PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Jacksonville

Where Florida Begins.

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 28, 2015

TO: Bill Gulliford, City Council, District 13

FROM: Elaine D. Spencer, Chief
          Housing and Community Development Division

RE: Possible Strategies and Uses of the Vacant Registry Funds in Jacksonville

At the January 20, 2015 Neighborhoods Subcommittee meeting, staff was tasked to prioritize list of three activities for potential uses for the Vacant Registry Funds. In an effort to address Blight from a holistic prospective, we developed three strategies that the various activities In doing so, we thought it would Dialogue was exchanged about some of the successful programs that were discontinued due to budgetary restraints.

Strategy 1:   Foreclosure Prevention Strategy - Direct Services to Homeowners with properties on the Vacant Registry

- Foreclosure Intervention – Provides direct cash assistance, up to $8,500, to individuals and families who are in default or facing possible foreclosure action that meet the eligibility criterion.

- Foreclosure Mediation – Provides consumer credit counseling and mediation services to eligible homeowners to prevent foreclosure actions through possible loan modification and/or other viable resolutions.

- Educational brochures, including the creation, production and distribution of informational material to assist with foreclosure prevention and foreclosure intervention. Promote the education and advertisement of the accomplishments of the vacant registry initiative.

Strategy 2: Housing and Community Development Strategy - Services to Private Residential Properties Surrounding Vacant Registry Properties

- Provide resources for mowing, board-ups and demolition of blighted private properties on or in proximity to homes on the vacant registry.

- Provide gap or construction financing to non-profit developers for the acquisition, rehabilitation and sale of vacant and/or REO homes in which the total development costs exceeds the appraised value of the home.

Strategy 3: Neighborhood Organizational Development, Outreach and Education - Assistance to Neighborhoods and Organizations in which Vacant Registry Properties are located

- **CommUniverCity** – The CommUniverCity was a multi-week leadership training course that was offered to potential community leaders citywide. The goal of CommUniverCity was to teach skills that would establish and maintain successful neighborhood organizations. Some of the topics that can be presented at the CommUniverCity classes were: 1) How to run an effective meeting, 2) Leadership styles and personal development, 3) Team building, 4) How to create a flyer or newsletter, 5) How to make a presentation, 6) Local Government structure, 7) Land Use and Zoning, 8) Networking, 9) Crime Prevention, 10) Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Studies, 11) ShAdCo, 12) Roberts Rules of Order , 13) Cultural Diversity and 14) take a bus tour. The bus tour will provide a visual experience for the participants to see what other areas of Jacksonville are concerned with and how their neighborhood addressed the issues. Some additional outreach activities can also include Neighborhood Roundtables, Educational Fairs and a Citywide e-newsletter to inform a wider audience than we currently can.

- Neighborhood Matching Grants – Communities in neighborhoods with high foreclosure rates could apply for funds up to $5,000 for physical improvements in their communities. The funds awarded would be linked to what the neighborhoods could match in funds, donations and sweat equity. Some of the possible uses could be: 1) Clean up graffiti, 2) Repair or install new fencing, 3) Replace or develop neighborhood identification or entrance signs, 4) Community gardens, and 5) Painting/landscaping of pre-selected homes in areas surrounding the properties on the vacant registry.

I look looking forward to the further discussions. Thank you for this opportunity.

EDS/dvg