



Legislation Text

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Historic Home Stabilization Assistance Program (B)

The proposed GCRA Historic Home Stabilization Program offers rehabilitation assistance to property owners of historic homes in the Fifth Avenue, Porters Quarters, Pleasant Street, and Springhill neighborhoods. The goal and objective of the Program are to reinvest in neighborhood culture by maintaining historic architectural uniqueness.

The City of Gainesville Comprehensive Plan Historic Preservation Element identified the proposed Program neighborhoods as having their historic character most negatively affected by neglect and demolition of historic buildings. The proposed Program would also help preserve the remaining historic housing stock in these neighborhoods.

The GCRA 10 Year Reinvestment Plan authorizes the GCRA to provide incentives to improve residential neighborhoods. The primary objective of the Plan's Attainable Housing Goal is to maintain the population and culture of neighborhoods. Over a series of community engagement meetings, many participants said they wanted historic preservation strategies. The proposed Program is part of this strategy to preserve culture by preserving history.

The forthcoming Historic Home Stabilization Program's proposed guidelines were presented first to the GCRA Advisory Board on July 20, 2021 (Legistar #201144) and returned to the board on October 19, 2021 (Legistar #210322). The Advisory Board approved the Program on January 18, 2022 (Legistar #210581). Most recently, the Program was introduced to the City Commission during the GCRA Update agenda item at the General Policy Committee (GPC) meeting on April 28, 2022 (Legistar #211113).

There are existing local programs that offer assistance to rehabilitate Gainesville homes, including the City of Gainesville's Housing and Community Development Department programs. However, there is a need for a local program that focuses on preventing "demolition by neglect" of historic structures that assist middle-income earners in addition to low-income earners.

The proposed Program complements existing programs and addresses the needs outlined above. It provides labor and material for exterior work, resulting in repair, improvement, reconstruction, maintenance, or stabilization. The Recipient must enter into a 10-year, 0% interest due-on-sale forgivable mortgage for the total amount of the repair assistance awarded to the homeowner. Acceptance into the Program is competitive, and the Program awards priority to projects that correct health and safety violations.

The property must be a structure contributing to a historic district or registered as a historic structure on the Gainesville Local Register of Historic places. If the building is not registered, GCRA staff will assist the homeowner in applying for this designation as part of the application process. Applicants must have a household annual gross income that does not exceed the Area Median Family Income by household size. Complete eligibility requirements are in the Program Guidelines and Application document included as Attachment B to this agenda item.

This program ties to Goal #1: Equitable Community.

The Historic Home Stabilization Program has allocated an FY22 budget not to exceed \$76,868.00 budgeted for its pilot year in the GCRA Fund 1132 "Residential Improvement Programs" account. For FY23, \$76,868.00 has been budgeted and will be available on October 1, 2022. GCRA Staff will return to the Advisory Board and Commission before the first anniversary with a report on the Program's effectiveness and recommendations for future budgeting.

Interim City Manager to City Commission: Approve the Historic Home Stabilization Program as presented, once approved by the City Attorney, as to form and legality.