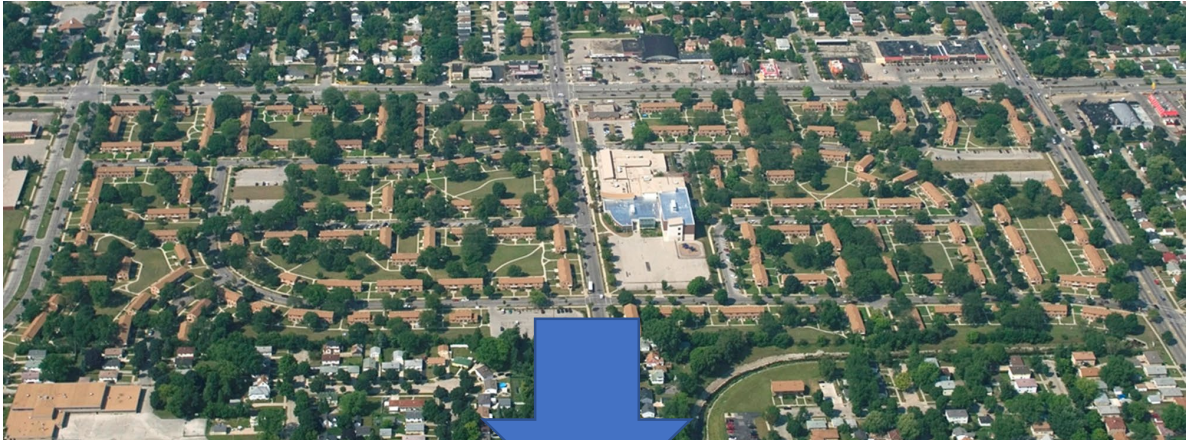
Milwaukee's Westlawn Gardens



- Transformation of Westlawn into Westlawn Gardens began in 2010
- Phase 1 was completed between 2010 - 2012 using Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- Replaced 326 distressed public housing units with 250 units



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- Choice Neighborhood Implementation (CNI) grant awarded in September 2015 to continue the revitalization into a mixed-income, mixed-use community
- Remaining 394 distressed public housing apartments are being replaced by:
 - 394 new RAD/PBV units
 - 123 new affordable (LIHTC) units
 - 191 market-rate rental and homeownership options
- Six phases of construction
- First two phases of replacement housing were completed in late 2018
- Replacement housing will be fully completed by December 2023.



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HUD Reoccupancy Requirements

- Right to return: “Grantees must provide each tenant who occupies a unit at the target housing under a valid lease or occupancy on the date of grant award the opportunity to return to a replacement unit if the tenant was lease-compliant at the time of departure from the housing prior to relocation and continued to remain lease-compliant during the relocation period.”
- What does this mean:
 - Returnees have a preference for replacement units before any other eligible households (e.g. off a waiting list)
 - No rescreening upon return (as long as they were lease compliant and remained lease compliant, they are eligible to return)
 - Housing plan must provide for units that have income limitations up to 80% that are not limited by another funding source such as LIHTC to cover those that have incomes higher than 60% AMI



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Relocation & Reoccupancy Plans

- Need a comprehensive written relocation and reoccupancy plan
- Recommend “first out, first back” model
- Be prepared to manage unanticipated issues
- Recommend a team leader to coordinate across departments, such as case management, housing management, LIHTC compliance, Section 8 department, etc.





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Communication with Residents

- Establish a process and schedule for communicating with residents
- Include regular updates on construction and relocation
- Manage expectations by sharing and documenting changes (i.e. due to increased construction costs, decreased funding)





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Resident Return Decision

- Per HUD, residents can choose to return until the last phase of replacement units is completed
- Residents generally want to see a comparable unit before deciding
- Residents may decline to return in an early phase but change their mind during a later phase





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Bedroom Sizing in Housing Plan

- Household sizes will change over time, sometimes unexpectedly.
- May need to adjust housing plan to accommodate needs
- Consider including larger (i.e. five bedrooms) units as a backup





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Timing Challenges in Reoccupancy

- Balancing completion date of an appropriate unit with residents' ability to move
- More flexibility if they were relocated to a PHA-owned/managed unit
- For residents that used a voucher to live with a private landlord, aligning lease end date with move date can be challenging.
- For such a resident, may need to hold a another replacement unit that is scheduled to be completed later in the year.





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Replacement Units – Expectations vs. Reality

- Residents will build their expectations from your communications with them.
- Mention factors that can change what is possible (i.e., budget, construction costs, etc.)
- Regular communication updates can help keep expectations in line with reality.





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Reoccupancy – The Reality

- Choice Neighborhood means choice: residents have options
- Most Westlawn residents chose a tenant protection voucher for relocation
- Most who did so have wanted to keep their tenant-based voucher because it preserves the ability to choose other housing in the future rather than moving into a project-based unit in Westlawn Gardens

