

# Housing and its effect on deterring crime

In October 2006, Mayor Frank Guinta released a six-point plan to address various issues concerning Manchester's neighborhoods and how the Mayor's Office and city departments will address them. This week, the Mayor will provide an update to the community in a series of columns. Today's installment discusses housing.

By FRANK GUINTA  
Mayor, City of Manchester

Affordable and workforce housing in Manchester is vital to the economic development of our city. The effects of a sufficient housing supply in our inner city and the West Side are numerous: It would reduce the size of the city's blighted areas; encourage young and talented individuals to move into the area; spur more private investment; and ultimately lead to a reduction of crime.

That said, the perceived housing crisis in our city needs the full attention of our city government and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, and I plan to make it a high priority in 2007.

We must start with a thorough evaluation of our current policies. I believe that the priorities of our various housing agencies, while well intentioned, are not necessarily meeting the needs

of the overall community. A citywide housing plan needs to be established that will better allocate city, state and federal funds for the betterment of our community.

My office is working with the federal Housing and Urban Development agency, the Manchester Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and NeighborWorks to help people establish home ownership and to revitalize blighted and distressed center city residences.

We also worked with the congressional delegation to secure funds for a lead paint mitigation grant, which is still a pressing issue in some center city residences.

Another major initiative, which will be announced soon, will be a special task

force to address ways to improve downtown housing options. This group will bring together some of the area's most knowledgeable housing and development experts. They will propose their own ideas, as well as evaluate what other communities are doing to improve affordable and workforce housing stocks.

By evaluating the best practices of these communities, especially those of a similar size as Manchester, we can see what works and what is the return on in-

vestment of these efforts.

One more area my office will be actively working with the aldermen on is to develop policies that encourage responsible ownership of existing rental units. While there are many great landlords in Manchester—both locally and from out-of-town—there remains a segment that are neglecting their properties, not checking the references of their tenants and ignoring the pressing needs of those that live in their buildings.

This must stop, and I will be redoubling my efforts to develop sound policies to address this increasingly pressing—and distressing—issue.


Everyone in Manchester deserves to live in safe housing and the opportunity to live the American Dream of home ownership.

Frank Guinta's office can be reached at 624-6500.



Mayor Frank Guinta

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