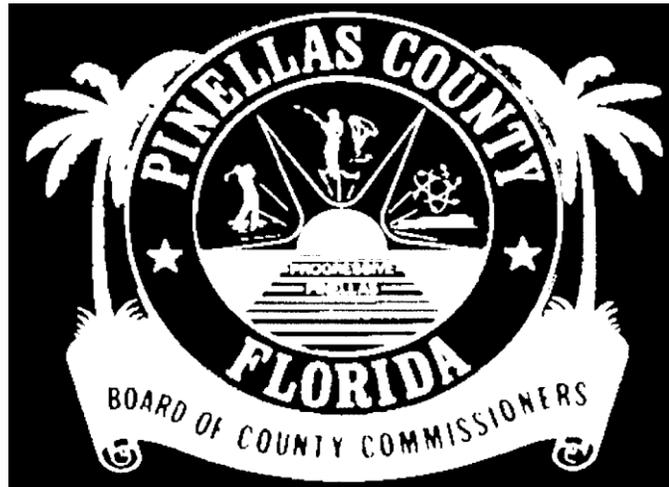


PINELLAS COUNTY FLORIDA CONSORTIUM
ACTION PLAN FOR COMMUNITY
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR
1994-1995

Dansville Redevelopment Area
Approved by BCC: July 1994
Approved by HUD: 10/1/1994



Prepared for: Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners

July 1994

Introduction

One way in which Pinellas County effects non-housing community development is through neighborhood revitalization. This is accomplished by the selection and revitalization of *target areas*. Target areas are chosen on the bases of severe infrastructure and social decay and the potential for change on a community-wide scale. Pinellas County currently has two active target areas: Dansville and Highpoint. This plan will describe community development activities in each of these areas separately.

The overview section for each area details the manifold problems that exist in the respective target areas. The subsequent strategy plan outlines a long-range strategy for the correction of these problems. Overall, it is meant as a plan for the revitalization and stabilization of the area. It also provides an overall vision of what the plan seeks to accomplish.

The strategies described herein have been carefully chosen and devised to effect the greatest amount of positive change with the amount of resources that can reasonably be expected to be available during the life of the project. Each of these strategies will be brought to bear on the needs of the neighborhood previously noted. Often, several strategies will be used to address a single need, and too, individual strategies will address several needs. The result is an interwoven fabric of plans which complement one other and, ultimately, work as a single program to achieve the desired results.

An integral part of the strategic development process has been the forging of community partnerships. These partnerships allow for the accomplishment of the project in a coordinated manner, so that both efficiency and results are maximized.

Substrategies, or objectives, manifest themselves through proposed accomplishments that serve to achieve the specified long-range goals. As with the strategies, the intermingling of these accomplishments under the different strategies will be common.

Dansville Redevelopment Area

The Dansville neighborhood is 68 acres, located just north of Ulmerton Road and west of Ridge Road in unincorporated Pinellas County. It is part of a larger African-American community referred to as the Baskins/Dansville/Ridgecrest community which is comprised of 481 acres. The Dansville neighborhood is primarily residential, with single-family houses, several commercial uses, three churches and a community center. It is bounded by Terra Excavating pit (Pine Street/134th Avenue) on the north, Jackson Street/125th Street North on the east, Indian Rocks Mobile Home Park on the south and Pine Street S.W. on the west.

The Dansville neighborhood contains portions of the unincorporated sections of Census Tract 252.07 Block Group 2 and 3. According to 1990 Census data supplied by HUD, Block Group 2 is 88.5% low-moderate income and Block Group 3 is 31.8%; combined they are 70.45%. Block Group 2 also includes the Pinellas County Housing Authority's Ridgeview Apartments and Block Group 3 includes the Indian Rocks and Glenwood Mobile Home Parks.

On October 3rd, 1992 a tornado swept through Pinellas Park and Largo, killing four people, and touching down in Dansville, destroying twenty-six (26) homes. Numerous other homes were damaged. Utilizing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, Pinellas County demolished twenty-five (25) substandard structures (24 houses and one commercial structure) after the tornado at an estimated cost of \$48,708. An additional \$260,793 in CDBG funds were spent to remove 15,143 car and truck tires; 12,050 cubic yards of material from three existing neighborhood junk yards that was distributed on twenty-one (21) lots as a result of the tornado; 7,850 cubic yards of trees and shrubs from thirty-six (36) lots; and 380 cubic yards of household trash from nine (9) lots.

Dansville developed in the 1940's as a nesting place for African-American citrus workers that picked, packed and processed oranges among the vast groves that once dominated Pinellas County. Other African-Americans gravitated to the area because of customs and ordinances in surrounding towns that encouraged racial discrimination and segregation. As a result, the conveyance of property over the years has been haphazard. Property owners often subdivided their property and conveyed it with handwritten documents, without the benefit of surveys, title insurance, and proper legal descriptions.

A survey of the community's characteristics, conducted by the planning firm of Hanson Taylor during April of 1994, provides demographic information about the neighborhood. While only twenty of the seventy-three households in the neighborhood responded, the respondents were geographically distributed throughout the neighborhood and the data appears to be representative of the entire neighborhood. The survey indicates that the majority of the households (44%) is two-person households; 87% had three or less in the household. Seventy-three percent (73%) of the households have no children under the age of eighteen residing in the household. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the households have lived in the neighborhood for fifteen years or longer.

There are 73 homes in the neighborhood: 52 owner-occupied units and 21 tenant-occupied units. Nearly all of the tenant-occupied units are in very poor condition, but approximately two-thirds of the owner-occupied units are either in good condition or need only minor improvements. Most of the tenant-occupied units are single family homes. There is only one multi-family building in the neighborhood: a duplex on Wilcox Road.

Streets in the neighborhood are mostly dirt travel paths which give residents access to their homes. The only public right-of-way in the neighborhood is on Helm Street in the northeast corner of the neighborhood that has been platted. There are three unconnected strips of public right-of-way south of Wilcox Road. The remaining parcels are metes and bounds parcels of various sizes. There are a total of 162 parcels. The zoning is predominantly R-3 and R-4. The R-3 zoning district permits single family dwellings; R-4 permits single family dwellings, duplexes and triplexes.

Water and sewer lines were installed in the 1960's and these utilities are provided by Pinellas County. The water lines are two inch (2") galvanized pipes. The Dansville residents have made numerous complaints about the quality of the drinking water. The configuration of the water line on 127th Street is such that it is not a continuous loop with Campbell Lane which causes property owners on the 127th Street and Campbell Lane to have poor water quality. A property owner on Pine Street SW/128th Street near Wilcox Road complains of sewer gas odor from the adjacent lift station. The need to replace and upgrade water, sewer and fire protection for existing neighborhood

residents as well as for future residents is anticipated and is described in the accompanying Strategic Plan.

The neighborhood is located in the Largo Fire District. The nearest fire station (Station #39) is located at 12398 - 134th Avenue, approximately one half mile from the neighborhood. Police services are provided by the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office.

The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, the mass transit agency in Pinellas County, operates two bus routes near and through the Dansville Redevelopment Area (#59 and 61). Route 59 traverses Ulmerton and Walsingham Roads, Roosevelt Boulevard and 9th Street North and provides transportation to Indian Rocks Shopping Center, Largo Mall, AT&T Paradyne Corporation, Rubin ICOT Center, Home Shopping Network, and Gateway Mall. Route 61 traverses 125th Street North and Wilcox Road, among numerous other streets, and provides transportation to Palm Lake Village, Mease Manor, the Park Street Terminal in downtown Clearwater, Largo City Hall and the Indian Rocks Shopping Center.

The schools which service the Redevelopment Area include Anona Elementary School, Seminole Middle School and Seminole Senior High School.

The Ridge Center, located at 12601 130th Avenue North, is a neighborhood youth and family resource center converted from a 13-room bar after the 1992 tornado. It serves the residents of Dansville as well as the 190 units at Ridgeview and 500 children. The Ridge Center is owned and operated by Ridgecrest Community Services, Inc., a registered Florida corporation that was granted tax-exempt status on February 15, 1993.

The neighborhood is semi-rural in character, in part due to a considerable amount of vacant land. Over 50 parcels of varying sizes are vacant, but this land has very little value due to lack of infrastructure and difficulty of assembling buildable lots. The Property Appraiser's Office reported that the total value of property in Dansville in 1993 was \$2,817,100; the taxable value was \$1,539,770.

GOALS AND COORDINATED STRATEGY

This section outlines the long range strategy for improvements in the Dansville Redevelopment Area. A master redevelopment plan for infrastructure improvements and the reconfiguration of parcels and blocks is being developed in 1995 by an engineering consultant selected with the assistance of neighborhood residents. The plan is being developed with resident input and involvement.

Long-term Community Development Goals

The vision for the Dansville Redevelopment Area is to revitalize a deteriorated, substandard minority neighborhood into a neighborhood which meets today's development standards and provides existing and future residents with a living environment that is racially and economically-diverse while preserving the neighborhood's history and sense of place.

Long-term goals provide broad guidance for policy and action, and set forth general ideas about what is to be accomplished through the plan. The long-range goals for the Dansville Redevelopment Area are:

- 1) Create a thriving community consisting of standard housing and infrastructure which honors and promotes racial and economic diversity.
- 2) Resolve economic barriers that have prevented public and private enterprise from making investments in the neighborhood in the past and continue to make future investment prohibitively expensive. These economic barriers include but are not limited to the multiplicity of property owners, faulty lot layout including conflicting lot boundaries, accessibility and inadequate or irregular-sized lots, improper conveyance of property, and an incompatible mixture of land uses.
- 3) Eliminate blighting influences on the neighborhood, preserve and enhance the declining tax base and provide increased tax revenues in the future.

Five Year Objectives

The following objectives for the Dansville Redevelopment Area represent broad aims of the strategic plan to be carried out through specific accomplishments. Each of these objectives has been developed with the belief that they can be carried out within the specified time with resources that can reasonably be expected to be available.

- 1) Eliminate existing substandard housing, environmental, and infrastructure conditions in the neighborhood;
- 2) Construct infrastructure to current development standards wherever possible, to support existing and future planned development;
- 3) Create a neighborhood-based development corporation to construct infill housing in accordance with the master redevelopment plan;
- 4) Create a safe environment in which illegal activities and land uses are discouraged or eliminated;
- 5) Provide economic opportunities for residents and existing businesses; and
- 6) Substantially increased the value and market appeal of property in the neighborhood.

PROPOSED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The objectives listed above will be attained through the proposed accomplishments described below. It should be noted that individual activities may be directed toward more than one objective. Therefore, some proposed accomplishments will be listed more than once, as they will be identified with every objective they help to achieve.

Economic Opportunity

- 1) Encourage economic opportunities, including job creation within the neighborhood, as well as entrepreneurial initiatives and the expansion of existing small businesses in the neighborhood.
 - a) Provide for rehabilitation/new construction, technical assistance, and financing for expansion of existing businesses in the Dansville neighborhood.
 - b) Contract with a grounds maintenance company, which is owned or managed by a resident from the Baskins/Dansville/Ridgecrest community, to maintain property which is acquired by Pinellas County to implement the redevelopment plan.

- 2) Support the development of a community-based network for the holistic delivery of family support services and job-training (Juvenile Welfare Board's proposed Neighborhood Family Service Center at the Urban League's Omni Center).

Public Safety

- 1) Coordinate with Sheriff's Department on community policing efforts in Baskins/Dansville/Ridgecrest, as well as at the Pinellas County Housing Authority's Ridgeview public housing.
- 2) Strengthen existing Neighborhood Crime Watch Program for Baskins/Dansville/Ridgecrest community.
- 3) Develop methods which allow neighborhood residents to report criminal activity anonymously (i.e. drug activity, illegal dumping).

Amenities and Design

- 1) Plan, design and construct infrastructure improvements including streets, sidewalks, water, sewer, stormwater drainage, fire hydrants and street lighting.
- 2) Utilize large land area required for stormwater management as open space and recreational area for the neighborhood.
- 3) Maintain the character and historic significance of the neighborhood.
 - a) Support efforts by the residents, and staff and volunteers from Heritage Park and the Pinellas County Historical Society to record and promote the historical development of the neighborhood.
 - b) Preserve the Dan Henry Homestead.
- 4) Create gateway and architectural/historical theme for the neighborhood including gateway signage.
- 5) Convert overhead utility lines and poles to underground.
- 6) Work with the Pinellas County Housing Authority to improve the aesthetics of Ridgeview Apartments.

Sustainable Development

- 1) Correct faulty lot layout (i.e. multiplicity of property owners, inadequate and irregular-sized lots and incompatible mixtures of land uses) and title/survey problems that prohibit private or publicly funded development through the execution of property line agreements and replatting by parcel and/or block.
- 2) Develop comprehensive zoning plan for the neighborhood which preserves the residential character while allow existing businesses to remain.
- 3) Enforce the County's zoning, building and housing codes in a regular and consistent manner.
- 4) Develop methods which allow neighborhood residents to report environmental, building and housing code violations without fearing reprisals (i.e. Environmental Management Department accepts complaints under the name of Friends of Dansville).
- 5) Upgrade water and sewer line for improved drinking water, fire protection and sewage treatment.
- 6) Address stormwater drainage issues during infrastructure design to alleviate flooding on Wilcox Road.

- 7) Provide leadership training to neighborhood residents to increase their capacity to deal effectively with neighborhood issues and to develop potential Board members for the neighborhood-based development corporation.

Housing

- 1) Rehabilitate the existing housing stock and facilitate the construction of new units for existing and new residents.
- 2) Create a neighborhood-based development corporation that will construct new infill housing.

Drug Abuse

- 1) Address crack houses.
- 2) Support the continuation and expansion of Operation PAR's drug treatment services and community-based drug abuse education programs.
- 3) Support Operation PAR's project at Pinellas County Housing Authority's Ridgeview Apartments.

Equal Opportunity

All facets of planning and implementation shall be open to participation by all present and future residents, tenants and property owners, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, or disability. Similarly, all benefits arising from the project shall be available to persons on the same nondiscriminatory basis.

- 1) Hire an engineering/planning consultant that is sensitive to the opportunities and differences of working in an African-American community.
- 2) Develop marketing materials which promote residential and economic opportunities for the neighborhood to redevelop as a racially and economically-integrated community.

Community-Based Partnerships

Community partnerships will be formed to facilitate the coordination of resources and effort, and to ensure that all parties have an opportunity to participate in the project. A task team has been established to accomplish this coordination. The task team consists of representatives from the following County departments: Community Development, Environmental Management, Planning, and Public Works (Administration, Operations, Engineering, Right-of-Way and Survey Divisions) as well as the County Attorney's Office. The Task Team meets on an as needed basis with the Community Development Department providing leadership to the Task Team.

Participants in this coordinated effort are listed below:

- 1) Community partners
 - a) Redevelopment Area homeowners, tenants and investor-owners
 - b) Neighborhood Committee - former Dansville Rehab Committee, as well as the citizen committee, elected by the homeowners, in November of 1994
 - c) Mid Pinellas Interfaith Disaster Response - a coalition of church groups that were formed after the storm, provided money and resources to begin rebuilding

- d) Church of the Brethren Disaster Team
 - e) Pinellas Technical Educational Center - architectural plans
 - f) Business community - contractors, Seminole Engineering, law firm of Carlton, Fields et al for pro bono legal assistance
 - g) Neighborhood Development Corporation (possibly Tampa Bay Community Development Corporation)
- 2) Private and non-profit organizations
- a) Ridgecrest Community Services, Inc.
 - b) Friends of Ridgecrest
 - c) Pinellas County Urban League - Omni Center
 - d) Juvenile Welfare Board - proposed Neighborhood Family Center at Omni Center
 - e) Tampa Bay Community Development Corporation
- 3) State and local government
- a) Pinellas County Dansville Task Team
 - b) Pinellas County Sheriff's Office
 - c) Pinellas County Health Department - Public Health Unit, a \$2 million, 12,000 square foot health clinic scheduled to open in 1996 to serve residents of the Baskins/Dansville/Ridgecrest community
 - d) Pinellas County Schools
 - e) Heritage Park/Pinellas County Historical Society
 - f) Florida Department of Juvenile Justice

BENCHMARKS AND LEARNING

The strategies identified above will produce measurable outcomes. Several of the indices are listed below.

- 1) Property values
- 2) Selling prices of vacant property
- 3) Homeowners, tenants and investor-owners assisted with rehabilitation and relocation
- 4) Selling prices of new houses
- 5) Consistency of code enforcement
- 6) Crime rates
- 7) Levels of participation by Dansville Committee
- 8) Levels of participation by neighborhood residents
- 9) Property line agreements executed
- 10) Parcels/blocks replatted
- 11) Availability of mortgage and home equity financing
- 12) Down payment assistance for new residents
- 13) Linear feet of infrastructure improvements
- 14) Number of new homes constructed and sold