

Council Agenda Report

Date: January 28, 2019
Prepared by: Yvette L. Robinson, Housing Specialist
Submitted by: Patrick Comiskey, City Manager
SUBJECT: January Housing Report

Discussion:

Housing Report for January 2019.

We are moving forward with the plan with Lisa Sturtevant & Associates (LSA) and are right on schedule in accordance with the proposal for the Cambridge Neighborhood Revitalization Plan. A draft of the housing study is now complete and currently under staff review. We anticipate forwarding a final draft to Council for review and comments prior to the February housing report.

The Communication Strategy Policy draft is complete and included in your packet for review and comment. This strategy will assist in effective communication in the community for the current plan, while also serving moving forward with other programming, planning and the like.

As a quick recap, the **Cambridge Neighborhood Revitalization Coalition** is comprised of key partners that will be instrumental in the redevelopment plans in target neighborhoods throughout the city. This partnership includes Habitat for Humanity Choptank, Dorchester County, City of Cambridge, 1880 Bank, Salisbury University, State of Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and members of the community.

We are continuing our relationship development with 1880 Bank. Currently they are exploring the possibilities for the creation of Cambridge specific financial programming. We are exploring the development of a targeted housing mortgage program for critical skill workers such as police, fire, healthcare, teachers, veterans, etc. The goal of this program would be to develop an incentive beneficial program for home ownership for this targeted population. More information to come.

Community Engagement

The development of the Cambridge Neighborhood Revitalization plan includes the involvement and engagement of the community. Therefore, we have had and will continue to conduct community meetings that will seek the input of members of the community in the development of this plan. The purpose is to ensure that any plan that the coalition and the city implement is a true reflection of the desires and needs of the community.

Below is the schedule of meetings:

- November 15, 2018 at the empowerment Center. (summary of the meeting included in your packet)

The next community engagement meetings are as follows:

- Core Group meeting - Wednesday, Jan. 30th at 5:30 PM
- Community Engagement meeting - Thursday, Feb. 28th from 5:30 to 7:30 PM
- Core Group meeting - Thursday, March 28th at 5:30 PM
- Community Engagement meeting - Saturday, April 6th from 11 AM to 1 PM

The community engagement meetings will be facilitated by city staff and the students from the Salisbury University Urban Planning class with Professor Dr. Ali.

RECAP OF CORE GROUP PURPOSE

2.1 Identify Key Stakeholders and Establish Core Group

A critical component to any planning process is the set of local stakeholders who provide valuable input, leadership, and serve as liaisons to the broader community. The LSA team will work with staff to identify key stakeholders in the Cambridge community to serve on the core group for the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan process. The composition of the core group should reflect the wider community and include residents of the plan neighborhood, members of the local business community, cultural institutions, city staff, and other stakeholders as identified with staff.

The first of the stakeholder meetings (core group) should be held a few weeks in advance of the first general community meeting to provide orientation to the core group members on the planning process and solicit feedback on content and organization of the larger community-wide meeting. It is anticipated that an additional two to four core group meetings will be scheduled throughout the planning process. City staff, with support from Salisbury University faculty and students, will organize and facilitate these meetings. LSA will provide content for the meetings, including updates on project status and questions to be used to guide discussion among the core group of stakeholders.

CDBG UPDATE

We have had several meetings with the State of Maryland DHCD to complete the housing policy for home ownership rehabilitation. DHCD will be coming for a site visit on Monday, January 28 from 10 AM to 3 PM. This meeting is to go over the project status and update etc. (more to report in the February housing report).

Habitat Detailed Report:

New Construction: Construction is under way on 3 single family, new construction homes. The addresses of the homes are: 507 High Street, 519 High Street and 603 High Street in the area designated as the Pine Street Historic District. These are the three homes indicated as “shovel ready” during the grant application process. Habitat Choptank’s total investment to date in the new construction projects is \$163,400. The grant has been billed approximately \$30,000 and an additional \$26,000 will be billed at the end of January. The homes are projected to be complete in the spring of 2019. One home has a qualifying homeowner working toward purchase of the home. These homes are single family homes, built to Energy Star Standards, incorporating Universal Design principles

to assist with aging in place, and built with durable materials to ensure a low maintenance, low cost of operation home.

Acquisition: During the reporting period 2 properties have been identified and the first appraisals completed. The properties are in the process of a review appraisal and we hope to make an offer following our meeting with CDBG on January 28th. Both properties are on Pine Street, in the Pine Street Historic Neighborhood. The appraisals and review appraisals for these properties are attached. We have contact information for 2 additional properties on Pine Street, as well as one property on Fairmount Ave. Currently we are reviewing the appraisal process with the homeowners and evaluating the properties for suitability.

Rehabilitation: During the reporting period the Policy and Procedure manual for the Rehab program was approved, and we have preliminary inquiries from 16 homeowners in the Pine Street Historic District. 6 of these homes are on Pine Street. The remaining homes are in the Historic District on Fairmount, Wells, High, Douglas and Noble streets, among others. These inquiries were homeowners that have contacted Habitat for Humanity Choptank for repair information and have submitted contact information and a brief description of the repairs desired by the homeowner. Formal applications and project review will begin now that the Policy and Procedure manual for the Rehab program has been approved.

Data on Location of Applications:

Location	# of Applicants
Pine St	6
High St	2
Douglas St	1
Schoolhouse Ln	1
Fairmount Ave	1
Dunns Ct	1
Wells St	1
Noble St	1
Just Outside Area	2

Habitat Staffing Update:

Habitat Choptank has created a Family Services position to assist with grant execution, applicant processing, documentation, and family partnership and education services for all our repair programs.

This position will assist in processing all existing inquiries and advertising the available programs in the Pine Street Historic Neighborhood.

All admin on Habitat Choptank's side is shown as In-Kind services, leveraging the grant funds, and allowing the amount billed to the grant to be used for direct repair, acquisition, and construction costs.

GOALS FOR 2019

- Continue to secure additional funding for program implementation.
- Seek out capacity building funding for an organization to assist residents in becoming home-buyer ready in areas such as financial planning, credit repair, home-buyers education classes etc.
- Identify key projects that can include the community for implementation through creative place making.
- Develop a marketing strategy to begin seeking developers to partner with the city in implementing key projects as found in the neighborhood Revitalization plan once it is completed

Communications and Public Engagement Strategy

Cambridge Neighborhood Revitalization Plan



The overall goal of the communication and Public Engagement Strategy is to ensure that all City of Cambridge residents, employers and other stakeholders have information about the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan and to have opportunities to provide meaningful input that will guide development of strategy recommendations and build broad support for the final plan.

As a result of the communication and public engagement activities described below, several positive outcomes are anticipated that will help facilitate broad community support for the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan and successful adoption of the Plan by the City Council and implementation by staff:

- The residents of Cambridge are fully informed about the planning process, its goals and its activities;
- The business community in Cambridge is involved with the process and understands the opportunities for investment in the neighborhood;
- Community members understand the benefits of having a full range of quality housing in the City that is affordable and appropriate for individuals and families from all economic backgrounds;
- Existing residents of the neighborhood feel their concerns and needs were taken into consideration and their input contributed toward the final product; and
- The City Council can have confidence in the quality and transparency of the process and the recommendations that result from it.

Audiences and Key Messages

The following audiences and related key messages will be considered in all of the communication materials and events throughout the plan process.

1. Residents of the Pine Street Neighborhood

Primary goals of communication and outreach:

- To provide Pine Street Neighborhood residents opportunities for engagement and involvement with the planning process.
- To use feedback from the residents to help shape the direction of the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan.
- To identify priority areas for the community and to gain a clear understanding of what specific improvements/changes are needed to enhance the quality of life in the neighborhood.
- To cultivate a sense of ownership of the plan for neighborhood residents

Summary of key messages/communication:

- The goal of the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan is to create a roadmap for investment in the Pine Street Neighborhood.
- These investments could take many forms ranging from housing development and rehabilitation, public realm improvements to streets, sidewalks, and open spaces, and economic/zoning incentives to the spur business growth in the neighborhood.

- Input from residents of the neighborhood will be a critical component of the plan, and will help shape the goals and identify the priority areas of the community to focus the revitalization efforts and strategies.
- Neighborhood revitalization can often take years to implement, this plan is an important step in this journey for the neighborhood.
- Plans for the neighborhood will respect the history of the Pine Street neighborhood and will ensure that current residents benefit from investments/improvements.

2. Employers/businesses in Cambridge

Primary goals of communication and outreach:

- To gain a clear understanding of how the Pine Street Neighborhood impacts the business community (customers, employees, proximity, etc.)
- To use feedback from local employers and businesses to gain insights into existing barriers of business development in the neighborhood (e.g., zoning, commercial space suitability/availability, crime impacts, market demand, labor pool, parking, etc.)
- To generate ideas and have conversations about how the business community can be part of the solution for revitalizing the neighborhood.
- To prioritize strategies/tools for business growth and investment in the neighborhood that will have the greatest impact.

Summary of key messages/communication:

- The goal of the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan is to create a roadmap for investment in the Pine Street Neighborhood.
- Improving the health and vibrancy of the neighborhood can have a direct impact on the economy in Cambridge.
- The Pine Street Neighborhood is an important and core piece of the overall community in Cambridge, and investment in the neighborhood is a priority for the City.
- Revitalizing the Pine Street Neighborhood presents many opportunities for the business community in the Cambridge and can serve as a catalyst growth in other neighborhoods and corridors in the City.

3. Residents of Cambridge:

Primary goals of communication and outreach:

- To provide residents of Cambridge opportunities for engagement and involvement with the planning process.
- To use feedback from the residents to help shape the direction of the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan.
- To provide information and engage in a dialogue with residents that illustrates the link between the health of the Pine Street Neighborhood to the overall health of adjacent neighborhoods and the City as a whole.
- To foster community cohesion and create common goals for Pine Street and Cambridge through vision sessions and overlapping priorities for the neighborhood and the City at-large.
- To cultivate a sense of ownership of the plan for neighborhood residents

Summary of key messages/communication:

- The goal of the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan is to create a roadmap for investment in the Pine Street Neighborhood.

- These investments could take many forms ranging from housing development and rehabilitation, public realm improvements to streets, sidewalks, and open spaces, and economic/zoning incentives to the spur business growth in the neighborhood.
- Input from residents will be a critical component of the plan and will help shape the goals and identify the priority areas of the community to focus the revitalization efforts and strategies.
- The health and vibrancy of the Pine Street Neighborhood is a key priority for the City. Revitalizing the Pine Street Neighborhood will provide benefits to adjacent neighborhoods and enhance a core and highly visible neighborhood within the larger historic downtown area.
- Neighborhood revitalization can often take years to implement, this plan is an important step in this journey for the community.
- Creating a more inclusive and integrated city will strengthen the community and make it more attractive for investment.

4. Public officials, representatives, and other stakeholders:

Primary goals of communication and outreach:

- Communicate the needs, goals, and priorities of the residents of the Pine Street neighborhood and the wider community as identified through the public engagement and visioning process.
- Identify political allies that will help the Pine Street Neighborhood Revitalization Plan through the local approval process and gain traction at the County and State level for future investment/funding opportunities that align with the goals of the plan.
- To provide information that illustrates the link between the health of the Pine Street Neighborhood to the overall health of adjacent neighborhoods and the City's economy.

Summary of key messages/communication:

- The goal of the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan is to create a roadmap for investment in the Pine Street Neighborhood.
- The residents of the Pine Street neighborhood have identified _____, _____, _____, and _____ as key areas of their neighborhood that need revitalization and should be prioritized during the implementation phase of the project. (priorities TBD, will come out of community visioning process).
- Revitalization of and investment in the Pine Street neighborhood will provide positive outcomes for the historic core/downtown of the City, and are a critical part of overall economic development efforts for the City and County.

Materials, Media, and Activities

1. **Website** (to be designed and launched by the City)
 - a. Information about public meetings
 - b. Draft and final plan reports and other documents
 - c. Fact sheets
 - d. Opportunity to provide input online
2. **Communications toolkit**
 - a. Power Point for use in public meetings
 - b. Education-based fact sheets
3. **Community Visioning Meetings**
 - a. Meeting materials and structure
 - b. Facilitator discussion guides
 - c. Handouts and informational documents

4. **Neighborhood Revitalization Plan Core Group**
 - a. Meeting schedule and agendas
 - b. Meeting content and discussion guides
5. **Social Media Calendar**



Community Day Meeting

Recap

Empowerment Center

November 15, 2018

1- Housing:

- Senior Housing needed (both in multifamily and in 1 level cottages)
- Create a space/building with community amenities serving both the new housing and the neighborhood (possibility: DCS site in back of Waugh Chapel); adult day care, food services, social space facing High Street, above Muir Street.
- Need is identified by all for **affordable** housing; low income, but also middle income that either does not qualify for assistance nor is sufficient for market rate
- Encourage + increase homeownership / develop quality rentals if rentals are done
- Extend the mixed-use zone from Dunns Court to the top of Pine street / Gay Street; would allow a continuous commercial "loop" with Race / Poplar Street, all the way down to Washington Str. and create a cross connection at Cedar & Elm
- Report bad landlords / substandard conditions; educate tenants about rights / retaliatory evictions
- Provide education services for mortgage qualification and financing / credit to residents

2- Businesses and Services

- Primary need identified = Restaurant / Neighborhood coffee shop (social space) + Entertainment (theater)
- Define an overall business strategic plan that **integrates** Pine Street with Race Street / Main Street commercial district (complement – not compete)
- Bring in convenience stores, boutique shops (clothing, shoes, barber...); proximity shopping + walkability
- Lack of small banks, or ATM in neighborhood
- Use vacant properties to provide start up locations for incubator businesses, young entrepreneurs
- Provide a health center / Gym
- Orient new business towards the commemoration of the Pine Street heritage

3- Workforce

- Need more jobs in the immediate community: artists, construction trades, startup entrepreneurs ...)
- Find locations to provide practical training (trades ..., but also looking into the future; example: electrical vehicles, downtown bike shop, sailing boats parts...)
- Define practical jobs relating to moms and pops boutiques (retail, cooking ...)
- Business to be focused on what makes the Pine Street district special and unique; relation to culture, history, food...
- Youth involvement in businesses involving production of memorabilia (ex. Harriett Tubman, Underground Railroad)
- Youth built program for job training

4- Resources and Amenities

- Public Transportation available in the neighborhood
- Walkability, i.e. safety of pedestrians as well as attractiveness of sidewalks and public spaces with benches sitting along the street
- Need vibrant social gathering spaces (entertainment, theater, restaurants, bars coffee shops) at heart and entrances of the neighborhood
- Need places for music (indoor & outdoor) Pine Street heritage
- More street festivals (community cohesion)

5- Public Spaces

- Need safe parks for kids (well lit, community watched ...)
- Consider skate board, splash pad, dog park, basketball
- Suggestion by table #4 to have a playground at the South end of Pine Street (new activity anchor /extend neighborhood engagement)
- Use some of the vacant lots as pocket parks with tree canopy + benches; explore use of vacant lots for additional off-street parking (ex: chapel's funerals)
- Include outdoor art displays, heritage plaques, small community gardens
- Celebrate community's history through street improvements and preserved buildings' architecture

6- What defines the Pine Street Historic District?

"PARADISE LOST" (Mayor Victoria Jackson Stanley) ... when Pine Street felt like a village.

From Herve O. Hamon, AICP, Planner 1



January 22, 2019

Attn: Yvette Robinson, City of Cambridge

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MEMO: Update on Neighborhood Revitalization Funding

I am writing to share some good news Habitat Choptank has received regarding resources to support Neighborhood Revitalization in Cambridge.

We recently received notice of award from the Maryland Energy Administration for \$150,000 for our weatherization program. These funds can be used in both Talbot and Dorchester counties for making energy efficiency improvements to homes, such as adding insulation and updating HVAC systems. In past years, almost 70% of this funding was utilized within Cambridge city limits. This funding is important to show as matching funds, enabling Habitat Choptank and/or our partners in the Neighborhood Revitalization plan to show investment that can leverage additional funding requests. These funds serve homeowners with an income less than 85% of the AMI for their county of residence. The release of funds is expected to be in March or April.

In addition, the Rural Maryland Council has funded our request for Health and Safety Repair funding for \$40,000 for Talbot and Dorchester counties. This funding is critical to assist in completing projects that may not be able to utilize other grant funds due to a hazard in the home, such as a roof leak, or asbestos pipe insulation.

These resources can be paired with the CDBG funding to ensure that critical home repair projects are completed, rather than deferred due to the size of the project, or other health hazards on site.

In addition, we have also been selected to apply for an Aging In Place grant from Habitat for Humanity International. We are among 25 affiliates (from 1400 nationwide) that were invited to apply. Only 3 grants will be awarded, but this invitation does demonstrate that through our collaboration and successes, we are attracting investment to the Neighborhood Revitalization program from grantors and funders other than the Department of Housing. Please feel free to share this information with partners, staff and City Council as you see fit.

Thank you,
Rhodana



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