



# JORDAN DOWNS 2021 IMPACT REPORT

REDEVELOPMENT OF  
JORDAN DOWNS



## Jordan Downs: Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative

Jordan Downs Community Partners (JDGP) is a public-private partnership that will transform the 1940s-built Jordan Downs public housing development in the neighborhood of Watts, Los Angeles, into an inclusive, mixed-income community and vibrant mixed-use urban village, where all can thrive.

### Our Vision: Bridging Connections



## Letter from Damon Harris, VP of Community Development

The ethos at BRIDGE is to strengthen communities – beginning but not ending with housing. That is to say, improving the built environment for greater social equity, health and educational outcomes. Our work in public housing leverages the opportunity of large-scale infill redevelopment to preserve historic communities, advance economic opportunity and activate community assets like schools and parks.

Building on learnings from Trauma Informed Community Building,<sup>1,2</sup> we entered Jordan Downs by engaging with residents and community partners to identify the partnerships that would be most meaningful to residents. We heard the priority clearly: residents want to ensure the revitalization of their community also includes improved economic conditions for Jordan Downs residents and neighbors.

Jordan Downs Forward (JDF), a workgroup born from our initial engagement with residents and community partners, in very short order has delivered on the promise of improving access to quality training and career-building jobs. With the completion of Cedar Grove at Jordan Downs, the

collaboration has established proof-of-concept by greatly exceeding local hire targets. Not only has this improved opportunities for residents to participate in the development of future phases, it has enabled residents to become employed at other large construction projects in concurrent developments throughout the city and county.

However, we know there is much left to do. JDF is engaged in continuous improvement—assessing, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating so we can better understand and react to the employment environment. We are keenly focused on the issues of gender equity and improving economic outcomes for women and youth, and are confident that we have built a durable foundation for new opportunity pathways.

Kind regards,

*DAMON A. HARRIS.*

Damon Harris, VP of Community Development

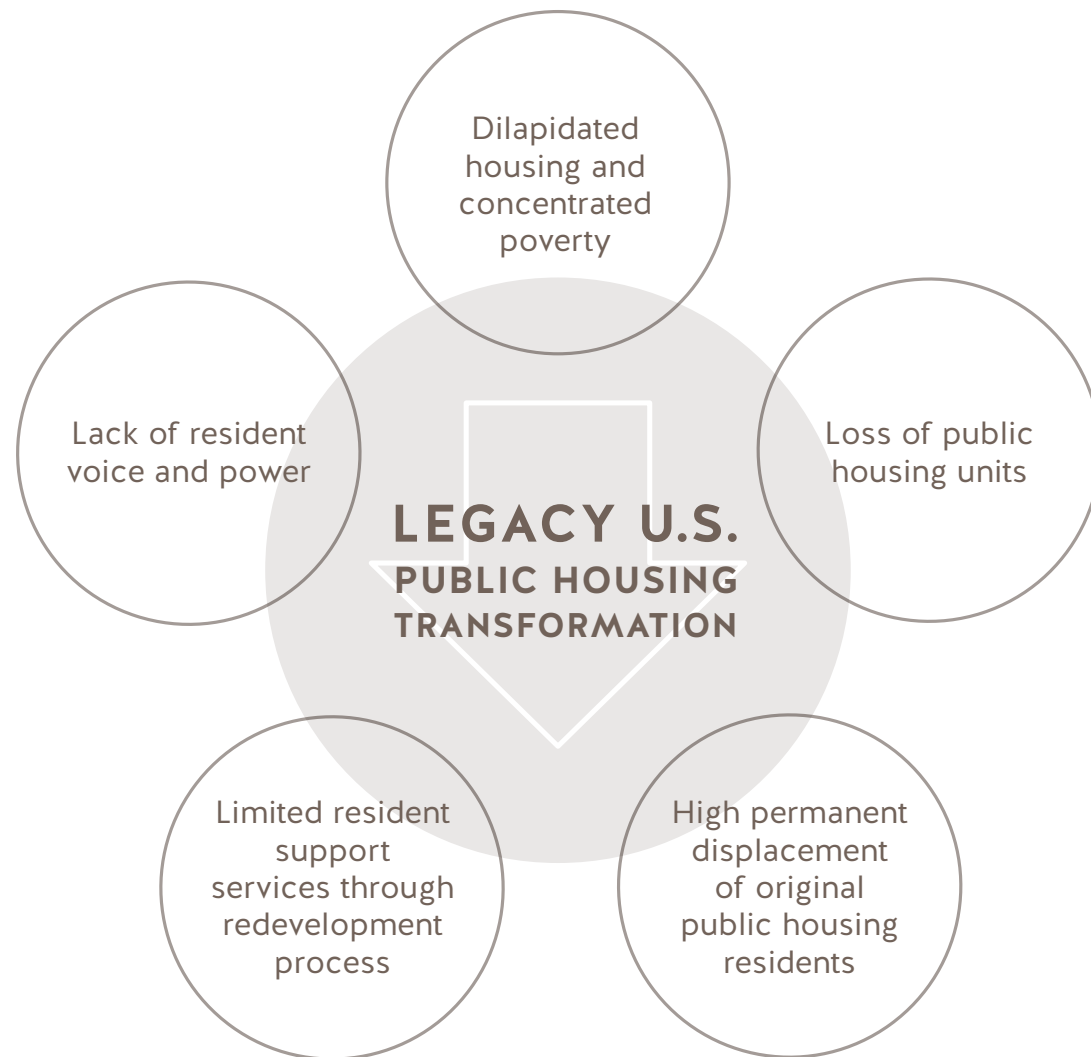
<sup>1</sup>[HTTPS://BRIDGEHOUSING.COM/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2018/08/TICB-2018.PDF](https://bridgehousing.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/TICB-2018.PDF),

<sup>2</sup>[HTTPS://BRIDGEHOUSING.COM/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2018/01/TICB.PAPER5\\_14.PDF](https://bridgehousing.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/TICB.PAPER5_14.PDF)

## The Challenge and Our Approach

### OUR HISTORY

In 2012, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles selected Jordan Downs Community Partners (JDCP), with BRIDGE Housing Corporation (BRIDGE) and The Michaels Organization (TMO) as joint master developers, to redevelop 700 units of public housing into a larger mixed-income community. Together, JDCP, and commercial developer Primestor Development Inc. (Primestor) along with residents are reimagining Jordan Downs into a vibrant community that first and foremost serves former public housing residents, welcomes new residents of varying incomes, and transforms the surrounding neighborhood with new and much-needed retail, public community spaces and improved transportation connections. Across the United States, public housing authorities are challenged with multiple issues. At Jordan Downs, we are fortunate to have a strong housing authority that is committed to creating a vibrant, thriving community.



## Our Holistic Approach





Who We Serve

To date, the redevelopment team has completed two community surveys at Jordan Downs to understand resident demographics and their strengths and needs in the areas of education, employment, health and civic engagement. Eighty percent of households participated in both surveys and results were paired with U.S. Census data and other secondary sources to create a full understanding of the Jordan Downs community.

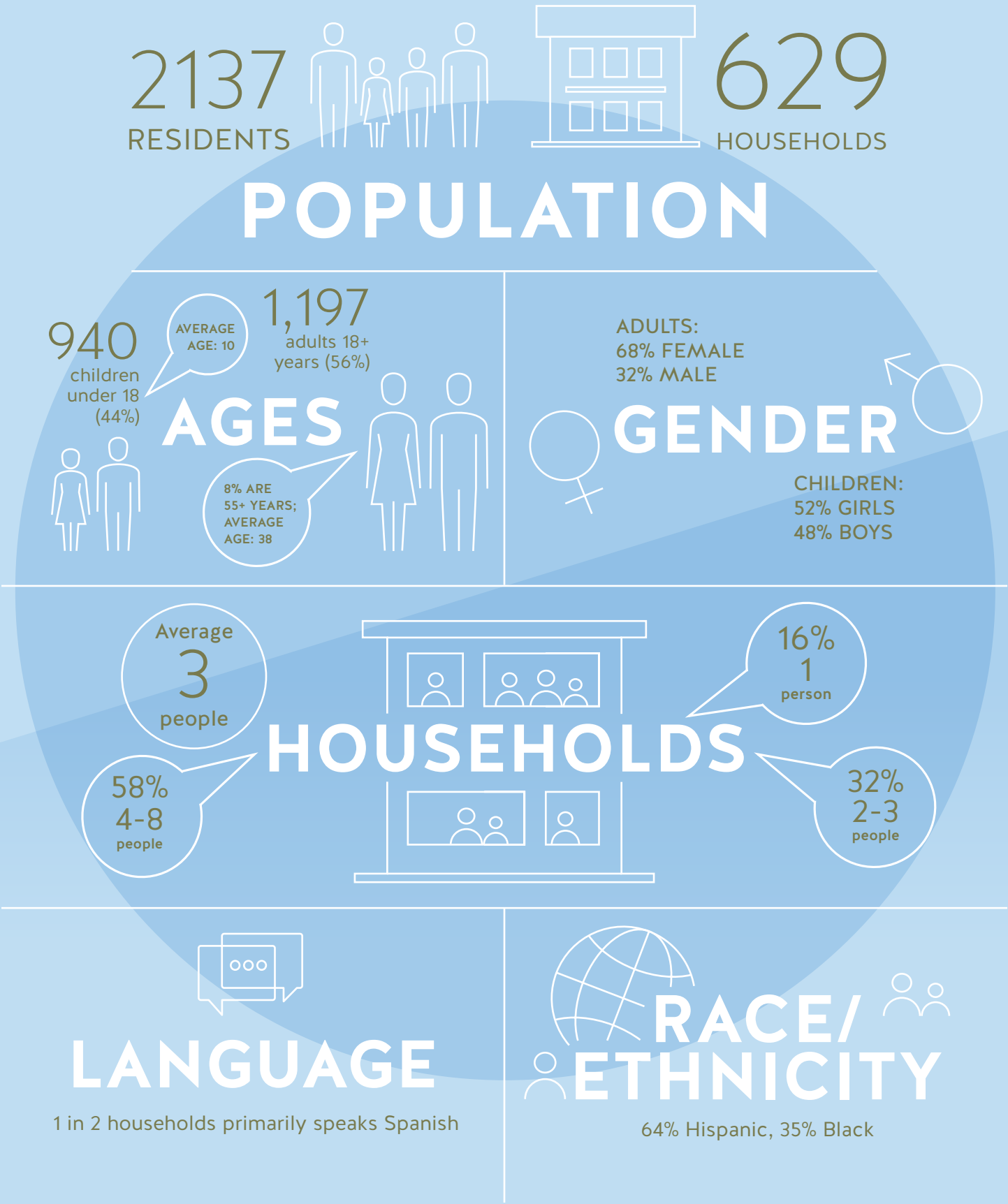
Data presented in this report illustrate findings from these two surveys, as well as administrative data from government and contracted organizations.<sup>34</sup> This report highlights one of our key Community Development and Services strategies launched during the first phase of redevelopment: Workforce Development. Subsequent reports will speak to other areas of progress and learning as the work continues.

THE HEART OF JORDAN DOWNS IS OUR RESIDENTS



<sup>3</sup> MID-2022, WE WILL RELEASE FINDINGS FROM OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE FIRST PHASE OF CONSTRUCTION, CEDAR GROVE  
<sup>4</sup> 2013 AND 2016 RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS HAVE COMPARABLE YEAR-OVER-YEAR DEMOGRAPHICS PROVIDING SUFFICIENT CONFIDENCE OF REPRESENTATION

Who is Impacted



Case Study: An Innovative Workforce Development Collaboration to Create a Vibrant, Sustainable and Resilient Workforce

BRIDGE Community Development staff led the successful creation and implementation of a workforce development collaboration comprised of joint master developers—BRIDGE and TMO—and partners: Primestor, WorkSource development partners, construction contractor Cannon Constructors (and its subcontractors), and government entities HACLA and the City of Los Angeles’ Mayor’s Office of Economic Opportunity and Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD). The partnership adopted the community-informed brand identity Jordan Downs Forward (JDF) to guide the group’s work.

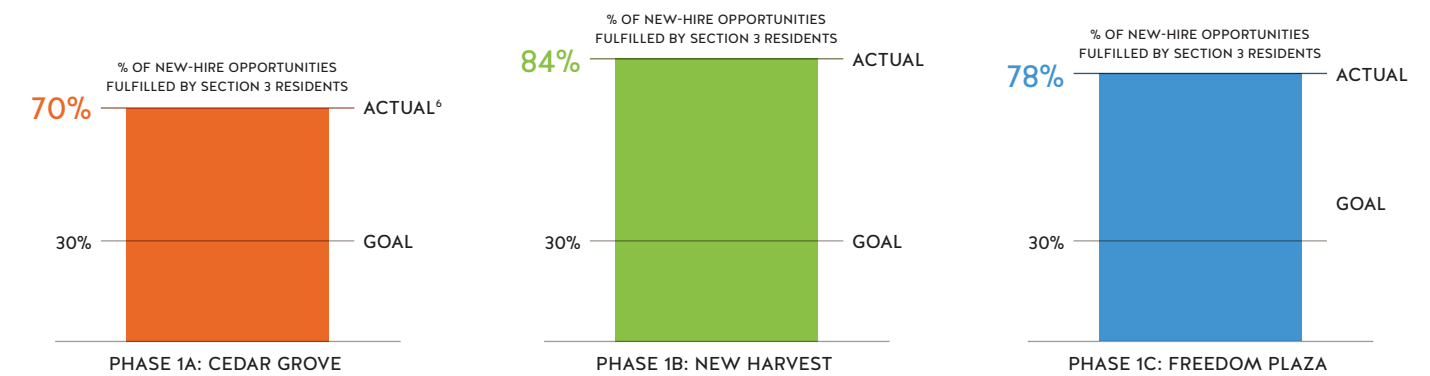
Community data illustrated high, chronic unemployment in both Jordan Downs and the broader Watts community. The partners prioritized workforce development programming and used JDF as the mechanism to 1) convene disparate service providers and 2) adopt a common objective: exceed targeted local hiring outcomes. Together, JDF partners ensured area residents knew about job opportunities, coordinated outreach and training, and made available the necessary resources and support to sustain employment over time. JDF also provided safe spaces for joint planning and conflict resolution.

Keys to success:

BRIDGE Community Development staff established a foundation and infrastructure, including:

- Agreement among partners on an aligned vision, goals and expectations
- Thoughtful development of the necessary processes and operations of the collaboration
- Identification of essential partners to invite to the table
- Regular meetings to learn, share and provide accountability
- Data reporting for real-time troubleshooting and impact measurement

The group’s successes resulted in broad community support for campus redevelopment as well as exceeding federal Section 3 local hire goals for all three phase 1 construction sites: Cedar Grove (phase 1a), New Harvest (phase 1b) and Freedom Plaza (phase 1c).<sup>5</sup>



AN INNOVATIVE, SUSTAINABLE AND SCALABLE MODEL

With experience under its belt, JDF partners are eager to build upon their collective learnings and sustain the model with each subsequent construction phase of Jordan Downs redevelopment as well as beyond to other local construction projects. Additionally, the team will explore how to expand the model to other industries such as healthcare and technology.

<sup>5</sup> PHASE 1B IS TMO'S NEW HARVEST AT JORDAN DOWNS, COMPRISING 135 FAMILY APARTMENT HOMES. PHASE 1C IS PRIMESTOR'S FREEDOM PLAZA, COMPRISING 114,000 SQUARE FEET OF COMMERCIAL RETAIL WITH ANCHOR GROCER SMART & FINAL AND LARGE RETAILERS NIKE AND ROSS, AMONG OTHERS.  
<sup>6</sup> BRIDGE PHASE 1A SECTION 3 DASHBOARD AS OF DECEMBER 2019

Goal: Create a vibrant, competitive and resilient workforce for the 21st century economy



<sup>7</sup> BRIDGE PHASE 1A SECTION 3 DASHBOARD AS OF DECEMBER 2019  
<sup>8</sup> BRIDGE PHASE 1A SECTION 3 DASHBOARD AS OF DECEMBER 2019



Local-Hire Success Story

ENGAGING SUB-CONTRACTORS TO EXCEED LOCAL-HIRE GOALS

BRIDGE and its workforce partners exceeded local-hire goals in JDF’s first project to complete construction because subcontractors followed through on their commitment to hire Section 3 workers. Out of 41 subcontractors, 32 committed to hiring Section 3 workers, and 83 percent fulfilled their placement commitments. Progression Drywall committed to hiring 11 Section 3 workers earned an average of \$6,111 per month.

Resident Highlight



“ It feels good to be able to help the Jordan Downs and Watts residents who are in need of jobs, because I was one of those people.”

– Sherina Bledsoe, Cedar Grove Resident

Sherina and her family were homeless for two years. She felt extremely discouraged as she could not provide her kids with a home, “like I was supposed to.” Once she moved into Jordan Downs public housing, she gained stability and began to work her way toward a brighter future. Sherina successfully applied for a job with the first phase of Jordan Downs revitalization. Sherina and her family moved into Cedar Grove in November 2019. In 2020, Sherina parlayed her experience into a similar job with the next phase of Jordan Downs.

Goal: New affordable, high-quality housing paired with supportive services

CEDAR GROVE AT JORDAN DOWNS

Reflecting HACLA’s “Build First” commitment, BRIDGE completed construction of phase 1a–Cedar Grove at Jordan Downs–in late 2019, providing brand-new homes to 115 families, 72 of whom are original Jordan Downs residents.



“ I always had faith it was going to happen.”

– Denise Richardson,  
President of Resident Advisory Council

					
115 family apartment Homes	72 replacement apartments, 10 homes for Section 8 referrals and 32 LIHTC at 30-60% AMI	1-, 2-, 3-, 4- and 5-bedroom apartment homes	On-site amenities: In-unit laundry and on-site management office	Community amenities: Community park w/ BBQ	Built to LEED Gold certification <sup>9</sup>

STRATEGY: SUPPORTING RESIDENTS THROUGH HOUSING RELOCATION AND ONGOING SERVICES

During Cedar Grove’s move-in and lease-up process, BRIDGE engaged a social services organization, El Nido Family Centers, to provide residents with wraparound supports to ensure a smooth transition into their new homes. In addition to helping residents navigate move-in logistics such as compiling vital documents, service coordination staff provide ongoing support and resource referrals to ensure that families remain stable in their homes.

<sup>9</sup> FINAL CERTIFICATE PENDING AS OF THIS WRITING



COVID-19 Recovery Support

Amidst COVID-19 recovery efforts, service coordination staff ramped up service offerings to help families facing various hardships. These efforts were supported by HACLA, Boys and Girls Club, Community Safety Partnership and other donations partners brought to the site. As of this writing, service coordination staff provided Cedar Grove residents and residents across the entire Jordan Downs campus with financial assistance, food assistance, health services and general information and education referrals.



Additional supports include: COVID-19-related flyers and informational materials, including social distancing guidelines; energy saving tips to reduce electricity bills; and how to apply for financial assistance, such as the Angelenos Card the City of Los Angeles Emergency Renters Assistance Program

<sup>10</sup> THE MAYOR'S FUND FOR LOS ANGELES' ANGELENO CARD PROVIDES DIRECT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES FACING EXTREME ECONOMIC HARDSHIP DUE TO THE PANDEMIC. HOUSEHOLDS THAT MEET THREE CRITERIA ARE ELIGIBLE (1) HOUSEHOLDS IN THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES; (2) HOUSEHOLDS WITH TOTAL ANNUAL INCOMES THAT FELL BELOW THE FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL PRIOR TO COVID-10 CRISIS; AND (3) HOUSEHOLDS THAT HAVE FALLEN INTO DEEPER ECONOMIC HARDSHIP DURING THE CRISIS BECAUSE AT LEAST ONE HOUSEHOLD MEMBER HAS LOST A JOB OR EXPERIENCED A REDUCTION IN INCOME OF AT LEAST 50%. IMMIGRATION STATUS IS NEITHER ASKED NOR CONSIDERED IN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY.

Looking Ahead: Choice Neighborhoods, Transformative Climate Communities & Phase 2 Through Full Build-Out

In April 2020, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded HACLA, the JDCP development and community partners a \$35 million Choice Neighborhoods Implementation (CNI) grant to further catalyze the neighborhood revitalization work already underway at Jordan Downs— what HACLA calls the “Watts Rising Transformation Plan.” CNI funds comes at the heels of \$685 million in pooled private, state and local monies from the State of California’s Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) grant to move the needle on community health, jobs and entrepreneurship.

As with the first phase of redevelopment, the remaining build-out will continue with HACLA’s Build First commitment and in phased stages, integrating rental and for-sale housing, green open space, community space and commercial retail. The overall housing mix will include 1,569 new units.

BRIDGE’s Phase 2 will include 80 family apartment homes (60 replacement of former public housing and 20 new low-income apartments serving 30-80% AMIs), including 1- to 4-bedroom apartment homes with ample open space, tot lots, BBQs, a community room, bicycle storage and on-site laundry. Anticipated completion is fall 2021.



**STAY TUNED**  
The 2021 Jordan Downs Forward Impact report will highlight our progress on other initiatives focused on health and well-being, updated results from the 2020 Resident Survey, as well as an early assessment of Cedar Grove residents’ experiences.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**  
Our sincerest thanks to our residents for whom this work will ultimately benefit as well as our project partners, our many generous funders, and the following research and evaluation consultants: Harder+Company Community Research, Social Science Research Center at California State University, Fullerton, and Overland Pacific & Cutler.



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