



WESTSIDE COMMUNITY RETENTION COLLABORATIVE

Goal:

To address Westside resident concerns regarding blighted properties, displacement and gentrification through the creation of a Community Retention Plan that will include vetted recommendations and strategies.

Current State:

In February 2017, the Westside Future Fund (WFF) started leading the transition of the Problem Property Collaborative into the Westside Community Retention Collaborative to continue to work on problem property concerns and focus on implementing community retention strategies in the neighborhoods of English Avenue, Vine City, AUC and Ashview Heights.

Current Activities:

- Community Retention Plan:
 - WFF and the neighborhood associations of Vine City, English Avenue, AUC and Ashview Heights each hosted a series of community meetings to share existing housing and rental data with residents and get feedback on potential strategies.
 - Based on the initial feedback, the WFF and partners began working on the first community retention strategy, an [Anti-Displacement Tax Relief Fund](#) for homeowners.
 - The fund was announced in April 2017 to help ensure that current homeowners are not displaced due to rising property taxes in the English Avenue, Vine City, Ashview Heights and Atlanta University Center neighborhoods.
 - Supported by private philanthropic donations, the fund will provide grants to individual homeowners and will not require participants to pay back any funds received. Residents can apply for the program from April 12, 2017 through March 15, 2018. Fund payments will begin in the 2018 tax year.
- Stabilization Strategies:
 - Over 200 offers have been submitted to willing sellers for the acquisition of blighted properties.
 - Acquired blighted properties: 78 properties acquired through project partners.
 - Police Officer housing program through the Atlanta Police Foundation – Ribbon Cutting on first five homes occurred in October 2016.
 - Atlanta Police Foundation constructing 10 officer homes in English Avenue and partnering with WFF to expand the project to include up to 10 additional affordable homes for longstanding residents.

Moving Forward:

- Community Retention Plan: Community Retention Collaborative currently exploring policy recommendations on a Rental Rehabilitation Program and a program that helps transition renters to homeownership.
- Finalize the WFF Land Use Action Plan and secure adoption by City of Atlanta Planning and Development Dept. Final Community input meetings occurred the week of May 15th. The city will be working on adoption of the plan in 2017.
- Increase the short-term supply of affordable rental housing through the acquisition and renovation of existing vacant small apartment buildings: all vacant small apartment buildings have been identified, assessed based on existing condition, and mapped on the basis of highest priority for short term development opportunity.
- Acquire 100 parcels of vacant and blighted property by the end of 2nd quarter 2017: 78 problem properties have been closed by project partners and 23 are in line to close by June 30th.
- Atlanta Police Foundation completing the @Promise Youth Center by August 2017.



Collaborative Members:

- APD Urban Planning
- The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation
- Ashview Heights Neighborhood Association
- The Atlanta Beltline
- Atlanta Habitat for Humanity
- Atlanta Housing Authority
- Atlanta Land Bank Authority
- Atlanta Police Foundation
- Atlanta Regional Commission
- AUC Neighborhood Association
- Center for Community Progress
- City of Atlanta
- Enterprise Community Partners
- Emory University Law
- English Avenue Neighborhood Association
- Equifax
- Holder Construction
- Invest Atlanta
- Mattie Freeland House
- Quest Communities
- US Attorney's Office
- U.S. Department of Justice
- Vine City Civic Association
- Westside Future Fund