



For Immediate Release: November 22, 2010

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Opa-locka Community Development Corporation to Create A New Vision for Magnolia North

"All Star" Team of National Experts Headlines Vision 20/20 Charette Process

OPA-LOCKA, Fla. — The Opa-locka Community Development Corporation (OLCDC) is hosting a design "charette" Nov. 30 to Dec. 2 in a renewed effort to increase economic opportunity, provide better housing and create a more attractive environment for the Magnolia North neighborhood. Nationally renowned architects, planners and housing professionals will join local government officials and members of the Opa-locka community to develop a plan for this area commonly known as The Triangle. Together, they are expected to shape a plan that can transform this challenged neighborhood – one that has struggled with issues of poverty, crime and neglect – into a dynamic community that supports its residents and businesses.

"This process will help fulfill the vision I have long had for Opa-locka," Mayor Myra Taylor said in describing the importance she sees in the event being held at the start of her term in office.

"For 30 years, OLCDC has worked to revitalize our unique community and build opportunities for residents," said Willie Logan, founder and president of OLCDC and himself a former mayor of Opa-locka. "The Vision 20/20 charette is about sparking our imaginations and building momentum behind an inspiring, yet attainable vision that we can work toward together to achieve over the next decade."

The OLCDC was recently awarded \$20 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's highly competitive Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP). The NSP is intended to strengthen communities that have suffered from foreclosures and abandonment. The OLCDC team has elected to leverage the funding by not just purchasing and redeveloping foreclosed and abandoned homes, but to leverage job and business creation opportunities within the community.

The charette, a process in which a group of designers work intensively to create a solution to a design and development problem, will include a tour of the Opa-locka community and surrounding areas, an orientation to OLCDC and an objective assessment of opportunities and challenges in the community. The charette will result in a community development plan the team will present to the Mayor and Opa-locka City Commission on Thursday, Dec. 2.

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Opa-locka has attracted several prominent design and community revitalization leaders for the charette because of the city's architectural character and the OLCDC's history of successful development, further demonstrated by earning the exceptionally large NSP grant – awarded only to organizations that display an especially high capacity to deliver results. National thought leaders participating in the charette include:

- **Maurice Cox**, assistant professor of Architecture at the University of Virginia who formerly served as the Director of Design for the National Endowment of the Arts.
- **David Dixon**, who leads Goody Clancy's planning and urban design practice and who led the interdisciplinary teams that produced the Master Plan for New Orleans and Miami's Parks and Public Spaces Master Plan.
- **M. David Lee**, a nationally renowned urban designer with experience in neighborhood planning, housing, and urban development.
- **Reese Fayde**, the former CEO of Living Cities, who is nationally known for her expertise in urban revitalization and the development of affordable housing.
- **Mary Means**, a community planner best known as the creator of the National Main Street program.
- **Suzanne Hague**, a planner with a strong background in community development.

“The fact that well respected experts from different backgrounds agreed to join the charette process speaks volumes of what OLCDC has already done for the community, as well as the potential we believe this community holds,” said Fayde. “OLCDC is not very well known outside of its local community, but those who are familiar with the organization's work have tremendous respect for its ability to get things done.”

The Opa-locka Community Development Corporation's mission is to create and stimulate economic development, affordable housing, and to improve the quality of life for residents in the City of Opa-locka and other neighboring communities of North Miami-Dade.

For more information, visit www.olcdc.org.

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