



Conference on Housing & Neighborhood Development

November 10, 2015

Final Report:

125 registered guests from numerous local government offices, private businesses, housing developers, students and nonprofits participated in the first Neighborhoods NOW Conference. More significantly, 35 individuals contributed to planning and helped host 15 unique topical sessions about related quality of life issues. 100% of the survey respondents indicated they liked or loved the conference, and participants suggested the next steps include:

1. **Build Actionable Plans** – Create active advocacy groups that are passionate about the break-out sessions and provide measurable updates in regards to progress.
2. **Advocacy and Education** – Media Campaign to educate folks (city councils, businesses, and the public) as to the definition of affordable housing...Research and educate others about how to change legal barriers (including zoning)...Offer a tour of successful developments...and Host another conference!

The day included rich conversations led by informed panelists, and participants overwhelmingly wished they could have participated in more topics than the day permitted. The attendees cultivated strategies developed during the planning process, and attendees contributed to these **solutions** during the day. The complete list of 17 strategies are available upon request, but these solutions can be summarized in the following manner:

1. **Garner Local Support to Increase the Capacity of HAND** (and other partners) to perform these functions, and to support the implementation of additional best practices.
2. **Improve the Perception of Affordable Housing** – Change the perception of Affordable Housing by putting a face to it, and by promoting diverse, walkable, and denser mixed-uses developments.
3. **Actively Develop Good Examples of Affordable Housing** – Build quality, affordable housing when possible.
4. **Identify Barriers to Affordable Housing development** -Participate in research around informal and formal barriers, and assist with the update of the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI) required in 2016.

In 2016, HAND proposes the following steps be taken to make progress towards the desired results:

1. **Organize a Hamilton County Housing Advisory Council (HAC)** – Establish a policy committee to gain legitimacy, raise public support, and to demonstrate a commitment from city and county leaders. The responsibilities of this group would include (1) Research, (2) Oversight, and (3) Funding Strategies (See separate HAC Proposal).
2. **Engage the community about affordable housing needs and implementation strategies** by offering the following: (1) Trainings and capacity building support for community groups, (2) Partner with HCLA class to launch a media campaign to raise awareness of the issue, and (3) Host a 2nd Conference and offer Housing summits for the following audiences: Businesses and Chambers, Faith Communities, and Elected Officials.

HAND will need support from many stakeholders to carry this agenda in 2016. Public and private sponsors are invited to contribute time, talents and treasure to help address the lack of affordable housing in Hamilton County.

Goal

Promote the best practices of community development and to have meaningful discussions on the following topics: Comprehensive neighborhood development, sustainable growth and long-range planning, lifelong communities (aging in place), transit-friendly development, vibrant active lifestyles, and affordable housing.

Outcome

The participatory process resulted in a discrete list of strategies developed with the input of experts ready and willing to deliver results in a defined time frame.