



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Southeast Gainesville Renaissance Initiative (B)

On December 6, 2004, the City Commission requested staff to research a request for proposals for a transactional consultant and also directed staff to research a request for proposals for a planning consultant for a master plan and housing development initiative for southeast Gainesville, focusing on mixed-income development by both the public and private sector on various parcels in southeast Gainesville.

Housing staff has reviewed the steps that would be involved in an action plan up through the planning and funding stages. Many of these steps would be pursued simultaneously or would overlap. Here are some of the major steps being planned:

Funding: Present the federal and state agendas to elected officials and committees, in order to seek initial funding for land acquisition and for predevelopment and development on parcel(s) the City may acquire

Consultants: Obtain Commission approval to issue a request for proposal to hire a financial consultant and planning consultant and conceptual approval on using Commission contingency funds for consultants; issue request for proposals to hire the consultants; review responses to the RFP, confirm consultant funding availability given final consultant prices, and hire consultants

Planning: Develop master plan (with planning consultant's assistance and neighborhood input); present proposed master plan to City Commission

Property acquisition: Contact property owners about their willingness to sell; appraise one or more parcels and obtain option contracts on one or more parcels; negotiate option prices and purchase price on one or more parcels (focusing first on those with potential sales prices affordable with current funding levels); complete due diligence (environmental and other review) on parcels; petition for land use and zoning changes; close on one or more parcels

Additional funding sources: Analyze market and identify potential grant funding (with financial consultant's assistance); prepare and submit grant applications (with financial consultant's assistance)

Predevelopment: Initiate subdivision plat and/or site plan process

These steps would take the City to the point where we would be awaiting response on grant applications submitted to various agencies, and if funding is approved, beginning to plan the predevelopment stage (subdivision application and approvals, infrastructure, soft costs).

Housing staff has reviewed the options for a financial consultant, and recommends that the City issue a request for proposals to assist in obtaining grant funding and in developing market analysis and the project pro formas. The request for proposals would identify the following scope of work for the financial consultant: identifying potential sources of grant funding; assisting in preparing grant applications; structuring project financing; coordinating completion of all requirements of the grantor; and preparing bid and RFP proposals for developers. Financial consultants for large-scale residential developments frequently charge in the range of \$125,000. Staff would make every effort to generate an RFP with the understanding that, due to budget constraints, the City's goal would be to hire a consultant in the range of \$25,000 to \$50,000 plus expenses.

Planning staff has researched the options for a planning consultant. Since Plan East Gainesville already provides a large-scale plan for a vision and for certain projects and changes on the City's east side, this master plan would be a more detailed, implementation oriented master plan for a specific portion of the Plan East Gainesville plan. Staff has reviewed the Broad Creek Revitalization and Implementation Plan being undertaken in Norfolk, Virginia. The Broad Creek plan focuses on a comprehensive acquisition strategy that addresses land acquisition, business/residential relocation, demolition and clearance. Another part of the plan discusses residential market positioning, validating the residential products types and the level of change needed to stimulate demand for the housing that would be proposed in the area.

Staff's recommendation for the Southeast Gainesville Renaissance plan is to do a phased master plan that focuses, in its first phase, on vacant properties in the vicinity of Southeast 15th Street and 8th Avenue. The master plan should be specific about development types, including conceptual layout of infrastructure and buildings, and including conceptual renderings of housing types, for parcels that have potential for acquisition by the City. In its second and later phases, the plan should include less detailed conceptual layouts and renderings on the other vacant properties, less likely to be acquired and developed by the City, in order to stimulate private development of the desired types on those properties. Portions of the development could be done through a design-build approach. The City could also seek partners such as the School Board in order to encourage improvements on publicly owned properties.

Hiring a national design expert such as Urban Design Associates, that typically does master planning projects of this type on a full-blown scale for large cities, would cost approximately \$125,000. A mid-range scope could put more emphasis on the conceptual layout and renderings for whatever parcels the City acquires and plans to develop itself, with the later phases rendered very conceptually - labeled as to uses and with loose drawings of housing types to spur interest by the private sector with reduced consultant cost -- and could be accomplished for approximately \$25,000. Done in the most limited fashion, the planning and design work would be done only on the parcels the City wishes to acquire and develop, which could be done for as little as \$10,000, but would be far short of the Broad Creek plan.

Funds for a financial consultant and master planning consultant would need to be from City contingency funds or included in the summer 05-06 budget discussion. Limited, smaller scale acquisitions (one or two parcels of smaller scale) may be funded from the Housing Division's HOME budget if appropriate budget transfers were made.

Authorize staff to initiate RFPs for a financial consultant and planning consultant to be funded from City Commission contingency funds, with the intention of a proposed budget of approximately \$25,000 to \$50,000 plus expenses for the financial consultant and \$25,000 plus expenses for the planning consultant.

