

PUBLIC COMMENTS – 2011 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN FALL PUBLIC HEARINGS

COMMENTS PROVIDED BY:				
Name	Organization	Comment or Question	Action Plan Reference	Department Response
Deborah Sanders	Concerned citizen of Houston	My question is whether or not you are required to live within a revitalization area to be eligible for the Home Repair Program.	Please see Description of Activities & Awards Process Section of the draft 2011 Annual Action Plan	Eligibility for the Single Family Home Repair (SFHR) program is not limited to revitalization areas of the City. Income eligible persons may apply for assistance; however, the Department is oversubscribed and is not accepting new applications at this time. Please note that the Single Family Emergency Repair program is age restricted for persons 62 years of age or older and those with HUD designated disabilities. The Emergency Repair Program is accepting applications.
Mama Delaney	Concerned citizen of Houston	Seeking information on purchasing land, bus stop with benches. Buying power in Kashmere Gardens.	N/A	Commenter referred to the Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority (LARA), which is administered in the Department by Stephen Tinnermon, Deputy Director over Housing Programs, for additional information.
Jane Cummings	Executive Director of H.E.A.R.T.	I'm here to ask you, please, to include the H.E.A.R.T. program in funding allocations for next year. We know that the dollars are precious and we're working very, very hard to do the most we can with these dollars. People with developmental disabilities need transportation, jobs, job training, and housing the H.E.A.R.T. program works towards providing these services and we could do so much more with your help.	Please see Resources Section of the draft 2011 Annual Action Plan	This year the Public Services Section will be issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Organizations requesting funding from the City must respond to the posted Request for Proposal (RFP) for consideration. The Public Services RFP will be released in June 2011 on the Department's website www.houstonhousing.org ,

				and general circulation newspapers, such as the Houston Chronicle. The RFP will be open for 45 days. Proposals will be evaluated according to explicit selection criteria, such as; CDBG program priorities, experience and/or past performance, and benefit to target area/or special needs populations.
Sharone Mayberry	Home Builder, Mayberry Homes	If you're going to have the grant dollars be the same citywide, there is no incentive for people to come back and stay in blighted areas. So we encourage the City of Houston to do is go back to where we were, to continue to have the tier level product to where the inner city areas, those hope areas receive the high level of assistance as opposed to citywide.	Please see Description of Activities & Award Process Section of the draft 2011 Annual Action Plan	HCDD has revised the Homebuyer Assistance Program (HAP) to provide more option for low -to-moderate – income households' to purchase affordable, decent, and safe housing throughout the City of Houston. The revised HAP program provides financial assistance of up to \$19,500 for low-to moderate income homebuyers, whose income does exceed 80% of Houston's area median income (AMI), as designated by HUD. The Department is using federal HOME and CDBG funds to provide financial assistance for homeownership downpayment, prime write-down, and closing costs through a direct grant to the homebuyer. The City's Workforce Housing Downpayment Assistance Program (DPA) was created to provide low-to moderate-income residences whose combined gross annual income is 80%-110% of the Houston AMI up to \$30,000 in downpayment assistance. The Department is utilizing TIRZ affordable housing funds for the

				Workforce Housing DPA. Regarding Revitalization Area programs such as Houston HOPE, the Department is exploring alternative approaches to establishing neighborhood revitalization areas that comply with HUD guidelines.
Thao Costis	CEO Search Homeless Services	I wanted to make a comment, a suggestion with the Housing Department. You can help us by linking organizations that can benefit from the skill sets that each bring to a certain project or program, and take into account the broader funding opportunities in areas concerning homeless needs and how to complement it all together.	N/A	The Department appreciates the comment and looks forward to partnering in the future.
Stephen Fairfield	Covenant House	As you consider the downpayment assistance program here are a couple of thoughts. The City should provide something extra for families that are willing to invest in low income areas by having a 20% bench mark to get below mortgage premiums. I want to thank you for your investment in the Deluxe Theater. Also, the City ought to pay for public safety improvements, such as fire trucks, police stations out of the general fund and thereby federal funds would be available to fund more eligible programs.	Please see Description of Activities & Award Process Section of the draft 2011 Annual Action Plan	The Department appreciates the comment. The downpayment assistance program has been revised to better assist homebuyers and provide more options for financial assistance using federal and non-federal funds. Regarding the use of CDBG funds for public safety improvements, in accordance with 24 CFR 570.201 (c), public facilities and improvements which allows for the purchase of fire trucks and other public infrastructure, is an eligible activity. Additionally OMB Circular A-87 (15) (a) (1) (2), now codified at 2 CFR 225 supports eligible "Capital Expenditures" which allows for the acquisition cost of capital assets (equipment, buildings, land), or expenditures to make

				improvements to capital assets. Anytime the City uses the funds for such purchases, low and moderate income citizens are the primary beneficiaries as required by law. The Department understands concerns regarding these expenditures and funding priorities are reviewed regularly.
Tony Koosis	Houston Center for Independent Living	The City of Houston passed a visitability ordinance and is the largest city in the country with such an ordinance. The issue that we have now is builders who said it would add thousands of dollars to the cost of the home and there is actually no money set aside to provide the funds. But what we found out when did a test here is that adding these physical features added \$47.50 to the cost of the home. So as far as visitability, it is here and it is something that should be funded by the City of Houston.	Under Review	The Commenter is correct; City Council approved Ordinance 2003-1239 establishing Voluntary Visitability standards, which amended the 2000 International Residential Code. The following year, City Council approved Ordinance 2004-0024 appropriating \$200,000.00 out of Low Income Housing Fund 162 and adopted Guidelines under the Voluntary Visitability Program to provide incentives to developers. In addition, the Department will set-aside construction funds in the 2011 budget to assist with accessibility of housing and public facilities.
Mary Cunigan	Sunnyside Resident and member of Sunnyside Civic Club	The City needs to do a better job of promoting its programs especially Downpayment Assistance, i.e. the Houston HOPE Program, which they had never heard of until a staffer at the mortgage company informed them of it. There are a lot of people who don't know about the City's program. It is important that the City emphasize its programs more.	N/A	The City of Houston promotes the Homebuyers Assistance Program (HAP) in two distinct ways. Information about the Downpayment Assistance program can be viewed online at HCDD's official website www.houstonhousing.org . Presentations on the HAP are done bi-weekly at HUD Certified Housing Counseling Agencies Classes and at

				Realtor or Lender offices. To schedule a presentation please contact Jorge Cavazos with HCDD at 713-868-8300.
Rita Foretich	Super Neighborhood 39 in Sunnyside	I wanted to talk about having Townwood Park building on our present park. We want to have something for our youth. The 19 acres of land for Townwood Park was purchased from the Houston Parks Board for \$2,375,000, which is our match. Any help you can give us is appreciated.	Please see Description of Activities & Awards Process Section of the draft 2011 Annual Action Plan	This activity falls under Neighborhood Facilities & Improvements program. Projects are solicited from the public and other City Departments for consideration through an open Request for Proposal (RFP) on HCDD website, www.houstonhousing.org and general circulation newspapers, such as the Houston Chronicle. Organizations requesting funding from the City must respond to the posted Request for Proposal (RFP) for consideration.
Dorecia Craft	Concerned citizen of Houston	I am here to address the Downpayment Assistance program and the amount of money that will be given to individuals. If the City is serious about redevelopment it must do something to incentivize people to live in revitalized neighborhoods and one way of attracting working class families is the amount of downpayment assistance granted to eligible persons.	Please see Description of Activities & Awards Process Section of the draft 2011 Annual Action Plan	HCDD has revised the Homebuyer Assistance Program (HAP) to provide more option for low -to-moderate – income households’ to purchase affordable decent and safe housing throughout the City of Houston. The revised HAP program provides financial assistance of up to \$19,500 for low-to moderate income homebuyers, whose income does exceed 80% of Houston’s area median income (AMI), as designated by HUD. The Department is using federal HOME and CDBG funds to provide financial assistance for homeownership downpayment, prime write-down, and closing costs through a direct grant to the homebuyer.

				<p>The City's Workforce Housing Downpayment Assistance Program (DPA) was created to provide low-to moderate-income residences whose combined gross annual income is 80%-110% of the Houston AMI up to \$30,000 in downpayment assistance. The Department is utilizing TIRZ affordable housing funds for the Workforce Housing DPA. Regarding revitalization Area programs such as Houston HOPE, the Department is exploring alternative approaches to establishing neighborhood revitalization areas that comply with HUD guidelines.</p>
Veronica Jacobs	AIDS Project at Houston Volunteers Lawyers Program	I like to thank the City of Houston and in particular HOPWA for allowing us to provide supportive services to persons living with HIV and AIDS in the Houston areas. We bring attorneys to hospitals, hospices and AIDS service organizations, where ever the clients are to help them deal with some of those life-ending issues. And we thank you for the opportunity to do that, and we look forward to continuing our work with HOPWA and the City of Houston.	Please see Description of Activities & Award Process Section of the draft 2011 Annual Action Plan	This year, the Public Services Section will be issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Organizations requesting funding from the City must respond to the posted Request for Proposal (RFP) for consideration. The Public Services RFP will be released in June 2011 on the Department's website www.houstonhousing.org , general circulation newspapers, such as the Houston Chronicle. The RFP will be open for 45 days. Proposals will be evaluated according to explicit selection criteria, such as; CDBG program priorities, experience and/or past performance, and benefit to target area/or special needs populations.

John Henneberger	Texas Low Income Housing Information Service	<p>First, will the repeal of the floodplain prohibition apply to both disaster recovery funds and non-disaster recovery funds? Secondly, urge that a comprehensive infrastructure plan be prepared on the inner city minority neighborhoods with emphasis on flooding and drainage problems. And thirdly, that 1/3 of the gross CDBG allocation and disaster recovery funds is used to address these problems. Due to the problematic nature of the Home Repair Program Director Noteware should create a task force with a 30 day review period for restructuring the single-family program and the City brings in experts from other cities who successfully administer this program. Urge that all CDBG funded contractors set aside 35% of funds for hiring individuals living within the target neighborhoods. Suggest that CDBG funds go directly to problems relating to flooding, low income housing and other things. I ask that the City consider adopting a visitability standard for people with disabilities. I ask that the City consider leaving this public hearing open for a period of seven days to allow people to make additional written comments.</p>	Under Review Please see Description of Activities & Award Process Section of the draft 2011 Annual Action Plan	<p>The Department may only respond to the comments on entitlement grant funded activities and programs and will address Disaster Recovery in a future application. The Department revised the Single Family Home Repair Program (SFHR) in consultation with other City Departments and community groups. For the 2011 Annual Action Plan the City of Houston allocated \$5,277,567 of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to the Single Family Home Repair Program. The City is in the process of requesting an appropriation of \$500,000 in TIRZ funds for the "Minor Critical Emergency Home Repair Program" an initiative which would include, but is not limited to, roof repairs (including blue tarps and repaired or replacement roofs) and vital interior systems (plumbing, electrical, and heating). The Department will refer eligible applicants to this program once it is approved by City Council. Regarding the Visitability standard, City Council passed Ordinance 2003-1239 establishing Voluntary Visitability standards, which amended the 2000 International Residential Code. The following year City Council approved Ordinance 2004-0024 appropriating \$200,000.00 out of Low Income Housing Fund 162 and adopted</p>
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				<p>Guidelines under the Voluntary Visitability Program to provide incentives to developers.</p> <p>Responding to Commenter’s request that the public hearing remain open for seven days, the Department held four public hearings on the federal entitlement grant allocations, two hearings were held October 26 and 28 of 2010, and two hearings were held March 17 and March 24 of 2011. The Department is committed to meeting with the public to inform them on entitlement funding activities and programs and get input on budgeting priorities and plans.</p>
Eric Mitchell	Avenue Community Development Corporation	<p>Our community has benefited from the HUD resources that have been made available by the City of Houston’s Housing and Community Development Department. Avenue CDC has completed 20 affordable homes made possible with the HOME funds and we are constructing 144 apartment units also funded through HOME. The average home price in the City of Houston is \$156,000. New high quality affordable homes in the Houston Hope areas are selling for on average \$123,000. Buyers who earn 60 percent to 80 percent of median income require adequate downpayment assistance to purchase these homes. The current subsidy level of \$30,000 is appropriate to assist low income households to purchase homes in our low income communities. We urge the</p>	Please see Description of Activities & Award Process Section of the draft 2011 Annual Action Plan	<p>HCDD has revised the Homebuyer Assistance Program (HAP) to provide more option for low -to-moderate – income households’ to purchase affordable decent and safe housing throughout the City of Houston. The revised HAP program provides financial assistance of up to \$19,500 for low-to moderate income homebuyers, whose income does exceed 80% of Houston’s area median income (AMI), as designated by HUD. The Department is using federal HOME and CDBG funds to provide financial assistance for homeownership downpayment, prime write-down, and closing costs through a direct grant to the homebuyer.</p>

		<p>department to continue to support the revitalization of our communities by continuing the housing assistance program with adequate funding.</p>		<p>The City's Workforce Housing Downpayment Assistance Program (DPA) was created to provide low-to moderate-income residences whose combined gross annual income is 80%-110% of the Houston AMI up to \$30,000 in downpayment assistance. The Department is utilizing TIRZ affordable housing funds for the Workforce Housing DPA. Regarding revitalization Area programs such as Houston HOPE, the Department is exploring alternative approaches to establishing neighborhood revitalization areas that comply with HUD guidelines.</p>
Debra Walker	Member of TOP (Texas Organizing Project)	<p>I am requesting that the City allocate \$20 million in grant funds for Single Family Home Repair Program on a yearly basis. Hire people from the target neighborhoods to work on repairing the homes, abolish floodplain prohibition. Due to problems of mismanagement and millions of tax payer dollars that have been sent back, commenter requested the creation of a citywide housing oversight committee that consists of TOP (Texas Organizing Program) members and member of the low income communities.</p>	<p>Please see Description of Activities & Award Process Section of the draft 2011 Annual Action Plan</p>	<p>For the 2011 Annual Action Plan the City of Houston allocated \$5,277,567 of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to the Single Family Home Repair Program. The City is the process requesting an appropriation of \$500,000 in TIRZ funds for the "Minor Critical Emergency Home Repair Program" an initiative which would include, but is not limited to, roof repairs (including blue tarps and repaired or replacement roofs) and vital interior systems (plumbing, electrical, and heating). The Department will refer eligible applicants to this program once it is approved by City Council.</p>

Acie Jefferson	President of Holmes Community Housing Development Corporation	I'm standing here today to ask for strong support of the CHDO program. CHDO are the anchors for the development of low income neighborhoods that were at one time overlooked and left out. CHDO need the City's help, support and the City ought to design programs that help CHDOs succeed.	Please see Description of Activities & Award Process Section of the draft 2011 Annual Action Plan	A minimum of 15 percent of the annual HOME allocation, approximately \$2.1 million (plus approximately \$700,000 for CHDO operating expenses) is reserved for Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs). HCDD will meet with all certified CHDOs to determine their capacity in efforts to provide a more streamlined and responsive program to the needs of each CHDO and their neighborhoods. HCDD plans to announce a request for proposals (RFP) for certified CHDOs on its website, www.houstonhousing.org and general circulation newspapers, such as the Houston Chronicle.
James Lacy	Houston Area Urban League	We're requesting operating funds to develop the Bland Street project to address core neighborhood challenges like education, youth development, workforce development, issues impacting senior citizens and others in need. We thank you for the funds to repair the roof last year; however that was only the beginning to repairs needed to update the historic HAUL's building, and the Houston Area Urban League established separate 501c (3) and is currently a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) to develop affordable housing for low and moderate income citizens. We are requesting operating funds to develop this project under the Neighborhood Stabilization Program.	Please see Description of Activities & Award Process Section of the draft 2011 Annual Action Plan	The Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) Solicitation and awards process is as follows: Applicants must submit a response to a Request For Proposal, in order to be considered to receive any NSP funding. This RFP will be posted on the HCDD website, www.houstonhousing.org , and general circulation newspapers, such as the Houston Chronicle. HCDD will meet with all certified CHDOs to determine their capacity in efforts to provide a more streamlined and responsive program to the needs of each CHDO and their neighborhoods. HCDD plans to announce a request for proposals (RFP) for certified

				CHDOs on its website, www.houstonhousing.org , and the Houston Chronicle. Organizations requesting funding from the City must respond to the posted Request for Proposal (RFP) for consideration.
Vivian Harris	S.C.C.C.	I'm asking when you all think about placing the homeless, make sure that you don't concentrate them in certain areas.	N/A	The Department appreciates the comment.
Rev. Elmo Johnson	Uplift 4 th Ward Community Housing Development Corporation	I want to thank the City of Houston because they have meetings like this so we can voice our opinions. The Community Development Department of the city is one of the arms that help bring low to moderate income housing, HOPWA grants into our community. We need stores, washaterias and other things in the community.	N/A	The Department appreciates the comment and looks forward to partnering in the future.
Alan Apurim	Concerned Citizens of Houston	Discuss Proposition 1 and other drainage issues	N/A	The Department appreciates the comment.
Cindy Romero	Home Builder/Concerned Citizens of Houston	I came to ask you to consider in your 2011 budget to include a Hispanic area to be included in the Hope areas...areas are basically African American, and I would like to see if we can have an area that is Hispanic and help the Hispanic community.	N/A	The Department is currently reviewing the Houston HOPE areas to address HUD concerns on the selection process of targeted areas and is looking for other areas of investment.
Robin Germaine Curtis	Executive Director Greater Houston Development, Inc.	I heard about the downpayment assistance possibly being reduced. Working in a community such as Trinity Gardens the only way we're going to redevelop those neighborhoods where you have hundreds of vacant lots is that we're able to leverage the dollars that are available at level that really makes them affordable.	Please see Description of Activities & Award Process Section of the draft 2011 Annual Action Plan	HCDD has revised the Homebuyer Assistance Program (HAP) to provide more option for low -to-moderate – income households' to purchase affordable decent and safe housing throughout the City of Houston. The revised HAP program provides financial assistance of up to \$19,500 for low-to moderate

				<p>income homebuyers, whose income does exceed 80% of Houston’s area median income (AMI), as designated by HUD. The Department is using federal HOME and CDBG funds to provide financial assistance for homeownership downpayment, prime write-down, and closing costs through a direct grant to the homebuyer. The City’s Workforce Housing Downpayment Assistance Program (DPA) was created to provide low-to moderate-income residences whose combined gross annual income is 80%-110% of the Houston AMI up to \$30,000 in downpayment assistance. The Department is utilizing TIRZ affordable housing funds for the Workforce Housing DPA. Regarding revitalization Area programs such as Houston HOPE, the Department is exploring alternative approaches to establishing neighborhood revitalization areas that comply with HUD guidelines.</p>
Regina Dixon	Executive Director Catholic Charities Community Development Corporation	I would like to stand in unity with other CDC’s and the builders and the CHDOs to encourage the city not to lower the downpayment assistance below \$30,000. I have the privilege of working in Independence Heights to help revitalize the community. This cannot happen if the City’s downpayment program is reduced below \$30,000. We can keep our prices down, and we don’t have to re-gentrify	Please see Description of Activities & Award Process Section of the draft 2011 Annual Action Plan	HCDD has revised the Homebuyer Assistance Program (HAP) to provide more option for low -to-moderate – income households’ to purchase affordable decent and safe housing throughout the City of Houston. The revised HAP program provides financial assistance of up to \$19,500 for low-to moderate income homebuyers, whose

		<p>that community. Please do not lower the amount below \$30,000 if you are serious about rebuilding, not just the communities, or the Hope areas, but the city in general.</p>		<p>income does exceed 80% of Houston’s area median income (AMI), as designated by HUD. The Department is using federal HOME and CDBG funds to provide financial assistance for homeownership downpayment, prime write-down, and closing costs through a direct grant to the homebuyer. The City’s Workforce Housing Downpayment Assistance Program (DPA) was created to provide low-to moderate-income residences whose combined gross annual income is 80%-110% of the Houston AMI up to \$30,000 in downpayment assistance. The Department is utilizing TIRZ affordable housing funds for the Workforce Housing DPA. Regarding revitalization Area programs such as Houston HOPE, the Department is exploring alternative approaches to establishing neighborhood revitalization areas that comply with HUD guidelines.</p>
Rodney Jones	Concerned Citizen of Houston	<p>I want to speak on record in favor of the downpayment assistance program. We had over 1000 lots in this particular area in the Sunnyside area that was within the Houston Hope area. The city was not getting a dime on taxes. All of those homes that have been sold in that area, they are now on the tax rolls. So it doesn’t take a rocket science to figure out getting money is to the city advantage to get taxes from the homes that are now in the area that</p>	<p>Please see Description of Activities & Award Process Section of the draft 2011 Annual Action Plan</p>	<p>The Department appreciates the comment.</p>

		have been built.		
Wanda Adams	City Council Member, District D	I want you to know that you all have done an amazing job, and let you know that I appreciate all you are doing to make sure our communities get to a level that we need to be.		The Department appreciates the comment and looks forward to working together.
Stephen Costello	City Council Member, Position 1	I am here to express support for permanent supportive housing for the chronically homes in Houston and encourages the City to prioritize permanent supportive housing. Without supportive housing people cannot access and make effective use of treatment and supportive services. Permanent supportive service works. The City must leverage its available federal and local resources to provide units and services for the homeless. Supportive housing gives people independence, dignity and hope, it makes good public policy.	N/A	The Department appreciates the comment and looks forward to working together.
Jolanda Jones	City Council Member, Position 5	I would like to allocate money and send our people to train to learn the HUD regulations. Make sure we have competitive spending. We need to make sure that contracts are in place so organizations on shoestring budgets are able to provide the services they're there to provide for. We need to stop over subsidizing tax credit deals. We need to assist renters. We need to target media in different communities tailored to that specific community. We need to have meaningful public hearings and not squeeze it into an hour or two. I would like money to be used on floodplains, economic development and mixed income development. We need to provide more	N/A	The Department appreciates the comment. HCDD is currently developing a revitalization strategy and is having discussions with METRO and community regarding Transit Oriented Development. The Department will also work with local school districts and city departments to coordinate activities for a more holistic response to community needs. HCDD staff has been to several HUD trainings to address administrative concerns. The Department is committed to meeting with the public to inform

		<p>moderate income housing along transportation by working with METRO. We need to put housing where the schools are. We need to do better with communicating between City departments to maximize funding. I would like for the Housing Department to be more responsive and respectful of the people that come for assistance.</p>		<p>them on entitlement funding, activities, and programs seeking input on budgeting priorities and plans. The Department looks forward to working together in the future.</p>
Al Green	United States House of Representatives - 9 th Congressional District	<p>My stated concern is about multi-family projects in Sunnyside. Residents are concerned about maintaining the integrity of the community and it staying a single family residential community. Residents are also concerned about abandoned projects, where the lending community starts a project and then abandoning it when the project hits a snag leaving the residents holding the ball. It gives the appearance that Sunnyside is not a good investment when it is.</p>	N/A	<p>The Department appreciates the comment and looks forward to working together in the future.</p>