

Housing Task Force Meeting Notes, 2/24/16

Welcome and Intro

Major work for this meeting will be going through Transformation Plan outline

Laura – HUD’s comments on TP outline are that we need to reorganize the plan so that we focus more on goals rather than the work from individual task forces. For that reason we will begin having more joint meetings in order to structure the plan to be more goal-oriented and less in silos.

Today we will go through the housing section of the plan to determine whether it has it captured everything that we’ve talked about, heard from the community or seen in the surveys or data. Is anything missing? Does anything need to be added? We, of course, want to do everything in the community but the plan is anywhere from a 10-20 year plan so we need to identify short, medium and long-term goals. Our goal now should be to put more specifics into the TP and prioritize.

Kathleen – As we are going through this let’s keep in mind what our ultimate outcome is, who the partners are and what resources we have in hand vs. what we still need.

Laura – we don’t have to cover everything today, we can do some of this work outside of the meeting and bring it the team.

Housing Section of TP Outline

B. Challenges - Are we missing anything?

Low homeownership – disproportionate to the rest of the city of Louisville

Utility costs for homes, families are unable to handle

Age of housing stock – energy efficiency/utility costs/conserve/optimize

Operating costs are higher in older homes

Add challenge - Preservation of housing stock

C. Goals, Outcomes, Metrics and Strategies

Will be more robust once we finish strategies

Lisa – (Green Lab is going to deliver) Block to block quality of place – housing is the spine of the aesthetic of Russell, there are also many gorgeous commercial and church buildings

Add goal – Conserving Quality of Place

Attica Scott – (**Add goal**) Increase homeownership in the neighborhood – both new and existing stock

What are strategies for increasing homeownership?

- Purchasing VAP, financial fitness and increasing awareness of predatory lenders
- How to get comparable prices up in the area so that investments are more attractive for people
- Bringing in the capital to finance mortgage loans, increase funding
- Soft second mortgages
- Lower price points on homes (even when costs are the same as they would be elsewhere)
 - Tiny house movement, smaller homes

How to take care of existing homeowners

- Repair Affair
- Assuring people can afford to stay in their homes

Preserving & Enhancing Existing Housing

Limited equity models, helps keep homes affordable but limit person’s ability to build wealth

[Send limited equity models info to Laura and Johnetta]

Lisa – we have the opportunity to try a number of strategies to see what works

How do we fund a lease to own model? New Directions has done in Southern Indiana and so has LMHA
Lisa & Johnetta will explore lease to purchase options

Other strategies

Attica – Contact Preservation Louisville about the work that they are doing, Johnetta will work with Attica on this connection

Need to address tax liens,

Joe Gleisner has suggested a moratorium on property tax increases based on rehab, have reached out to PVA – even if we could do it, most of the tax rate is for the state and the school system

Make people aware of the Homestead exemptions that are available to people

Through Newsletter & NOWs – tax exemptions available to people and ability to appeal tax increases

OneWest is looking into becoming a tax lien purchaser, is dependent on funding from metro government

We also need to address victimization of homeowners by bad contractors -How?

- BBB – consumer awareness campaign
- Information is power
- Maybe the Homebuilders could help with education – list of possible vendors
- Bring members down to Russell who are willing to come to the neighborhood
- Conduct a Campaign with the Building Industry
- Toolbox weekends – forum on what’s appropriate repairs and reasonably cost and what’s not – build informed consumers
- Maybe look to Plato Academy and how they can help

How do we help with senior citizens and vulnerable homeowners that have people knock on their door and offer to fix things around the house?

Awareness Campaign, [newsletter article](#), and provide support throughout the process of home repairs

Homework Assignment – think of strategies to address predatory issues for homeowners

It is not enough to say “Don’t use these people” must also bring in contractors/builders who will work in Russell

How do we support owners who can’t afford repairs - Small loan funds – how do we make capital available to people?

Annie Dutton for Building Industry, BIA might be a good contact to help with this

Some homeowner’s don’t have HO insurance, this has been a big issue as well, need to determine the reason why. Has it been cancelled? Is home in poor condition and they can’t get insurance? Is insurance not affordable?

Not paying taxes

Discussion on helping older folks determine the destiny of their home, clean title transfers, how to keep in the family, if that's what they want, how to protect their investment

Develop a serious home advocacy group – neighborhood collaborative – to address home repairs, estate planning, new homes,

Jackie – don't assume that people don't know these things, they know they need insurance; can we talk with insurance providers to help get rates down? There is a lack of trust among community members.

Develop a kit with this information/Booklet – distribute to the churches to share with their congregation and neighbors

Comprehensive website

Need to remember that there are lots of strategies needed for lots of different people, need to meet every group where they are.

Discussion on classic & historic restoration – how do we do the best job we can on energy efficiency, “cool tips”, changing the specification of a repair – a white roof for example, planting a shade tree

Having a space or spot where community members can get information could be powerful, host Thursday night workshops – revolving group of workshops – that homeowner's and neighborhood members can get together

Build community, engage and empower the community

Habitat does similar classes as well as Project Warm

Where do Russell community members purchase home repair goods? Would Ace Hardware and other retail outlets support this effort by offering discounts or classes?

Habitat ReStore is also in Portland

YouthBuild – tool library and hands on tool workshops

All of these things together make sense, one day a week or month

Look at the Census data on HO's demographics to be sure we are gearing strategies to entire community and be sure we are informed about who needs help.

Repair Affair – There are large pockets of HO in areas, and some are elderly, let's get them signed up

Approach hardware stores about providing discounts – could use as an incentive for attending a class
Ace, located in Portland, will loan tools

How do we increase number of homeowners? What are the strategies?

Rental equity building could be one strategy to building necessary downpayment

Jill heard an economist speak recently, said the economy isn't coming back as fast as expected because kids are staying at home instead of moving out, unable to form their own homes, lack of creation of homes is slowing entire economy. Student loan debt is an issue.

Lynn – Article about a business plan where the business pays a certain percentage of the student loan debt back as opposed to a 401K plan. Something innovative like this is needed, jobs are needed.

There is a major shift in family unit and when kids move out – shifting back to 100 years ago when extended families stayed together longer. Perhaps develop new housing products in Russell to address this change.

Discuss with City - Look at the zoning for granny flats, and apartments

Open the path to more diversified housing

Duplex is a good model for families

Habitat for Humanity - Muslim families who can't pay interest – no usury because of their religion look at fee based instead of interest and creative structures. Some families are large and who need larger homes. Half of Habitat's program is currently Muslim families.

Is there a conduit and a way to have this conversation – have a focus group with Muslims? Perhaps hold a housing roundtable to make sure this is a need and the size of the opportunity.

HO in Shawnee and Portland – city designed a program where if you wanted to buy and needed to repair, the City would kick in \$25K for repairs. Republic designed a special mortgage product for this.

Also approach the insurance companies about affordable insurance for community members in Russell.

There is also inflation in the construction costs – money goes quickly when it comes to home repairs. We need to help build an awareness of quality – time expenditures on improvements in such a way to get to permanent financing prioritizing on roofs and repairs that will save the housing,

Hold one more meeting in next two weeks to finalize this discussion.

Announcements:

Action grant was submitted, 64 other applicants

Implementation grant could come out 4/25, due 7/25

Joint task force meeting sometime in March, early April to start prioritization process

Lisa - Looking for houses in Russell now for Repair Affair

Next Meeting will be Thursday March 10th at 10AM at Office Environment Company (1136 W Market St, Louisville, KY 40203)