

**City of Gainesville Five-Year Consolidated Plan
Stakeholder Meeting: Housing Providers
March 14, 2013 | 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.**
Eastside Community Center
2841 East University Avenue
Gainesville, Florida



MEETING SUMMARY

City of Gainesville is in the process of drafting a Five-Year Consolidated Plan for FY 2013/2014-2017/2018 to create a strategic and unified vision for HUD funding over the next five years. In order to develop this vision, City of Gainesville conducted a series of stakeholder meetings during March 2013 to collect input and comments related to the Five-Year Consolidated Plan.

On March 14, 2013, the City conducted a stakeholder meeting at the Eastside Community Center at 2841 East University Avenue. Approximately eight individuals representing housing interests attended the meeting. Organizations represented included but were not limited to:

- Alachua Habitat
- Alachua Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry
- Center for Independent Living
- Gainesville Housing Authority
- City of Gainesville

In an effort to provide an environment that would allow for all attendees to be heard, a three tier approach was conducted. The first was to present an educational PowerPoint which provided background on the purpose of drafting a Five-Year Plan, which activities and area are eligible for HUD funding, and the schedule that City of Gainesville will follow to adopt the Five-Year Plan in 2013. The second was a questionnaire asking participants about their experiences working with City of Gainesville to administer HUD funds both in the past and present. The third was an open discussion where participants were asked to discuss issues and concerns publicly.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire allowed for attendees to convey their familiarity with HUD programs administrated by City of Gainesville and to provide input on obstacles to and priorities for fund administration over the next five years. The questionnaire included five questions in an open-ended format. Five individuals returned questionnaires during the Housing Providers stakeholder meeting.

Major housing challenges identified through the questionnaire included lack of funding and financing for low-income families, poor economy and a lack of entry-level jobs, lack of quality affordable housing or affordable housing in desirable neighborhoods, reluctance of private sector to enter perceived "high-risk" affordable housing market, lack of housing for the homeless, lack of self-sufficiency education, and high demand for rehab and neighborhood revitalization.

Priorities identified through the questionnaire included more desirable/accessible locations for affordable housing (i.e., near downtown), affordable single-family new construction and rehabbed homes, additional funding for home modifications for the disabled, public housing for low-income families and self-sufficiency training for low-income families, expanding the job market for entry-level applicants, housing or shelter for the homeless, redevelopment/reinvestment in target neighborhoods, and reducing barriers to homeownership.

Open Discussion

During the discussion, participants were asked to speak openly regarding issues and concerns affecting their respective focus group. Participants were very engaged in this portion of the meeting. A number of issues were brought to City of Gainesville's attention. These issues are listed below, specific to the Housing focus group:

- Surplus of substandard housing; lack of quality affordable housing
 - Challenges:
 - Historic homes (cost of rehab currently prohibitive – perceived barrier)
 - Energy efficiency retrofits (requirement and cost – perceived barrier)
 - Owner/rental conversions due to student housing demand; lack of pride/investment in property
 - Slumlords/landlords taking advantage of rental families (lack of rental code enforcement/public safety inspection)
 - Priorities:
 - Housing rehabilitation
 - Housing recycling
 - Housing replacement
 - Code enforcement and public safety inspection
- Lack of desirable types of affordable housing
 - Priorities:
 - Variety of housing types
 - Workforce housing
 - Housing for “no” income populations (e.g. unemployed or uneducated)
 - Senior housing
- Lack of desirable locations for affordable housing
 - Challenges:
 - Nonconforming lots (requirement for new construction to meet code after demolition – perceived barrier)
 - Contamination of lots on old railroad lines
 - Scattered sites; geographic barriers to infill
 - Competition with student housing; loss of affordable property to high-rent student housing developments; displacement of low-income families
 - Cost of units closer to critical amenities
 - Cost of construction in historic and architectural design districts to meet aesthetic requirements
 - Priorities:
 - Mixed-use development in central location (e.g. 5th Avenue, East of 13th Street)
 - Land assembly (public or private, or public-private partnership)
- Lack of land and public infrastructure to support affordable housing development
 - Priorities:
 - Water and sewer
 - Site acquisition
 - “Shovel-ready” sites
 - Demolition of slum/blight, neighborhood stabilization
- Lack of Self-Sufficiency
 - Challenges:
 - Families in workforce that have jobs but cannot qualify for mortgage
 - Foreclosure history; credit-issues
 - Utility bills/energy costs – ability to consistently pay utility bill
 - Stigma of Section 8 – landlords reluctant to participate in program
 - Priorities:
 - Rental subsidies for homeless
 - Assistance with rental application fees
 - Down payment assistance
 - Lender cooperation/availability of resources
 - Behavioral counseling services
 - Training/education re: home ownership
 - Self-sufficiency coordinator/case management

- Self-sufficiency “village” concept (e.g. Veterans – group housing complex)
- Accessibility
 - Priorities:
 - Retrofits and ADA ramps, etc. for elderly, disabled, etc.
- Economic climate
 - Priorities:
 - Entry-level jobs; living wages
 - Job training

Conclusion

Although there are many issues that the Housing Providers felt are important, there are a few items that were stressed throughout the meeting as being of the highest priority:

- Quality affordable housing in locations proximate to essential amenities
- Land assembly and infrastructure to support affordable housing development
- Self-sufficiency training and case management for all populations (home owners, renters and the homeless)
- Housing for non-homeless needs populations (veterans and accessibility retrofits for the elderly and disabled)
- Elimination of perceived barriers to affordable housing

For questions regarding the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, please contact John Wachtel at 352.393.8565 or wachteljs@cityofgainesville.org.

City of Gainesville Housing & Community Development Division
 Thomas Center “B”
 PO Box 490, Station 22
 Gainesville, FL
 32627-0490

More information can be found at www.cityofgainesville.org