

Housing Authority of Joliet Press Release

In 1966, the Housing Authority of Joliet developed a 168 rental unit public housing development known as Fairview Homes. Located within the City of Joliet's northeast quadrant, the community consists of two, three, four and five bedroom family rental units and an on-site community center.

With the passing of time, buildings and critical infrastructure accumulate major repair, renovations and upgrade needs that must be completed in order to maintain a level of service and safety necessary to continue to provide affordable housing assistance. However, with limited availability of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (**HUD**) modernization and operating funds, Housing Authorities found themselves in a position of either attempting to maintain **functionally obsolete** buildings and infrastructure or identifying both HUD and non-HUD funds necessary to demolish and rebuild/redevelop properties. This is the current situation associated with Fairview Homes. The repairs, replacements, modernization and upgrade needs associated with the 168 rental units within the Fairview Homes property far exceed reasonable redevelopment costs; therefore, it was only financially logical to demolish the property and rebuild/redevelop it into something more useful to the community.

On July 2, 2018, the Housing Authority of Joliet received approval from HUD to demolish the Fairview Homes property and leave the land vacant and undeveloped due to a lack of local amenities that are now desirable with modern day renters and potential home owners. Amenities lacking include access to public transportation, local supermarkets and convenience stores, shopping facilities, restaurants, gas stations, local businesses, employment opportunities, highly rated grade/middle/high schools, churches, parks and recreational facilities, medical clinics, etc.

As part of the property demolition process, the Housing Authority of Joliet provided each resident household with a housing choice voucher and unlimited access to on-site mobility and relocation counselors brought on specifically to assist each household in identifying and overcoming barriers to household relocation and to connect with existing community services that are essential in establishing a stable household within a new community. They also assisted households in identifying rental housing that is located within an "**opportunity area**." An opportunity area is a geographical area (neighborhood) that has lower concentrations of poverty and subsidized housing and increased access to quality rental housing, transit options, jobs, and local schools. By electing to reside within an opportunity area, a households can use their subsidy not just to pay rent but to improve their lives. Mobility and relocation counseling services have been provided to resident households for approximately two and one half years.

Pre-Relocation Counseling Services began in February and the relocation process will begin and will last for approximately a 90 to 180 day period. Demolition activity will begin approximately November, 2018. During this period of transition, local area residents will notice a vast difference in the look and feel of the property. You are encouraged to periodically check our website at www.hajoliet.org for updated news and photos of the property as it undergoes demolition.

The Housing Authority of Joliet continues to remain committed to providing affordable housing options to residents within the City of Joliet and Will County community and slowly but surely, we remain committed to developing communities of choice and opportunity, one brick at a time.

"This is great news and long overdue. I thank the Housing Authority of Joliet and Michael Simelton for all of their hard work," said City of Joliet Mayor O'Dekirk.

Michael Simelton states, "The timing of this approval is rather ironic in that we are celebrating Independence Day and the residents we serve will be provided assistance that will allow them a higher level of independence and improved quality of life."