

Buena Vida Choice Neighborhood Plan
Working Group Meeting 1 – Housing and Commercial Development

May 25, 2017

Housing Authority of the City of Brownsville

Included below is a summary of potential strategies and initial project ideas described by participants at the first Working Group Meeting.

HOUSING

Draft Strategy 1: Improve neighborhood safety and livability to attract housing development

- Commercial and multifamily. Security streets, lighting and better lights.
- Historic perspective and new development. Better buildings, lights and water.
- Safety implement neighborhood watch, increase BPD, presence in the area, encourage reporting any incidents and measures. Student housing: implement safe walk ways to get to TSC or UTRGV crossing Int. Boulevard because is not easy, and it is dangerous.
- Make security and respect whiting the community.
- Safety: eyes in the street, keep institutions of clean distance. Safe for danger, establish neighborhood watch group, bike areas, districts parks and ways that can convert to retail over time.
- Security cameras, transitional housing, single room occupancy (GNSH)
- Strengthen the policy for selection/screening of new residents and provide more security.
- Vandalism, there is need for security cameras; there is a lot of crime during the daytime.
- We would like more security or police presence to prevent vandalism; we would like that residents feel confident to call the police; I would like to have more support for the police.
- Increase surveillance not only in the development, but also in the surrounding areas e.g. the alleys where are the offenders.
- Increase police surveillance and security cameras; I would like that residents would support each other because we are at risk.

Draft Strategy 2: Develop programs to help owners, renters and potential buyers

- Promote financial literacy education by establish current sessions through institutions.
- Addressing costs understanding ability skills, no cost- low cost important for residents.
- Understanding utility bills.
- Education programs for neighborhood to improve the negative impact of the city. Long term planning education for owners to help avoid displacement of income families.
- Having some fees to cover some programs and a cost saving strategy for projects.
- Promote and educate on the bottom line responsibilities to your neighborhood.

- Neighbors seem to shift responsibility to outside services without identifying what they can do to solve the problems in the community.
- Education of information on maintenance homes and schedule maintenance.
- Education utilities cost, when in danger, what to do who to call.

Draft Strategy 3: Improve public spaces and neighborhood connections

- Increase connectivity to the neighborhood by making areas more friendly and accessible for residents and artists. Continue achieving green spaces to implement programs.
- Housing that engages the street and public space for bikes, eyes on the street, encourage community building (people outside of their cars).
- Foster the walk ability.
- Evaluate parking to improve the zone, we need parking areas.
- Allow the pass-through traffic, cross walks, increase police patrol, bicycle patrol, financial advising sessions, seek local donors for quality of life, zoo day, beach day, trampoline park, etc.
- Evaluate parking need.
- Ensure ADA accessibility.

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COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Draft Strategy 1: Ensure better promotion and visibility of local businesses

- Mapping area in business in the active webpage at Brownsville. Connect ideas with other districts in Brownsville and Texas.
- Job fair.
- Enforce codes on the business streets.
- Better lighting, mainly for businesses.
- Supply a location for business.
- Education marketing, collaboration with organizations and business near Buena Vida, Public relations, resident's needs.
- Collaboration among business network with Buena Vida
- Establish associations to formally share challenges and opportunities.
- Understand residents need by establishing business expo. SBA, WB or other orgs to establish workshops and regular basis.

Draft Strategy 2: Create a healthier business environment within the neighborhood

- Collaborate with transportation and funds for the community and BID.
- Business, university housing, low ranting neighborhood can make this possible. Local institutions and local business, UTRGV, TSC, BISD.
- Farmer market twice a week in the neighborhood so they do not have to travel to purchase products.
- Assist business with delivering to Buena Vida and expand services.
- Call Mr. Butt to clarify that not only HEB is the best store for the community that is in Buena Vida, how Buena Vida neighborhood rehabilitated with efforts this community.
- Implement educational workshops on topics like online presence for business, done in collaboration with organizations that have programs like this already in place, such as the women's business development center.
- Shared space to reduce cost of monthly rent.
- Incorporate commercial space with in Buena Vida Development along of 14th street is option which is high traffic.

- Learn what the actual needs are that must be met, learn what we would like once necessities are being met, choices can be expanded.
- Study the possibility to educate and installing security systems.
- We would like a supermarket in close proximity and stores that are close to our homes.
- I would like more grocery stores and more frequent buses (every 30 minutes). To improve downtown conditions; add more stores because it's very empty.
- I like Buena Vida because is close to HEB, the zoo, tortilla stores, and parks.