Georgia Initiative for Community Housing:
Building Local Support and Capacity for Affordable Housing
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.
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
“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
WHAT IS IN OUR BLIGHT TOOLBOX?
Cedartown: Fighting Blight

BLIGHT- SPECIFIC ORIDINANCES
CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER
SUPPORT OF CITY OFFICIALS
SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY
“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 . . .”
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.
In 2017, we redesigned our website and focused heavily on blight reduction measures and successes.
Community Visibility

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

Participated in a GRAFFITI 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