The Big Rapids Housing Commission, responding to increasing demand for high quality affordable housing, recognized that a downtown location offered potential residents a broader and more accessible service base than more suburban locations while expanding the market for downtown merchants.

The commission partnered with Hollander Development to rehabilitate the Nisbett and Fairman Buildings, located in the heart of Big Rapids. By combining a wide variety of public and private funding with the federal and state historic preservation tax credits, the development team was able to make this combined $5.2-million-dollar investment possible. The projects created 47 new residential units, 38 of which are guaranteed to be affordable units; rehabilitated nearly 126,000 square feet of underutilized commercial space; and created outdoor space for the use of the residents.

The partnership between the Big Rapids Housing Commission and Hollander Development demonstrates that creativity is the key to reinvigorating communities.