

## Work Plan: Sustainable Opa-locka 20/30

---

### Objectives

With support from HUD's Community Challenge initiative, the City of Opa-locka will undertake ***Sustainable Opa-locka 20/30***, a new citywide comprehensive planning process that will produce the guidelines and tools that are essential to becoming a more livable, competitive and sustainable community.

Our commitment to aggressively using all available mechanisms and resources to revitalize our economically distressed community is demonstrated by the series of focused planning processes we have initiated or engaged in over the last two years. Starting in 2010, the City embarked on a planning process to create a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) that focuses redevelopment efforts in four sections of the city: Downtown, the Ali Baba Commerce District, Magnolia North and Magnolia Gardens. The CRA is authorized by the State of Florida as a municipal tool to direct tax increment financing (TIF) for the purposes of "slum and blight" removal and overall economic development. Numerous planning sessions were held with community residents, businesses, faith-based organizations and other stakeholders.

To assure that we have the resources and staff capacity to continue the redevelopment planning efforts launched in CRA, we are partnering with the Opa-locka Community Development Corporation (OLCDC) to integrate with the planning work they have been conducting. Further, to assure a prompt start and efficient planning process, OLCDC is using Reese Fayde & Associates (RFA), a planning consulting firm that OLCDC has under contract and that has been approved by HUD.

In late 2010, as part of the strategic planning effort for the implementation of its recently awarded HUD Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 grant (NSP2), OLCDC sponsored an intense community visioning charrette whose participants included nationally known leaders in urban design, planning, housing, historic preservation and implementation as well as city, county and regional planning staff. The resulting ***Opa-locka Vision 20/20*** brought the City a fresh perspective on livability and showed us we have the assets not just for revitalization, but for a much more sustainable economy and environment.

With the award in late 2011 to OLCDC of a Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Planning Grant (CNI) for the Nile Gardens neighborhood, our community revitalization planning efforts in Opa-locka significantly scaled upward. We have again joined with the CDC to engage residents, businesses, all departments of City government, and regional and state agencies as partners in assessing community needs and developing effective strategies for the future. We intend to advance this process in ***Sustainable Opa-locka 20/30*** by continuing the Task Force and working groups that are providing vital stakeholder input. To date, we have seen tremendous

success in the community outreach work that launched a series of stakeholder meetings on a regular basis. In particular, these meetings have engaged a wide cross-section of participants to include seniors, youth, veterans, men and women of different ethnic backgrounds, as well as city and county agency personnel.

The master planning process of *Sustainable Opa-locka 20/30*, which will be supported by the HUD Community Challenge Grant, will enable us to accomplish the following:

- *Create a Housing Strategy* that will address affordability, historic preservation, mixed use and mixed income development, and assure more housing units are clustered near public transportation, stores that sell fresh food and essential services.
- *Create an Economic Development Strategy* that will enable Opa-locka to take advantage of heretofore scattered (and hence, underappreciated) assets such as a large general aviation airport, hundreds of thousands of square feet of flexible warehouse/industrial space, and the unique sense of place that derives from the presence of more than 100 historic Moorish Revival buildings in or near the city center.
- *Engage in Strategic Property Acquisition* to create an early catalytic model project that demonstrates the viability of new economic development strategies for this community. Its location and planned use will demonstrate our commitment to sustainability principles. We anticipate completing all aspects of the real estate acquisition process by April 30, 2013.
- *Conduct a Model Community Engagement Strategy* that utilizes the mechanisms for outreach and communication launched in the CNI planning process to consistently and genuinely seek the participation of the residents and businesses in charting a new, more livable and more sustainable future for our heretofore distressed community.
- *Conduct a Zoning Analysis and Code update for the entire City* -- including City Center, Magnolia North, Magnolia Gardens and the Niles Gardens neighborhoods (areas hardest hit by unemployment, crime and vacant land), that will bring zoning tools and design guidelines to encourage sustainability practices in the city.
- *Finalize recommendations for a Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code* – after tapping the City of Opa-locka, state and local agencies, residents and other stakeholders, we will consolidate visions and ideas to develop a new Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code for the City that will guide its core revitalization strategies for years to come. Upon request, consultants will provide technical assistance to facilitate the City's adoption and approval process.

## Work Plan: Phased Implementation

The following summarizes the phases of the planning process and their progression over time:

- I. **Initiation and Assessment.** In this first phase, we will establish a baseline condition analysis for the city in order to better understand the opportunities and challenges. This includes reviewing information obtained during the two-year CRA process and the CNI planning efforts, conducting a second design charrette focused on downtown, as well as gathering new information related to land uses, traffic and circulation, parcelization, ownership, and infrastructure. The data collected during this phase will be used as a baseline for future evaluation of the City's success at meeting a variety of objectives like economic opportunity and empowerment, availability of new housing units, revitalization of the downtown center, and introduction of new land uses to meet the redevelopment needs of the City.
- II. **Policy Framework Development.** The second project phase will build upon existing baseline conditions through a series of focused strategic studies and work efforts aimed at developing draft planning concepts. During this phase, consultants with expertise in the areas of downtown and economic development, workforce and affordable housing, form-based code, infrastructure and utilities, and land use and zoning will form the basis and foundation for plan development. Consultants will develop planning concepts and solutions that respond directly to the community-endorsed vision for the city. These ideas will be further tested in public workshops, and will be refined for inclusion in the next phase of work, Comprehensive Plan Formation.
- III. **Comprehensive Plan Formation.** In Phase Three, concepts and themes will be merged and consolidated for testing through the community process, including input from key City Boards, Task Forces, Miami-Dade County housing and economic development departments and other key stakeholders. Of particular note, the South Florida Regional Planning Council -- recipient of a Sustainable Communities Regional Plan grant and regional administrator for Comprehensive Plan reviews -- has been confirmed as the resource that will take the lead on making revisions to and repositioning of the Opa-locka Comprehensive Plan and Land Code documents. This will be followed by a presentation to the community to summarize findings, evaluate the balance of benefits and impacts, and comment on strategies for housing, jobs, land use mix, zoning and economic opportunity access.
- IV. **Recommendations for Comprehensive Plan.** In this phase of the project, the community process in Phase Three will be completed and final recommendations for the plan will be prepared. Along with the final draft, an implementation strategy will be developed that includes proposed policies

for land development and zoning. All recommendations will be reviewed for compliance with Florida statues prior to delivery to the City of Opa-locka Planning Department.

- V. Adoption of Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code.** During this final phase, the City of Opa-locka will lead the process of securing approvals from the various review and regulatory bodies. With presentation materials and technical support from the consultants, the Planning Department will coordinate the hearings and formal adoption process of the new plans and ordinances.

**Broad and Inclusive Community Outreach: The Common Element**

Although this work plan contains specific plan development phases, one important common element will overlap throughout the planning process: the community engagement process. Engagement will occur throughout the planning period, as the City presents the community with new information, strategy proposals, alternatives and the results of certain studies.

The City of Opa-locka employs a sophisticated public outreach component for all major planning efforts through its City Commission, Community Redevelopment Agency, Advisory Boards and Community Development Department as well as its Challenge Grant partner, the Opa-locka Community Development Corporation. As the City develops and promotes ideas through well-advertised interactive workshops, public meetings, newspaper ads and articles, emails, websites and social media, a solid foundation of community outreach and engagement will be built upon throughout the planning process. This foundation includes Task Forces that have been created for the HUD Choice Neighborhood Planning grant for Nile Gardens (approximately one-third of the City) and the City's recent planning efforts to create a Community Redevelopment Agency (2010 and 2011).

In addition, in 2012, the CDC and City have helped reestablish a Nile Gardens Business Association – with approximately one-third of the businesses located in this area - resulting in the creation of a Business Improvement District. Master Consultant, Reese Fayde & Associates (RFA), along with increased project time from OLCDC existing senior and support staff and personnel provided by the City, will provide both general and focused outreach to the neighboring residents, members of the business community, stakeholders and property owners, churches and social service agencies. Staff will also conduct focus group and stakeholder interviews for businesses. Each will have the dual purpose of soliciting visions from property owners and involving them in future phases of the project.

Upcoming events will be advertised through a variety of techniques including direct mailing, newspaper ads, emails, social media, phone calls, and posters at popular venues. It is important to reiterate here that we are working in a small town context, which means that the same groups of people are often relied upon to engage in community events. As we move forward, we remain conscious of needing

to bring people together for activities that are important, efficient and productive while working to broaden exposure to and participation in community. We will use Challenge Grant dollars to continue and build upon the existing successes described earlier that utilize Choice Neighborhood Initiatives (CNI) funds.

To facilitate the formal government agency review and approval processes, City of Opa-locka staff will be provided with presentation materials and technical assistance from OLCDC and its consultants. It is anticipated that throughout ***Sustainable Opa-locka 20/30***, county, state and city officials responsible for approvals of Comprehensive Plans and Land Development Codes will receive briefings and provide input. We will meet with representatives as a group while, at other times deemed feasible, we will meet on a one-on-one basis to ensure ample opportunity for individuals to ask detailed questions, contribute comments and buy-in to project visioning as early in the process as possible.

### **Phase I: Initiation and Assessment**

Goal: Prepare an analysis of the existing conditions of the City of Opa-locka.

Phase I implementation objectives as introduced above are further reflected in the deliverables below:

- Establish a baseline condition analysis for the city in order to better understand opportunities and challenges
- Conduct a second design charrette focused on downtown
- Gather new information related to land uses, traffic and circulation, parcelization, ownership, and infrastructure.

Data collected will be used as a baseline for future evaluation of the City's success at meeting a variety of objectives like economic opportunity and empowerment, availability of new housing units, revitalization of the downtown center, and introduction of new land uses to meet the redevelopment needs of the City.

Major Activities:

- Commence community engagement process
- Revise **Work Plan**
- Complete convenings and summarize highlights of downtown design charrette; prepare final **Downtown Design Charrette Report**; present report to City commissioners and others, as deemed necessary
- Prepare **Current Conditions Report** by:
  1. Conducting an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the study area;

2. Assessing traffic conditions, public transportation, streetscape connectivity and road conditions, sidewalks and lighting conditions, architectural inventory, current land uses and zoning, and open space.
3. Undertaking data gathering and analysis of economic conditions including business classification, revenues and sales, number of employees, tax revenues generated as well as an economic base analysis.
4. Defining the labor force with current educational attainment, quality of schools and unemployment/employment status.
5. Assessing and mapping social and demographic conditions including key equity indicators
6. Determining sustainable environmental conditions including water, flood plain and contamination status.
7. Analyzing supply and demand for different housing types: infill housing, transit-oriented development, market rate and affordable housing, housing for different family types, single-family, condo/town home, and multifamily housing.
8. Identifying potential locations of transit-oriented development.
9. Listing and assessing financial incentives and resources.

Task Responsibility: OLCDC/RFA

Timeframe to deliver Phase I: February 1 thru August 30, 2012 with ongoing community engagement thru October 2012

Phase I deliverables with product due dates:

- March 30 – Revised Work Plan
- May 30 – Downtown Design Charrette Report
- August 30 – Current Conditions Report

## **Phase II: Policy Framework Development**

Goal: To develop planning concepts for future development in Opa-locka with focused strategic studies dealing with market demand, housing, economic opportunities and empowerment, downtown development, land use and zoning.

Phase II implementation objectives as introduced above are further reflected in the deliverables below:

- Build upon existing baseline conditions through a series of focused strategic studies and work efforts aimed at developing draft planning concepts

Consultants with expertise in the areas of downtown and economic development, workforce and affordable housing will utilize form-based code, infrastructure and utilities, and land use and zoning to form the basis and foundation for plan development. They will develop planning concepts and solutions that respond directly to the community-endorsed vision for the city. These ideas will be further tested in public workshops, and will be refined for inclusion in the next phase of work, Comprehensive Plan Formation.

Major Activities:

- Continue community input in activities and tasks
- Prepare an **Economic Development Strategy Report** that will form recommendations to incite growth that will benefit the city and its residents through business attraction, expansion, and creation as well as the design of a linkage system between residents, training opportunities and jobs in Opa-locka's businesses.
- Prepare a **Housing Strategy Report** that will address various other issues related to potential mixed use development including affordable housing, workforce housing, fair housing, prevention of gentrification, and transit connections. The affordable housing strategy contemplated from this study will be used to help focus future city resources that may be used to support future housing activities.
- Prepare a **Downtown Strategy Report** that includes urban design guidelines for downtown, and serve as a model for the development of a form-based zoning code to guide desirable development in downtown.

Task Responsibility: OLCDC/RFA

Timeframe to deliver Phase II: February 1 thru September 15, 2012 with ongoing community engagement thru October 2012

Deliverables with product due dates:

- September 15 – Economic Development Strategy Report
- September 15 – Housing Strategy Report
- September 15 – Downtown Strategy Report

**Phase III: Recommended Comprehensive Plan Formation**

Goal: To create a recommended Comprehensive Plan for the City of Opa-locka that is informed by the Current Conditions Report in Phase I and refined by the strategic reports in Phase II to reflect the preferences articulated by participants in the planning process.

Phase III implementation objectives as introduced above are further reflected in the deliverables below:

- Create a model process for community engagement to include input from key City Boards, Task Forces, Miami-Dade County housing and economic development departments, the South Florida Regional Planning Council (recipient of a Sustainable Communities Regional Plan grant) and key stakeholders.
- Evaluate the balance of benefits and impacts
- Comment on strategies for housing, jobs, land use mix, zoning and economic opportunity access.

#### Major Activities:

In this third phase, the Comprehensive Plan consultant will take the lead to consolidate the various planning studies into a cohesive set of recommendations conveyed in a Comprehensive Plan by performing the following tasks:

- Continue community input in activities and tasks
- Consolidate themes by merging concepts and highlights from focused studies to determine priorities and areas of opportunity.
- Test scenarios that meet the project vision, goals and objectives based upon the analysis of the data and the input from the community
- Recommend a Comprehensive Plan based upon community, stakeholder and City Commission input and guidance that defines the City's approach to critical issues, including:
  - Economic Development and Job Creation
  - Neighborhood Revitalization and Redevelopment
  - Decent, Safe, Sanitary and Affordable Housing
  - Community Identity and Image
  - Historic Preservation
  - Community Core, Neighborhood Centers and Gathering Spaces
  - Integrated Development Patterns
  - Community Connectivity and Transportation Systems
  - Public Service Standards and Infrastructure Systems
  - Crime Prevention and Public Safety
  - Land Development Practices and Design Standards
  - Improving the Built and Natural Environment

Task Responsibility: OLCDC/RFA

Timeframe for Phase III Implementation: June 1 thru October 30, 2012

There are no deliverables for Phase III. Work will focus on gathering and analyzing information for subsequent reports.

#### **Phase IV: Recommended Comprehensive Plan and Recommended Land Development Code**

Goal: To recommend for adoption by the City of Opa-locka a Comprehensive Master Plan, *Sustainable Opa-locka 20/30*, and Land Development Code

Phase IV implementation objectives as introduced above are further reflected in the deliverables below:

- Prepare final recommendations for the plans.
- Develop an implementation strategy that includes proposed policies for land development and zoning.

Major Activities:

- Prepare a **Zoning Analysis Report** that identifies deficiencies in current practices.
- Prepare a **Land Use Strategy Report** that embraces the principals and goals of the recommended Comprehensive Plan.
- Revise **Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code recommendations** and present to key stakeholder groups as part of the community engagement process
- Present Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code recommendations to Planning and Zoning Advisory Board for review
- Present final **Comprehensive Plan** and final **Land Development Code** recommendations to City of Opa-locka.

Task Responsibility: OLCDC/RFA

Timeframe to deliver Phase IV: September 1 thru November 30, 2012

Phase IV deliverables with product due dates:

- September 30 – Zoning Analysis Report
- October 30 – Land Use Strategy Report
- November 30 – Recommended Comprehensive Plan, *Sustainable Opa-locka 20/30*, and Recommended Land Development Code

#### **Phase V: Adoption of Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code**

Goal: New Comprehensive Plan for Opa-locka is approved by the State and the City of Opa-locka adopts a new Land Development Code.

Phase V implementation objectives as introduced above are further reflected in the deliverables below:

The City of Opa-locka Planning Department will:

- Secure approvals from the various review and regulatory bodies
- Coordinate the hearings and formal adoption process of the new plans and ordinances

Major Activities:

- Presentation of Comprehensive Plan to adoption hearings and City Commission
- Submission and approval of Comprehensive Plan by State agencies
- Presentation of Land Development Code to adoption hearings and City Commission

Task Responsibility: City of Opa-locka Planning Department

Timeframe to implement Phase V: December 1, 2012 thru January 15, 2013

Phase V deliverable with product due dates: There are no deliverables for this phase.

**Combined list of Work Plan Products and Deliverables with due dates:**

- March 30 – Revised Work Plan
- May 30 – Downtown Design Charrette Report
- September 15 – Economic Development Strategy Report
- August 30 – Current Conditions Report
- September 15 – Housing Strategy Report
- September 15 – Downtown Strategy Report
- September 30 – Zoning Analysis Report
- October 30 – Land Use Strategy Report
- November 30 – Recommended Comprehensive Plan, *Sustainable Opa-locka 20/30*, and Recommended Land Development Code