



CITY OF BATTLE CREEK

CITY MANAGER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City releases report on public engagement in Consolidated Plan process

BATTLE CREEK, Mich. — The city's Community Development Department today released its Public Engagement Report, detailing the results of its survey — covering housing, neighborhood services and other issues — that was conducted in September and October.

The survey was sent out with the September water bills and was available online for approximately two months. In the survey, residents prioritized services that can be funded with federal community development dollars and answered the question, "If you could change one thing in your neighborhood, what would it be and how would you do it?"

Surveys were completed by 1,179 citizens with 590 comments about how to improve neighborhoods.

Resident input also was collected during 10 public meetings, including eight during regularly-scheduled Neighborhood Planning Council meetings, one at the SHARE Center to receive input from citizens who are homeless, and an evening community forum on healthy neighborhoods held on October 9, in partnership with Project 20/20. In total, 232 people participated in the public meetings and 310 comments were recorded. The Community Development Department also consulted with 50 community and organizational leaders to learn about community needs and priorities.

The report presents a lot of information, but two points are at the forefront for Community Development Manager Chris Lussier.

"First, job opportunities rank as the highest need, regardless of a respondent's income, race, age, employment status or where they live," he said. "This really speaks to the importance of the work that the BC Vision initiative is doing around economic development.

"Second, when people are asked to comment on the one thing that they would like to change about their neighborhood, the focus is clear — 48 percent of the 900 comments we received were about improving the look and feel of neighborhoods by addressing blight, vacancy and neighborhood deterioration."

Annually, the City of Battle Creek receives approximately \$1.2 million in federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and \$255,000 in HOME Investment Partnership funds. To receive these funds from the federal government, the city every five years engages in a community-wide planning process to produce a Consolidated Plan.

With CDBG dollars, the city has funded Code Compliance activities in distressed and blighted areas of the city; repair and replacement of streets projects in low- and moderate-income areas, a minor home-repair program to assist low- and



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moderate-income families in fixing up their homes, and neighborhood planning activities. Through the HOME program, the city has funded homeowner rehabilitation in the Urbandale area, in partnership with the Community Action Agency, and a homebuyer rehabilitation program run by Neighborhoods, Inc. of Battle Creek.

Working with the City of Battle Creek to design the public engagement and analyze the data gathered were the United Way's Beacon Community effort, BC Pulse and Project 20/20. These partnerships are greatly appreciated.

The full report is available at the city's website, www.battlecreekmi.gov. See the link under "Current topics" on the home page.

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