



GCI Campus Citizens Input Forum
January 11, 2014

Summary Report

Submitted by
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GCI Campus Citizens Input Forum

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GCI Campus Citizens Input Forum City of Gainesville January, 2014

Background: For more than a decade the City of Gainesville, in partnership with Alachua County has been planning an approach to better serve the homeless population by providing improved access to services via a centralized location. In 2013, the State of Florida made known its interest in selling a 98-acre parcel on 39th Avenue, near the airport, that included 15 buildings that formerly served as a prison campus. The City of Gainesville moved forward with its intent to purchase the site to serve as the new homeless service center.

The staff and Commission realized that the site provides far more space and buildings than are needed solely to serve the homeless population. In order to determine appropriate uses and to seek community buy-in for the future of the campus, the City of Gainesville staff and Commission wanted citizen input in the future possibilities for use of the site.

The planning team, under the leadership of Assistant City Manager Fred Murry, included staff from the City of Gainesville and Alachua County, along with the facilitator, President and CEO of United Way of North Central Florida, Debbie Mason. The planning team worked together to stage and execute tours of the former GCI campus and then developed the process and topics for an open forum session. Both were held in January, 2014.

Goal: The goal of the process was to provide a forum for citizen input into the proposed GCI campus to inform City of Gainesville staff and Commission members.

Outcomes: At the outset, the planning team set the following outcomes in mind:

- 1) To increase the citizen input into the future plans of the GCI complex
- 2) To list and prioritize the possible services benefitting the homeless, as well as possibly other populations and general community at large
- 3) To explore and prioritize the development options for the parcel
- 4) To create a list of possible names for the campus

Process: On Friday, January 10, 2014, the City of Gainesville and Alachua County staff provided tours of the GCI site for interested community members. Approximately 50 people toured the site on that day. On Saturday, January 11, 2014 a community forum discussion was held at the Thelma Bolton Center. More than 70 members of various community organizations participated, in addition to City and County Commissioners and the planning team members.

Participants included a very good cross section of residential, business, faith-based, government and community leaders in addition to advocates for the homeless and nonprofit organizations. The agenda for GCI community discussion included a welcome by Assistant City Manager Fred Murry who gave an overview of the site (showing a site plan) with an explanation of the intended four buildings to be offered to the contractor soon to be selected for the Homeless Services Contract.

Facilitator, President and CEO of United Way of North Central Florida, Debbie Mason explained the purpose of the day and the outcomes desired. She noted that the conversation was meant to be far more expansive than addressing homeless services and instead should look to the broad community needs and possibilities of the entire campus. Mason shared that there would be a separate forum specifically to address homeless services, once the contractor had been selected and negotiations were complete.

Assistant City Manager Fred Murry provided a history and timeline of how the site became available to the community. He reviewed the uses of the various buildings on the site, and the physical assets in place on the campus. Murry told the group that the City intended to pursue government, corporate and foundation grants, seek private contributions and look for fee for service options as ways to pay for the ideas ultimately selected for the campus. He shared also that the City was very open to the concept of private public partnerships and participants should really be thinking of the entire community as an intended audience for the potential campus and its uses.

Facilitator Debbie Mason led participants through an exercise at each table to list all the possible uses for the campus. Each group presented their concepts. Then everyone had three votes to use for selecting early priorities for the primary services deemed most important for the campus. (Detail of this work can be found in the addendum.)

Homeless Services: Several tables of participants were solely focused on services for the homeless. For those participants, the initial priority services were identified as case management, health, mental health triage and service referral, sign-up/registration and delivery of immediate need services to the homeless of food, shelter, healthcare and transition services.

For these participants, the concept they shared was the need to use this campus to create a one-stop location for as many needed services as possible, with continued oversight, so homeless clients can transition from homelessness to healthy and productive lives.

Also, homeless advocates were focused on providing services to those who would prefer outdoor services and who won't want to go inside a facility. Participants suggested that the campus have campground or covered tents to provide cots and outdoor sleeping.

The concept embraced by this was that the campus should serve all the local homeless clients with flexibility for preferences of indoor and outdoor shelter.

In addition to those participants who were more narrowly focused on homeless services, were the majority of participants who were eager to explore how to best expand the use of the campus beyond serving only the homeless. Those participants had very robust conversations and provided a huge list of possible opportunities. From those lists, participants had the difficult task of voting to list the priority services for which they would like to see the City begin conversations with potential providers.

PRIORITY SERVICES FOR ALL

Those **priority INITIAL** services on campus were organized under the umbrella concept of providing a **continuum of job skills development**, which would include training, life skill support services and connections to social enterprises.

Participants thought that no matter where the clients enter the service continuum, they would be best served in a wrap-around environment provided in one location that offered key opportunities to learn a variety of skills, even as clients were receiving support services. The concept was to connect those that receive the service to opportunities to build skills based around that topic, e.g. culinary from farm, to cooking to business type skill training continuum.

Also, participants thought it was very important that the visiting clients' total needs were addressed, such as health through smoking cessation, counseling to understand and address mental health needs, clothing to provide work clothes, artistic and spiritual outlets such as performance art, yoga, etc. By addressing the clients' total needs and connecting them to the opportunity to enroll for programs for which they are eligible, clients have a better chance of improving their lives.

Key to the success of this concept is an assigned case manager to guide all clients through eligibility and enrollment to key services, based on clients' specific needs. This allows expansion of those served from solely the homeless to any citizen in Gainesville that needs access to services and an improvement plan, with coaching and supervision.

Much discussion was held about the need for existing services to co-locate to the site in order to provide an easy access point for food, shelter, training, clothing, medical, dental, mental health, financial stability, etc. services for a variety of clients.

There was significant consensus among the room full of participants about this ideal scenario, which embraced public private partnerships and began to teach homeless and low-income clients how to develop and use specific skills to attain self-sufficiency.

CAMPUS NAME SUGGESTIONS

The groups then participated in a similar exercise to determine possible names for the campus. (Detail of this work can be found in the addendum.)

Again, a voting by participants narrowed the choices to the top two contenders.

Top two choices for campus name were:

- Hope Village
- Potano Campus

SUMMARY

The facilitator, Debbie Mason closed the session by telling the participants the process to come. She assured participants that the entire list of ideas from every table would be captured as part of the final report submitted, in addition to the summary priorities. She shared that all participants could receive the summary report by providing their names and email addresses on the sign-in sheets.

Mason summarized the priority services and name recommendations provided by participants.

Assistant City Manager Fred Murry closed by thanking the participants. He let folks know that the facilitator would present the summary of information to the City of Gainesville Commission and the Alachua County Commission. Murry shared that the City of Gainesville is very committed to having continued updates and citizen input sessions during the next few years as the plans for the campus continue to evolve.

He let participants know that those interested in providing more input would be welcome to do so and would be notified of future sessions. A discussion at a later date will seek input on development options, including but not limited to public/private/phased, leased space for agriculture, and short-term versus long-term options.

Murry asked the staff members of the City of Gainesville and Alachua County that served on the planning team to stand and be recognized for their hard work in preparing for the session. He thanked the facilitator and the elected officials who took time to participate, as well.

Respectfully submitted,



Debbie Mason, APR, CPRC, Fellow PRSA
President & CEO, United Way of North Central Florida
Facilitator

ADDENDUM

DRAFT

**GCI Campus Citizens Input Forum
January 11, 2014
Thelma Bolton Center
Gainesville, FL**

AGENDA

8:00 to 8:30 AM	Refreshments and Registration	
8:30 AM	Welcome	Fred Murry Assistant City Manager
8:35	Purpose and Overview	Debbie Mason
8:40	History and Timeline	Fred Murry
9:00	Small Group Exercise	Debbie Mason
10:15	Break	
10:30	Report From Groups	
11:15	Large Group Priority Discussion	Debbie Mason
12:00	Closure	Fred Murry

DETAIL OF INPUT

SERVICES

Below find the detailed summary of notes on proposed services for the campus, as listed by each worktable:

Table 1

- Training, vocational training, literacy, library, skills classes
- Child care/family services, daycare, child safety
- Chapel - medical, mental, spiritual support, counseling
- Gardening – landscaping, farmers market
- Recreation and physical fitness
- Nutrition and good health practices (cessation class)
- Mental health - criminal justice – more than warrant clearing
- Volunteer coordination – support groups for art and performance
- ADA and physically challenged accessibility
- Food growing, preparation, distribution
- Veterans services
- Volunteer coordination

Table 2

- Life skills and training
- Self improvement and skill building
- Boutique for clothing, tailoring, grooming support
- Recreation and entertainment – small festivals to bring community out there – jogging trail
- Chapel - artistic venue
- Community integration
- Entrepreneurship/small business training and incubator
- Cafe/indoor outdoor
- Bike shop
- Recreation center/sporting events
- One stop service center
- Drop in day care center for clients needing mental health support
- Farm to market/community garden
- Drop in child care
- Elder services
- Arts and craft center (studio and shop)
- Camping area
- Computer lab
- Library
- Aquaculture
- Mechanic shop
- Counseling center (family, life skills, financial, mental health, substance abuse)

Table 2 continued

- Fitness center
- Culinary classes
- Beauty school
- Edible landscaping
- Teaching/training component for all or most projects
- Community food pantry
- Shuttle service
- Santa Fe/UF Center (higher education)
- Animal services

Table 3

- Job training and skills development, business development to start new business or to have interview prep
- Office space for start up charities and nonprofits – incubator
- Proprietary services: bike repair, farmers market, soup kitchen, free clinic, hair salon, gardening, facility use to attract community to other uses
- Job skill training/interview prep
- Commercial kitchen
- Charity/nonprofit incubator
- Religious functions
- Movies/performances, activities/theater
- Welcome center
- Daycare/playground
- Clothing boutique
- Neighborhood/campus/park
- Designated smoking area
- Counseling Center
- Library
- Hair salon/barber shop
- Soul kitchen/cage/menu
- Satellite office for nonprofits
- Community garden
- Farmers market
- Taxi/van service
- Bicycle repair and racks
- Sanctioned campground
- Fishing ponds
- Community workshops for carpentry
- Drug and alcohol free but open door policy
- Training ground for conservation training area
- Post office
- Employ people to learn (training)
- Bike/hiking trails
- Entrepreneurs incubator

Table 3 continued

- IFAS relocated offices
- Satellite campus for SFC and others
- Security integration LEO
- CJEM SAG mental health/justice system
- Storage facility
- Animal kennel
- Free bus pass/phone minutes
- Medical/dental clinic and pharmacy

Table 4

- Business incubator, tech center, thrift store for donations, training, services registry to talent listing of skills, bike repair shop – integrate businesses with training of homeless and others
- Culinary arts ed center - garden, food crop production, food preparation, training kitchen and public restaurant
- Campground, outdoor showers, clothes lines, tent and camping area
- Bicycle repair shop -- training and livery
- Skills and aptitudes assessment program
- Service registry
- Technology center (media center)
- Animal care center - rehabilitation, boarding, veterinary care, training
- Musical center, instruction, music performance, art therapy
- Fitness Center
- Counseling and rehabilitation
- Healthcare services for exams and diagnostic imagery
- Product reuse center with vocational training
- Daycare center
- After school program - vocational exploration
- Laundry facilities, clothesline
- Addiction services
- Thrift shop

Table 5

- Medical and mental health services, substance cessation, exercise trail, pets support and training, adoption
- Legal social services, qualify for programs, into housing and transition
- Life skills training, jobs, money management, parenting, community farm, farm to fork fundraising, computer center
- Mental health services - family counseling services, substance abuse treatment
- Medical services
- County health department - social services
- Drop off for donated goods
- Work program to repurpose donated goods

Table 5 continued

- Add value to the community and the client through art therapy, marketable skill, vocational training, etc.
- Job training and placement to help find jobs
- Community farm - grow their own food, training people to grow, farm to food fundraiser, sell overage to the public
- Library with computer center, online apps, educational services, GED prep, SBAC, SFC, UF and GED prep
- Social services needs to have a presence to help clients connect and get Medicaid, food stamps, SSI and legal services
- Vocational rehab
- Landscaping and grounds keeping
- Place for pets - residents can work with animals and do therapy and adoption
- Important to give community a reason to be involved to go out there
- Fitness programs - exercise course and trail, basket ball, baseball
- DMV to get state id, train drivers for driver's ed, chauffeur, truck driving
- Bike program - donations, safety and repairs
- Transportation - extend business services
- Proper lighting from gates to street
- Family and parenting counseling, life skills and decision making skills, money management skills - banking, establishment
- Positive life management skills and financials
- Focusing on transitioning people out of homelessness
- Holistic intervention process to motivate client to take part in service
- Transportation to and from center, extended bus service
- Welcoming assessment and evaluation process
- In take case management
- Safety - security, screening for appropriate placement, mental health assessments, emotional, behavioral and social assessments
- Law enforcement buy in
- Medical and mental health
- Legal and social services

Table 6

- Job training and entrepreneur program, day labor, social entrepreneur, section III office, education and GED support
- Health and human services, animal, medical, physical training, social services, youth services, day care
- Community enterprise opportunities – groups that want to come in and do things – thrift shop, garden, entertainment, sporting, organic gardening, farmers market, sporting events
- High school community service projects
- Physical training
- Smoking cessation
- Youth services (foster care transition)
- Social services center

- Table 6 continued
 - Education - GED training
 - Entertainment events
 - Volunteer opportunity (high school)
 - Animal services
 - Social entrepreneurship
 - Donation drop
 - Thrift shop/co-op
 - Inventive programs for additional services
 - Day labor services
 - Restaurant/food service training
 - Section 3 government contracts office site
 - Faith based services
 - Job services and training
 - Medical
 - Life skills
 - Counseling
 - Organic garden
 - Youth service
 - Transportation
 - Repurposing/co-op

Table 7

Issues interfering with this project happening:

- Funding - city give priority to GCI
- Attracting people to the new site
- Transportation
- Homeless and indigent – families and singles, convicts, mentally ill,
- Security, child care WIC, Medicaid, literary services
- Tent city for homeless – move from downtown and provide medical services, mental health, pet services, GED, job training
- Artists colony
- Money management skill building
- Community block grants should give priority to GCI projects to serve the homeless

Table 8

- Transportation opportunity for partnerships – so folks aren't "trapped" on the site and can get to work and off site services as needed
- Education, health, access to information, food, horticulture, landscape, re-entry menu of services, training for health coding, library with computers for client use
- Culture of engagement and comfort – respect and openness for those accessing services
- Engage community at large with the facility
- Faith and spiritual opportunities

Table 9

- Fareless transit between downtown and the center (free zone)
- Library branch and use of technology and books to support job training
- Evaluation center for temporary shelter to support police in providing safe facility for those who need evaluation and noncriminal holding
- Determine what the center cannot do – day care
- Add chapel to immediate access list
- Legal support services for restoration of rights, warrant response, etc.
- Communications and reconnection support to reconnect and go home to family
- Gardening in cooperation with Florida Organic Gardeners and Master Gardeners
- Medical/dental./mental health
- Art, music, recreation programs,
- Barbershop, optician, holistic care, fitness center
- Kennels for dogs and cats of homeless, with vet care and animal rescue
- Community closet of items for free
- Bicycle and wheelchair maintenance and repair, including training
- Nutrition services and culinary training – quality restaurant
- Counseling
- Replacing IDs (more than Trinity Church provides currently)
- Medications
- Get local businesses that could provide jobs to those trained here
- Way to formalize opportunities to do "odd jobs"; training to do lawn work and certification/badge affiliation
- Florida Works - partner for basic job services skills
- Way to help people become more entrepreneurial - start their own business
- Shelter is intimidating - was prison, next to work release program. Need to change the way it looks, prison shelter is what some call it
- Remove fences and gates, too institutional and intimidating
- Very present and POSITIVE staff
- Culture of respect
- Transportation -- how do people get there and not feel trapped
- Storage that can fit their belongings and have control over their own lock and not handed to someone else
- Camping would bring out tent city folks probably
- Want to retain privacy and control but have close proximity to shower and meal facilities
- Opportunities for churches to provide spiritual programs
- Meet needs of women and children
- Medical needs including prenatal for pregnant women
- A gathering place of hope
- Affordable day care for families
- Services for youth, teens and seniors
- Proximity to jail = challenge = have a re-entry center for ex-offenders (bus station nearby 23rd Ave.)
- Have an empowerment focus
- Design space so areas for different user groups with different needs (i.e. families vs. ex-offenders)

Table 9 continued

- Library with computers
- FED - secure
- Vocational training
- FED and other training
- Secure storage
- Food supply issues - healthy eating gardens, potential income opportunities (restaurants, horticulture with lots of partnerships)
- How will buildings come on line - can organization renovate to use? Speed up?
- Education and services related to healthy eating (can we work with existing efforts)
- Chronic homeless versus short-term needs
- Healing and secure feeling

Table 10

- Triage and case management center to access dental, medical and mental services, respite care,
- Education – job training and support – adult ed (GED, literacy skills and entrepreneurship classes)
- General services – legal, veterans, pet care, emergency, Gainesville Police Department (GPD) or Alachua County Sheriff Office (ASO) for enforcement and job opportunities
- ASO or GPD presence on campus for safety

Other elements that were mentioned as necessary for success by the larger group during the summary discussions included the following:

- Bilingual assistance
- Welcome center for homeless – bath, phone, locker
- School pick up
- Translation services
- Kennels
- Mediation/yoga/fitness
- Motivational training

NAMES

Below find the detailed summary of notes on proposed names for the campus, as listed by each worktable:

Table 1

- LIFE Center (leadership, innovation, fellowship empowerment) center
- Gainesville Center for Social Innovation
- Humanities Solutions Project
- “The Pride of Gainesville”
- Restoration and Rebuilders
- Gratitude Center
- Life Challenge Center
- Life Happens Center

Table 2

- Gainesville Regional and Alachua County Empowerment – GRACE Marketplace
- Homeless Pavilion
- The Change Center
- The Change Marketplace
- Gainesville Growth and Advancement Center
- Hope Village
- Hope Center

Table 3

- Gainesville Empowerment Village
- Gainesville Integration Empowerment
- Gainesville One
- G1 Center
- New Village
- Andrea Nickel Center
- Pitcholochoco State Forest
- Empowerment Center Campus
- Gainesville Restoration Village
- Fred Murry Institute
- Bruce’s Hope
- Pat Fitzpatrick Center for Empowerment
- Arupa Freeman Center for Empowerment
- GIV - Gainesville Integration Village
- CEC – Community Empowerment Center
- Potano Campus

Table 4

- Springboard
- Gainesville Center for Integrated Living
- Empowerment Zone
- Attributes of empowerment, hope, cooperative, resource, enterprise, change, opportunity, integration, community and success

Table 5

- Hope Center stands for housing, opportunity, purpose and empowerment

Table 6

- Hope Village

Table 7

- Connection Hub
- Empowerment Center
- Opportunity Hub
- Freedom Center
- Hope Center
- Liberty Center

Table 8

- Keep “One Stop”
- Gathering Place of Hope
- Caring Community Center
- Opportunity Village
- Attributes of caring community, open hearts, respect, empowerment, safety, not institution, innovative, creative, resource, welcoming, allowing individuality, freeing, collaborative, partnerships, not religious

Table 9

- Potano campus – stands for pride, opportunity, tolerance, achievement, neighbors and outreach
- Potano campus stands for providing opportunity through achievement, neighbors and outreach

Table 10

- Community Empowerment Center

Detailed comments from the group for future consideration:

In addition to the topics on the agenda, participants had some commentary during the closing session of elements for which they wanted to be sure to have the City's consideration. Those included:

Whiteboard:

- Smoke free campus
- Address, locker and mailbox
- Partnership with Doris, Dignity, St. Francis Pet Care
- Bring cold shelter access as fast as we can
- Governance with overarching to coordinate these groups
- Internal governance system and structure with input from clients
- Funding source for services to homeless and low income, hospice and trickle down is Federal – deep cuts right now
- Need is going up and funding is going down, opportunity to reach out to Federal government
- Creative ways to do funding
- Get buy in from those using services to repurpose by clients for sales, revenue and pride
- Bring services to campus, music, events
- Social entrepreneurship exploration - explore creative opportunities and solutions around the country
- Get immediate services up and running and then focus on how to sustain and fund creatively
- Patience with providers who will be doing their best with serving those with needs
- Formal background - for clients - set goals and achieve goals
- Remove the appearance of prison, wire, frames, etc.
- Work on simple incentives for smoking cessation, etc.
- Patience with transition of homeless to moving to the site - avoid new ordinances that make things difficult in other areas of Gainesville
- Multi-year funding for infrastructure support for the entity that runs the campus beyond one year --- maybe longer term into three years
- Tie into social service agencies in Gainesville to prevent duplication of effort to avoid client duplication
- Consider other open buildings to access for cold night services while renovations are going on or add this center to emergency shelter list
- Self timing faucets, self closing doors, look at efficiency measures
- Financial stress counseling center to prevent foreclosure and homelessness
- Volunteer labor from clients to help others with moving, etc.
- Homeless clients participate in upkeep and running of center and services
- Food for People program idea, clients run the programs and facilities
- Look at longer length of stay for clients – patience with those who need longer for transition

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