2024-25 Low-Income Residents' Needs Assessment

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING

November 16, 2023

SUMMARY NOTES

CALL TO ORDER:

Community Development (CD) Interim Planning Manager/Hearing Officer Krystin Rice called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Civic Arts Plaza Boardroom, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 2100 East Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Thousand Oaks, California and via videoconference. Assistant City Attorney Tracy Friedl was available for questions via videoconference; Office Supervisor Michelle McMurtry and Community Services Analyst Sarah Mailes were present via videoconference; CD Analyst Lynn Oshita and Recording Secretary Lori Goor were also present. In addition to staff, 19 persons were present in person and via videoconference, representing 13 organizations.

WELCOME:

After a brief welcome and the purpose of the hearing to receive comments on the unmet needs of lower-income City residents, Ms. Rice recognized Ms. Oshita for staff comments.

STAFF COMMENTS:

CD Analyst Oshita reported that the City of Thousand Oaks annually receives an entitlement grant from the Federal government known as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). These funds are provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). CDBG funding must be used to primarily benefit lower-income persons or households.

- The July 1, 2024 CDBG grant is estimated to be approximately $614,000. In addition, there are approximately $32,000 available from the prior year for a total community development project budget of $646,000.

- The City expects an approximate budget of $115,000 for City administration, $440,000 for community development projects, and $91,000 for public services that primarily benefit lower-income households.
Now through Wednesday, January 10, 2024, the City is soliciting CDBG funding applications from non-profit agencies seeking an award of CDBG funds to address an unmet need of the lower-income population of Thousand Oaks. The application can be found on the City’s website www.toaks.org on the Community Development page.

After the CDBG Review Committee evaluates the 2024 CDBG proposals, City staff will prepare a proposed spending plan that is expected to be available for 30 days of public review, as soon as HUD advises the City of the actual dollar amount of the City’s CDBG entitlement grant. The City’s CDBG funding year begins in July 2024 and ends in June 2025.

In compliance with the City’s “Citizen Participation Plan,” under City Council Resolution 2020-013, this administrative hearing is being held to receive public comment on the needs of the City’s lower-income persons. These needs may potentially be addressed by the City using CDBG funds or another funding resource.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT:

Hearing Officer Rice opened the Public Hearing. She invited those present to provide comments on the needs of lower-income Thousand Oaks residents. There were eight speakers whose comments are summarized below.

Speaker In-person:

Ed Krol, St. Paschal Baylon St. Vincent de Paul, discussed his organization’s weekly food drive where on average, 125 cars per week pick up groceries. Provided $266,000 of food delivered from Food Share this year, accumulated $30,000 in food drives, purchased $40,000 of groceries, and $51,000 in grocery cards. They provided $85,584 in rental assistance covering 86 families with a goal to keep people in their homes. Other assistance was $16,500 in car repairs, insurance, and DMV registration, $1,300 in gas vouchers, and $12,500 in utility assistance. Looking forward to working with the City again with a CDBG grant.

Speakers via Videoconference:

Janet Young, Conejo Valley Senior Concerns, Director of Development, reviewed the senior needs assessment in Thousand Oaks which includes meals and help with social isolation. She reported the organization provided 70,000 freshly prepared meals per year through their Meals-On-Wheels program, of which 50,000 meals were for Thousand Oaks residents funded by the City of Thousand Oaks and by the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging. A Case Manager also conducts a needs assessment and connects seniors with appropriate services on other needs the resident may have. Volunteer drivers provide healthy connections to socially isolated seniors. They partner with
Manna to deliver pantry items. Their Adult Day Program provides respite care to seniors with Alzheimer's-related issues and the Caregiver Support Center provides vital programs through advocacy and education in navigating health insurance, finding transportation, and affordable housing. They provide incontinence supplies, emergency preparedness kits, free memory screening, and, in coordination with the Rotary Club, limited home repair and maintenance. They are grateful for the City convening the meeting to hear and understand the needs of seniors in the community.

Rena Sepulveda, Turning Point Foundation, stated they are a specialty homeless shelter and navigation center for those with mental illness which is a great need in the community where more work can be done. They thank the City for the support for Our Place Safe Haven.

Susan Murata, Hospice of the Conejo, Executive Director, stated they provide volunteer hospice and palliative care, and professional therapist-led grief support free of charge in the Conejo Valley. 88% of their clients are low- to extremely low-income residents. Providing care is expensive and greatly needed in Thousand Oaks. They are grateful for the opportunity to speak and past City support.

Danica Selvaggio, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ventura County, Chief Executive Officer, stated their program offers one-on-one mentorship with a young person and a group mentoring program. They serve over 1,000 youth in Ventura County, including those in Thousand Oaks. They have seen improvement in grades, school participation, family dynamics and social circles, and mental health with their program.

Mpume Nyandu, HPP Cares, Stakeholder Relations & Outreach Director, described their organization that has been providing housing counseling for 13 years with a focus on affordable housing and homelessness. They would like to connect with the City to collaborate on these issues.

Katherine Peoples, HPP Cares, Executive Director, stated their HUD-approved counseling agency has homeless case workers in position, and they would like to work with the City on a housing solution to provide convertible units that can be put into in-fill lots in a matter of minutes to assist the unhoused.

Kris Youngman, Harbor House, stated they provide a variety of services to assist homeless, unhoused, low-income individuals and families.

The following were present in the audience, but did not speak:

- Heather Huffman, Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurses Association and Hospice
- Tamar Bezjian, Many Mansions, Senior Asset Manager
- Rich Sauer, Senior Alliance for Empowerment (SAFE)
The following were present via videoconference, but did not speak when called:

- Juan Jimenez Jr., Area Housing Authority of the County of Ventura
- Denise Avila, Area Housing Authority of the County of Ventura
- Kurt Gunning, Conejo Recreation and Park District
- Michael Braff, Conejo Recreation and Park District
- Andy Shoemaker, Habitat for Humanity of Ventura County
- Natalie Helton, Many Mansions
- Marie Cantor, Many Mansions
- Kathryn Goodspeed, Senior Alliance for Empowerment (SAFE)

The following were represented via the webinar registration, but did not join the meeting:

- Sam Carr, Habitat for Humanity of Ventura County
- Rosalinda Vint, Women of Substance & Men of Honor

Hearing Officer Rice closed the public hearing at 6:30 p.m. on the CDBG Needs Assessment and thanked attendees for participating.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

All attendees present in the Boardroom at City Hall and videoconference were provided the opportunity to speak.

CDBG WORKSHOP:

CD Analyst Oshita provided a presentation on the CDBG Application Workshop, including information about California Senate Bill 1439 which amended Government Code Section 84308 of the Political Reform Act which requires applicants to disclose campaign contributions to any City Council member totaling $250 or more since January 1, 2023, by the organization, their agents, consultants, or contractors. Ms. Oshita mentioned the CDBG application, 9-page application instructions, and reference materials are posted on the City's website www.toaks.org/CDD. The workshop slides and the Needs Assessment Administrative Hearing Meeting Notes will be posted on the City's web page. The signed CDBG application form and supporting documents, are due by 5 PM, on January 10, by email only to, CDBG@toaks.org. The presentation was followed by a question and answer period.

Maria Cantor, Villa Esperanza Services (Via Chat Feature on videoconference)

   Question 1: What is the difference between a public service project and a CDBG project?
Answer to Question 1: CDBG Projects are related to community development activities, such as housing and commercial rehabilitation. CDBG Public Services, on the other hand, are activities that provide a type of service, such as a meals program or a free clinic. For more information, please visit the HUD Exchange website listed in the application instructions.

Ed Krol, St. Paschal Baylon St. Vincent de Paul (Via Boardroom at City Hall)

Question 2: Do we have to provide both the activity budget and the mission budget, and what is the difference? We have volunteers, are funded by donations, and don’t know how many donations we will receive.

Answer to Question 2: The CDBG Budget is focused on the CDBG grant and expenditures that will use the CDBG grant. The Organization’s budget, on the other hand, includes all the agency’s program activities. For example, if an organization runs a food pantry program, a clothing program, and a rental assistance program, the organization’s budget includes the income and expenses from all three programs.

Mupme Nyandu, HPP Cares (Via Chat Feature on videoconference)

Question 3: Are applications limited to Ventura County residents or can any organization outside the City of Thousand Oaks submit an application?

Answer to Question 3: No, the organization does not need to be in Thousand Oaks. However, the CDBG activity does need to service and benefit Thousand Oaks residents.

Hearing Officer Rice reminded the audience the City is accepting CDBG Needs Assessment written comments until January 10, 2024, and thanked attendees for participating.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Hearing Officer Rice adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Summary notes approved on November 28, 2023 by:

Krystin Rice, Hearing Officer
Community Development Department