

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: 2014-2015 CONSOLIDATED ACTION PLAN STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND USE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG), HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP (HIOME), HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH AIDS (HOPWA), AND EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT (ESG) FUNDS to be submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for federal financial assistance for Planning and Community Development Activities under the Housing and Community Development Program Acts, and Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 as amended, (PL 93-383); and the Cranston Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act of 1990 as amended (PL 101-625). (Mayor DeStefano).

REPORT: 1488-09

ADVICE: Approval

BACKGROUND

As required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Mayor is presenting for the Alders approval of the recommended Consolidated Housing and Community Development Annual Action Plan ("Annual Action Plan") for FY 2014-2015. The Annual Action Plan includes activities proposed to be funded by the following federal programs: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership (HOME), Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) and Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG). Recommendations adhere to the guidelines, objectives and procedures set forth in the City's local Citizen Participation Plan and the Five Year Consolidated Housing and Community Development Strategy and Plan ("Five Year Plan") for 2010 through 2014, previously approved by the Board of Alders. The Five Year Plan serves as a strategy and planning document that guides the budget and funding allocation process for HUD-funded community development and housing activities.

HUD requires the submission of a planning document incorporating housing and non-housing community development strategies in a consolidated plan to be prepared in accordance with the process prescribed in 24CFR Part 91.

The Annual Consolidated Action Plan submitted to the Board by the Mayor, along with FY 2014-2015 budget recommendations, includes activities to be funded by funds reprogrammed and/or received as program income from prior years' Community Development Block Grant activities. Prior to submission of this Plan to HUD, the Mayor and other public officials have heard citizen's views of housing and community development needs. In the recent past, a Citizen Participation Plan along with information and data regarding the activities the City will undertake and carry out during the coming year with the financial assistance received from HUD was also presented to the Board and approved.

The Annual Action Plan has been available in the office of the City/Town Clerk, 200 Orange Street, for at least thirty-five days for the purpose of public inspection. In February, March, and April 2014, the Board of Alders acting through the joint committee on Community Development and Human Resources will hold public hearings pursuant to notices published in accordance with Public Act no. 75-443. During this time, the views of the public with respect to the strategies, objectives, and community development activities proposed in the Annual Action Plan will be communicated to the Board.

The Board will either receive written comments on the Annual Action Plan from the New Haven City Plan Commission, the New Haven Housing Authority, the LCI Loan Advisory Committee, the New Haven Development Commission, or, has allowed such agencies thirty days to review such plans. The Board has also received or has provided the opportunity for written communications from various City officials and members of the general public regarding this Plan.

The Board is cognizant of the conditions imposed upon the Mayor and the City with respect to undertaking and carrying out community development activities under the provisions of the Housing and Community Development programs and Public Act. 75-443. It is necessary that the Board take appropriate official action respecting the City's Annual Action Plan statement of activities and use of funds, which forms part of the application to the Department of Housing and Community Development programs.

The Mayor's proposed budget for FY 2014-2015 reflects anticipated federal revenues available for each program. The national budget for these programs is subject to change, pending Congressional authorization and approval by the President. The preliminary totals requested in each category are as follows: CDBG: \$3,100,000; HOME: \$941,566; ESG: \$235,790; and HOPWA: \$979,575. These requests are less than what was allocated in FY2013-2014 due to the diminished anticipated federal revenues.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The Commission by custom does not undertake a line-by-line review of the Consolidated Plan. However, certain aspects of the budget and Plan are of particular interest to the Commission as they advance the overall efforts of sound land use planning, environmental protection, neighborhood revitalization and economic development.

Of note, the Commission favors the continued development of the Comprehensive Plan. In the coming year, City Plan proposes to continue work on a number of projects/initiatives in support of the current plan (adopted in 2003) such as zoning revisions, neighborhood planning and revitalization. Specific activities will include new zoning arising from the Hill to Downtown Community Plan; a transit-oriented development plan; zoning revisions for the Mill River industrial area (Mill River Municipal Development Plan); Farmington Canal Phase IV construction; Downtown Crossing Phase 2 & 3 planning; Route 34 West rezoning and design guidelines implementation; Waterfront strategic planning for Long Wharf Park shoreline stabilization and the new Community Boathouse at Canal Dock design and implementation; GIS mapping; and HUD environmental clearances.

Besides these, the department is also working on updating the city's Comprehensive Plan, which has to be updated once every ten years according to Connecticut General Statutes § 295-302. The Plan is due for adoption by July 2015 based on an eighteen month time extension provided to all municipalities in Connecticut by the State Office of Policy and Management. City Plan has completed work on Phase I of the Plan i.e., identification of planning issues through community input and Databook update, as well as deployment and analysis of a community survey which received 900 responses. Public outreach is on-going through attendance at city-wide neighborhood management team meetings and monthly City Plan Commission meetings. In the coming year, the department will continue to work on developing the Plan Update document through a detailed analysis of various planning topics and by exploring and implementing additional ways of engaging the residents in forming recommendations.

As noted in the submission letter, the City will work to meet the challenge of providing services and programs to its residents while struggling to balance its financial resources as the country continues to face difficult and trying economic times. It is clear that the climate of this community and communities across the nation have been affected this year by continued high unemployment rates, housing foreclosures, business closures, and job layoffs or reductions.

Furthermore, reprogramming funds from any unexecuted CDBG public service contracts will be allocated only to organizations that have submitted applications for CDBG public service funding in 2014-2015.

The recommended FY 2014-2015 Annual Action Plan continues to promote neighborhood stability; provide programs for individuals to help achieve a better quality of life; and support New Haven's long range community development efforts. Programs and services in the Annual Action Plan include providing affordable housing opportunities in a variety of configurations, improved public facilities, safer parks, and public spaces. Recommendations also ensure the availability of needed public services and supportive programs for all residents, with priority given to the support of special needs populations and homeless services, including job training and youth programs. Implementation of the proposed Plan will address gaps in critically needed services as identified within the draft Five Year Consolidated Plan.

ADVICE:

The Commission approves the goals and objectives of the Consolidated Annual Action Plan 2014-2015 without reference to particular amounts.

ADOPTED: January 15, 2014
Edward Mattison
Chair

ATTEST:


Karyn M. Gilvarg, AIA
Executive Director