

Small Group Discussion Summary
Home, Sweet Homeless: Where Will the Homeless Live?
Tuesday, April 22, 2008
Eppes Recreation Center

Participants' Comments and Recommendations – (Group #1)

1. How do we engage the for-profit sector in building permanent, affordable housing? What incentives can be added to encourage builders to bring affordable housing to Pitt County?

- Builders, business encourage affordable
- Provide incentives or tax relieve for builders
- Offer subsidizing opportunity – offer guaranteed housing through other funding sources that could be available to the builder
- Creation of “safety net” for developers to build and have rents subsidized at 30 percent
- Create a system to “guarantee” rent payments to builders by partnering with social security or other entities that offer automatic draft from accounts for example
- Develop criteria for builders that state in order to continue to build they must build a certain amount of affordable units.
- The City of Greenville has a low profit margin and most private builders want a higher profit-look at diverse ways to lower margin
- Refurbish existing unites such as hotels and motels.
- Use more tax credit options
- Find out what type of incentives builders are looking for to build affordable housing (non-financial incentives)
- Develop preferences for local contractors
- Develop a plan (the City) by land for free may help encourage builders
- Encourage/help builders find appropriate sites to build affordable housing and get the necessary permits to build housing (zoning)
- Transportation: Housing must be located on bus lines or near public transportation – This is critical; create ways to extend services to more areas
- Important for citizens to get involved in the political process such as City Council meetings

2. **Given that we want to end homelessness, how should we allocate our money and other resources among shelters, transitional housing programs, and permanent housing?**
- Concentrate on permanent housing to get them out of shelters on to permanent housing.
 - Transitional housing requires that a person be homeless; funding needs to go into permanent housing; currently there are only 12 units and for a city this size that is too small
 - Need a homeless shelter that provides medical treatment, convalescent care/infirmary
 - Have a shelter that provides rehabilitative services such as mental health, substance abuse prevention; create a task force to address this; have a program developed to address all areas that affect homeless individuals.
 - Resources distributed equally to all types of service providers
 - The Greenville Community Shelter needs more resources for staffing, i.e. social worker and physician
3. **In addressing the permanent housing needs of the homeless in Pitt County should our immediate priority be to focus on the homeless population broadly or should we target specific populations (e.g. families, individuals, special needs, chronically homeless)?**
1. Need to address the housing needs (and supportive services) of the elderly, domestic violence victims and individuals (not just families)
 2. Address family and special needs; special needs refers to mental illness and persons with disabilities
 3. Persons with HIV – not enough housing programs available
 4. It is important to look at what housing and services are currently available
 5. Look at best practices and see how they affect the community and how the City or County are addressing implementing these practices
 6. Collect more data and look at the census data to determine the special needs groups
 7. Look at the socio-economic data and get involved with City officials

8. Create programs “base” program with substance abuse – more housing targeting and evenly distributed housing for special groups instead of housing individuals together; people should be a part of the community-at-large
9. Current housing is targeted to families; look at housing options for single person
10. Look at the children of homeless persons – reviewing data for this subset group
11. Target veterans
12. Question asked: Where did all the FEMA houses go? Answer: They were sold
13. Create camps or use temporary housing options like FEMA trailers to incorporate in the community

Participants Comments and Recommendations – (Group #2)

1. How do we engage the for-profit sector in building permanent, affordable housing? What incentives can be added to encourage builders to bring affordable housing to Pitt County?

- Reframe the message so that social responsibility helps the business community
- Don't be shy about asking the business community to help
- Look at what are the barriers to participation by businesses to determine how to get their help
- Educate the business community then give recognition to those that step up to help
- Lack of capacity in the nonprofit community; not enough organizations qualified to do housing development (which is least expensive way to build)
- Partnerships between the government and nonprofits would help expand affordable housing supply of rental and ownership stock
- Need to increase income/wage rates of the homeless population to make housing more attainable

2. Given that we want to end homelessness, how should we allocate our money and other resources among shelters, transitional housing programs, and permanent housing?

- Divide funds with most going to the shelter because the least ability to pay exists in populations with less money to the transitional housing and permanent housing
- Need to have a good strong starting place in a solid shelter
- Need a division of housing money - some for facilities and some that is tied to people needing housing
- Regardless of which model, some investment in the education of people served is necessary to help them progress to increasing levels of independence
- Remember that not everyone goes through progression – Housing can be therapeutic - “Housing First” model

3. In addressing the permanent housing needs of the homeless in Pitt County should our immediate priority be to focus on the homeless population broadly or should we target specific populations
- Each class of situation had different needs and how to make them ready should be looked at by each class
 - Hard not to look at the homeless broadly because there is overlap between subgroups
 - Must think in terms of progression to better and more suitable housing over time

Other Comments

- We need to modify the training of those who work with the most vulnerable in society