


**CITY OF  
GAINESVILLE**

**INTER-OFFICE  
COMMUNICATION**

050747a

Date: April 7, 2006

To: Honorable Mayor and  
Members of the City Commission

From: Russ Blackburn   
City Manager

Subject: City of Gainesville Staff Comments –  
Priorities for Implementing the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness

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The Implementation Committee of the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness had requested comments on the recommended priorities for implementing the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. Following are comments that I have received from various departments of the City of Gainesville. I have already shared these comments with members of the Implementation Committee, and the Committee will be presenting its recommended priorities at the joint City-County Commission special meeting on April 13, 2006.

**Public Safety – page 1**

Increase Awareness in Public Safety Personnel

*GFR: Quarterly Paramedic Educational Sessions have all involved scenario-based discussion regarding the delivery of care. Many have specifically involved the low-income and homeless population as the medical follow-up and preventive health maintenance for this group is little to none. These sessions will continue as well as GFR intranet-based education sessions relating to specialty needs within this population.*

**Public Safety – page 2**

Create a "Homelessness Awareness" track at SFCC Academy of Public Safety & in-service training for veteran officers.

*GPD: If this is referring to the Police Academy criteria that police chiefs approve for Criminal Justice Standards and Training criteria for officers, we do not believe it would be a proper course to include in police academy requirements.*

*GFR: Specialty needs for this population have been included in the curriculum for EMTs and Paramedics for years. Specific issues on the homeless can be included.*

**Public Safety – page 3**

Review City/County ordinances that may adversely affect the homeless population.

*We believe it to be unconstitutional and discriminatory to exempt or to change a law to apply to one group. Laws apply to everyone.*

Implement a regularly scheduled warrant clearance day for minor offenses.

*Warrants are under the responsibility of the Alachua County Sheriff's Office; however, GPD would be willing to assist, as applicable and within our jurisdiction, as long as the method is legally equitable. This is a good idea.*

Hire a social worker to assist police with non-violent mental health complaints.

*This position would be best utilized if it incorporated all aspects of pertinent areas of local government, i.e., housing, transportation, social services, etc. Placing the position within GPD would greatly limit the service range of the person serving as a social worker. GPD would not be the proper forum for hiring this position either.*

**Sustainable Housing – pages 5-10**

Various goals.

*The City supports the creation of a local housing trust and other means of providing additional housing for homeless individuals and families. Qualified individuals and families are currently eligible to apply for housing programs that are administered by the City.*

**Sustainable Housing – page 6**

2. Explore feasibility of and work to reintroduce rooming houses.

*Rooming houses are already allowed in multi-family zoning districts. City staff would not support allowing them in single-family districts.*

**Sustainable Housing – page 7**

3. Target existing tenant-based rental assistance (TBRA) to specific homeless populations.

*The only TBRA that the City currently funds is a rental deposit assistance program that is administered through Gainesville Community Ministry. This program could be expanded within the limits of available funding. However, due to the overall limited HOME funding, it is unrealistic to expect significant funding to be allocated for a full-fledged TBRA program, which would be similar to a Section 8 voucher program.*

**Sustainable Housing – page 8**

4. Increase the inventory of affordable housing in Alachua County via coalitions.

*There is already an Alachua County Affordable Housing Coalition, which could be the basis for furthering this goal if its membership were expanded.*

## **Supportive Services – page 12**

### 2. Create first entry/one-stop center to ensure coordination of homeless services.

*The City supports the establishment of such a center provided its location does not create a burden on its immediate surroundings.*

## **Health – page 14**

### Develop on-site medical clinics for homeless and low-income citizens at fire stations

*Efforts to establish a Healthcare Screening Program for the residential population at the St. Francis House have been underway for several years. Specific hurdles have been funding for personnel and expendable supplies, partnerships with the medical community, and current laws regarding the scope of practice for EMT and Paramedic personnel.*

*Currently, plans have evolved to address methods to overcome the hurdles of partnerships with the medical community and current laws regarding the scope of practice for EMT and Paramedic personnel. GFR is in the process of establishing, with direct involvement of St. Francis House, protocols for health screening and medical referral for on-site residents. The transitional homeless population is described as working during the day; therefore, a schedule involving night visits at the St. Francis House is being discussed to facilitate the greatest number of participants from this population. This would be facilitated through the participation of scheduled visits by approved medical personnel operating under specific medical protocols.*

*The suggestion of establishing clinics at fire stations for this population is operationally and geographically not the best solution. For the targeted population, a method of bringing the services to their location will generate higher numbers of participants for scheduled non-emergent conditions (i.e., health screenings and medical referrals). Fire stations within the City of Gainesville have been built to strategically provide the most expedient response to emergency calls for assistance. To successfully meet this mission, emergency crews must be ready to respond within 60 seconds once summoned. This objective cannot be realistically met if emergency crews are involved in providing healthcare screening and medical referral at their stations; this must be accomplished through scheduled assignments as described above. Funding for personnel and expendable supplies continues to be an unresolved hurdle.*

## **Health – page 15**

### Implement Medical Services Van

*A hybrid of this has been discussed between COG/AC EMS, exploring the possibility of grant funding of a taxi-voucher transport system for those evaluated by Paramedics and not in need of ambulance transport but in need of minor medical attention. This would provide for transport of the low income/homeless population in non-life threatening minor medical situations. This effort is targeted to increase the availability of transport-capable EMS vehicles for time-critical emergencies. Exploration continues in this area.*

**Implementation – page 17**

2. Seek funding for homeless programs outlined in the 10-Year Plan.

*The City will continue to make its grant-writing staff available to assist in seeking such grants. Where appropriate, the City can use the services of its state and federal lobbyists to obtain legislative support for grants where the City is a partner.*

*Regarding "development funds", the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) can use a portion of its funds (TIF) to develop programs/projects that demonstrate new and improved means of providing services, provided the funds generated within a redevelopment district are spent within that district. [There are currently four redevelopment districts.]*

**Prevention – page 20**

**2. Enhance educational, job training and employment related options for at-risk and homeless individuals and families.**

*Good idea. Efforts begun at St. Francis House with Goodwill Job Junction should be continued and, as opportunities arise, expanded with self-funded efforts such as a thrift shop.*

RB/km

Attachment