



Legislation Text

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Historic Home Stabilization Program Follow Up (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 goals 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 help preserve some 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. This proposed program is in response to the Reinvestment Plan priorities, which reflect community needs.

The forthcoming Historic Home Stabilization Program's proposed guidelines were presented first to the GCRA Advisory Board on July 20, 2021 (Legistar #201144) and then returned to the board on October 19, 2021 (Legistar #210322). Today's agenda item continues this discussion and presents a program that incorporates input and goals brought by the Advisory Board members.

There are existing local programs that offer assistance to rehabilitate Gainesville homes, including the City of Gainesville Housing and Community Development Department programs. However, there is a need for a local program that focuses on preventing "demolition by neglect," which assists middle-income earners, in addition to low income. The proposed Program complements existing programs and addresses the needs outlined above.

The Program would provide exterior work which results 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 and funding amount is competitive, and repairs that correct health and safety violations are given priority. After approval, work is arranged by GCRA staff and completed by a qualified contractor.

The property must be a single-family structure contributing to a historic district or registered as a historic structure on the Local Register of Historic places. If the house is not registered, GCRA staff will assist the homeowner in applying for this designation as part of the application process before improvements are made. 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.

The Historic Home Stabilization Program has allocated an FY22 budget not to exceed the amount of \$77,000 budgeted for its pilot year in the GCRA Fund 1132 "Residential Improvement Programs" account. As a pilot program, GCRA will return to the commission if more funding should be appropriated due to demand. The current balance will also increase in October 1, 2022 with the FY23 budget.

GCRA Director to GCRA Advisory Board: Approve the Historic Home Stabilization Program as presented, once approved by the City Attorney as to form and legality.