



Request for Letters of Interest – 2016

Release Date: August 23, 2016

Responses Due: September 30, 2016

I. Executive Summary

Great Places 2020 is a visionary community development project to transform strategic places in Marion County neighborhoods into dynamic centers of culture, commerce and community, preparing Indianapolis for unprecedented success as it reaches its Bicentennial. Philanthropic, civic and private partners will engage with neighborhoods to make significant social and capital investments to enhance quality of life and spur private investment.

Great Places implementation partners launched these ideas in three places in 2014. In 2016, we will select two additional places to support four years of implementation of the new Great Places plans. Implementation partners include: City of Indianapolis, Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Partnership, Indy Chamber, Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, and United Way of Central Indiana. Local Initiatives Support Corporation acts as the backbone organization for this collective impact initiative.

This Request for Letters of Interest asks neighborhood partners to answer the following:

- 1) Are you interested in participating in Great Places 2020?
- 2) Which place in your neighborhood do you wish to make a Great Place?
- 3) What are the opportunities, challenges, and momentum that make this location a good candidate for Great Places 2020?
- 4) Who is the lead agency and who are your partners?

The Letters of Interest are due September 30, 2016 by 5:00 PM.

II. Program Background

The year 2020 is the bicentennial of the founding of the City of Indianapolis. As such, it provides an opportunity to mobilize the community around twin efforts of creating a vision for the City's future, and actually achieving specific and ambitious civic goals by the beginning of our third century. The next four years will be full of critical decisions for Indianapolis that will shape its

future. It can either continue its trajectory upward to be one of the leading cities in the country, or fall victim to its growing challenges of disinvestment, loss of population, and failing civic systems. Indianapolis must *define and become* the kind of city it aims to be, with a particular focus on its neighborhoods. It is increasingly clear that Indy's greatest challenges and opportunities are concentrated in its core urban neighborhoods, and their success will drive the future of the entire city.

Great Places 2020 is a visionary community development project to transform strategic places in Marion County neighborhoods into dynamic centers of culture, commerce and community, preparing Indianapolis for unprecedented success as it reaches its Bicentennial. Philanthropic, civic and private partners will engage with neighborhoods to make significant social and capital investments to enhance quality of life and spur private investment. This effort leverages the infusion of investment by the City of Indianapolis and its Plan 2020 master plan for Indianapolis – into four years of focused redevelopment of key neighborhood centers in our most strategic places of future population growth. This concentrated effort at building great places will be achieved through the collective effort of neighborhood and citywide partners working together to restart market investment that will continue beyond 2020.

Great Places implementation partners launched these ideas in three places in 2014, [Englewood Village](#), [Maple Crossing](#) and [River West](#). As of May 2016, more than \$84 million had been pledged to Great Places 2020 from over 50 partners.

In 2016, we will select two additional places to support four years of implementation of the new Great Places plans. We believe that by 2020 each place will leverage many times over our initial investment from local and national philanthropy, and particularly by stimulating extensive market-driven investment in each neighborhood.

The Challenge of City Viability

Empirical findings over the three decades between 1970 and 2000 show that more educated residents, higher skilled workers, ethnic diversity, and income equality within large American counties all drive economic prosperity in the surrounding region. Yet Marion County's neighborhoods continue to struggle to significantly improve the education, skills, and income levels that could positively impact Central Indiana's economy. In spite of that fact, Indianapolis has great assets upon which to build, such as institutions and small businesses, parks and greenways, plus leaders and workers who have transformed whole sectors of our city in recent decades.

As Indianapolis approaches the celebration of the bicentennial of its founding (1820 – 2020), city leaders representing every discipline and sector recognize a unique and critical opportunity to comprehensively address Indianapolis' liabilities, build on its assets, and boost the region's economic future through strategic neighborhood planning and investments. The strength of Downtown Indianapolis as a vibrant regional center was achieved through decades of intense public-private redevelopment. Moving forward into our city's next century, we need to build on that downtown success with a bold vision and strategic investments in neighborhoods surrounding Downtown. The City of Indianapolis created a master vision through its Plan 2020

effort. Great Places 2020 aligns with this vision and makes coordinated, strategic investments at a scale that can not only transform specific places, but also invigorate the economic resources and assets of Indianapolis neighborhoods.

III. Program Design

Effective Placemaking

To meet this viability challenge, Indianapolis must compete with peer cities to attract and retain talented people, businesses, and investment. According to the [Project for Public Spaces](#), to have a great city, it is not enough to have one great place. You need a number of them to create a truly lively community – places where people choose to live, work, and play. You need to provide people all over town with close-to-home opportunities to take pleasure in public life. Indianapolis has some great places to be sure: Fountain Square, Irvington, Broad Ripple, Downtown, and Meridian-Kessler. But, we need to be more proactive in adding to this list of great places if we want to meet the challenge of retaining and attracting residents as we continue to compete both regionally and nationally.

A Vision for Neighborhoods

Great Places 2020 will foster vibrant city neighborhoods where a wide range of people can live affordably, yet have access to high quality common amenities within a five-minute walk from the center of the place (half mile diameter). These neighborhoods will contain single and multi-family housing that will be attractive to a range of ages and incomes. These homes will complement their private yards with greenspace and recreational amenities located within walking distance. Daily shopping, dining, and service needs will be met through a short walk or bike trip, while other shopping and entertainment will be accessed using dependable and high quality public transportation. These neighborhoods will cluster around high quality schools that offer unique educational approaches designed to connect children to growing future employment opportunities in the city. Nearby anchor institutions will invest in these neighborhood amenities due to their positive impact on their customers and employees. Neighborhood amenities will be fostered and reinforced through social, civic, and economic development efforts supported by grassroots neighborhood non-profits and religious organizations. This combination of features will reduce dependence on individual automobiles and commute times, providing residents with a more affordable, socially rich, lower-stress, and environmentally sustainable lifestyle.

Theory of Change

By supporting quality-of-life plan creation and implementation over the past seven years, LISC has provided many of the tools needed to create positive neighborhood change and built a platform of relationships to keep the momentum moving forward. The vision and goals outlined in the quality-of-life plans provide the groundwork to dig more deeply into the details of neighborhood revitalization to transform a specific place within the neighborhood. This placemaking approach builds on many years of LISC investment in commercial revitalization, quality housing, family wealth building, education, and healthy neighborhood development. It is a culmination of our geographic and programmatic investments over the past decade and a vehicle to deliver them going forward.

Recent efforts such as the Super Bowl Legacy Initiative have demonstrated that a comprehensive, civically powerful, concentrated and coordinated focus on implementing a neighborhood's development goals can bring about fundamental change in a particular place. The key elements of this success have been the pairing of well-organized neighborhoods with a compelling, high-profile civic event such as the Super Bowl to work together on shared goals. The Super Bowl partnership made neighborhood development an important cause to community members from across the region, well beyond traditional community development constituents. This neighborhood/civic combination was managed through a coordinating entity and attracted a variety of investment types and sources in support of its community objectives.

The Legacy Initiative attracted \$152 million into neighborhood objectives by starting with a \$1 million NFL grant, a modest core investment in staff and volunteer support, and \$30 million in City infrastructure improvements. While the recession dictated that the total Legacy investment was heavily drawn from government and philanthropic sources, it reversed the momentum of neighborhood decline and re-established vibrant places in the neighborhood where private investment is now following.

The level of investment necessary to similarly reverse the course of decline in many additional neighborhoods is much too large to accomplish with just philanthropic or government funding. These subsidies must be carefully structured to leverage as much for-profit investment as possible in order to attract enough investment to transform specific places and turn the tide of neighborhood decline. This leveraging is often most achievable in neighborhoods where an existing "anchor institution" is engaged in carefully deploying their economic activities to achieve maximum positive neighborhood impact. This includes investment activities like providing and purchasing goods and services and increased employment opportunities through targeted training and job development strategies (see section on the role of anchor institutions later in the document for more detail).

Private investment in targeted places will initially need to be leveraged by carefully structuring subsidy funds to create linked investment vehicles to attract private capital. Such structured funds would be targeted side-by-side with public-sector investment in infrastructure, in order to re-establish the physical and social vitality of key neighborhood centers. These direct partnerships can then achieve significant clusters of change in neighborhood educational, social, transportation, and cultural opportunities, as well as housing, employment, commercial, and public space.

This groundwork of coordinated investment can then attract growing levels of spontaneous private investment, as new and old residents, businesses, and institutions recognize the financial value of investing there. Ultimately, this market-driven response will generate the majority of investment necessary to transform targeted places and begin to positively impact both surrounding neighborhoods and the viability of the entire city.

IV. Eligibility Criteria

Place Selection Criteria

Where this work takes place is essential to the success of the initiative. Selection criteria include:

- neighborhoods in the district have the **capacity** to plan and implement change, as evidenced by the presence of a **quality-of-life plan**;
- new investments can build on existing signs of nearby **private market activity or promising trends**;
- **anchor institutions** are physically near the district and willing to participate as investment partners;
- investments can be located on proposed rapid **transit routes**;
- **natural resources** like waterways and/or public green spaces are nearby
- proposed investments will contribute to mixed-use **walkability**; and
- alignment with United Way of Central Indiana's **Great Families 2020** target areas.

Selected neighborhoods must have the capacity to lead improvements, as evidenced by the presence of community-based organizations with a track record of project-based partnerships, and they must have an organized community base that has identified a vision for itself, and can access resources necessary to accomplish that vision.

The Role of Anchor Institutions

Anchor institutions will act as essential partners within most Great Places. Indianapolis is home to many large institutions that have located, and stayed, in the heart of our neighborhoods. Hospitals, museums, businesses, educational institutions, and more operate within Indianapolis neighborhoods and, in many ways, already act as important partners to neighbors. Great Places 2020 will provide the forum for anchor institutions to more actively engage in the life of their neighborhoods, while at the same time advancing their core businesses.

Anchor institutions typically engage with their communities in seven roles (according to the [Initiative for a Competitive Inner City](#)): 1) Provider of Goods and Services; 2) Major Employer; 3) Workforce Developer; 4) Purchaser for Goods and Services; 5) Driver of Land Use; 6) Community Infrastructure Builder; 7) Cluster Anchor. These roles allow the anchor institution to adapt its business practices to have the greatest positive impact on the neighborhood and provide the highest enterprise value for the anchor itself. Great Places 2020 will work to engage anchors in each selected place in integrating all seven of their roles into their particular Great Places plan.

Selection Process

Each targeted Great Place will be selected by using the aforementioned criteria to evaluate potential place locations. These will be vetted by a selection committee of community leaders and ultimately refined to two places by the LISC Local Advisory Board in November 2016. Each of these places will then receive several months of planning assistance to create a detailed redevelopment plan for their proposed target area. This planning process will require the development of specific objectives and conceptual designs that build on neighborhood assets, are supported by key constituents, and rely on implementation partnerships with capable entities. Great Places 2020 will provide a planning team to each neighborhood to assist them in finalizing a

holistic plan for their selected place that meets standards needed for successful implementation. This timeline will allow at least four years to implement the Great Places 2020 redevelopment plans before we reach the Bicentennial.

Implementation Toolbox

While each of the Great Places is developing their plans, there will be a simultaneous effort to identify, expand, or create the tools necessary to implement their redevelopment projects. Whenever possible, each Great Place will draw on the work of other groups formed around addressing key areas necessary for intense redevelopment such as: anchor institution mobilization, land assembly and environmental cleanup, homeownership development and repair, rental housing and mixed-use development, commercial and industrial area redevelopment, innovative infrastructure and green space financing, and social innovation tools. As necessary, each Great Place will form working groups to grapple with critical challenges not being addressed by others. We anticipate that these working groups would provide the Great Places with best practices locally and nationally to determine how to feasibly create such projects. This information will be utilized to create development strategies for the targeted types of improvements, including financing structures that could be utilized to fund their development. Ideally, these tools will be put in place in time to begin implementing the redevelopment plans as soon as they are complete in 2017.

Investment Strategies

Great Places 2020 will organize investments within each Great Place into four elements – livability, opportunity, vitality, and education (LOVE). Together, investments in these four areas will be designed to tangibly elevate the people, institutions, and places at the “heart” of each selected place. A description of each of these follows, along with examples of current or future initiatives that may be integrated into the redevelopment plans of each Great Place by prioritizing and layering investments in these areas.

A. Livability

By leveraging existing assets of many kinds, healthy neighborhoods will be created in which residents have daily access to art, nature, recreation, and beauty.

Livability includes the natural and cultural amenities that will improve the health and well-being of residents and make their neighborhood more attractive to new stakeholders. These elements include the character, creativity, and condition of natural and built environments. Desirable amenities include pedestrian and bicycle connectedness, recreational programs and spaces, access to quality health care, local high-quality food access, cultural attractions, and the preservation and enhancement of natural spaces.

Existing and emerging local initiatives that contribute to livability include billions of dollars of public investment that Citizens Energy is making to divert sewage from Indianapolis’ waterways and improve storm water conservation, the Office of Sustainability’s environmentally focused work, JumpIN childhood obesity reduction efforts, community health centers, the Indy Food Council, Top 10 by 2025 collaborative community health agenda, KIB and Indy Parks’ investments in the city’s green space, Indy Connect and other transit-oriented

planning, the grassroots Reconnecting to Our Waterways (ROW) effort, urban gardening, and sustainable local food production.

B. Opportunity

Through coordinated investment in available capital, technical support, marketing, and “shovel-ready” real estate in neighborhoods, enterprises will grow and businesses will be attracted that offer increased employment opportunities.

Opportunity efforts will focus on building both human capital and redeveloping industrial/commercial property for viable new businesses. This will require the deployment of capital and technical support to bolster neighborhood entrepreneurs. This will also entail redeveloping older industrial and commercial areas (often including brownfields) to meet the location needs of growing regional business sectors. Additionally, it will include neighborhood-level commercial development that will offer essential goods and services in mixed-use places.

Outcomes and initiatives that support expanding opportunity in Indianapolis neighborhoods include economic and commercial development, Develop Indy’s new business attraction, sector-specific strategies, industrial redevelopment, LISC’s FOCUS partnerships and façade improvements, microenterprise and small business development, social venture funding, and brownfields remediation.

C. Vitality

By retaining existing residents and attracting new residents to under-populated neighborhoods in a way that diversifies household income levels, the density and prosperity of these neighborhoods and of the city will be enhanced.

Indiana’s recent imposition of property tax caps and the resulting reliance on income taxes to support city services may have troubling implications for Indianapolis given the diminishing wealth and educational levels of its neighborhoods. Consequently, retaining existing residents, population growth, income diversification, expanding customer bases for local businesses, and increasing the income tax base in neighborhoods are the objectives of the Vitality investments.

Initiatives that support these objectives include incentives and creative financing options from a variety of sources for increased renovation and infill construction by developers, programs for home buyers, the City Gallery’s urban living marketing, a potential LiveIndy campaign, Renew Indianapolis land banking, targeted home repair financing, energy efficiency improvements, and code enforcement for existing structures.

D. Education

Future growth requires seamless integration of education and workforce development to enhance the employment opportunities of neighborhood residents. This will engage current residents in redevelopment efforts and create educational opportunities that attract new residents.

Metropolitan skill composition (i.e., a city's human capital) may be the most powerful predictor of a city's growth. For more than a century, educated cities have grown more quickly than comparable cities with less human capital. At the metropolitan level, education levels have a positive impact on population growth, increases in future wages, and housing value appreciation. Cities with higher levels of educational attainment not only have higher incomes, but also faster rates of income growth. Successful neighborhoods must have access to sufficient high-quality educational "seats" to serve their children, as well as training programs to equip adults to increase their work skills.

Indianapolis Public School reforms, United Way of Central Indiana's Great Families 2020 initiative, the Mind Trust's charter school incubator, plus Hire-Up and EmployIndy's workforce development programs are examples of local initiatives that can be coordinated with neighborhood-specific work to support the development of talent. The selected Great Places will be prioritized to benefit from each of these efforts.

V. Evaluation

LISC staff has developed and will deploy a unified system of tracking progress/metrics for redevelopment plan implementation in the Great Places. This data will be reported regularly to funders and partners and used to inform the broader public frequently. This measurement will require a significant investment in both tracking technology and the training of all partners to utilize it consistently. It will also require high-level marketing and public relations skills to creatively push this information out in interesting forms to the public.

VI. Selection Criteria

The selection criteria will be based on a number of quantitative and qualitative measures. These measures will address questions of organizational capacity, neighborhood development experience, defined need and opportunity, anticipated outcomes, resident and stakeholder involvement, sustainability and letter of interest quality.

Opportunities and Challenges (40 points possible)

This refers to the extent to which there is a need for neighborhood revitalization and opportunities for livability, opportunity, vitality and education. Applicants should focus on demonstrating the extent of the problems and strengths in the geographical area that will be targeted. Sound and reliable data should be used whenever possible, but other means of documenting needs and opportunities are also acceptable.

- Clarity of selected place boundaries, demographics and assets identified, paying special attention to items listed under eligibility criteria on page 4. Place should be no more than half mile across, with a quarter mile radius to achieve the 5 minute walk shed (6 points)
- Attributes and challenges related to livability. (6 points)
- Attributes and challenges related to opportunity. (6 points)
- Attributes and challenges related to vitality. (6 points)
- Attributes and challenges related to education. (6 points)
- How these attributes and challenges fit into the existing quality-of-life plan. (10 points)

Organizational Capacity and Experience (40 points possible)

This refers to the applicant's ability to bring together stakeholders to carry out the revitalization plan for the selected place. The ability of partners to participate in the process is also a key factor for success. A demonstrated recent track record of success is required, particularly around real estate development. Successful applicants will also have internal financial controls in place and be able to manage the influx of funds that will be involved with these initiatives. This criterion also addresses the extent to which the organization has the experience and resources to participate in these initiatives, including an active board of directors that is engaged and follows established governance practices. The organizational financials attachment will also provide the committee with insight on this criterion.

- Neighborhood's recent track record of success. (10 points)
- Organizational experience and resources (including financial controls). (10 points)
- Partner organizations experience and resources. (10 points)
- Anchor institution presence in neighborhood. (10 points)

Community Involvement (20 points possible)

This refers to the level of involvement of residents, neighborhood groups, institutions, businesses, government, and partner organizations in neighborhood revitalization activities. Participation and collaboration among individuals, groups and organizations will be the key to a neighborhood's success.

- Quality of existing mechanisms for engaging stakeholders in the quality-of-life plan. (20 points)

VII. Letter of Interest Requirements

- Letters of Interest must be received at the LISC office no later than 5:00 PM September 30, 2016.
- Please submit electronic copies only.
- Please use the selection criteria listed above as a guide to the drafting of the letter of interest. Answer each part as described and in the order it is listed. Letters should be no more than 5 pages.
- Please attach **current financials** for the lead organization, a **place map** that outlines preliminary boundaries of the specific selected place targeted for this work, and a copy of the lead organization's **IRS 501(c)(3) Determination Letter**. Please do not submit any other attachments.
- Please note that the letter of interest should be on the letterhead of the selected lead organization for this work, but should be **signed by any and all collaborating groups and organizations**.
- Please note that the Letter of Interest does NOT need to include a plan or proposal for improvements to the Great Place.

VIII. Review Process and Timeline

After an initial review by staff, letters of interest will be reviewed by the Great Places Committee using a point system. The top scoring applicants will be asked to submit additional information and prepare a presentation for the Great Places Committee. The LISC Local Advisory Board will make the final decision.

Distribution of request for letters of interest:	August 23, 2016
Mandatory application workshop:	September 6, 2016, 3:30 PM
Letters of interest due:	September 30, 2016, 5:00 PM
Additional information collected:	October 2016
Finalists make presentations:	November 9, 2016
Great Places 2020 Steering Committee:	November 29, 2016
LISC Local Advisory Board finalizes selection:	November 30, 2016
Announcement of selected neighborhoods:	November 30, 2016

Please submit letters electronically to:
Sara VanSlambrook, Senior Program Officer
LISC Indianapolis
svanslambrook@lisc.org
317-454-8493