



**HOME CONFERENCE  
DOORKNOCKER AWARDS  
OWENSBORO, KENTUCKY**

**AWARD CATEGORY:** Neighborhood Revitalization

**COMMUNITY:** Owensboro, Kentucky

**PROJECT/PROGRAM NAME:** Baptist Town Redevelopment Project

**HUD REGION/FIELD OFFICE:** Region IV / Louisville Field Office

**HOME UNITS/TOTAL UNITS:** 50 HOME units / 69 total units

**HOME FUNDS/TOTAL FUNDS:** \$1,213,968 HOME funds / \$5,582,924 total funds

**PARTNERS**

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Plaza Committee

**FUNDING SOURCES:**

- |                                        |             |
|----------------------------------------|-------------|
| • HOME Funds                           | \$1,213,968 |
| • Owensboro-Owned Property             | \$100,000   |
| • Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati | \$1,200,000 |
| • CDBG Funds                           | \$347,412   |
| • Various Bank Loans                   | \$2,821,511 |

**BRIEF NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:**

In 1999, the City of Owensboro began working with the Dr. Martin Luther King Plaza Committee to create a redevelopment plan for the greater Baptist Town neighborhood, a distressed inner city area with a high number of dilapidated structures and vacant lots. Although the city had spent nearly \$1 million on renovations to a community center, a neighborhood park, street and sidewalk improvements, and scattered site home construction and renovation, such efforts were not part of a coordinated redevelopment plan.

Through its work with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Plaza Committee, the City of Owensboro began to clearly define future land use within the Baptist town area

by significantly revising its consolidated plan. The old consolidated plan designated a large portion of the redevelopment area as commercial use; a designation that clearly exceeded the demand for and practical possibilities of future commercial development. The city realized that the key to any successful commercial development within the Baptist Town neighborhood would be found in stabilizing the residential character of the area. After developing a realistic projection of future federal funding, the city created an ambitious list of goals to achieve over a three-year time frame.

- Goal #1 – Increase the prevalence of homeownership within the neighborhood from 28 to 45 percent
- Goal #2 – Decrease the amount of unsound single-family housing within the neighborhood from 66 to 14 percent.
- Goal #3 – Decrease the number of vacant residential lots within the neighborhood from 50 to 6.

After a total public and private investment of more than \$5.6 million dollars, the Baptist Town neighborhood has witnessed a dramatic transformation. Since the end of the redevelopment project in 2003, total assessed property values have increased 140 percent, crime rates have fallen, and a non-taxable piece of city-owned property has been transformed into \$1,000,000 worth of taxable value. More noteworthy are the accomplishments associated with the consolidated plan goals. The homeownership rate in the Baptist Town neighborhood has risen to 41% and is still rising. The rate of unsound housing has fallen to eight percent, and only 5 vacant residential lots remain in the neighborhood.

City staff attribute the success of the Baptist Town redevelopment to the thorough and realistic evaluation and revision of the consolidated plan provisions concerning land use and a concerted effort to maximize community participation. The partnership between the city and the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Plaza Committee was invaluable to the success of the redevelopment effort.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Keith Free, AICP  
City of Owensboro  
P.O. Box 10003  
Owensboro, KY 42302-9003  
(270) 687-8658