

## **Part Seven**

### **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

# PART SEVEN - CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

## 1.0 CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

The citizen participation plan for the Consolidated Plan aims to receive a high level of community input from East Chicago residents. To this end, the city engages in several actions to ensure community participation. The city seeks input from a variety of groups ranging from the citizens, advocacy groups, CDC's, neighborhood organizations, social service agencies, and other entities involved in community development. Through this process the citizens are encouraged to review, provide comments, or discuss all aspects of the community development and the consolidated plan development in the city of East Chicago.

The city further attempts to inform the largest number of the citizens about the plan and how it impacts different communities. The city holds community meetings on a regular basis to assure access to information to most citizens. The citizens in these meetings are offered opportunity to freely discuss all their needs and concerns. Bilingual interpreter is typically available in these meetings to meet the Hispanic community's needs.

The city of East Chicago follows several steps in the development of the consolidated plan. These are:

1. Agency input gathering actions. These start the plan development process. The city seeks inputs from the community groups and agencies that are previously received funding or are potentially eligible to obtain funds. The city also gathers their needs, and receive suggestions, comments, or proposals. This process typically starts at the beginning of the plan development.
2. Public Input gathering. This process typically involves several public meetings held at the Riley Center during the plan development process.
3. Public Comment for the Plan. This comment is received for the public at a public meeting about the draft plan, proposed projects, and the budget.

For the purpose of the current plan, the city engaged in the following steps to assure full public participation.

1. **Community Survey.** The purpose of this survey was to receive community input about a wider variety of issues. These surveys were tabulated and the results were considered in setting up priorities for the Consolidated Plan.
2. **One on one interview** with the stakeholders in the community. These ranged from governmental departments to agencies engaged in housing and community development.
- **Community Meeting.** The city held public community meetings in three different occasions to receive input from the community. These meetings were held on the following dates:

March 8, 2004

April 8, 2004

May 10, 2004

The city received a variety comments in these meetings. These comments are summarized in the following section.

The city made available copies of the plan at the East Chicago Public Library, the City Hall, and the Department of Redevelopment. The city also made available a summary copy of the plan at no cost to all that attended the public meeting or were interested to receive one. The comments received from citizens during the comment period is reviewed and responded as deemed appropriate.

To assure equal opportunity to apply for funding, the city also provides technical assistance to a variety of the groups and citizens interested in submitting applications for funding. In this efforts, these organizations are also provided technical assistance to get prepared to apply for the funds.

The city typically makes announcement of availability of funds sometimes early March. The proposals received from interested entities are all evaluated for eligibility and conformance to the overall program objectives. The selected proposals are included in the draft plan. The scope of projects are typically maintained for the duration of the project. When a substantial change is necessary for the use of funds, the city amends the Consolidated Plan. The city typically provides full disclosure of this change and the citizens are afforded a public meeting to comment on the changes.

## **2.0 SUMMARY OF NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS**

Listed below is a summary of the questions, comments and suggestions made during the Community Meeting held on March 8, and April 8, 2004 for the Consolidated Plan.

### **March 8, 2004, 5:00 p.m.**

**Riley Park Pavilion**, 1005 E. Chicago Avenue ( More than 20 residents attended)

The Agenda for this meeting was as follows:

Welcome

Purpose of the Meeting

Program Overview

- Eligible activities
- Deadline for submission of the Proposals
- Proposal form
- Upcoming Meeting

Final Comments.

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m.

Mr. Artis welcomed everyone to the meeting and then introduced his staff. The purpose of the public hearing tonight is to inform the citizens of potential funding in the upcoming year and the upcoming 5 years. Mr. Artis gave a general overview of the intent of the program, benefits, and how we have used funds. The City of East Chicago has been involved since 1975 with this program and East Chicago is an entitlement city. This means the city is automatically eligible for funding annually because it is a community with demographics such as older housing stock and high level of unemployment. HUD use to set aside entitlement grants. Hammond and Gary are also entitlement Cities. There are approximately 12 cities in Indiana with entitlements and if a city does not have an entitlement, they can apply to the state's program. They have their own rules and regulations on how you use those dollars. Any entity servicing 501(c)3 organizations can not participate in the state program. In 1975 Congress crated the CDBG program to consolidate several programs; housing, homelessness, infrastructure, parks and recreation funds, infrastructure. There are certain eligible activities that the program sets how they must principally benefit low income residents. The Census Bureau identifies the areas of city activities which include:

1. Housing
2. Homelessness
3. Public Facilities – Center improvements. Example: Alse Clemente and Martin Luther King
4. Public Services (Elderly, etc.)
5. Economic Development
6. Anti-poverty Programs

The history for East Chicago is that we use our dollars for housing and economic development. We have supported social services and property rehabs. Initially homeowners and investor owned units - \$35K/unit for low or middle income limits. The money has dwindled resulting in reduced amounts of federal grants. Owner occupied single family owned houses. Currently the program has evolved and we provide up to \$15K, 0% interest to owner occupant homes of which 65% are Senior Citizens and 40-45% own their homes without any encumbrances and they were extremely skeptical of our program. So we increased the grant amount and changed the rehab terms and that has been a great program for us now. Our program is not a home improvement program. Our program includes code enforcement identification and will correct homes and bring them up to code because of federal guidelines that are required. In most instances we do improve units and increase independent living styles. Mr. Artis then reviewed the 2003 Action Plan Budget. The years covered are June 2003 – July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004.

The City of East Chicago will receive \$2,164,000 of which \$1,664,000 in CDBG funds and \$500,000 in HOME dollars. Additionally we are anticipating that we will generate \$400,000 in other income from the property rehab program. We are anticipating a total program dollar amount of \$2,564,000. There is an additional pot of money for 501(c)3 organizations and participants such as: RONA, CRP and Faith Temple are eligible to receive funding. The state of Indiana will provide another \$60,000 which gives us approximately \$3 million for the upcoming year.

Mr. Artis proceeded to go through the list:

The Harbor Area Action Plan – Mr. Artis stated we are acquiring property, 400 units for new housing in this area.

Calumet Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan  
Riley Bank Building Renovation  
Bessie Owens Center Renovation

The funds for these programs will be used to identify architects and finish the plans.

Catholic Charities – Senior Companion Program. This is a vital program to both seniors who are able to do for themselves and those incapacitated.

Northwest Indiana Open Housing Center – An Equal Opportunity Entity testing for redlining and working with landlords, realtors, insurance companies, and provides technical training to City Departments. This program year will provide training/workshops with landlords and training with our subrecipients in housing.

Community Reinvestment Project (CRP) – is a CHDO providing homeownership counseling. They also can provide \$20,000 and \$100,000 for multi-family rehabs.

The Revitalization Organization of New Addition (RONA) has a land bank of \$50,000. They provide \$10,000 in down-payment assistance.

National Development Council (NDC) - They work with businesses to create jobs and/or job retention.

Haven House – Shelter for battered women and their children – Domestic Violence

Indiana Legal Services (ILS) – Offices in Gary, Hammond and now East Chicago (Alse Clemente Center)

Calumet Council of Boy Scouts of America – At McKinley, Harrison, Carrie Gosch and Field Schools.

General Administration  
Rehab Administration  
Administrative Reserve  
Community Reinvestment Fund

We will have a final public meeting on April 8, 2004. We will try to have a rough draft at that meeting. The program year is from June – July. The 5-year plan will also be submitted by June of this year.

We want to work with you in identifying approved projects. There is also a copy of the public notice in your packet and a citizen recommendation form for you to use so the public can have input. We have tried to give you a general overview. The deadline for submission is Friday, March 26,

2004 at 4:30 to submit an application. You must have a 501(c)3 not-for-profit status. The surveys are due back March 19, 2004.

Mr. Artis introduced Mr. Taghi Arshami, the consultant who will be working on the plan.

**April 8, 2004, 5:00 p.m.**

**Riley Park Pavilion**, 1005 E. Chicago Avenue ( More than 30 residents attended)

The Agenda for this meeting was as follows:

Welcome  
Program presentation  
5 year Consolidated Plan  
Final Comments.  
Award of the Raffle  
Adjournment

The meeting was called to order at 5:15 p.m by Mr. John Artis, Executive Director.

Mr. Artis welcomed everyone to the meeting and then introduced his staff and Commissioner Paul Myers. The purpose of the public hearing tonight is to inform the citizens of potential funding in the upcoming year and the upcoming 5 years. Mr. Artis gave a general overview of the intent of the program, benefits, and how we have used funds, for those in the audience who did not attend the meeting last month. The City of East Chicago is an entitlement city. This means the city is automatically eligible for funding annually because it is a community with demographics such as old housing stock and a high level of unemployment. HUD sets aside entitlement grants for those entitlement cities. Hammond and Gary are also entitlement cities. If a city does not have an entitlement, they can apply to the state's program. The state's program has their own rules and regulations on how you use those dollars. We will receive \$1,664,000 in CDBG funds for program year 2004 which is from July to July. In addition, the HOME program provides funding for CDC's (local not-for-profit organizations) in the amount of \$500,000 for a total of \$2,164,000. That amount is what we are looking to program for the next year to benefit low and middle income persons.

The federal government funding is based on Census Data by census tracts and states that programs must benefit persons "principally" in those tracts. 51% of owners are low and moderate income persons. Mr. Artis stated that in their packet there is a program overview of activities which includes:

1. Housing (see second page in handout)
2. Homelessness
3. Public Facilities – Center improvements. Example: Alse Clemente and Martin Luther King
4. Public Services (Elderly, etc.)
5. Economic Development
6. Anti-poverty Programs

The City has been involved since 1975 with this program. We have gotten a much as 2.5 million one year and now that amount continues to dwindle. At the last meeting we talked about the kinds of programs we use the funding for such as the rehabs of the community centers. These monies can't be used for equipment but can be used for Health and Safety equipment. We can build or rehab existing fire stations, do sewer work, give rehab loans to eligible residents and our grant program gives grants up to \$15,000 to low income eligible residents. Our loans are 0% interest to eligible owner occupied homeowners. We fund Social Services such as the Boy Scouts, Catholic Charities, and Haven House Shelter. Also, we determine redevelopment districts, site improvements and land acquisitions in conjunction with the Annual Action Plan.

Mr. Artis directed them to turn to the Geographic Locations Table 9. He stated we began this process several weeks ago. We took some new approaches this time. We had surveys distributed, held raffles after the meetings, and flyers were posted throughout the city. In addition, we identified community leaders and asked our consultant to conduct personal interviews to get their impressions. We also put together a focus group and met with people who have participated in our program. There were close to 600 surveys distributed and only 50 were returned. The results of the information gathered from the interviews, has been incorporated in our visions, goals and strategies. We plan to hold another public meeting on May 10, 2004 where we will present the final plan. We want to incorporate as many of the suggestions for the next 5 years as possible.

Mr. Artis introduced the consultant, Taghi Arshami, who gave a presentation.

Mr. Artis reviewed the 5-year Consolidated Plan to the audience

Mr. Artis stated that on May 10 there would be another meeting in which the community will have an opportunity to see the complete plan.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Aida Lopez, 4928 Euclid - Question – How is the existing housing going to be upgrade? They can go to local CDC's for assistance. Each community will have their own needs addressed. Some will have job training to eliminate barriers.

Catherine Hill, 3822 Hemlock – Question – How about putting in centers that will enhance children's minds. They have taken music and arts out of schools. Mr. Artis stated that an advisory group will look at this.

Juan Andradeth was a reoccurring theme in our surveys, in terms of economic development and enhancement. There are a number of efforts going on in the City especially in the construction trades. General Contractors must adhere to rules.

Maritza Lopez, 4928 Euclid – Question – What about educating adults? There are so many grants and federal low interest loans available. She stated she attended a National Grant Conference in Washington D.C. She asked if our department could bring this information to individuals. Mr. Artis stated we can look at that to identify other funding sources. We have no interest loans. Our waiting

list takes 8 months to process. Homeowners are taking advantage of it. Seniors are the majority of homeowners and are on a fixed income. We offer an emergency grant for roofs and furnaces.

Henry Rodriguez, 4925 Indianapolis Blvd. – Question regarding Table 1, the in-process projects. Mr. Artis stated we allocate the money for programs. We have to spend the money in a certain time frame. If the money doesn't get spent we have to reprogram those dollars. We operate on a letter of credit. We have to draw down as we spend it.

Anthony Copeland – Question – There are many boarded up homes can grants be given for existing homes to renovate and blend the new and old. We need to enhance and embellish the code enforcement and need to be both reactive and proactive to make sure homes are up to standards. We need to go on the north side and the south side. Mr. Artis stated that everything boarded up cannot be rehabbed. If there are structural problems they cannot be rehabbed. You won't get a grant if you are an investor. We can make low interest loans though.

Gilda Orange, 3929 Evergreen – Question – In the harbor section of town there is a termite problem that needs to be looked into. There is also a need for ramps.

Mrs. Caruthers, 4922 Parish Ave. – Question about the Riley Building (the old bank building). Mr. Artis stated that it has been proposed to be a cultural arts facility to be completion date unknown for now. We have been working on this project. The city owns it. We have an architect and committee that has been established. We have done the same thing with the neighborhood centers. Also Clemente and Martin Luther King Center have been done.

Mrs. Crowns, 3474 Guthrie St. – Question regarding CDC funding. Mr. Artis stated we make a time frame to allocate those funds, if a project falls through, that becomes the responsibility of the CDC and it is up to them to move the project along. We try to make it move along. They can come back the next year and apply again. Our money is checked by HUD, we have a letter of credit.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

### **3.0 SUMMARY OF THE WORKSHOP RESULTS WITH AGENCIES**

#### **Workshop Date 3-08-04**

On this date, potential and previously funded recipient were invited to attend a workshop. The workshop was held at the Department. All those that attended were given application packets. They also received an in-depth procedure and process information for award of a grant. They were encouraged to participate and submit proposals. The attendees were further asked to discuss four major community development issues in a focus group format. They were given forms with these issues and asked to discuss and make suggestions. The following is the results of these discussions.

#### **Area I - HOUSING**

**A. Please describe the five most important *HOUSING* issues in the city of East Chicago today.**

1. Transitional/specialized housing (support services).
2. Appraisal process.
3. Insurance coverage.
4. Age of Housing Stocks/condition includes cut-ups.
5. Affordable/Availability.

**B. How do you solve above issues? (Please be specific about your proposal).**

1. Develop housing and supportive services to allow low-income residents to maintain housing.
2. Specialized appraisal, with process developed for redevelopment.
3. Watch-dog existing laws.
4. Zoning code enforcement.
5. Additional affordable housing developments and subsidized.

**C. If money was no concern, what do you think the Housing Goals for the City should be for the next five years?**

1. Increase homeownership/owner occupied.
2. Improve code enforcement and property management services.

#### **Area II - SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**A. Please describe the five most important *SOCIAL SERVICES* issues in the City today:**

1. Service for the youth, not enough services at hours that are right for them.
2. Lack of life skills/Employment.
3. Services that address life skills/Parenting Classes.
4. Health Education, Drugs, Nutrition, Diabetes, Heart Disease, Aides HIV, Smoking, Cancer.
5. Education Issues.

**B. What do you propose to address these issues? (Please be specific about your proposal).**

1. Open schools, churches, and facilities with viable programs that interest and excite children and youth.
2. Education, Assessment, training, banking.
3. Trained how to care for and raises a child.
4. Media Components, PR, Field Trips.
5. Access, educate, follow-up all based on interest and qualifications of the individuals.

**C. What do you think the Social Services Goals of the City should be for the next five years?**

1. Individuals taking it one step at a time.
2. Comparing and contrast from.

**Area III - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**A. Please describe the five most important *ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT* issues facing the City today.**

1. Lack of livable wage jobs.
2. Business Development- Retail, high-tech service and manufacturers.
3. Accessibility to usable property and plants/lack of office and retail space.
4. Shortage of Economic Incentives.

**B. How do you solve the above issues? (Please be specific about your proposal).**

1. Identification of area, then marketing and development of infrastructures in the City for the formation of high-tech jobs.
2. Warehousing and other small business development to service the airport (transport, freight, etc.).
3. Set a target area, for redevelopment of commercial and industrial property (Brownfield incentives).
4. Identification of key areas and increasing funding of Work One to meet the needs and potential job creation, economic empowerment zones.
5. Tax abatement, loan financing, expansion of existing agencies within Enterprise Zone.

**C. What do you think the Economic Development Goals of the city should be for the next five years?**

1. Job training in new areas, money for business to train their own workers.
2. High-tech evaluation, development for future use, as well as professional building space.
3. Expansion of money for Incentive Packages in designated areas.

## **Area IV - INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **A. Please describe the most important *INFRASTRUCTURE* issues in the City today.**

1. Age of Infrastructure-Utility.
2. Age of Housing Stock.
3. Analysis of infrastructure, needs or changes.

### **B. How should the City solve the above issues? (Please be specific and consider limited funds as a factor).**

1. Make funds available to Redevelopers for new Infrastructures.
2. Work with local utilities to upgrade present utilities.
3. Augment City's Capital Improvements Process.

### **C. In light of limited funds, what should the City's Infrastructure Goals be for the next five years?**

1. Upgrade and expand all infrastructure needs and wants.

**Public Advertisement 1**

