

City of Hopkinsville's Inner-City Residential Enterprise Zone Program Summary

The City of Hopkinsville's Inner-City Residential Enterprise Zone is an initiative being undertaken by Hopkinsville City Council in an effort to revitalize and rehabilitate four (4) targeted inner-city residential neighborhoods and the downtown business district. This initiative, commonly referred to as the Inner-City REZ, is being funded through a City appropriation of \$500,000 per year over a five (5) year period.

A twelve (12) member Inner-City Advisory Committee, appointed by Mayor Dan Kemp, is responsible for developing plans, programs, and policies concerning the Inner-City REZ. The Committee Members represent a large array of community leaders in the areas of housing, downtown development, minority development, education, and faith-based development. The Christian County/Hopkinsville Development Corporation, a local non-profit organization charged with the responsibility of providing affordable housing and encouraging downtown development, is responsible for the administrative duties associated with this initiative.

The following four (4) elements serve as the basis for the Inner-City REZ initiative: (1) Clean and Safe Neighborhoods, (2) Housing Stock Revitalization, (3) Economic Infrastructure, or Downtown Development, and (4) Economic Opportunity Plan.

Financed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the *Guide to Implementation of a Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative for the City of Hopkinsville, Kentucky* was developed by Dennison Associates, a consulting firm located in Washington, D.C. This comprehensive housing strategy includes recommendations for the revitalization of Hopkinsville's inner-city neighborhoods. Camiros, an Urban Design Team firm from Chicago, Illinois was sub-contracted to develop "model block concepts" to visually demonstrate the impact suggested neighborhood revitalization efforts could have on the areas. Kentucky Housing Corporation provided funding for the development of a housing market study which was completed by Rouse and Associates from Lexington, Kentucky. The Inner-City REZ Program provided funding for the development of the *Downtown Renaissance Plan*. Copies of these documents may be found on this site.

To date, the following legislation has been adopted by Hopkinsville City Council as a result of the Inner-City REZ Program: Neighborhood Networks Ordinance, Abandoned Urban Properties Ordinance, Basic Property Maintenance Code, and Downtown 50/50 Matching Grant Program. The Neighborhood Networks Ordinance provides parameters by which neighborhood groups can seek funding for programs and projects within their neighborhoods. The Abandoned Urban Properties Ordinance allows the City to tax "abandoned" properties at \$1.50 per \$100 assessed value in an effort to encourage property owners to make improvements to their properties. The Basic Property Maintenance Code serves as a tool for providing tenants with relief regarding sub-standard housing while also serving as a tool for requiring all properties to be maintained to a minimum standard. The Downtown 50/50 Matching Grant Program provides a reimbursement of up to \$10,000 for the acquisition and restoration of properties along the main corridors in the downtown area. Copies of these documents may also be found on this site.

Additional incentive programs that have been developed to encourage residential and downtown development and will be forwarded to Hopkinsville City Council in the coming months include a Collateralized Loan Program, an Enterprise Zone Program, and a Preservation in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) Program. Additionally, an Interagency Governmental Task Force is being developed to provide the neighborhoods with proper access to governmental departments and utility providers to assist with undertaking public infrastructure projects.

The Hopkinsville and Christian County Landbank Authority, Inc. has been established to acquire and dispose of tax-delinquent properties within the Inner-City REZ area. It is their goal to return vacant properties within the inner-city to a useful state through providing housing, economic development, or recreational spaces. Copies of the “Interlocal Cooperation Agreement Authorizing the Establishment of the Hopkinsville and Christian County Landbank Authority, Inc.” and the Hopkinsville and Christian County Landbank Authority, Inc.’s Articles of Incorporation and By-laws may be found on this site.

Plans are underway for the development of an Economic Opportunity Plan through a partnership with the local Workforce Development Committee, chaired by Hopkinsville Community College President Dr. Jim Selbe. The goal is to provide educational and job training opportunities to the residents who live within the targeted areas in hopes of better preparing them to enter the work force.