

Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant Application

Exhibit A – Executive Summary

Orlando Housing Authority

The Downtown West neighborhood is the historic hub of the African American community in Orlando, Florida. Over time, this once vibrant community has become an area of disinvestment with great social and economic needs. The bisection of the community in the 1960's by the construction of Interstate 4 and then again by the East/West Expressway in the 1970's, severed Downtown West from the Central Business District. Compounding these struggles, Downtown West is home to the highest poverty and crime rates in the City of Orlando. Plagued with high vacancy rates (24.25%), substandard housing, inadequate schools, and high unemployment (32%), the City of Orlando, US HUD, US DOT, and the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFPC) have identified the neighborhood as an area ripe for revitalization. Downtown West is in desperate need of significant revitalization efforts that improve housing conditions and educational outcomes, create jobs, reduce crime, and promote economic self-sufficiency. The Housing Authority of the City of Orlando (OHA) and Creative Village Development, LLC (CVD) have teamed to lead the process of bringing transformational change to Downtown West.

A large number of anchor institutions and significant neighborhood assets are located inside or within .5 miles of the neighborhood including Orlando City Hall, Orlando Police Headquarters, Orange County Public School District, Citrus Bowl, Bob Carr Performing Arts Center, Florida Department of Children and Families, Amway Center, University of Central Florida Center for Emerging Media, FAMU College of Law, University of Central Florida, Ninth Circuit Court of Florida, Orange Orlando Tech, Orange County Health Department, Callahan Neighborhood Center, Nap Ford Community Charter School, and LYNX Central Station Regional Bus and Rail Transportation hub. Many of these institutions have already been engaged in the revitalization activities and all will serve as key partners in the creation of the Downtown West Transformation Plan. Additional key partners include Lorna Doone Senior

Public Housing Apartments (Lorna Doone) and neighborhood residents, local businesses, community based organizations, Orange County Public Schools, Downtown CRA, ECFPC, and local social services providers.

This Planning grant offers the opportunity to craft a transformation plan for the neighborhood that is based on resident, community, and stakeholder input and that addresses housing, people, and neighborhood. The requested grant funds will be invested in completion of a market analysis and a needs assessment, community involvement, planning coordination, development of the Housing, People, and Neighborhood strategies of the Transformation Plan, agency coordination, and data collection and the development of metrics. The grant will be utilized to engage the residents of Lorna Doone and neighborhood residents, anchor institutions, social service providers, governmental agencies, the business community, and other stakeholders in the planning process to create a vision and feasible transformation plan for the Downtown West neighborhood which will serve as the blueprint for the revitalization efforts. Important aspects of the Downtown West Transformation Plan must include: 1) establishment of clear, quantifiable, measureable goals, 2) creation of a cradle to college education strategy that improves school performance and educational outcomes, 3) a supportive services strategy that engages anchor institutions and promotes economic self-sufficiency, 4) sustainable development, 5) a housing plan consisting of rehabilitation of Lorna Doone and the development of new quality housing in mixed income mixed finance developments, and 6) a neighborhood plan that improves transportation, recreational opportunities, includes an effective crime prevention strategy, and engages and supports neighborhood assets.

The vision for Downtown West builds on the success of Orlando's digital media industry by transforming the former site of the Amway Arena in Downtown Orlando into a 68-acre mixed-use, transit-oriented, neighborhood that will house leading higher education providers;

high-tech, digital media and creative companies; and a diverse mix of students, employees and residents. The master planned community, Creative Village, fosters a “live, work, learn and play” lifestyle in the heart of Downtown Orlando, while bringing exciting opportunities to Downtown West. At the heart of this transformation is the severely distressed Lorna Doone Senior Public Housing building. Its rehabilitation, the development of 20 replacement housing units at Creative Village, and the construction of hundreds of high quality mixed income, mixed finance housing units, commercial and office space at Creative Village will serve as lynchpins for the revitalization of Downtown West.

The City of Orlando entered into a public/private partnership with CVD to redevelop the project. When complete, this high quality, sustainable neighborhood development will support a diverse and dynamic mix of uses including 900,000–1,000,000 sf of office/creative space, 300,000-500,000 sf of higher education space, 25,000 sf of K-12 education space, 1,200–1,500 mixed income residential units, 125,000–150,000 sf of retail/commercial space and 150–200 hotel rooms. Creative Village means new jobs at a time when the community desperately needs them. The job creation study for Creative Village estimates an additional 6,500 jobs in the local economy during the construction period. At build-out, there will be approximately 5,000 permanent jobs, with more than 8,000 total Creative Village related jobs in the local economy.

Creative Village will help support Downtown West through targeted redevelopment activities, designed to improve the neighborhood’s existing public recreational facilities, upgrade or rebuild the educational facilities in the neighborhood, and introduce a new mix of affordable, attainable and market rate residential units to the community. In addition, the development includes plans for parks, green space and future neighborhood services such as a grocery store, drug store, full service banking options, and greater access to health care. Creative Village will build on Downtown Orlando’s burgeoning digital media industry by providing a unique platform

to attract businesses, universities, workers and students to a place that is tailor-made for their creative lifestyles. Creative Village will generate more than \$10 million in annual property tax revenues to support City services. With a daytime population of roughly 10,000 professionals, students, residents, and visitors, Creative Village will become a new destination for Central Florida. This new urban neighborhood will be anchored by education and serve families of all income levels, particularly those with the greatest socioeconomic need. There will be new parks and green spaces as well as industry-leading sustainable development practices. This unique platform will attract new businesses to expand and diversify Orlando's regional economy.

Downtown West and Creative Village visitors and residents will also have greater access to public transportation. Creative Village is adjacent to LYNX Central Station which will be the primary station in Downtown Orlando for the future SunRail commuter rail line which is expected to begin service in 2014. CVD plans also involve the expansion of the LYNX bus circulator system which will serve Creative Village, Downtown West and the west side of Downtown Orlando with service expected to begin in 2013. Proximity to the Central Station will provide Downtown West with regional access to jobs, education, social services, government facilities, entertainment, civic and cultural assets, and many other opportunities. The Downtown West Transformation Plan will strive to create a revitalized community that will attract private investment to the neighborhood and serve as a catalyst in the promotion of more than \$1.0 billion in investments over the next 15 years to create a transit oriented, mixed-use neighborhood with office, education, mixed-income residential, hospitality and retail/commercial sectors. This investment is sorely needed in the Downtown West neighborhood and promises to reverse historical patterns of disinvestment and hardship that have for too long plagued the community.