



Legislation Text

File #: 200937., Version: 3

My Neighborhood Program (B)

On August 31, 2020 (Legistar #200150-Equitable Development and Moratorium) the City Commission approved a motion, directing Gainesville Community Reinvestment Area (GCRA) staff to return with details and a possible funding source for a proposed program (to be known as the My Neighborhood Program) that invests in neighborhoods by acting as a financial partner for individuals who want to move back into an eligible neighborhood where they grew up.

Staff presented the Program to the GCRA Advisory Board (GCRAAB) on December 15, 2020 (Legistar #200591) and received recommendations. These recommendations were presented to the City Commission on January 21, 2021, and their input was received. Draft Program Guidelines were presented to GCRAAB on March 16, 2021 (Legistar #200937), and members recommended that they be approved by the City Commission. On April 1, 2021 (Legistar #200937) the Commission approved the My Neighborhood Program with the following revisions:

“(#1) Applicant must have lived in the neighborhood or one of the neighborhoods before 2011 for at least three years, or they can be a current renter [who] has lived [in the neighborhood] continuously for the [past] three years; (#2) Clear up the conflicting information about townhouses and condominiums in Section 2, to allow them; (#3) Applicant must have an accepted offer within 120 days of being approved through the program; and (#4) [Applicant] is not eligible for the program if [they] currently own a home in one of the eligible areas.”

Per City Commission direction, revisions (#2)-(#3) have been updated in the program policy per legal review. GCRA staff and the City Attorney's Office recommend that revision (#1) *include* only applicants that have lived in one of the neighborhoods before the year 2011 for at least three years and *exclude* current renters who have lived in an eligible neighborhood continuously for at least the past three years.

City staff and the City Attorney's Office are not able to justify why renters who have lived in a neighborhood for the past three years are eligible, but other similar groups are excluded. For example, renters who have lived in a neighborhood from the years 2011-2020 would not be eligible, despite having continuous residence in a neighborhood for nine years. In order to move the program forward, it is recommended that this eligibility requirement be removed. Further discussions concerning eligibility criteria may continue and be made into the next iteration of the program.

The City Attorney's Office requested that the Office of Equity and Inclusion review the Program guidelines for equity. The department suggested changes to the way the program would be administered. Those changes are described in Attachment C.

Strategic Connection: This item is connected to Goal 3: A Great Place to Live and Experience in the City's Strategic Plan. An objective of this goal is to increase affordable housing opportunities for all neighbors.

The not to exceed amount of \$75,000 is budgeted for the My Neighborhood Program in the GCRA Fund 620

“Community Enhancements & Housing” account for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2021.

That the City Commission approve the My Neighborhood Program as presented.