



Council Agenda Report

Date: May 28, 2019

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SUBJECT: May 2019 Housing Report

Recommendation: Council accepts the official May 2019 Report

Discussion:

Cambridge Neighborhood Revitalization Plan

The Cambridge Neighborhood Revitalization Program (CNRP) is a targeted plan focusing on select neighborhoods to stabilize, redevelop and grow neighborhoods through strategic programs, partnerships and community engagement. In November 2018 we began working with Lisa Sturtevant & Associates (LSA) on developing the official Cambridge Neighborhood Revitalization Plan. Below is the status update and goals for the programs.

PROJECT TIME-TABLE AND STATUS UPDATE

<i>Revised Timeline</i>	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar/Apr	Apr/May	May-July
Task 1. Housing Market Analysis & Needs Assessment	COMPLETED	Report				
Task 2. Visioning, Public Engagement & Communication		COMPLETED	COMPLETED	Document Delivery		
Task 3. Strategy Toolkit & Implementation Framework				IN PROGRESS – COMPLETION JUNE 2019	Document Delivery	
Task 4. Final Neighborhood Revitalization Plan						Document Delivery JUNE/JULY 2019

- ✓ The community planning meeting for April was not well attended. Therefore, we rescheduled the meeting for May 21st. Above is an update on the project timeline reflecting the adjustment

for the final community meeting.

- ✓ The next step in the Implementation Framework document. This will outline a recommended strategy for implementation of the tools and resources discussed during the review of the Strategy Toolkit. Combined with the other deliverables, this will serve as a guided timeline and prioritization of which tools to utilize for the goals and visions identified.
- ✓ The final visioning meeting for the Cambridge Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (CNRP) was held on May 21, 2019 at the Empowerment Center. This is the final community input event for the Plan draft. The focus for this meeting was to review the available tools, resources and policies that are available for the implementation of the vision and priorities set by the community during these meetings. The tools reviewed were (see detailed attachment):
 - *Establish a land bank entity for Cambridge*
 - *Adopt a vacant structure/lot receivership ordinance*
 - *Expand the rental registration process*
 - *Establish a joint-program with Code Enforcement & the Police Department*
 - *Launch a landlord training/education program*
 - *Hire two additional building code inspectors*
 - *Adopt a mandatory "crime free" lease addendum*
 - *Adopt a mandatory "tenant rights" lease addendum*
 - *Establish a fund for emergency home repairs*
 - *Continue to monitor the condition of the housing stock*
 - *Establish a housing trust fund*
 - *Create a down-payment assistance program*
 - *Partner with private or non-profit developers to build affordable housing*
 - *Explore creating a density bonus program*
 - *Offer property tax and impact fee rebates to developments that include affordable housing*
 - *Explore creating a new public park at the corner of High & Muir*
 - *Collaborate with the neighborhood on renovations to Cornish Park*
 - *Install streetscape improvements on Pine street*
 - *Create neighborhood watch*
 - *Promote side lot initiative*
 - *Explore event programming between the City and Empowerment Center*
 - *Consider transforming vacant buildings at strategic locations into business incubators*
 - *Explore the creation of a Pine Street Retail overlay district*
 - *Establish a Pine Street Neighborhood Civic Association*
- ✓ Next month we will be requesting a time to present the final Plan to City Council for review and official adoption. This document will serve as the road map for implementation of neighborhood revitalization programs, projects and activities. Additionally, it will serve as a critical marketing tool and resource attraction.

CDBG

- ✓ We met with and conducted a walkthrough in the Historic District with the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) and DHCD highlighting key properties that are currently owned by the County and have been identified by and set aside for the revitalization work in the Pine Street Historic District. Work on these properties will represent significant positive impact in neighborhood.

The purpose of the consultation with MHT is for 1.) compliance with the federal regulation for CDBG activities 2.) a historian review of the incorporation of preservation possibilities for the district and 3.) to overview revitalization efforts in the neighborhood.

Note: because we are utilizing federal funding in a Historic District, MHT review and approval is required before work can commence on any of the planned activities such as, acquisitions, demolition, housing rehab and new construction. *We estimate a 6-8 weeks process.*

✓ ***Acquisition:***

We have identified 2 homes on Pine Street for acquisition. The property owner has accepted the offer and we are currently finalizing the transaction. This activity will allow us to move forward on new construction on Pine Street. Contract for these properties will be closing in June. Habitat for Humanity is meeting with MHT to begin approval process for the acquisitions of these homes.

✓ ***Owner Occupied Home Repair:***

The Housing Rehab policy has officially been approved by DHCD and the program officially launched May 15th via an informational meeting officiated by Habitat for Humanity. The meeting was held at the Empowerment Center. The meeting was held to review program requirements, share information about the program, and accept applications.

- Habitat staff called and sent letters to all who had previously made inquiries about the program.
- Postcards were mailed to all homeowners (according to SDAT records) in the Pine St Historic District Neighborhood
- 10 people attended the meeting, 8 residents on the list of interested applicants who could not attend the meeting requested information/applications. The current potential applicants pool is 18 homeowners. Home visits will commence on May 28th.
- Each homeowner/applicant, within 30 days of application, will receive a letter indicating their acceptance, denial, or the need for additional information.

✓ ***New Construction***

- The sale of first home expected to be completed in June 2019
- CDBG portion of first 3 homes will be completely billed in June
- Completion of 2nd home expected in July 2019

✓ ***Other repair/housing programs***

- One Porch at a Time: Home on Camper St, to be completed May 29th
On May 14th Herve Hamon led the effort and worked with Habitat for Humanity to repair the porch for the residents home on Camper St.

“One porch-at-a time” is a program designed to enhance the neighborhood curb appeal

of properties' in the City and assisting residents that are looking for a little extra assistance in maintaining and/or enhancing the value and appearance of their property. This is a volunteer, community assisted program that provides community pride and increased value on a micro level.

Initially this first project was intended to be conducted with the assistance of the help of the Cambridge High School vocational carpentry shop students, however due to unforeseen medical challenges, the Carpentry student participation had to be postponed until the next school year.

- **Habitat for Humanity supportive programs**
 - New Weatherization Funding: 9 projects started citywide
 - Home To Stay: Homeowners over 55, funding for repair and homeowner DIY/Maintenance Workshops funded by AARP. Will release details in June. Work begins in July.
 - Revolving Loan Fund: Access to repair funding. Repayment on a sliding scale based on income, with a no interest loan for repairs up to \$7500. Expected funding release in July.

✓ **Budget to date** – see attachment for updated grant spending report

Additional Items:

- ✓ I had the opportunity to talk with WBOC regarding the Cambridge Revitalization program and Housing report. They were interested in how the National Affordable Housing report related to Cambridge. The report aired on May 16, 2019. We will continue to establish a positive relationship with the media in efforts to tell Cambridge's story.

Upcoming Events:

- ✓ Cambridge Neighborhood Revitalization Plan Release – June/July
- ✓ Community Block Party & Resource Fair – August
- ✓ Community Cornish Park Pop-Up Events – Summer

Fiscal Impact:

Approved by: _____