# SECTION 2



COMPREHENSIVE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROGRAM.

### <u>SECTION 2:</u> COMPREHENSIVE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROGRAM.

#### 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 lowend 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.



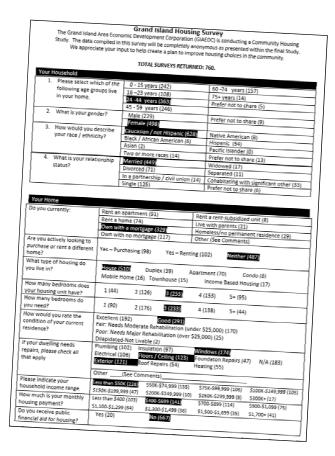




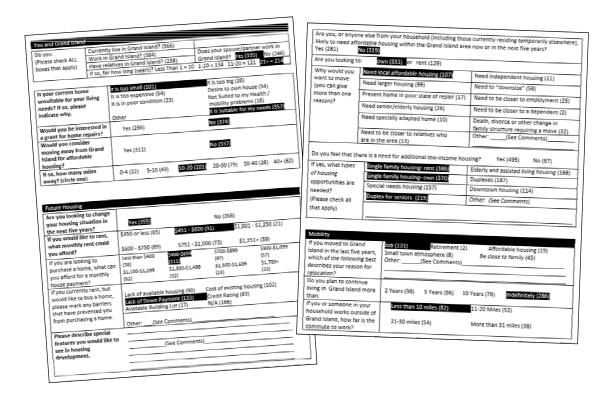
#### HOUSING SURVEY.

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.



- 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.



## COMMUNITY HOUSING FOCUS GROUP "LISTENING SESIONS".

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