



The Grand on University Frequently Asked Questions

Communities First, Inc. is a Flint based nonprofit with a 10 year track record of providing affordable housing and quality opportunities for families. This includes being the developer of Oak Street Senior Apartments, Swayze Court Apartments, Coolidge Park Apartments and Berkley Place Apartments (under construction). We put on many community events, including Movies Under the Stars, African American Film Series, A Taste of Culture and other unique activities through our Culture Shock and Green Life programs.

There have been many questions asked about our proposed development called The Grand on University, located on the corner of W. University Ave. and Grand Traverse St. The Grand on University is a mixed use (residential and commercial), mixed income development with 48 - 1, 2 and 3 bedroom residential units. The development will create approximately 100 construction jobs, 10-15 permanent jobs and utilizes local contractors, subcontractors and workers. We are pleased to have this opportunity to share our responses to some of the commonly asked questions about this development.

The Grand on University FAQ

- Is this a public park? **No, this is a privately held property.**
- Will another greenspace be available for Carriage Town residents nearby? **Yes. Hurley is working to develop another property on University Avenue between Hurley and Atwood Stadium as community green space. The space will feature walking paths and will be available for neighborhood events and recreation.**
- Who maintains the property? **The property is maintained by Carriage Town Ministries. This arrangement was intended by the current owner as a means to activate the property as a greenspace until the site could be further developed.**
- What about property taxes? **The development is requesting a “Payment in Lieu of Taxes” (PILOT) to pay for basic city and emergency services. We will also pay special assessments and millages.**
- Why is a PILOT needed? **The development is requesting a “Payment in Lieu of Taxes” to ensure that rents remain affordable for people in our community. Without the PILOT,**

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rents will be too high for most Flint residents to afford, resulting in gentrification of the neighborhood. This project meets the criteria of PILOT set forth by the City of Flint.

- Is there a historical significance to this land? The property is located in the locally recognized Carriage Town Historic District but does not have a specific historical designation. The development plan has been approved by the local historic district commission.
- What was this land used for before becoming a green space? The land was the site of a grocery store and parking lot until the building became vacant and was torn down, leaving a flat and broken up concrete surface behind (see below).



- Is the current owner investing in the development? No.
- Will there be community space available for the community to use? Yes.
- What types of businesses will go in the commercial space? Businesses that will be beneficial to the neighborhood and complement resident and neighborhood needs and current amenities.
- Do the Chippewa Indians know and approve of this development? Yes, and we received a letter of support from them and no objection.

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- **Why develop this property?** The property meets several requirements including being a private parcel available for sale, size of parcel, nearby amenities, competitive funding criteria based on location, and market demand.
- **Will this increase traffic?** The site design, including setback and scale of the buildings, will help calm traffic and naturally cause drivers to be more aware of their immediate surroundings. We expect that residents will utilize local amenities more and drive less, increasing pedestrian oriented activity and safety.
- **Is there enough parking?** All parking requirements are currently met. In addition, we expect many residents to not utilize a car due to the Development's proximity to walkable amenities, including downtown Flint, Atwood Stadium, and local businesses.
- **Where will people park that patronize the businesses?** Parking spaces for commercial tenant patrons will be located in the interior of site but specific spaces have not been determined.
- **Will residents or commercial tenant customers park on the street?** While there are many on-street parking spaces within walking distance to the Development, we expect residents and commercial tenant customers to utilize onsite parking.
- **Is this development too big?** The development size is appropriate for the location and was reduced from one building that was 54 feet in height comprised of 58 units to multiple buildings that are 30 feet in height comprised of 48 units. The development is located on a main intersection and many of the houses in the interior neighborhood are taller than 30 feet.
- **Is there a demand for housing in this neighborhood?** While the City of Flint population has decreased, in order to not just survive but prosper in the future, it must grow by retaining and attracting residents and talent. The City's own Master Plan states the City should "turn its sights on growth" and seek to add 15,000 housing units to the Downtown and Innovation District areas. Additionally, the City has an overabundance of aging single-family housing while not enough multifamily housing exists for current demand, let alone future growth. As evidenced by the extremely low vacancy rate in and around downtown and high vacancy rates in Flint's traditional neighborhoods, there is high demand for the type of housing.
- **Who will live there?** People with a mix of incomes and backgrounds. The tenant demographic will be those people who wish to live and work in or near downtown and

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enjoy walking to local amenities. Given current home values in and around the neighborhood, we expect current Flint residents to meet the income and rental requirements to live at the Development.

· What resources will be available to tenants? Communities First, Inc. provides access to many resources for tenants of our housing developments. This includes opportunities for employment, education, recreation, arts and culture, volunteering and much more through our other programs and partnerships with other agencies.

· Have you asked the neighborhood and residents about the Development? Yes, we have had several meetings with the neighborhood association, local organizations and businesses, and even individual residents over the past 15 months. Through resident engagement, we have modified the development in several important ways, including; reduced the building height from 54 feet to 30 feet; reduced the number of units from 58 to 48; changed from 1 large building to 4 buildings; reduced siding and modified building façade and material elements.

· Does the neighborhood support this Development? We have support letters from nearby business, hospital, and nonprofit service provider and the current property owner. Some residents have remained critical of the Development throughout the engagement process. We have made several significant modifications to meet their requests. We have encountered similar criticism on other developments that was rooted in fear of change and NIMBY (not in my back yard) stereotypes but once the Development was completed and residents note the quality, aesthetics, and smooth operations, these criticisms often turn to complements. Many residents support the Development as a benefit to the City and neighborhood. Additionally, the Development has been approved by the Historic District Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Commission.

· Is the building architecturally compatible with the historic neighborhood? The Development has received a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic District Commission meaning it is historically compatible. Additionally, the Development Architect is familiar with historic properties and the neighborhood and has designed the property to be contextually appropriate for the neighborhood. See below for some examples of the design and scale of neighborhood buildings:

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Durant-Dort Carriage No. 4 at Water Street & Grand Traverse (destroyed in arson fire in 1987)



Berridge Place Apartments – Present Day



Odyssey House – 3 blocks east of site



Durant Apartments – 4 blocks east and south of site



The Grand on University

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We are excited about this growth driven development which will improve quality of life for residents in our community. Our approach integrates wrap-around services and resources for our tenants and the broader community to help all people succeed in life. We have helped residents find employment, return to college, explore interests, volunteer in the community and reunite their families through our work.

The funding that we seek out for these developments is highly competitive and if those resources don't come to Flint they go to other communities in the State. The need for safe, quality affordable housing is substantial in our city and this development goes a long way to meeting this need while helping to revitalize our city. Based off the criteria of the PILOT application submitted, this development meets the criteria set forth by the city ordinance for affordable housing and should be approved.

If you happen to have additional questions or thoughts, feel free to email us at info@communitiesfirstinc.org.

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The Grand on University Time Line

10-12-18 - Met with Neighborhood Association Representatives – CFI showed a concept proposal for one large building with 58 units with commercial space and building height of 54 feet. The concept proposed scaling and massing was designed with the City's Master Plan and the proposed zoning ordinance in mind rather than the old ordinance still in effect. Resident comments included desire for historic compatibility, use architectural features to break up the building height, include historic windows and prominent building features on corner emphasizing building as a gateway to/from neighborhood; no fencing in front; no cheap looking chain fencing; widen sidewalk along building.

10-16-18 – Zoning Board of Appeals meeting to request height variance of 26 feet; 4 ZBA members were in favor and 3 ZBA members were opposed; the motion was denied.

10-30-18 – Met with Neighborhood Association Representatives to obtain further input.

11-26-18 – Met with Neighborhood Association Representatives again to obtain input and show new concept based on resident feedback included regarding reducing building height. Other features could be added later.

12-18-18 – Zoning Board of Appeals meeting to request a height variance of 15 feet; this request reduced building scale per resident feedback and met the intent of the proposed zoning ordinance.

07-09-19 – Met with Neighborhood Association and discussed design elements. CFI offered several different design and scale concepts and took input on the members' favorite. Residents preferred concept with 4 buildings with larger building facing Grand Traverse and 3 walk-ups facing W. University. Building height was reduced to 30 feet, which meets current zoning requirements and is not as tall as many houses in Carriage Town. The building sizes are comparable to Georgia Manor (25 ft.) and Georgian Court (3 stories) which are located on residential streets rather than a busy corridor like W. University Ave. and Grand Traverse St.)

08-01-19 – Met with Historic District Commission to request a Certificate of Appropriateness; this was granted.

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08-20-19 – Zoning Board of Appeals meeting to request use variance: this was approved: also noted that this project would be permitted by right according to the proposed zoning code and the large lot size would not properly fit a single-family residence of duplex, which is what is allowed under the current zoning code. The original project building has been broken up into four smaller buildings to be more aligned with the character of the neighborhood rather than the single large building. Also noted that Communities First, Inc. spoke with Hurley and Kettering about creating an improved greenspace on the vacant land between Atwood Stadium and Hurley Hospital.

09-04-19 – Original request for a PILOT to keep development affordable to local residents for foreseeable future.

09-24-19 – Planning Commission Meeting request approval of site plan which was granted.

11-19-19 – Gave presentation at UACC meeting and answered questions

2-19-20- Resubmission Request a PILOT to keep development affordable to local residents for foreseeable future.

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CITY OF FLINT
FLINT PLANNING COMMISSION
ROBERT WESLEY, CHAIRMAN

Sheldon A. Neeley
Mayor

Council President Monica Galloway
Flint City Council
1101 S. Saginaw St.
Flint, MI 48502

February 18, 2020

Dear President Galloway,

I am unable to attend your meeting today in person but wanted to extend greetings from the City of Flint Planning Commission. We had the opportunity to consider a site plan for the Communities First, Inc. University Park Apartments project located at 422 W. University Ave. Because you are currently considering a PILOT for University Park Apartments, I wanted to share with you a brief summary of our review of the site plan.

The Planning Commission unanimously approved the site plan for this project on September 24, 2019. As part of the review, we considered multiple factors including:

- The project meets all setbacks, standards, and requirements based on the existing zoning code.
- The project also fits within the future mixed residential land use identified for the property in the *Imagine Flint Master Plan*.
- The initial project design was revised based on input and suggestions from residents after meetings held with the neighborhood association.
- The Saginaw Chippewa tribe had no concerns about burial remains at the site.
- All necessary approvals were attained from the Historic District Commission and/or Zoning Board of Appeals.

At the time of the meeting, the question of whether City Council would grant a PILOT for the project was a matter of public record. The Commission asked Mr. Glenn Wilson, the President of Communities First, Inc., about the impact of the proposed PILOT on the project's viability. According to the meeting minutes, he responded, "The project is feasible even without this PILOT, but the tax credits would allow for more affordable units." The project is likely to proceed regardless of the PILOT, but the PILOT could affect who can afford to live there once it is built.

The Planning Commission notes that the city's *Imagine Flint* master plan reflects the input of

thousands of residents and its Housing and Neighborhood Plan identifies two relevant objectives. Objective 4 is to promote equity and social justice in housing (of which access to high-quality affordable housing is a part). Objective 5 is to diversify the City's housing stock to enable anyone to make Flint their home.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this summary as you consider the matter.

Sincerely,

Robert Wesley, Chair
City of Flint Planning Commission

Cc: Mr. Eric Mays, Councilperson
Mr. Maurice Davis, Councilperson
Mr. Santino Guerra, Councilperson
Ms. Kate Fields, Councilperson
Ms. Jerri Winfrey-Carter, Councilperson
Mr. Herbert Winfrey, Councilperson
Mr. Allan Griggs, Councilperson
Ms. Eva Worthing, Councilperson
Ms. Inez Brown, City Clerk
Mayor Sheldon Neeley
Ms. Suzanne Wilcox, Director of Planning and Development

**Gisele Farah Trust
P.O. Box 3597
Flint, Michigan 48502**

August 16, 2019

Re: Communities First Project
Northeast Corner of University Ave. & Grand Traverse

To whom it may concern:

The Farah family has owned the property at the northeast corner of Third (University Ave.) and Grand Traverse for approximately 40 years. During that time period the property and neighborhood have gone through many transitions.

Over the past 10 years, we have been blessed to be able to partner with the Carriage Town Ministries (CTM) and offer them the property at no charge so that they could implement a vision that they had to improve the property and neighborhood, and we believe that they've done a tremendous job over the past decade, in that regard.

Over a few years ago, we were approached by Glenn Wilson with Communities First (CF) regarding a vision CF had to develop the property into a mixed-use project with apartments and commercial space. Having seen other recent projects by CF such as the Oak School Project and Swayze Court Apartments, and now the nearly complete Coolidge Park, we felt comfortable that we were working with a developer that could deliver a quality project that should be well received by the community.

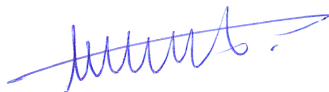
The agreement with Carriage Town Ministries was always meant to be a "place holder" until the right opportunity came around to redevelop the property. We obviously discussed the proposed CF project with CTM before we decided to proceed and, at that time, offered the property to CTM first. But they weren't ready to discuss acquiring the property and at the conclusion of that discussion we understood that that Carriage Town Mission was supportive of the redevelopment concept.

We believe that the proposed development is very attractive and is the right project for this Gateway Corner of Third and Grand Traverse. We understand that it is consistent with the City's Master Plan and will significantly contribute to the quality of life in the neighborhood.

We strongly support the project because we believe it will enhance the University corridor and bring much needed residences back into a neighborhood that has been depleted of residents over the decades.

We hope that you approve the project as we believe that it will contribute to the improvement of the University Corridor.

Yours truly,



Troy S. Farah
On behalf of the Farah Family
And The Gisele Farah Trust



One Hurley Plaza
Flint, Michigan 48503

August 19, 2019

Glenn Wilson
President & CEO
Communities First, Inc.
415 W. Court St.
Flint, MI 48503

Re: University Park

Dear Mr. Wilson

I am pleased to offer this letter of support to Communities First Inc. ("CFI") for the development and construction of University Park Apartments in the historic Carriage Town neighborhood in Flint, Michigan. The development is the new construction of a mixed-use development to include a small amount of commercial space along Grand Traverse St. and the corner of University Ave. as well as forty-eight (48) apartment units.

University Park is located near Hurley Hospital, a major employer and medical care provider and Kettering University. The development is within ¼ mile of the Flint River, Downtown Flint, and Riverbank Park. University Park is adjacent to a public transit stop and across the street from a multi-tenanted commercial building housing several businesses and helps introduce the historic Carriage Town neighborhood while connecting downtown Flint to the University Avenue Corridor.

CFI brought on local architect Sedgewick + Ferweda Architects to design a development that will be contextual with nearby business buildings and housing design. We understand that the building is much lower in height than the City's proposed zoning code allows to accommodate neighborhood concerns and oriented near the street to maximize pedestrian scale, walkability, and traffic calming effect.

The proposed project supports the Carriage Town neighborhood revitalization goals, including preserving and promoting the neighborhood, stimulating future reinvestment in the area, and building a sense of community to make Carriage Town an attractive, clean, and safe neighborhood in which to live.

The proposed project also supports the City's goals as described in the Imagine Flint Master Plan by increasing density, promoting mixed use development in key corridors and neighborhood centers, increasing multi-family dwelling units and the proportion of multifamily dwellings compared to single family homes.

To address the concerns about a lack of green space in the University Avenue Corridor, Hurley Hospital is working to develop another property on University Avenue between Hurley and Atwood Stadium as community green space. The space will feature walking paths and will be available for neighborhood events and recreation.

One Hurley Plaza
Flint, Michigan 48503

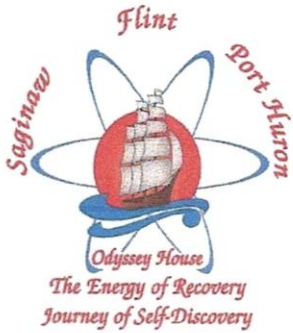
There is significant unmet demand in the Flint area for decent, sanitary, and safe affordable housing. We see this need every day in our interactions with patients and we are excited to see additional housing options being produced for those that need it.

Thank you for your hard work in leading the way for future investment and development in the City of Flint. We are hopeful that this development moves forward and to working with Communities First, Inc. on this and future endeavors.

Sincerely,



Michael Burnett MBA, MSW
Vice President
Service Line Development and
Chief Strategy Officer



Flint Odyssey House, Inc.

A Non-Profit Agency

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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Fax: (810) 238-8635

January 22, 2020

Communities First, Inc.
415 W. Court Street
Flint, MI 48503

Dear Glenn Wilson:

I write on behalf of Flint Odyssey House, Inc. in support of the University Park Development proposed by Communities First, Inc. to be located on the corner of W. University Ave. and Grand Traverse St.

One of the challenges our community faces is access to quality, affordable housing. The proposed housing development would expand access to quality housing to area residents while providing new retail space for our growing economy. Being steps away from downtown, the complex would encourage a more walkable, active community, which is vital for thriving cities.

Our community is in a period of growth and transition, which requires careful development to preserve the qualities that make Flint, Flint while expanding the market to attract new residents. Communities First, Inc. has shown the ability to produce high-quality mixed-income housing, including the recently completed Coolidge Park Apartments development. Supporting developments that attract new residents as well as existing Flintstonians is key to growing our city and making it a place young professional's call home.

I support this project as it is an important development for the community and look forward to seeing this development come to fruition. Communities First, Inc. has created the excitement of new development in our historic Carriage Town Neighborhood.

Thank you,

Ronald S. Brown
Executive Director

Delegate Agency of Region 10 Funded by Michigan Department of Health and Human Services,
Office of Recovery Oriented System of Care.



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PAUL MUSSON, MD

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RONALD BROWN, CADC, CCS-M

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JOE KLOBUCHAR, CPA

Finance Director

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ADMISSIONS

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For more information visit us at:

OdysseyVillage.com



Communities First, Inc.
415 W. Court Street
Flint, MI 48503

Dear Glenn Wilson:

As a business owner in Flint, Michigan I am writing to express my support of the University Park Development proposed by Communities First, Inc., to be located on the corner of University Ave. and Grand Traverse St.

The proposed housing development will attract young professionals as well as cater to those already in our community that are in search for quality housing options to meet their needs. The mixed-use building will provide space for new businesses and provide quality housing within walking distance of the heart of the city.

Being located just blocks away, we are excited about the increased traffic and density in our neighborhood. We believe both the Grand Traverse and University Avenue corridors are wonderful today and have the potential to even better tomorrow.

I support this project as it is an important development for the community and look forward to seeing this come to fruition.

Thank you,

Jason Caya
Partner, Tenacity Brewing