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## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Renton's Sunset Area Transformation Project is finalist for federal Choice Neighborhoods grant**

Renton, WA—Renton's Sunset Area Transformation Project is among the finalists selected to compete for a federal grant worth up to \$30 million that would help transform the Sunset Area neighborhood in northeast Renton.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has announced that Renton's Sunset Area Transformation Plan was selected as one of nine finalists to compete for a 2014/2015 Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI) Implementation grant. The project was selected from a pool of 33 applicants. HUD has \$155 million in 2014/2015 CNI funds available to award this year with a maximum of \$30 million per applicant. HUD will conduct site visits of the finalists in the coming weeks and plans to announce the CNI grant awards in September.

"We are very excited to be a finalist for HUD's Choice Neighborhoods Initiative grant," said Mayor Denis Law. "Our vision for a renewed Sunset neighborhood is finally becoming a reality. When completed, the Sunset community will be transformed and include new housing units for low-income families, a new, state-of-the art library, quality market-rate multi-family housing complexes, a new inclusive playground and a 3.7 acre community park. The Sunset Area plan shows how public funds help spur private investment creating jobs and a beautiful, livable neighborhood with equal amenities for all. Receiving the grant will be a game changer for Renton."

Building on the successes of HUD's HOPE VI Program, Choice Neighborhoods helps transform communities by revitalizing severely distressed public and/or assisted housing and by leveraging and investing in well-functioning services, high-performing public schools and education programs, early learning programs and services, crime prevention strategies, public assets, public transportation, and improved access to jobs. See [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/ph/cn/fy14-15finalists](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/cn/fy14-15finalists))

"It is fantastic news that the King County and Renton Housing Authorities and the City of Renton have been named finalists for the Choice Neighborhoods grant, an important recognition of their hard work. This has the potential to make huge positive changes for low-income families in the region," said Senator Patty Murray. "I am proud to be a voice for Washington state families and fight for the federal investments that provide local communities extra tools to revitalize and grow neighborhoods like the Sunset Area, and to help our economy grow from the middle out, not the top down."

The Sunset neighborhood is a 269-acre area in northeast Renton. The award of a CNI grant would result in the redevelopment of the 100-unit Sunset Terrace public housing complex into energy-efficient, mixed-income housing. Overall, 364 affordable or mixed-income housing units will be built or rehabilitated. In addition to the new and rehabilitated housing, the CNI grant would fund a new family service center; weatherization and critical repairs to existing housing; a new homeownership program; crime reduction efforts; job training and placement services; and enhanced access to quality education, health care, and other human services.

According to Congressman Adam Smith, "Seattle is one of the fastest-growing big cities in the U.S. At the same time, the suburban poor population in the greater Seattle area has grown much more rapidly than the urban poor population. A CNI grant would help address the region's growing affordable housing needs, while providing substantial resources to Renton, a suburb of Seattle, to help transform the Sunset Area neighborhood."

The Sunset Area Transformation Plan strategies are expected to spur private and public investments at the Sunset Terrace site, creating an additional 398 units of market-rate housing there as well as a new neighborhood park, and a safer, improved state highway linking the area with job centers throughout the region. Local and regional partners have committed \$197 million to the Sunset Area Transformation Plan in addition to the CNI grant to invest in the housing, neighborhood improvements, and services if the grant is funded.

Led by the King County Housing Authority, the City of Renton and the Renton Housing Authority, 12 additional Renton and regional agencies will help provide education, jobs training, health, supportive services, and neighborhood improvements. The Renton School District, Neighborhood House, Renton Technical College, King County Library System, HomeSight, UW Medicine/ Valley Medical Center, HealthPoint, Renton Salvation Army, The Boeing Company, Renton Chamber of Commerce, The Road Map Project, and Suburban King County Coordinating Council on Gangs will all participate in the effort.

Many Sunset housing units were built as World War II defense worker housing in the early 1940s and then sold to private owners in the 1950s. Sixty-six percent of the units in the neighborhood are now occupied by renters.

"I was glad to see first-hand the difference that a federal Choice Neighborhoods grant would make for the people of the Sunset area," said King County Executive Dow Constantine. "At a time when affordable housing

is desperately needed throughout the region, the Sunset Area Transformation Project would breathe new life into a community long overdue for revitalization.”

The King County Housing Authority (KCHA) owns and manages affordable and public housing communities throughout suburban King County, including a number of sites in Renton. “KCHA welcomed the opportunity to partner with the city and the Renton Housing Authority to support this Plan and pursue Federal funding,” said KCHA Executive Director Stephen Norman. “This partnership leverages KCHA’s capacity and experience to help Renton revitalize the Sunset Area community, support positive outcomes for its residents and increase the supply of affordable housing in the region.”

The transformation plan builds upon significant investments in the Sunset Area by the city, Renton Housing Authority, the Renton School District and the private sector over the past five years in housing, neighborhood improvements, and education, including: relocation of all Sunset Terrace residents to affordable homes, replacement of 24 units of public housing, construction of a new early learning center and an accessible playground, acquisition of land for a new park, construction of 217 units of new market-rate rental housing, and creation of a major pedestrian connection from the Sunset Area to a new regional shopping center and major job center.

“The City of Renton’s Housing Authority is honored to be recognized for its efforts to transform Sunset Terrace and the broader Sunset Area by being named to HUD’s list of finalists for a potential \$30 million Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Implementation grant award,” said Mark Gropper, RHA Executive Director.

“Residents of this neighborhood are so deserving of the new and refurbished housing, civic amenities, and infrastructure that this grant will provide. And of equal importance, will be the resulting supportive services, health, education, job placement, and economic vitality that will enable people to thrive in this opportunity-filled community.”

For more information regarding the Sunset Area community revitalization, see [rentonwa.gov/sunsetarea](https://rentonwa.gov/sunsetarea).

Attachment: Rendering of Sunset Area Transformation Plan mixed-income housing projects – courtesy of Schemata Workshop.

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