

CDBG Priority Task Force Public Forum
October 7, 2008 at 7:00pm
Council Chambers, 2nd Floor City Hall

Task Force Members: Co-Chair Anna Collins, Rhonda Juneau, Jon Bradley, Jeannemarie Celentano

Staff: T.J. Martzial, Amy Grommes Pulaski
Councilor Dan Skolnick, Kevin Donoghue, and Mayor Suslovic

Anna thanks everyone for coming. The goal today is to present a 20 minute slideshow and then open it up for questions. We are hoping to end the meeting at around 8:30pm. She also offers everyone to take one of the handouts by the door.

She introduces the Councilors, Task Force Members, Staff, and the Allocation Committee.

Anna begins the presentation. Why are we here? She explains the challenge in the allocation of 2006 resources, which resulted in a memo written by Shapiro and Boxer-Macomber that described the issues and challenges to the program.

She continues to explain change will be transition not transformation. Any radical transformation is unrealistic; rather a period of transition is preferable. The Shapiro and Boxer-Macomber memo ended in creating the HCD Task Force. The HCD Task Force created two recommendations referring to priorities: 1) priority should be given to proposals that benefit low and moderate income persons, and 2) priority will be given to proposals to contributing a comprehensive revitalization of targeted neighborhoods. They also recommended creating the CDBG Priority Task Force and also the CDBG Annual Allocation Committee.

When the task force began it was important to identify the background on how the program has worked. There have traditionally been three funding silos for planning and administration, public improvements and social services. There was no coordination between these silos. The planning and admin piece is about 20% of the funds, 33% is the maximum cap set by HUD (traditionally 15% around the nation), the remaining funding goes to public improvements at 47%.

As a task force we asked if these funding silos were coordinated with city visions or plans, were they located in a targeted area, and did the proposals create a complementary impact. Overall the answer was no. As a result everything was funded a little bit, with no overarching impact. The Task Force created priorities and guiding principles to address this.

She introduces the model. The Task Force is recommending a set aside for basic needs to address emergency food and shelter. The second part is planning and administration. This is the over-arching umbrella over the model. There are four impact priority areas: housing, work and shop, transportation, and safe neighborhoods.

She introduces a possible percentage of allocation. This would allot 15% for basic needs, 20% toward planning and administration and the remaining funding, 65% to go toward impact areas.

The planning and administration portion is on top to help coordinate and guide the proposals and projects.

She introduces a few examples. Example one is housing rehab with no specific target location. It would score very low. This proposal would score higher if it was located in a specific targeted neighborhood.

She says the highest ranking could be a project that had housing, community policing, after school programming, and infrastructure improvements. She shows pictures of vibrant neighborhood centers.

In summary she says some of the issues they are trying to approach: lack of focus, lack of resources, scattered approach, lack of objectivity, transparency, and lack of coordination with planning.

Jon Bradley says that this is a change from what this program has been in the past. Funding a position may not score strongly but collaboration between programs and agencies could. He acknowledges that this will affect social service agencies and it will take time to implement. All the social service agencies that do get funded can look to address the priorities of the program. We are emphasizing bigger impacts and targeting that impact. Piece meal funding or funding gaps in agencies is not how this funding was intended to be used.

There are two structural changes that received positive feedback. One is raising minimum grants. It would be difficult doing something that had an impact with small grants. That recommendation for a minimum grant is \$20,000. The second recommendation is that there are two year funding awards, contingent upon performance. A second set aside would be for emerging needs, capacity buildings, issues that are emerging, like immigrant or refugee or other training. We don't want to discourage people from applying or creating new programs. As a provider, this will have an impact on agencies like ours. We have this great scoring system, but the first year everyone may score low or medium. We don't know what will occur if we create a new system, but we are taking a leap. We will re-look at this to see what impact it has.

Anna introduces Councilor Donoghue. She opens up the floor for questions.

Resident of St. John Valley: It seems that a large budget proposal would be preferred. However many of the projects in St. John Valley are smaller, cross walks, etc.

Anna responds that the project may not be larger the applicants would have to.

Jon says this program encourages people to think bigger. However we are encouraging coupling of projects, to make an impact. Pulling together several smaller projects as one to make a bigger impact is encouraged. This can be coordinated with planning. This is a new emphasis that this committee is working with and the planning staff is happy to do.

Christina Feller from the Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization states that she thinks these recommendations are wonderful. She wishes that this happened before the Adams School was awarded to a developer by the City. All of this could have been coordinated and implemented on this site. It could have happened all in one place. But the city decided to move forward with a small group of people and did not take community input. If she had this a year ago, she could have made the argument to utilize the Adams school for all of these things. She wishes we could stop it moving forward.

Anna introduces Mayor Suslovic. He thanks the Task Force for their work. Their recommendations exceeded his expectations.

Steve Hirshon asks what the eligibility requirements are for this program. Amy describes the income requirements at 80% of the median income and also the project eligibility: low and moderate income area benefit, benefit to a low income individual and projects that address slum or blight.

Christina asks if you can cross district boundaries. Anna says yes.

Councilor Skolnik mentions that Libbytown is adjacent to St. John Valley.

Victoria asks what the basic needs category means? Would people in that category be subject to same rules? Anna answers that the multi-dimensional coordination and location based community impact would not be subject to basic needs. Jon says how that ultimately looks will be determined by staff. The same would be true for capacity building. There will be some scoring, but won't be competing with the larger grants and agencies. It invites new people into the process.

Wendy Cheribini likes the model and the paradigm shift. She wants to understand better why the planning and administration is fixed at 20%. Would the capacity building come from planning and admin? The second question is would there be technical workshops to educate. Amy says it hasn't been defined. If the capacity building went to training, it would have to come out of planning and admin. But if it was a small grant for a project, then it would come out of either social services or public infrastructure.

Ethan asks about the grandfathered status of basic needs and social services. Is the social service set aside for basic needs? Jon answers that the basic needs set aside would be within the social service cap. However other social service programs could be funded under the impact areas as well: housing, work and shop, safe neighborhoods or mobility and accessibility. The 15% is arbitrary at this time and will change before final recommendations. He continues to say that the any year the city could fund less than 33% but go back up in later years.

Grace states that the way it's laid out part of any proposal might include social services. She asks for the definition. Amy defines it as any programs that serve low to moderate income persons. However she points out that the Task Force is defining social services that address the four impact areas: housing, work and shop, mobility and accessibility, and safe neighborhoods. For example work and shop includes job training, child care and education. Housing includes housing counseling or programs that help to maintain persons in their homes.

Doug Gardener asks where basic health care services would fall safe neighborhoods or basic needs. Anna responds that it is difficult to place public health. Jon says the homeless health could get funded based on what is getting funded. If it was drug related that would fall under safe communities. It would have to be described as falling under safe neighborhoods. He stresses that it wouldn't be eliminated but would have to be creative.

Resident of St. John Valley: states that many of the housing developments would have to have other funding. He asks the role of CDBG in housing. Amy explains how CDBG funds can be used for housing

Wendy Cherubini asks if CDBG funds can be used to benefit for profit businesses in low income neighborhoods. Amy responds yes.

Alex Landry, president of BNA. The neighborhood centers received the most dots. Being a neighborhood association we can tick off all of those categories. His question is you need to

show that you are doing it well. How do you show that you are doing it well? T.J. responds that you have to show you are doing it well through past performance. He says some of that specific scoring numbers will be determined by the Allocation Committee. Jon Bradley says that HUD is pushing outcomes that are measurable and meaningful. Ultimately it has to show that you are doing what you say.

Resident and business owner in Bayside states that the recommendations refer to retail businesses, but did not refer to manufacturing jobs. Is Portland trying to grow manufacturing for creating plans? Anna answers that there are city plans for creating economic development. It could compete in this model.

Blanca Santiago, diversity cabinet of United Way, comments that the gentleman of BNA says that they have done things well. But you mentioned that you can address start up organizations. How will you help smaller organizations? Jon answers that is the reason there was a set aside for capacity building or small projects. Diversity and inclusion is something that we heard a lot in the process. Anna says the work and shop category is also new. Jon also says that one thing we talked about is collaboration. Smaller organizations could collaborate with larger organizations. We need people to think together and work together. We are trying to get people to think broadly.

Blanca asks about the set asides, what do you mean by set asides. And how does that relate to the minimum and multiple year funding. Anna says that the minimum would not apply to the set aside. It may not address basic needs as well.

Jeannemarie states that the ultimate hope is that instead of Amistad creating its own food program, maybe they could collaborate with other food programs so they would have a bigger impact.

Grace Braley said that the \$20,000 was not an absolute minimum. Jon says the group has not set the \$20,000 as final. However the purpose was to raise the bar. He said the minimum grant and multi-year funding could also be coupled with sun sets. This was something that was discussed a lot in the outreach meetings.

Victoria S. says that as you look at the categories you are trying to increase collaboration. Would planning be involved in addressing this collaboration? TJ responds that specifically for public improvement projects, proposals would have to be coordinated with planning and HNS and we can connect a proposal to an existing plan and coordinate with Public Works. This is a new direction for this to go. Anna says that partnership has already started.

Jessica Tomlinson from MECA says she's excited about the development being put back in the community development grant. She asks how you address if most of the proposals hit two or three categories but is missing one, like work and shop. Anna responds that this Task Force is one of many. This is the first time the city is doing this and it's important for the task force to come back to the table and re-evaluate. There will be tweaks and changes to this program.

Anna points out that the task force did not want to rank housing, work and shop, mobility and accessibility, and safe neighborhoods are all important and not one is ranked higher than another. This allows this funding to respond to community needs. There is a lot of room for community input and participation.

Steve Hirshon compliments the committee on challenging people to think differently. He asks how you differentiate between crisis and support services, and basic needs? Jon responds that

basic needs would be food, shelter, heat, and very basic. The other programs becomes improving peoples lives. Basic needs is very basic. We wanted to be sure that no one was hungry or didn't have a place to sleep.

Regal from Mercy Hospital says Mercy has a ton of affiliates and programs How do we sort that all out. Amy says to come in and talk to staff.

Anna thanks everyone for coming. The meeting is adjourned.