

**City of Gainesville Five-Year Consolidated Plan
Neighborhood Meeting: Downtown Gainesville
March 28, 2013 | 6:00 p.m.**
City Hall, Room 17
200 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 neighborhood meetings during March 2013 to collect input and comments related to the Five-Year Consolidated Plan.

On March 28, 2013, the City conducted a neighborhood meeting at City Hall on East University Avenue. One individual representing the Porters Community neighborhood attended the meeting.

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 areas 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 the participant about his/her experience working with City of Gainesville to administer HUD funds both in the past and present. The third was an open discussion where the participant was asked to discuss issues and concerns with the staff.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was intended to allow attendees to convey their familiarity with HUD programs administered 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. The individual did not fill out a questionnaire, as questions were asked and answered verbally during the open discussion.

Open Discussion

During the discussion, the participant was asked to speak openly regarding issues and concerns affecting his/her respective stakeholder group. A number of issues were brought to City of Gainesville's attention. These issues are listed below, specific to the Porters Community neighborhood:

- Economic Development
 - Challenges:
 - Surrounded by new commercial and multi-family investment, but little positive economic change is happening with neighborhoods
 - Priorities:
 - "Spin-off" neighborhood business start-ups utilizing momentum of Innovation Square (The Hub) and other projects.
 - Job creation
- Community Development
 - Challenges:
 - Unproductive vacant lots
 - Ageing and inadequate infrastructure, particularly sidewalks and roadways
 - No neighborhood commercial or other amenities in walking distance
 - Nonconforming lots; difficulty with land assembly and redevelopment
 - Priorities:

- New infrastructure to attract new development and investment; improving quality and connectivity of streets and sidewalks, internal and external to communities
 - Address obstacles to redevelopment
 - Historic Preservation/Community Revitalization
 - Challenges:
 - Maintaining historic character and sense of community while encircled by changing dynamic of downtown Gainesville.
 - Priorities:
 - Maintain historic single family neighborhoods while inviting neighborhood-compatible commercial that enhances the community.
 - “Neighborhood-compatible commercial uses were here 40 years ago; they can be successful again.”
 - Youth and Young Adult Services
 - Challenges:
 - Youth in poverty with limited access to education, tutoring, etc. – “at risk”
 - Immobile seniors and frail elderly on fixed income
 - Unemployment, particularly young males
 - Priorities:
 - Education programs at community centers and other neighborhood venues so that youth in poverty are not at an educational disadvantage
 - Assistance to homebound seniors and frail elderly
 - Job training/placement assistance

Conclusion

Although there are many issues facing the Porters Community neighborhood, there are a few items that were stressed throughout the meeting as being of the highest priority:

- Economic Development; Business Start-Ups and Job Creation
- Infrastructure Improvements; Sidewalks and Streets
- Historic Preservation & Community Revitalization; Respecting the Integrity of Historic Communities while Benefiting from Nearby Economic Growth and Opportunities
- Youth and Young Adult Services; Including Educational Programming and Job Opportunities

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

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More information can be found at www.cityofgainesville.org