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Introducing new housing and revitalizing existing neighborhoods are top priorities for the Springfield community. To address these needs, city officials and local executives have conducted housing studies and are moving forward with new initiatives.

City of Springfield Revitalizes Housing Stock With New Initiatives



Following recent studies, new housing-focused initiatives are being proposed by city leaders and local executives.

ROD HATFIELD



Bryan Heck is Springfield's city manager.
CITY OF SPRINGFIELD

Last month, Springfield's comprehensive housing study titled "Housing in the Champion City: Comprehensive Housing Analysis" debuted, taking a closer look at the city's housing landscape. Recommendations were offered through this study, along with key strengths and strategies between city officials, county leaders and community stakeholders. The study was led by Greater Ohio Policy Center.

The city treated this study as a way to establish a baseline for Springfield's current housing status. Most recently, the city has seen a boost in housing demand because of the growing workforce locally.

"Overall, this study leads us on a path of change," City Manager Bryan Heck said. "It'll help guide us in making the decisions necessary to change the trajectory in our neighborhoods."

One of the first initiatives at the forefront following the study is establishing a vacant property registry. There's a need for a registry like this, as 14 percent of structures in the city are vacant. These vacant structures can lead to further issues locally and can make it difficult to invest in already established housing.

This initiative has been implementing in cities across Ohio, including Beavercreek, according to the consortium's members.

Establishing a vacant property registry can also improve the safety within the city. That's the outlook from John Brown, president of Security National Bank, who is one of the leaders involved with the consortium initiative.

The consortium leading these discussions are comprised of professionals active in the city and county sector, along with executives involved with local foundations, banks, realtors, private industries and nonprofits.

Brown got involved at the start of the initiative about a year and a half ago, following the bank's desire to lend a hand in revitalization efforts. Plus, one of the bank's goals is to assist homeowners with loans and improve delinquent taxes, among other financial focuses. Narrowing in on the vacant property registry, Brown describes the initiative as a "no brainer," and hopes it gets passed by city council.

Echoing Brown's views, Springfield City Commissioner David Estrop noted city taxpayers spend about \$1 million dealing with the management of abandoned buildings. This database initiative will help owners of vacant buildings become more responsible and deal with their properties.

The consortium met Sept. 10 to discuss the report's findings and the status of proposing the database in front of city council. The database will likely be voted on by October.

In addition to the general housing study, a second study was conducted by Urban Fast Forward. The study analyzes redevelopment opportunities in Springfield's south side, featuring perspectives from the area's current residents. The consortium will be presenting a potential plan of action following these results to the community Oct. 5 at Second Baptist Church.

Among these steps to address the studies' findings, current housing developments are underway in the city to help meet demands. Charles V. Simms Development Corporation has broken ground on its new town-house development in downtown Springfield, in addition to the 230 single-family home Bridgewater subdivision development located off of Tuttle Road.

The consortium is eager to move forward with its conclusions.

"This is home for me, so you want to see it be successful," Brown said. "We're at a point of accomplishment, now we have to act on them."



John Brown is president of Security National Bank in Springfield.
JORDAN UNTERNAHER



City Commissioner David Estrop.
PICASA



John Yung - Senior Project Manager with Urban Fast Forward