

# Georgia Initiative for Community Housing:

Building Local Support and Capacity for Affordable Housing



March 27, 2019

Georgia Planning Association Spring Conference

# Panelists



- Jermaine Durham, University of Georgia
- Joe Fretwell, Georgia Dept. of Community Affairs
- Jordan Hubbard, City of Cedartown
- Sadie Krawczyk, City of Monroe

# What is GICH?

- Three-year technical assistance and capacity building program for communities engaging in local housing planning efforts
- **Main goal: Develop and implement Housing Work Plan**
- 2 Retreats per year for 3 years:
  - Facilitated work sessions
  - Expert presentations
  - Host city tours
  - Networking and idea sharing
- Since 2004, DCA has invested more than \$361 million across 71 GICH communities

# Partnerships define GICH Success

- At the **local** level, GICH teams rely on unique partnerships among government, private sector, education, real estate, regional commission, and community leaders
- At the **organizational** level, administrating agencies collaborate to recruit teams, facilitate local planning, and provide technical or financial support as needed

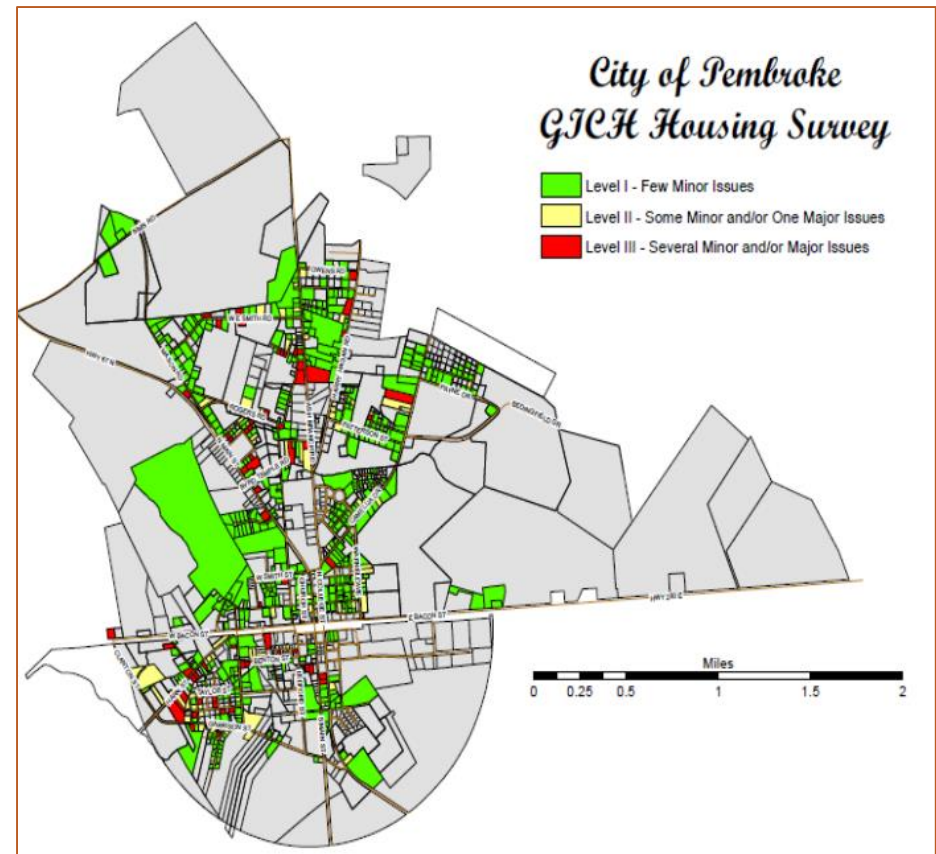


Financial Planning, Housing  
& Consumer Economics  
*College of Family and Consumer Sciences*  
Housing and Demographics Research Center  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



# GICH has helped communities with...

- ❑ Code Enforcement
- ❑ Urban Redevelopment
- ❑ Housing Assessments
- ❑ Land Bank Authorities
- ❑ Heir Properties
- ❑ Fair Housing
- ❑ Substandard housing
- ❑ Neighborhood Revitalization
- ❑ Housing Tax Credits
- ❑ Public Engagement and Education



Source: City of Pembroke Comprehensive  
Plan Update 2018-2028

# How to Participate in GICH

1. Assemble a community housing team
2. Begin to identify housing needs
3. Allocate money for team travel expenses
4. Submit a letter of intent in July followed by formal application in August



# Spotlight Monroe

*“It has been very transformational for us a city because it has changed the way we talk about housing, neighborhoods, and our challenges in these areas. I think we are in a much better place than 3 years ago, but it is clear we still have work ahead. Our housing expo is this Saturday [10/10/18], which is one of the most valuable developments that came from our GICH efforts.”* - Sadie Krawczyk, Economic Development Specialist, City of Monroe (GICH 2014, Population 13,000)



# Monroe: Lessons Learned

*“Neighbors make good neighborhoods”*

## **GICH Plan Accomplishments**

Made visible neighborhood impacts

Educated team & elected officials

Supported home ownership

Managed housing growth

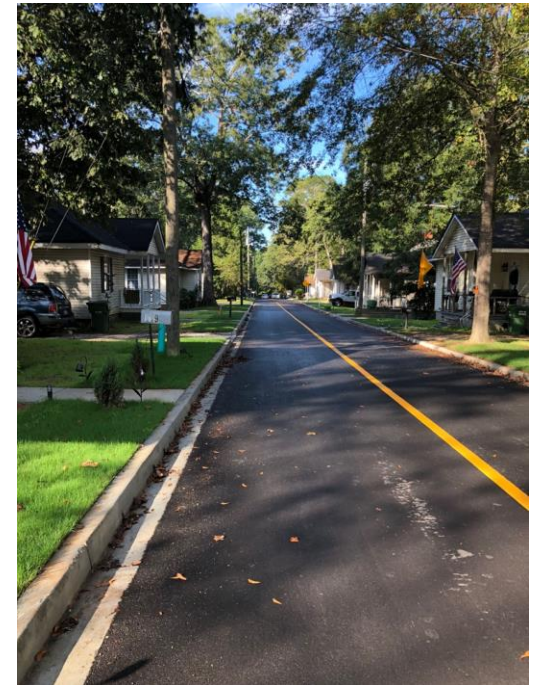


Monroe Housing Expo and Clean Up Days



# Monroe: Visible Impact

Community wide clean ups (cross-pollination of neighbors)  
CHIP grant home renovations (4 completed, 2 more in process)  
Housing Assessment data collection (meeting neighbors, hearing concerns)  
Demolitions  
Changes in Code Dept.  
CDBG project



# Monroe: Housing Growth

*Defined Vision* (comp plan, LCI master plan update, DDA work plans)

450 new homes approved for construction

325 sf home active adult community – city infrastructure underway

2 infill developments under construction

Main Street Walton LIHTC senior living infill development

6 new lofts being planned for construction downtown

New infill neighborhood plan meets 12 of 13 stated goals in our ordinances



# Monroe: Other Surprises

New hires – new planning department head with an additional city marshal hire and a city planning position

New City Council committee + planning retreat

Rewrite of zoning ordinances to encourage infill redevelopment

Partners – WBBOR, The Partnership for Families, Youth Advocacy Board, UGA service learning, HOPE Monroe



# City of Cedartown GICH Class of 2016

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WHAT IS IN  
OUR BLIGHT  
TOOLBOX?



# Cedartown: Fighting Blight



BLIGHT- SPECIFIC ORDINANCES  
CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER  
SUPPORT OF CITY OFFICIALS  
SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY

# Sevenfold Tax – August 2014

“There is hereby levied on all real property within the city which has been officially identified as maintained in a blighted condition an increased ad valorem tax by applying a factor of seven (7.0) to the millage rate applied to the property . . . .”



# Animal Tethering Ordinance - 2016

The Cedartown City Commission passed a new ordinance in 2016 stating that dogs can be tethered temporarily outdoors BUT they cannot be kept outdoors on a tether continually.



# Vacant Properties Ordinance - 2018

If an individual is listed as the owner of a property that stays vacant for more than 30 days, the new ordinance requires the owner to register their name and contact information with the City.

The goal is to cut down on the amount of out-of-town “absent” property owners that do not perform routine upkeep.





# Abandoned Shopping Cart Ordinance - 2018

Commissioners passed an ordinance that makes stores responsible for clearly marking their carts and penalizes residents for removing carts from the store property.

Any type of abandonment of a shopping cart inside the City Limits is prohibited.

The ordinance also allows the commission to sell carts via surplus auction if carts are not claimed by the owner within 60 days.

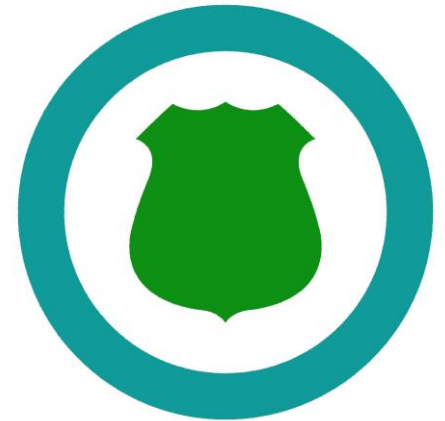


# Created Code Enforcement Officer Position - 2015

The City of Cedartown employed an additional Code Enforcement Officer in August 2015

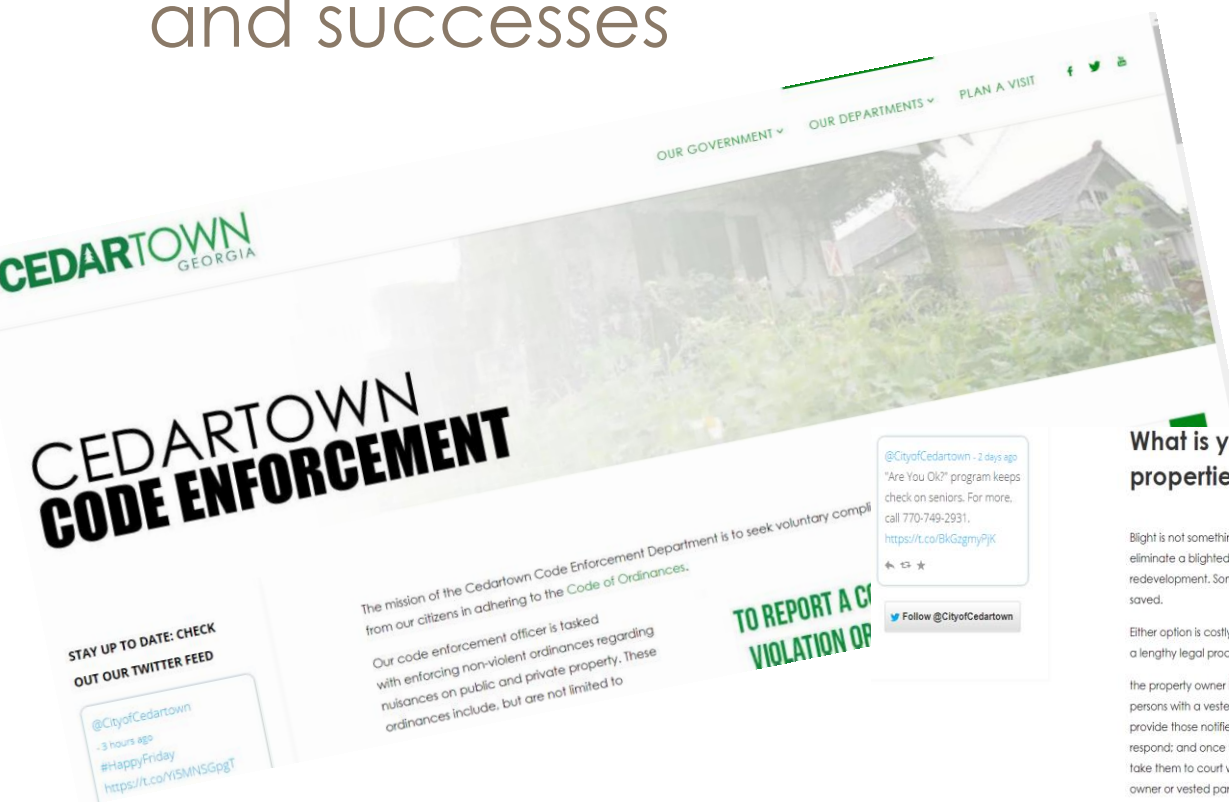
Previously, the City had one Code Enforcement Officer who also served as the Building Inspector

Additional code enforcement presence has allowed the City of Cedartown to more efficiently and effectively manage violations



# Community Education

In 2017, we redesigned our website and focused heavily on blight reduction measures and successes



## What is your City doing to fight blighted properties? A lot, actually.

Blight is not something that can be eradicated overnight. There are basically two ways to eliminate a blighted property; either tear it down or go through approved remediation or redevelopment. Some structures cannot be rehabbed and must be demolished. Others can be saved.

Either option is costly and surrounded by legalities. Once a property is classified as blight, there is a lengthy legal process the city must follow: first, notify

the property owner in writing and any lenders or persons with a vested interest in the property; next, provide those notified an ample amount of time to respond; and once they respond, the city has to take them to court where the judge will give the owner or vested party time to remedy the situation.

Most times, residents do not have enough money to bring it up to code or even to have it torn down.



Journalists from across the U.S. visit Cedartown June 8, 2017

City earns Georgia Association of Water Professionals Gold Award June 5, 2017

Employee spotlight: Randy Wright June 5, 2017

Employee spotlight: Rachel Howard June 5, 2017

Employee spotlight: Timmy Ledbetter June 4, 2017

# Community Visibility

Participated in a POVERTY SIMULATION designed to bring attention to housing dilemmas for low or no-income residents



## Adults to participate in 'poverty simulation' in Rockmart Aug. 14

Posted: Tuesday, August 2, 2016 3:00 pm

Staff reports

Adults in Polk County will have opportunity to understand what it is like to survive on a limited income in a poverty simulation from 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 14.

The event, hosted by Action Ministries, will be held at the Community Center, located at the corner of College St.

The experience, guided by volunteers, is a simulation, not a game. The object is to sensitize participants to realities faced by low-income people.

Rhonda Heuer, Polk Family Connection, said she experienced a similar activity and was "really stressed" at the end of the event. "It is a great way to help individuals understand how to stretch their family budget to survive on a meager income."

Participants are role-playing and simulate what it would be like if deserted by the breadwinner, be a homeless person or recipients of TANF (Temporary

### Polk Family Connection seeks to expand services

Polk Family Connection is working to make a difference in the lives of local families and children. "We must be aware of where and how resources and money is used," said Rhonda Heuer, PFC coordinator, said. (Agnes Hagin/thepolkfishwrap.com)



Participated in a GRAFITTI REMOVAL project designed to clean up a local neighborhood and increase GICH visibility in the community

# Community Involvement

Cedartown Housing Authority began a **\$20 million dollar rehabilitation** project in 2015

Includes acquisition, rehabilitation and equipping of:

- ▣ a 100-unit apartment project, and
- ▣ 140 housing units in five Cedartown locations
- ▣ converted all CHA public housing to Section 8 Project Based Rental Assistance

# Community Involvement

Vantage Development Housing Project began in 2015 and is located on +/-20 acres inside the City Limits

- features 62 townhomes comprised of 9 one-bedroom units, 32 two-bedroom units and 21 three-bedroom units
- site amenities include a covered picnic area with BBQ grills an outdoor playground and community laundry facility





In the last four years

**19 BLIGHTED STRUCTURES**

have been demolished within the City Limits

# More Recent Demolition



420 PACE STREET: A KNOWN 'HOT BED'  
OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY FOR 10 YEARS



**INCREASED TAX ON BLIGHTED PROPERTIES  
FORCES OWNERS TO EITHER TEAR DOWN OR BRING  
UP TO CODE**

**THE ADDITION OF NEW,  
AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS  
FORCE IRRESPONSIBLE  
LANDLORDS TO EITHER CLEAN UP  
OR LOSE RENTAL INCOME**

**AFFORDABLE,  
ATTRACTIVE HOUSING  
A BETTER  
CEDARTOWN**

**NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT,  
RENOVATED SECTION EIGHT  
HOUSING PROVIDES SAFE HOUSING  
OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS**

**CONTINUED PUBLIC EDUCATION  
REGARDING GICH,  
BLIGHT AND HOUSING OPTIONS**

# City of Cedartown GICH Team



# Q&A