

**City of Gainesville Five-Year Consolidated Plan  
Stakeholder Meeting: Economic Development  
March 14, 2013 | 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.**  
Thomas Center  
306 NE 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Building B, Room 201  
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 Thomas Center on NE 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Approximately three individuals representing economic development interests attended the meeting. Organizations represented included but were not limited to:

- Trimark
- City of Gainesville
- Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)

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. No individuals returned questionnaires during the Economic Development stakeholder meeting.

## **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 Economic Development stakeholders:

- Community Development
  - Challenges:
    - Façade grants – Concern that business owner who does not own building cannot apply for grant directly
  - Priorities:
    - "Shovel Ready" Sites
    - Water and sewer availability
    - Streetscaping/street improvements
    - Encourage people to stop and spend money in low- and moderate-income areas (e.g. Southeast Gainesville); attract people traveling between Hawthorne and Gainesville

- Better marketing of City opportunities and planning efforts to potential investors/developers
    - Potential for matching funds from CRA
      - Façade Grants
      - Small Business Loans
- Housing
  - Challenges:
    - Current stigma of “high risk” investment
    - Land cost as perceived barrier
  - Priorities:
    - Education/information for developers about opportunities
    - Advertise demand for affordable housing to developers
    - Workforce housing for entry-level workers (e.g. first-year nurse, first-year teacher, etc.)
    - Mixed use, affordable housing project in downtown (e.g. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Pleasant Street area – “Seminary Lane” – “Hub”)

### **Conclusion**

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

- Façade Improvements
- Infrastructure, Streetscaping and Public Works Investment (Destination-Making)
- Collaboration, Political Will and Matching Funds with CRA (Synergy)
- Eastside Redevelopment and Infill Projects
- Incentivizing Developers to Take Risks on Affordable and Workforce Housing

For questions regarding the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, please contact John Wachtel at 352.393.8565 or [wachteljs@cityofgainesville.org](mailto:wachteljs@cityofgainesville.org).

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More information can be found at [www.cityofgainesville.org](http://www.cityofgainesville.org)