An Overview of Choice Neighborhoods

Georgia Planning Association of APA
2013 Fall Conference
October 10, 2013, Jekyll Island
Agenda

• What is the Young Planners Group?
• Panel Introduction
• What is Choice Neighborhoods?
• What are the Core CN Goals?
• Typical Planning Process
• Community Participation – CN Stakeholders
• CN Outcomes
  • Neighborhood Transformation Plan
  • Housing Strategies *Jaime Bordenave*
  • Grassroots Initiative *Kwabena Nkromo*
What is the Young Planners Group?

Young Planners Group

• NOT AGE RESTRICTED, it is open to emerging planning professionals, students, and experienced planners
• Provides a forum for networking, learning new skills, and above all having fun
• Quarterly newsletters and social meetings
• www.ypg.georgiaplanning.org

Previous events

• End of Summer Social—Braves Game
• Sustainable Planning: What does it mean?
• Historic Fourth Ward Park Tour/Beltline Update
• Sustainable Affordable Housing – The New Trend, 2011 Fall Conference
• Gulch Tour / MMPT Presentation
• Georgia Tech First Friday
Panel Introduction

John Skach, AICP, AIA
Senior Associate, Urban Collage + Lord Aeck & Sargent

Introduction to Choice Neighborhoods and Overall Planning Process

Jaime Bordenave
Founder, President and CEO of The Communities Group

Housing Strategies

Kwabena Nkromo
Founder and Lead Partner of Atlanta Food and Farm, LLC.

Grassroots Initiatives in the Atlanta CN Area
What is Choice Neighborhoods?

“The Choice Neighborhoods initiative will transform distressed neighborhoods... into viable and sustainable mixed-income neighborhoods by linking housing improvements with appropriate services, schools, public assets, transportation, and access to jobs... Choice Neighborhood 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.”

- White House Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI) to support comprehensive transformation
- Built on the framework of the HOPE VI program, but focusing on the revitalization of the surrounding neighborhoods as well as a public housing site
- Five agencies working together – HUD, Education (ED), Justice (DOJ), Treasury, and Health and Human Services (HHS)
What is Choice Neighborhoods?

**Grants**

- **Planning Grants**: Supports the development of comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plans focused on transforming public/assisted housing while improving the surrounding neighborhood and creating positive outcomes for families.

- **Implementation Grants**: Supports those communities that have undergone a comprehensive local planning process and are ready to implement their Transformation Plan to redevelop the neighborhood.

In Last three years...

- **Planning**: 47 grants ($250k - $300k)
- **Implementation**: 9 grants ($30mm)
What are the Core CN Goals?

The Plan must develop or acknowledge strategies for:

• **Housing** – focused on public and assisted housing / mixed income settings
  ▪ Energy efficient, mixed-income
  ▪ Physically and financially viable
  ▪ Requires 1:1 replacement, current residents have the right to return

• **People** – focused on residents, and families in the surrounding neighborhood
  ▪ Cradle-to-college education
  ▪ Community and Supportive Services: Health and Safety
  ▪ Mobility and employment

• **Neighborhoods** – focused on the neighborhood as a whole
  ▪ High-performing schools
  ▪ Comprehensive social services
  ▪ Quality parks, recreational facilities and other public assets
  ▪ Improved access to jobs, increased economic development
How is the CN Area Defined?

- CN is not defined based on any jurisdiction or neighborhood boundaries.
- **HUD’s Mapping Tool**: Establishes neighborhood eligibility and helps in assigning points for certain rating factors of the grant application.

**Eligible Neighborhood Threshold:**

- Poverty Rate: At least 20% of the households estimated to be in poverty.
- Housing Vacancy Rate: At least 1.5 times higher than the city.
- Part 1 Violent Crime.
- Poor Performing Schools.
- CN Area in a Food Desert and Medically Underserved Area.
- Poor walk score.
Typical Planning Process

1. Planning Grant Award and HUD Site Visit
2. Research and Data Collection on Planning Context and Market Assessment
3. Identification of Issues, Needs and Opportunities
   - Resident Needs Assessment
   - Other Community Surveys
4. Community Participation
5. Community Visioning / Draft Strategies
6. Neighborhood Transformation Plan
7. Plan Documentation (Measure of Success)
Research and Data Collection

List of mapping and research:

- Previous and ongoing planning projects and programs
- Neighborhood history
- CN socio-economic analysis based on Census data and other resources
- Existing physical condition analysis – land utilization, ownership, housing, and public infrastructure (windshield survey and parcel data)
- Identification of blight / distressed areas
- Community assets (developmental, commercial, recreational, educational, and health)
- Crime analysis
- Walkability / accessibility / public transit
Community Participation

**CN Stakeholders:**

- **Planning Grantee** (Housing Authority) leads the overall effort
- **Anchor Institutions**: University/college, Hospital, etc.
- **Steering Committee**: city / county representatives, neighborhood association, PH site leader, local institutions (schools, colleges, churches, hospitals, etc.)
- **Focus Groups**: agencies / organizations related health & wellness, education, safety, economic development
- **Community Stakeholders**: residents of PH site, CN area residents & business owners, community leaders, faith-based institutions, non profit organizations
- **Planning Coordinator**
Community Participation

Engagement Tools:

• Regular meetings of CN grantee with the steering committee, focus groups, and community stakeholders
• Presentations, meeting minutes, and summary reports
• Community Outreach
  • CN Website
  • Public workshops / forums
  • Resident Needs Survey & Community Assessment Survey
  • Press releases, mailings, handouts
  • Small community group meetings
  • Web-based community engagement
• Stakeholder capacity-building and knowledge-sharing
Guiding Principles

• CLEAR
  The process is easy to understand right from the beginning

• INCLUSIVE
  Everybody is welcome and encouraged to participate

• VARIETY
  We'll include lots of different ways for you to join in

• ACCOMMODATING
  We'll try to consider everyone's busy schedules to make it convenient

• RESPECTFUL
  There is no right and wrong – everybody has a valid opinion

• CONSTRUCTIVE
  Workshops are to build consensus and to be FUN!
CN Outcomes

Neighborhood Transformation Plan

- Executive Summary
- Planning Process
- Neighborhood Context
- Overall Vision for the Neighborhood Transformation
- Neighborhood Plan
- People Plan
- Housing Plan
- Implementing the plan
Neighborhood Plan Strategies

Coordinate activities related to planning and development of:

- Identification of neighborhood lead
- Neighborhood assets: developmental, commercial, recreational, physical, and social
- Sustainable development (LEED-ND) and infrastructure – sidewalks, corridors and gateways
- Streetscapes and public improvements;
- Transportation access;
- Neighborhood stabilization;
- Public safety measures
- Economic development
People Plan Strategies

Implementation strategies related to:

• Relocation and right of return policy
• Supportive services plan
• Identification of the people implementation entity that works collaboratively with the partners
• Education - adult education and literacy, create a world-class cradle-to-career education pipeline
• Economic self-sufficiency
• Health and wellness
• Neighborhood capacity building
• Resident program – supportive service plan, relocation plan and tracking
Housing Plan Strategies

Implementation strategies related to:

- Identification of housing lead
- Comprehensive housing program
  - Market recommendations
  - Transformation of housing through rehabilitation, preservation, and/or demolition and replacement
- Housing physical plan
  - Target sites master plans
  - Other catalyst housing sites
- Replacement housing plan
- Relocation plan
- Financing and phasing
- Affordable housing preservation
- Fair housing plan
- Green building
- RAD
Housing Plan Strategies—Common Elements

Deconcentration of Poverty:

- Typical 1930s public housing site—288 units; 600 projects > 300 units
- Average household income of these 600 projects = $9,308 per year
- Larger projects have lower incomes

Strategies include:

- Multiple smaller sites & projects
- Mixing of incomes at each site
- Mixing of tenure
- In-fill homeownership
- Tie-ins to economic development and resident case management to address barriers to employability

Average HH Income Correlated to Project Size

<table>
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<th>Size of Development</th>
<th>Family &gt;70%</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
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<td>500+ Units</td>
<td>$5,428</td>
<td>$10,981</td>
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<td>250 to 500</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt;100</td>
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<td>$10,531</td>
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Housing Plan Strategies—Common Elements

Mix of Incomes:

- Target each replacement site with mix of:
  - Returning assisted households (<30% AMI)
  - Affordable rental (40-60% AMI)
  - Workforce housing (60-80%)
  - Market Rate if supported by market study and stage of development
  - Larger sites to include phase(s) of homeownership, also at multiple income tiers
- In-Fill Replacement
- Project-Base RAD vouchers at other existing sites (e.g., newer tax credit developments)

XVII. Development Tax Credit Rents:

List the maximum applicable affordable housing tax credit rents for the development location:

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0-BDR</th>
<th>1-BDR</th>
<th>2-BDR</th>
<th>3-BDR</th>
<th>4-BDR</th>
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<tr>
<td>30% of Area Median Income</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$341</td>
<td>$410</td>
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<td>50% of Area Median Income</td>
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<td>$569</td>
<td>$682</td>
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<tr>
<td>60% of Area Median Income</td>
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<td>$683</td>
<td>$819</td>
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Housing Plan Strategies—Common Elements

Address Site Plan Issues:

- Typical “competitive” site requires demolition and new development:
  - Address density
  - Provide adequate parking
  - Remove “super-blocks”
  - Re-knit into neighborhood -connectivity
  - New Urbanism
  - Walkability
  - Address storm water management & flood zones
  - Crime prevention through environmental design
  - Adequate open space and recreation
Housing Plan Strategies—Common Elements

Development is Planned in Phases:

- Start development offsite
- Relocation planning is important
  - Coordination with school system
  - Tie-in to supportive services plans
  - Track all households & maintain communications
- Project size and phasing is tied to Funding and Funding Cycles
- Removal of Blight helps show movement
- Demolition can be catalytic
- Plan for critical mass and leverage
Housing Plan Strategies—Common Elements

Site Master Plan:

- Housing Mix
  - Family Rental
  - Senior Rental
  - Homeownership
- CSS Facilities
- Open Space
- Re-connecting to the neighborhood—streets, housing types, services
Housing Plan Strategies—Common Elements

Address non-assisted neighborhood housing conditions:

- Enlist partners—City; Non-profits; Churches; CDCs; Community Land Trusts and Land Banks
- City is vital partner for this element—they have “ownership” of the neighborhood
  - Code enforcement
  - CDBG and HOME funding
- Land assembly is lengthy process—clouded titles; irregular and small lot sizes; “hold-out” owners wanting unrealistic prices
Housing Plan Strategies—Financing

Multiple Sources Must be Used:

- Choice to be planned “with or without” major HUD grant
- Even with Choice grant, leverage of 2 to 3 times is needed to be competitive
- Low-Income Housing Tax Credits is the most critical finance source
  - 9% credits are best, but competitive
  - 4% credits are good, non-competitive, and a lesser resource
  - 4% credits work well with RAD
- Many other sources typically used
  - Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
  - Local waivers: hook-up fees; permits
  - City sources: Transfer tax funds; inclusionary zoning; CDBG; HOME
  - Federal Home Loan Bank Board’s Affordable Housing Program

- Public Housing Financing: HOPE VI; Choice Neighborhoods; CFFP; Replacement Housing Factor Funds; Project-Based Section 8; Section 8 Homeownership
- Private mortgage financing
- Tax-exempt bond financing
- Public funding through HUD, Treasury, and State Housing Finance Agencies
- Tax Increment Financing / TAD
- Subordinate financing
- Loan guarantees
- Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD)
- Credit enhancement
- Home buyer second mortgage assistance
- Equity investment in low-income, historic, and New Markets tax credits
- Foundation and government grants
- Funding for community services
Housing Plan Strategies—RAD as New Resource

Rental Assistance Demonstration Program:

- 60,000 units available initially
- Privatizes public housing and can recapitalize existing Project-Based Section 8 assisted housing
- Permits borrowing against property & leveraging
- Much more stable and higher level of subsidy
- Extremely flexible program (in HUD context)
  - Vouchers can be transferred to other sites
  - Can be combined with Choice grant funds on same project
  - Demolition approval from HUD not required
Implementing the Plan

- Governance structure
- Partners roles and responsibilities, leverage resources
- On-going resident and community participation
- Budget / Financing strategies
- Implementation process and schedule
- Land use approvals and site control
- Data collection and use/performance tracking and management
Grassroots Initiatives

“It’s about providing a 'mustard seed' of community change for the better, if the people have a mind to”

- Atlanta Food & Farm (AF2) established in 2011
- Planners & project developers for local food & urban agriculture
- Multi-sectoral partnerships --> HUD grant - Atlanta Housing Authority, Urban Collage
Socio-Ecological Framework for Assessment

**ORGANIZATIONAL (INSTITUTIONS & ORGS)**

- Civic groups/NGO's/NPUs
- Store Owners/Food Retailers
- Government Programs (food stamps, WIC, food pantries)

**INTERPERSONAL (SOCIAL NETWORKS, FAMILY, FRIENDS)**

- Garden groups & Farmers' Markets
- Student Groups
- Community Centers

**INDIVIDUAL**

- Residents
- Students
Geographic Boundary

Three neighborhoods designated as the ‘Choice Neighborhoods Atlanta’ area:

Vine City, Atlanta University Center, and Ashview Heights
Mapping of Community Assets

- Food sources
- Schools/Colleges
- Restaurants
The Fertile Crescent concept is a community-based adaptation of The Food Commons development model.

- Geographic footprint is ~ 6000 acre area in South-West Atlanta (correlates with Atlanta Beltline Project’s subarea planning sections 1, 2, 9, and 10)
The Food Commons

Three main components

Food Hub
Food Fund
Food Trust
Food Commons ATL “Fertile Crescent”
### Atlanta “Fertile Crescent” Neighborhoods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grove Park</th>
<th>Bankhead</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Howell Station</td>
<td>Hunter Hills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knight Park</td>
<td>Westview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mozley Park</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Park</td>
<td>Adair Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just Us Neighbors</td>
<td>Oakland City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashview Heights</td>
<td>Mechanicsville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vine City</td>
<td>Peoplestown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Avenue</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
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</table>
“Fertile Crescent” Demographics

- These neighborhoods are home to about 55,000 people.
- The specific neighborhoods that are part of the Fertile Crescent area are predominantly low income and African American.
- The median income for a typical community in this area is $20,848, well under the federal poverty line.
“Fertile Crescent” Development

C. Shaheed DuBois, AF2/Executive Team co-Lead/resident
Wanda Whiteside, AF2/Executive Team co-Lead/resident

Subcommittees
- Executive Team
- Community Food Fund
- Food Trust
- Food Hub

Kwabena Nkromo, AF2/co-Chair/resident
Colette Joly, AF2/co-Chair/resident
Trish O’Connell, Food Trust COLead
Barbara Miller, AF2/Community Food Fund lead/resident
Moki Macias, Food Hub CO-Lead

Shawn Walton, WeCycle Atlanta
Gil Frank, Historic Westside Gardens
John Skatch, Urban Collage
Katlyn Wilson, Atlanta Mobile Market
Melanie Wofford, Community Housing Initiatives Corporation

Anthony Muhammad, 4GreenVision
Jon Rosenthal, Farmer D Organics
Chad Angell, City of Refuge
Cheryl Johnson, Georgia State University/resident

Bren Ames, Slow Money Georgia/Community Food Fund lead
Rob Brawner, Beltline Partnership
Lili Crymes, Atlanta Community Food Bank

Earl Picard, Food Hub co-Lead/resident
DeBorah Williams, Mother Clyde Community Garden/resident
Way Forward

Initial Scope of Work

Food Trust

- Asset survey & related real estate inventory of Fertile Crescent area
- Secure interim partner to hold assets immediately donated to AFC-FC
- Formation of Food Trust (legal organizations & governance structure)
- Raising capital for asset/property acquisition

Food Hub

- Feasibility study/research
- Business plan development
- Formation of Food Hub or “vertically integrated spine of food enterprises”

Food Bank (renamed “Community Food Fund” by Steering Committee)

- Explore creation of a small grants and/or IDA program
- Partner with existing programs for micro-financing/lending (i.e. Slow Money Georgia)
- Establish a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI)