



**PEOPLE TASK FORCE MEETING SUMMARY
SUMMARY FOR MEETING #1 – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2024 – 5:30PM-6:30PM
VIRTUAL MEETING**

MEETING PURPOSE

To clarify the People Task Force’s role in the Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) planning process, discuss organizational and administrative structure of the task force, outline the next steps in the process, and review planning handbook and baseline housing data.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Shared understanding of task force’s role in the CNI planning process and initial discussion of goals for the people component of the Transformation Plan.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Gayatri Rana, LaToya Mills, Alecia Spencer, Linda Cross, Jeffrey Walker, Marjeta Gjoni, John Noonan, Steven Marans,

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Emily Byrne, Henry Fernandez, Laura Woodie, Kyle Ballou, Alice Forrester, Bill Villano, Kymebl Branch,

OTHERS PRESENT

Francisco Catala, Lynn Walters, Shirley Grice, Alberta Golden, Alvin Hunter, Serene Neal-Sanjurjo, Sarah McIver, Nydia Jimenez, John Shively

-PRESENTATION MATERIALS ARE ATTACHED TO THIS DOCUMENT-

1. Welcome

Ms. Vincent, Program Manager, welcomed attendees and led introductions. Ms. Vincent is the Project Manager of the Glendower Group. She stated that Elm City Communities (ECC) and The Glendower Group, and the consultants put together a team that will provide support to the task force. However, the heavy lifting is in the member’s responsibility. She added that CNI will make a difference. Ms. Vincent reviewed the agenda, which she planned to move through quickly, yet efficiently to ensure everyone’s time is respected.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the task force members is to commit to the CNI process, actively participate in meetings and be an ambassador and champion of the CNI process. The purpose of the task force is to prepare the people plan component. Ms. Vincent stated that the task force will not just talk challenges and solutions, but identify tangible outcomes that will be incorporated into the plan to transform the community.

3. Administrative Details



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Ms. Vincent discussed meeting standards. She noted that the task force will need to decide how to move forward: how often to meet, where and when the meetings will take place, and who else needs to be added to the group. She asked the task force to keep the questions in mind as she walked them through the remainder of the agenda, and stated that the group would come back to these questions at the end of the meeting.

4. Task Force Scope

Overview of the Process

Ms. Vincent stated that CNI is a revitalization planning process sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It is a program designed to transform neighborhoods. HUD expanded its previous program – called HOPE VI – to transform lives, not just homes. There are three categories that are addressed through the planning process: housing, people, and neighborhood. The people task force will address such topics as health, education, supportive services, jobs, and youth. Ms. Vincent added that the planning process will be centered on the redevelopment of Robert T. Wolfe.

Ms. Vincent identified the neighborhood boundary and explained that the area is the one with the greatest need, but also the area of greatest opportunity. She then explained the stages of the planning process: Mobilize, Understand, Imagine, Shape, Fine Tune, and Nurture. The City is currently in the early part of the Mobilize stage, gathering information. The next stage of the process will be the Understand phase. The main output of the Understand stage is preparing and administering a detailed needs assessment or household survey. The task forces will be instrumental in developing the questions for the needs assessment with Yale school of Management. Ultimately, information from the needs assessment will help shape the Transformation Plan.

5. Let's Get Started

Neighborhood Planning Handbook

The Neighborhood Planning Handbook will be distributed to attendees along with a people baseline data sheet. The handbook is designed to walk CNI participants through the steps of the planning process of transforming an existing community into a neighborhood where people choose to live. The task force members were asked to review and become familiar with the information and bring it to future meetings for reference.

Baseline Data

Key points from the people baseline data for the Union Square Choice Neighborhood:

- There are many community assets, including almost a dozen churches in the area.



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- Approximately 23 percent of area residents did not complete high school; this is more than twice the number for the city as a whole.

Ms. Vincent noted that while the hand out shows that there is a lot of data on hand regarding the various categories that the task force will discuss, we will need more neighborhood-specific information. That will come from the neighborhood assessment. Examples include health and education.

Question Matrix

The task force reviewed the questions that will assist the team in developing the people component, as well as identifying questions for the needs assessment. The following is a summary of the initial ideas discussed around the first few questions outlined in the question matrix. These are initial goals that will continue to be discussed, and may change as the process moves along.

- Goal: Bring employers to the table to help develop strategies
- Goal: Better connection between jobs and transportation (it's all about access)
- Goal: Identify available jobs, necessary skills for those jobs, and the training readiness programs that will help residents get the jobs
 - identify the type of training and certifications that are needed to shape training programs
 - make sure the high schools – like Heritage – are linked with the jobs that need to be filled
- Goal: Improve accessibility to job training programs by offering programs locally
- Goal: Increase neighborhood schools/accessibility to neighborhood schools
 - busing to schools causes challenges
 - regardless of the school situation, the task force will need to make recommendations that help kids in the Union Square Choice Neighborhood
- Goal: Correlate after school/wrap-around programs with school programs so technology and programs are more consistent
 - improved technology and access to technology
 - partnerships to reinforce what is learned in school
- Goal: Expand free Wi-Fi access for kids
- Goal: Expand programs for infants to 3 year olds – these are the critical years
- Goal: Connect people and resources

Communications

Task Force members were introduced to the Union Square Choice Neighborhood website (www.unionsquarechoice.com) as a tool to stay informed about the process.



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Task force members suggested additional outreach methods:

- Develop the leadership institute and develop local leaders that can conduct “house” chats
- Work with local organizations to build trust and get the word out
- Use Facebook and email

6. Questions

Christina Musante asked if we can have an example of a successful transformation plan from another site. Would like to know if they can join us on a call virtually.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting date and time will be April 10th at 5:30pm.