LD–2

City forms redevelopment agency

The city of Fitzgerald, Georgia (8,800), found itself in need of more affordable housing. But it chose not to build this housing on the outskirts of town because this would require expensive new infrastructure. Instead, the city decided to take advantage of the existing infrastructure in town and turn the many blighted properties in several neighborhoods into needed housing. The city council accomplished this by declaring itself a redevelopment agency. Under state law, the city can now sell abandoned properties to those who are willing to redevelop them. Without the redevelopment agency, the city would be required to sell the properties at auction to the highest bidders, which might include speculative bidders. The redevelopment agency has enabled the city to increase its stock of affordable housing.

Cam Jordan
Community Development Director

City of Fitzgerald
116 North Johnston Street
Fitzgerald, GA 31750

229/426-5063
Fax: 229/426-5066
E-mail: Camjordan@mchsi.com

Implementation Notes

Leadership/staffing The Fitzgerald city council passed the appropriate legislation to designate the council as a redevelopment agency. The agency is led by the city's community development director.

Timeline The city offered a six-month voluntary compliance period before forming the redevelopment agency in 1996. During the amnesty period, approximately 40 property owners voluntarily cleared their lots. If lots were not maintained after this period, they became eligible to become a target property for redevelopment. The effective date of the program was October 1998.
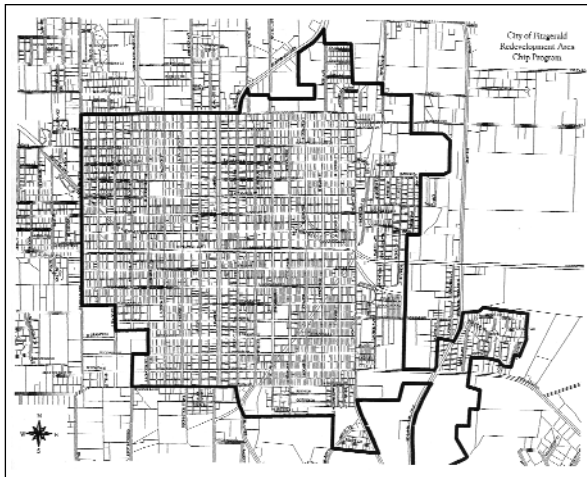
Budget/funding The city used $50,000 left over from a former housing program to start the program. The city currently has $26,000 in its redevelopment agency account as well as $20,000 worth of property.

Program description Before the redevelopment agency was formed, Fitzgerald lacked affordable housing for workers in area industries. At the same time, many neighborhoods inside the city were experiencing an increase in numbers of blighted properties. Under redevelopment agency law, the city can now waive many potential hindrances to redevelopment, including virtually all fees. If the agency can obtain clear title to a blighted property, it voluntarily purchases the lot at the appraised value and attempts to put together property owners and developers and avoid going through the courts. Because little funding is needed for fees or infrastructure, the city can invest all of its redevelopment money directly into the housing. The biggest challenge has been the high landfill costs for disposing of debris from the properties; these costs can be higher than the value of the houses. Fitzgerald is working closely with the state's environmental protection division to keep the debris out of landfill by legally burning much of it in a very contained way and recycling the remaining metals and masonry.

Results In addition to the approximately 40 lots that were cleared before the redevelopment agency's formation, the city has cleared 150 lots. Of these lots, 90 now have housing, and the remaining 60 are vacant. Many of these vacant lots were taken over by adjoining properties to create standard-sized lots.

Redevelopment Redeveloped Houses

	Number	Direction	Streets	Action Taken	Status
1	804	E	Altamaha St.	Remodeled	Housing Reestablished
2	318	W	Altamaha St.	Cleared	EMS market
3	324	W	Altamaha St.	Cleared	Housing Reestablished
4	507	W	Altamaha St.	Cleared	Housing Reestablished
5	512-514	W	Altamaha St.		EMS Building
6	412	W	Central Ave.	Remodeled	Housing Reestablished
7	610	E	Chattahoochee St.		Slated for Demolishing
8	216	W	Chattahoochee St.	Cleared	Sold to Housing Authority for a duplex.
9	601	W	Chattahoochee St.	Remodeled	Housing Reestablished
10	603	W	Chattahoochee St.	Remodeled	Housing Reestablished
11	109	N	Church St.	Remodeled	Housing Reestablished
12	137	N	Church St.	Cleared	Housing Reestablished
13	103	N	College St.	Cleared	Housing Reestablished
14	114	N	College St.	Cleared	Housing Reestablished
15	401	E	Cypress St.	Cleared	Vacant
16	403	E	Cypress St.	Cleared	Vacant
17	515		Cypress St.	Cleared	Housing Reestablished
18	100		Evergreen Rd.	Cleared	Housing Reestablished
19	159		Evergreen Way	Cleared	Housing Reestablished
20	167		Evergreen Way	Cleared	Housing Reestablished
21	407	N	Grant St.	Cleared	Retail Sale Space
22	415	N	Grant St.	Remodeled	Housing Reestablished
23	800	N	Grant St.	Cleared	Retail Sale Space
24	501	N	Grant St.	Cleared	Retail Establishment
25	502	S	Grant St.	Cleared	Retail Establishment
26	502	N	Hooker St.	Cleared	Vacant
27	302	S	Hooker St.	Cleared	Housing Reestablished
28	207	N	Jackson St.	Cleared	Vacant
29	113-115	S	Jackson St.	Remodeled	Housing Reestablished
30	609	S	Jackson St.	Remodeled	Closed & Secure (Estate)
31	209	E	Jessamine St.	Cleared	For Sale
32	502	E	Jessamine St.	Remodeled	Housing Reestablished
33	711	E	Jessamine St.	Demolished	Awaiting Clearing
34	716		Jessamine St.	Cleared	Housing Reestablished
35	802	E	Jessamine St.	Cleared	Housing Reestablished
36	302	N	Lee St.	Remodeled	Housing Reestablished
37	216	S	Lee St.	Remodeled	Housing Reestablished
38	312	S	Lee St.	Cleared	Future Parking
39	516	S	Lee St.	Remodeled	Housing Reestablished
40	707	S	Lee St.		In process of remodeling under historic guidelines
41			Lee St. Lot	Repaired	Closed & Secure
42	311	E	Lemon St.	Remodeled	For the church
43	403	E	Lemon St.	Cleared	Sold threw Chip Program
44	409	E	Lemon St.	Cleared	Housing Reestablished
45	412	E	Lemon St.	Demolished	Waiting Clearing
46	416	E	Lemon St.	Remodeled	Housing Reestablished
47	505	E	Lemon St.	Cleared	Habitat House
48	515	E	Lemon St.	Cleared	Housing Reestablished
49	609	E	Lemon St.	Cleared	Joined adjacent yard
50	709	E	Lemon St.	Cleared	Housing Reestablished
51	301	W	Lemon St.	Remodeled	Housing Reestablished
52	010	N	Logan St.	Burn Permit	In the process of clearing
53	302	N	Longstreet St.	Cleared	Housing Reestablished
54	214		Magnolia St.	Cleared	Taken into adjoining yard.
55	216	E	Magnolia St.		Under reconstruction
56	316	E	Magnolia St.	Remodeled	Housing Reestablished

City of Fitzgerald
Redevelopment Area
Chip Program