

II. Public Participation in the Development of the Housing Study

Numerous community organizations, businesses, and individuals provided valuable information in the completion of this study. A thorough public participation process provided significant insight through public hearings, surveys, key person interviews, and Steering Committee meetings.

Housing Survey

Paper and online surveys were developed in both English and Spanish to gather information from the public regarding the state of housing in Grand Island.

Paper surveys were distributed to a variety of businesses and agencies. Respondents also had the option of going to www.grandislandhousingsurvey.com to fill out the survey online during the survey period.

The results of the survey are included in Appendix A.

Key Person Interviews

A series of key person interviews/surveys were conducted with 25 individuals that had great interest in the project. The list of those interviewed/surveyed included representatives from major employers, community organizations, City Council members, school district representatives, housing organizations, developers/contractors and key City staff. A detailed breakdown of the results of the interviews is included in Appendix B.

Meetings

Steering Committee

Steering committee meetings were conducted to facilitate discussion among citizens who were interested in the process of developing this housing study and implementing the suggested strategies to improve the housing opportunities of Grand Island. The steering committee included 12 individuals with various vested interests in housing development in Grand Island. Representatives from local housing organizations, schools, banks, and other entities served on the committee providing a high level of input in the development of the study.

The first steering committee meeting was held October 15, 2008 in the Grand Island City Hall. Grand Island's consultant, The Schemmer Associates (Schemmer), introduced the planning process and presented some of the early findings of the study. The committee then broke up into two groups for roundtable discussions on a variety of issues. After the roundtable discussions were complete, the Grand Island Affordable Housing Survey was distributed before the meeting was adjourned.

The second steering committee meeting was held January 6, 2009 in the Grand Island City Hall. Schemmer staff presented a review of what was presented at the second public hearing, providing the basic Strengths-Weaknesses- Opportunities- Threats (SWOT) analysis results to the committee members. The committee then reviewed the goals of the existing community housing study to gauge the progress made and to understand what specific areas may need more attention. The committee then reviewed the proposed goals of the current study to compare it to the existing study and make adjustments.

The third and final steering committee meeting was held on February 3, 2009 in the Grand Island City Hall. Schemmer consultants reviewed the housing affordability analysis with those in attendance. The study's goals and recommendations were also reviewed and modified during the meeting. The committee closed out the meeting with a review of the draft document, as provided by The Schemmer Associates.

Public Open House

The City held a public meeting to invite comments about or suggestions for the Affordable Housing Market Study on December 11, 2008, at the Grand Island Public Library. Those in attendance assisted in the development of a detailed Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis. The results of the SWOT analysis are included in Appendix C.