
Hearing Summary

City of Colorado Springs

May 4, 2015

Regional Building

Overview

The City of Colorado Springs Housing and Community Initiatives Division (HCID) documented comments resulting from the Public Hearing required as part of the Housing and Urban Development's specifications for three critical plans: The 2015-19 Consolidated Plan; the 2015 Action Plan; and the Citizen Participation Plan.

World Café Feedback

Drawing on seven design principles, the World Café process seeks to engage people to encourage active listening and participation. We used the following steps to invite deeper dialogue and understanding.

Set the Context Defined purpose and meeting parameters were considered in preparation for the hearing.

Create Hospitable Space

Explore Questions that Matter Knowledge emerged in response to compelling questions. Participants were invited to engage with powerful questions to help attract collective energy, insight, and action as they moved throughout the process. Three rounds of questions on the same theme helped to deepen and clarify the common themes. Guests were asked whether the plan made sense to them and to consider what might be missing from the plan that would add value to the community.

Encourage Everyone's Contribution City staff supported each of three tables, encouraging and inviting guests to convene and converse as the staff captured their ideas, questions, and comments. Those seeking to participate by simply listening were encouraged to do so.

Connect Diverse Perspectives Guests had the opportunity to move between tables, meet new people, actively contribute their thinking, and link the essence of their discoveries to ever-widening circles of thought. As guests carried key ideas or themes to new tables, they exchanged perspectives.

Listen together for Patterns and Insights The quality of listening is perhaps the most important factor determining the success of a Café. Through practicing shared listening and paying attention to themes, patterns, and insights, guests began to sense a connection to the larger whole. People were encouraged to listen for what was not being spoken along with what was being shared.

Share Collective Discoveries Conversations were harvested on big sheets of paper and consolidated in this report.

A Few Suggestions for Better Citizen Participation

Continue the grassroots outreach through nonprofits, neighborhood associations, and churches

Describe the CDBG application process

Consider creating a Citizen Handbook on CDBG

Find a way to get input from the shelters (or describe how that is done now)

Explore how to use social media more effectively to engage people in the process

Concern that by the time notices are posted and people are invited to engage in the planning process, decisions have already been made

AGENDA

6:00 Opening and Welcome

6:10 Presentation of the Plans

6:30 Citizen Perspective using Open Space Technology and World Café Processes

7:00 Citizen Comment: Open Forum

7:30 Wrap-up

Materials

(List is needed here)

Key Themes for the Con and Action Plan

Clarify the connection between the Con Plan and Economic Development plans for the City.

Clarify the application process (when, what, how).

What is the strategy for engaging business and private sector to support affordable housing?

Fairness in distribution was a big topic; clarify the process for determining how funds are allocated and why. Also, how is the process equitable?

What is the plan for increasing the overall stock of affordable housing? Clarify the City's role in increasing the stock.

Transportation and its connection to affordable housing was important to many. Clarify how the City envisions coordinating resources for transit and housing to help disadvantaged people, not just homeless.

Clarify how the City decides the priorities for the plans.

Define the role of code enforcement.

Questions/Comments From the Open Forum

- Deborah
 - There is a loophole in the policy that allows the City to demolish and replace single-family homes with low-cost smaller housing units instead of updating. See page 195.
- Alise
 - The Plan does not clearly address economic development.
 - There is no effort in the plans to address food deserts.
- Roger McCarville
 - Concerned that the local Housing Authority is managing and owning property (see Colorado Springs Gazette, August 14, 2014); reference to the notice for the Hearing suggests there is no interest in citizen participation.
 - Concerned that federal program = federal control and, as a result, fewer people will own houses.
- Longinos Gonzales, Jr.
 - Southeast has been a priority. Will it receive adequate funding to make improvements?
 - How will the funding be distributed? How will the City ensure that the distribution is equitable?
 - The Southeast has two project areas identified by committee; he wants to be sure those priority project areas receive fair share of projected and budgeted funding in the new plan.
- Sharon King – Independence Center Volunteer
 - Public transit is a serious issue in the community; low to moderate income citizens need access to efficient and reliable public transit
 - Accessible and affordable housing must coordinate with public transit to connect people to jobs, services, housing, and healthy food, especially for people with low to moderate income
 - The City is very far out of compliance with the American’s for Disabilities Act; Colorado Springs needs to have a concrete written plan of how it will make affordable housing accessible
- JJ Fraser – Urbanites
 - Low income housing is not a ghetto; help change the mindset
 - Simple things can have a significant positive impact. For example, the basketball court adjacent to the townhomes on Moreno at the Urbanites Center (506 E. Moreno) could be repaired and help youth have a safe place. Repairs will encourage children to play and use the facility.
 - The Hillside area is still in serious need of support; please don’t overlook it in this plan.
- Jerry White
 - The city should explore the Melville Charitable Trust as a resource for getting private support to help end homelessness.
 - Homelessness is solvable; solutions to homelessness are known; what we need is will; how does the plan help bolster will?
- Dave
 - We need to stabilize neighborhoods, which is done by developing leadership in local communities through neighborhood associations
 - Take the conversation of homelessness and housing to the people; go out and find people to participate: use churches, social media, and non-profits to ensure wider outreach.
 - We need a robust citizen outreach plan.
 - How are decisions made regarding funding and priorities? This must be articulated.
- Public comment from a gentleman
 - When you give someone something they don’t accept, they waste it.
 - More intense screening process to weed out those using system.
 - Make part of community by using input; homeless want to feel part of community.
- Jane
 - Disappointed Helen Hunt isn’t included in plan.
 - 28% African American and 32% Latino aren’t being communicated with.
 - Clarify how code enforcement officers are kept on street when the grant ends.
 - “People need a place to be and a place to belong.” How can the plan help to articulate the importance of helping people feel connected and that they belong to our community?
- Shawna
 - Federal money that comes in is irreplaceable and is not the only piece of pie that goes into this
- Gary Ganz gganz@aol.com
 - How will the 10-year plan be developed by Continuum of Care interface with the City’s Consolidated Plan? Which drives what?

- Michael Royal
 - The leverage the limited resources available from public funds for the City...what is outline in the Plan or elsewhere to engage the resources of the private sector to develop permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, or affordable housing? What state funds are available to help support housing?
- Public comment
 - When we are developing or rehabilitating housing to be accessible, how is the City ensuring compliance with the 7 standards of accessibility outlined by the Fair Housing Act?
 - There are 77 units of affordable senior housing; based on the plan, what is the distribution of funding to priority areas?

Summary of Public Comments

During the 30 day public comment period (April 14, 2015 through May 13, 2015), the City received a number of comments in writing and through the public hearing conducted on May 4, 2015 that were incorporated into the Consolidated Plan. The comments are summarized below:

- Regarding domestic violence and sexual assault and persons fleeing domestic violence and sexual assault, the plan was modified to include “sexual assault” with references to domestic violence and to expand descriptions of homeless services and shelter to include victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Regarding economic development, the Consolidated Plan was revised to include economic development as a tool to meet the goal to stabilize and improve struggling neighborhoods.
- Regarding Citizen Participation, the plan was revised to clarify uses of social media and other forms of outreach, to include a definition of low- and moderate-income and to include a general timeline for activities to better inform the public about the process.

Other comments received largely support priorities in the plan:

- Ensure Southeast Colorado Springs receives a fair share of projected and budgeted funding.
- Create more accessible, affordable housing available to low income residents located near public transit to connect people to jobs, services, housing and healthy food; especially for people with low to moderate income.
- Encourage housing choice. Don't concentrate affordable housing in low income areas.
- Ensure there are opportunities in the community for affordable home ownership, not just rental housing.
- Improve facilities providing public services directly to neighborhoods (such as parks and community centers) and consider access to food in plans to improve neighborhoods within food deserts.
- Continue to support Code Enforcement city-wide.
- Create more jobs available to low income residents.
- Continue grassroots outreach to all citizens through nonprofits, neighborhood associations, and churches and take actions to encourage greater participation by minorities and non-English speaking persons as well as persons with disabilities.
- Continue to work to end homelessness and include the homeless in identifying priorities.

In sum, the City will continue its reforms to its entitlement process and will move forward in 2015-2019 in concentrating limited resources for maximum impact. The City will continue to work to build a pipeline of affordable housing projects and continue to prioritize projects that exceed minimum requirements for accessibility and provide a connection to transit. The City will continue to invest in public facilities projects in

neighborhoods and explore more ways to invest in economic development to support jobs and vitality. Outreach will continue to grow to create a shared vision for change where federal block grants are invested. Ending homelessness will continue to be a priority and strategies will be coordinated with the Continuum of Care and its consumer advisory committee.

There were requests for further planning within the community that exceed the scope of the Consolidated Plan but could improve the City's ability to leverage federal block dollars with other community investments. Areas where additional planning was recommended include:

Accessibility	The City is currently developing a Transition Plan to address ADA issues. When complete, this plan can aid in the identification of projects.
Neighborhoods	Identify and commit resources to communities within geographic target areas to include facilities, code enforcement, housing rehabilitation, economic development and public services that address needs and build capacity to support change over the long-term, especially in southeast Colorado Springs.
Economic Development	Identify appropriate uses for federal block grants to improve economic vitality, and align activities with economic development plans, especially in geographic target areas.
Homelessness	As outlined in the Initiative to End Homelessness in Colorado Springs, support a communitywide plan to end homelessness and identify how federal block grant dollars can be used to meet priorities.
Affordable Housing	Develop a community plan for addressing critical affordable housing needs. The plan should identify ways to engage private sector resources, identify additional funding sources and clarify the role of the City in providing resources and addressing policy barriers.

Finally, there were several requests for clarification that are not components of the plans, but merit response to improve understanding of the federal entitlement programs:

- Comment: Clarify the application process and how the City selects projects.

It is important for the community to understand the allocation process. This information is not a component of the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan but is included with the Notice of Funding Availability and will be provided on the City's website

at www.coloradosprings.gov/housing. The City will work to create a user friendly format for presenting the information.

- Comment: Clarify how the City decides the priorities for the plans.

Priorities are identified through a comprehensive needs assessment, which is detailed in the Consolidated Plan, then evaluated and approved by an internal community development team that consists of staff from planning, parks, public works, police, fire, finance, city attorney and economic vitality. Decisions are made based upon the needs assessment, public outreach process, NOFA applications, and priorities identified in approved plans. The Consolidated Plan/Action Plan is posted for public comment and the City Council approves the final plan. The City has been reforming the entitlement process and will consider forming a board to serve in an advisory capacity on the allocation of federal block funds and the development of outreach strategies.

Summary of Comments or views not accepted and reasons for not accepting them

During the 30-day public comment period, there was one comment that was not accepted.

Citizen Participation Plan

- Comment: The City should increase the number of public hearings during the development of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan to one in each Council district and one in or near all low-and-moderate income areas, plus one conducted by telephone targeted to low-and-moderate income citizens.

This comment was not incorporated into the Citizen Participation Plan because the requirement cannot be met with current resources. The City exceeds the requirements of the Citizen Participation Plan in conducting outreach; and the process is detailed in the Action Plan. The City will promote greater transparency in the process by posting citizen participation information to the City website at www.coloradosprings.gov/housing. In addition, the City will consider forming a board to serve in an advisory capacity on the allocation of federal entitlement funds. The board would develop an annual citizen participation strategy. The Citizen Participation Plan can be amended to include the board participation once the board is formed.