

SECTION 2



**COMPREHENSIVE CITIZEN
PARTICIPATION PROGRAM.**

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INTRODUCTION.

The **Grand Island, Nebraska Housing Study** included both qualitative and quantitative research activities. Discussed in this **Section** is the **comprehensive citizen participation program** that was implemented to gather the opinions of the Area citizenry regarding housing issues and needs. *Planning for the Area's future is most effective when it includes opinions from as many citizens as possible.*

The methods used to gather information from the citizens of Grand Island included meetings with an organized **Housing Steering Committee**, the implementation of a “**Housing Survey**,” and a series of local **housing focus group** “**listening sessions**” with key Community organizations and housing representatives.

HOUSING STEERING COMMITTEE.

This Housing Study was conducted with the assistance of an organized **Housing Steering Committee**, consisting of members of **GIAEDC**, local leadership and elected officials, business professionals and housing stakeholders. The Committee met several times during the development of the Housing Study. This Committee highlighted “key” issues in the Community, as well as provided information regarding new housing development projects and Community programs. The following housing issues were highlighted by the Steering Committee:

- Housing priced under \$200,000 is hard to find in Grand Island. Many of the Community's developers are focused on high-end housing, generally larger than 1,600 square feet.
- The Copper Creek Development Project has new housing construction with a low-end sale price of \$180,000.
- Affordable workforce housing and senior housing is a major need in Grand Island.
- The Housing Steering Committee identified a need to develop a solution to promote the development of affordable housing without subsidizing it.

- A collaborative effort between the Grand Island City Council and local developers is critical to future housing stock affordability.
- Currently, only 35 percent of persons using housing vouchers in Grand Island secure housing. This represents a decline in recent years, as identified by the Grand Island Housing Authority.
- There is an estimated 14 month wait period for Section 8 vouchers. Nearly 600 individuals are on a wait list for affordable housing in Grand Island.
- Clients of the local homeless shelter are unable to find housing, resulting in clients being sent to other nearby Communities.
- Emergency shelters consistently have a wait list for housing.
- There has been a significant advancement in the development and construction of market rate rental housing in Grand Island.
- Infill development should be a key development initiative for the City of Grand Island.



HOUSING SURVEY.

The Grand Island “**Housing Survey**” was made available online to households in Grand Island and presented in both English and Spanish. **Survey** participants were asked to give information regarding their current living situation, condition of their dwelling unit and what families could afford for monthly rent or a monthly house payment. A total of **760 Surveys** were completed. The following summarizes the results of the **Survey**. The complete results of the **Housing Survey** are available in **Appendix I**.

- A total of 498 participants were females, while 229 were males. Most ranged in age from 24 to 44 years (363 participants) or 45 to 59 years (246 participants). A majority of the participants identified themselves as “Married” and “Caucasian/not Hispanic”.
- 329 participants (43.3 percent) identified owning a home with a mortgage.
- 233 participants (30.6 percent) identified needing a home with, at least, three bedrooms in Grand Island.
- A total of 291 Survey participants (38.2 percent) rated the condition of their current residence as “good.” An additional 195 participants (25.6 percent) rated their place of residence as needing moderate to major rehabilitation. The most common identified dwelling repairs included exterior, floors/ceiling and windows.

Grand Island Housing Survey
 The Grand Island Area Economic Development Corporation (GIAEDC) is conducting a Community Housing Study. The data compiled in this survey will be completely anonymous as presented within the final Study. We appreciate your input to help create a plan to improve housing choices in the community.

TOTAL SURVEYS RETURNED: 760.

Your Household		
1. Please select which of the following age groups live in your home.	0 - 15 years (242)	60 - 74 years (157)
	16 - 23 years (108)	75+ years (14)
	24 - 44 years (363)	Prefer not to share (5)
	45 - 59 years (246)	
2. What is your gender?	Male (229)	Prefer not to share (9)
	Female (498)	
3. How would you describe your race / ethnicity?	Caucasian / not Hispanic (628)	Native American (8)
	Black / African American (6)	Hispanic (54)
	Asian (2)	Pacific Islander (0)
	Two or more races (14)	Prefer not to share (13)
4. What is your relationship status?	Married (449)	Widowed (17)
	Divorced (71)	Separated (11)
	In a partnership / civil union (14)	Cohabitating with significant other (33)
	Single (125)	Prefer not to share (6)

Your Home		
Do you currently:	Rent an apartment (91)	Rent a rent-subsidized unit (8)
	Rent a home (74)	Live with parents (21)
	Own with a mortgage (329)	Homeless/no permanent residence (29)
	Own with no mortgage (117)	Other (See Comments)
Are you actively looking to purchase or rent a different home?	Yes - Purchasing (98)	Yes - Renting (102)
		Neither (487)
What type of housing do you live in?	House (510)	Duplex (39)
	Mobile Home (16)	Townhouse (15)
		Apartment (70)
		Condo (6)
		Income Based Housing (17)
How many bedrooms does your housing unit have?	1 (44)	2 (126)
		3 (255)
		4 (155)
		5+ (95)
How many bedrooms do you need?	1 (90)	2 (176)
		3 (233)
		4 (138)
		5+ (44)
How would you rate the condition of your current residence?	Excellent (192)	Good (291)
	Fair: Needs Moderate Rehabilitation (under \$25,000) (170)	Poor: Needs Major Rehabilitation (over \$25,000) (25)
	Dilapidated-Not Livable (2)	
If your dwelling needs repairs, please check all that apply	Plumbing (102)	Insulation (97)
	Electrical (106)	Floors / Ceiling (123)
	Exterior (121)	Roof Repairs (54)
		Windows (174)
		Foundation Repairs (47)
		Heating (55)
		N/A (183)
	Other (See Comments)	
Please indicate your household income range	Less than \$20k (222)	\$20k-\$24,999 (155)
	\$25k-\$29,999 (47)	\$30k-\$34,999 (10)
	\$35k-\$39,999 (8)	\$40k-\$44,999 (8)
	\$45k-\$49,999 (17)	\$50k-\$54,999 (105)
How much is your monthly housing payment?	Less than \$400 (103)	\$400-\$599 (141)
	\$600-\$799 (84)	\$800-\$999 (114)
	\$1,000-\$1,499 (38)	\$1,500-\$1,999 (15)
	\$2,000-\$2,499 (13)	\$2,500-\$2,999 (4)
Do you receive public financial aid for housing?	Yes (20)	No (667)

Section 2
Comprehensive Citizen Participation Program.

- 141 participants (18.5 percent) identified making a monthly house payment between \$400 and \$699. An additional 114 participants (15 percent) make a house payment between \$700 and \$899.
- The top three answers to the question of why Survey participants would want to move out of Grand Island include a need for more affordable housing (107 participants), needing larger housing (99 participants) and needing to “downsize,” or move to a smaller living unit (58 participants).
- 495 (65.1 percent) participants feel there is a need for additional low-income housing in Grand Island, including a need for single family housing, both for rent and for ownership, and duplex housing units for seniors.
- Participants were asked about their top three barriers to obtaining affordable, suitable and appropriate housing in Grand Island. The top responses for renters included the cost of rent and a lack of available decent rental units in the Community. For owners, issues/barriers included housing prices, lack of sufficient homes for sale in both size and in price, and the cost of real estate taxes.

You and Grand Island	
Do you: (Please check ALL boxes that apply)	Currently live in Grand Island? (566) Work in Grand Island? (384) Have relatives in Grand Island? (238) (If so, for how long (years)? Less Than 1 = 10 1-10 = 134 11-20 = 121 21+ = 214)
Does your spouse/partner work in Grand Island? Yes (335) No (246)	
If your current home unsuitable for your living needs? If so, please indicate why.	It is too small (101) It is too expensive (54) It is in poor condition (23) Other: _____
Would you be interested in a grant for home repairs?	Yes (266) No (374)
Would you consider moving away from Grand Island for affordable housing?	Yes (311) No (337)
If so, how many miles away? (circle one)	0-4 (32) 5-10 (49) 10-20 (101) 20-30 (79) 30-40 (26) 40+ (62)
Future Housing	
Are you looking to change your housing situation in the next five years?	Yes (355) No (268)
If you would like to rent, what monthly rent could you afford?	\$450 or less (65) \$451 - \$600 (91) \$601 - \$1,250 (21)
If you are looking to purchase a home, what can you afford for a monthly house payment?	\$400-\$699 (114) \$700-\$899 (97) \$900-\$1,099 (57) \$1,100-\$1,299 (38) \$1,300-\$1,499 (23) \$1,500-\$1,699 (23) \$1,700+ (33)
If you currently rent, but would like to buy a home, please mark any barriers that have prevented you from purchasing a home.	Lack of available housing (90) Cost of existing housing (102) Lack of Down Payment (133) Credit Rating (83) Available Building Lot (17) N/A (166) Other: _____ (See Comments)
Please describe special features you would like to see in housing development.	_____ _____ _____ (See Comments)

Are you, or anyone else from your household (including those currently residing temporarily elsewhere), likely to need affordable housing within the Grand Island area now or in the next five years?	Yes (281) No (319)
Are you looking to:	own (331) or rent (129)
Why would you want to move (you can give more than one reason)?	Need local affordable housing (107) Need independent housing (11) Need larger housing (99) Need to “downsize” (58) Present home in poor state of repair (17) Need to be closer to employment (25) Need senior/elderly housing (26) Need to be closer to a dependent (2) Need specially adapted home (10) Death, divorce or other change in family structure requiring a move (32) Need to be closer to relatives who are in the area (13) Other: _____ (See Comments)
Do you feel that there is a need for additional low-income housing?	Yes (495) No (87)
If yes, what types of housing opportunities are needed? (Please check all that apply)	Single family housing- rent (386) Elderly and assisted living housing (166) Single family housing- own (370) Duplexes (187) Special needs housing (157) Downtown housing (114) Duplex for seniors (215) Other: _____ (See Comments)
Mobility	
If you moved to Grand Island in the last five years, which of the following best describes your reason for relocation?	Job (131) Retirement (2) Affordable housing (19) Small town atmosphere (8) Be close to family (45) Other: _____ (See Comments)
Do you plan to continue living in Grand Island more than:	2 Years (98) 5 Years (96) 10 Years (76) Indefinitely (286)
If you or someone in your household works outside of Grand Island, how far is the commute to work?	Less than 10 miles (82) 11-20 Miles (52) 21-30 miles (54) More than 31 miles (38)

COMMUNITY HOUSING FOCUS GROUP “LISTENING SESSIONS”.

The comprehensive citizen participation program included **Housing “Listening Sessions”** with local organizations, elected leadership and general citizenry. A series of Housing Focus Group Listening Sessions were conducted in March, 2019, with representation from local continuum of care and vulnerable population supporters, realtors and landlords, contractors, developers, major employers, government and local elected leadership. The following “consensus statements” highlight commentary from those in attendance.

- Larger housing units are needed in Grand Island.
- Housing in Grand Island is higher in price compared to surrounding communities.
- Need for three-bedroom ranch homes. Versatile for all age sectors.
- “affordable housing” in Grand Island should take on a new definition among local officials and leadership. \$800 to \$1,000/month is considered affordable.
- Deferred maintenance exists in low income housing. A rehabilitation program would be beneficial.
- Housing need for single parents with children.
- Families are struggling with making house payments while working minimum paying jobs.
- Current housing construction is geared toward very specific price points and not taking advantage of new, innovative housing types.
- Affordable lots are scarce. Vacant land exists where various housing types could be developed.
- Housing rehabilitation and purchase-rehab-resale is greatly needed.
- Investors are looking to sell properties.
- Vacancy rates are low in affordable rental housing programs and moderate to high in market rate rental housing programs.
- Waiting lists for affordable rental housing have generally been high in Grand Island.

- Partitioned “conversion” housing could be an innovative housing development type, suitable for nonconforming lot development and have the ability to be a versatile housing unit concept.
- Housing awareness; include a partnership between City leadership and local/regional contractors.
- “Sweet spot” for development, generally including housing priced for persons and families of moderate income, is also the toughest to fund and finance.
- Revisions to existing zoning regulations have been made to advance the development of affordable housing. This includes the creation of the “R-3SL” zoning district which features a 3,000 minimum lot size requirement