

Executive Summary

ES-05 Executive Summary - 24 CFR 91.200(c), 91.220(b)

1. Introduction

The Consolidated Plan is a five-year planning document laying out the goals for the City of Duluth's Community Development program. The City uses this collaborative process to establish a unified vision for community development actions. This process allows the City and Citizens to shape the various housing and community development programs into effective, coordinated neighborhood and community development strategies. It also creates the opportunity for strategic planning and citizen participation to take place in a comprehensive context, and to reduce duplication of effort at the local level. This document outlines the community's outcomes and objectives for 2020 through 2024.

The Consolidated Plan approach is also the means to meet the submission requirements for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) formula programs.

The statutes for the formula grant programs set forth basic goals for the annual action plan and the jurisdiction's performance that will be evaluated by HUD. Each year the City's plan must state how it will pursue these goals for community development programs, as well as all housing programs.

2. Summary of the objectives and outcomes identified in the Plan Needs Assessment Overview

Theme #1: Ensure all residents have access to necessary transportation and utility infrastructure.

Priorities include:

- Improve streets and sidewalks, and address snow clearing, in ways that do not increase cost burdens on low-income property owners. Support multimodal transportation by improving access to transit, and adding transit amenities such as bus shelters and street lights. Invest in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and implement ADA improvements in targeted areas. Provide reasonable access to clean energy and improve energy efficiency to relieve energy burdens.

Theme #2: Increase the supply of affordable, quality housing.

Priorities include:

- Provide housing cost assistance to alleviate cost burdens. Increase the number of housing units in locations that are convenient for access to jobs and food. Provide a variety of unit types at all levels of affordability, aiming for mixed-income neighborhoods. Housing types to focus on include supportive housing, accessible housing, units for individuals, and senior housing. Improve quality and safety of housing, including enforcement of existing codes and rehab of older structures.

Theme #3: Support thriving neighborhoods by addressing neighborhood issues and improving aesthetics.

Priorities include:

- Identify solutions to homes that are condemned or vacant, in order to address neighborhood blight. Ensure neighborhoods have key amenities such as quality lighting, street trees, and public art. Collaborate with the police department, neighborhood groups, and others to ensure neighborhood safety. Increase waste receptacles and sharps containers in parks and public facilities.

Theme #4: Build employment skills and opportunities.

Priorities include:

- Provide job training for low- and moderate-income individuals. Build the capacity of contractors in order to provide skilled jobs and meet housing development needs. Use economic development strategies to increase living wage jobs.

Theme #5: Support health and well-being.

Priorities include:

- Ensure health care access. Provide connections to recreation activities that promote physical and mental well-being. Eliminate food deserts and expand food access. Provide chemical dependency and mental health treatment, with a particular need for residential treatment.

3. Evaluation of past performance

Each program that is funded with CDBG, HOME and ESG funding is monitored annually to make sure that the number of people who were going to be served for a specific need were met. If not, then that program is evaluated to determine if the need for that the program is still a priority or if that need is being met elsewhere due to other new funding sources or if the community dynamics have changed and the demand for a specific need has decreased. Every year, there are public input sessions to gather input on community needs to evaluate if a need should be a goal for this plan. A description of the goals and a description of the public input process is provided in the annual action plan, which is submitted to HUD for review and approval.

4. Summary of citizen participation process and consultation process

The citizen participation process is outlined in the 2019 Citizen Participation Plan and was integral in goal-setting and developing strategies in the plan. The City used a combination of public hearing, newspaper outreach, and surveys (both online and in person) to identify needs in Duluth.

The Citizen Participation Plan lists out the public process that the Planning & Development Division utilizes throughout the year. The plan includes the process for the development of the Consolidated Plan. The Citizen Participation Plan can be found online at: <https://duluthmn.gov/planning-development>

As part of the Consolidated Planning process community outreach, the City Planning & Development Division staff used multiple outreach strategies to engage community members and the organizations that serve our community. An online Community Needs Assessment survey was available for 3 weeks from April 30, 2019 to May 21, 2019. The Community Development Committee held a Public Hearing on Community Needs on May 28, 2019. Division staff consulted with nonprofit and service providers who work on issues of healthcare, housing, homelessness, and education, and other community issues. These consultations used the same set of five questions, but have been conducted in a variety of ways including an online survey, in person meetings, emails, and phone calls.

At the June 18, 2019 public meeting of the Community Development Committee, the Committee discussed the 5-year goals and priorities for the Consolidated Plan based on the input gathered during the Community Needs Assessment process. The Committee also discussed the funding priorities for FY2020 HUD program funds.

In July 2019 the Planning & Development Division published the annual Housing Indicator Report, which is an analysis of the housing market in Duluth. At the July 16, 2019 public meeting of the Community Development Committee, the Committee adjusted and supported the draft 5-year goals for the 2020-2024 Consolidated plan.

The Community Development Committee reviewed the draft Consolidated Plan, the Action Plan, and FY2020 funding recommendations at its October 22, 2019 and May 5, 2020 meetings. The draft Consolidated Plan was available for 30-day public comment period from October 26, 2019 to November 25, 2019, and was made available April 5 to May 5, 2020. The 30-day comment periods were advertised

in the local newspaper and online. Copies of the draft plans were available at the local libraries, in the Planning & Development division office, and online. All public comment received during the comment periods and at the meeting was presented to the CD Committee and is referenced in the minutes.

5. Summary of public comments

All of the comments received during the public comment period and at the Community Development Committee meetings are referenced in the meeting summary from the public hearings.

6. Summary of comments or views not accepted and the reasons for not accepting them

The comments were related to funding requests, which will be considered.

7. Summary

The Consolidated Plan consists of a number of parts including: a housing and community needs assessment that analyzes the current market conditions, a section on the needs for people who are homeless, a Strategic Plan section and the Annual Action Plan. The Strategic Plan is a key component of the Consolidated Plan, as this section outlines the Community's objectives and outcomes to meet the needs identified in the assessment section. The Annual Action Plan, one of five annual plans, outlines how the federal Community Development resources will be allocated in FY 2020. Each year after that an Annual Plan will be completed to communicate how these funds will be allocated to meet the objectives identified in the Consolidated Plan.

The Annual Action Plans will also include a section that evaluates the community's performance towards meeting the objectives outlined in the Consolidated Plan, meaning how well we are achieving progress towards the priority needs of the City of Duluth.