

2019/2020 Local Technical Assistance and Community Planning Programs

Application Number: 80

Project Title: Will County Implementation Assistance Partnership

Applicant: Will County



Project Description:

The Fairmont Neighborhood Plan, completed in 2012 with the assistance of an LTA grant is currently being implemented and Will County is seeking assistance to revisit the plan. The purpose of revisiting the plan is to reengage the community, coordinate multi-stakeholder efforts and prioritize future projects. During the development of the Plan, the top issues for attendees included poor infrastructure and residents clearly identified the need to improve all aspects of infrastructure as their highest priority. Will County has been working on infrastructure improvements since adoption of the Plan. A Sidewalks to School Grant funded the construction of a sidewalk near the Fairmont elementary school and CDBG funding has been used for a multi-phase stormwater drainage improvement plan for south and central Fairmont. During drainage improvement work, it was discovered that the water system was in disrepair and we successfully worked out a plan with the City of Joliet to take over the water and sewer system. This will also be a multi-year CDBG funded project and will make redevelopment possible in Fairmont. Other progress on the Plan includes a referendum for a garbage service contract that now serves all of Fairmont, owner occupied rehab, neighborhood clean-ups and installation of a community garden. We are now working on options for vacating underutilized right-of-ways and redeveloping vacant lots. In addition to the work Will County has done, other entities have also added value to the quality of life in Fairmont. The Lockport Township Park District has increased programming at the Fairmont Community Center and has rehabilitated the Center. The Lewis University Office of Engaged Learning is assisting with bringing technology to the Center and the Food Pantry operations. Habitat for Humanity has rehabilitated properties in Fairmont and has resumed new construction in the community. Revisiting the Plan would allow us to reconvene the Fairmont residents and stakeholders to highlight progress on the Plan, capitalize on the synergies and prioritize projects for going forward. In addition to reconvening the existing stakeholders, we also have some new stakeholders that we would like to engage based on their expressed interest in the community. There is an increasing Hispanic population and revisiting the plan could be an opportunity to identify and/or bridge cultural differences. Additionally, a local lending institution is interested in partnering with the County on a revitalization strategy, the Housing Authority of Joliet is demolishing a housing project just south of Fairmont and is concurrently developing senior housing near Fairmont and has a vested interest in the area as does an investor that has recently begun to buy up vacant lots in Fairmont. Critical obstacles for redevelopment have or are being addressed and while all the activity in Fairmont is encouraging we feel it is important to touch back on the Plan with community residents to help guide and prioritize next steps. Assistance is requested with outreach, convening relevant partners and conducting priority setting workshops.

Project Location: Fairmont CDP

Lockport Township, Will County