

9/16/2010 Public Hearing
Development and Regulatory Affairs Council Committee
Houston City Council
Non-housing Disaster Recovery CDBG Program and Funding

The Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act of 2009, appropriated \$6.1 billion to the State of Texas through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for necessary expenses related to disasters occurring during 2008. The Texas Department of Rural Affairs (TDRA) is the state agency designated and responsible to the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department for the administration of the CDBG disaster recovery funding.

These funds were divided between housing and non-housing activities. Today we are here to discuss funding related to non-housing activities.

During the first round of disaster recovery funding, the City of Houston was awarded \$21,806,565 which was used to fund two

storm drainage improvement projects and the construction of a large detention basin in the Halls Bayou watershed. These projects are currently in the final phases of design and construction will begin in the next few months.

Round two of the disaster recovery funds are being awarded in two sub-rounds, the first of which is identified as round 2(a) and is what we are discussing today. For round 2(a) the City of Houston has been given an allocation of \$6,537,247. It has also been proposed that the City will receive an allocation of approximately \$19,612,000 for round 2(b) which is planned to be available in mid to late spring of 2011.

Funding for round 2(a) may be used only for projects with a compelling need. Therefore, the Houston-Galveston Area Council has proposed, and the State has accepted, limiting eligible projects to: flood and drainage improvements, sewer facilities, water facilities, other public utilities, street improvements, economic development and fire protection facilities and equipment.

Projects should address these compelling needs and affirmatively further fair housing. Applicants for these funds must certify that they will affirmatively further fair housing and include documentation on how the project will achieve this requirement. As part of this requirement, City staff have recently received training on the Fair Housing Act. As part of the application the City of Houston will identify one additional activity that will help affirmatively further fair housing. Please note, for more information on fair housing requirements and the current impediments to fair housing in Houston, the public may obtain a copy of the 2010 Consolidated Plan and Analysis of Impediments online at www.houstontx.gov/housing/consolidated.html, or by calling (713) 868-8461.

To demonstrate compelling need, priority has been placed on projects that were damaged or failed to perform as a result of Hurricane Ike. Additionally, projects must benefit low to moderate income individuals. These two requirements are priority requirements mandated by the State and Federal government as a qualification for receiving these funds. The City of Houston will further prioritize projects in the City where high concentrations of damaged occurred,

so to provide disaster recovery where it is most needed, and coordinate efforts with other City Disaster Recovery efforts like housing programs.

In the City of Houston documented damage or infrastructure that failed to perform occurred from structural flooding due to inadequate or damaged storm drainage systems, or the inability to treat or transport wastewater and/or drinking water due to the inability or difficulty in connecting portable power generation during city-wide power outages.

Based on this, project types which can be identified as a compelling need and comply with state and federal eligibility criteria are storm drainage upgrades and infrastructure hardening. As mentioned earlier in this presentation, projects funded in round one included the planned upgrade of storm drainage systems on Yale Street between Tidwell and Parker, above the 610 loop, Tidwell Street between Airline and McGallion, and the Bretshire detention basin located at 59 and Jensen. Project types under infrastructure hardening can be flood proofing and/or electrical and control upgrades to allow remote

detection of failures as well as manual connections for portable power.

To receive public comments on these project types for disaster recovery round 2(a) funding, the City of Houston has opened a public comment period which began today and will run for seven days closing at the end of the day on September 23, 2010. Comments can be given at today's public hearing, or written comments will be accepted through the comment period. For persons wishing to make comments in writing, they may email comments to PWEgrants@houstontx.gov or send them by mail to Disaster Recovery CDBG Program, Public Works and Engineering Department, 611 Walker, 19th Floor, Houston, TX 77002.

Further information about the Disaster Recovery CDBG Program and round 2(a) funding are available at the City of Houston's Central Library located at 500 McKinney, Houston, TX 77002, on the third floor at the reference desk, or online at www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/planning/plan.html, the information is located towards the bottom of this web page.

If technical, language, other impairment assistance is need to understand the process or to make a comment, please contact the Public Works and Engineering Department by phone at (832) 395-2695, or my email at PWEgrants@houstontx.gov. I am available if you have any questions. Thank you for your time today.