

AGENDA



Thursday, April 23, 2009

Public Hearings and Possible Actions
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Item No. 91

Subject: Conduct a public hearing to receive citizen comments on a Substantial Amendment to the City's (1) Fiscal Years 2004-2009 Consolidated Plan; (2) Annual Action Plan for Fiscal Year 2008-2009, required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); and to (3) the Texas Local Government Code Chapter 373, Community Development 2008-2009 Program. The Substantial Amendment allows the City of Austin to apply, receive, and administer additional grant funds made available to the City of Austin from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

For More Information: Margaret R. Shaw, Director, Neighborhood Housing and Community Development, 974-3184.

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced the City of Austin will be allocated two grants made possible through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), also known as the Stimulus Act. The grants are \$3,062,820 in Homeless Prevention Funds (HPF) to be administered by the City's Health and Human Services Department and \$2,003,003 of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to be administered by the Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD) Department. The HPF grant application is due to HUD on May 18, 2009. While detailed CDBG-Recovery guidelines are not yet available, staff anticipates their release shortly, and to expedite the application process have included them in the public comment period for HPF.

In order to apply for these stimulus monies, HUD has directed jurisdictions to amend their current 2008-09 Action Plans. The City of Austin, under rules developed locally and approved by HUD, require that when amending a plan citizens be granted a public hearing before Austin City Council and a 30-day public comment period. To expedite the availability of funds, ARRA allows localities to shorten the public-comment period. Austin citizens will have 12 days – from April 20 to May 1, 2009 -- to comment on plans to use the funds. The proposed amendment will be available at 10 locations throughout Austin, including select neighborhood centers, libraries, the offices of the Austin Housing Authority and NHCD. Both written and electronic comments will be accepted. This public hearing fulfills the requirement for public to provide City Council with input on amendments to the Plan. Further opportunities for public input include:

CDBG

- NHCD staff will work with the Community Development Commission (CDC) at its April 14, 2009 meeting to establish criteria to evaluate potential CDBG projects.
- The public may submit project ideas online beginning in late April at www.cityofaustin.org/stimulus.

HPF

- Key stakeholders, including the Basic Needs Coalition, ECHO, CDC and Travis County staff, are working with HHSD staff to draft a plan on how best to allocate the \$3.1 million in funding.
- At the April 21, 2009 Austin City Council Public Health & Human Services sub-committee, HHSD staff will present the draft recommendation.

In preparing the proposed amendment, NHCD and HHSD staff will also incorporate the comments received as part of the community needs survey for the City's next Consolidated Plan. At numerous

stakeholder meetings, public hearings and through written comments held between January and March 2009, the public highlighted areas of critical need for low and moderate-income Austin residents.

Council approval of the proposed amendment to Austin's Action Plan that outlines specific uses of HPF and CDBG funds is planned for May 14, 2009. The CDC will review staff recommendations for both CDBG and HPF prior to the May 14th Austin City Council meeting.