

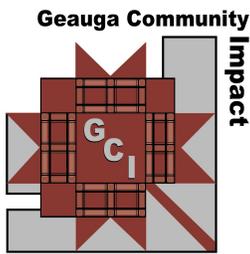
REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY ~ Fall 2007

Dear community resident,

Geauga Community Impact, or GCI, is a collaboration of community leaders from local businesses, faith groups, law enforcement, health care, government and neighborhoods that have come together to plan for the future of Geauga County's health and human service needs. Funding for the collaboration has been provided in part by the Lake-Geauga Fund of The Cleveland Foundation, Geauga County Department on Aging, Geauga County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board, Geauga County Department of Job and Family Services, Geauga Family First Council and United Way Services of Geauga County.

After much research and community input, nine priority issues were identified as needs in our community. The nine issues include: affordable housing, transportation, services to homebound seniors, prevention of chronic physical diseases, support of persons who are unemployed or under-employed, meeting the communities basic needs, improve communications to promote a sense of community, ensure all students receive a high quality education and improved coordination of the social service system. One of the commitments made by the GCI project was to track the nine priority issues and provide progress reports on these issues. In addition, GCI agreed to develop task force groups for various issues, which would then be responsible for the development of a Strategy and Resource Plan. The focus of the Strategy and Resource Plan is the formation of solutions to community issues that will create positive lasting change. Since our last report, it was determined by the GCI Steering committee that we needed to move ahead sequentially with the top three priorities , but continue to monitor, as well as to serve as a resource, for any ongoing initiatives that address one of the remaining six issues. For more information on GCI, please visit our website at www.gcimpact.com.

The following is an update on the first three GCI issues. A second report which will be issued in the near future will focus on the remaining six issues. The information in this report is structured in the following manner: the issue statement as adopted by the steering committee, the goal to address the issue, and an update on activities and progress related to that issue.



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Status and Update of Issues and Goals –

Issue 1: Affordable Housing – Social Indicator housing data show that the median price for most of the housing in the county is beyond what is affordable to young families, seniors and persons with disabilities.

Goal: Promote affordable housing opportunities for young families, those who work in the county, seniors, and persons with disabilities with 24/7 supportive services.

Summary: A Task Force led by Tracy Jemison, Geauga County Auditor and Edna Davis, Middlefield Village Councilwoman, was established in April 2006. Using data gathered in the GCI report, additional research provided by consultants and interviews with housing experts, the task force developed a comprehensive Strategy and Resource Plan. The GCI Affordable Housing Strategy and Resource Plan delineated six goals with specific strategies to achieve them. A copy of the full plan may be found on our website at www.gcimpact.com. The goals are as follows:

GOAL I: Expand community awareness of the needs and benefits of affordable housing to the County's quality of life.

GOAL II: Strengthen the economic future of Geauga County by increasing the supply of affordable housing for families.

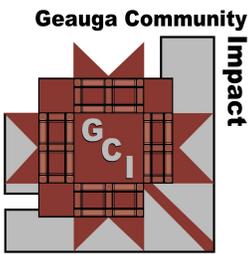
GOAL III: Enable older adults in Geauga County to "age in place" and physically disabled persons to live in the community by increasing the supply of affordable and accessible housing.

GOAL IV: Enable adults with behavioral health issues to live in the community by increasing the supply of affordable supportive housing.

GOAL V: Expand Emergency Shelter arrangements for homeless persons in Geauga County.

GOAL VI: Establish a Geauga County Development Corporation to take a leadership role in developing innovative solutions for increasing affordable housing in the county.

In keeping with GCI's intent to use existing agencies to implement solutions, rather than establish new nonprofits, the criteria were developed to identify the most qualified organization to carry out these goals. After the search for an agency that could implement the Housing Strategy and Resource Plan, Lake Communities Development Corporation (LCDC) was identified and agreed to accept this responsibility. A Memorandum of Understanding with LCDC



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has been approved. LCDDC is an organization with a proven track record in the initiation of projects, grant approval of funds to carry them out and careful oversight of them. They have received recognition by the State of Ohio for their work in affordable housing development as well as rehab and repair of existing housing stock.

Work has already begun on the identification of available land, developer interest and possible sources of funds. Several agencies have formed partnerships which will enable them to move forward in a collaborative fashion, allowing for the creation of new efficiencies that include such things as bulk purchasing of goods and materials.

Educational sessions and discussions about the Strategy and Resource Plan have taken place with various groups and individuals, including the Geauga County Commissioners, Community Improvement Corporation, Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Chagrin River Watershed Partners, etc.

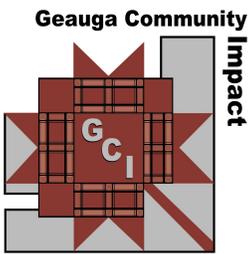
Geauga County's Job and Family Services in cooperation with United Way Services of Geauga County are in the process of compiling a data base of affordable housing that will serve as a resource to those individuals and families seeking affordable rental housing in Geauga County. This new data base should be up and running by Spring 2008 and will be updated on a regular basis. The information contained in the database may be accessed through United Way's 211 either by telephone with the assistance of an information specialist or via website which would allow an individual to seek out appropriate housing based on his/her personal needs and resources.

GCI recognized early in the planning process the importance of reporting our results out to the community. An outcome based measurement system has been developed, which will enable GCI to track progress towards the stated goals.

Issue #2: Transportation – Perception of inadequate public transportation for seniors and disabled; and high percent of drivers making the county more dependent on automobile transportation.

Goal: Devise strategies for expanding public transit targeting seniors, workers, and persons who are economically and physically challenged.

Summary: As mentioned previously, GCI's intent is to identify if there are any existing agencies within the community that address the issues identified.



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Geauga Transit and the Portage Area Regional Transit Authority (PARTA) utilized data and recommendations from the **GCI: Report to the Community** to apply for a regional transportation planning grant. The grant was awarded to the collaborative effort between Geauga and Portage counties. The purpose of the grant is to develop a coordinated human service transportation system, also known as a Travel Management Coordination Center. This new system should begin to alleviate some of the problems identified by the GCI report. As the project gets underway, an assessment will be made to see if the new call center will provide a total solution to this issue. If not, further attention will be given to transportation at a later date.

In addition, Geauga County schools are continually looking for ways to regionalize transportation services including a joint bus terminal, repair facilities and combined Special Education bus routes between districts.

Issue #3: Homebound Seniors – Whether GCI should promote expanded adult day care, personal care, and homemaking services for seniors.

Goal: Increase services for homebound seniors.

Summary: A GCI Homebound Task Force officially kicked off on June 26, 2007. This group is being led by Susan Juris, President and CEO for UH Extended Care Campus, and Pat Schraff, Esq. The goal of this group is also to develop a Strategy and Resource Plan that addresses services to homebound seniors and will include a review of models for provision of services. The group is working to have a Strategy and Resource Plan completed by March 2008.