

Housing Affordability Engagement Report and Framework

Executive Summary:

On November 29, 2018, the City Commission directed staff to conduct an Affordable Housing Engagement Strategy Workshop. This workshop was held on February 20, 2019. Workshop participants discussed the following topics: financing development, environmental concerns, land use and zoning, gentrification, community safety, student housing, diverse housing options, homelessness, transportation, healthy communities and neighborhoods, and opposition to development in several neighborhoods. Community members and the City Commission recommended that staff conduct a more inclusive engagement process around issues related to housing and development.

The city's Community Engagement Program Manager, Anne Wolf, invited feedback from individuals not able to attend the February 20, 2019 meeting through a survey and a series of small-group meetings. In these conversations and in survey responses, community members discussed the following housing concerns:

- The need for more diverse housing options for:
 - Seniors looking to downsize
 - People making less than the area median income
 - People with disabilities
 - Survivors of domestic violence
 - Veterans
 - Currently unhoused individuals seeking housing
- The impact of development pressure on communities vulnerable to displacement
- The impact of increases in rental costs on families and individuals renting homes

Community members also shared the following concerns related to the city's public engagement processes:

- The need for more diversity of perspectives involved in decision-making about housing
- Engagement fatigue: "What are we going to *do*? Call me when you have something on the table."
- Engagement barriers: "If I don't know what my kids are going to eat tomorrow, your survey isn't my first priority."
- The need to build trust between the community and the city

Keeping the above community feedback in mind, staff recommends that a full time employee with expertise in affordable housing strategies be dedicated to working between the Housing and Community Development Department and the Department of Doing. This employee would be responsible for creating a housing strategy that includes ongoing and consistent opportunities for city staff to communicate with community members about issues related to housing affordability and planning.

Staff also recommends consideration of adopting core principles for engagement to be used in designing future opportunities for community participation. The International Association for Public Participation recommends the following core values to define what public participation is and what it can do: Public participation: 1. ...is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process. 2. ...includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision. 3. ...promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers. 4. ...seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision. 5. ...seeks input from participants in designing how they participate. 6. ...provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way. 7. ...communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Lastly, staff recommends that the Commission participate in a workshop to think through questions we need to ask before conducting any future housing engagement. As a result of persistent challenges in inclusive and equitable engagement, staff also recommends that this workshop include an extended conversation about strategies to make our engagement efforts inclusive and equitable.

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Engagement Timeline:

1. 2/20 Affordable Housing Engagement Strategy Workshop
2. 2/20-3/14 ForEveryoneHome application
3. 3/14-4/29 Meetings with
 - a. Individual stakeholders (homeowners, renters, landlords, planners, developers)
 - b. Affinity groups (seniors, survivors of DV, immigrant communities)
 - c. Partner organizations (Gainesville Housing Authority, Meridian Behavioral Health Center, United Way of North Central Florida, Fearnside, Habitat for Humanity, Shimberg Center for Housing Studies)
4. 4/4-5/3 Survey Data Collection

Report:

On July 16th, 2018, the Commission held a Housing Forum with the purpose of bringing community partners together to discuss affordable housing strategies. The event was supported by participation from the City Commission, the Florida Housing Coalition, the Shimberg Center for Housing Studies, the Department of Doing, and local community members. The meeting minutes reflect a variety of requests from the Commission including: affordable housing strategies, information on housing bonds, a masterplan, more data, and housing at all income levels throughout the city. In part as a result of this event, staff from the Department of Doing drafted a proposal for a comprehensive plan amendment called GNVRISE. The proposed amendment was highly controversial. In the wake of community concerns about the amendment, the Commission rejected the proposal and directed staff to determine more effective ways of engaging the community. As a first step in the engagement process, Housing and Community Development, the Department of Doing, and the Strategic Initiatives department worked together to create a Housing Affordability Engagement workshop on February 20th, 2019 with the goal of centering community members' perspectives in future housing decision-making.

The housing engagement process was largely driven by the work of Dr. Anne Wolf in the Strategic Initiatives department. As Dr. Wolf conducted housing engagement efforts, the Housing and Community Development department continued their work. Part of that work involved fulfilling a requirement to complete an "incentives and recommendations report" (IRR). In order to receive funds through the State Housing Initiative Partnership, Housing and Community Development was required to hold public workshops which took place in parallel to Dr. Wolf's engagement process.

More than 120 individuals participated in the February 20th, 2019 Housing Affordability Engagement workshop. Feedback from participants suggested that while there is widespread recognition that we have local

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housing affordability challenges, goals and questions, there is no clear path forward. With that said, participants at the meeting offered numerous goals. Some of the goals stated at the meeting were central to the GNVRSE controversy, while others were far less controversial (see Appendix A for specific comments recorded at the meeting). These ideas ranged from eliminating single-family designation and softening or reversing housing patterns that resulted from the history of housing discrimination, to providing housing and offering opportunities for upward mobility through affordable housing. Many expressed concerns that individuals representing people with low incomes, people with disabilities, and people who are currently unhoused should be present during discussions about housing. From the information gleaned at the February 20th meeting, it is possible to see that while all of the participants agreed that Gainesville faces many housing challenges, community perspectives about how the City should move forward differ.

Qualitative data from individual stakeholder meetings that took place in March and April indicate that there are various perspectives on what the greatest housing challenges are locally. Renters shared concerns that rental costs for homes and apartments have increased by hundreds of dollars in just a few short years. Local cost of renting far outpaces increases in local income. This presents a challenge for the entire community, but especially for individuals on a fixed income and seniors who are looking to downsize but are unable to find suitable housing at a cost they can afford. Landlords shared concerns about the increased cost of maintaining housing and ensuring that they are able to find tenants who will leave properties in good condition. Individuals in the development sector expressed concern for the rising cost of rentals, but indicated that they wouldn't be able to afford to stay in business if they primarily built lower cost homes. Partner organizations emphasized the role of housing affordability on working families due to the fact that stable, high quality, safe and affordable housing is central to maintaining economic stability and family well-being. Dr. Wolf spoke with many individuals who are deeply concerned about their inability to pay for increases in rental costs. These individuals have been unsuccessful in finding safe and quality homes within their price range. For them, and for our community as a whole, addressing this matter is urgent.

Based on the areas of interest and the concerns most frequently expressed during the February 20th workshop as well as follow up meeting (see Appendix B), staff created a housing affordability survey (see Appendix C) with aim of gathering additional feedback from a larger population. The survey was distributed by the COG's Communications Department, staff within the City's Department of Strategic Initiatives, some members of the Commission, and through a network of local housing partners. These partners included: Peaceful Paths, the Gainesville Housing Authority, United Way, Fearnside Family Services Center, Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, as well as respected local leaders like Mr. John McKnight who shared the survey with a

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wide network of local faith leaders. The survey asked community members to share information about their cost-burden level, their biggest challenges with housing affordability, and their areas of interest regarding potential workshops about housing. The survey data included feedback from 240 people and was almost evenly split between respondents paying 30% or less of their income and those paying more than 30% of their income for housing (in other words, those considered cost-burdened and those not considered cost-burdened).

Of the areas of concern offered in the survey, the largest number of respondents expressed concerns about the cost of rental housing. Concerns for the quality of rental housing and the preservation of neighborhood character were the next greatest concerns (with an equal split between concerns for both issues). Respondents expressed a high level of interest in every topic for future workshops including: community safety, environmental concerns, gentrification, the history of housing discrimination, homelessness, home-ownership, housing options, land use and zoning, student housing, transportation and “other”. Comments participants stated in the “other” category included: meeting the needs of people with disabilities, veterans loans, renters’ rights, background checks and credit challenges, increasing the supply of subsidized housing, preserving green space, saving older trees and planting ones that live a long time, and concern that veteran teachers who have devoted decades of their lives to teaching local students are barely able to pay their rent.

In addition to in-person conversations and survey data, staff also collected information on housing patterns and displacement pressures in the city. On January 24, 2019, the Commission directed staff to collaborate with community partners to apply to the Ford Foundation funded ForEveryoneHome program. The ForEveryoneHome program was designed to bring three cities together to build strategies to prevent displacement in low-income communities of color and foster inclusive growth. Selected cities would participate in an 18-month process of peer-learning and community engagement, and receive 500 hours of technical expertise and support with policy implementation. Staff built a team of members from the COG, Alachua County, the Gainesville City Commission, and Habitat for Humanity, and submitted an application on March 14, 2019. Although the City of Gainesville was not selected to participate in the program, through the process of writing the plan, staff were able to create a picture of some of the housing dynamics in Gainesville as well as some of the ways displacement is currently occurring in local African American communities (see Backup Attachment 1).

Feedback from several communities of color included concerns that development was contributing to the displacement of historically African American neighborhoods. Dr. Wolf met with numerous individuals living in the Porters community, 5th Avenue neighborhood, and Pleasant street neighborhood who explained what the process of displacement looked like in their communities. Community members shared stories about receiving

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persistent (and unwanted) notices from developers seeking to buy their properties, having new student housing surrounding their homes, seeing homes purchased and then left to fall into disrepair, watching rent and home prices rapidly increase, and witnessing the loss of historic “mom and pop” businesses. These kinds of concerns are not unique to Gainesville, but the feedback received during the engagement process expressed the urgency of these pressures on local African American communities.

Analysis of qualitative and quantitative data gathered between February 20, 2019 and May 3, 2019 indicates that a broad housing strategy needs to be designed up front and then each topic area needs to be addressed separately, by including everyone living in Gainesville at every level of cost burden. This will be a heavy lift—requiring an affordable housing strategy and a process of engagement around each topic area. The engagement framework could be strengthened by a committee comprised of community members. This committee might consist of a Commissioner, a co-chair, and a group of 6-8 people who would meet over the course of several months to create a report that could serve as a foundation for the affordable housing strategy. The data and engagement process suggest that if we want to increase housing affordability, it would be useful to have the support of a staff person able to fully devote their time to working across departments and partner organizations to develop and implement an affordable housing strategy.

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Housing Engagement Framework

Introduction:

This framework offers a rationale for the importance of community engagement in decision-making about housing affordability. It offers some definitions for what we mean by *engagement* and how that differs from *outreach*. Additionally, it provides a list of several methods for doing outreach and methods and strategies for doing engagement. Lastly, it offers a series of questions that we will need to ask before we begin any engagement process.

Rationale for engagement:

Engaging with the community serves multiple purposes. An engaged community feels like they are a part of the City rather than being separate from it. Engagement fosters clearer communication and collaboration between the City's leadership, staff, and residents. This increased communication and collaboration enables the City to better meet the needs of the people who live here. It also helps local residents to feel that their voices are being heard and that they are truly at the center of our decision-making processes.

Our community is divided around the issue of affordable housing. Some are concerned that increased affordable housing options will lower property value and reduce a sense of safety. Others feel that housing should be available throughout the city to individuals at a wide variety of income levels. For other members of the community, the greatest concern is displacement pressure happening in working class communities of color. If we are going to move forward together on issues of housing affordability, we need to have a clear approach to housing engagement.

Our approach to housing engagement should ensure that we first understand why we are engaging with the community and which issues are on the table for community members to deliberate. This will require that we create a housing affordability strategy. This strategy will need to be built by a staff person or consultant with a strong understanding of potential housing affordability solutions, the ability to assess the feasibility (risks/benefits) of each solution here locally, and the ability to effectively communicate all of the above to individuals throughout the community. This could be the outcome of the upcoming Affordable Housing Action Plan. Once the strategy has been drafted, the City will need to:

- Be explicit about which specific topics are and are not on the table for community members to decide.
- Know who the stakeholders are and determine which communities we want to engage.
- Determine the best methods of outreach and engagement (digital, print, mail, in-person, etc.).

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- Allocate staff time to completing the engagement process.
- Build community understanding of the components of the strategy and the rationale for each component.
- Engage with the community and ensure that we are using community feedback to make decisions about a final housing affordability strategy.

All of the above steps are necessary to having an effective engagement process that ensures equitable participation among community members throughout the city. It is important, at the outset of engagement, to set goals and desired outcomes for each effort we undertake so that we can assess how effective we have been and where there is room for improvement.

Defining the terms:

It is important to clarify two terms: outreach and engagement. The distinction between these terms is important. Outreach is one-way communication about an event, concept, or policy decision. Outreach can take the form of flyers, Facebook posts, newsletters and Twitter posts. Engagement, on the other hand, necessarily involves two-way communication. Engagement can take the form of town hall meetings, Commission workshops, surveys, focus groups, and advisory boards. While all engagement efforts will include some form of outreach, not all outreach efforts will be associated with engagement. In times when City leadership and staff simply need to inform the community about an issue, outreach is appropriate. In times when the City requires input into processes and decision-making, engagement is necessary.

When we engage, we are actively seeking to listen to the community and to use community feedback to shape the direction of policies, services, and programming. In doing community engagement, we make a tacit agreement that the information we gain by listening to community members will shape the decisions we make. Community members who participate in our engagement efforts are expecting transparency in how and why we take their feedback into consideration as we are determining future courses of action. If we ask them to engage with us, in order to build and maintain trust, we need to be clear about what is, or is not, on the table for them to influence. Then, as decisions are being made, we need to be clear about who we engaged with, why we engaged with them, and how they influenced the process. We need to offer clear reasons for why specific feedback was more influential in our decision-making than other feedback. Finally, it is important to assess how effective the engagement process was based on which of our initial engagement goals were accomplished and where we might do better in the future.

Methods of outreach, engagement, and strategy:

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There are many methods and strategies for outreach and engagement to choose from. No single method or strategy will work for every situation. Potential options should be chosen based on the desired outcome, the communities we seek to engage, and how much controversy is likely to arise from the different perspectives of participants. For example, if we are engaging with youth, we will need to take into account participants' level of understanding of the topic, attention span, and desire for tangible and immediate results. If we are engaging about a complex planning decision, we may need to use multiple methods of engagement over time. If we are seeking to engage a community that has expressed a lack of trust for the City, we may need to consider working with community partners in order to increase the efficacy of our engagement.

A few examples of outreach campaigns from other cities include:

“Can I Be Your Neighbor” Campaigns: This kind of messaging helps to give a face to the notion of housing affordability. The words “affordable housing” have been highly stigmatized over time, but everyone needs access to a home they can afford. This method has been used in numerous states around the country to give a human face to housing affordability. Posters of hard-working individuals who are highly respected in the community for their work are created and distributed around town. In the case of Houston, images of workers were included on posters along with a brief statement like, “I served our country; Can I be your neighbor?” along with a few facts about the local housing market. See here for an example: https://houstontx.gov/housing/Say_Yes_Education.pdf. The positive aspect of these posters is that they have been effective at humanizing the notion of affordable housing—everyone needs housing within their price range.

National Low Income Housing Coalition’s “Memo to Members”: This outreach option shares a weekly newsletter with interested parties. The newsletter provides information about housing research and news. Creating a memo of this nature would require devoted staff time, but could be one way to get the word out about specific housing affordability strategies in a way that’s short, informative, and easy to understand. You can learn more about the “Memo to Members” here: <https://nlihc.org/explore-issues/publications-research/memo-to-members>.

What is Affordable Housing?: The Center for Urban Pedagogy has created numerous well-designed informational booklets and brochures on a variety of issues. One such issue is that of affordable housing: http://www.welcometocup.org/file_columns/0000/0011/cup-fullbook.pdf. In the “What is Affordable Housing” booklet, the concept of affordable housing is explained in a fairly comprehensive way. This kind of document could be used during a “train the trainer” event or shared with local student leadership groups.

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The purpose of well-designed and clearly-written materials like this, is to spread information and increase the community's capacity to make informed decisions about complex issues.

Engagement Methods vs. Strategies:

It is important to make a distinction between methods for engagement and strategies for engagement. A method of engagement is a time-limited or single event engagement opportunity. A strategy for engagement involves creating a plan to bring about a specific objective. Engagement methods include public meetings, focus groups, and surveys. It would be appropriate to use an engagement method in the following instances:

- When we seek information about a specific policy decision or course of action.
- When we wish to get feedback on a plan being written (e.g., comprehensive plan, affordable housing action plan).
- When we want to identify key issues of concern about a specific program.

Engagement Methods:

A few examples of engagement methods (taken from best practices in various cities) include the following:

Community development mapping: This method asks participants to create their own map of their existing community while making recommendations for changes they would like to see. Through community mapping, individuals are able to work together to identify community assets, challenges, and priorities for how their communities might look in the future. This kind of mapping enables communities to identify points of strength and pride and to deliberate about where they would like to see new housing and amenities. Community mapping is fairly versatile insofar as it can be done with children in schools, seniors in senior centers, and at community events. In order to make community mapping meaningful, staff should be able to convey a clear idea of how the maps will be used.

Train the trainer opportunities: This method provides an opportunity for communities to gain useful knowledge and resources about specific issues related to housing and then take resources and “curriculum” back into their own communities to share. Through train the trainer opportunities, community leaders can become more informed about things like long-range planning, the role of different departments with regard to housing, or the role of specific housing affordability solutions like bonds or Community Land Trusts. At train the trainer events, individuals meet with staff experts and are able to ask questions to get relevant and accurate information that they can share with others. This kind of training supports communities who wish to better understand and advocate for policies, programs, and housing solutions.

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For these kinds of events to be effective, we would need to devote staff time to creating clearly and carefully written handouts, informational brochures, and lists of definitions.

Digital Engagement Tools: The City of Minneapolis developed extensive methods of engagement that you can find here (skip to page 23 for methods). One useful example of a digital engagement method was their “20 Years from Now” interactive application. The application asked participants to provide information about where they see themselves and their children in twenty years and how they see the city playing a supportive role in their lives at that time. Users share their ideas about their own imagined futures as well as the ways they are imagining the future of the city. This application was used during a comprehensive planning process, but it could also be used in considering the kinds of houses and locations individuals would like to see themselves and/or their children living in in the future.

The above-mentioned options are just a small sampling of potential engagement methods. There are hundreds of methods that we could explore as we move forward in our efforts to create solutions to local housing affordability. In order to determine the best approach, we will need to ensure that the methods chosen are based on planning that takes engagement goals, the communities we need to engage, and how different we anticipate the perspectives of participants will be.

Engagement Strategies:

Whereas engagement methods provide single-events or time-limited ways to engage, engagement strategies seek to solve a specific engagement problem or challenge. It would be appropriate to use a strategy for the following kinds of issues:

- Building trust between the city and historically marginalized communities
- Determining a course of action to resolve a complex challenge
- Identifying solutions that community members with different perspectives can support

It is important to involve communities, to the greatest extent possible, in designing both engagement methods and strategies. Below, we explore an in-depth look at one area where we will need to work with the community to develop an engagement strategy.

City staff and leadership are aware that we need to work to repair the relationship between the city and many local African American communities. Therefore, one example where we might consider giving more attention to our engagement strategy is in better engaging local African American communities. Staff, and leadership have recognized that at Commission meetings and other public meetings, we see a lower

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representation of individuals from historically African American neighborhoods. The lack of representation may be a result of apathy and frustration. Individual members of African American communities have expressed a commitment to having power to collaborate in the city's decision-making. We need to keep in mind some of the historical reasons that have caused a lack of trust and a sense of disempowerment.

Data from the Racial Inequity in Alachua County report reveals numerous local racial disparities. In the absence of adequate reflection on how these disparities came to exist, some may conclude that disparities are somehow inherent to a particular community or that they were inevitable. This could not be further from the truth. Many disparities, both locally and nationally, were intentionally designed through a combination of explicitly and implicitly exclusionary practices. Other cities seeking to build relationships with historically marginalized communities have taken a two-part approach to remedying explicit and implicit exclusion of communities of color. The first part involves identifying the ways cities have historically made decisions that excluded people of color through land-use practices, enabling exclusionary deed restrictions, and providing reduced services and infrastructure in neighborhoods of color. The second part involves actively looking for ways that cities might currently be perpetuating historical inequities and working to change this.

If we wish to engage local communities of color, we will need to create a strategy that addresses the ways trust has been broken by doing some or all of the following:

- Fostering greater transparency with regard to the ways that the disparities were intentionally designed into our local decision-making. In other words, we should consider seeking out and telling the stories of how many of these disparities were intentionally created. This will require significant effort and staff time, but it is central to building the relationships we wish to build.
- Seeking out current community leaders and finding creative ways to partner with them in supporting our community engagement efforts. A few potential ways for doing this involve compensating individuals for the work of organizing and advocating in their neighborhoods, using a "Block Captain" model for engagement, supporting existing neighborhood organizing, and/or re-visiting the Neighborhood Planning Grants. It is important to remember that engagement requires work and effort. Much like we pay consultants, it might be necessary to pay organizers to do this work in specific communities.
- Partnering with local organizations to create programs to build youth leadership capacity. If we want to build long-term relationships with local communities, youth engagement is essential to that goal.

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- Consistently collecting demographic data on who we are engaging with and how. In the absence of such data, we cannot truly know who is and who is not at the table in participating in decision-making. Without demographic data, we will not know where we are falling short in our engagement efforts.
- Clearly explaining why we are collecting demographic data. Due to the controversial nature of collecting data on topics like race and income, we will need to conduct outreach and create opportunities for engagement specifically around *why* we are collecting this data. It is important to convey to the community that we have a reason for understanding the racial and economic patterns of who we are engaging with, and that that reason has everything to do with making a purposeful attempt to be more inclusive.
- Most importantly, we need to include community members in the process of building a strategy to collaborate more effectively with them. Effective engagement strategies cannot be created by a single person. We can offer the above elements of strategy as options, but if no one in the community sees them as useful components of a strategy, we will not be effective in improving trust and building relationships. We can look to other cities that have conducted extensive public participation processes for direction in how to move forward. Boulder, for example, has created an exemplary process. You can find out more about that here: https://www-static.bouldercolorado.gov/docs/PPWG_Operating_Protocols_Updated_10_26_16-1-201611040839.pdf?_ga=2.22963133.784497625.1557490683-2033864467.1557490683.

The above elements of a potential strategy for building relationships in local African American communities have been offered by individual residents and include strategies that have worked in other places. While our strategy might not involve all of the above components, if we want to move forward in an inclusive way, we need to give significant thought to engagement strategy for equitable engagement.

Core principles for the Practice of Public Participation (used with permission of the International Association for Public Participation).

The International Association for the Practice of Public Participation has created a list of core values for public participation that many cities are using to guide their engagement processes. These core values are as follows:

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.

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3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Core questions to answer before we conduct any future engagement:

The questions we ask as we plan each engagement effort will be slightly different, however, we can create more consistent processes if we tie our engagement efforts to core values for community engagement.

We can do that by asking a series of core questions:

1. What specific decision are we seeking to involve the public in making?
2. How will public contributions to decision-making influence the final decision made by the Commission?
3. How will the community, staff, and the Commission recognize and communicate the needs and interests of all participants (including decision-makers)?
4. How will the city seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision?
5. How will we seek input from participants in designing how they participate?
6. How will we ensure that participants have the information they need to participate in a meaningful way?
7. How will we communicate to participants how their input affected the decision and how we have prioritized certain input over other input?

Questions to answer before we conduct future housing engagement:

There is no one-size-fits-all engagement approach. Each engagement effort has a different history and will require a different approach. In addition to the above core questions, we might therefore consider asking the following questions prior to conducting future engagement efforts.

Why engage now?

1. Which decisions are we seeking public participation about? What specific affordable housing issues/policies are we engaging about?
2. Which decisions are on the table for community members to have influence over?
3. What are our specific goals for this engagement process?

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Which communities are we focusing our engagement efforts on and why?

1. Which specific communities are we seeking to engage?
 - a. Communities at risk of displacement?
 - b. Community members concerned about property value?
 - c. Community members interested in increased socio-economic diversity in local neighborhoods?
2. Why are we trying to engage with these specific communities?
 - a. Are we seeking to build capacity for informed decision-making about a specific housing policy?
 - b. Do we need solutions to be informed by a specific subset of the population that will be most strongly impacted by the decision at hand?
 - c. Are we seeking collaboration across geographic and socio-economic lines to support a housing strategy approved by everyone/the majority of participants/individuals making less than 60% of the area median income?

Which ways can we effectively engage?

1. Where is the most convenient location for the communities we wish to engage?
2. How can the communities we wish to engage be involved in the design of engagement events and processes?
3. What are the best times and dates for the communities we wish to engage to do so?

How might the communities we wish to engage be better off as a result of this engagement process?

1. Will engagement increase community understanding of a housing issue?
2. Will engagement increase the community's ability to make informed decisions?
3. Will engagement expand opportunities for community members to work together to solve a problem?
4. Will engagement provide a stronger sense of community empowerment?

What kinds of resources will it take to make an engagement effort work?

1. If the answer to the question "Which specific communities are we seeking to engage?" is "Everyone", we need to be aware that engagement of this nature will be a time and labor-intensive process that will require the work of a team of people over an extended period of time.
2. If the answer to the question "Which specific communities are we seeking to engage?" is, "working class communities of color with whom the city has not historically had a strong relationship," we might need to consider hiring organizers from the community to ensure that we are communicating in a respectful and effective manner.
3. If we are trying to build empathy among people with divergent perspectives, we need to ensure that we give these efforts the time and resource commitment they will need in order to succeed. This will likely mean devoting staff time from several departments to the engagement process.

How will the city be better off as a result of this engagement process?

1. What does the city stand to gain by engaging with local community members on this issue?
2. What does the city stand to lose if we don't engage with local community members about this issue?

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Evaluation of Engagement Efforts:

Upon completion of all engagement efforts, we need to assess the extent to which the outreach or engagement method or strategy was successful and determine how we might do things differently in the future. Not every method or strategy will be successful, but with community support in the design and implementation of engagement processes, we are far likelier to achieve our engagement goals.

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Appendix A: Data from the February 20th, 2019 Housing Affordability Engagement Workshop

Feedback 2/20

Small groups were asked to discuss their goals, challenges, and questions about housing affordability. Feedback for each category is documented below:

Goals:

- Eliminate single-family designation
- Be part of the solution
- Equity income
- Integrate housing into all policies
- National and local overlap (Venn Diagram)
- Soften or reverse housing patterns that resulted from history of discrimination
- Keep neighborhood character
- Maintain balance between housing and the natural environment
- Define the problem for this community
- More jobs
- Appraisal Value = actual value
- Vision and solutions
- Create successful self-sufficiency programs (e.g., money management, credit) education
- Establish shared vocabulary and dataset
- Define terms and goals
- Share information about the variety of ways housing is a problem in our town
- Engage others in the process to develop solutions to this problem
- Engage more people in the community through a medium that's easy to use
- Build community support and trust
- Create a rehab program—homes are required to remain affordable even after rehab
- Create a sense of community pride
- Identify community leadership and reach out to them
- Less luxury student housing
- Having housing options throughout the city for all income levels
- Make sure all families have safe/healthy housing
- No homeless children in Alachua County
- Develop whole neighborhoods to make all housing attractive (i.e., employment, grocery store, schools)
- Deconcentrate ownership → More home ownership
- Community-built plan for housing
- Homeownership for low income people
- Renovation and rehab work with existing stock
- Safe and reliable transportation available for people with affordable housing needs
- Get UF to build employee housing for UF employees/Shands (Decent housing)
- 50 additional affordable housing units in the next year
- Information sharing

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- Develop strategies that community leaders can share with the disenfranchised and not represented community
- Identify who is disenfranchised and not represented
- No stigma attached to AH
- City Commission set aside unused land and zoned for affordable housing
- Housing should be desirable
- Have a backyard
- Be safe
- Better code enforcement—funding for staff
- Stricter rules around landlords—ex raise rent notice
- Get started in a way that lets community know about it
- Housing everyone in affordable and safe housing
- Develop strategies for different housing options
- Measureable housing plan
- Eliminate inequity and injustice in housing
- Economic development without displacement
- Create market conditions to spur AH growth
- Make all rental housing safe, healthy, up to code
- Offer opportunities for upward mobility through AH
- Go to the people who are most vulnerable instead of bringing them to us
- Provide a platform to hear from people at risk to share their experiences and stories
- Earning and building the trust with those that need AH
- Eliminate homelessness and ensure AH for all income levels while protecting neighborhoods
- Create workforce housing and create definition that encompasses 30% cost of housing @ 80% AMI
- Create local administrative capacity to compete for state, local , philanthropic funds
- Reduce barriers to applying...
- Increase access to resources
- Equitable supply throughout the entire city (income, geography)
- Resource transit loops for working people year round
- Create a policy to support AH throughout the city
- Partner with the county to support AH throughout the city
- Be mindful of the stigma—clearer definition “housing that is affordable”
- Reduce the energy burden in older houses
- More broad based funding, not so specific
- Diversity of housing product to meet diverse housing needs
- Defining needs for each neighborhood
- Price of property AH goes on (reduce the price creatively without solely relying on money)
- Increase affordability in all neighborhoods Diverse rental and homeownership choices
- All stakeholders assist the city and county to come up with a definition of AH that reduces negative connotations
- Input from all neighborhoods and all impacted (individualized approach to engagement and solutions)
- Identify financial levers and partnerships required to achieve, do so as a community that shares the burden

Housing Affordability Engagement Report and Framework

- Willingness to accept those who want to participate
- Jobs to fill the income gap
- Lessening the disparity of resources
- Bringing in retail
- Find where everyone agrees

Challenges:

- Transient community (besides students) incl. leadership
- Too many regulations
- Solving national issues locally
- Parking
- Fear of change
- Coordinating policy changes between city and county
- Keeping it local
- Impact of students
- Utility cost
- Keeping neighborhood character and integrity
- Renovation/rehab—have to have a clear title
- Community buy-in for affordable housing plan
- How to assist parents with economic stability
- Building new smaller developments on public transport routes
- Dogmatic zoning/planning policies
- Landlords lack of licensing/standards/slumlords
- Capitalism
- Expensive rentals—difficult to save for down payment
- Not having a land bank—Community Loan fund CDFI
- Way for tenants to challenge landlords outside of court system
- Disseminate information on what's available
- Lack of political will
- Organize community members in a way that can identify solutions and that those who have a stake in the issue contribute to the solution
 - Has to include investors, landlords, and renters
- Most vulnerable have no power in decision-making, in part due to a lack of trust and consistency from people in power
- Allocating limited resources-funding, manpower, time
 - Also identifying the different funding sources
- Overcoming the “Not in my backyard” (X2)
- Lack of funding and process for accessing funds
- Unheard voices that aren't here need to be heard
- Having a conversation with landlords, investors, property managers on info presented by Anne Ray
- How do you change the minds of landlords, investors, and property managers
- Other disparities are related to housing—criminal justice, education, utility costs, etc.
- Being open-minded to new information

Housing Affordability Engagement Report and Framework

- Electric bills
- Knowing when to show up to engagement
- Get UF to provide student housing on campus
- Build trust that something actually happens this time
- Help the most vulnerable to navigate the systemic barriers—programs for credit repair, lack of banking, renter or homeownership
- AH shouldn't be clumped together in one area
- Don't want to get kicked out for complaining about code violations
- Lack of liaison of a tenant/landlord + code enforcement + police department
- Lack of federal funding
- Raising taxes and fees is not realistic
- Income challenges residents in our community
- Find landlords who are willing to rent to people with less than ideal background
- Funding
- Neighborhood opposition to AH
- No incentives for lenders, realtors, builders to provide AH
- "Not in my backyard"
- Scattered housing on transportation routes
- Networking and collaboration is a challenges within our community
- Construction costs are high
- Modify land use and zoning code to allow greater range of housing (e.g., SRO, cohousing, small houses)
- Finding ways to creatively finance AH (wages, fees on builders)
- Escaping the cycle of poverty
- Stability of housing
- Developers only building high end student rental and can't build houses for less than 180,000
- Unintended consequences of policy decisions on vulnerable communities
- Working people who may need AH often do not have the time to be present at discussions/we have a need for creative engagement
- There's an absence of or gap in a locally funded financing pool
- Define the role of local government to incentivize affordable housing development
- Good data
- Gentrification
- Create healthy, sustainable community (*resilience)
- Reduce the fees/regulations that make it very difficult to build
- Finding the \$
- Overcoming bias within the community and inequity
- Difficult to define "cost burdened"—agree on a definition that is less expansive and more specific
- Use data to meet the needs of people most in need
- Centralized resource clearinghouse
- Relationships between landlord and tenant (respect and effective communication—they need each other)
- Homeownership
- % spent on utilities 30-35%

Housing Affordability Engagement Report and Framework

- Rental affordability
- Diversity of home residents' ages
- Education and information
- Opportunities
- Development available
- Safe, pleasant rather than luck
- Support for mental health and homelessness
- Limited availability downtown
- Rights for renters
- Cultural changes required for people in existing homes and people moving in (increase sensitivity)
- Finding where everyone agrees
- Getting rid of fear when neighborhoods hear "affordable housing"
- Funding
- Disparate resources

Questions:

- How—unintended consequences
- Private capital to support public goals
- Parking
- Appraised value to equal cost of construction or actual value
- What does accountability look like?
- Explore downzoning (Portland)
- Identify and learn from local successes
- Why is 30% the cost burden for housing (risen from 25%)?
- How do we get the stakeholders to come to the conversation?
- The need/demand is there. Why do we have such a hard time finding market solutions?
- Why is this the first community engagement workshop regarding housing? What was the driving force?
- What's next?
- How do we sustain public engagement? We are only at the tip of the iceberg. Education and learning.
- How do you lower the cost of living?
- What is legal to expect landlords to do?
- Who on staff is meeting with less active groups (homeless or disabled)?
- How to maintain neighborhood value while embracing growth?
- Is the City serious this time?
- How can we implement measures of wellbeing (i.e., measuring our success—people in healthy housing)?
- How can the City/County/School Board get more properties back on the tax rolls (i.e., UF/SFC)
- How do we get feedback from those who don't attend meetings?
- What is the community willing to do?
- How do I take information from this meeting and share it back to my community?
- What kind of housing are people actually looking for?
- Is the County involved?
- How can we stay involved and not get burned out?
- How to get deliverables sooner—can't wait 5 years for a plan

Housing Affordability Engagement Report and Framework

- What can we do now that has an immediate effect?
- What can we do to incentivize pocket neighborhoods
- Can 311GNV be used to increase engagement and track outcomes?
- What is being done today to address affordable housing and where is the work taking place?
- How do we prioritize housing in GNV?
- Housing crises are resolved quickly with appropriate support
- Ensure affordable housing for all who want to be housed
- How do we create the market conditions to build AH?
- Which systems are standing in the way of AH?
- How do we make the large institutions (UF, Shands, Santa Fe) to pay their fair share to AH if they aren't paying taxes?
- What are effective strategies used by other places (college towns) to address AH?
- What are the access points (institutional touch points) for people who need AH and how do we partner with them to address the problem?
- How do we support the maintenance of AH units over time?
- How are we going to engage the community?
 - Assign staff to go into communities to attend meetings
 - Neighborhood based planning
- How can we best incentivize delivery into the market?
 - Take existing infrastructure and make it livable dwelling
- Why do we always put inclusionary zoning at the top of the list?
- Are we using the right criteria to define "cost burdened"?
- How do we create an inclusive and clear definition of "cost burdened"?
- Can we turn Ironwood into workforce housing?
- What is affordable housing going to look like?
 - (safe, nice, amenities, energy efficient, comfortable, cohesive)
- More houses than apartments
- Development—same plans? Why different plans for affordable vs. market rate in the same developments?
- Smooth out design guidelines

Engagement feedback

- Peaceful Paths—shelter residents and outreach clients need housing. We would love to host an on-site meeting.
- There are no students from UF or SFC here. Think about messaging for those students invested in health, policy, and community development
- Stop relying on the same city methods, neighborhood meetings, crime watch, Black on Black meetings, show up to commission meetings and start thinking about who's not here: faith-based leaders, homeowners association presidents and representatives, community activists, neighborhood block leaders, Eastside residents, non-profits (Youth Build, Rebuilding Together)

Housing Affordability Engagement Report and Framework

- Working families aren't here! Make personal phone calls and invitations. Was anyone who is on the waitlist for public assistance housing contacted? Might have to do some door-knocking.
- Organize more meetings but shorter—1 hour talk-back sessions. Visit UF and SFC student groups. They're affected too and many want to be engaged in the community
- Missing: RH, Community Parties (hotdog roast), Senior Center—Meals on Wheels, homebound elderly folks, survey? Older folks who don't congregate, Disabled folks—hard to get here, RM—Area bank president of the BBBA (CS—VP BBAA), CH—NHDC
- Community Centers East GNV focus groups
- Reach out through churches, update and develop communication with anyone in neighborhood associations, contact student groups—some of the high schools and college students are rent-burdened
- Reach out to WalMart workers, single moms, people who receive city/government aid, online survey and reach people who couldn't physically attend this event, get the name list from NGOs
- Understand that disparities are intersectional, connecting mission driven organizations who are already embedded in the community. E.g.,--charitable media organization in Orlando that screens incoming patients for civic social needs, while also screening for their other needs. We need equity across all social disparities.
- Attendees at GNVRISE who were particularly vocal may not all be here. We need to find out what the concerns of those in "opposition" to GNVRISE were and address their concerns.
- Immigrant groups aren't represented here tonight and neither are trailer park residents—reach out in Spanish through the Rural Women's Health Project
- Reach out through public emails, social media, on the back of GRU bills, and on civil notices
- Homeless populations, elderly people, and very low income are not here. In order to get a broad and diverse group of people together, draft community members—like a jury summons and pay a stipend for participation.
- Reach out to MH through her women in ministry group
- Reach out to RC (of the apartment association). Texts are great.

Housing Affordability Engagement Report and Framework

Appendix B: Survey

Living in Gainesville Survey

The City of Gainesville invites you to share your ideas and experiences about how much it costs to live in Gainesville. These questions are anonymous and are designed to help us learn about local housing needs. We want to make sure that we hear from people who live in every part of the city. If you have any questions, please email Anne Wolf at wolfam@cityofgainesville.org.

1. What are your biggest housing concerns?

	Not Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Very Concerned
Cost of rental housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of rental housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Location of rental housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ability to get a mortgage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of homes to buy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preserving neighborhood character	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. The City of Gainesville is considering offering the following workshops. How interested are you in learning more about these issues?

	Not Interested	Somewhat Interested	Very Interested	I don't know what this is
Community Safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environmental concerns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gentrification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
History of housing discrimination	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Homelessness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Home-ownership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Housing options	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Land use & zoning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student Housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Housing Affordability Engagement Report and Framework

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3. What is your zip code (if you have one)? _____

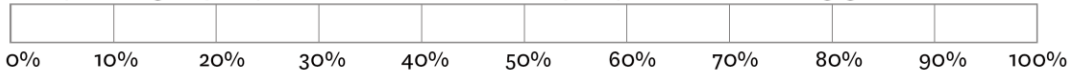
4. What is your monthly income (if you have one)?

Before taxes and deductions	After taxes and deductions
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

5. How much do you spend on rent or mortgage each month?

Your Household	You Personally
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

6. What percentage of your personal take home income do you spend on rent or mortgage each month?



7. Would you like to share anything else about the cost of housing in Gainesville?

If you are interested in continuing to be part of the conversation, we would like to know how best to reach you.

Email	<input type="text"/>
Text Message	<input type="text"/>
Phone Call	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

Gainesville.
Citizen centered
People empowered