

## **City of Houston Response to Public Comment from Needs Assessment Public Hearing**

**Commenter 1:** Commented that Northside Village would be a good candidate to receive funding.

**City Response:** The City of Houston appreciates the support for the node designation process. The determination of which nodes will be targeted will be completed after a planning process as part of the Outreach Plan.

**Commenter 2:** Commented that Northside Village would be a good candidate to receive funding. Commenter would also like to see low income housing priority for single mothers with young children.

**City Response:** The City of Houston appreciates the support for the node designation process. The determination of which nodes will be targeted will be completed after a planning process as part of the Outreach Plan.

**Commenter 3:** Commented that the Fifth Ward is suffering due to Hurricane Ike damages and is in need of funding.

**City Response:** The City of Houston appreciates the support for the node designation process. The determination of which nodes will be targeted will be completed after a planning process as part of the Outreach Plan.

**Commenter 4:** Comments

- a. The Needs assessment fails to provide infrastructure information.
- b. There should be more information on rental housing.
- c. Income targeting is based on the wrong information.
- d. No information for special needs in rental.
- e. Need to address not just rental income but affordable rents.
- f. The Capital needs for Houston Housing Authority are not eligible expenses; replacement of housing for Houston Housing Authority is, but not capital improvements.
- g. LJA information provides damage information but not income information, should use FEMA data instead.
- h. Need to provide for very low income occupancy in rental.
- i. Outreach plan should have a public hearing since it is not available today.
- j. Elderly disabled targeting cannot displace Families without a Fair Housing Violation.

**City Response:**

- a. We have reviewed the Conciliation Agreement, the State Housing Guidelines and the Housing Opportunity Program Guidelines and cannot find a requirement to include infrastructure programs in the Needs Assessment. If the General Land Office provides guidance to the contrary, we will amend the Needs Assessment.
- b. Rental housing is addressed as an important component with approximately 50% of all Houstonians renting. We have discussed vacancy rates in the city and addressed the need for additional rental housing. The City is committed to low income rents, including a large portion of the funds being provided to Houston Housing Authority (HHA) who can provide additional subsidies to lower the overall rents.
- c. The Needs Assessment drafting team looked at published income totals, HUD FEMA data totals, and damage based on census information. The income buckets of Very Low-income (37%), Low-income (29%) and Moderate-income (34%) are consistent with the available information. The City of Houston is engaging in an active planning phase that will help clarify the income bracket funding. The income buckets will again be addressed during the Outreach Plan once the planning phase is complete. The City recognizes that the final implemented allocation will be adjusted, as informed by the planning process, in order to deliver the desired outcome of stable, racially, ethnically, and economically mixed communities.
- d. The City is committed to addressing special needs in rental. The City will require all Multifamily units to meet the standards, will fully implement the requirements of Texas Government Code §2306.514.
- e. The City will limit the rents according the rules and requirements addressed in the guidelines. The City agrees that more affordable rents are a need, however rent restrictions are not an issue addressed in the Needs Assessment.
- f. The City agrees with the comment that the Houston Housing Authority's (HHA) capital needs are not a valid expense with CDBG-DR funds. The purpose of including the language regarding the capital needs of the HHA represents the need for additional subsidized housing throughout the city. HHA is the logical place to address this need. The information is from the City of Houston's Consolidated Plan and is not a funding plan using DR funds.
- g. See response c. above.
- h. See responses e. and f. above.
- i. The City is committed to providing a comment period for the Outreach Plan, but will follow the submission of the Needs Assessment and the planning process.
- j. The City will meet the intention of the Housing Guidelines to provide priorities to elderly and persons with disabilities, but will also make certain that families have been included. If it is a determination for one spot then

preference would go to an elderly or special needs person, but not to the exclusion of all others.

**Commenter 5:** Commented that Northside Village is an area where funding is needed. Commenter is impressed with the outreach activities of gathering community input and feels that the City should use disaster recovery funds where other funding is currently being implemented.

**City Response:** The City appreciates the support for the Needs Assessment. It is the intention of the City to review the materials from the planners and assess the potential for private investment, public investment, and the needs of the community.

**Commenter 6:** Commented that he participated in the public meetings to propose choices of Super Neighborhoods to receive funding. The Northside recommendation as a node seems to coincide with the findings. Commenter is concerned that relocating applicants could cause their cost of living to increase.

**City Response:** The City of Houston appreciates the support for the node designation process. The determination of which nodes will be targeted will be completed after a planning process as part of the Outreach Plan. It is important to note that the program that includes a relocation option, which is just that, an option as part of a Fair Housing Choice program called the Homeowner Opportunity Program. No one will be forced to relocate.

**Commenter 7:** Presented petition actively seeking construction to build housing for elderly in the South Union area. Commenter thinks South Union is the best candidate for funding assistance.

**City Response:** The City of Houston appreciates the support for the node designation process. The determination of which nodes will be targeted will be completed after a planning process as part of the Outreach Plan.

**Commenter 8:** Commented that Acres Home was in need of infrastructure to prevent flooding and that she would like to see the application process move quicker. Commenter would also like to see more residential areas versus commercial construction.

**City Response:** The City of Houston appreciates the support for the node designation process. The determination of which nodes will be targeted will be completed after a planning process as part of the Outreach Plan.

**Commenter 9:** Commented that Acres Home was in need of attention due to the elderly population that still has damaged homes due to Hurricane Ike. Also, would like to see infrastructure improvements to reduce flooding in the area. Commenter was opposed to multifamily units being created in the neighborhood.

**City Response:** The City of Houston appreciates the support for the node designation process. The determination of which nodes will be targeted will be completed after a planning process as part of the Outreach Plan.

**Commenter 10:** Commented that Acres Home was in need of improved infrastructure to prevent flooding and that he is opposed to multifamily units being created in the neighborhood. Commenter would like to see more funding in the Acres Home neighborhood.

**City Response:** The City of Houston appreciates the support for the node designation process. The determination of which nodes will be targeted will be completed after a planning process as part of the Outreach Plan.

**Commenter 11:** Commented that the elderly in the South Union neighborhood are in need of housing assistance that does not consist of multifamily units. Commenter would like to see single family having priority in order to preserve legacies.

**City Response:** The City of Houston appreciates the support for the node designation process. The determination of which nodes will be targeted will be completed after a planning process as part of the Outreach Plan.

**Commenter 12:** Commented that open ditches need to be replaced with proper infrastructure to reduce flooding city-wide. Commenter does not want to see applicants relocated, but would rather have the neighborhood redeveloped to bring in businesses such as grocery stores.

**City Response:** The City of Houston appreciates the support for the node designation process. The determination of which nodes will be targeted will be completed after a planning process as part of the Outreach Plan. It is important to note that the program that includes a relocation option, which is just that, an option as part of a Fair Housing Choice program called the Homeowner Opportunity Program. No one will be forced to relocate.

**Commenter 13:** Commented that funds should be used to jump start assistance for residents of the Third Ward. If none are available through this round of funding, he would like to see Round 3 concentrate on the Third Ward area.

**City Response:** The City conducted extensive public hearings over more than seven months to determine areas to be included in the Node selections. The City will consider all areas that also need additional support when making funding and resource allocation decisions, no matter what the funding source. There is no Round 3 planned with the CDBG DR funds.

**Commenter 14:** Commented that he would like to see the process move quicker so that he may apply for housing assistance in the Northside area.

**City Response:** We appreciate the difficulties five years after the storm that many people still need assistance. The Needs Assessment does not deal with individual applicants.

**Commenter 15:** Commented that she does not want to see multifamily units built in her neighborhood. She would rather see the elderly receive repairs to their current homes.

**City Response:** The City understands that there are issues surrounding multi-family housing. Approximately 50% of all Houstonians rent rather than own housing and multifamily housing is an important part of addressing that need. We appreciate that the speaker desires to assist elderly.