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Donnelly Announces Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant for Gary

City and its partners to receive \$500,000 for planning the revitalization of University Park East

Friday, January 16, 2015

Washington, D.C. — U.S. Senator Joe Donnelly today announced that the City of Gary is one of seven applicants across the country to receive a Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Gary will receive \$500,000 to help develop a revitalization plan for the University Park East neighborhood—an area that experiences high rates of poverty, crime, and housing vacancies.

Donnelly said, “This is excellent news for Gary. Unfortunately, those in and near the University Park East neighborhood know far too well the effects of adverse economic and social conditions, but thanks to the resolve of so many community leaders, Gary is poised to rise again. I congratulate Mayor Freeman-Wilson, the City of Gary, and its partners on receiving this grant and look forward to seeing how the hard work of Gary community leaders pays off for the University Park East neighborhood and the city as a whole.”

“Being selected as a Choice Neighborhood by HUD today, has further confirmed that we definitely have people locally and all the way to the White House pulling for Gary, Indiana’s comeback,” said Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson. “These funds will not only help us transform a neighborhood, but we’ll change perceptions and continue to restore hope. That’s priceless.”

The U.S. Department of Transportation reports that University Park East has continued to show steady population declines in recent years and a violent crime rate that is roughly three times Gary’s average. Additionally, 23 out of the 25 schools in the University Park East area received a D or an F grade from the Indiana Department of Education.

Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants are designed to support struggling neighborhoods by facilitating the development of comprehensive revitalization plans, called Transformation Plans, through an emphasis on housing, education, transportation, and jobs. These plans bring together public and private agencies, philanthropy groups, and community leaders to carefully target resources to support the plan’s financial goals.

While the City of Gary led efforts, the Co-Grantees of the award included the Legacy Foundation and the City of Gary Economic Development Corporation. Additional partners included leaders from Indiana University Northwest, Ivy Tech, Gary Community School Corporation, WorkOne Indiana, ARISE Gary, Indiana Parenting Institute, Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission, Broadway Area Community Development Corporation, Gary Public Transportation Corporation, Gary Redevelopment Commission, EJP Consulting Group, LLC, in addition to other local city officials.

The City of Gary is also designated as a Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) city. Launched in July 2011, the SC2 initiative is part of the White House’s push to help coordinate federal programs and investments, as well as fostering stronger relationships between community organizations and local leaders, to help further economic growth in some of the nation’s most distressed areas. In July 2013, Donnelly sent a

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letter in support of Gary's application for participation in the SC2 initiative.

For information on how Senator Donnelly's office can assist cities, municipalities, and groups applying for federal grants, please visit <http://www.donnelly.senate.gov/help/grants>.

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