

VII. KEY ISSUES, STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Housing and Neighborhood Plan for the City of Jonesboro must include **four fundamental principles**. **First**, the recommendations must be based on **broad strategies** that collectively address a wide range of physical, financial, social, economic, human, and policy issues that have a negative effect on the well being of the community. Some of Jonesboro's CDBG eligible census tracts and other areas are experiencing advanced levels of decline and will require more aggressive strategies and a greater infusion of resources than other more stable areas within Jonesboro.

Second, the plan must address needed **improvements to the community's basic attributes** of a clean and safe community, adequate delivery of city services, convenient access to quality retail and commercial services, recreation for all age groups, effective regulatory enforcement, public school systems that offer competitive programming to that of surrounding independent school districts, resource availability, and programmatic enhancements that ensure a reasonable quality of life for residents.

Third, maintaining neighborhood stability and reversing decline requires that **increased resources** be identified and dedicated to revitalization through innovative programming and by identifying additional resources for implementation. This includes partnerships between government, business, industry and the community. In establishing new partnerships, emphasis must be placed on cultivating and expanding the community's social fabric, a necessary step in order for the community to take more of a leadership role in the revitalization process. Community service organizations, religious institutions, neighborhood residents, and other civic organizations have had limited involvement in revitalization efforts aimed at improving the community.

Fourth, the plan requires that the implementers and policy makers directing the implementation process and enacting housing policies make tough decisions relative to **resource targeting, leveraging of resources**, and the **priorities and timelines** associated with each activity outlined in the overall plan. The disparity between resource availability and the existing level of need dictates that careful planning and consensus building must be at the forefront of the plan implementation effort to ensure that priority is given to the most critical issues facing the community.

These fundamental principles serve as a starting point for launching the plan. Building upon the fundamental principles, individual strategies are needed in response to specific issues faced by the community. Implementation of these strategies in response to the key issues will serve to under gird the entire plan and its recommendations. The Plan identifies fourteen **Key Issues** and prescribes a myriad of **Strategies and Recommendations** for implementation

KEY ISSUES, STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section presents housing policy alternatives, prototypical concept illustrations, strategies and recommendations, all designed to address Housing and Neighborhood Issues identified in the Plan for Jonesboro. These issues were derived from input during the focus group sessions, community forums, priority needs survey, 2030 Vision Sub-Committee / Plan Steering Committee input, and an examination of data and analysis performed by the consultant team during the planning process. Some of the recommendations and policy alternatives may address specific areas of the city or a specific sub-market, while others are broad in their possible application citywide. The recommendations are presented as options in the creation of an overall housing policy that will serve as the basis for developing the Housing and Neighborhood Element of the Vision 2030 Comprehensive Plan. The following are the Key Issues addressed in this section.

KEY ISSUES

- 1. Restoring the “Basic Attributes” of the Communities**
- 2. Concentrations of Poverty**
- 3. Zoning and Development Regulations and Incentives**
- 4. Land Use Compatibility**
- 5. Housing and Neighborhood Conditions**
- 6. Regulatory Reform**
- 7. Location of New Construction**
- 8. Downtown Housing**
- 9. Multifamily Housing Affordability, Condition, and Location**
- 10. Senior Housing and Special Needs Housing**
- 11. Alternative Housing Products**
- 12. Increase Resources for Housing and Redevelopment**
- 13. Economic Development and Community Projects**
- 14. Collaboration with the Arkansas State University on Revitalization**

Restoring the “Basic Attributes” of the Communities

Revitalization must include addressing needed improvements to the community’s basic attributes such as: public safety, street maintenance, clean streets, timely infrastructure improvements, trash collection, brush collection, well maintained buildings, vacant lots that are regularly mowed and kept free of debris, regular yard maintenance, and a general neighborhood appearance and level of community involvement that suggests that people care about their community. Public schools must demonstrate that academic programming and student achievement is comparable to that of surrounding independent school district schools and the public’s perception of the quality of their schools must validate that comparability. Resident must feel safe in their homes and confident that they can conduct their daily routines in the neighborhood without being victimized by crime. These basic attributes tend to shape both the way a neighborhood sees itself and how non-residents entering the neighborhood view it as well. In an

effort to achieve this goal of improved basic attributes, the following are the proposed **Strategies are Recommendations** that can be applied citywide – and prototypical examples of their application to specific areas.

- **Citywide - Enhance the Communities’ Image, Identity and Physical Attributes.**

- **Prototypical - Market Area Destination and Purpose – Johnson Avenue corridor’s connection to downtown and “The Open Air Festival Market” concept.**

- **Citywide - Improving neighborhood image and physical attributes through land use and design.**

- **Citywide - Provide Gateway and Major Corridor Improvements**

- **Prototypical – West End Neighborhood Entrance, Washington Avenue at Gee Street.**

- **Prototypical - Revitalize Washington and Monroe Avenue Corridors as a Specialty Lodging and Work-Live District**

- **Prototypical - Create New Mixed Residential Development in the Huntington Street – Burke Avenue Corridor**

Enhance Community Image & Identity and Physical Attributes - Our planning effort identified a number of neighborhoods experiencing decline throughout Jonesboro, some in worst condition than others. Many of the neighborhoods planning areas are comprised of Community Development Block Grant eligible census tracts appear to have the higher concentrations of poverty and to be experiencing the greatest impact of neighborhood decline in the city. While our report has selected these neighborhood planning areas, to illustrate current conditions and strategies and prototypical design concepts for revitalization, it is

important to note that both the existing conditions and recommendations presented in this report can be applied citywide.

Since maintaining and enhancing neighborhood stability and as a vision for 2030, achieving sustainability, an essential recommendation is that neighborhood planning areas impacted by decline must enhance their “Image and Identity” as a neighborhood in order to attract new residents and retain existing residents and businesses. An essential component of this recommendation will include all neighborhood areas becoming healthier, sustainable neighborhoods, able to meet the essential quality of life needs of its residents. This means improving the physical character of the neighborhood, which in some instances, is viewed both internally by its residents and externally by the larger community as uninviting. Some neighborhoods are viewed as unsafe and as havens for criminal activities. Whether this is reality or a perception, it has a detrimental effect on the image of the neighborhood either way.

Neighborhood assets must be protected and improved, if retained, or strategically removed if found to no longer contribute to the well being of the community. For example, the Johnson Avenue corridor from Caraway Street to Main serves as an East-West gateway into the city. However, the corridor lacks significant redevelopment and reutilization of its existing buildings and land area, and urban design and streetscape amenities that could further transform the corridor into a true community asset. Vacant land and obsolete and deteriorating buildings should be evaluated for adaptive reuse and redevelopment as new residential, retail and mixed use development, providing housing and employment sites that could serve to create needed jobs for community residents as well as employment needs citywide.

Other corridors including Burke Avenue, from Flint Street to Puryear Street, represents a transitional area between the West End Neighborhood Planning Area to the south and the industrial development beyond the railroad and to the north. It is also an important east west connector from downtown. We must

define the transitional land use patterns appropriate for the areas south of this corridor and create adequate buffers to support the co-existence of current and future commercial activities along Burke and their compatibility with alternative land uses to the south.

Beyond the corridor's lacking in the quality of development, businesses, employment, and activities and events with broad appeal, entry points from these corridors and their serving as gateways into the neighborhood fail to create a positive initial impression of the area as a community or provide curb appeal in terms of its appearance. Neighborhood residents identified a need for streetscape improvements and landscaping in area medians, as well as, sidewalks, street lighting, benches, and plantings that could make a significant impact on the image of the neighborhood. Greater emphasis on maintaining vacant lots including clearing weed and tree growth is needed. Providing streetscape enhancements in the medians and pedestrian areas along residential streets, adding street lighting, sidewalks, shrubs, as well as, new development on vacant lots, would significantly improve the neighborhoods. Most of all, there is a need to revive the "sense of community and trust" and encourage participation and cooperation from residents to maintain their homes, yards, and surroundings and to actively participate in community empowerment activities such as crime watch, neighborhood associations and self help initiatives.

Marketing the Neighborhood's Destination and Purpose – Neighborhoods that serves as a destination for visitors and an asset for its residents are dependant upon creating a positive and lasting image of their commercial corridors leading into the area. The enactment of this plan itself and its visible impact on the physical landscape of the community must replace current negative images of the corridors. Positive change resulting from the planning process and implementation of the recommendations must be marketed to residents and the broader Jonesboro community as a means of signaling a new beginning. Again using the Johnson Avenue Corridor as an example, marketing and image concepts should be designed to help create a mental and physical

attraction of resident or visitor to a particular neighborhood. Marketing should also assist in creating a destination or purpose for visiting an area based on its distinct character and unique personalities. Branding could be based on the cultural diversity, entertainment, historically significant places or buildings, and the people and businesses that have made the neighborhood their home. Branding can also be based on an emerging image of a revitalized community that has replaced its tarnished image with visual evidence of positive change.

Sustainable neighborhoods invite people to live there for lifetimes and beckons visitors to return time and time again. These neighborhoods enjoy a positive image as being clean and safe and offer the necessary amenities in support of a healthy quality of life. This image of a sustainable neighborhood will assist in attracting new community assets. The Johnson Avenue Corridor was once well known for its diversity and culture as a retail, entertainment and commercial district and capitalized on being the primary connector between Arkansas State University and Downtown Jonesboro. Its quality restaurants and entertainment venues attracted both the university and boarder community and helped bring the university and downtown closer together. The corridor must once again be transformed into a mixed residential, retail, commercial and entertainment district based on a cultural theme that helps appeal to those visiting nearby downtown and university cultural assets and entertainment venues. Some underutilized building could be adaptively reused and transformed into retail shops and restaurants, as well as, opportunities for service and professional trades such as shoe repair, dry cleaners, pharmacies, and professional office. Special events that increase awareness and utilization of corridor, such as “Music under the Stars” featuring local musicians, bands and vocalist; and African American, Hispanic and Asian Festivals, could enhance the positive cultural heritage of the people who live in the community.

Ultimately a neighborhood’s brand should describe to the customer or visitor what to expect and provide a brief description of the neighborhood’s spirit. To

brand a neighborhood and to create an identity, these themes should be carried out throughout nearby neighborhood, particularly in the retail corridors and in the streetscape and urban design. Banners, signs, street furniture, art, and street sign toppers all help to emphasize the identity of the neighborhood. This effort should be implemented throughout the corridor and used in promotional materials developed and distributed to attract regional patronage to neighborhood events. The community might be well served to solicit the support of local university marketing and business schools, such as Arkansas State University, in developing a branding and marketing campaign. The corridor branding campaign could be organized by volunteers who will lead and facilitate the marketing campaign. Detailed goals and objectives for the campaigns should be developed to specifically delineate what the neighborhood would like to accomplish through these efforts and what the corridor commercial community desires. Based on those goals and objectives, the campaigns should identify visible places and activities to incorporate marketing such as:

- street signs and banners
- lighting
- public spaces and park activities
- landscaping and plantings
- cross walks and medians
- festivals and special events
- benches and other street furniture
- entrance markers and statues
- fountains
- business facades
- public art and murals
- promotional materials
- advertisements
- public buildings such as library, schools and post offices

Improving neighborhood image and physical attributes through land use and design - When entering the North Jonesboro Neighborhood Planning Areas west of the intersection of Johnson Avenue and Main Street, and downtown to the east, it is important that the transition be noticeable and inviting, highlighting the historic and cultural heritage of the city. This will help demonstrate the importance of revitalizing the adjacent neighborhoods and continuing the emphasis on redevelopment in downtown. In order to accomplish this, our planning efforts must focus on this commercial corridor and others. The Johnson Avenue corridor itself must be reclaimed for commercial, residential, retail and restaurants with an emphasis on adaptive reuse of existing structures and complimentary streetscape and infrastructure improvements. This key intersection and others serving as “gateways” to the broader community must be enhanced to serve as the announcement of positive change occurring in the city.

The negative images of an unsafe and relatively uninviting neighborhood will change with the physical redevelopment of vacant parcels and existing structures and the replacement of the current dilapidated retail, commercial and residential buildings that line the commercial corridor and neighborhood streets. Much of how people view the community is shaped by the physical conditions that exist and the criminal element that those conditions tend to attract. The success of a marketing campaign to bring investment to the broader neighborhood will depend largely on our ability to bring physical change to the corridor in terms of new housing units and businesses offering the quality goods and services that are needed in the community. Then and only then, can we use visual aides and promotional material to successfully promote the image we want for the corridor. The following are recommendations for improving neighborhood image and physical attributes through land use and design.

Design Guidelines – Revitalization of the commercial corridor should be guided by a unified design concept, connecting new and existing residential, retail, and commercial uses and new amenities and

development along the Corridor. An overall design plan should be created to achieve greater design cohesiveness in this area whether development occurs as a single, phased or as separate projects each based on guidance from that plan. This design plan should take into account the uses planned for this area – new residential options, mixed use development, restaurants, employment centers and offices.

Land Uses – The corridor itself should be redeveloped with a mix of residential and non residential uses. New residential uses proposed for the corridor should be primarily higher density townhouse, cluster or cottage senior housing, and multifamily. Developers should consider mixed use development that includes a residential component and new multifamily rental housing, which are currently not available as a residential housing type in the area. Higher density housing and mixed use development should also be designed to complement the scale and texture of the corridor’s new character and to compliment the strong single family residential neighborhoods adjacent to the Johnson Avenue Corridor. Retail uses should encourage pedestrians to walk along the corridor and to promote the connectivity of the retail uses along the corridor to the mixed use, commercial and office development that might be developed.

Public Spaces – Streetscape amenities should be enhanced to include wide sidewalks on both sides of Johnson Avenue providing, a greater sense of security and comfort to the community when combined with a strong street-level presence of retail entrances and doorways contributing to an interactive pedestrian experience. Improvements such as street furniture, signage, banners and markers can also enhance the image and identity of the area and further serve to link pedestrian to area offices, shops, and restaurants. This sense of security and street activity can have a spillover effect on the neighborhood’s sense of security.

Connectivity of Corridor Revitalization - One of the main purposes for improving the entry points and commercial corridors leading into existing neighborhoods is to help residents and visitors feel connected to the area and to create an impetus for expansion of the revitalization efforts. It is difficult to revitalize and transform the broader residential neighborhood when your entry into the neighborhoods presents an image of despair. Residents and area visitors should be free to drive and walk safely to destinations within the residential neighborhood including work, restaurants, entertainment, and friends' residences, or take advantage of the transit stops in this area. The changes to the corridor would send a positive message that reinvestment in the area is occurring.

Provide Gateways and Major Corridor Improvements – The Johnson Avenue Corridor needs gateway entrances into the area and vistas along the corridor that are improved with trees, signage, lighting, public spaces, and benches, which signifies the presence of a safe and stable neighborhood. Key intersections must be enhanced to serve as portal neighborhood entrances to the area. Illustrations 1 - 3 on the following pages demonstrate alternative approaches to these goals.

- The intersection of Johnson Avenue and Main Street should serve as a primary entrance to North Jonesboro neighborhoods and an extension of downtown.
- The Johnson Avenue corridor and its intersection at Main Street could serve as a major entrance to the neighborhood and the gateway to new residential, retail commercial and job site destinations.

Open Air Market Center - The land on the northwest corner of Main Street and Johnson Avenue is largely comprised of vacant and underutilized buildings, vacant land, and an existing car wash. This property could be redeveloped to provide an “open air market” center featuring a farmers market, arts, crafts, and specialty retail outlets as well as public recreation space. Illustrations 4 - 6 demonstrate the area accommodating uses such as small water or splash parks,

walking or exercise trails at the intersection of Main and Johnson, and a downtown park that could replace the unpaved land area used for parking just over the bridge at main and Burke. The Open Air Market Center could serve as a regional attraction and help create that new destination and purpose for the area.

Enhance and Designate the Washington and Monroe Corridors as a Specialty District – the Washington and Monroe corridors, from McClure to Madison and the downtown core could serve as specialty lodging and work-live district building upon the area’s unique character as a culturally diverse neighborhood. This could encourage small home-based and community-based businesses to establish enterprises in existing buildings and enhance their survival by capturing a greater share of the broader city-wide and tourist market.

Specialty Districts are defined by their unique mix of land uses, business establishments, or special architectural characteristics. They are sometimes based on a theme and often characterized as a “Cultural Arts District”, “Festival Market Place”, or “Ethnic Restaurant and Retail Mall”.

Prototypical Illustrations 14 - 15 focuses on similar possibilities for the capitalizing on the corridors existing assets by transforming the area into a “Bed and Breakfast” lodging and business “Work-Live District. The large residential structures featured in the photographs used for Illustration 14 are iconic representations of the history of Jonesboro, and would make great lodging properties. Other residential structures along the corridor have already been transformed into professional office uses. Again, these corridors’ proximity to downtown, their history, and potential to attract a diverse mix of businesses and patrons, enhances their possibility of supporting neighborhood level retail, lodging and commercial uses and becoming a destination for visitors and the Jonesboro community. Jonesboro also has limited lodging alternatives in and around downtown.

Changing the Corridor' Physical Attributes

Illustration 1: Revitalization Concept for Johnson Avenue



Enhanced Image and Identity

Illustration 2: Intersection of Johnson Avenue and Main Street Gateway to Downtown



Illustration 3: Johnson Avenue Open Air Festival Market or Spray Park



Illustration 4: Downtown Park at Main Street and Burke Ave



Illustration 5: Existing Gateway Entrance at the intersection of Johnson Avenue and Main Street



Market Neighborhood's Destination and Purpose

Illustration 6: Johnson Avenue Open Air Market



Revitalization Concept for Huntington Street - Burke Avenue Corridors

Illustration 7: Mixed Residential – single family, townhome, cluster housing, patio housing

Special Needs Housing – senior cottage housing and intergenerational / shared housing



- Improved image and identity for the corridor and neighborhood
- New special needs housing
- Adaptive reuse of existing commercial/residential structures
- New residential development on vacant lots and utilizing property in marginal conditions
- Utilization of vacant commercial structures

**Illustration 8: Huntington – Burke Concept for Mixed Residential Housing
Burke Avenue Frontage between Vine Street and Floyd Street**



**Illustration 9: Huntington – Burke Concept for Mixed Residential Housing
Vine Street Frontage between Huntington Street and Burke Avenue**



Illustration 10: Burke Avenue and Floyd Street Intersection, Between Huntington and Floyd Street

Special Needs Housing

Cottage Housing



Illustration 11: Burke Avenue at Floyd Street – Assisted Living or Intergenerational Housing



Illustration 12: West End Neighborhood and Burke Avenue Corridor

Redevelopment and Revitalization Concept

– addressing Incompatible Land Uses and Transition from Residential to Non-Residential Uses

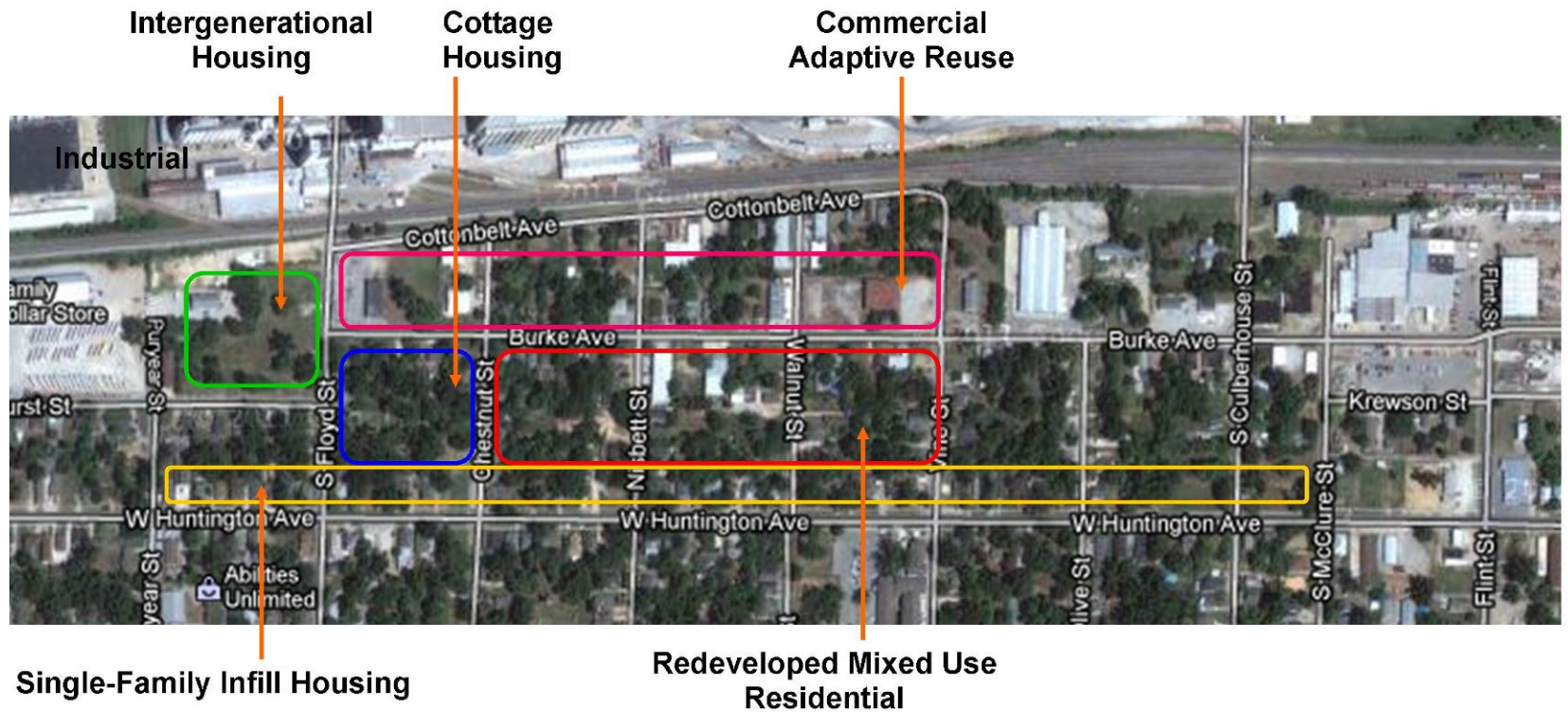
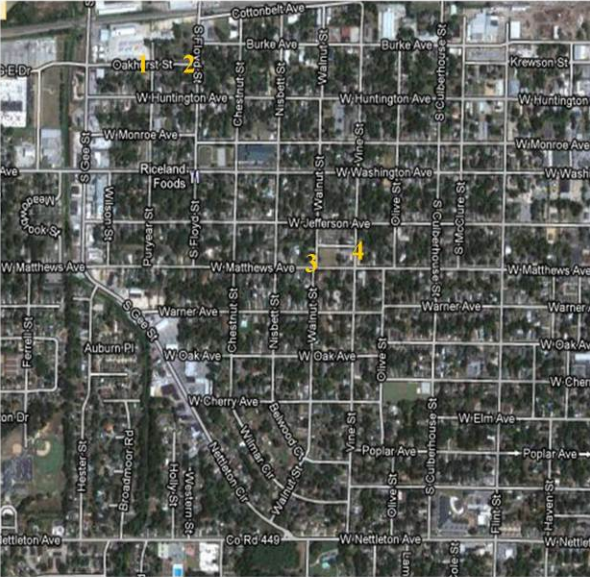


Illustration 13: West End Neighborhood and Burke Avenue Corridor – Addressing Incompatible Land Uses and Transition from Residential to Non-Residential Uses



Washington Avenue “Bed and Breakfast” and “Live Work” District

Illustration 14: Washington Avenue Specialty District

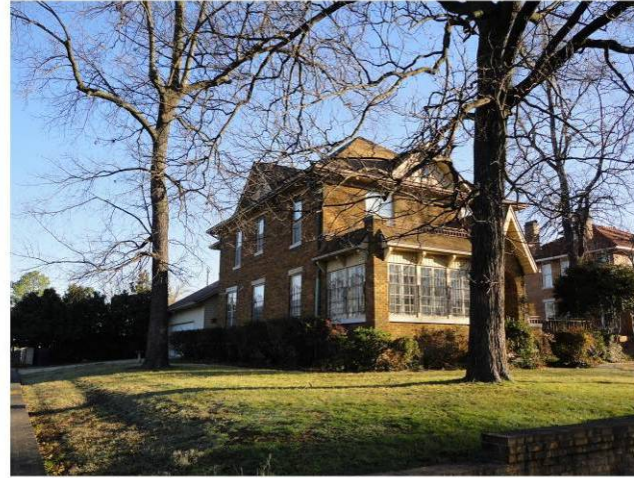


Illustration 15: Opportunities to continue the revitalization in downtown and adjacent to the Specialty District



Enhanced Image and Identity

Illustration 16: West End Neighborhood Entrance, Washington Avenue at Gee Street



Create New Mixed Residential Development – Currently, Burke Avenue and the adjacent neighborhoods to its south contain a mixture of marginal and obsolete commercial and retail structures, and a number of dilapidated houses and vacant lots. There is a need to improve the quality of life in the area by attracting new residents with a range of residential development types that will complement existing reinvestment in the West End Neighborhood Planning Area. A broad range of residential types desired by renters and home owners, and supporting the needs of families, singles and elderly are needed. Existing residential to the east and south of Johnson Avenue must be improved and neighborhood populations or rooftops increased to demonstrate levels of demand that support the retail establishments needed along the Gee Street and Johnson Street retail corridors. New residential development must also be affordable to existing and potential residents and designed in response to their desire for housing development alternatives offered in other parts of the city.

Illustrations 7 - 13 emphasize an opportunity to create a mixed housing types including higher density residential, cluster or cottage housing for the elderly, special needs housing, and vacant lot single family infill housing in the West End Planning Area, between Huntington and Burke. Alternatives to the traditional single family detached housing unit is needed with many seniors experiencing a housing crisis due to their over-housed and single occupancy status in units for which they are no longer able to afford repairs, maintenance, utilities and operating expenses. Their homes, which once housed large families are now lacking modern updates and energy efficient features, and in some cases suffer from years of neglect and deferred maintenance. Cottage housing can be operated as rental housing or offered for sale as homeownership, and generally ranges in size from 450 to 900 square feet. Amenities can include common area green space, recreation or community gathering space, community gardens and shared parking. Developments are sometimes sponsored and managed by non-profit, religious or community organizations and residents are offered shared

maintenance and supportive services by paying a condominium-type homeowners fee.

Adaptive reuse of existing commercial land uses and new residential development is needed along the Burke Avenue corridor and along adjacent commercial corridors such as Gee Street as well. Vacant tracts of land ranging from the abandoned lots between Huntington and Burke, to the development site adjacent to the school bus facility at Puryear, all provide potential development sites for new housing and revived commercial. The recapture of many of these parcels may require acquisition and land banking activities on the part of the City in order to assemble and market these properties. Conceptual development concepts for a variety of housing types are shown in illustrations 7 - 13, and 17 – 18. These housing examples are based on new construction single family units ranging in size from 1100 to 1800 square feet and multifamily and special needs housing with higher densities and ranging from one story to four stories.

Illustration 21 demonstrates prototypical smaller patio homes or townhouse unit development needed as replacement housing for residents currently living in the North Jonesboro Planning Area, including substandard houses on Word Street in the area bounded by Johnson, LaBaume, Belt and Caraway. These units which are also appropriate for the West End Planning Area may require redesign of streets, resembling alleys and lots that should be re-platted to support smaller units ranging in size from 900 to 1100 square feet. This development type commonly involves zero-lot-line setbacks and can be used to maximize density, while adapting new development to the constraints of exiting streets and platting.

Illustrations 19 and 20 focus on improve existing conditions and the de-concentration of poverty and sub-standard housing conditions in and surrounding the same area of North Jonesboro, often referred to as “apartment city”. We have identified this area as a possibility for the HUD Choice Neighborhood Planning and Implementation Grant.

Illustration 17: Huntington Street Frontage - Single Family Housing along the Huntington frontage
Cottage Housing between Huntington and Burke, along Floyd Street



Illustration 18: Single Family Housing Infill between Huntington and Burke



Illustration 19: Proposed HUD Choice Neighborhood Grant Area - Existing Conditions

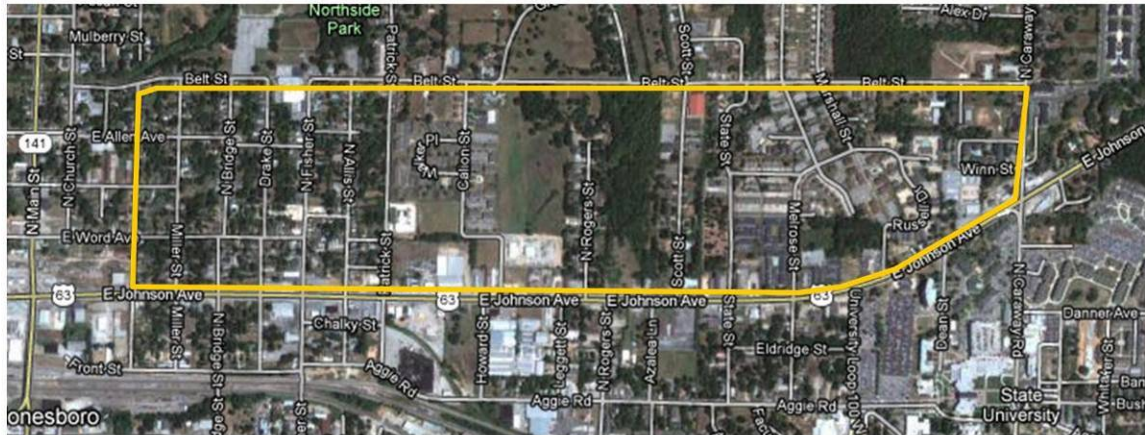


Illustration 20: HUD Choice Neighborhood Grant Area - Existing Conditions



Illustration 21: Lower Cost Patio Homes Alternatives

Illustrated along Word Street, near Word Street and LaBaume Street



Interim Land Uses and Projects on Under Utilized Buildings and Vacant Lots – Existing non residential building in marginal or poor condition litter the landscape along major corridors. Some businesses occupying these building are clinging to their financial existence, barely able to keep afloat and virtually unable to afford or justify needed improvements to their physical building or infrastructure. If market conditions improve and development opportunities desired under this plan become a reality, some owners may opt to redevelop their properties for alternative development types. However, during this interim period, while the redevelopment concepts are taking shape, existing business must continue to operate until area conditions improve. Their survival as viable businesses, in some instances, is linked to immediate improvements by making minimal investments that will attract increased client traffic.

Existing buildings can be improved without making major investments in the structures and infrastructure. By maintaining the existing rustic and eclectic character of the buildings and lots as shown in Illustrations 22 and 23 on the following pages, businesses in other communities have capitalized on a market derived from patrons looking for unique places to visit shop and dine. Land use such as farmers markets and craft outlets can quickly retrofit existing building or transform vacant lots into business enterprises with few changes to the actual building or property infrastructure. This allow for the redevelopment of the property at a later date if desired without forfeiting larger sums of dollars having been invested in interim uses.

Illustration 22: Examples of Interim Land Uses and Projects for Underutilized Lots and Buildings



Illustration 23: Examples of Adaptive Reuse of Existing Buildings



Implement a Neighborhood Watch Association - a Neighborhood Watch Association (NWA) or Crime Watch program encourages active neighbors to become the “eyes and ears” for the police by reporting any criminal activity or suspicious behavior. Neighborhood Crime Watches can address all types of criminal activity, but usually are more focused on home-based crimes, such as larceny and vandalism. A Neighborhood Watch Association could be organized with teams comprised of neighbors within designated blocks or small neighborhood sub-areas who come together to address crime and/or safety issues in their area. This group then works cooperatively with local government and law enforcement to develop solutions to problems and/or create interventions for issues that could become problematic. A NWA could be organized by the existing neighborhood association, but the key element in a formal Neighborhood Watch Association is its relationship with local law enforcement. It may also act as a deterrent to drug and gang-related crime on the streets. Some city Police Department offers support in establishing Crime Watch programs and they can send police officers out to instruct community organizations on safety surveillance and reporting. Block leaders can be selected as points of contact for each block and a communication network can be established to pass along information about crime and security.

Steps to Setup a Neighborhood Watch:

- Ask the police to assist in setting up a program. Schedule an initial neighborhood meeting.
- Establish the boundaries of the watch area that can be effectively monitored. Discuss what, how, and when to report activities to the police and effective ways to use 911. The department liaison can recommend security measures for homes--such as locks, lights and alarms.
- Elect a chairperson to oversee the program and block captains to disseminate information and enlist volunteers.

- Hold regular meetings with law enforcement personnel to educate neighbors on local crime patterns, effective crime prevention, and crime reporting. Have a law enforcement representative present as a guide for the first few meetings and then return occasionally to address residents' questions and concerns.
- Create a website and newsletter to post events and incidents.
- Distribute a list of all residents with their home phone numbers and e-mail addresses (which are also useful for emergencies). Update the list as families move in or out of the neighborhood.
- Post neighborhood watch signs. Check with the police about regulations governing their posting and where to acquire them.
- Contact the police department about developing a community policing program. These partnerships are a collaborative effort between police and residents, where the input of the entire community is utilized to reduce the incidence of crime and improve community relations.

Volunteer Patrols — In many communities across the country where crime or the perception of crime has made neighborhoods unsafe or less attractive to potential residents, volunteer patrols have worked to reduce crime and assist the local police department. These groups receive training from the local police, with particular attention on what to look for and what to do if the patrol notices something suspicious. The objective of the patrols is to provide additional eyes for the police department and create a presence in the community that discourages criminal activity. With the budget constraints that many cities are currently experiencing, beefing up police presence in a community is unlikely. Adding patrols to one area of town means reducing them from another area. Volunteer patrols give cities a low cost option that increases activity in the community and works to reduce crime.

Trained citizens drive their communities and call in anything suspicious that they observe. They drive their own cars, identified as a volunteer patrol participant with a magnetic sign on the door, and carry cell phones. Volunteers slowly cruise their neighborhood looking for suspicious persons or vehicles. Volunteers should not get involved in any situation, such as stopping a car theft, but instead are instructed to call the activity into the police dispatch center and report any relevant information. They should never attempt to stop the perpetrator or follow to report on movements of the perpetrator after the fact.

Volunteers are simply additional sets of eyes dedicated to making their neighborhood a safer place to live. Additional benefits include reports to relevant departments concerning burned out street lights, street repair needs, abandoned vehicles, and other public concerns that often go unreported. Implementation of the concept would require recruitment of volunteers, arranging for training with the Police Department, and buying magnetic signs for the patrol participants. Ongoing needs would include scheduling volunteers, ensuring that volunteers conform to the guidelines under which they are supposed to operate, and various public relations tasks, such as recognition awards for volunteers.

Concentrations of Poverty

According to the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey data in Table 5, of the Socio-Economic Profile, about 17 percent of all families in Jonesboro lived in poverty between 2005 and 2009. About six percent of married couples with children under the age of 18 lived in poverty, and over 11 percent of families with children under the age of 5 lived in poverty during the period. The poverty rate in married couple families was significantly lower than that of families with a female-headed householder. An alarming 47 percent of female-headed households and 53.7 percent of female-headed households with children under the age of 18 lived in poverty.

About 20 percent of the total population of the city lived in poverty between 2005 and 2009. Over 29 percent of all children under the age of 18 lived in poverty, and about 37 percent of all children under the age of 5 lived in such dire straits. Over nine percent of people over the age of 65 lived in poverty during the period.

Concentrations of poverty are not only a concern with regard to social equity, but have a significant impact on the condition and quality of housing in a neighborhood. In areas where a majority of homeowners cannot afford to perform routine maintenance, poor housing conditions may quickly become the accepted state of affairs. The housing condition survey and neighborhood planning area assessment data show that there is a correlation between areas with high poverty rates and poorer housing conditions. Examining Maps 11 and 12 showing the results of the neighborhood classification scheme application, identifies areas with the most housing concerns are those located in the areas closest to downtown, and areas where the majority of residents are performing below the City of Jonesboro median income level or citywide poverty levels.

Recommendations - There are a number of policy options which address the de-concentration of poverty and creation of income diverse neighborhoods. Policies focused on changing the mix of housing types, attracting a range of incomes, and de-concentrating public and assisted housing can work to create neighborhoods with a greater range of values and, therefore, residents with a mix of incomes. Examples of these policies include incentives for mixed-income infill development, inclusionary zoning, and allowing for a variety of lot sizes and zoning categories to create mixed-income areas. Public and Assisted Housing must replace obsolete housing types and large rental developments with scattered site development that include a mix of both subsidized and market rate housing. The City through its regulatory powers must aggressively address substandard housing conditions that contribute to the decay of the neighborhoods.

Improved access to healthy, affordable food choices

Not all of the policy options relate directly to improving housing choices and conditions, and de-concentrating poverty by diversifying housing. Poverty stricken areas are also isolated from quality goods and services such as convince stores rather than full service grocery stores. Due to higher cost and limited food choices, people living in these areas of Jonesboro make daily lifestyle choices that disproportionately affect their health and well being. For many households, low access to healthy, affordable food translates into a higher incidence of nutrition-related diseases, including diabetes and heart disease and is a major factor preventing their exercise of housing choice.

A food desert is any area where healthy, affordable food is difficult to obtain. It is prevalent in rural as well as urban areas and is most prevalent in low-socioeconomic minority communities. Food Deserts are also associated with a variety of diet-related health problems. Recently highlighted in the City of Shreveport, Louisiana, low access to healthy, affordable food translates into a higher incidence of nutrition-related diseases, including diabetes and heart disease, says Grace Peterson, of the LSU Agricultural Center, who helped formulate the recent Shreveport/Caddo master plan outlining this issue. At a time when people in Shreveport are scouring their newspaper's weekly grocery ads for the best deals, some people also must consider whether it is worth the effort. For they live in food deserts, urban areas with little access to healthy, affordable groceries within walking or biking distance of their homes. For them, a trip to the store can mean waiting in the elements at a bus stop, perishable goods in hand, or laboring to get a heavy bag of produce into a taxi. It's enough to make them settle for fast-food outlets that often are a characteristic of food deserts.

When divided by census tracts, Shreveport has 22 food deserts, according to the U.S. Agriculture Department's Economic Research Service (ERS). Within these areas live 63,291 people, 64.5 percent of whom have low access to a supermarket or large grocery, ERS data show nearly 11 percent of those with low access have no vehicle at their disposal. Shreveport's food deserts span the city

from the north to the south-southwest. They range from the Russell Road area south of Southern University and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, where 72.5 percent of the 5,728 residents of that census tract have low access, to the tract that flanks Line Avenue between Southfield Road and just north of state Highway 3132, where the rate is 29.3 percent among that area's 6,890 residents.

Among the goals outlined in the Shreveport/Caddo Parish plan is ensuring that all residents have reasonable access in close geographic proximity and are well informed about nutrition. This will be difficult given the City's Business dynamics and their lack of support for investing millions in construction of a supermarket every square mile. So locally, the focus thus far has been on providing fresh produce through a quarter-acre urban farm and teen-run market in the Valencia Park area and 11 other community gardens. Peterson, who heads an eight-member Caddo food system task force formed as a result of the master plan, wants to expand that. The City applied for and received a federal grant for additional gardens, each of which costs \$3,000 to \$4,000 to start plus funding for educational and support services.

The City of Jonesboro should evaluate and consider applying for 2012 or 2013 USDA Food Desert and other related Grant funding. The Department of Agriculture (USDA), Deputy Agriculture Secretary Kathleen Merrigan announced on June 3, 2011 approximately \$10 million in funding for the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) to help increase availability of local agricultural products in communities throughout the country. These grants will put resources into rural and urban economies to create and support direct marketing opportunities for farmers. Secretary Merrigan indicated that this year USDA will place emphasis on food deserts because America's low income and underserved communities need greater access to healthy, fresh food.

In fiscal year 2011, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) competitively awarded grants to projects that develop producer-to-consumer market outlets, including but not limited to farmers markets, community supported agriculture,

and road-side stands. Priority status will be granted to those projects that expand healthy food choices in food deserts. AMS will continue to target 10 percent of grant funding toward new electronic benefits transfer projects at farmers markets.

USDA, in coordination with the Departments of the Treasury and Health and Human Services, seeks to eliminate food deserts in the U.S. by increasing access to fresh, healthy and affordable food choices for all Americans, while expanding market opportunities for farmers and ranchers. Through a suite of funding options, the federal partners are targeting food deserts or areas with limited access to affordable and nutritious foods in urban, rural and tribal neighborhoods. Earlier this year, USDA's Economic Research Service released a Food Desert Locator tool online. The Food Desert Locator is an Internet-based mapping tool that pinpoints the location of food deserts around the country and provides data on population characteristics of census tracts where residents have limited access to affordable and nutritious foods. To use the Locator, visit www.ers.usda.gov/data/fooddesert.

Because of changes to the program in fiscal 2011, applicants should visit the FMPP website for full details about food deserts and assistance in applying. The "FMPP Pre-Application Guide" also helps applicants assess their readiness for implementing a federally-funded grant project, and the "How to Apply for an FMPP Grant" tutorial will guide them through completion of the application. These and other tools can be found at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/FMPP>.

If interested in information on the 2011 application process, the FMPP grant was published in the June 1, 2011, Federal Register, and posted to <http://www.ams.usda.gov/FMPP>. For more information, also contact in writing: Carmen Humphrey, Program Manager, Farmers Market Promotion Program, AMS, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 4509 – South Building, Washington, DC 20250; call (202) 720-8317; or fax (202) 690-0031.

De-Concentration of Public and Assisted Housing

The Jonesboro Urban Renewal and Housing Authority (JURHA) own and operate low rent public housing units in the City of Jonesboro. The Public Housing Program includes 151 units in scattered sites, of which eight units are designated for low income families, 40 for very low income families, and 99 for extremely low income families. The 151 Public Housing units owned and operated by JURHA consist of 1, 2, 3 & 4 - bedroom units with 24 Elderly units. JURHA administer Section 8 Vouchers throughout Craighead County. In November 2011, 1,312 Jonesboro households were receiving tenant-based rental assistance through the Section 8 Voucher Program. There are another 781 applicants from Jonesboro on the waiting list.

The City of Jonesboro has 344 subsidized units situated in 11 scattered site developments, owned and operated by various entities, which are affordable to very low income and low income households. Table 12, in the Housing Market Analysis Section, provides an inventory of various types of assisted housing in Jonesboro by Program and target population. These properties represent a number of different housing HUD programs and including Section 202, 221(d)(4)MKT, and Section 811. The total number of assisted housing units was approximately 478 units in November 2011, including 180 of which were constructed or adapted for the elderly or disabled persons. The Public and Assisted housing inventory is primarily concentrated in the lower income areas and areas of minority concentrations. Conditions of these units vary, but for the most part are in poor condition and or otherwise obsolete or in need of modernization and updated amenities. In additions to the concentration of units, the developments are surrounded by lower income concentrated neighborhoods comprised of single family and privately owned multifamily units that are largely in poor conditions.

Recommendation - The City of Jonesboro, in conjunction with the Housing Authority of Jonesboro should consider applying for a **2012 or 2013 HUD Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant. 2012 applications are due May 1, 2012.** The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced June 3, 2011 that \$3.6 million in Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants were to be awarded in fiscal year 2011 to assist in the transformation, rehabilitation and preservation of public housing and privately owned HUD-assisted housing, and surrounding distressed neighborhoods. A total of \$100 million was included in the final Continuing Resolution of 2011 Appropriation Bill for HOPE VI, which included the Choice Neighborhood Planning Grants funding.

In announcing the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan said the program is intended to reward communities that use innovative tools to tackle concentrated poverty holistically. The initiative expands on the success of the HOPE VI program by recognizing that communities must link affordable housing with quality education, public transportation, good jobs and safe streets.

As part of HUD's overall plan to revitalize areas of concentrated poverty, the Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants are intended to help transform distressed and at risk public or assisted housing, and their surrounding neighborhoods into sustainable, mixed-income housing that connects to key services, such as education and transportation, and supports positive outcomes for the neighborhood's families. Eligible applicants are public housing authorities, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit developers that apply jointly with a public entity. Applicants must demonstrate their plan to revitalize the neighborhood through public-private partnerships that seek to develop high-quality public schools and early learning programs, public transportation, and improved access to jobs and well-functioning services.

These grants will enable communities to create a comprehensive "transformation plan," or road map, to transform public and/or assisted housing within a

distressed community to create a “choice neighborhood”. This Federal support provides a significant incentive and catalyst for the local community to take critical steps toward neighborhood transformation. In 2011, applicants had until August 8, 2011 to apply for the 2011 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants. HUD anticipates awarding approximately 17 to 22 grants with a maximum award of \$300,000 each. HUD at its discretion may award additional grants with remaining 2010 appropriations for this initiative. Applications must focus on the revitalization of at least one distressed public and or HUD assisted housing development and may target more than one. Distressed includes income and racial concentration in addition to obsolete or deteriorated conditions. The neighborhood surrounding the distressed development must be distressed as well. A match of at least 5 % of the grant is required.

The Choice Neighborhoods initiative will transform distressed neighborhoods and public and assisted projects into viable and sustainable mixed-income neighborhoods by linking housing improvements with appropriate services, schools, public assets, transportation, and access to jobs. A strong emphasis will be placed on local community planning for access to high-quality educational opportunities, including early childhood education. Choice Neighborhoods grants will build upon the successes of public housing transformation under HOPE VI to provide support for the preservation and rehabilitation of public and HUD-assisted housing, within the context of a broader approach to concentrated poverty. In addition to public housing authorities, the initiative will involve local governments, non-profits, and for-profit developers in undertaking comprehensive local planning with residents and the community.

Additionally, the Department is placing a strong emphasis on coordination with other federal agencies, with the expected result that federal investments in education, employment, income support, and social services will be better aligned in targeted neighborhoods. To date, the Departments of Education, Justice and Health and Human Services are working with HUD to coordinate

investments in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, including those targeted by Choice Neighborhoods.

Zoning and Development Regulations and Incentives

Zoning and Development regulations and developer incentives are needed to encourage the development of a mix of housing types, affordable to persons with diverse incomes and needs. **Recommendations** include incentivized zoning, tax abatement, development subsidies and a variety of programs funding with federal Entitlement funds.

Mixed-Income Infill

Incentives for mixed-income infill housing development may be appropriate as a part of the overall strategy to rebuild older neighborhoods and replace demolished homes and vacant lots, and substandard housing, particularly in neighborhoods identified as “Declining or Neighborhoods in Transition”. Many of the Declining and In Transition Areas have vacant lots available for redevelopment. Lower income and older neighborhoods which are otherwise strong may see an immediate benefit if the vacant lot or vacant house on a block is replaced with a new home. This type of development, known as infill housing development places new housing on scattered vacant or underutilized lots in established neighborhoods or in an area within a neighborhood which has previously been left undeveloped. The City promotes infill development and area agencies, such as the Jonesboro Area Habitat for Humanity, have had success in creating new housing in existing neighborhoods. The City through its CDBG Entitlement program dedicates funding for development of infill housing and housing assistance to first time homebuyers who qualify.

Mixed-income infill development refers to infill development which does not necessarily focus exclusively on low to moderate-income housing. Rather, mixed-income infill looks to create a broader range of infill housing types and values. This type of development does not necessarily mean a one-for-one

replacement of residential stock on currently vacant lots, but typically accommodates higher densities and different housing options, including townhome and duplex development, cluster housing, and assisted living, nursing homes, and cottage housing for the elderly where appropriate. Increasing area density through density bonuses or re-zoning is one possible component of a mixed-income infill strategy. Other components may include:

Generating Developer Interest

Developers may be hesitant to initiate an infill project if their experience in this area is limited. A training and outreach program or seminar on infill development, showcasing City incentives for this type of development, City donation or subsidized pricing on tax foreclosure or adjudicated properties, may provide developers with the tools to start infill activities. Identification of infill priority areas and creating a list of available infill sites could be undertaken as well. This list showing potential infill sites could be accessed by developers searchable on the City website.

Reducing Development Costs

Examine the reduction or waving of development fees for infill development. Often vacant lots are difficult to develop because doing so involves a lengthier review and approval process not associated with other development. This process may involve soliciting variances from side-yard set-backs and other restrictions which may not be granted. Review the process required to create infill housing for ways to make the process more streamlined and efficient. One way to reduce development costs may include 'fast-tracking' permitting and variance processes for infill status projects.

Developing one lot is more costly than developing a number of contiguous lots. One strategy includes creating a public land assembly and land write-down program to generate larger impacts than piecemeal development. Examine the appropriateness of financial assistance to spur infill development through loan guarantees, tax abatements, and below-market financing.

Generating Market Awareness

An infill strategy will be less likely to be successful if no one is aware of it. Consider a publicity campaign targeting builders, real estate professionals, and lenders, encouraging them to take advantage of the City's infill incentives. Provide information on infill development through planning, zoning and permitting offices, and distribute materials explaining the new program through builders associations and the boards of realtors. Minimize opposition by lenders to finance infill development projects, which they may be unfamiliar with, by providing information on successful infill development projects. A Parade of Homes project offering tours of infill housing efforts sponsored by the City may be appropriate.

Inclusionary Zoning

Inclusionary Zoning refers to a set of strategies that aims to create balanced housing development and mixed-income communities by ensuring that some portion of new housing development is affordable. This strategy may be appropriate to encourage a mix of incomes in the city where development may create neighborhoods of homogenous home prices and residents of similar incomes. Mixed-income communities broaden access to services and jobs, as well as provide openings through which lower-wage earning families can buy homes in appreciating housing markets and accumulate wealth.

Inclusionary Zoning policies can be voluntary or mandatory. Austin, Texas is an example of a city with a voluntary inclusionary zoning policy implemented through its Safe, Mixed-Income, Reasonably-Priced, Transit-Oriented (SMART) Housing program. The program provides fee waivers and other incentives on a sliding scale according to the share of affordable units included in new developments. An example of a mandatory inclusionary zoning policy is that of Montgomery County, Maryland, which was enacted in 1974. The policy requires developments of more than 50 units to include 15 percent moderately priced dwelling units. Of that 15 percent, two-thirds are sold to moderate-income first-

time homebuyers and the remainder can be purchased by the local housing commission or local non-profits for use in their affordable rental programs.

Conservation Districts

Within the City of Jonesboro there are unique and distinctive older-in-town residential neighborhoods or commercial districts which contribute significantly to the overall character and identity of the City and are worthy of preservation and protection. Some of these districts are designated as historic districts while others may lack sufficient historical, architectural or cultural significance at the present time to be designated as Historic Districts. As a matter of public policy, the City may want to take steps to preserve, protect, enhance, and perpetuate the value of these residential neighborhoods or commercial districts through the establishment of Neighborhood Conservation Districts.

The purposes of a Neighborhood Conservation District are as follows:

- to promote and provide for economic revitalization and/or enhancement;
- to protect unique physical features, design characteristics,
- to protect and enhance the livability of the neighborhood;
- to reduce conflict and prevent blighting
- to promote new compatible development; and
- to help stabilize property values;
- to provide property owners a planning bargaining tool when evaluating request for future development;
- to promote and retain affordable housing;
- to encourage and strengthen civic pride; and
- to encourage the harmonious, orderly and efficient growth and redevelopment of the neighborhood.

The City's zoning ordinances would be used to designate each district. Ordinances designating each Neighborhood Conservation District will identify the designated district boundaries, and specify the individual purposes and standards for that district. The enabling ordinance could be written as an overlay district to the base zoning. These ordinances generally include the following:

Overlay District - Neighborhood Conservation Districts are designed as overlays to the regular zoning districts. Property designated within these districts must also be designated as being within one of the General Use Districts. Authorized uses must be permitted in both the General Use District and the overlay district. Property designated as a Neighborhood Conservation District may have additional designations. Such property shall comply with all applicable use restrictions. The City of Jonesboro would be required to enact changes to its local zoning regulation in order to implement Neighborhood Conservation Districts. Individual regulations would then be drafted for specific geographies in order to create an actual district, using similar procedures and public hearing requirements used for zoning changes.

Zoning Designation - The zoning designation for property located within a Neighborhood Conservation District would consist of the base zone symbol and the overlay district symbol (CD) as a suffix. Neighborhood Conservation Districts could be numbered sequentially to distinguish among different districts, i.e., R-4 (CD-1), R-1 (CD-2), etc.

The designation of property within a Neighborhood Conservation District places such property in a new zoning district classification and all procedures and requirements for zoning/rezoning must be followed.

In the event of a conflict between the provisions of a specific Neighborhood Conservation District ordinance and the General Use District regulations, the provisions of the Neighborhood Conservation District ordinance shall control.

West End Conservation District

The West End Neighborhood Planning Area is an area that could potentially improve neighborhood stability and long term sustainability utilizing Conservation District Overlay Zoning. The West End Area is currently benefiting from a renewed interest and reinvestment by a diverse group of investors. However, the area has unresolved planning issues including differences in the underlined higher density zoning of R3 that allows higher densities for residential development than has actually been developed on much of the existing parcels and lots. The majority of the parcels are generally developed as lower density single family and duplex uses.

Design standards are also needed to insure that the development consistency and integrity of the neighborhood can be maintained. Currently setback requirement and regulations governing the placement of a home on a lot are inconsistent.

The West End Planning Area is generally bounded by Nettleton to the South, Burke to the North, Flint to the East, and Gee to the East. However, it is recommended that Huntington Street running east and west between Gee Street and Flint Street be considered the northern boundary for the proposed West End Conservation District. Currently the Huntington – Burke corridor contains marginal residential structures, higher density residential and commercial development along Burke and has an abundance of vacant lot. Not only does this area differ in character from the rest of the West End, but a conservation district would likely constrain redevelopment. Due to the transitional character of the area, a concentration of vacant lots, and in order to conserve the commercial development situated along Burke, we recommend that this area continue to be zoned for higher density residential.

West End Conservation District Overlay District

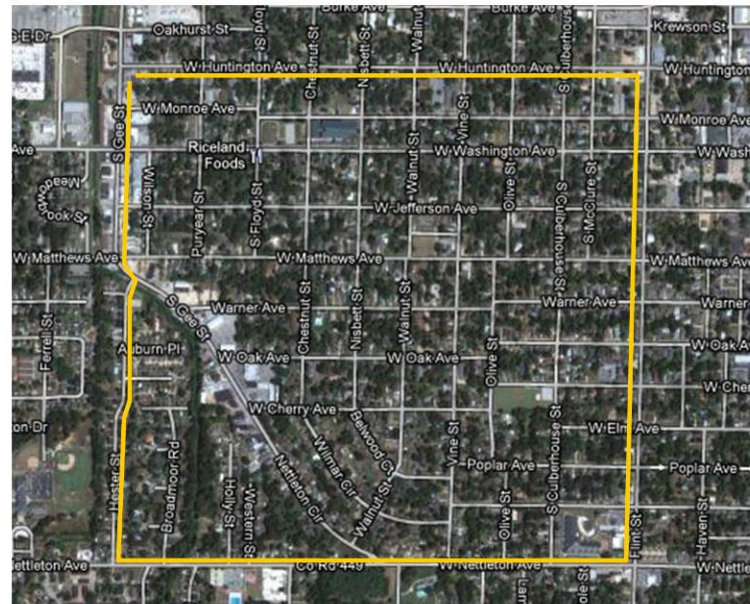
Illustration 24: West End Neighborhood Planning Area Conservation District

Bounded by Nettleton on the south, Gee Street to the west, Huntington Street to the north, and Flint Street to the east

Neighborhood Conservation District:

- **Generally less restrictive than historic districts;**
- **to promote economic revitalization;**
- **to protect unique physical features, and design characteristics;**
- **to enhance neighborhood livability;**
- **to reduce conflict and prevent blight**
- **to promote new compatible development;**
- **to help stabilize property values;**
- **to provide property owners a planning bargaining tool when evaluating request for future development;**
- **to promote and retain affordable housing;**
- **to encourage and strengthen civic pride;**

Neighborhood Conservation Districts are designed as overlays to the regular zoning districts.



West End Conservation District



Mixed Residential Higher Density – Huntington – Burke Area



Illustration 25: Existing housing renovated or replaced under Conservation District Guidelines

Replicates architecture and cultural amenities with modular housing - less restrictive design and construction guidelines



Land Use Compatibility

One land use issue observed in the housing condition survey and neighborhood planning area assessment phase of the analysis was areas with land uses inconsistent with the underlying zoning designation or with land uses that were incompatible with the adjacent land uses. These areas had a variety of problems which included:

- commercial adjacency / encroachment into residential neighborhoods
- isolation of smaller residential neighborhood areas
- vacant lots and residential structures along arterials
- development along corridors that form the buffers, boundaries or transition for residential neighborhoods or other developed land use areas

One area where commercial adjacency and the encroachment of commercial uses into residential areas was seen as having a particularly negative effect was in the neighborhoods north and south of Washington Street. Encroachment of commercial uses from the corridor has had two different effects on the adjoining neighborhoods. The first effect has been the conversion of some single-family homes in the adjoining neighborhood to commercial uses. Not all instances of these conversions have had serious negative effects. While these conversions necessarily result in a change of the character of the adjoining neighborhoods, elements, such as adequate buffering, vegetative or other enhanced visual screening, and careful design of traffic flow, minimize the impact a commercial use has on residential uses in the area.

The second effect is the impact of the commercial character on the residential area, particularly at the entrances to the neighborhoods. The lack of adequate transition between high impact uses, and the adjoining residential structures has created a problem for these properties. Some of these properties were in poor repair and others were vacant. This is strong evidence of the inappropriateness of residential uses at those locations, if the externalities of the commercial area cannot be eliminated through a distance buffer or appropriate screening.

Another form of land use incompatibility is found in the areas identified on the neighborhood conditions map (See Maps 11 and 12) as “Residential Conversion to Non-Residential”. These areas are residential pockets, surrounded by non-residential uses. One example is in the area abutting Burke Avenue where the residential uses are adjacent to and sometimes integrated within commercial and industrial uses. The homes in these areas are generally in dilapidated condition and surrounded by high concentrations of vacant lots. Housing surrounded by active commercial or institutional uses, with traffic and access issues, and subject to noise makes these areas undesirable as residential areas. Because these areas are small there are relatively few, if any, interior streets shielded from the negative spill-over from the adjacent uses.

The City should examine site-specific measures in each of these areas of land use incompatibility. In areas with encroachment and adjacency problems, the City should study the appropriateness of residential uses adjacent to commercial uses, determining if the lot sizes provide for adequate buffering and screening between the uses, or if a transitional use is more appropriate on the residential lot. In the areas identified in the City’s Vision 2030 Comprehensive Plan and this plan as “Residential Conversion to Non-Residential”, the City should conduct special area studies to determine appropriate land uses. If these areas should remain residential, the study should identify what strategies will be used to enhance the long-term viability of the area as a neighborhood and what strategies may reduce the negative effects from adjoining non-residential uses. The area studies should also identify what potential uses and zoning categories may be appropriate for the areas that should transition from residential uses. Following each area study, the City should follow-up with zoning changes to facilitate the transition from residential.

Housing and Neighborhood Conditions

A major discussion for community outreach sessions, steering committee sessions and during the analysis phase of this plan was the general state of housing in the city. Through our analysis, we concluded that some concerns raised or evaluated regarding housing conditions were unsubstantiated or otherwise unfounded. While on the whole, most single family housing conditions in the city were standard or in need of only minor repairs, within strong neighborhoods, there are some areas of the city which need attention. Some areas were characterized as needing classification schemes associated with the Stable, and In Transition approach primarily due to the high concentrations of structures in need of minor repair which evidenced a lack of routine maintenance.

The analysis considered the income concentrations in areas during the housing conditions survey and neighborhood planning assessment phase as depicted on Maps 1 – 10. This shows the correlation between lower income and areas identified as Declining, In Transition, and Deterioration in this report. As discussed in the land use compatibility issue, there are non-viable portions of planning areas and arguably some entire neighborhoods which are candidates for transition from residential to non residential uses strictly based on planning principles, advanced signs of transition or the degree of neighborhood decline. However, the historical and cultural presence, resident input, and issues associated with replacement housing for those who would be displaced must be considered by the City. Other areas identified as Declining and In transition were also areas of high renter-occupied single-family and multifamily homes. Strategies to facilitate rehabilitation of these housing units are discussed in the issues relative to rental housing improvements and pro active code enforcement.

Improvement Plans

Currently there are parallel efforts where neighborhoods such as West End are developing their individual community goals and objectives for improvement in their area. The City should be involved and can identify potential public/private partnership opportunities for various housing and neighborhood revitalization activities. These may range from civic groups for neighborhood litter pickup to specific contractual relationships with development entities that are involved in housing rehabilitation or development. The City should investigate starting a series of small area improvement plans. Area improvement plans are a way to identify improvements that are needed for specific areas and ascertain the specific actions needed over a number of properties. Plans would include: physical improvements to support reinvestment, such as urban design amenities, traffic controls, or street closures; neighborhood self-help initiatives, such as clean up campaigns and plantings in medians or parkways; public safety initiatives, such as crime watch, bicycle patrols, and crime prevention workshops; and social and civic support services by neighborhood associations and social service providers. The development of area improvement plans brings participants together around a shared vision for the neighborhood, identifies specific strategies and tools to be used to improve the area, and identifies the community-wide actions that support and facilitate revitalization activities.

Rehabilitation of Renter-Occupied Housing

The 2011 – 2015 Consolidated Plan for the City of Jonesboro indicates that the City should support strategies for the rehabilitation of owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing in low to moderate-income areas. The goals in the Five Year Strategic include acquiring State of Arkansas HOME Entitlement funding for rental housing repair. The Strategic Plan does not designate specific goals or targeted amount of funds or units to be assisted and those specifics will be determined at a later date.

Rental housing repair programs are operated like homeowner rehabilitation home loan programs, although in coordination with landlords instead of homeowner-occupants. Rental rehabilitation programs typically provide a financial incentive through a forgivable loan for a portion of rehabilitation costs, up to a certain dollar amount per residential rental unit. In these programs landlords provide the remainder of the rehabilitation costs to bring the buildings up to code. If certain conditions are not met over the life of the loan, such as rents remaining affordable or code violations noted, the loan loses its forgivable status and loan payments become due.

Improving Neighborhood Identity

One striking difference between the more stable neighborhoods in Jonesboro and those in decline or deterioration was the 'sense of place' which was generally lacking in the neighborhoods with poor conditions. Creating a stronger identity for a neighborhood increases the pride residents have in their neighborhood and engenders a feeling of commitment to its future. Residents will be more willing to investment in the maintenance and improvement of their homes and aid in marketing new infill housing developed on vacant lots. The following design features and neighborhood empowerment concepts can contribute to creating stronger neighborhood identity.

- ✓ Neighborhood Gateway and Entrance Treatments;
- ✓ Internal neighborhood identification, such as banners, distinctive street signage;
- ✓ Consistent landscape themes among properties;
- ✓ Street sign-topper or yard-flag program to promote neighborhood cohesiveness;
- ✓ Promoting neighborhood associations and neighborhood planning council involvement.

Increased Self-Help Initiatives

The City should continue its efforts in providing volunteer based initiatives aimed at improving housing conditions and neighborhood stability. Our recommendation is that current activities be continued, and that the City considers expanding volunteer activities as funds become available. Other activities that could be considered include:

- **Increase self-help initiatives such as "fix-up," "paint-up," or "clean-up" campaigns and "corporate repair projects"**. In order to increase resources available for these efforts, neighborhood residents, religious institutions, community organizations, individuals, and corporations would be recruited to participate in the repair to homes occupied by elderly, disabled, and indigent homeowners through organized volunteer efforts involving their members and employees.
- **Implement a Youth Build and Repair Program in conjunction with the local school district**. Youth Build is a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program that teaches young people how to build new homes and repair older ones. HUD offers competitive grants to cities and non-profit organizations to help high-risk youth, between the ages of 16 and 24, develop housing construction job skills and to complete their high school education.
- **Organize a "Compliance Store"** where home builders, building supply stores, merchants, and celebrities, such as radio and television personalities, are used to demonstrate simple, cost effective ways to make improvements to houses and donate building supplies for use in self-help projects. The supplies and storage facility for supplies could be provided to enrollees by building supply stores, contractors, and hardware stores.

- **Organize "adopt-a-block" and "adopt-an-intersection" campaigns** where neighborhood groups, residents, scout troops, and businesses adopt key vistas and intersections to maintain and implement beautification projects, such as flower and shrub plantings and maintenance.
- **Creating Community Gardens as interim uses on select vacant lots** provide an opportunity for neighborhood residents to work together to increase the attractiveness of their neighborhood. Formats for community gardens range from attaching simple window boxes to homes along a street reflecting a common theme, coordinating garden planting, or converting a vacant lot that may previously have been an eyesore in the neighborhood into a flower or vegetable garden tended by members of the community. Naturally, ownership of a vacant lot is an issue to be resolved before gardening begins. The City Assessor can provide information on the ownership of the property, including a mailing address. If the lot is privately owned, permission to use the lot must be received from the owner. If the property is owned by the City, ownership of the property might be transferred to a local non-profit organization or neighborhood association. While the costs of plant materials and supplies are an important consideration for community gardens, many nurseries and home improvement stores offer discounts for community improvement projects.

Creating a Community Garden:

As with any neighborhood improvement effort, a community garden requires dedicated volunteers and a limited organizational effort. A community gardening group can be formed in conjunction with neighborhood associations, block clubs, or religious institutions. Resident interest and participation is important. The creation of the garden can be promoted through association newsletters, public advertisements, and leaflets distributed door-to-door. These are suggested steps for Implementation:

- Initiate the project with an organizational meeting to discuss the location of the garden, possible issues with garden development, materials needed, and basic gardening ground rules.
- Establish responsibilities for resolving any organizational issues.
- Organize a planning and fundraising committee that will be responsible for arranging for the purchase of supplies at a discounted rate or receiving contributions through in-kind donations.
- Discuss the layout and appearance of the garden. Some community gardens simply allow participants to manage a small section of the garden as they wish, growing flowers or vegetables for their own use. Others prefer a park-like design that can become a gathering place within the neighborhood. This decision can be made through a community planning effort.
- Develop sketches or pictures of what residents would like to see in the garden for the basis of an overall design. Include any landscape amenities that are wanted by the participants, such as fountains, trees, benches, vegetable plots, blooming flowers, and barbecue areas.
- Use local resources, such as garden stores, nurseries, and arboretums, for planting ideas.
- Finalize the design.
- Select a name for the garden.
- Utilize a public awareness campaign to gather support for the community garden (announcements at neighborhood meetings, distributing flyers, hanging up signs, and posters in public places).
- Implement the plan.

Battle Creek, Michigan has published a how-to guide for creating community gardens, *How to Start a Community Garden*¹, that has been summarized above. Some additional ideas and information can be found at: www.communitygarden.org.

Community Garden, City of Winnipeg, MD Example



Community Garden, Jacksonville, FL Example



Regulatory Reform

Revitalizing Jonesboro's older neighborhoods requires a comprehensive approach involving residents, neighborhood organizations, and the City. Participants in the public outreach sessions expressed concerns about their relationship with the City, particularly that between code enforcement and area neighborhoods. The City should enhance its working relationship with the residents, property owners, and community organizations. This is a most important step in that community resources are identified and nurtured, which will serve as building partners for revitalization actions. Regulatory reform will be needed in order to help strengthen and stabilize the housing supply and maintain neighborhood stability. Regulations such as rental property registration and inspections and proactive code enforcement should be considered.

¹ How to Start a Community Garden and Beautify Your Neighborhood: A How-to Guide for neighborhood leaders working to make life better for people in Battle Creek. http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/GreaterBC/Community_garden_00254_02997.pdf

Jonesboro currently has a complaint-driven code enforcement system, in which enforcement officers respond to calls. Several issues were discussed in regard to this system which would be addressed through proactive code enforcement policies. One such issue was the perception that code enforcement personnel time is consumed by absentee landlords and repeat violators of the codes on the same property. As will be discussed in the next section on single-family rental, repeat code violations must be addressed. There were some perceptions of bias or the targeting of enforcement which are likely a product of the complaint-driven system. In a primarily compliant driven system, properties which are actually reported to code enforcement officials receive attention, while other unreported properties may have similar violations but are not address until reported.

Pro Active Code Enforcement

Strategies to improve the condition of owner occupied single-family and single family and multifamily rental housing include the creation of a housing rehabilitation program focusing on rental units, enactment of rental registration regulations and inspection program, and a strengthened citation process for repeat and chronic building code violators.

Repeat Code Violators

An issue raised with regard to rental housing was that despite repeat code enforcement action in an area, conditions did not seem to improve. Sometimes a few bad landlords controlled several properties in an area and these were visited repeatedly before any action was taken. Sometimes existing regulations and enforcement alternatives are not sufficient to deter violators who have a consistent pattern of violating the codes or responding only after regulatory agencies have issued multiple warnings. One method to combat this problem would be requiring code enforcement violators that have repeat violations on the same property in a twelve month period to pay citations as a first action. Graduated fines would be assessed for each successive violation.

Multiple Property and Chronic Code Violators

Multiple or chronic violator enforcement would allow code enforcement officials to file one action for all properties in violation of the codes, when owned by the same entity who has a consistent pattern of code violation. Research should be conducted to generate a list of all property owned by the individual/entity with a chronic violator history. All such properties would be inspected and one consolidated case notice of noncompliance with codes given to the property owner for all properties in violation. Consolidated cases would be filed in court requesting judgment with associated fines for noncompliance. This would result in court actions that assign fines or other judgments that more closely fit the impact that such landlords are having on the community.

Rental Housing Registration Program

To combat the deterioration of renter-owned single-family housing stock, the City should enact regulations creating a rental registration and inspection program. Registration of all rental property within the City should work to ensure that minimum property maintenance standards are met by landlords. A number of cities have passed ordinances requiring the registration of all single family, duplex, or tri-plex and greater rental properties. The registration and inspection program is designed to enhance the quality of the city's rental housing supply and to insure that minimum housing quality standards are being met. Information is gathered during the registration process and used to locate ownership and legal entities responsible for rental properties as well as to provide contact information on the individuals who own the property should the city need to contact them in the event of an emergency or code violation. The Tennessee State legislature passed a bill requiring all owners of residential rental property to register their property effective July 1, 2007. Metro Nashville and Davidson County has implemented a program for local residential property registration ([http://www.nashville.gov/codes/Rental Insp Dist Prog.htm](http://www.nashville.gov/codes/Rental_Insp_Dist_Prog.htm)).

Under the Davidson County, Tennessee program, all residential rental property is required to register rental units under the Landlord Registration Program and pay the appropriate rental registration fee. Properties are inspected annually, but those properties without code violations will receive a four year inspection waiver. Properties found in noncompliance, must first be brought into compliance and are re-inspected in twelve (12) months from the date it complied to insure it remains in compliance.

The cost of rental property registration and the required inspection timetables and wavier for compliant properties vary among jurisdictions. In general, most jurisdictions have attempted to make rental registration programs function as an enterprise activity. That is, the fees collected for registration and inspections will cover the cost of program administration and inspection. Noncompliant properties are generally expected to carry the greatest burden of cost with fees commensurate with the unit cost of the actual inspections and re-inspection services.

In some jurisdictions, as part of the registration and licensing process, owners (or responsible local agents) are required to provide contact information for themselves as well as the local person within the jurisdiction who will manage the property. A more complete registration list will ensure that persons with the responsibility and authority to maintain buildings can be easily located and, if necessary, served with legal notices, expediting compliance and enforcement actions. Tenants also benefit from being able to readily locate those responsible for maintaining their homes. Registration fees range from \$25 to \$50 and are often voluntarily submitted and higher if the City has to research and solicits the registration. These one-time fees do not cover the cost of an on-premise inspection of the property, or any re-inspections. To more adequately ensure improvement in the city's renter-occupied single-family housing the City may consider an annual fee rather than a one-time registration fee, along with scheduled inspections covered by these fees.

Other cities with strong rental registration programs include Boulder, Colorado, and Crestwood Missouri. In Boulder property owners who wish to rent their property must obtain a license and provide local contact information. A baseline inspection is required as a part of the registration process. The baseline inspection includes a general inspection (exterior, egress, stairways, fire protection, lighting, plumbing, and general conditions) and an electrical system inspection. On renewal of the rental license, only a safety inspection is required, provided there has not been a change in ownership during the four-year licensing period. Inspections are not performed by City inspectors, but the City provides a list of licensed inspectors. Both licensed rental properties and pending applications are available through the City's Internet site and can be searched and viewed as a list or through an interactive map.

In Crestwood, Missouri, a suburb of Saint Louis, all existing dwellings that are let, leased, or rented are required to submit a residential rental property re-occupancy permit application for approval. The fee for the permit is \$190 for single-family residences and \$145 for apartments. If the rental dwelling fails the initial inspection, a \$75 re-inspection fee is assessed at the time of re-inspections. Rental properties will not be allowed to be occupied unless all deficiencies are addressed and the property meets current codes.

Location of New Construction

The analysis identified as a concern, the type and location of new development in the city—where development was occurring and where it was not occurring. Residential building permit data for the last 2 years (See Appendix) show a lack of development in the Community Development Block Grant Eligible inner city areas. New multifamily and single family development permits were issued primarily for areas outside the inner city. While many thought of new development as a positive for the city, there was concern expressed that this new development was not benefiting all parts of the city equally.

Many factors determine where new development will occur. One factor is the availability of easily developable land. These Strategy will address this disparity is infill development. Strategies to overcome the disparity in available land include land acquisition and development marketing such as parade of homes.

Land Acquisition and Land Bank Program

The Land Bank Concept involves acquiring unproductive, vacant and developable lots for affordable single-family housing development. The Land Bank helps to both reduce unproductive expenditures and increase local government revenues. This approach is being implemented in a number of cities largely through a process of acquiring tax foreclosure property. Most cities have established certain criteria for acquiring properties and for properties to be considered for Land Bank use. These criteria include: 1) the property must owe five years or more in back taxes; 2) the total taxes and liens must be greater than the value of the property; 3) the purchaser must demonstrated the financial ability to immediately develop the property for affordable housing. The Land Bank generally acquires the foreclosure properties from the Sheriff Sale, maintains the properties and assembles parcels for sale to for-profit and nonprofit developers. Land Bank properties are sometimes acquired as donations by property owners, purchases from owners willing to sale property at reduced prices, and as surplus City-owned land deemed no longer needed for any public purpose. The Land Bank Program could include the following.

- **Land Transfer Program** - The City would design and implement a residential land bank and acquire eligible tax foreclosed, abandoned, City surplus or vacant properties. For-profit and nonprofit groups would have an opportunity to develop affordable housing by acquiring land bank properties from the city's inventory. The City would receives vacant lots as a result of property tax foreclosure, acquisitions, or donations and would sell some properties to eligible nonprofit groups at a below market price

- for the development of affordable housing. The City could extend this opportunity to sell land bank properties to for profit organizations for the development of affordable housing at or below market price, depending upon city policy.
- **Release of Non-Tax Liens** - The City could provide for the release of non-tax municipal liens on privately held property in exchange for the development of affordable housing by the owner. Interested parties must apply for consideration and agree to pay the delinquent taxes, penalties and interest on the property. This would include fines resulting from code enforcement issues and liens that have resulted from demolition of substandard structures.
 - **Residential Development Acquisition Loan Program** - Provides for direct City acquisition or loans for developer acquisition of vacant or improved properties for affordable housing development through rehabilitation or demolition and new construction. The City would use its CDBG and HOME Program funding from the U.S. Department of HUD to pay for both the loan funds and program administrative cost.
 - **Infrastructure and Incentive Program** – The City would provide incentives for developers to build affordable and mixed-income housing in particular areas of the City in need of public intervention to prompt the market. These incentives could include cost participation funding for infrastructure to support development of affordable single-family housing within new mixed-income subdivisions of 50 or more units. The City would use its CDBG and HOME Program funding to participate in the cost of onsite infrastructure normally paid for by the developer. The City would request responses to a Request for Application as funds are available. Other incentives could include fee rebates for platting, zoning, and permitting.

- **Land Assembly** - Land acquisition and land assembly aim to produce contiguous parcels for redevelopment. Often the plans of organizations involved in redevelopment are not coordinated and work is done in a piecemeal, less cost-effective manner. Redevelopment plans are often stymied by difficulties in acquiring critical parcels or acreage to make a project feasible. The City should consider a program involving land assembly playing a role / responsibility of receiving and maintaining property for future redevelopment in targeted areas throughout the City. These parcels could then be sold to nonprofit corporations, CDCs, or market rate developers.

The Land Bank and Acquisition Model - The Land Bank and Acquisition Model would support the acquisition of tax foreclosure and abandoned properties that are for the most part, blighted, unproductive, and vacant lots and undeveloped land tracts that would be used for affordable housing development. The City would establish and implement certain criteria to guide the acquisition and title clearance of tax foreclosure property, acquisition, and disposition of land bank property and a process for insuring adherence to State Laws.

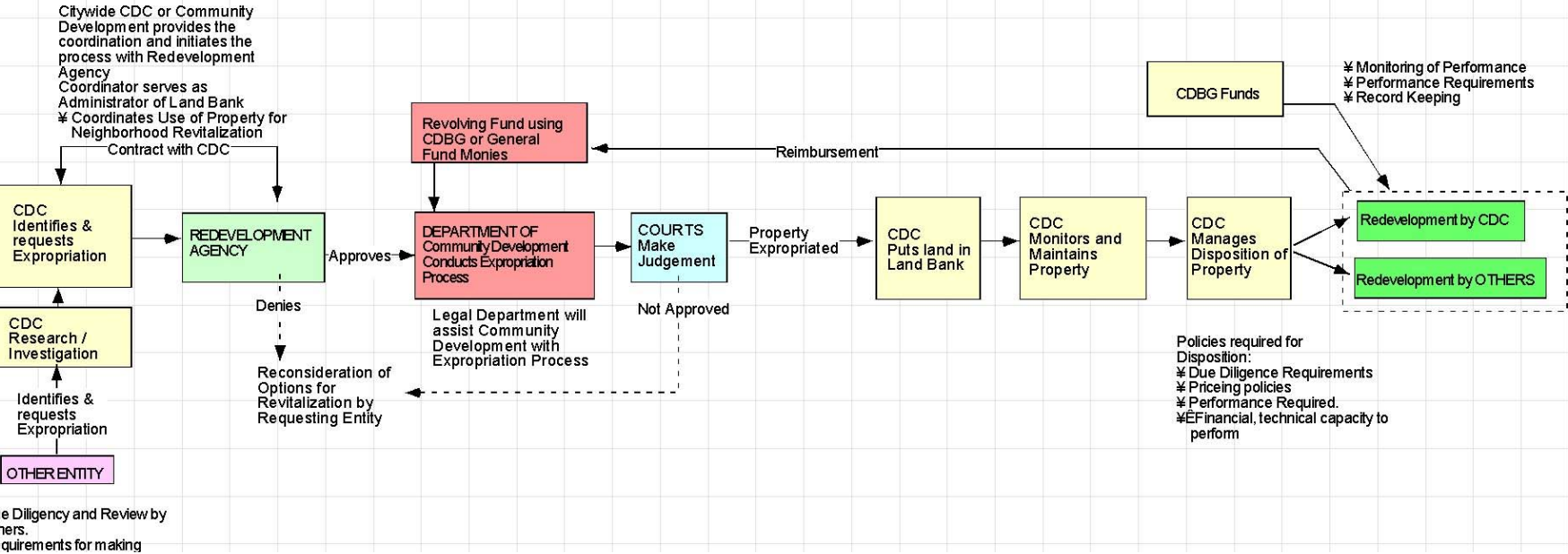
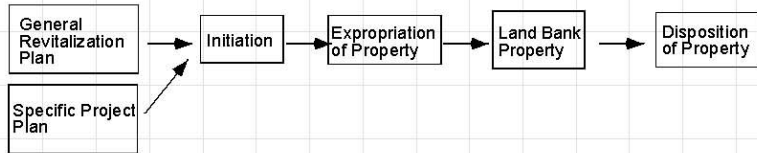
The criteria for acquisition should include: 1) the property must be a property acquired through voluntary sale, or tax foreclosure disposition procedures as an abandoned or a mortgage or tax foreclosure property; 2) a process is needed to acquire clear title, eliminate all tax liens, mortgage liens and other encumbrances upon the property title to be eligible for land bank acquisition; 3) the disposition price to developers acquiring land bank property, whenever financially feasible, will provide recovery of dollars expended by the land bank for taxes and other liens provided such liens are not greater than the fair market value of the property; 4) the purchaser must demonstrate the financial ability to immediately develop the property for affordable housing.

The function of the land bank will generally include acquiring the properties, maintaining the properties until disposition and assembling and marketing development parcels for sale to for-profit and nonprofit developers. Land Bank properties may also include donations by property owners, purchases from owners willing to sale property at reduced prices, and as surplus City-owned land deemed no longer needed for any public purpose. Sources of funds for acquisition cost and other land bank operations will come from sources including CDBG and HOME program funds.

The City of Jonesboro evaluate and consider implementing the land bank model to support its goals of developing affordable housing for sale to low, moderate and middle-income homebuyers. Eligible non-profit or for-profit housing developers will provide the acquisition/rehabilitation and/or acquisition/new construction cost of properties they acquire from the land bank. Illustration 26 on the following page graphically depicts the land bank and acquisition process.

Illustration 26: Land Bank and Acquisition Model

PROCESS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION LAND BANK AND EXPROPRIATION



Parade of Homes

A Parade of Homes event could be established in Jonesboro to facilitate the development and sale of infill housing. The Parade of Homes concept brings together the right mix of developers, available land, banking, and buyers. A parade of homes has five phases:

Site Selection – a neighborhood assessment and action plan are completed, determining where the parade of homes will take place. Lots are acquired to be made available to builders.

Pre-development – work is coordinated with a local neighborhood association and code enforcement to schedule neighborhood clean-ups, rehabilitation, public safety, and code enforcement projects. In this phase the City recruits builders, bankers, mortgage companies, insurance companies, and non-profit and community organizations to participate in the Parade of Homes.

Development – The development phase entails completion of necessary environmental reviews, demolition and relocation, addressing infrastructure needs, lot sales, and construction.

Homebuyer Acquisition – This phase includes pre-purchase homebuyer programs, loan applications, and financing for prospective homebuyers.

Parade Event / Home sales – This final phase includes the pre-parade advertising and marketing, the event and home tours, home purchases / closings, and post-purchase homebuyer activities.

Increase Homeownership Initiatives

According to the 2005 – 2009 American Communities Survey, there were a total of 24,196 residential units in Jonesboro. The homeownership rates within sectors of the City varied. Of that total, 13,731 units were owner-occupied representing a 56.7 percent homeownership rate. Homeownership rates for minorities are disproportionately lower than the City or national averages. For Whites, the homeownership rate was 64.5 percent. The African-American rate was 17.5 percent, a difference of 47 percentage points. The homeownership rate for Hispanics was under 31.5 percent, though the population of Hispanics was very small. Nationally, HUD has set a homeownership goal of 65% which means none of the minority populations are within reach of this goal. It is essential that homeownership rates increase and residents who rent have access to financing to become homeowners. Homeownership allows residents to build equity in their property and receive tax benefits from owning a home. In addition, increasing the homeownership rate can contribute to the strength of the neighborhood, as some neighborhoods have demonstrated that homeowners are more likely than renters to maintain their homes and more likely to participate in neighborhood-based social and community activities. The following are recommended program initiatives that are needed or should be continued by the City.

- **Down-payment Assistance** — City CDBG and HOME funded homebuyer assistance programs have successfully supported homebuyers to purchase a home, including help with down-payment, closing cost, and principal reduction. These programs usually include a homebuyer education requirement that provides financial literacy and home maintenance education to increase the odds of success for program participants. Because the federal funds for these activities are limited, the City and local CDC's should continue to submit applications to Federal Home Loan Bank, Community Development Financial Institutions, local foundations and others as a source of additional funding for these programs.

- **Financial Literacy** — Financial literacy focuses on the preparedness of potential buyers to acquire mortgage financing. Financial literacy counseling programs typically work with buyers to address their creditworthiness and to help them correct any credit issues that may interfere with their ability to qualify for a home mortgage. However, most programs are structured primarily to assist persons already in the market to buy a home. As a group, these buyers typically contain large numbers of persons with poor credit. Damage to their credit worthiness in the form of poor credit history or no credit history, high consumer debt, and bankruptcy characterizes many of the persons in the market for a home mortgage. This makes qualifying extremely difficult and, therefore, financial literacy must provide a pre-emptive approach to the establishment of good credit, rather than primarily focusing on correcting poor credit. The 18 to 35 year old demographic in the City of Jonesboro is impacted by the issues associated with financial literacy even more. Today not only is good credit essential in acquiring real estate and major purchases but considered in matters of employment as well.

Financial literacy is also an important factor in the successful management of one's overall personal finances, which sets the stage for all of life's important purchases, not just homeownership. A well ordered personal budget enables homebuyers to qualify for the best credit terms in major purchases and eliminates the major obstacles to loan origination. An early start in managing personal finances can prepare an individual for those major purchases. The City should work with local school systems to increase courses in the high schools that provide financial literacy education for high school juniors and seniors. Local lending institutions and real estate professionals should be recruited to assist in curriculum development and to provide instructors for the classes.

Downtown Housing

Downtown living is associated with a thriving city, where the downtown is more than just a place to conduct business, but has also re-emerged as a center for restaurants, entertainment, and a vibrant street-life. People who choose to live in downtowns are willing to give up some of the advantages that suburban living offers, such as a back-yard and better schools. Making this exchange is simple for a demographic which has no children. Young professionals, students, empty nesters, boomers, and retirees often fit this mold.

Population projections for the city show growth in older population cohorts outpacing the population growth of the city as a whole. This population will likely demand a different set of housing options, than is currently being offered. Also as the young, single professional portion of this population seeks housing they will look at a variety of housing options as well. The population projections above indicate an increasing demand for housing choices, and a need for downtown housing emphasis that includes a mix of housing types.

Downtown living provides unique shopping and entertainment opportunities, as well as proximity to commercial offices, business, and government for young and older professionals. Aging boomers, retirees, or the elderly, because there are no children in their household may no longer desire or need to maintain a large home. Without the burdens of a large home and lawn to mow, those with smaller households can take advantage of the compact residential options in downtown. School choice is typically not a consideration for empty nesters that may choose to live downtown. Senior citizens who are unable to drive long distances to be part of activities in central city may choose to live downtown to take advantage of the pedestrian friendliness and easy access to the hub of cultural activity and shopping. Downtown living offers the opportunity for developments with retail on the ground floor and housing on the upper floors. This environment can connect these target groups to the energy and community living of downtown. This type of development can make the downtown streets vibrant and lively, at all times.

Downtown is already a destination point and generates a significant number of trips. The top destinations and reasons to visit downtown included government offices, restaurants, shopping, and entertainment. The 1999 HyettPalma Downtown Action Plan for Jonesboro projected a changed image for downtown by 2006 which included more loft apartments in downtown, with upper floor residential in commercial buildings. Both owner and rental units were suggested to be developed in downtown. Mixed use building in areas surrounding the downtown core and redevelopment sites at the edge of downtown were recommended for townhouse and garden apartment multifamily. New market rate housing and renovation of existing single family in neighborhoods surrounding downtown was recommended in what the study termed the "Urban Village Cluster". We concur with those recommendations and we noted loft conversions already occurring in downtown.

A collaborative effort with developers is recommended to explore the feasibility of senior housing in downtown. The Crescent City Lofts on Church Street in downtown provides an example of loft development with retail on ground floor and residential units on upper floors. Development of rental housing is recommended as an initial phase, such as loft apartments on upper floors, with ground floor retail, in both low-rise and high-rise buildings, providing a variety of unit types. Buyers are more hesitant than renters in an unproven market. By starting with rental units, momentum will begin to build in the downtown market, allaying the fears of potential buyers.

Developers and lenders may not be aware of all the resources available to them. In addition to discovering what developers and lenders feel is lacking, an education process may take place where developers discover new funding mechanisms to break ground faster on downtown projects. The City also has an opportunity to fashion development incentives that could serve to attract outside investors to produce housing and revitalize existing building in downtown and to attract businesses looking to relocate to consider downtown.

Multifamily Housing, Affordability, Condition and Location

Multifamily Housing Supply - According to the Census data, multifamily permits were issued for 243 multifamily housing units in 23 buildings between 2005 and 2010. This figure represents approximately seven percent of the stock of multifamily housing units reported in the 2006 - 2008 American Community Survey which estimates 3,382 housing developments containing five or more units in Jonesboro. While much of the multifamily housing supply, particularly units built between 2005 and 2011, remains in good and stable conditions, the housing survey and neighborhood planning area assessment noted numerous developments and units that were obsolete and or in poor conditions.

Student Housing Consumption in the Rental Market - Areas in and around Johnson Avenue and close to the Arkansas State University was of major concern. These units are not well maintained and some instances in deplorable condition while maintaining a healthy rent role, pricing and occupancy levels because they are absorbed by the student population. Students concerned cost and proximity to the university rather than condition are more accepting of these substandard conditions. Foreign and exchange students in some cases come from developing countries where housing conditions are also substandard compared to U.S. standards and are unaware of the landlords and the markets' exploitation of their resources in exchange for poor housing conditions.

Student consumption of single family housing for rental has adversely impacted the amount of affordable housing for sale and available to lower income and workforce housing consumer. Landlords also charge rent by the room, or higher prices for multifamily and single family rental units that prices non student lower to moderate income family out of the market.

Rental Housing Affordability - According to the 2006 - 08 ACS 3-Year estimates, Over 42 percent of rental housing in Jonesboro was single-family housing and over 53 percent was multifamily housing. Table 12, in the Housing Market Analysis Section, provides the distribution of rental units by the number of units in the structure between 2005 and 2009. Just over 28 percent of rental housing is found in apartment buildings (defined as five or more units in the structure).

Rental Housing Demand - According to the 2005 - 2009 ACS 5-Year estimates, Jonesboro had 427 vacant units for sale and 1,125 vacant units for rent (all housing types). Chart 6, in the Housing Market Analysis, shows the number of vacant rental units by rent range during the period. Of the 1,125 units available for rent during the 3-year period, 30.3 percent were in the \$400 to 499 rent range, 27.3 percent were the \$500 to \$599 rent range, and 21.0 percent were \$300 to \$399 rent range. According to the ACS estimates, the median gross rent for the city was \$592 between 2005 and 2009.

Rental Housing Cost Burdened - According to the 2005 - 2009 ACS 5-Year estimates, 45.7 percent of renters in Jonesboro paid more than 30 percent of their household income on gross rent. Those paying more than 30 percent of their income are considered “cost burdened” by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Table 13, in the Housing Market Analysis, provides an analysis of gross rent by number of bedrooms in Jonesboro between 2005 and 2009. Table 13 shows that for studio units, the modal rent category was \$1,000 or more. For single-bedroom units the modal rent category was \$300 to \$499. For two-bedroom and three or more rental units, the modal category was \$300 to \$499. For three or more bedroom units, modal rent was \$500 to \$749. In the Market Analysis Section, Map 13 provides an analysis of the geographic distribution of rents and Map 14, shows the distribution of renter occupied between 2005 and 2009.

Age of Rental Housing - Table 14 below compares the age of rental housing to the age of owner-occupied housing. The data show that the age of the housing stock tends to be marginally older for renter-occupied housing, with 31.2 percent of rental housing and 26.7 percent of owner-occupied housing built prior to 1970.

Recommendations - Allowing for the development of small-scale multifamily or cluster housing in appropriate areas of Jonesboro where single-family rentals demand higher rents, could shift some renter households to multifamily units. This could make the single-family rental units available for homeownership. To ensure quality development, the City should enhance its multifamily site development requirements to require desirable amenities in new development. Items found in other ordinances include building design elements, enhanced signage and lighting requirements, and play areas.

Newer energy efficient units with amenities not found in older single-family rental housing, could increase demand for multifamily and attract those living in single-family rental housing to choose multifamily. As we discussed in the recommendations for downtown housing and loft rental housing, special amenities for seniors can accommodate baby boomers and empty nesters. Improved design in new units and accessibility modifications in older multifamily stock are important elements to accommodate the city's elderly and special needs populations. Many design elements identified in Universal Design, discussed later with regard to senior and special needs populations, not only benefit these populations, but enhance housing for everyone.

The Arkansas State University should be encouraged to take a lead role in influencing developers to build more quality multifamily similar to the recently built Grove apartments near Caraway and Johnson Avenue. These units provide high quality rental amenities, with developers able to market the units to the lifestyle of the students.

Senior Housing and Special Needs Housing

The elderly live a distinctive lifestyle requiring numerous supportive services. Between 2000 and 2010, the population of over 65 years of age has increased over 21 percent in the city. The 2010 Census estimated the city's population of 65 and over at 7,968 which is 21.5 percent of the total population. The 2000 Census estimated that 1,431 or about seven percent of city residents over the age of 65 had a "go-outside-home disability" (a condition that made it difficult to go outside the home), restricting them to services they could receive at home. It is anticipated that supportive services for the elderly will increase locally, as well as nationwide, as the "baby boomer" generation approaches retirement age.

Recommendations - Design and Implement Alternative Housing Products and Development Approaches

The elderly have few alternatives for housing. They must choose between living in traditional single family ownership units, living with relatives and single family and multifamily rental housing or assisted living or nursing homes. Alternative housing products are needed. The following are some alternatives.

- **Senior Housing / Tax Credit Financing** – Commercial buildings in downtown Jonesboro and vacant, obsolete commercial building and school facilities in neighborhoods are currently marginal or non-contributing asset to the community's wellbeing. However, their proximity to major transportation corridors, which serve as car or public transportation routes to various senior services and programming sites, make these buildings an attractive prospect for adaptive re-use as senior housing. Developers such as Keen Development Corporation assisted AU Associates in planning for the conversion of a similar site, the historic Midway School located in Midway, Kentucky, into 28 apartments for the elderly. Renovation work started in early 1998 and was completed in 1999 utilizing LIHTC equity and HOME Funds. The historic renovations were honored by a Preservation Award from the Kentucky Heritage

Council. Keen Development has several other similar projects throughout the state of Massachusetts. <http://www.keencorp.com/School.htm>. The former Aldridge Hotel located in downtown Shawnee, Oklahoma, just 40 miles northeast of Oklahoma City, serves as a recent example of turning an obsolete building in the downtown core into an asset for senior housing utilizing tax credits as part of its financing.

The Aldridge Hotel' conversion to senior housing was initially begun by Central Oklahoma Community Action Agency, was purchased and developed by ERC Properties to create 44 two bedroom and 17 one bedroom apartments for elderly residents. The COCAA will provide services to residents leasing the units for rents ranging from \$475 to \$709 a month. Qualifying residents must earn no more than 60% of the area median income. The cost to remove hazardous materials such as asbestos and the cost of renovation will likely require public subsidies to make the project financially feasible and to provide incentives that entice private developers to undertake such an initiative.

The prototypical design concept on the existing site between Burke, Union, Huntington and Madison in the downtown business district was used in Illustration 27 as an example of existing buildings and vacant land potentially could be retrofitted to become senior housing utilizing a development and finance scheme similar to the Oklahoma project. These buildings and others are currently vacant, underutilized and in some instances obsolete, or being torn down and discontinued for occupancy in terms of their continued use as office or commercial properties. Project financing could potentially be enhanced through the use of Brownfield Economic Development Grants and Section 108 Loan Guaranty financing provided by the City through the use of federal funds.

Illustration 27 is intended to conceptualize the concept and no contact has been made with the existing owners to determine future utilization of this property or their interest in developing senior housing.

Illustration 27: Adaptive Reuse and Renovation of Existing Sites

Site for Senior Tax Credit Housing – Not proposed / for Illustration purposes only

Existing Conditions



○ **Cottage Housing for Elderly Homebuyers** – Cottage housing, or cluster housing as it is sometimes called, provides a smaller unit for the elderly as a homeownership option or as an alternative to continuing ownership of a larger unit that essentially over-houses them or has become too costly to maintain. It should also be considered a viable alternative to a City grant-funded major rehabilitation when an elderly applicant is living in unsafe conditions and the rehabilitation costs exceed the projected value of the completed structure. There may also be applicants who, as a result of limited funding, will have to wait years for assistance because their application is at the end of a long rehabilitation program waiting list.

The Program Objectives:

- Construct cottage housing developments of 8 to 12 housing units built in a cluster housing configuration, sometimes with common walls similar to the walls found in duplex construction.
- Identify eligible elderly participants for the purchase of a cottage. The prospective buyer would either currently own their home, but is over-housed and is willing to purchase the cottage and sell their existing home at market value, or they are in the market to buy an affordable unit.
- Facilitate the existing home sale and the purchase of the Cottage for the participant using the proceeds of the sale of their home.
- Add CDBG contribution to cover the difference between the buyer's equity and the market value of the cottage, if necessary.
- Provide maintenance of the cottage community, partially funded through neighborhood association dues and the non-profit/civic organization's maintenance fund.

Illustration 28 is intended to conceptualize the concept for cottage housing and no contact has been made with the existing owners to determine future utilization of this property or their interest in developing cottage housing.

Cottage Housing Example

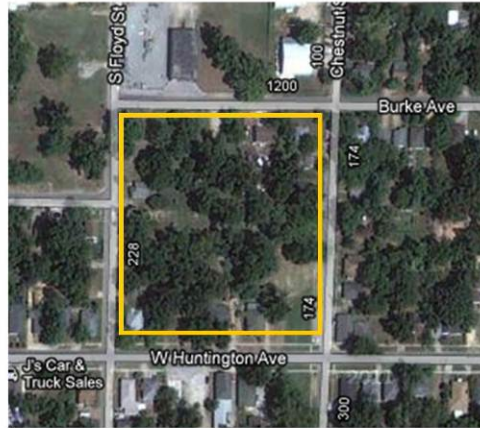
Cottages should be designed to contain 450 to 600 square feet. Other features include front porches with appealing exterior design features, one bedroom, bathroom, den, and kitchen. The site could be laid-out to provide opportunities for community gardens or green space /courtyard in the interior of the development. The entire site should be enclosed with wrought iron fencing with the front of the cottages facing the common green space. Cottages should incorporate Universal Design features and be energy efficient. Construction financing could be provided through CDBG or HOME funding, with additional participation solicited from financial institutions that express an interest in leading the way toward funding progressive housing projects. Principal reduction grant funding should be requested from the Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) through a member bank as part of FHLB's Affordable Housing Grant Program.

A non-profit or religious organization could serve as developer. That entity could also provide ongoing maintenance support after the sale based on a monthly assessment to the residents of the cottage community. A monthly assessment should cover the cost of maintaining the grounds. The maintenance fund provided by these contributions and/or an escrow derived from the sale of the cottages could be used for routine maintenance as well as paint-up and fix-up needs of the housing units in the future.

Cottage or cluster housing as it is sometimes referred to, can also be an alternative housing in areas currently zoned for high density residential but currently developed as single family. Other areas may be in need of medium density home ownership type residential housing as an alternative to medium density or larger scale multifamily rental housing.

Cottage Housing – Prototypical Illustration 28

Site Location – Floyd Street between Burke Avenue and Huntington Street



Site Map



Cottage Housing Examples

1. 12 - 450 to 650 sq. ft Cottages
2. Community Garden
3. Common Area
4. Wrought Iron Fence (no gates)

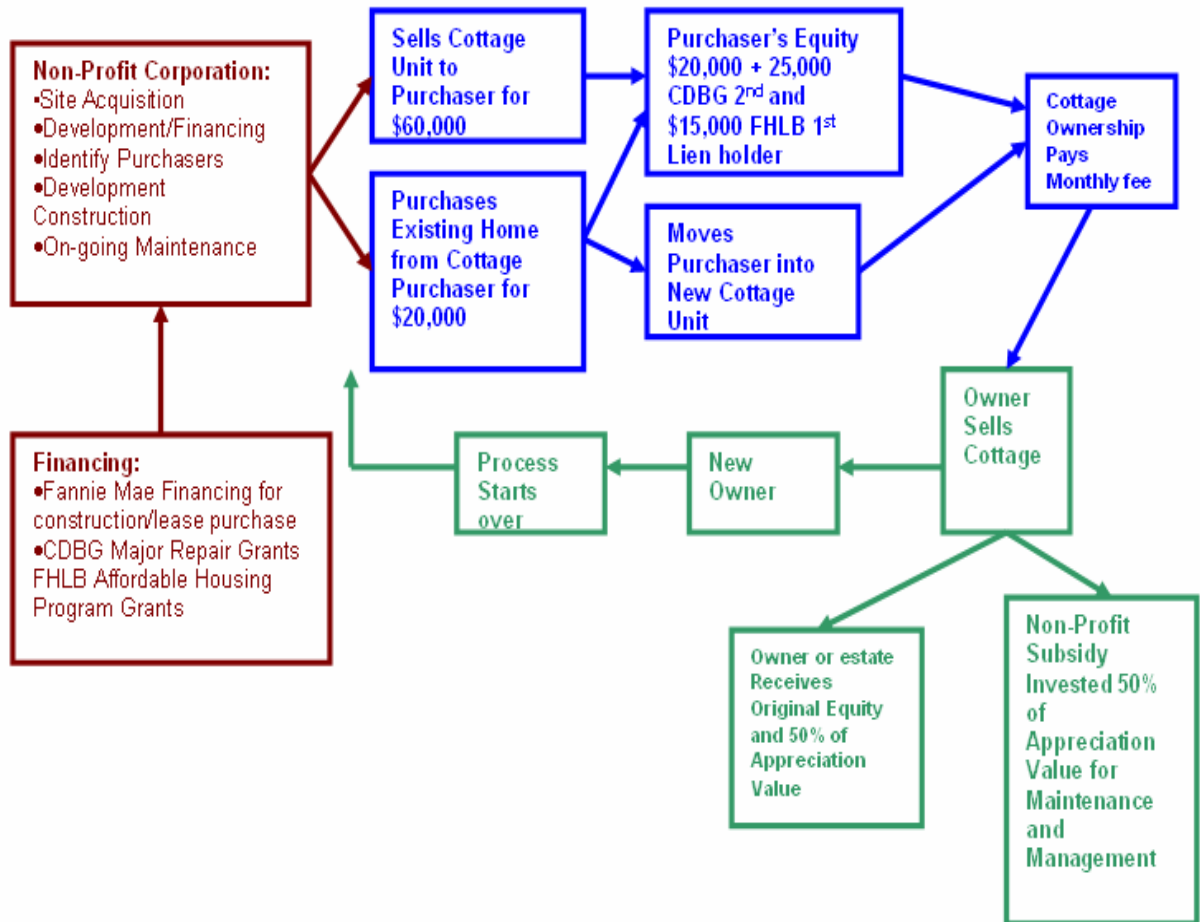
Cottage Housing – Kirkland, WA Example



Cottage Housing – Whidbey Island, WA Example



Illustration 29: This diagram and graphic illustration will provide further details of the transaction concept.



- **Intergenerational and Shared Housing for the Elderly** – Intergenerational or shared housing provides a group residence which houses a single, elderly adult serving as principle custodian for their minor-aged grandchildren or an elderly adult shares the unit with an unrelated single parent with dependent children. They become a structured family unit, sharing common areas, such as kitchen and living room, and having their own private bedroom with private or semi-private bath.

The purpose of intergenerational housing is to provide longer term transitional housing to the individual and families needing supportive services and special assistance as they identify and secure permanent housing. The program is generally sponsored by nonprofit agencies, community development corporations, religious institutions, and others utilizing a variety of funding sources ranging from Federal CDBG funding to foundation grants. Some programs operate as homeless housing, receiving funding under the HUD Super NOFA/Supportive Housing Grant Program and McKinney Act Funding. The concept is to provide a safety network of supportive services that offer opportunities to improve education, job training and employment placement, and social and economic status so that clients may regain self-sufficiency and return to long term rental or homeownership housing.

Through support service networks and partnerships, efforts are made to offer daycare, mental health counseling, and life skills training. In some instances, older residents provide childcare for the working single parent and in return are supported by the single adult with support for shopping and other needs. This program strives to provide a living environment for older adult clients and single parent families that will enable them to develop an alternative “family” network for self-help and independent living.

In some instances, the sponsoring agency provides staff supervision of the group residence to assure maintenance, sanitation, and safety. Staff is generally responsible for the delivery of case management regarding screening new applicants and placing exiting residents in a more permanent living situation. Everyday household chores are the responsibility of each resident. Contractual services, networking relationships, and volunteers are available to assist the residents throughout their stay in counseling, budgeting, programming, and other special needs.

Eligible Program Participants:

- Elderly adults and single-parent families who are homeless or near homeless and are seeking affordable temporary housing options, but not rehabilitation services.
- Residents must be self-sufficient in their own lifestyles, promoting a self-help, self-care, and independent living environment.
- Head of household of a single parent family must be 21 years or older.
- The children of the single parent family must not exceed the ages of 10 for boys and 12 for girls when accepted into the program.
- Typically, the residence is modeled to assist the individual/family through a transition period of their life not to exceed 18 – 24 months.

Typical Services:

- Case-management to assist with immediate personal/family crisis.
- Provision of groceries, clothing, personal toiletries, medicines, and transportation.
- Educational and training classes in nutrition, personal hygiene, and first aid.
- Access to employment placement, job training, and other resources.
- Tutorial assistance to school-age children and adults enrolled in classes.
- Budgeting and financial management classes.
- Assistance in securing permanent housing placement.
- Daycare services provided by social service agencies or by the elderly resident.
- Mental health counseling (individual/family) referrals.

Program Participant Cost:

Recommend some cost sharing by residents of \$100.00 or 30% of their income, whichever is less, per month to be collected by the agency. Single-parent families must be employed, employable, or attending school. The older adult may volunteer or work, if social security or other sources of income are inadequate to meet the minimum rental cost.

Intergenerational Housing Example

Intergenerational housing can also be provided as a multifamily development or campus environment. McAuley Square is an innovative 74-unit affordable housing project designed to serve both elderly and single-parent households. Older residents, young parents, and students share an attractive living complex which opened in Burlington, Vermont on January 22, 2001.

The affordable housing development houses seniors, pregnant teens, and community service scholars. Located near downtown Burlington, the building site is convenient to businesses, schools, health services, and transportation. The McAuley Square development is managed by Cathedral Square.

This project is more than affordable housing, it is a community supported by services from a myriad of social service programs assessable to its residents. The success of this project was largely due to communitywide participation and support for its development. Participants included the Sisters of Mercy donated the land and the development was handled by two non-profits, Cathedral Square Corporation and Housing Vermont. Other organizations playing major roles in the project were:

- Vermont Housing Finance Agency
- Chittenden Bank

- Howard Bank
- Vermont Housing Conservation Board
- City of Burlington (McKinney Grant)
- Burlington Housing Authority
- HUD

Illustration 30 below and 31 on the following page are intended to conceptualize the concept for intergenerational and shared housing and no contact has been made with the existing owners to determine future utilization of this property or their interest in developing cottage housing.

**Intergenerational Housing – Prototypical Illustration 30
Site Location – Between Floyd Street and Puryear Street at Oak Hurst**



Intergenerational or Shared Housing – Project illustration 31



Legend

1. 400 - 500 sft. One-Story Duplex Units – 30 Units
2. 500 – 600 sft. Two-Story Units – 56 Units
3. Community Center and Garden
4. Common Area
5. Wrought Iron Fence (no gates)

Intergenerational Housing Example, Burlington, VT



The McAuley Square development project provides 74 affordable housing units near downtown Burlington, Vermont.



As an innovative intergenerational housing facility, McAuley Square was designed to accommodate a variety of lifestyles.

Aging In Place

A national initiative sponsored by Partners for Livable Communities and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging in the Aging In Place Initiative is a leading authority on aging in place. They collaborate with communities across the country to achieve an overall objective of the initiative is to improve livability for older persons. Through a collaboration with Battle Creek Michigan, in a February 2006 report to the community entitled "Cruising the Age Wave – Where Will All the Boomers Go?", Aging In Place Battle Creek identified 10 issues and 26 recommendations based on input from the City's boomer population. The report revealed that in terms of housing, while many boomers desire to remain in their own homes in retirement, an almost equal number would like to see the development of new housing options. Options mentioned included smaller homes in planned communities, condominium living, and downtown housing opportunities. As discussed in the downtown housing section, both rental and ownership opportunities should be pursued.

Recommendations - The needs to be addressed for this population group can be summarized as follows:

- Fixed incomes, limiting their ability to secure/ maintain housing and pay utilities,
- Medical care/prescription medications, straining their already limited income,
- Special transportation needs due to medical and physical condition,
- Mobility assistance in normal daily activities,
- Assistance in meal preparation, housekeeping and shopping, and
- Physical rehabilitative care due to injury/falls.
- Housing alternatives that addressed their over-housed and maintenance and utility cost burdens.

Healthcare Competitive Advantage

One stable sector of the Jonesboro economy is the health care and health service industry. St. Bernards Healthcare has provided leadership in the formation of Matthews Medical Mile, a consortium of businesses that provide health-related services and are located along a one-mile section of Matthews Avenue. Owners of more than 100 businesses located along the route and within a block or so on either side of Matthews Avenue have joined together to promote the Matthews Medical Mile as the premiere destination for healthcare in Northeast Arkansas and Southeast Missouri.

The area already is a destination for healthcare services and goods, and has been for a very long time. Many businesses that fall into the healthcare sector of the economy are located along Matthews Medical Mile. Some have been there for decades, while some are newcomers to the area. The business with the longest tenure is St. Bernards. It has been there for 110 years. The Matthews Medical Mile is distinctive in several ways, most notable, its' visual identifiers. One of the things that mark this corridor as unique is that the curbing is painted burgundy.

Throughout the City of Jonesboro, we noted new development of nursing home and assisted-living facility. Only a short drive separates these sites from the Jonesboro Medical Mile, the veteran's medical facility, and other doctor's offices. These and other new developments are making Jonesboro known as a healthcare hub and elderly housing hub in the state. Jonesboro should capitalize on this trend and ensure that housing can accommodate the needs of seniors and the staff of these facilities.

Universal Design

One way to impact housing accessibility is the adoption of a Universal Design Ordinance, requiring developers to incorporate accessibility provisions into all or a certain percentage of new housing units. With the aging population, the need

for accessible housing will be more and more an issue. The City should investigate the feasibility of adopting a Universal Design Ordinance to guarantee that future development will provide a ready supply of accessible housing, reducing the cost of accessibility through incorporation into development costs, rather than through adaptation after the fact. Converting a home that was built according to standard (non-accessible) practices to allow room to maneuver a wheelchair can be very expensive, involving widening doorways and rebuilding bathrooms. Cost estimates of incorporating universal design into new construction show the addition of \$370 to \$670 per unit, compared to \$3,300 to \$5,300 for remodeling to meet the same accessibility provisions. A Universal Design Ordinance is an important step toward providing appropriate housing for a range of citizens.

As Jonesboro's population ages, demands in the marketplace for accessible housing are going to increase. Universal Design features will help create more accessible homes for people of all ages. Homebuilders in Jonesboro can also lower the cost of converting a home to be fully wheelchair accessible by planning their construction process to anticipate the possibility of these future conversions. Doorways can be framed with longer headers to allow wider doors to be installed easily, if and when needed. Blocking for safety bars can be installed in walls for showers and toilets, eliminating the need to tear the wall up to install blocking later. Obstacles can be avoided, in the design and construction process, to eliminate the need for ramps. The costs associated with planning for the eventual conversion to accessibility are relatively minor, especially when compared to the cost of retrofitting a home where no provisions for accessibility were made.

Future housing units need to be developed to house persons with disabilities. While needs may be adequately addressed currently, future demand should be anticipated and preparations should be made to expand disability housing opportunities and to explore new housing models that have been adapted to address the need of all sectors of the special needs housing community.

Alternative Housing Products, Programs and Financing

Single family housing and multifamily housing alternatives must mirror both the cost of housing and the contemporary products and choices of a diverse housing market. Alternatives to traditional single family and multifamily designs and products and lower cost options other than mobile homes must be explored and considered.

Modular Housing as an alternative lower cost housing product – We now face a crisis of affordability in the housing industry. We are having difficulty delivering high-performance and durable buildings at an affordable cost. This has vast societal consequences from homelessness to compromised living standards and the inefficient use of resources. Most importantly, it has added to the difficulty of making homeownership a reality. Alternative lower cost housing products must be considered. Modular housing is fast becoming a cost effective alternative to traditional on site construction. The components of the building are constructed in a factory and transported and assembled on the lot. These industrialized building offers two primary advantages: predictability and time required for construction. Unlike mobile homes, each modular housing building is required to meet local and national building codes.

In Shreveport, Louisiana, nonprofit development organizations are utilizing modular housing as a means of lowering the purchase price of new housing, while replicating the architectural style of the existing neighborhood and meeting local building code requirements as well. On the following page is an illustration of several replacement infill housing units being constructed on vacant lots in the Queensborough Neighborhood in Shreveport. These units feature siding as opposed to traditional brick construction and offer the residents porches similar to those found on the units currently in the neighborhood.

These types of units could provide alternative development opportunities when constructing affordable housing in established areas and Conservation Districts.

Modular Housing – Project Illustration 32



Modular Housing

1. Located in Shreveport Louisiana
2. Designed to architecturally replicated existing neighborhood housing
3. Purchase price \$80,000 to \$110,000
4. Each unit receives \$30,000 subsidy for principle reduction, down payment and Closing cost from City HOME Funds and Federal Home Loan Bank Grant

Lease / Purchase — Lease/purchase is another option for home buyers seeking to qualify for mortgage financing. A viable tool for cash-poor, but gainfully employed households, lease/purchase programs traditionally allow you to rent a home for some preset period of time with a portion of the rental payment going toward the down-payment to help purchase the rented property. Freddie Mac's offers a program that allows a buyer to make rental payments virtually equal to the mortgage payments they will eventually pay on a loan they can assume after several years of adequate credit and loan payment behavior. Fannie Mae offers a similar product.

Lease Purchase Housing Example

Shreveport, Louisiana Lease/Purchase Program – The City of Shreveport recently collaborated with Federal Home Loan Bank, Fannie Mae and local banks to build Shepherd Place, a 22 unit single-family, new construction and gated subdivision in northwest Shreveport. Illustration 6 highlights the subdivision which features both one story and two story designs at a purchase price of \$100,000 to \$130,000. Families receive up to \$30,000 in subsidies for principal reduction, down payment and closing cost and have up to three (3) years, depending on their individual circumstances, to repair credit and to qualify for the permanent mortgage. If applicants are unable to qualify at the end of the specified period, they will be dropped from the program and any accumulated contributions toward closing cost and down-payments will be forfeited. The City of Shreveport Community Development Department administers the program and is responsible for qualifying applicants, administering a lease-purchase contract, collecting rents, maintenance, and ultimately closing the permanent mortgage. Non-refundable administrative and maintenance fees are charged to the applicants to pay for program administration, home maintenance, and other activities. Program funds also accumulate from a portion of the rents paid by those who fail to qualify for permanent mortgages and supplemental support from Fannie Mae.

Illustration 33: Shepherd Place Subdivision – Shreveport, LA

Lease Purchase Financing Example



Lease Purchase Housing

1. Located in Shreveport Louisiana
2. Single-Family Lease Purchase and Gated Community
3. Purchase price \$100,000 to 130,000
4. Each unit receives \$30,000 subsidy for principle reduction, down payment and Closing cost from City HOME Funds and Federal Home Loan Bank Grant
5. Purchaser has up to 3 years to qualify for permanent financed mortgage

Illustration 34: Shepherd Place Subdivision – Shreveport, LA
Lease Purchase exterior and Interior of Lease Purchase Units



Employer Assisted Housing - The City should work with the Chamber of Commerce and local employers to market Employer Assisted Housing (EAH) as a means of creating homeownership opportunities for the working poor. It is vital that we increase awareness among major employers that some wage levels are not adequate for people to enter into homeownership, without down-payment and other assistance. While the City offers financial assistance to address this need using its federal entitlement funds, it only impacts a small percentage of those in need of assistance. The City should coordinate with major employers and lenders to design and aid firms in the implementation of Employer-Assisted Housing (EAH) programs, encouraging employers to work with employees in their efforts to purchase housing.

Employer-Assisted Housing programs benefit employers, employees, and the community. Employers benefit through greater employee retention. Employees receive aid to move into home-ownership. Ultimately, communities benefit through investment in the neighborhoods where the employers and employees are located. The most common benefits provided by employers are grants, forgivable loans, deferred or repayable loans, matched savings, interest-rate buy downs, shared appreciation, and home-buyer education (provided by an employer-funded counseling agency). Successful EAH programs use a combination of some of the benefits listed above. One program that has met with success was developed by Fannie Mae, which not only has their own EAH program, but also helps employers implement EAH programs. Fannie Mae's EAH program has made it possible for 2,200 of its employees to become homeowners. Seventy-six (76%) percent of all Fannie Mae employees own their own homes, compared with a national average of sixty eight (68%) percent.

Police Officer Housing Program - Cities have found that the presence of a police officer in a neighborhood often helps in efforts to reduce crime. Toward that end, programs have been implemented around the nation to encourage home purchases by sworn officers. Fannie Mae Corp. and the U.S. Department

of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) have both been active in promoting these programs. Example programs include the Fannie Mae program in Orlando, Florida which offers a low-interest mortgage loan and up to \$7,500 in down payment assistance for eligible participants. Participants can earn up to 120 percent of the area median income and must complete a homebuyer training program.

HUD operates a similar program called the Officer Next Door Program that utilizes HUD's foreclosure inventory. Properties are listed on HUD's home sale website and eligible officers can bid on designated homes. Homes sell to officers for half the listed price of the home. Eligible homes must be in a designated revitalization area, which cities can create through their Consolidated Plan process. HUD can provide a listing of homes on their foreclosure list which are located in the zip codes that include the study area and potential neighborhoods where the program could be implemented. A program operated in Orlando, Florida and New Haven, Connecticut has been cited as best practices by HUD. HUD also conducted a limited study in 2002 to measure the programmatic impact on crime in Rialto, California and Spokane, Washington. While the study did not provide statistical evidence of a direct correlation to reduction in crime, certainly overall crime in the areas went down and perceptions of crime by local residents improved measurable.

A similar local program could be created with funding from the City's Community Development Block Grant Program or with private funding from area foundations or businesses. The program would offer incentives to sworn officers looking to purchase a home. These incentives should include a mortgage loan with a below market interest rate and some form of down-payment or closing cost assistance. Alternatively, this program could be administered by a local lending institution or in conjunction with a City of Jonesboro EAH program offered to all city employees.

Increase Resources available for Housing Programs

Cultivate Greater Involvement of the Faith-Based Community - The community has a number of churches and religious institutions that have had some success in helping to improve the neighborhood that surround them. However, these entities have an opportunity for greater involvement. Similar organizations have formed community development corporations, CDC's operating in the community, and directly involved in the development of affordable housing. There is also an opportunity to coordinate the efforts of these organizations to make a more visible impact on volunteer projects, such as home repair for the elderly. The potential volunteer labor from these organizations could greatly increase the number of rehabilitated units each year and insure that the resources are channeled to the community activities and homeowners with priority needs in a timely manner. Many of those persons in need are members of local congregations.

Non Profit and Faith Based Capacity Building Initiatives - The limited number of non profit partners and certified Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDO) and level of affordable housing production by those organizations underscores the need for an organized capacity building program aimed at strengthening and expanding the role of nonprofit organizations in the provision of affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization. Faith based organizations represent an untapped resource in the community. If encouraged and given access to training, many might opt to participate and form nonprofit arms of their organizations to undertake affordable housing and neighborhood stabilization as part of their mission. Organizations vary both in their level of interest and capacity to enter the development process and therefore require either a basic or beginner track and/or a more progressive track for organizations that want to immediately address increasing capacity. The following provides an outline for a dual track approach to such a capacity building program.

The Basic Track - This track provides an organizational development and basic construction management seminars. Organizations would be solicited for acceptance into the capacity building program according to a set group of requirements. The HOME CHDO guidelines would provide a good starting point for the requirements. Once accepted into the program, participants would be evaluated to determine their level of competence in both business management and housing development.

The Basic Track would provide a series of seminars and training sessions on basic business management and organization topics. Among those topics would be Board Development, Fund Raising, Contract Management, Business Plan Development, Personnel Management, 501 c(3) certification, and Accounting Systems. A second series of topics would cover development activities such as Construction Management, Using Tax Credits, and Federal Housing Programs.

Participants would also be expected to participate in discussion group where Executive Directors and key personnel meet to exchange ideas on problems that they have experienced in the development process. These meetings would initially be moderated by an individual with experience in nonprofit management and housing development. Eventually, leadership of the discussion group should be assumed by a committee of participants.

The Basic Track would be six to twelve months. Participants would be expected to complete a business plan and identify a project plan for housing development during that period.

The Advanced Track - The Advanced Track will be structured to address the needs of individual organizations whose evaluation has shown them to be beyond the level of a startup entity or first time/limited in their capacity affordable production nonprofit developer. This track will utilize the above mentioned activities used in the basic track, where needed, but will rely on direct technical

assistance to provide more intensive and hands on training in understanding the development process and enhancing their production. For instance, an organization working to develop a multifamily project may require the assistance of a consultant that can help structure a financial package to see the project through construction and into a permanent loan package. Or perhaps they need assistance with a Low Income Housing Tax Credit application. Whatever the specific needs of the organization, the program should provide a flexible delivery mechanism that can mold support to those needs. Elements of this track should be available to participants in the Basic Track as they progress and their workload requires such assistance.

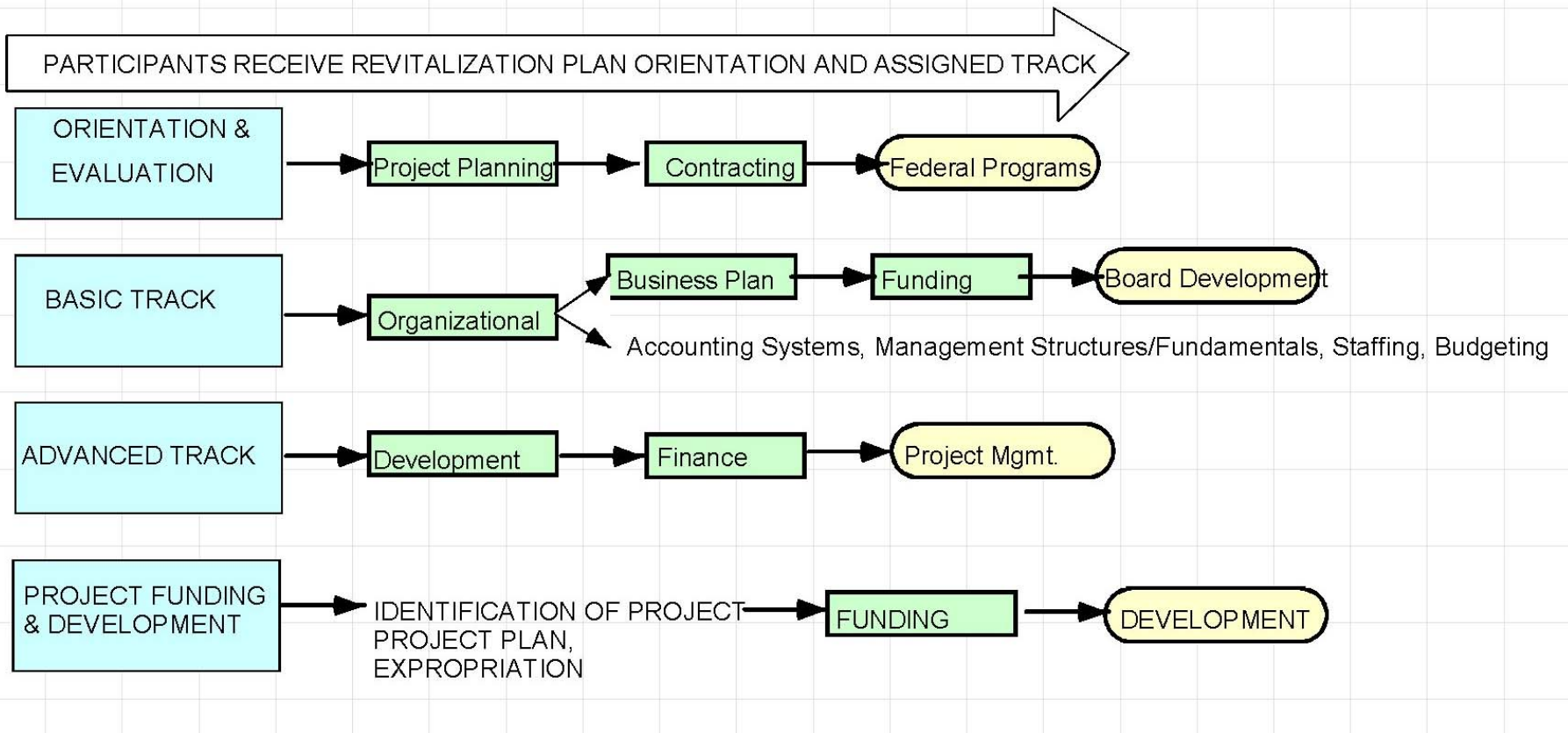
The Advanced Track would span one year. Participants would be expected to at minimum, to complete a project feasibility study and predevelopment budget, submit applications for project funding and option development parcels during that time frame.

Sources of Assistance - Several national nonprofit organizations provide assistance to local nonprofits. The Enterprise Foundation and LISC are two such organizations. Each organization has local offices across the United States that offer assistance to affordable housing providers. Additionally, there are a number of consultants around the country that offer their services for such programs. Some already have prepackaged seminars available that could fit into a program of capacity building. Other resources include corporate leaders, HUD staff, local real estate professionals, and retired business persons.

Funding - Funding for the Capacity Building Program could be provided through the CHDO Set-Aside from the HOME Program. Up to five percent of the HOME entitlement can be used for this purpose.

Project Priority - Projects initiated through the Capacity Building Program should be given funding priority for CDBG or HOME funds if the project sponsor has

Illustration 35: Nonprofit and Faith Based Capacity Building Program



Model Block Planning and Targeting Resources - Resource targeting utilizing the model block concept presents a tremendous opportunity to diminish the rapidly spreading blight and neighborhood decline negatively affecting numerous neighborhoods throughout the city. The distribution of decline is widespread and in many instances highly concentrated in specific sectors of the city such as the designated target areas.

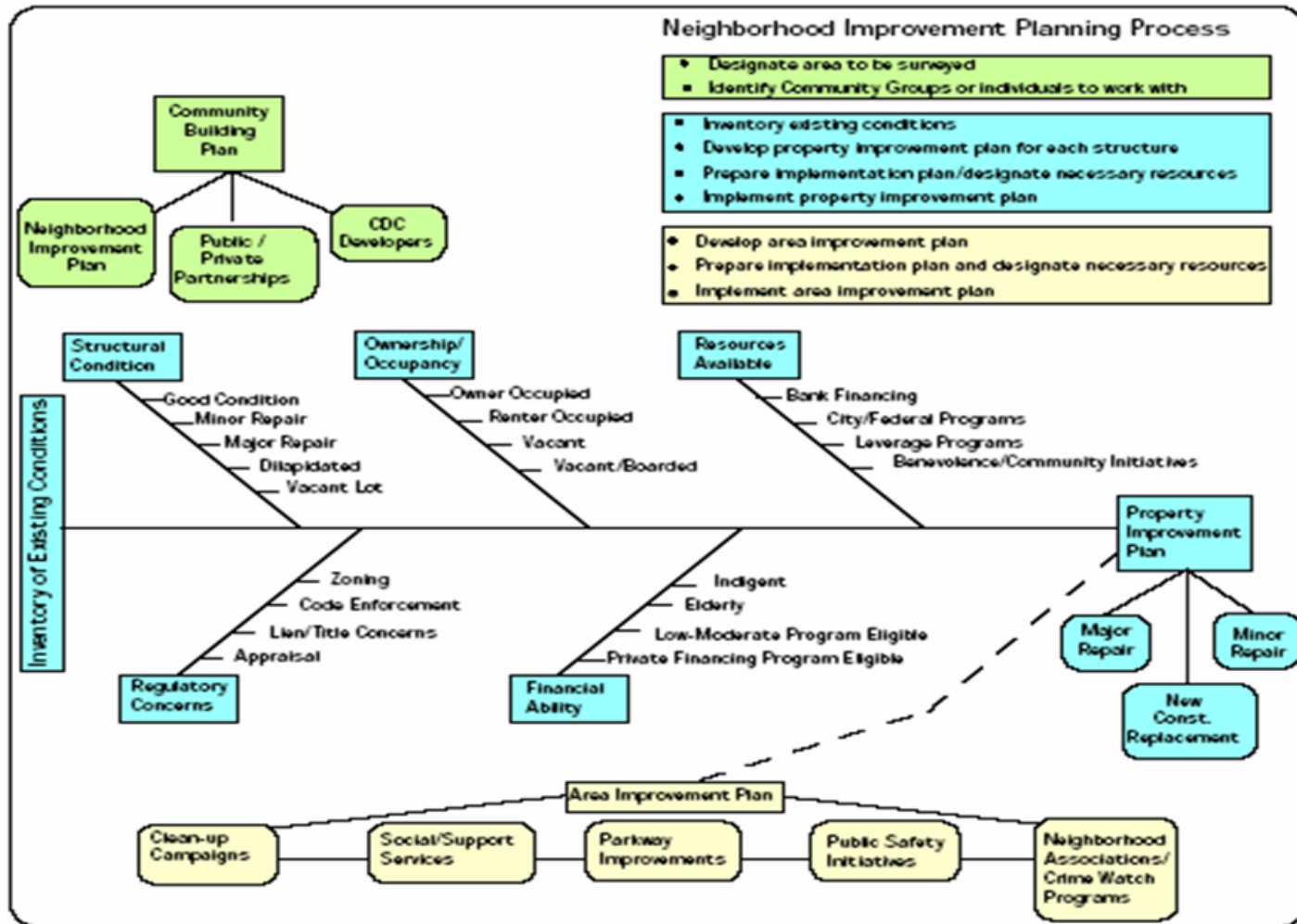
- A **Community Building Plan** is developed focusing on bringing about neighborhood revitalization by implementing a neighborhood improvement plan with targeted city resources combined with public-private and neighborhood partnerships involving resident, community development organizations, financial institutions, educational institutions, and other organizations with direct interest in the well being of the community. The community building plan should be focused, holistic, and comprehensively administered.
- Resource targeting should include three basic components. First designation of manageable geographical areas as a target neighborhood for which the City has established programmatic goals and reserved associated financial and city service resources to respond comprehensively, to its revitalization needs.
- Second development of a model block planning effort should address the issues affecting revitalization and offers a prescriptive implementation program for solving those issues. A **Neighborhood Improvement Plan** should be developed in conjunction with the community stakeholders and those who will actively participate in the implementation process. Select city departments and other agencies will form an Action Coordination Team (ACT) to assess existing conditions of the designated target area to determine the appropriate treatment required to renew the model block area. The ACT need

assessments will be used as a basis for determining budget allocations and other resource needs. The Community Development Office will be primarily responsible for program planning, administration and inter-department coordination. A neighborhood action plan and implementation schedule will be developed for each designated target area, along with a multi-year funding plan.

- Third, resource targeting must recognize that success in community rebuilding requires a commitment from the community itself to assist government in building stronger neighborhoods. An **Area Improvement Plan** will be developed and implemented under the community's leadership, through its active participation in the planning and implementation phases, and as a result, will increase community spirit, confidence and neighborhood identity. The primary partners and foundation builders in the area improvement planning and implementation process are the residents themselves. The viability and long term success of the targeting approach is contingent on the residents' willingness and capacity to participate in self help initiatives, neighborhood improvement and social and community services projects and support public safety initiatives.

The following graphic in Illustration 36 further details the process.

Illustration 36: Model Block Planning and Resource Targeting



CDFI Funding - Funding sources such as U. S. Department of Treasury Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Program and Federal Home Loan Bank's Affordable Housing Program should be explored to provide additional funding or to provide technical assistance to in support of the development of affordable housing. Both entities offer funding for affordable housing as well as economic development.

The CDFI Fund targets housing and economic revitalization by promoting access to capital and local economic growth in the following ways:

- The CDFI Program provides direct investment that pays for CDFI staff training and provides funding for project equity, loans, investments, financial services, and technical assistance to underserved populations and communities;
- The New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Program provides an allocation of tax credits to Community Development Entities (CDEs) which enable them to attract investment from the private-sector and reinvest in low-income communities; and
- The Bank Enterprise Award (BEA) Program provides an incentive to banks to invest in their communities and in other CDFIs.

While the CDFI Fund does not make loans directly to individuals for finance specific projects, it provides financing to certified organizations that are knowledgeable of their communities. Certification as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) allows organizations to participate in the Financial Assistance (FA) Component, Technical Assistance (TA) Component, and NAI Component under the CDFI Fund Program and to obtain funding through the BEA Program. Certification as a CDE allows organizations to participate, directly or indirectly, in the NMTC Program. If an organization is certified as a CDFI it

may register and automatically qualify as a CDE. These funds can be used in conjunction with the City's CDBG and HOME program funds for housing and economic development activities, such as technical Assistance to CDC's, small business loans, storefront renovation/design assistance, signage, streetscapes, site improvements, and off-street parking. In addition to its Affordable Housing Program, the Federal Home Loan Bank has the Economic Development Advance (EDA) Program and Community Investment Program (CIP) that provide assistance to eligible economic development activities.

Brownfield Economic Development Initiative Grant and Section 108 Loan Guaranty Funding - The adaptive re-use and redevelopment of commercial and industrial building along commercial corridors and abandon school facilities may require grant funding and public subsidies to make the projects financially feasible and to mediate the obsolete and contaminated land and buildings as they currently exist. Federally funded programs such as Brownfield Economic Development Initiative (BEDI) grants can enhance the security or improve the viability of a project financed with private financing. BEDI grants have also been utilized in conjunction with Section 108 guaranteed loan authority which is another possible source of public financing. Section 108 is the loan guarantee provision of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program operated by the U.S. Department of HUD. Section 108 provides entitlement communities with a source of financing for economic development, housing rehabilitation, public facilities and large scale physical development projects. Although BEDI funds require a separate application to HUD in addition to an application for Section 108 funding, the two applications are encouraged to be submitted for collective HUD consideration. If approved, BEDI funds may be used for any eligible activities under the Section 108 Loan Guarantee program.

The purpose of BEDI funds is to minimize the potential loss of future CDBG allocations used to secure Section 108 loan guarantees:

- By strengthening the economic feasibility of the projects financed with Section 108 funds (increasing the probability that the project will generate enough cash to repay the guaranteed loan);
- By directly enhancing the security of the guaranteed loan; or
- Through combination of these or other risk mitigation techniques.

HUD intends BEDI and Section 108 funds to finance projects and activities that will provide near-term results and measurable economic benefits, such as job creation and increases in the local tax base. BEDI funds can support a wide variety of activities. For example, the City of Chattanooga may use BEDI fund to address site remediation costs or use a combination of Section 108 and BEDI funds to acquire an eligible property and convey the site to a private sector party at a discounted price from its purchase price. The redevelopment focus for BEDI-assisted projects is prompted by the need to provide additional security for the Section 108 loan guarantee beyond the pledge of CDBG funds.

There are certain limitations on the use of BEDI grants and Section 108 funds. BEDI funds may not immediately repay the principle of a loan guarantee under Section 108. BEDI funds shall not be used to provide public or private sector entities with funding to remediate contamination caused by their actions. Applicants may not propose sites listed or proposed for listing on EPA's National Priority List (NPL); sites subject to unilateral administrative orders, court orders, administrative on consent, or judicial consent decrees, and facilities that are subject to the jurisdiction, custody, or control of the federal government. Further, applicant cities are cautioned against proposing projects on sites where the nature and degree of environmental contamination is not well-quantified or are the subject of on-going litigation or environmental enforcement action. A number of the building sited in our report and used in our illustrations would appear to be eligible based on these criteria.

Economic Development and Community Projects that re-energize people and cultivate reinvestment

Recruiting industries providing jobs that match local workforce demographics - The City and Chamber of Commerce should continue to work on expanding job opportunities through the recruitment of corporations, the provision of incentives for local corporations seeking expansion opportunities, assistance with the preparation of small business loan applications, and other activities aimed at reducing unemployment and expanding the base of higher income jobs. A particular emphasis should be to recruit jobs that best mirror the job skills and education levels of those populations in the target areas and most in need of jobs. For Jonesboro, this means jobs that support persons with high school education, GED's and in some instances, community college or technical training. These persons are evident in the workforce demographics and in need of jobs paying minimum wage to moderate hourly wages. The City should also continue to support agencies that provide workforce development programs and continuing education courses to increase the educational level and job skills of residents. The goal should be to increase the GED, high school graduation, technical training, and college matriculation rates among residents. This will help in the recruitment of industry such as "call centers", clerical and manufacturing jobs. Call centers and customer service centers where employees are recruited to process sales or provide customer service support for various industries, have become more and more attracted to areas with similar demographics to that of Jonesboro. The combination of lower priced land, government incentives for relocation and the workforce to support their industries, have all become incentives in recent years.

The Aflac Insurance Company is a great example of a "call center operation" that relocated to a smaller city, and is making a difference by dramatically expanding employment in Columbus, Georgia for persons from similar demographic groups to those most in need of jobs in Carrollton. In 1998, Aflac opened its Computer

Service Center housing 600 employees. In 2001, the company opened its Corporate Ridge office, a 104-acre development housing the company's claim processing and call center operations. Aflac recently completed a new phase of the expansion, slated for completion in 2007, which will add 90,000 square feet to the existing Paul S. Amos Corporate Ridge campus building located in Columbus. Once all the phases of the expansion are complete, Aflac will have built 340,000 square feet of additional office space for a total of more than one million square feet of office space in Columbus. The City of Columbus provided an incentive package including tax abatement and land assembly and acquisition subsidies through the use of their federal grant funds.

We recommend that the City, in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, become more active in supporting recruiting industries that match the demographics of the populations most unemployed, as a means of improving poverty rates, incomes and home ownership rates in the City. The City should evaluate providing similar incentives to those used by other communities to achieve this goal. For example, the City of Columbus Georgia used Section 108 Loan Guaranty Funds and Tax abatement to leverage Aflac's relocation. Recruiting such industries can assist in increasing the City's tax base while serving to provide the necessary income for more persons to achieve home ownership.

Corporate Call Centers - Recruitment of a corporate call center or customer services/support operation should be given strong consideration for similar properties in downtown. Buildings in downtown could be adaptively reused as a corporate job center, and transformed into important economic development asset for the area. The transformation of such sites will not only change the appearance of the corridors, but can bring much needed jobs to the area. Redeployment of these buildings will be a key to insuring that the workforce and other patrons are available to support retail, housing and restaurants.

Illustration 37 on the following page conceptually demonstrates through photo imaging how the building on the northwest corner of Washington Avenue and Main Street could be adaptively reused for a call center operation. This building, which formerly served as the downtown headquarters of NationsBank is currently vacant. However it exemplifies the kind of buildings that are available along commercial corridors that are underutilized and could potentially house such uses. Redeployment of these buildings will be a key to insuring that the workforce and other patrons are available to support new retail and restaurants.

Illustration 37 is intended to conceptualize the concept for adaptive reuse of existing building for commercial office or campus style call center operations in a downtown area. There has been no contact made between the City and the Planning team with the existing owners to determine future utilization of this property or their interest in developing or the future sale of this property.

The Capital One signage featured in our prototypical conceptual illustration is intended as an example of call cent operations that range from credit card to auto and insurance operations, and is in no way an endorsement of one company.

**Illustration 31: Call Center Employment Opportunities – Former NationsBank Building
Northwest corner of Main Street and Washington Avenue**

- **Recruiting jobs that match the demographics of the workforce**
- **Job Training aimed at increasing the skilled labor for jobs in call centers and customer service**



Business Attraction Program - A business attraction program is designed to attract new businesses and better inform developers about retail opportunities in the neighborhood. The local CDCs can act as the information hub for retail development opportunities in the community and build relationships with retailers, real estate brokers, and developers engaged in retail development. Features of the program should include:

- A one-stop shop that provides information about retail opportunities within the neighborhoods, market demands, financial resources, support to new businesses, and assistance with navigating the City's development regulations.
- Specific marketing materials which target different types of businesses. For example, a marketing brochure for restaurants could promote the neighborhood's diversity theme and match developers with vacant lots suitable for restaurant development.
- Outreach to commercial real estate professionals, particularly those that have relationships with retailers.
- Involvement in events and trade show activities for retail associations and organizations, such as the International Council of Shopping Centers, International Economic Development Council, and National Retail Association.
- Work with the Local Chamber of Commerce to host local and national retailers during their visits to Jonesboro to promote opportunities available along the target areas' commercial corridors.
- Personal visits to various businesses and companies to share the marketing materials and business attraction initiatives.

- A marketing media campaign aimed at increasing awareness of the neighborhood and its premier retail locations. The campaign may include public service announcements/ advertisements on television, radio, a website, flyers, etc.

Business Incubator Program - The creation of a business incubator can help to establish new businesses in the community. The business incubator assists new business start-ups by providing a variety of targeted resources which may include lease space, administrative assistance, business plan development, business counseling, and an array of other technical assistance workshops aimed at producing knowledgeable entrepreneurs.

The goal of a business incubator is to develop future financially viable and self-sustaining businesses. Hopefully, these businesses, upon graduation from the incubator program, will locate in the target area commercial corridors or similar sites with the potential to create jobs for neighborhood residents, bring more capital into the community, and become a partner in the revitalization of the neighborhood. To be a successful business incubator, the City and other organizations creating the incubator program must have a clearly defined strategy for achieving positive business results. The business incubator should focus on small businesses that will provide needed goods and services to the community.

Steps for developing a community-based business incubator:

- The City and/or local CDCs identify businesses desired for participation in the program.
- Specific goals created for business development for the incubator.
- Sponsors must solicit program participants/ business operators that offer

the types of goods and services desired under the program.

- A timeline should be established to get businesses started and operating.
- Private funding and grant support such as CDFI funds should be sought to help provide incentives to attract businesses, to provide technical assistance for the program and for supplemental operating support for the business incubator operation.
- A program should be designed to match new business owners with business mentors to help monitor progress and success.
- Partnerships should be established with schools to provide technical assistance to business owners.

Of primary importance in the incubator concept is the availability of technical assistance for business owners. Office space for tenants could be found in an underutilized commercial buildings located in the commercial corridors or vacant buildings/facilities in the community. Once a facility is located it will probably require some rehabilitation or reconfiguration to meet the needs of the incubator concept.

Youth Programming Offered by Senior Citizens, Religious and Civic Organizations - Some neighborhood residents pointed out the need for professional development and life skills programs for youth in the community, including basic skill enhancement such as computer literacy and GED training, and programs that provide tutoring, job shadowing, and apprenticeships from business persons. Retirees could help improve job opportunities for youth by sponsoring mentoring programs that teach etiquette, table setting, dressing for success, public speaking and other life skills that could be provided to youth in conjunction with recreation programs for elderly persons. Collaborative efforts

between civic and business organizations could be encouraged to create programs that provide training to area youth and to organize youth activities at local churches and community centers.

Increased Vocational Training through public - private partnerships – The City should work with the private sector to develop programs aimed at linking vocational training and jobs with person working to increase their education attainment to a high school diploma level or acquire basic skills, and youth, and ex-offenders in need of employment opportunities. The following are example programs and approaches that have worked successfully in other communities.

- Pittsburg based Manchester Bidwell Project – operates educational and job training programs technology, culinary, horticulture and medical fields for disadvantaged youth.
- State of Louisiana – Louisiana Workforce Commission dual enrollment, work-based learning, and industry based certification programs in web design, nursing, automobile technology and other field.
- Ex-offender programs offering tax and procurement incentives to businesses that train and employ ex-offenders. Government contracting policies should consider offender training and employment in their criteria for procuring goods and services. For example, city criteria for awarding dry cleaning contracts for city uniform or janitorial contracts for public building could include considered.

Collaboration with the Arkansas State University on Revitalization

Marketing and Branding Campaign for Johnson Avenue – Johnson Avenue needs physical improvements and branding in order to create greater marketability of the neighborhoods north and south of Johnson Avenue and the commercial uses along the corridor. The corridor's brand should describe to the customer or visitor what to expect along the corridor and beyond and provide an introduction to the neighborhoods' spirit. Branding themes should be implemented in streetscape and urban design. Banners, signs, street furniture, art, and street sign toppers all help to emphasize the identity of the corridor. We recommend a collaborative effort between the City, community, and Arkansas State University Business School and its student, in developing a branding and marketing campaign.

2012 HUD Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant - The City of Jonesboro, in conjunction with the Housing Authority of Jonesboro, and Arkansas State University should consider applying for 2012 a HUD Choice Neighborhood Planning Grant. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development allocates annually funding. HUD announced plans to allocate \$3.6 million in Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants in 2011 to assist in the transformation, rehabilitation and preservation of public housing and privately owned HUD-assisted housing, and surrounding distressed neighborhoods. A total of \$100 million was included in the final Continuing Resolution of 2011 Appropriation Bill for HOPE VI, which included the Choice Neighborhood Planning Grants funding. We have described an area adjacent to the university between Johnson Avenue and Belt earlier in this report. New and rehabilitated Single family housing is needed and current marginal multifamily could be replaced with new multifamily and rental housing similar to the recently built Grove Apartments, serving the needs of the student population.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) – one of the major issues identified by both resident and the university community was the need to address crime and the perception of crime in and around the university. The area referred to as a potential candidate for the HUD Choice neighborhood grant was frequently referenced during the planning process. We recommend a collaboration or commission involving the City, Arkansas State University, and JURHA are designated to examine ways to improve crime prevention, safety and the perception of crime in the area.

The CPTED concept could be explored by the City Police department and University as one means of implementing this recommendation. CPTED is based on the premise that "The proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear of crime and incidence of crime, and to an improvement in quality of life." CPTED strategies are ideal for Law Enforcement Officers, City Planners, City Managers, City Council Members, Architects, Security Consultants, Educators or anyone involved in designing neighborhoods, schools, downtowns, buildings, or revitalization efforts. It is an effective way of fighting crime and promoting business. Example of what types of activities or regulatory changes could be used or offered in the implementation of CPTED programs is listed below.

- Improved signage
- Providing education on Human Behavior and CPTED concepts
- Barriers – Real vs. Symbolic/Fencing, Landscaping, & Interior Walls
- Lighting For Safety
- Planning, Zoning, and CPTED
- Writing a CPTED Ordinance/Overlay Districts
- Traffic and signals
- Crosswalks and protected crossings