

Neighborhood Stabilization and Revitalization

Mayor Walling is working hard to rebuild Flint house by house, block by block, job by job, and business by business in neighborhoods all across the city. With assistance from many partner organizations and over \$30 million in grant awards from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Flint's neighborhoods are being stabilized and revitalized. The three-pronged approach utilizes a combination of demolition, rehabilitation, and new construction depending on the needs of the neighborhood and the problem properties involved. The worst ones come down, the ones that can be fixed are rehabilitated, and some areas that need an infusion of new families and new housing are being redeveloped.

Demolitions are taking place across the city to clear out problem properties and blight at a pace that is faster than ever before. More than 600 demolitions have been completed in this budget year alone. The City of Flint has had as many as five crews working at the same time to meet the goals of spending all allocated funds on time and on budget. These grant funds are dedicated to specific neighborhoods that met certain requirements from the federal government regarding foreclosures, while other neighborhoods are covered with other more flexible funds. Areas of Flint's eastside were the focus during the winter and spring, and now the northwest area will see major blight reduction over the summer.

Rehabilitation work is being done across the city through partner organizations such as Operation Unification, Salem Housing Community Development Corporation and the Genesee County Land Bank. One example of success is the two houses in carriage town that are currently for sale. These houses have historic character and also five star energy ratings. More units will be renovated on the North side, around Mott Park and Thread Lake, and in many other neighborhoods.

The new home development at Smith Village is the only new residential subdivision slated for Genesee county this year and it is happening right here in Flint. Approximately \$16 million in grant funds are dedicated to the redevelopment of The New Smith Village—a neighborhood just north of the Flint River whose redevelopment has been a long standing goal of the community, but has seen one delay after another over the last 13 years. The redevelopment project began in earnest in May of this year and plans are underway to build 83 new single family homes for low to moderate income buyers. A goal of 25 new homes completed by the end of 2011 has been set by the Walling administration.

Potential buyers are already lining up and a website was recently launched (www.newsmithvillage.com) to showcase building plans and a long list of amenities including attached garages, covered porches, and energy efficient appliances. Down-payment assistance will be available and in many cases families will be able to buy new homes in Smith Village for what they are currently paying in rent.

A recent study by the Downtown Development Authority showed a demand for more than 250 housing units in the greater downtown area. The New Smith Village neighborhood will help meet this need for housing within walking distance of downtown and will help stabilize a neighborhood that is just blocks away from The University of Michigan-Flint, Kettering University, and Hurley Medical Center and that acts as the gateway to the North side of Flint. Future plans for the new subdivision also include a new child development center and performing arts center.

The revitalization of Flint is underway and on track. Through city-wide efforts such as neighborhoods stabilization, new economic developments like those taking place at the Great Lakes Technology Centre, and the tireless work of the Walling administration to bring new opportunities to Flint's citizens, Flint is being rebuilt house, block by block, job by job, and business by business in neighborhoods all across the city.