



EARLY ACTION ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY #4 – THURSDAY, AUGUST 1, 2024 – 5:30PM-6:30PM

HIGH SCHOOL IN THE COMMUNITY – 175 WATER STREET, NEW HAVEN, CT 06511

Meeting Purpose

To review and approve early action items for the Union Square/Hill project, ensuring alignment with our goals and community needs.

Committee Members Present

Edward LaChance, Josh Golden, Alder Carmen Rodriguez, Mark Wilson, Doris Doward, Jimmy Miller, Haley Vincent, Giovanni Zinn, Thomasine Shaw, Anstress Farwell,

Committee Members Absent

Jeffrey Moreno, Pamela Monk-Kelley, John Pupello, Dolores Colon, Rosaly Rosario, Arlevia, Tomi Veale, Charmain Yun, Samuel, Scott Kalicki, James Turcio, Roni Elliot ,

Other Presents

Osorio Matilde, Griselle McFadden, Julimar Carros Scillo, Sanaa Smith, Alexis Taylor, Ynosencia King, Maria Apolilo, David Drits, Aura Soto, Carmen Gonzalez, Nelida Oter

-PRESENTATION MATERIALS ARE ATTACHED TO THIS DOCUMENT-

1.0 Welcome & Update of Project Status

Ms. Vincent, Program Manager, welcomed attendees and led introductions. Ms. Vincent provided a brief update on the project and introduced Co-Leads of Committee, Joshua Golden and Edward LaChance, who conducted the roll call. Ms. Vincent stated that we will vote on the early action items at this meeting. This is necessary to prepare a plan to submit to HUD by September 2024. Ms. Vincent handed over the meeting to Jimmy Miller to lead the activity.

2.0 Discussion of Doing While Planning

Committee Co-Lead, Edward LaChance, walked the committee through the rationale for the Early Action Committee and the “Doing While Planning” Model and the process that HUD requires for this Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant. Program Manager, Haley Vincent, explained that we will have to draft an Early Action Plan to provide to HUD by September 2024 so it is important review the proposal. Ms. Shaw suggested adding more historical context about the Hill and Trowbridge.

3.0 Early Action Activities Identification

Based on feedback and the vote from the last meeting, the Committee reviewed the EAA proposal. Ms. Shaw suggested adding more historical context, particularly concerning Trowbridge Square Park and Union Square. The Committee also recommended doing a proofread of the proposal to ensure accuracy. There were no further comments on the proposal.

Mr. Golden will work with the ECC/Glendower team to refine the image for the community banners.

4.0. Questions

Will you send us a revised copy of this proposal?

Why are we focusing on this park for these activities?

5.0. Next Steps

Haley will work on the Early Action Activities Proposal and finalize all edits/revisions to submit to HUD on September 13, 2024.

Union Square Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant Early Activities Proposal

- **Project Title:** Union Square Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant Early Activities
- **Applicant Organization:** Elm City Communities
- **Co-Applicant:** The Glendower Group, Inc.
- **Executive Vice President:** Shenae Draughn
- **President:** Karen DuBois-Walton, Ph.D.
- **Project Manager:** Haley Vincent
- **Contact Information:** 360 Orange Street, 3rd Floor
 - New Haven, CT
 - 203.498.8000 ext. 1090
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- **Date:** September 1, 2024

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I. Executive Summary

The Union Square choice neighborhood planning grant aims to revitalize Union Square by addressing housing, economic opportunities, and neighborhood amenities. The early action activities outlined in this proposal focus on engaging the community, conducting preliminary assessments, and developing infrastructure and partnerships. These steps will lay the groundwork for successful planning process, ultimately leading to a transform and vibrant Union Square.

II. Introduction

The Union Square is a community in need of revitalization as show by the follow data derived from the Neighborhood Assessment conducted by the Yale Urban Design Workshop, the Resident Assessment conducted by the Yale School of Management, the Union Square Opportunity Assessment conducted by the Real Property Research Group for Torti Gallas and Partners, and a supplemental survey of resident housing preferences conducted by the Elm City Communities.

- Approximately 89% of Union Square neighborhood residents are minority (predominantly Latinx and African American) and 33% live below the poverty line
- The area median income for the neighborhood is \$ 34,886, below the city average, and far below the average for the County
- Educational attainment is lower in Union Square than in other parts of New Haven, and far lower than County averages
- Of residents 25 or older, 76% have a high school diploma or equivalent, but only 13% have a bachelor's degree or higher
- Residents are likely to be employed in lower paying fields that do not require a college degree, including services, natural resources, construction, maintenance, production, transportation, and material moving
- Unemployment is higher in Union Square than New Haven or the County, and participation in the labor force is lower.
- Health outcomes are highly correlated to income.
- Residents of Union Square have worse health outcomes than residents of wealthier neighborhoods in New Haven, and then City and State averages
- Life expectancy in the Hill is 75.9 and in West River is 74.6, while the state average is 80.1
- Rates of high blood pressure, diabetes and coronary heart disease are all higher in the Hill than the City and County
- Only 31 percent of the R.T. residents ranked the neighborhood parks as good or excellent
- Only 10 percent of the R.T. Wolfe ranked the neighborhood as a good place to raise children
- Approximately 20 percent of the R.T. Wolfe residents ranked overall health as good or excellent

III. Early Action Activity Description

A. Goals and Objectives

The Early Action Activities presented in this proposal will enhance and accelerate the transformation of the Union Square community by achieving the goals and objectives outlined below. Implementing these goals and objectives would likely lead to a more vibrant, healthy, and cohesive Union Square Community, aligning with the broader aims of the Choice Neighborhoods initiative to transform distressed neighborhoods into viable and sustainable mixed-income communities.

These activities are focused on improving the Trowbridge Square Park and surrounding Trowbridge Square Historic District. Historical significance. The Park holds historical significance as part of one of the city's earliest planned residential neighborhoods. The area, originally called "Village of Spireworth," was developed in the 19th century by James Trowbridge, a prominent local businessman and philanthropist.

James Trowbridge envisioned a community for working-class families, and the neighborhood was designed with a mix of housing styles centered around the park. The Park itself was laid out in 1830, making it one of the oldest public squares in New Haven. Its design reflects the 19th-century urban planning trend of creating communal green spaces to enhance the quality of life for residents.

Trowbridge Square was a part of the Underground Railroad. It provided a network of secret routes and safe houses used by enslaved Blacks to escape to free states and Canada.

The Park is about half a mile from the Robert T. Wolfe development. This proximity allows residents to easily access the park for recreation and community events.

Enhancing the Trowbridge Square Park and Surrounding Trowbridge Square Historic District:

- **Activity 1:** Regrade and rebuild the stone dust path in the park.
- **Goal:** Foster community pride and encourage more frequent use of the park.
- **Objective:** Upgrade the park facilities and amenities to create safe, attractive, and accessible spaces for all community members.
- **Timeline:** October 2024 to June 2025
- **Resources Needed:** Approval of a passthrough agreement by the City Board of Alders; Preparation of design and specifications by the City Engineer; Solicitation of bid for construction.

- **Outcome:** Increased accessibility for people with disabilities, seniors, and families with strollers, thereby promoting inclusivity and ensuring that all can enjoy the park.
- **Alignment with Other Activities:** The City of New Haven received a \$1.5 million grant from the State of Connecticut to renovate the former Hill Cooperative Youth Services “Barbell” community center that is located across from Trowbridge Square Park. The facility, which has been closed since 2008, provides a myriad of programs for the community’s youth. The city also improving several other parks in the Community as well as making significant infrastructure investments.
- City of New Haven received \$17 million bond authorization from the State to operate and improve Union Station which is a key asset in Union Square. These funds promote the City’s vision of making the revitalization a transit-oriented development.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:**
 - **Methodology:** The methodology for repairing the pathway at Trowbridge Park focuses on thorough planning, sustainable construction practices and ongoing community engagement.
 - **Metrics:** Results from surveys measuring satisfaction with the pet waste condition and usability.

Promoting Health and Wellness:

- **Activity 2:** Install pendulum swing that has a safety zone that fits and provides a solo of communal swinging activity.
- **Goal:** Improve the physical and mental health of residents by providing opportunities for regular physical activity.
- **Objective:** Install exercise equipment in Trowbridge Square Park to support active lifestyles.
- **Timeline:** October 2024 to September 2025
- **Resources Needed:** Approval of a passthrough agreement by the City Board of Alders; Preparation of design and specifications by the City Engineer; Solicitation of bid for construction.
- **Outcome:** Residents enjoy better mental and physical health, stronger social connections, and a more vibrant community space.
- **Alignment with Other Activities:** The City of New Haven received a \$1.5 million grant from the State of Connecticut to renovate the former Hill Cooperative Youth Services “Barbell” community center that is located across from Trowbridge Square

Park. The facility, which has been closed since 2008, provides a myriad of programs for the community's youth. The city also improving several other parks in the Community as well as making significant infrastructure investments.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

- **Methodology:** The methodology for installing a pendulum swing at Trowbridge Park focuses on thorough planning, community engagement, sustainable construction practices, and ongoing maintenance.
- **Metrics:** Results from community surveys measuring satisfaction with the swing's condition and usability.

Strengthening Community Cohesion:

- **Activity 3:** Install pole banners commemorating the community's connection with the Underground Railroad.
- **Goal:** Build stronger social ties and a sense of community within the Hill neighborhood.
- **Objective:** Create spaces for community events, gatherings, and activities that bring residents together.
- **Timeline:** October 2024 to March 2025
- **Resources Needed:** Approval of a passthrough agreement by the City Board of Alders; Approval of concept by the City Parks Department; Preparation of design for banners by Robert T. Wolfe resident with assistance from the Yale School of Design; Purchase and installation banners by the City Engineer.
- **Outcome:** Community has a greater appreciation of their heritage, thereby fostering a deeper sense of pride.
- **Alignment with Other Activities:** The City of New Haven received a \$1.5 million grant from the State of Connecticut to renovate the former Hill Cooperative Youth Services "Barbell" community center that is located across from Trowbridge Square Park. The facility, which has been closed since 2008, provides a myriad of programs for the community's youth. The city also improving several other parks in the Community as well as making significant infrastructure investments.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:**
 - **Methodology:** The methodology for installing poems with historical significance at Trowbridge Park focuses on thorough planning, community engagement, stainable practices, and ongoing maintenance.

- **Metrics:** The number of visitors who report increased awareness of local history through surveys and interviews.

Cultural and Artistic Expression:

- **Activity 4:** Install an interpretive display/monument highlighting the Trowbridge Square area and commemorating its importance in New Haven's history.
- **Goal:** Celebrate the neighborhood's cultural heritage and provide platforms for artistic expression.
- **Objective:** Incorporate public art, performance spaces, and cultural programming that reflects the diversity of the Hill community.
- **Timeline:** October 2024 to September 2025
- **Resources Needed:** Approval from the Parks Department; Community input to complete the design; Agreement with the City to purchase and install.
- **Outcome:** Create a more culturally vibrant and engaged community by celebrating the history and heritage of the community.
- **Alignment with Other Activities:** The City of New Haven received a \$1.5 million grant from the State of Connecticut to renovate the former Hill Cooperative Youth Services "Barbell" community center that is located across from Trowbridge Square Park. The facility, which has been closed since 2008, provides a myriad of programs for the community's youth. The city is also improving several other parks in the Community as well as making significant infrastructure investments.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:**
 - **Methodology:** the methodology for installing and interpreting its monument with history lessons at Trowbridge Park focuses on thorough community planning, community engagement, sustainable practices, and ongoing maintenance.
 - **Metrics:** The number of visitors who report increased awareness of local history through surveys and interviews.

Community Involvement in Planning:

- **Activity 5:** Conduct preliminary data collection and assessment
- **Goal:** Identify critical issues and prioritize intervention and resources to address the community's most pressing needs.
- **Objective:** Engage residents in the planning and implementation process to ensure improvements meet their needs and preferences.

- **Timeline:** March 2024 September 2024
- **Resources Needed:** Establishment of an organizational structure that maximizes community participation; Establishment of partnerships to enhance participation and to achieve goals and objectives. Identification of places to conduct planning,
- **Outcome:** A well targeted plan that addresses the specific needs of the Union Square community.
- **Alignment with Other Activities:** The City of New Haven received a \$1.5 million grant from the State of Connecticut to renovate the former Hill Cooperative Youth Services “Barbell” community center that is located across from Trowbridge Square Park. The facility, which has been closed since 2008, provides a myriad of programs for the community’s youth. The city also improving several other parks in the Community as well as making significant infrastructure investments.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:**
 - **Methodology:** The methodology for conducting the planning and preliminary assessment of the Union Square Transformation Plan focuses on thorough data collection, community engagement, comprehensive analysis, and iterative feedback integration
 - **Metrics:** Results from community surveys measuring satisfaction with the planning process and preliminary plan.

Environmental Assessment of Proposed Early Action Activities:

- **Activity 6:** Conduct preliminary data collection and assessment
- **Goal:** Ensure that all Early Action Activities have a positive impact on the Union Square community.
- **Objective:** Engage residents in the planning and implementation process to ensure improvements meet their needs and preferences.
- **Timeline:** March 2024 October 2024
- **Resources Needed:** Engage environmental consultant to prepare assessment; the City of New Haven to oversee the environmental review process; HUD review of environmental review process.
- **Outcome:** A well targeted plan that addresses the specific needs of the Union Square community.
- **Alignment with Other Activities:** The City of New Haven received a \$1.5 million grant from the State of Connecticut to renovate the former Hill Cooperative Youth

Services “Barbell” community center that is located across from Trowbridge Square Park. The facility, which has been closed since 2008, provides a myriad of programs for the community’s youth. The city also improving several other parks in the Community as well as making significant infrastructure investments.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

- **Methodology:** The methodology for environmental assessments for the Union Square Transformation Plan focuses on thorough baseline assessment, regular monitoring, community engagement, and adapted management.
- **Metrics:** The level of community engagement in the environmental review process as measured by surveys and interviews.

B. Community Building

One of the primary goals of planning and implementing Early Action Activities is to build momentum and demonstrate commitment to the broader Transformation Plan.

We engaged in an extensive community engagement and outreach process:

- Community Meetings
 - **Resident Advisory Committee – March 27, 2024** - Jimmy Miller, Glendower development consultant and president of Censere Consulting, walked the committee through the process for selecting Early Action Items. He explained what constitutes an Early Action Item and that these were things that could be immediately implemented after HUD review and approval. The committee and residents were given an opportunity to recommend the work they wanted to part of the Early Action Items. Each person present was asked to give recommendations and approximately 20 participants made recommendations. The recommendations were grouped by category and a vote was taken on each item. There were also some recommendations that may not qualify as Early Action Items.
 - **Steering Committee Meeting # 2 – March 28, 2024** - Jimmy Miller, Glendower development consultant and president of Censere Consulting, walked the committee through the process for selection of Early Action Activities. He explained what constitutes an Early Action Item and that these were things that could be immediately implemented after HUD review and approval. He also

reported the results of the poll taken of the Wolf residents regarding their preferences for Early Action Activities.

- **Resident Advisory Committee Meeting # 2** - Early Action Co-Leads, Edward LaChance and Josh Golden, walked the committee through the process for selecting Early Action Items. They explained what constitutes an Early Action Item and that these were things that could be immediately implemented after HUD review and approval. Residents were given an opportunity to recommend the work they wanted as part of the Early Action Items. A mock-up featuring an outdoor pavilion and benches was showcased for residents to provide feedback. Each individual offered recommendations and expressed concerns regarding the accessibility of the benches. Residents also voiced a desire to incorporate gardens or planters to cultivate fresh herbs and vegetables but expressed concern about the lack of a water supply for such endeavors. There was a recommendation to look for a fresh food mobile van. Residents raised additional ideas for initiatives that may not fall under the category of Early Action, but rather pertain to Property Management and Maintenance. These include suggestions such as installing fencing, enhancing security measures, increasing lighting, implementing motion sensor lighting, repairing the front door and intercom system, and establishing a more efficient system for package pick-up and drop-off, as well as improving parking facilities.

- **Early Action Committee Meeting # 1 - April 4, 2024** –The roles and responsibilities of this committee were discussed along with the meeting standards. ECC/Glendower explained the Early Action Activities requirements and process. The committee also reviewed how Early Activities can be used, including what they can and cannot be used for. The list of possible Early Action Activities that emanated from the March 27, 2024, Resident Advisory Committee were presented to the Early Action Committee. These activities included:
 - Enhancing outdoor space at the rear of Robert T. Wolfe
 - Installing signage
 - Implementing a Farmers Market
 - Installing a splash pad at Trowbridge Park
 - Installing murals and other community arts

A schedule was set for the delivery of critical path items.

- **Early Action Committee Meeting # 2- May 2, 2024** - Discussion of Doing While Planning -Committee Co-Lead, Edward LaChance, walked the committee through the rationale for the Early Action Committee and the “Doing While

Planning” Model and the process that HUD requires for this Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant. Program Manager, Haley Vincent, explained that we will have to draft an Early Action Plan to provide to HUD by September 2024. The committee engaged in a comprehensive discussion to clarify the definition of Early Activities. It was collectively agreed that these initiatives encompass limited, physical improvements undertaken within the neighborhood during the planning phase. These activities are strategically designed to foster community engagement, promote social cohesion, and reinforce the ongoing planning process. Mr. LaChance discussed examples of Early Action activities from other planning grant awardees which included park improvements, boardwalks, pedestrian safety, access to fresh fruit.

- **Early Action Committee – Meeting # 3 - June 27, 2024** – The Early Action Committee wanted to implement projects that would preserve the vibrant history of Union Square and Trowbridge Park. Trowbridge Square Park was unanimously selected as their top priority. The committee identified the following proposed activities:
 - HUD involvement winter farmer’s market as community building
 - Façade improvement of the “Barbell” & park landscape
 - Banners & Signs with underground railroad features
 - Beautification of Kimberly Square
 - Transforming Bayview Park into a Healing Arts Park
 - Investment in Hill Parks that need upgrading
 - Underground RR Mura
 - Lighting (some residents would like more lighting at the nighttime)
 - Regularly de-clog the sewer system to prevent flooding with sewer backing up into 1st floor apartments

The committee discussed the feasibility of each of these activities, whether or not they could be implemented in a timely manner, and whether or not they are eligible EAA. After extensive discussion, the committee selected the EAA that are presented in this proposal.

IV. Administration

A. Capacity

The Co-Applicant, Glendower, will oversee the implementation of the EAA. Glendower has assigned Edward LaChance, Vice President, to serve as the Co-Lead for the Early Action Committee under the auspices of the Program Manager. Edward joined Glendower and is responsible for identifying and planning both new and existing projects, including identifying funding, completing underwriting, and conducting due diligence. Prior to coming to work for Glendower, Edward served as a community development specialist with the State of Connecticut

Department of Housing. In this capacity, he managed the state’s ompetitive housing a mother's family project program from misconception, overseeing the war and management of over \$220,000 of state and federal funds. Edward also served in various other roles, including project management for housing community development projects environmental certification for various federal funding sources, and as liaison with other state agencies. Edward holds a bachelor's degree in political science and a masters of public affairs, both from the University of Connecticut.

The Glendower Team under the direction of the Program manager has developed a partnership with the City of New Haven Engineering Department headed by the City Engineer Giovanni Quinn.

ECC will execute a passthrough agreement with the City of New Haven whereby the funds needed to undertake the Early Action Activities will be “passed through” to the City who will implement these activities.

B. Administrative Cost

- Elm City Community/Glendower will defray the administrative cost of staff responsible for overseeing and coordinating these activities.
- Elm City/Glendower will defray the cost of third-party consultants working on these activities, including the environmental consultant.
- The City of New Haven will defray the cost of its Engineer who is responsible for working with ECC/Glendower to design and implement these activities.

V. Program Development Budget

A. Sources and Uses

Activity	Amount	Sources
Phase 1 Environmental Assessment	\$2,750	ECC/Glendower
ECC/Glendower Administration	\$54,720	ECC/Glendower
ECC/Glendower Third-Party Consultant	\$15,000	ECC/Glendower
City of New Haven Administration	\$13,680	City of New Haven
Install and Rebuild Stone Dust Paths	\$65,000	Planning Grant
Interpretive Display	\$35,000	Planning Grant
Pendulum Swing	\$28,000	Planning Grant
Banners	\$10,000	Planning Grant
Construction Contingency	\$13,000	Planning Grant
Total	\$237,150	

B. Leveraging

As can be seen from the Project Development Budget, these activities will leverage significant available resources from our partners. In addition to leveraging these funds, these activities will augment the work that is being done by the City and well as other private investments in the area.

VI. Conclusion

These Early Activities are critical to achieving the overall project goals. They will have both a short-term and long-term positive impact on the Union Square community. Moreover, these activities have kept the community actively engaged in the planning process and “Doing While Planning.”

VII. Appendices

Appendix A: Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Appendix B: Preliminary Data Collection Methodologies

Appendix C: Letters of Support from Key Partners