



## Targeted Community Development Task Force Recommendations February 2023

### Recommendations to the Mayor, City Board, & City Manager

1. Create an Economic Development Commission empowered with funding (grants and/or city funds) and with seats filled by residents from targeted communities. (See attached [draft ordinance](#).)
2. Hire U of A Community Design Center to collaborate with AEDI and the City to design a comprehensive and community-inclusive master plan for all targeted areas. (See attached [proposal](#).)
3. Public Works is collecting resident input on infrastructure needs in each ward to determine how to spend bond funds. Currently, this funding is equally distributed among all seven wards. We propose allocating additional funds for community-sourced infrastructure projects in targeted areas.
4. Acknowledge, reference, and include recommendations from neighborhood action plans when planning/budgeting public works projects. Ensure funding for staff positions to develop and monitor such plans. In the meantime, develop a toolkit to expand capacity for neighborhoods to create and implement action plans.
5. Maximize efficiency and/or expand capacity to provide additional fair housing counseling, information, mediation, and education.
6. Increase affordable access to indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities. Prioritize programs for youth and young adults, but also ensure we're adequately serving older adults, people with disabilities, and young children.
7. Utilize an equity lens when delivering public works services (ex: increase/prioritize bulky items pick-up in areas with the most need).
8. Build more walking paths and sidewalks, prioritize installing additional streetlights, address hazardous ditches, and ensure park equipment is safe and inclusive. Prioritize areas in the most need.
9. Identify and amend City policies that create barriers to home-based businesses (ex: draft ordinance reviewed by Planning Commission November 2022).
10. Identify and amend City codes and policies that create barriers to innovative food distribution models. Ask state administrators to do the same. (ex: zoning changes within residential areas or permit temporary uses that strict application of zoning would prohibit).
11. Develop new partnerships to improve and maintain private grocery store facilities in targeted neighborhoods inside and out.

12. Financially support local curb and farmer's markets (ex: Neighborhood Resource Specialists could work with local property owners—or use city property—to host weekend tent markets with local farmers and makers.)
13. Refocus the mission of Neighborhood Resource Centers. Fully staff and train Neighborhood Resource Specialists and Community-Oriented Police positions.
14. Spur local private investment in targeted areas through technical assistance and incentives (financial and in-kind) [ex: invest in training community-focused builders in real estate development and construction similar to [Invest Atlanta](#) and [Incremental Development Alliance](#) trainings (partners should include Housing & Neighborhood Programs and Planning & Development); partner with federal and nonprofit agencies to support the establishment of community-owned grocery cooperatives].
15. Adopt a traditional neighborhood-compatible zoning code for neighborhoods platted prior to the 1961 code, particularly those currently zoned R4.
16. Formalize the processes for neighborhood associations, neighborhood-focused nonprofits, or private residents to implement public infrastructure improvements. This process must prioritize targeted areas.
17. Update the land use plan to identify a village center(s) in each neighborhood that includes commercial and governmental spaces, community gardens, parks, etc. Plan parking based on the area plan, not on individual parcels.
18. Collaborate with community organizations to repurpose alleyways in targeted areas to encourage walking, biking, and youth recreation.
19. Adequately fund programs that assist older adults and people with disabilities with retrofitting inclusive design.
20. Develop a comprehensive affordable housing development strategy to include mixed use development and creative financing options for low-income homebuyers to prevent displacement. This may include the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts to capture funding to support new affordable housing through development subsidies to ensure affordable rents and home-buyer assistance to make home purchases affordable.
21. Protect and preserve the MLK spring for the South End community.

### **Recommendations to the new Economic Development Commission**

1. Administer housing/land/property block grants to improve neighborhoods (see [Oswego Renaissance Org](#)).
2. Advocate/support surveying (digital scanning/grading) neighborhoods to identify area specific problems such as road quality, speeding, lack of sidewalks, flooding, etc.

3. Collaborate to maintain a comprehensive asset map of organizational resources in targeted communities.
4. Encourage coordination of right of way improvements with utilities to bury/improve/repair as needed through simultaneous, coordinated effort.
5. Work with Rock Region Metro to provide extended hours and options in areas hit hardest by the grocery gap.
6. Make funding, land, and resources available to community organizations to promote access to food through grocery store alternatives, community gardens, and urban agriculture projects.
7. Identify areas in Little Rock that have affordability gaps (rents are too high for families at or below area median income) and that have appraisal gaps (even new homes appraise below cost of construction). Use this information as a basis for neighborhood stabilization efforts.
8. Synthesize existing data, innovative policy, and improved government processes to improve existing housing stock (ex: license qualified home inspectors to act as City-approved rental inspectors to eliminate the backlog of uninspected properties. Rental operators should pay for the cost of inspection, and could be incentivized by discounted business licenses).
9. Collaborate to hire laborers from within targeted areas to rehab vacant lots and assist homeowners with maintenance and yard clean up as required.
10. Consider piloting 5-1-1 call center staffed with targeted community members to provide voter education, polling information, and community resources including transportation..