

RESPONSE TO 2003 ACTION PLAN COMMENTS (DRAFT)
REVISED JUNE 11, 2003

According to the Citizen Participation Plan, all written and oral testimony provided at public hearings, concerning the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, are official public comments. Additionally, written comments sent to the Community Development Division during the 30-day public comment period for the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan is considered to be public comment.

Consolidated Plan regulations require Anchorage to summarize oral testimony or written comment provided as part of the Citizen Participation and Consultation process for the Consolidated Plan and each Annual Action Plan. This section summarizes comments received concerning the Annual Action Plan. The 5-year Consolidated Plan contains an Appendix with a summary of comments received concerning that document. This section summarizes the written testimony (letters, E-mails, etc.) first, and then the oral testimony provided at public hearings.

For the original copies of all public hearing minutes and written testimony please contact the Citizen Participation Coordinator for the Consolidated Plan. See the Citizen Participation Plan for more details.

The following people submitted comments on the 2003 Action Plan, Amendment 1:

1. Polly Smith, Executive Director, Anchorage Literacy Project
2. Bruce Geraghty, Community Planner, Cook Inlet Housing Authority
3. Sherry McWhorter, Captain, Salvation Army

Polly Smith, Anchorage Literacy Project. Responses to 2003 Action Plan Comments

Comments: “Please insert illiterate in the priorities p. 1-6 second bullet that lists persons with the greatest needs. Do not de-obligate funds from successful community programs.”

Response:

The priorities in the draft 2003 Action Plan are from the 2003-2007 Consolidated Plan. Inclusion of illiterate adults into the priority listing will be addressed in the comments on the draft 2003-2007 Consolidated Plan.

The 2003 Action Plan does not de-obligate funds for the Anchorage Literacy Project. \$112,790 is programmed for 2003. The Anchorage Literacy Project is not specifically listed on page 1-11 but is included in the paragraph that states: “See Section Five for project descriptions. In Section Five (page 5-15), there is a complete description of the Anchorage Literacy Project showing the funding of \$112,790 for 2003.

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Bruce Geraghty, Cook Inlet Housing Authority. Responses to 2003 Action Plan Comments

Section 1: General Narratives:

Comment: “We think it is the “amount” of affordable housing units in the community inventory that is significant and recommend that the “condition” on page 1-7 be reduced to 15 years.”

Response: The investment of Municipal funds into affordable housing with the condition that the designated housing needs to be maintained as affordable housing stock is important. The amount of HUD funding that can support establishment of additional affordable housing units in Anchorage each year is limited. Therefore, as a condition of receiving public investment, designated affordable units must remain affordable for a significant period of time. The current minimum of 60 years will remain, however, may be re-evaluated and addressed in a future amendment to the Action Plan as programs are re-evaluated over the coming year.

Comment: Page 1-15: Replace bullet regarding Cook Inlet Housing Authority with the following (see Cook Inlet Housing Authority letter for proposed text).

Response: Concur.

Section 5: Proposed Project Descriptions.

Comment: Disabled Access Program – Citywide
Emergency Repair Program – Citywide

“...we recommend that the Disabled Access Program and Emergency Repair program be combined into a single program component allowing for both types of repair/upgrade needs.”

Response: These two programs will be combined into one program in the 2004 Action Plan.

Comment: “ we would also suggest that the program could be successful with slightly less overall funds dedicated to it, enabling the reduction to be re-programmed for other program components (affordable housing development grants, demolition of dilapidated properties, etc). ...to further reduce Municipal administrative burden we would suggest that this program be provided solely through a non-profit organization, perhaps utilizing the services of a non-profit(s) already offering a similar program.”

Response: This 2003 Action Plan amendment recommends decreasing funds for both programs. CDD would need time to assess the current program administration to

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determine if offering the program through a non-profit organization would be more effective.

Comment: “Page 5-9 Property Acquisition for Affordable Housing.....suggest that it would be more efficient to grant the funds to eligible sub-recipients and allow them to acquire the properties for the purpose of providing affordable housing for low-and moderate-income households. We also suggest that new construction using CDBG funds not be limited to only CBDOs, but also allow non-profits and regional housing authorities to be eligible for these funds for this purpose.”

Response: The Property Acquisition Program for Affordable Housing is not being funded in the 2003 Action Plan. CDD currently uses sub-recipients to acquire properties for the purpose of providing affordable housing. CDD will continue to explore expanding the use of sub-recipients in the future, as well as allowing non-profits and housing authorities to use these funds. The 2003 Action Plan would need to de-obligate funding for this program.

Comment: Page 5-17 Assembly Mandated Supplemental Project Listing.
“Although the projects listed appear to be worthy of assistance and, based on our two and half years working in the neighborhood in which these projects are all located, these projects will benefit the neighborhood. However, we have a concern for the public process that took place to generate the list of projects prior to this list being provided. We suggest that these projects would be more appropriately addressed in the public process for the 2004 Action Plan.”

Response: We are encouraged by the opinion that these projects will benefit the neighborhood. The projects emerged out of a process ongoing over the past year to develop a plan to revitalize Mountain View, and through identification by the elected members of the Assembly in public meetings during which there was opportunity by the public to comment.

While we recognize the frustration of other project sponsors who may want more time to potentially access these funds, because of the tenuous funding situation, it is not possible to wait until the 2004 Action Plan. A significant amount of CDBG funds must be expended by November 2, 2003 or this valuable resource will be lost. Not only will the “Assembly Mandated Projects” make significant positive impact on Mountain View, but, because the CDBG program funds are currently in jeopardy, they also represent the only viable mechanism for the community to retain these valuable funds.

While the process to identify these projects was sufficient to satisfy the Citizen Participation Plan, we will strive to allow for more time and clarity in future funding decisions, when the threat of losing the funds is not so imminent.

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Comment: Page 5-20 Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program (TBRA)

“This is perhaps one of the most administratively burdensome programs to offer and without substantially funding, including sufficient funding for the administrative costs to operate the program; we would suggest re-programming the funds into another program area.”

Response: The Request for Proposal (RFP) for this program has been extended until August 15, 2003. If there is no interest in the community to offer this program under the terms in the RFP, the program will be reconsidered through a subsequent amendment to the Action Plan.

General Comments Regarding Section 5.

Comment: “We recommend that a significantly greater amount of funds be dedicated to the demolition of dilapidated property, including those neighborhood revitalization projects undertaken by non-profit organizations....”

Response: Demolition of dilapidated property under the Slum and Blight program currently is being considered for expansion, with the possibility of additional funds being added in the future.

Comment: “We recommend that a reasonable amount of HOME funds be dedicated to affordable housing multi-family development.We would recommend that the city consider providing all HOME/CDBG funds programmed for affordable housing development (acquisition, demolition, new construction of multi-family properties), including permanent housing for homeless persons and persons with special needs to recipients through the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation’s annual GOAL Program.”

Response: This amendment to the 2003 Action Plan proposes no changes to the HOME funds. CDD will consider these recommendations in the future.

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Sherry McWhorter, Captain, Salvation Army. Responses to 2003 Action Plan Comments

Comment: “We would ask consideration for having the SAFE Center listed among your funding priorities for CDBG. The total cost of this project is estimated to be approximately \$18 million.....it is also important for your deliberations to understand that we can easily spend up to \$3 million by November 2, 2003.”

Response: We appreciate Salvation Army’s effort to identify a project that would help the community retain the CDBG funds that are currently in jeopardy if not expended by November 2, 2003. Unfortunately, because of the environmental review and public comment requirements of the CDBG program, it would not be feasible to use the SAFE Center project as a means to expend CDBG before the deadline. However, the project sounds potentially eligible for CDBG funding and would serve an important need in the community. The Salvation Army is encouraged to apply for CDBG funding for this project in the future. The opportunity to apply for additional CDBG funds will be included either in the 2004 Action Plan or in a subsequent Action Plan amendment.

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Summary of Items in the Minutes Regarding the Annual Action Plan for 2003

Offered during the June 11, 2003 HAND Commission Meeting

HAND Commission Members in Attendance:

Mac Carey
Margaret Evans
Carol Gore
Elise Huggins
Diane Johnson
Wanda Smith

June 11, 2003

Mary Jane Michael, CEO for Anchorage Neighborhood Housing

Refuted the statement made in the Comprehensive Response to Suggested Projects that all of the projects introduced in Mt. View were not eligible for HUD funding. Ms. Michael stated that the projects could meet the deadlines set forth. She went on to remind the HAND Commission how much these projects will impact the community in a positive way both financially as well as the growth to the community.

Response: Projects from the Mt. View District have been revised.

Jeff Judd, Director of Operations and Asset Management for Cook Inlet Housing Authority

He stated that Cook Inlet Housing Authority is in support of the 2003 Action Plan in order to encourage a healthy and culturally diverse economy and affordable housing. He stated that it is clear that there are greater needs in the community than there are funds available in the current Action Plan. Cook Inlet Housing Authority strongly advocates for a balanced funding approach and the funds to be redistributed between the housing and non-housing projects weighing the highest priorities and attempting to prioritize the number of projects that are submitted.

Response: CDD also advocates for a balanced approach.

Regina Montoya, Fairview Community Council

Ms. Montoya stated that in a recent meeting the Fairview Community Council is not in favor of the non-profit organization "In His Name" acquiring the old APRN building on the corner of 9th and Gambell. The Council feels that Fairview has many services already in place in their community that provides services to the homeless population.

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Response: The project, "In His Name" is not being recommended for funding in the 2003 Action Plan.

July 9, 2003 (no one provided oral testimony or submitted written comments)