

MINUTES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

**Two Civic Center Plaza, 8th Floor –
Community Development Conference Room**

Thursday, January 27, 2005

There being a quorum, Mr. Trini Acevedo called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Trini Acevedo, Chairperson
Miguel Grijalva
Esteban Sansores
Ann Schaechner
Barbara Silva

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jamie Barron
Joel Bay
Al Perez, Vice-Chairperson

STAFF PRESENT

Robert Salinas, Community Development Director
Robert Gott, Interim Grants and Program Administrator
John Nance, Assistant City Attorney
Eleanor Love, Grants Planner
Kevin Pitts, Grants Planner
Crandall Young, Grants Planner
Bill Bennett, ADA Coordinator
Dottie Rohler, Recording Secretary
Anthony Shaar, Senior Grants Planner

AGENDA

- 1. Discussion and Action on Steering Committee Absences - Trini Acevedo, Chairperson.**

Esteban Sansores made a motion not to excuse Jamie Barron and Joel Bay and to excuse Al Perez. **Miguel Grijalva** seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- 2. Approval of the Steering Committee Minutes of October 7, 2004 and October 27, 2004 – Trini Acevedo, Chairperson.**

Esteban Sansores made a motion to accept the minutes as they are written. **Miguel Grijalva** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Discussion on Revisions to the Conflict of Interest Section of the Citizen Participation Plan – Adopted by City Council on December 28, 2004 – John Nance, Assistant City Attorney.

Under the existing form of paragraph G there has been a revision. No application for funding with Community Development Dollars will be accepted for consideration by the Steering Committee from an agency such as an employee, officer, agent or anyone that represents the agency sitting as a member of the Steering Committee. It was determined that with regards to memberships of Neighborhood Associations, that standard was seen as being too harsh because they are not generally receiving direct funding, but may have an item that would affect their entity coming before the Steering Committee. There was not a provision of how that conflict of interest would be addressed. The purpose of the amendment being proposed here is to cover that potential conflict as well as the conflict for agency funding. The new provisions are in number 1 and in number 2. Number 1 is what addresses, in somewhat different words, the agency funding conflict and still has the same result. If a member of the committee is an officer, member, or has other interest in an agency that is receiving CD Funding, the funding application will not be considered. If a member of the committee, with regard to item number 2, is an employee, officer or agent of any group that has an identifiable interest that is coming before the committee, then the consequences of that are spelled out here and they are certainly less harsh than the denial of funding for a project. If you are a member of a Neighborhood Association for example and that Neighborhood Association has an interest in an item coming before the committee for consideration, then you should advise the Chairman of the committee that they have a conflict, that they are a member or whatever the connection to that Neighborhood Association is, what the issue is that the Association has an interest in and then they should refrain from discussion of the item and vote by abstain. Abstaining from discussion and voting does not jeopardize the quorum. The body can still vote with members abstaining but there should not be any participation in the discussion or the vote in that circumstance.

Ann Schaecher made a motion to accept the revisions to the Citizen Participation Plan as presented. **Trini Acevedo** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Discussion on the Department of Community and Human Development's Strategy to Move Forward Pre-committed Projects and Initiate a Mid-year (2004-2005) Request for Proposal Process to Address an Abundance of Uncommitted CDBG Dollars – Robert A Salinas, Director.

This is going to give me an opportunity to address two areas of concern that the Department has with our funding. One is that our Department is required to abide by a particular spend rate for the year. We cannot exceed by the end of June more than 1.5 times of that current year's allocation in dollars. For example, if we receive \$10 million dollars in a particular year, by the end of June, we cannot have more than \$15 million dollars still in our line of credit. Last year we did fairly well but our projections for this year are very close to that 1.5 figure. In attempting to address and analyze why we find ourselves in this situation, the staff looked at old projects. In doing, so we found that

there are a lot of unexpended funds from projects that are finished and have money left over. We did a sweep of all the accounts for years going back and we found some accumulation of a significant number of funds. This is a pot of money that previously we were not controlling. The way we decided to solve this situation was two fold. One is that we moved some projects that the Steering Committee and City Council had already pre-approved. As you recall you have some projects where you have design one year, land acquisition another and construction in a third year. We looked at the projects that we are currently working on and identified three that we can move forward into this year to speed up the process and spend the funds quicker. The second way we addressed this concern is to have a mid-year cycle. We let our City Departments know that we had some extra funds available and to submit requests. We had some parameters placed on those requests that we needed to spend the funds relatively quickly. Item 7 on the agenda are the recommendations that the staff had in regard to the proposals that came in. This is not all that came in, but are the ones most feasible to meet our objectives. This does not occur every year. We saw the need and had the ability to make this mid-year cycle happen. We moved just over \$700,000 from previously committed projects forward and we are considering in item 7 just over 1.4 million dollars in the mid-year cycle.

5. Discussion and Action on Allocating an Additional \$200,000 to the Citywide Curb Cut Demand Program, an Existing 30th Year (2004-2005) CDBG Project, Increasing the Budget from \$177,287 to \$377,287 – Robert A Salinas, Director.

Since we have this abundance of funds and you already approved the Citywide Curb Cut Program, we can now expand that project. I would like Bill to give us a quick overview of where and what we have done already and what we can do with an additional \$200,000.

Bill Bennett: The additional \$200,000 will enable us to install approximately another 145 curb ramps; that is to eliminate the curb at the corner and install a ramp for wheelchairs to access the pedestrian sidewalks. To date, at last count we have installed 91 ramps and have spent \$144,904 out of the \$177,000 that was allotted. We have actually installed 107 ramps; we just have not paid for 16 of them yet. We are almost at the end of funds for this year and should have no problem putting in the 145 ramps. We determined how many ramps we could put in with the funding we received, subtracted those, and we have over 270 additional ramps requested. The newer areas in town typically do not need to have curb ramps installed because they are being installed as the subdivisions are developed, which is a requirement by Federal and State Law. When somebody asks us for a curb ramp, we physically, the Street Department and myself, go out and look at the site. If there are no sidewalks in the area we will not install a curb ramp. If there is a sidewalk in one direction we will install a curb ramp. We mostly work with requests to install curb ramps from the neighborhoods to the major thoroughfares. When a ramp is requested on a major thoroughfare, then we submit the request to Sun Metro and the Street Department who with their funds for this same type of program install curb ramps.

Trini Acevedo made a motion to approve the allocation of an additional \$200,000 to the Citywide Curb Cut Demand Program. **Esteban Sansores** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Citizen Comments on Item #5.

None Given

7. Discussion and Action on Adding the Following Activities to the 30th Year (2004-2005) CDBG Program.

A. Audible Pedestrian Signal Installation Priority II and III - \$425,000 Community and Human Development – Bill Bennett

This is a program that has Priority II and Priority III intersections that have been determined can be fitted with Audible Pedestrian Signals. We started the program about a year and a half to two years ago and it seems like it has taken a long time to kick off. Part of the process is we put it out to bid, put out specs, we get information from the community on what type of audible signal they want and all of that took time. We got different manufacturers and tried them out; tested them with the community, and then put them out for bid. Once a bid was established, we ordered the signals for Priority I intersections. Traffic Engineering did the design and the Street Department is in the process of installing them. There is one signal completed at Hunter and Phoenix. Washington at Paisano are the next intersections on the list. These intersections are going to go very fast. We are tying them in with the Parkway Structure Contract where we can have an open bid to buy the signal immediately. With this program we will get 24 intersections that were identified by individuals with visual disabilities as Priority Signals or Priority intersections and bring the intersections up to current code standards; meaning installing additional curb ramps at high traffic locations. It would fix the area around the intersection and install about 160 yards of sidewalk. Since we have the contracts in place, we feel it will go very rapidly and have been reassured by the Street Department personnel that they will get any work they would have to do in-house within the period of time we need, to get the majority of this money spent by the end of June.

Esteban Sansores: Are any of these intersections near to Senior Citizens Health Care or Lighthouse for the Blind?

Bill Bennett: The first Priority intersections include Alameda and Washington, which is right down the street from the Lighthouse for the Blind.

Sergio Reyes: These intersections were previously selected by the disabled community. We are going to conduct training sessions for the disabled community, which will be announced. We only have one installed at the intersection of Phoenix and Hunter that is operational right now.

B. Downtown Master Plan - \$50,000 (Quality of Life Services) – Robert A Salinas

This project is coming from the City Manager and members of City Council. This is a plan to look at the land use between Union Depot all the way down to where Thomason and Texas Tech meet the freeway down to the border and bridges. They are not going to start from scratch but look at previous plans that have already been developed. They will look at land use and economic opportunities to develop more economic benefits to the neighborhood. They will also look at the infrastructure, transportation needs, and the

players, who are the people that can make things happen in that geographical area. They are requesting \$50,000 from the Community Development Department. The City is also putting in their share. This is going to start within the month; I don't know how long it is going to take, however, I anticipate it is going to be completed by some time in the summer. They are working with the Paso Del Norte group. They are one of the think tanks in the Community and have already worked and identified a potential consultant to work with them. This particular item will go to Council on the 15th of February. This \$50,000 is not going to affect the money that would go into any of the Street and Drainage projects. This plan is not being funded by Community Development dollars alone. There are other contributors.

C. Citywide ADA Compliance - \$35,500 (Engineering Department) – Gilbert Guerrero

The Engineering Department is requesting these improvements for eight sites Citywide. These are sites that have to come into compliance with the ADA and TDLR requirements. These improvements are to remove and replace some curb ramps that are non compliant by putting some color on the ramps or adjusting a push button on one of the intersections. We requested from TDLR an extension until June 30th, after that, the City could be fined for violations that have not been addressed.

D. Fire Station No. 11 Emergency Traffic Priority Control System - \$59,868 (El Paso Fire Department) – Chief Donald Marron

Each traffic priority control system aids the firefighters on the fire apparatus to take control of the traffic lights. Currently we have the Campbell corridor installed with this system. What this does is help all the traffic and the fire truck move smoothly through the intersections. These devices have prevented traffic accidents for both the City and the citizens and it increases the response time. For CPR and EMS calls, it's critical that we get there in minutes. We are getting ready to install the Alameda corridor from Davis to the America's. We are looking to install more of these corridors hopefully with TXDOT money and the Federal Government. With these installed at the intersections, it makes that transition for the Fire unit to respond to that call much more smoothly. Installation is quick, just a matter of a few days construction that consists of wiring. The driver of the apparatus flips a switch in the truck and the infrared signal goes onto the mast arm on the traffic light and it trips the device, which then takes control of that traffic light. Traffic and Transportation monitor the Campbell corridor to make sure that there are no false alarms and keep in constant communication with us that the system is working properly. The Street Department has helped a lot with the installation of this. It is a 3M Opticom System and we feel that this is safe, which is the bottom line.

E. & F. Central Fire Station Fire Truck Replacement & Fire Station No. 17 Fire Truck Replacement - \$396,699 each (El Paso Fire Department) – Chief Donald Marron & Chief Calderazzo

One of things that we do is we try to keep an apparatus in service for twenty years in El Paso. We keep them in frontline service for ten years and ten years in reserve. The reserve status is for us to use them in the event of major fires or when the regular ones are down for service. With Pumper 1 we have fallen behind with it being a 13-year old

truck. It looks like with the mileage alone it should last forever but one of the reasons why we have the 20-year replacement schedule is because during the ten years of front line service we work these trucks really hard. We don't treat them like a regular over the road truck because obviously by the nature of our calls we can't let the engine idle for a few minutes and warm up and then head out the door. We have to start them and gun them to get to the call really quick. Once they get there, these pumpers in particular, have to be revved up really high to pump the fire pump for hours on end. The real life of a fire apparatus is related to the hours of use and service. That particularly puts a truck at ten years, a good time to start moving it into reserve. The National Fire Protection Association says you should not keep trucks over 20 years in your fleet at all so we try to balance that out. The apparatus manufacturer that we want to get these from, only gives us 15 years on the apparatus, so the way we do it with ten years frontline and ten years reserve, we are actually able to extend the life of the apparatus beyond what the manufacturer recommends; we have been successful with that. Every three years or so NFPA tries to include new technology in the trucks and when we go out to buy a fire apparatus we try to get the latest standard type apparatus. For example, about ten years ago we were still using an open cab apparatus and guys were riding on the tailboard. Now we don't even let an apparatus move these days without everybody buckled in and ready to go. The volume of water that we use has gone up because of the size of the pump we are able to put in the trucks now. The cost of these apparatus reflects a new technological improvement we are looking at called CAFS (Compressed Air Foam System), which allows us to use fire-fighting foam and reduce the water damage. If you know anybody who has ever had a fire in their home, fire damage is not the only damage that occurs, you have smoke damage and water damage. The goal of the CAF System is to reduce the amount of water we need to put out a fire.

G. Carolina Recreation Center Parking Lot - \$69,841 (Street Department) – Harold Kutz

The Street Department is involved with this project, which deals with specific requests to do a cost proposal to see what it would cost to build this parking lot addition using in-house forces. Senior Citizens in this area approached Representative Lozano. This is just an effort to expand the existing parking at that facility by 38 spaces.

H. Hidden Valley Jogging Path - \$70,000 approximately (Parks Department) – Richard Garcia

This project is for an extension to an existing jogging path at Hidden Valley Park. We made some park improvements to this park a few years ago with the Quality of Life Bond proceeds. We put in new ball field lighting, automated the irrigation system and put in a new jogging path. As part of the jogging trail there was a section that was put in as an alternate to make sure it came within the budget, this particular section, just under 300 feet, did not get built. We do however have the design already completed. We have had quite a few requests to extend the path. This is an 8-foot wide jogging path and with this extension it will finish it out really nice and provide a loop. Right now you start at one point ending at another and then having to go back. The \$70,000 will cover any adjustments to the irrigation system, preparation of the bid specs that need to be done along with the extension and we want to make sure we have enough money to complete the job.

8. Citizen Comments on Item #7.

None Given

Ann Schaechner made a motion to accept these projects as presented. **Trini Acevedo** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Discussion on the Funding Allocation from HUD for 2005-2006 – Anthony C. Shaar, Senior Grants Planner.

We received notice from HUD of the final allocations we will be getting for our three entitlement grants. You can see on the bottom of the page that for sure we are going to be getting \$9.6 million for CDBG, approximately \$4 million for HOME and \$374,000 for ESG funds. This 31st year CDBG budget is a pretty good breakdown of where all the funds should be going or are going to be going. We know that the \$1.6 million will be going to Social Services. That amount is based upon the amount we know we are going to be getting for the 31st Year for CDBG plus the current 30th Year program income projection. We add those two amounts together and take 15% of that, which is where we get the 1.6 million dollar figure. That is the max we can spend on Social Services for the 31st Year. We brought three of the pre-committed Public Facilities projects forward that you had previously committed into this 31st Year. Those projects were Capistrano, Mary Webb Park and Boys Club Walkway. There were two projects that you had committed to the 32nd Year - Dorbandt Circle and Verdeland Drive, which we moved from the 32nd Year into this 31st Year funding and pre-committed those. The Community Development budget figures and accounting figures are set. The reason there is a little shading on that legal amount is we still have not received Legal's request but we figure it is going to be about 141,000 dollars from preliminary discussions with them. They are supposed to take about a 5% decrease and that's what the 5% decrease would be. Based on that, we should fall below our Administrative cap. We have a 20% Administrative Cap fee imposed upon us by HUD for the 31st Year and we should be below that. What this all adds up to when you add in the Social Services, the Pre-Committed projects and the Administration is the ten million dollar figure that you have here. We are only getting 9.6 million from HUD. In order to make up that deficit; we are taking those uncommitted funds from those previous projects we have closed out from the contingency amount and we are going to take 2.5 million dollars from that account and are going to stick it in here into the 31st Year program to make it available for new projects. In doing this we are going to have 12 million dollars for 31st Year. You will have 2.1 million dollars to spend when you are trying to figure out your budget for all the requests you are going to be getting for 31st Year. In these coming weeks we have received requests for 31st Year funding stemming from street and drainage improvement requests, parks requests and other different types of requests. The requests total probably around 20 or 30 million dollars. People are going to be coming before you and making a presentation pleading their case, telling you why they have a good project and why you should fund it. Your job here as the Steering Committee is to make a recommendation on which projects you think are the best. You have a 2.1 million dollar budget to work with to fit in those new projects.

10. Discussion and Action on Steering Committee Schedule for Review of 2005-2006 Funding Requests – Anthony C. Shaar, Senior Grants Planner.

In looking at your schedule you see that you are going to start your proposal review on Tuesday February 8th. You will be starting with the Social Services Projects, and will be meeting twice a week, or at least once a week for quite a bit. The discussion we need to have here is to approve that schedule, however this is not set in stone. We seem to be having a problem with some of the Steering Committee members making it at 5:30 p.m., and you might want to look at that and discuss if you want to meet some other time or a different day.

Trini Acevedo: As long as the majority is committed to at least have a quorum, there is no problem with this schedule. We are going to be in a bind if we do not have a quorum at one of these meetings, therefore doubling up the agenda and be here until 1 or 2 in the morning.

Trini Acevedo: I have a conflict with the date of the bus tour on Thursday March 17th. Could we move it to Wednesday or Friday?

Anthony Shaar: That would be no problem; we can move the Bus Tour from Thursday March 17th to Wednesday March 16th.

Esteban Sansores made a motion to tentatively approve the planning schedule as is. **Trini Acevedo** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Discussion and Action on the Materials to be Provided to the Steering Committee by CD Staff during the Proposal Review Process – Anthony C. Shaar, Senior Grants Planner.

As you can see, this can get very confusing and we provide you with a lot of paperwork. This is in regards to Non Social Services proposals; they have already provided you with their application packets. What we usually provide is a fact sheet where we give you the description, service area, the representative district, other information we feel is important, and the feasibility on the project. In addition to that, what we have been providing to you in the past is parts of the application packet that we think you should probably see, like the narrative and the budget sheets. If this is okay with you or if you think this is still too much paperwork, you might want to consider just the fact sheet or, in the past, if this is not enough paper for you, we used to provide the entire application packet.

Trini Acevedo: I think we can use what we do right now but in addition, can we have a census? It would give us an idea of how many people are going to benefit from the request.

Anthony Shaar: We can provide that information for you on the fact sheet.

Trini Acevedo made a motion to approve the materials that are provided to the members. **Ann Schaechner** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Adjournment.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.