



# Community Challenge Planning Grant

## *Overview and Progress Report*

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District of Columbia

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## *partnership for* **Sustainable Communities** an interagency partnership HUD • DOT • EPA

### Livability Principles

- provide more **transportation choices**
- promote equitable, **affordable housing**
- enhance **economic competitiveness**
- support **existing communities**
- coordinate and **leverage** federal policies and investment
- value communities and **neighborhoods**

On June 16, 2009, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) joined together to help communities nationwide improve access to affordable housing, increase transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment.

(<http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov>)

In June 2010, HUD's Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities (OSHC) released a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), soliciting applications for two competitive grant programs, one of which was the Community Challenge Planning Grant. The DC Department of Housing and Community Development created an innovative proposal that addressed the six livability principles that guide the Sustainable Communities Initiative, and was awarded the maximum grant amount of \$3 million.





Over the three year life of the grant, DHCD and its partners will carry out a series of related activities that fall into three categories:

1) Community Engagement

Ward 8 Community Summit

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2) Affordable Housing

Property Acquisitions

Anti-Displacement Housing Counseling

Live Near Your Work Pilot

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3) Economic Development

Economic Development Implementation Strategy

Consolidated Transportation and Land Use Plan

Workforce Skills Assessment

Cooperative Business Assessment

Small Business Technical Assistance

East of the Anacostia Bicycling Program

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In addition to the \$3 million in Challenge Grant funds, the District will invest \$3 million of non-Challenge funds for related activities in the same geographic target area.

Budget

\$3 Million

Federal Challenge Grant Funds

\$3 Million

Match from DHCD and Partners

\$6 Million

Total Spent in Target Area

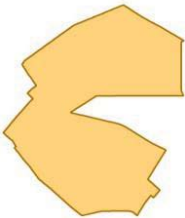
Timeline

February 28, 2011 to February 27, 2014






**HUD-DHCD Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) Target Area**  
Census Tracts 75.03; 75.04; 76.01  
in Fairlawn and Historic Anacostia



**Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE Business Corridor**  
From Good Hope Road SE in Anacostia  
to Sterling Street SE in Congress Heights

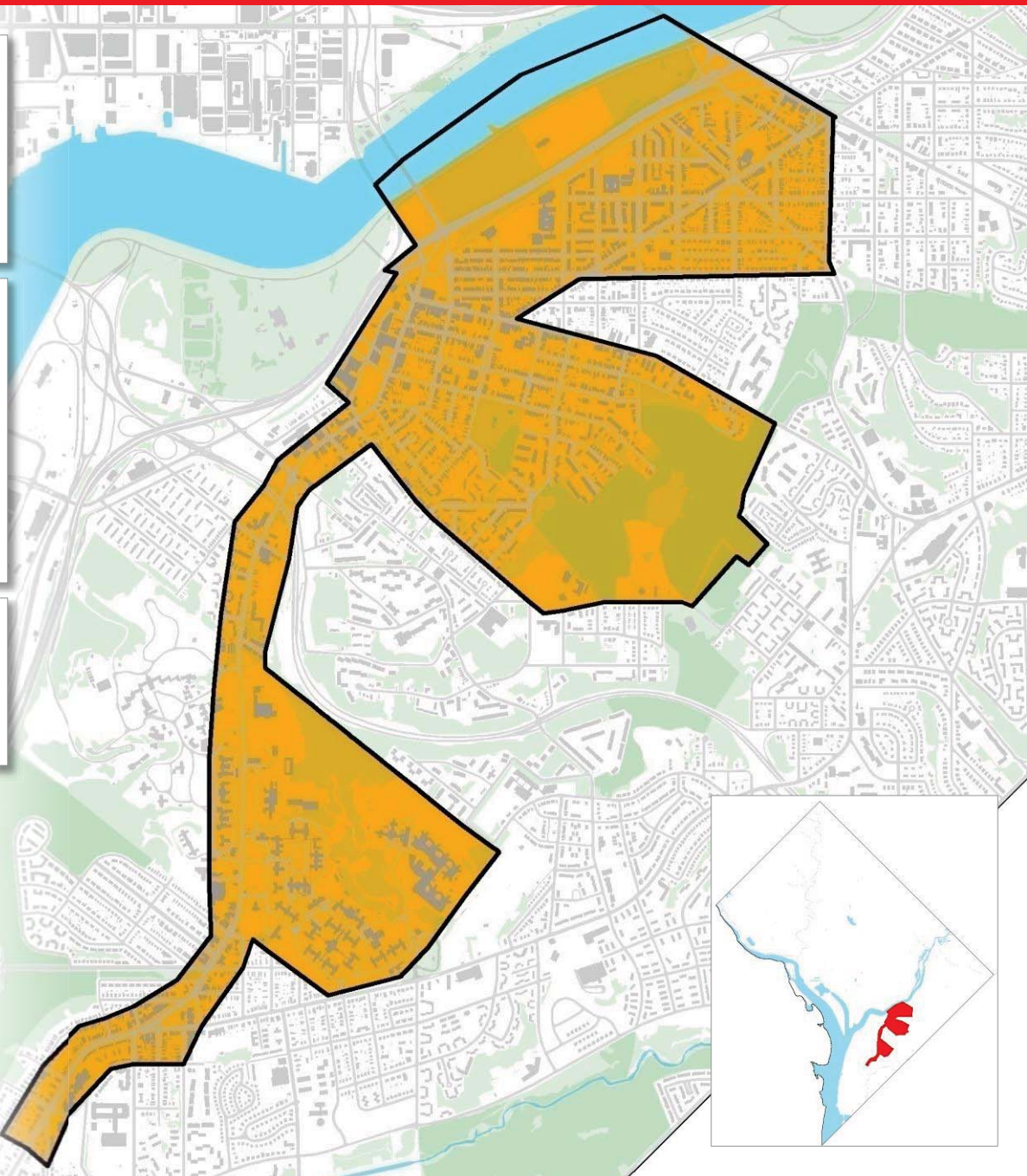


**St. Elizabeths East Campus**  
District-Owned Portion



All Challenge Grant activities target a specific geographic area, located in the District of Columbia's Ward 8 and covering parts of the Fairlawn, Historic Anacostia, Hillside, Barry Farm, and Congress Heights neighborhoods.

The Target Area is the union of three geographies (shown above) that were selected based on two criteria: (a) the ability to leverage other federal and local investments, and (b) the potential for impacts and opportunities as a result of the redevelopment of the St. Elizabeths campus.







On Saturday, July 9, 2011, nearly 600 Ward 8 residents, community leaders, and guests joined Mayor Vincent C. Gray, District Councilmembers, and Agency Directors at the Savoy and Thurgood Marshall Academy Sports and Learning Center to help shape the future of Ward 8.

Throughout the meeting, participants used keypad polling to register their views and engaged in facilitated group discussions about the future of their communities. The Ward 8 Community Summit utilized methodology from AmericaSpeaks, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that engages citizens in the public decision-making that affects their lives.

This event launched the Challenge Grant effort and guided the activities that will be undertaken throughout the three year grant performance period.

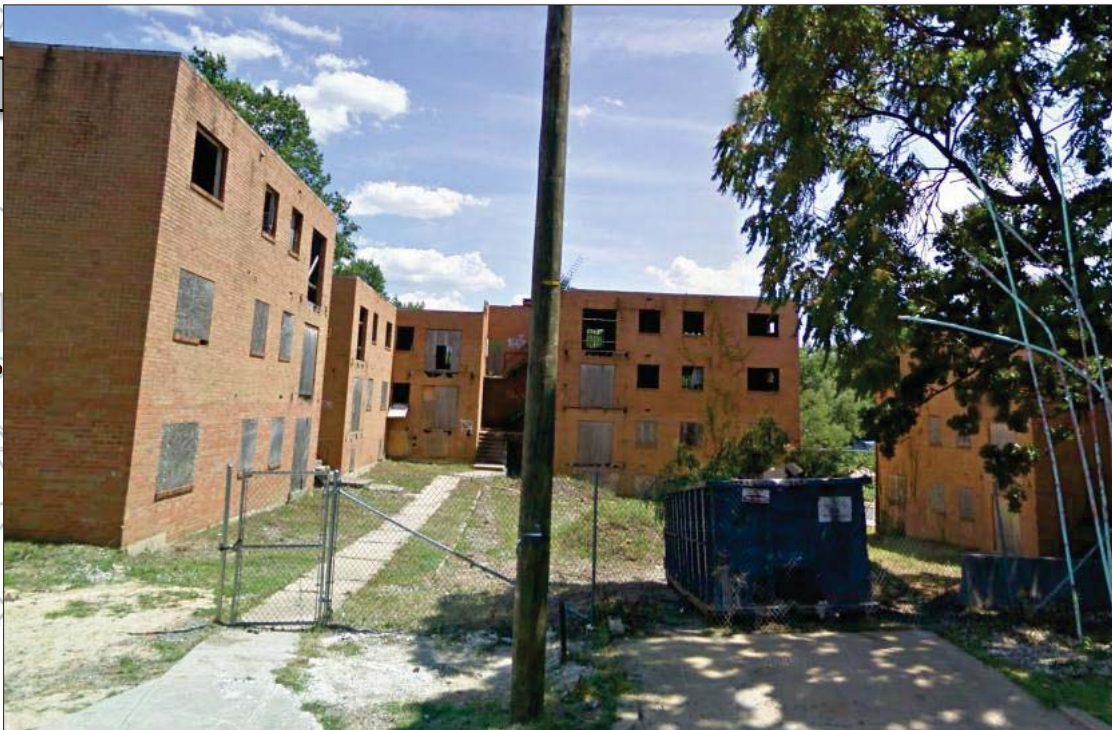
The preliminary report created based on the community's input can be viewed here: <http://dmped.dc.gov/DC/DMPED/Programs+and+Initiatives/Neighborhood+Revitalization/Ward+Eight/Ward+8+Community+Summit+Preliminary+Report>



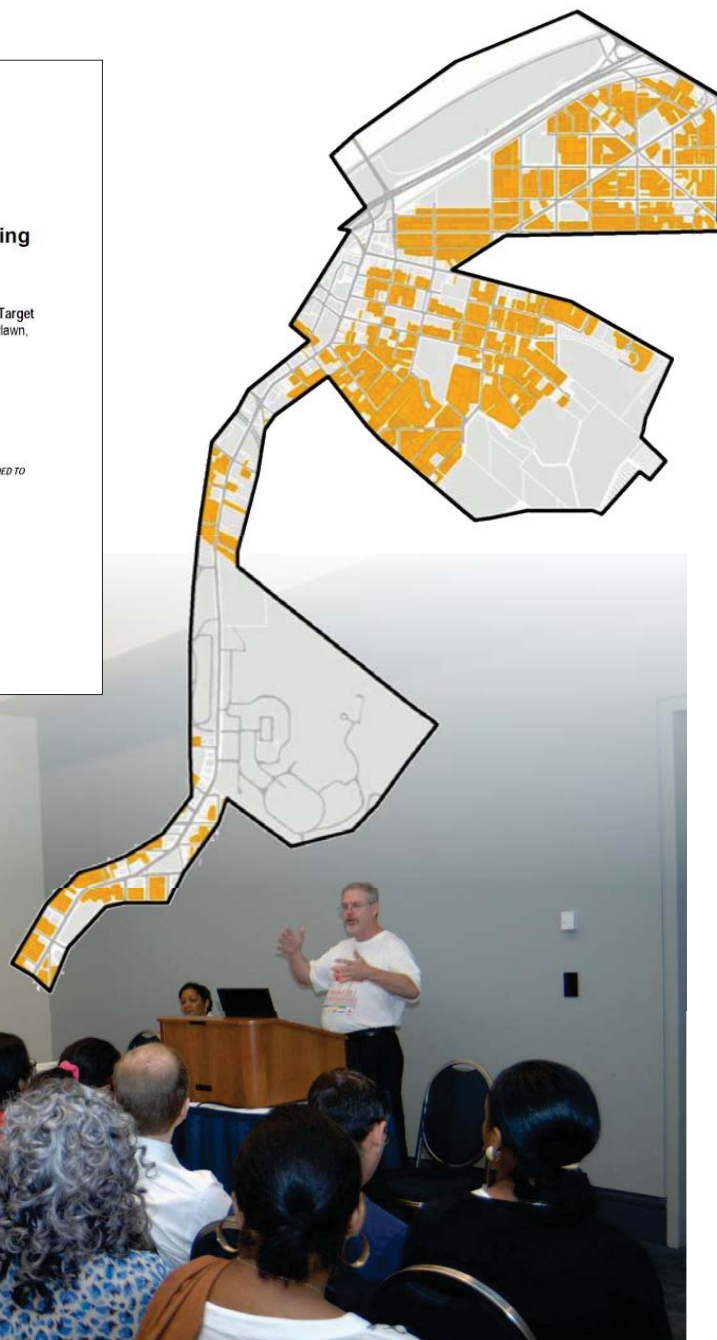
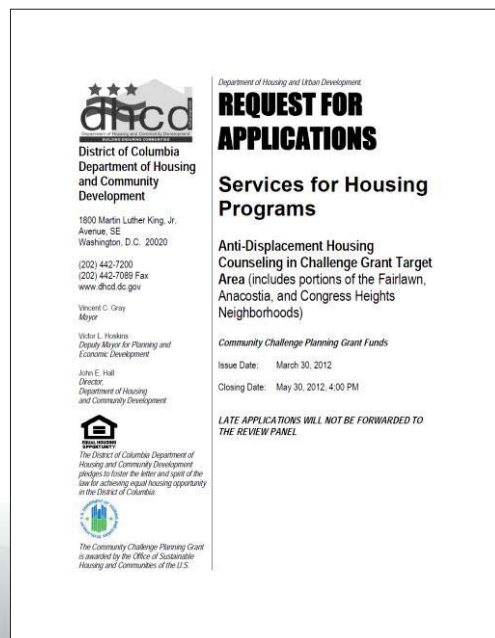


During the three year grant period, DHCD's Property Acquisition and Disposition Division (PADD) will acquire vacant and blighted residential properties in the Challenge Grant target area and create a strategy to redevelop them as affordable housing.

PADD's efforts will be guided in part by the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs' (DCRA) biannual vacant and blighted property list. The red dots on the map to the left represent properties that DCRA has deemed blighted. To date, PADD has leveraged Challenge Grant funds to acquire the largest blighted property on the list, located at 2352-2360 High Street SE.



2352-2360 High Street SE: Acquired by DHCD on 3/30/2012 (image credit: Google)



There are over 2,400 residential properties (shaded orange) in the Challenge Grant target area, made up of a mix of single family homes, condominiums, cooperatives, and apartments.

The federal and District governments as well as the private sector have begun to make significant investments in and around the target area that have the potential to raise the cost of housing

The Challenge Grant will fund an outreach and counseling program to empower residents with the knowledge they need to take advantage of the housing programs that DHCD offers in order to stay in their homes and benefit from the changes to the neighborhoods.

On March 30, 2012, DHCD released a Request for Applications soliciting a nonprofit organization to administer the Challenge Grant Anti-Displacement Housing Counseling Program. Applications were received on May 30, 2012.

<http://dhcd.dc.gov/release/dhcd-releases-funding-availability>





Beginning in 2013, DHCD and the Office of Planning will develop a means tested home purchase assistance program designed to motivate federal employees who work at the St. Elizabeth’s campus to purchase homes and reside in the surrounding neighborhoods, within the Challenge Grant target area.

The *Live Near Your Work* concept promotes environmental sustainability by reducing employee commute times and will contribute to the commercial and residential revitalization of the neighborhoods in the target area.





Beginning in 2012, the DC Office of Planning will lead an interagency, multi-stakeholder effort to assess the people-based and place-based economic development needs and opportunities in the target area. Stakeholder input, data and analysis, and a review of best practices and previous plans will be among the factors that inform the development of a comprehensive economic development implementation strategy.

The Implementation roadmap intends to leverage the full potential of the assets in the District and region in order to:

- Develop a bottom-up platform that connects community members, especially youth and underemployed individuals, to a range of jobs, including those that pay living wages and offer career ladder opportunities;
- Position the project area to increase resident employment, businesses, regional competitiveness, income and revenue;
- Develop and implement a sustainable strategy to link workforce development, job creation and entrepreneurship to the District's economic development agenda;
- Decrease unemployment in the area by increasing employers' access to and readiness to hire qualified employees; and
- Formulate a strategy to attract and grow innovative businesses in commercial districts and support existing small businesses





Over the past decade, District agencies have completed seven land use and neighborhood revitalization plans and four transportation and transit plans in the neighborhoods of the Challenge Grant target area, with another five studies currently ongoing. Given the amount of work being done here, there is a great need for interagency coordination and community engagement to ensure that each project and increment of development will lead to more livable, accessible, and mixed-income neighborhoods. For this activity, which is set to begin this year, OP will link and build off of existing land use and transportation plans to create mechanisms for helping the community visualize the physical changes that will occur at the neighborhood level once the plans are implemented. The consolidated plan will consider modifications to existing land use and zoning for new development opportunity sites. Finally it will explore creating design guidelines to ensure that new development is architecturally compatible with its surrounding context.





Beginning in 2012, DHCD and its partner, the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, will work to create and connect local residents with high quality job opportunities through the following tasks:

- Conduct a local workforce skills assessment;
- Identify potential cooperative business structures based on local procurement opportunities, public interest and workforce skills; and
- Identify the next steps required to implement a cooperative business structure.







As of March 2012, DHCD has partnered with two local community development organizations – Congress Heights Community Training and Development Corporation (CHCTDC) and Anacostia Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) – to perform three sequential tasks that will help existing small businesses improve their operations and help aspiring entrepreneurs establish their businesses:

- Conduct Business and Commercial Property Inventory
- Implement Business Health Checks
- Provide Small Business Technical Assistance



The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) East of the Anacostia Program is part of a multi-year strategy to improve mobility, livability, and access to economic opportunity for residents of these communities. In its initial year, the program focuses on identifying existing cyclists, encouraging new cyclists, and sowing the seeds of cycling in the project area. In subsequent years, focus will begin to shift toward empowering citizens to

plan for and cooperatively implement safety and mobility improvements. Throughout the entire process, WABA will continue its constant efforts to plan for facility improvements that would make bicycling a safer and more viable mobility option for residents east of the Challenge Grant target area. This activity commenced on April 1, 2012. For more information, visit: <http://www.waba.org/blog/tag/east-of-the-anacostia-2011/>



## Community Engagement

- Do you want to help shape the future of Ward 8? Participate in quarterly Summit follow-up meetings and periodic community meetings on specific issues.

## Affordable Housing

- Do you live in the Challenge Grant target area? If so, enroll in an anti-displacement housing counseling workshop to learn about the resources that are available for purchasing a home, avoiding foreclosure, or learning about and taking advantage of your rights as a tenant.
- Are you an employee of the Coast Guard, Homeland Security, or another organization that will relocate to the St. Elizabeths campus? If so, you may be eligible for down-payment assistance to purchase a home in the Challenge Grant target area.
- Do you know of vacant or abandoned properties that could be redeveloped as affordable housing? Report them to DCRA at [vacantbuildings@dc.gov](mailto:vacantbuildings@dc.gov). DHCD uses this list to help determine which properties to acquire.

## Economic Development

- Are you a resident, or do you work with residents of the Challenge Grant target area? Take the workforce skills assessment to help determine potential cooperative business opportunities for target area residents.
- Do you own or are you interested in starting a small business in the target area? Receive small business technical assistance to help overcome any obstacles you are facing or worry that you may face in the future.
- Do you want a cheaper, faster, and healthier way to get around in the city? Fix up your bike at a mobile bike workshop, take a class or join a group ride with the Washington Area Bicyclists Association.

*Further information about each of these activities will be available on the DHCD website.*



The redevelopment of St. Elizabeths as the headquarters for the US Department of Homeland Security has the potential to trigger major changes in the surrounding neighborhoods, and the Challenge Grant activities outlined in this report aim to ensure that residents and businesses in the target area benefit from these changes and have a meaningful role in establishing a unified vision for their community. All activities are aligned with the following three goals:

- Sustain and expand affordable housing options for lower income and senior households;
- Leverage public and private investment to develop an economic development implementation plan that strengthens the unique assets of the target area, including expanding small business development and enhancing residents' access to employment opportunities; and
- Conduct a community engagement campaign to ensure that residents lead the planning process and shape the ensuing redevelopment and implementation strategies.

Through the range of strategies presented here, DHCD and its partners will embody the Sustainable Communities Initiative's Livability Principles in the Challenge Grant target area by leveraging investment to support existing communities, enhancing choices for transportation, and improving access to safe and affordable housing for residents.



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