

# RIVERCHASE APARTMENTS COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENT

Advocating for the future of RiverChase has been a 3-year undertaking that is far from over. With massive East Bank developments coming soon down the pike, we need the community and city leaders behind us at RiverChase so that this CBA does right by current and future residents, and also sets a precedent for what good development can look like in East Nashville.

Since May 2019, Stand Up Nashville's coalition organizations have been advocating on behalf of residents of RiverChase Apartments in East Nashville, once it became clear that the property would be sold and redeveloped.

SUN's coalition includes NOAH, The Equity Alliance, SEIU Local 205 & LiUNA Southeast.

Earlier this year, the property's new owner, CREA, came to us to request a Community Benefits Agreement for RiverChase, where they were interested in incorporating affordable housing units in with the new, denser complex they planned to build. We have been in negotiations ever since.

While CREA has made early commitments for 200+ affordable units on the site, the rest of the details are still in discussion. What we are hoping to achieve with this agreement includes:

## Guaranteed long term affordability

CREA could flip the property after construction, and we want to ensure that these units are required to remain affordable no matter who owns it.

## Protections for construction workers

We want to see safety standards and quality pay for the workers. Too many workers have been injured on the job in Nashville. With so much money coming into these kinds of developments, none of them should have to work a second or third job just to feed their families.

## Protections for current residents

The current residents of RiverChase are going to be displaced by May 30. The least we can do is ensure that they have assistance with moving, and are guaranteed a right to return to the property if they wish once construction is completed.

## Transparency & accountability

This agreement must be in writing, with a mechanism in place to ensure that the details of the deal are carried out. All parties should be held accountable to holding up their end of the bargain, in a manner that is transparent and fair to everyone.



**LiUNA!**



## TMELINE OF RIVERCHASE CBA

### JUNE 2019

NOAH, the McFerrin Park Neighborhood Association (MPNA) & other groups begin raising alarms about affordability of the future of the site, including meetings with property management, neighborhood door knocking, and Metro Planning meetings.

### FALL 2019

Regular strategy meetings commence between allied neighborhood groups, including tenants rights meetings with the residents.

### FEBRUARY 2020

NOAH leaders speak at Metro Planning about need to keep RiverChase affordable, planning decisions are delayed.

### AUGUST 2021

EBWG begins canvassing RiverChase, including conducting survey of 94 current residents. EBWG secures concessions from developer: extending move-out time to May 2022, providing housing navigators, funds for residents' first month's rent and deposit at their new location, & more.

### FALL/WINTER 2021

Discussions continue between EBWG & CREA over issues of affordability and accountability, including formal letter & sit down meeting at The Salvation Army. EBWG requests CREA put commitments in writing in a legally binding document.

### FEBRUARY 2022

**CREA approaches EBWG to initiate Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) to institutionalize commitments.**

Stand Up Nashville will serve as negotiating entity, as it encompasses most of the EBWG organization. A presentation at the Planning Commission Meeting held on Feb. 24 is met with strong support from commissioners on the positive progress towards affordability.

### APRIL 2022

Stand Up Nashville continues to engage with residents to assist in seeing their needs met, including via a large community event where Legal Aid, the Financial Empowerment Center, interpreters, and other resources were on hand to help. A public hearing for the property's rezoning is deferred at Metro Council, in order to give SUN and CREA more time to negotiate.

### MAY 2019

NOAH discovers a possible re-zoning for RiverChase in Nashville Business Journal and on the agenda of the Metro Planning Commission.

### JULY 2019

**Conversations initiated by NOAH's Martha Carroll begin with Matt Mathias, then-owner of RiverChase.**

### JANUARY 2020

Matt Mathias meets with NOAH, MPNA, and CM Sean Parker. Advocates ask for 225 units to remain affordable when RiverChase is redeveloped; Mathias commits to keeping 150 affordable.

### MAY 2021

The **East Bank Work Group (EBWG)**, which includes Stand Up Nashville, NOAH, LiUNA Southeast, SEIU Local 205, The Equity Alliance, MPNA, and Trinity Community Commons, officially forms and begins meeting weekly.

### OCTOBER 2021

**CREA acquires the RiverChase property.** EBWG begins preliminary talks with CREA.

### JANUARY 2022

Conversations between CREA and EBWG continue. EBWG conducts second canvass/survey to gauge resident experience with transition.

### MARCH 2022

EBWG organizes community canvasses of both RiverChase and McFerrin Park to inform community members of CBA negotiations. Over 13,000 letters are sent from community members across RiverChase, McFerrin Park, and Nashville to CREA and the Metro Council to call for a CBA with strong commitments and enforceability. CBA negotiations continue.

**THIS IS AN ABBREVIATED TIMELINE OF ENGAGEMENT WITH RIVERCHASE. THIS IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE OF ALL ACTIONS THAT WERE TAKEN, BUT AN OVERVIEW OF THE WORK DONE.**

# What is a **COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENT**, and why does Nashville need them?

"A Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) is a contract signed by community groups and a real estate developer that requires the developer to provide specific amenities and/or mitigations to the local community or neighborhood."

- PowerSwitch Action

Community Benefits Agreements are relatively new to Nashville, with our city's first-ever Agreement struck around the new MLS soccer stadium between Stand Up Nashville and Nashville Soccer Holdings in 2018.

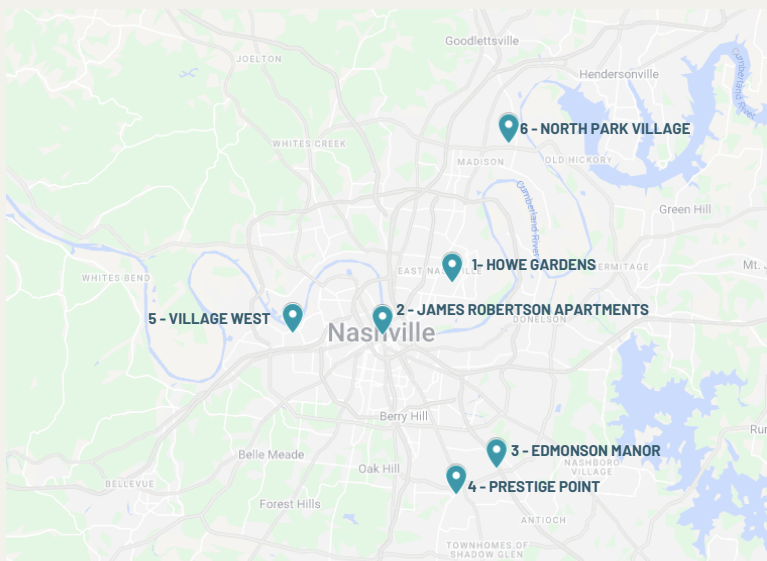
The need for them in Nashville has increased for two main reasons:

- 1.) **prohibitive state laws in Tennessee that forbid local governments from taking action against housing inequality**
- 2.) **the hypercharged increase in income inequality and decrease in affordability that our city's "boom years" have brought us**

Nashville's development gold rush, and the haste with which developers have moved to cash in, has led to:

- **displacement of long time residents**
- **gentrification**
- **unsafe construction worksites**
- **worker deaths**
- **side-stepping of hiring quality, union-backed construction crews**
- **local businesses being pushed out**
- **lack of opportunity for minority contractors and small business owners**

## A MAP OF RECENT DISPLACEMENT



1. Howe Gardens--Greenwood Ave in East Nashville--2016, 165 units
2. James Robertson Apartments--downtown--100 units, most elderly and disabled, 2016
3. Edmondson Manor--Southeast Nashville--325 units, at one time over 200 Burmese refugees, 2016
4. Prestige Point--South Nashville--178 units, 131 students, refugees from Somalia and Myanmar, 2017
5. Village West--The Nations, West Nashville--288 units, tenants with vouchers and many families of color, 2021
6. North Park Village Senior Living--Madison--approximately 40 residents, 2022

Let's call displacement what it is - Nashvillians being kicked out of their homes to make way for new, money-making developments that they won't be able to afford to live in.

A Community Benefits Agreement aims to address ALL of these issues, and more. But the need for these agreements increases every year, and we must move quickly. Already we have lost too many affordable homes in Nashville, and untold numbers of residents have already been displaced.

**NASHVILLE'S FUTURE MAP SHOULD BE DOTTED WITH COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENTS, NOT DISPLACEMENT**

