

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Commissioners Shaughnessy, Feeney, Cloutier  
FROM: Aaron Shapiro, Community Development Director  
DATE: April 10, 2009  
RE: 3rd Year Community Development Program

\*\*\*\*\*

Two public hearings will be held on the use of three sources of Community Development funds for 2009, April 13<sup>th</sup> and April 27<sup>th</sup>. Final vote by the Commissioners endorsing our 2009 HUD Annual Action Plan will be May 11, 2009. All this is in anticipation of the Plan's submittal HUD prior to the May 15<sup>th</sup> deadline.

- Standard 2009 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds
- Recovery Act Community Development Block Grant (CDBG-R) funds
- Recovery Act Homelessness Prevention Fund (HPRP)

\*\*\*\*\*

The purpose of this memo, in advance of the April 13th Commissioner's Meeting is twofold:

- Examine the issue of available grant funds for 2009
- Review the application process for selecting CDBG & CDBG -R grant projects
- Familiarize you with the projects and programs recommended for funding

**Available Grant Funds for 2009**

1) Standard CDBG Allocation: While we are operating on a very tight timeframe, a critical piece of information, the amount of our standard CDBG allocation remains unknown. For planning purposes we are using \$1,460,000, approximately level funding from 2008, as a "stand in" figure.

The total allocation is further divided into four components:

Administration: \$235,000

(County Admin \$135,000; South Portland Admin \$65,000; Bridgton Admin \$35,000)

County Grants: \$615,000

Town of Bridgton: \$185,000

City of South Portland: \$425,000

2) Recovery Act, CDBG Allocation (CDBG-R): We do know the amount of this one-year CDBG “bonus” allocation - \$395,941. We have not yet been informed of procedures to receive the funds, though we’ve been led to believe CDBG-R regulations will mirror those of the standard CDBG program.

County: \$204,956

Town of Bridgton: \$59,271  
(May use approx. \$7,000 for administration)

City of South Portland: \$131,714

3) Recovery Act, Homelessness Prevention Fund (HPRP): This new stream of funding is also associated with the Recovery Act, but has a three year lifespan. The total allocation will be \$605,763 over the three year period. At least \$400,000 must be expended within 24 months. The county will receive \$10,096 per year for program administration.

There are two additional programs not under the Cumberland County HUD 2009 Annual Action Plan integral to our community development effort.

Neighborhood Stabilization Funds (NSP): These grant funds are only available to the Cities of South Portland and Westbrook with Cumberland County Community Development acting as administrative agent. The total allocation is \$1,741,251 with the County receiving \$10,000 in administrative fees, primarily payment to process fund draw down requests.

HUD HOME Program: All the communities of Cumberland County including Portland, Westbrook, Brunswick and the 24 members of our Community Development program have formed the City of Portland/Cumberland County HOME Consortium. The City of Portland serves as the lead entity of the Consortium

---

## **County CDBG and CDBG-R Grants**

The Municipal Oversight Committee (MOC) debated the issue of essentially merging the CDBG and CDBG-R programs using the selection process already in place for the standard CDBG program for the CDBG-R funds as well. The MOC decided to merge the programs, using the CDBG-R funds for those projects ready to begin construction this summer and fall. This is the same system being used by the State of Maine and City of Portland’s CDBG programs and the approach recommended by HUD.

The amount of available funds for County community and region-wide projects is approximately \$820,000.

## I. Accepting and Selecting Applications

The process for 2009 was basically the same as in 2008.

- Applications distributed October 27, 2008
- Pre-applications submitted by December 14, 2008
- Final applications submitted February 1, 2009

Following submission, applications were distributed to the Application Review Team: Team members were: Donna Larson, Freeport (Chair); Tony Plante, Windham, Alan Manoian, Bridgton; Carolyn Beigel Standish; Allen Crabtree, Sebago; George Theborge, Gray; Erik Carson, South Portland; Matti Gurney, GPCOG staff. The Team represented a balance of rural and urban/suburban communities; region-wide distribution; two set-aside communities that do not submit applications to the competition, and a neutral staff member from GPCOG.

Team members reviewed the applications and assigned scores based upon established criteria.

### General Program Applications

Description of project – 30 points  
Community need - 30 points  
Readiness to proceed– 20 points  
Measurable impacts – 10 points  
Demonstration of need – 10 points

### Planning Grant Applications

Community problems to be addressed – 40 pts.  
Strategy to complete project – 30 points  
Readiness to proceed – 30 points

Raw scores were totaled and converted to ordinal rankings for each reviewer. The ordinal rankings were averaged across all scorers to form a total group ranking. This rank order of projects, 1 to 19 for general applicants and 1 to 4 for planning applications, became the working list for the group. All projects, those ranked highest, in the middle or lowest were discussed in detail. Team members explained the reasons behind their choices and reviewed the pluses and minuses of each application.

## II. Projects Recommended for Funding

The Application Review Team recommended projects for funding to the Municipal Oversight Committee (MOC). Two are regional projects and fourteen are community based projects. At its March 25, 2009 meeting, the MOC recommended endorsement of the project list to the County Commissioners. Two projects are recommended to receive alternative sources of funds: 1) PROP Homeless Case Management applied for CDBG funds but now becomes a perfect fit for the new Homelessness Prevention program; 2) Scarborough Homeownership Assistance is a better fit for the new HOME program.

**Total funds to be granted: \$820,000 (approximate)**

Regional Projects	\$162,000
Community Projects	\$658,000

Funding by project type:

Housing Rehabilitation	\$160,000
Public Facilities	\$393,000
Downtown Revitalization	\$200,000
Social Service	\$ 12,000
Planning	\$ 55,000

**Project & Funding Recommendations**

[Note: Given funding uncertainties, amounts have been rounded]

Casco - Community Center \$ 40,000 - \$65,000

CDBG funds will match significant municipal and private resources to renovate the Casco Community Center. The building has been closed due to mold and structural problems since 2005. With the closing of elementary schools in Casco the Community Center will serve as the focal point of community activities and gatherings. \$59,000 used as “stand-in” amount.

Casco - Regional Services Planning \$ 15,000

The planning grant will examine the regionalization of public safety services for the towns of Casco, Gray, Naples & Raymond. The communities will provide significant matching funds and hire a qualified consultant to complete the study. The goal is to maximize efficiencies of equipment, people and resources.

Freeport - Handicap Access Planning \$ 15,000

The planning project will study the feasibility of creating handicap access to the historic Harrington House, 45 Main Street, Freeport, home of the Freeport Historical Society. The result will be the development of preliminary plans for a building addition to accommodate handicap access.

Gray - Downtown Revitalization \$ 200,000

This is the second phase of the Clark Block revitalization project begun in 2008. This phase will facilitate improved vehicle access, expand parking and consolidate septic systems that serve the commercial block.

Harpswell - Weatherization Program \$ 10,000

The grant will provide supplies to volunteer home weatherization teams

to seal heat leaks and install storm windows. The program targets households receiving home heating assistance to make the homes as energy conserving as possible.

Harpswell - Road Construction \$ 40,000

Project will complete paving, ditching, loaming and seeding associated with a new road at the affordable housing sub-division being developed by the Greater Brunswick Housing Corporation.

Harpswell - Mitchell Field Planning \$ 25,000

This planning project will develop zoning and performance standards for a portion of the Mitchell Field property, the former location of the Navy Fuel Depot Facility. The 9 acre portion of the entire 118 acre site will become a marine business zone.

Long Island - Community Center \$ 20,000

Renovations and rehabilitation of the community center on Long Island is a large community endeavor. Grant funds will support two critical components - updating the existing electrical system and installing a sprinkler system.

Naples - Restrooms & Changing Facilities \$ 56,000

The Town will construct a dual-use facility at the Town Beach to house public restrooms and beach changing rooms.

PROP - Regional Housing Rehabilitation \$150,000

PROP will target these funds for two types of activities: 1) Homes receiving weatherization services. PROP's Dept. of Energy (DOE) weatherization funds may not be used for ancillary housing rehabilitation, often required prior to installing insulation or replacing heating systems. These repairs would include roof replacement, replacing faulty wiring, repairing plumbing leaks & removing friable asbestos. 2) Emergency home repairs. PROP frequently receives referrals for households, most who are very low-income and elderly, in desperate need for plumbing, heating or electrical repairs.

Scarborough - Road Construction \$ 85,000

Grant funds will match an equal local contribution to reconstruct a portion of Pine Point Road. The project will improve pedestrian safety and reduce conflicts between local resident and summer tourist traffic.

Sebago - Food/Clothing/Warming Facility \$ 37,000

The project entails renovations to a modular building that will house the Sebago Food Pantry, Clothing Bank, and storage area needed by the community Warming "Hut" program. The program is a partnership between the Town, four area churches, civic groups and interested residents.

Standish - Park Improvements \$ 60,000

This project will develop a public park in Steep Falls with swings, play systems, a basketball court, small skate park, benches, picnic tables and bicycle rack. An ice skating rink and parking already exists at the site at the heart of Steep Falls Village.

Wayside Food Rescue - Regional Food Distribution \$ 12,000

Funds will be used to expand the distribution of fresh and commodity foods to food pantries in Bridgton, Casco, Raymond, Windham, Standish, Steep Falls, Falmouth, Freeport, Scarborough and South Portland.

Windham - Food Pantry \$ 20,000

The project will relocate a town-owned modular building and connect utilities to provide expanded storage and distribution capacity for the Windham Food Pantry.

Windham - Fire Hydrant Installations \$ 16,000

The Town will add four new fire hydrants to existing Portland Water District lines to increase fire fighting capabilities in low/moderate income neighborhoods.

## **Bridgton & South Portland Programs**

The programs and activities conducted in the two set-aside communities of Bridgton and South Portland are integral components of the Cumberland County Community Development program. While not participants in the application competition, their projects, activities, funds, planning, administration and regulatory compliance are all part of the County's program.

**Town of Bridgton** \$279,000 (Standard CDBG + CDBG-R)

Wayside and Ball Field Sewer Leach Field Reconstruction \$185,000

The reconstruction and expansion of the Wayside Sewer/Leach Field and the Ball Field Sewer/Leach Field is a component of Bridgton's ongoing Downtown Revitalization initiative. The septic fields have deteriorated extensively and must be reconstructed to retain sanitary sewer service in the downtown neighborhood. The Wayside and Ball Field systems serve the low/moderate income downtown community development target area. This is Phase II of a multi-year plan to improve sanitary sewer service in Bridgton's Downtown. No construction occurred during 2007. Construction began in the late fall 2008 and will continue through the spring, summer and fall of 2009.

Façade Improvement Program \$59,271

Implement Pondicherry Square Historic Building Façade Restoration Program. Program will immediately create construction jobs and build upon efforts to renew Bridgton's historic downtown.

Program Administration \$35,000

Building and sustaining administrative capacity in Bridgton is an important component of their long-term Downtown Revitalization and Community Development program.

**City of South Portland** \$620,000 (Standard CDBG + CDBG-R)

The City of South Portland and its Community Development Director Erik Carson continue to operate their CDBG program, much as they did prior to relinquishing HUD Entitlement status. Coordination between South Portland and the County, particularly on administrative matters occurs on a regular and on-going basis.

Public Facilities/Infrastructure \$360,000

South Portland will complete facilities/infrastructure projects including: Mill Creek Park Benches; Pleasantdale Sidewalks; High/Sawyer Street Park; Mill Creek Transit Hub; Redbank streetscape Improvements; Redbank Community Policing

& Program Center; Redbank Park Equipment; Pedestrian Crossing Improvements; Broadway sidewalk improvements.

Public Services                      \$65,000

Funds will be provided to 6 programs funded in 2008: Recreation Scholarships; Boys & Girls Club; Center for Therapeutic Recreation; English as a Second Language (ESL); Bus Passes; & PROP Senior Companion. One new program, staff at the Redbank Community Services Hub will be added this year.

CDBG - R                                \$130,000

Not yet determined.

Program Administration        \$65,000

The funds pay salaries, benefits and basic office supplies, phone and technology required for the activities of South Portland's Community Development Office.

## **Recovery Act - Homelessness Prevention Program (HPRP)**

### Where We've Been

Beginning July 2007, PROP and Preble Street joined forces to create an innovative, regional response to homelessness. The project, funded by the County's CDBG program, tapped the expertise, experience and resources at PROP and Preble Street to develop a strategic approach to reducing homelessness. The project serves all communities participating in the County's Community Development initiative, targeting homeless populations and those that are at immediate risk of homelessness.

Between September 1, 2007 and September 30, 2008, the program engaged with 110 individuals and households, including a shocking number of households with young children. Through the efforts of the program, 81% obtained housing, with the remaining people placed on waiting lists for subsidized and private housing. All received supportive case management and referral to local service providers.

The project has two complementary functions: 1) prevent people from becoming homeless through intensive case management and, 2) assist homeless people in securing, and remaining, in stable housing. The two project staff members at PROP and Preble Street provide outreach and emergency assistance to homeless and potentially homeless individuals and families in the 24 communities served by the Cumberland County Community Development Program. The first objective is assisting people to remain in their home communities to benefit from the support of familiar surroundings and natural support networks.

PROP serves as the lead agency for this homeless initiative. The project is staffed by a Project Coordinator/Caseworker at PROP and a Caseworker at Preble Street. Each provides direct services to homeless individuals throughout the county, and engages municipal officials, and regional service providers in relationships designed to sustain the project's activities. An advisory group provides guidance to project staff and oversee the project.

### Where We're Headed: Expansion of Program with HPRP Funds

HPRP funds will allow this successful new initiative to strategically expand with a focus on preventing families from entering the existing shelter system or having to leave their home communities. Project staff will continue to provide services similar to those provided in the first two years of this program by assisting those county residents at the shelters return to their home communities and assisting those families who are at-risk of homelessness identify stable housing and supportive services.

An additional full-time case manager will be based in Windham, a significant source of referrals in the project's first two years. This case manager will focus on serving families at-risk of homelessness in the Lakes Region. Remaining funds will be used to provide direct financial assistance to families throughout the project. These flexible funds provide project staff with the leverage to negotiate security deposits and rent with private landlords, opportunities to address minor financial barriers to housing stability (such as retrieving items in storage, etc.), and provide small amounts of emergency food assistance.