JULY 2026

SOUTHEAST FORT WAYNE CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE

FROM PLANNING TO PLANTING

SEFW CNI'S COMMUNITY GARDEN TAKES ROOT AT TALL OAKS



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- What is Choice Neighborhoods?
- The SEFW Transformation Plan
- Early Action Activity
- A Community Milestone
- Why a Community Garden?
- Community Planting Day
- Ribbon Cutting Celebration

SEFW
TALL OAKS CNI
Creating Neighborhoods of Choice

What is the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative?

HUD's Choice Neighborhoods Initiative supports locally driven strategies that improve housing, strengthen neighborhoods, and expand economic opportunity through partnerships among residents, housing authorities, local governments, nonprofits, and businesses.

In 2022, the SEFW community received a Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant to develop a comprehensive Transformation Plan. Following extensive resident engagement and community planning, HUD approved the SEFW Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan in August 2025, establishing a shared vision for future neighborhood revitalization.







The SEFW Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan

The SEFW Choice Neighborhoods Transformation Plan, approved by HUD in August 2025, was developed through extensive resident engagement and collaboration with community partners. The plan provides a roadmap for improving housing, expanding opportunities for residents, and strengthening the Southeast Fort Wayne neighborhoods through 13 implementation goals across three focus areas.

SEFW TALL OAKS CNI

Creating Neighborhoods of Choice

SOUTHEAST FORT WAYNE

CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS TRANSFORMATION PLAN







Housing Plan

The Housing Plan has two (2) goals focused on expanding quality housing opportunities through the rehabilitation of Tall Oaks Apartments, the development of additional affordable housing, and increased homeownership opportunities for residents.

People Plan

The People Plan has seven (7) goals which focus on improving residents' quality of life through education, employment, health, and economic opportunity.

Neighborhood Plan

The Neighborhood Plan has four (4) goals focused on creating a safer, healthier, and more connected community through improved public safety, mobility, neighborhood amenities, and sustainable development.

What is an Early Action Activity?

Early Action Activities are physical neighborhood improvements that demonstrate visible progress while long-term planning is underway. These projects help maintain community momentum by:

- Engaging residents
- Strengthening neighborhood connections
- Building confidence in the planning process
- Responding to neighborhood needs through lasting community improvements





HUD requires Planning Grantees to dedicate a portion of their Planning Grant funds toward these neighborhood improvements, ensuring that residents experience tangible benefits before larger redevelopment projects begin.





A Community Milestone

On June 17, 2026, residents, community partners, elected officials, and the Fort Wayne Housing Authority gathered to celebrate the grand opening of the SEFW CNI Community Garden at Tall Oaks Apartments. The ribbon-cutting ceremony marked the successful completion of the Community Garden Early Action Activity, an important milestone in the SEFW Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) planning process.





The Community Garden reflects the shared vision of creating healthier neighborhoods, stronger community connections, and vibrant public spaces while demonstrating the positive momentum generated through the Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant.



Why a Community Garden?

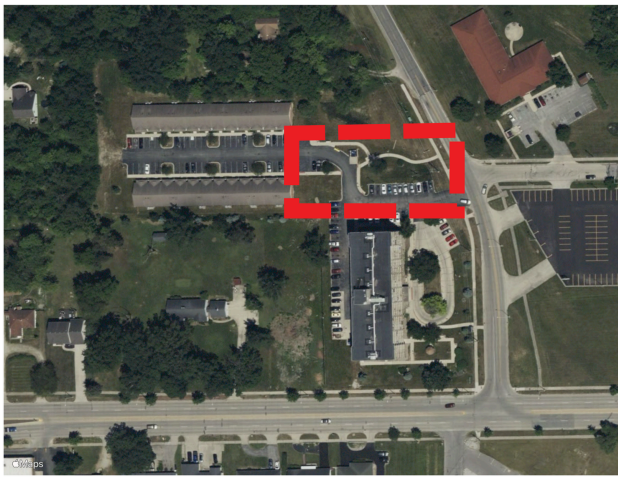
The SEFW CNI Community Garden at Tall Oaks was selected as the Early Action Activity because it directly supports the community's vision for healthier neighborhoods, stronger resident relationships, and increased neighborhood pride.

The garden provides opportunities for residents to:

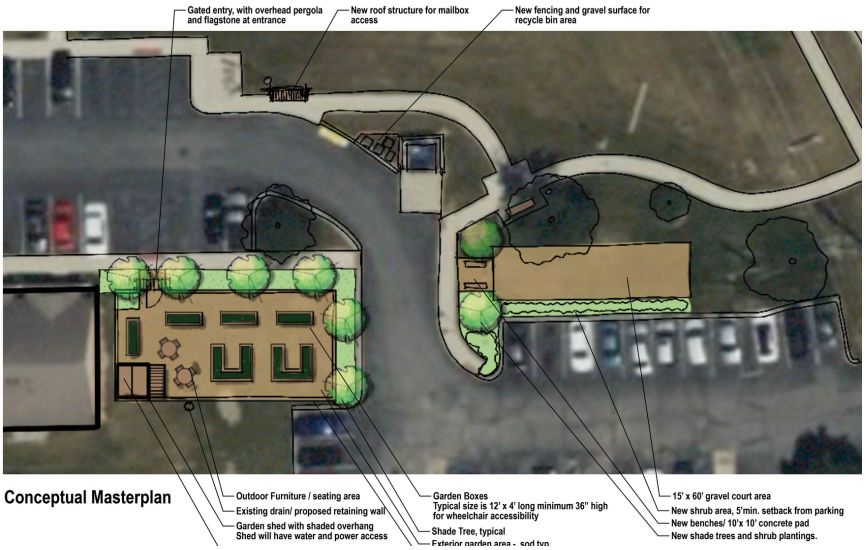
- Grow fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers
- Learn gardening skills
- Build relationships with neighbors
- Participate in community events and volunteer activities
- Create a welcoming outdoor gathering space

The project includes:

- Raised accessible garden beds
- Secure fencing
- Accessible walkways
- Seating and gathering areas
- Entry pergola
- Landscaping and beautification



Existing site with the proposed project location



Conceptual Masterplan





Community Planting Day

Before the official opening, residents and volunteers came together for a Community Planting Day, preparing the raised garden beds with vegetables, herbs, flowers, and other plants.

This hands-on event allowed neighbors of all ages to help shape the new community space while building friendships and creating a sense of ownership that will continue long after the garden's opening.









Ribbon Cutting and Community Celebtation

The ribbon-cutting ceremony on June 17, 2026, brought together residents, the Fort Wayne Housing Authority, community partners, and local leaders to celebrate this important achievement.









The ceremony marked not only the opening of the garden but also the successful completion of all HUD-funded Early Action Activity requirements. As the Fort Wayne Housing Authority moves into implementation of the HUD-approved Transformation Plan, this garden will continue serving as a gathering place where residents can grow food, build relationships, and strengthen their community.