

DRAFT
MUNICIPALITY OF NORRISTOWN
2010 - 2014 CONSOLIDATED PLAN SUMMARY
FISCAL YEAR 2013
PROPOSED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
ACTION PLAN

Public Hearings will be held in the Municipal Council Chambers, Municipal Hall, 235 East Airy Street, Norristown, PA., and the Public is cordially invited to participate. Persons who wish to attend and require an auxiliary aid, service or other accommodation, or for more information, call (610) 270-0421.

The Municipality of Norristown will be holding public hearings to allow citizens, public agencies and other interested groups to comment on the Municipality's Consolidated Plan Fiscal Year 2013 Action Plan. The Consolidated Plan replaces several documents, which had previously been submitted separately. These documents include the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), the non-housing community development plan and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Budget and Final Statement. The Summary of the Plan is as follows:

NEEDS AND RESOURCES

Housing Needs

The Municipality is fully developed with little or no land available for new affordable residential construction. In order to preserve its affordable housing stock, the Municipality has and will continue to rehabilitate properties and will avoid the demolition of standard and substandard units suitable for rehabilitation. The Municipality will also increase its affordable housing stock by renovating vacant units suitable for rehabilitation and selling them to low to moderate-income families. The Municipality will also work to improve overcrowding conditions that are evident in the community, through more concentrated code enforcement.

The Municipality's most significant current needs are to rehabilitate owner-occupied and rental substandard housing occupied by the very low income and other low-income households. It is estimated that eighty percent (80%) of very low-income households, experience housing

problems and fifty percent (50%) of the substandard units suitable for rehabilitation are occupied by low-income households. Currently, the Municipality has more rental units than owner occupied housing units. Per the 2000 census, the Municipality had 6462 rental units (51.9%) as compared to 5786 (or 48.1%) owner occupied housing units. The Municipality is working towards increasing the number of homeowners through its first-time homebuyers program; stabilize homeownership through its housing rehabilitation program, and also working through the Zoning process, to deter conversions of single family units to rental units. The Municipality will also continue to implement programs to help alleviate panic selling and block busting in its neighborhoods through Fair housing advocacy among other things. Efforts in place for implementing of the above include the following:

- Funding incentive through the Business Development Office for small businesses through provision of small low interest loans will be continued through CDBG funds as the Main Street Economic Development Initiative, providing an opportunity for small business growth and job creation and retention in our downtown.
- Continued funding for the Owner-occupied housing rehabilitation program. The Municipality is proposing to set aside funds in FY 2013 for this purpose. As stated in the past, the need is great, with a waiting list of up to five (5) years long. Funds will be leveraged with \$300,000 in DCED HOME funds for housing rehabilitation.
- Both CDBG and HOME funds have continued to be utilized in evaluating and reducing lead based paint hazards, in accordance with current regulations. However, this continues to limit how much funding is available for other rehabs. In previous years, the Municipality has leveraged over \$2m in DCED HOME funds towards this project and will continue to seek other sources of funding to leverage CDBG funds.
- Continued funding of Fair Housing activities to remove barriers to affordable housing as required by HUD. Through these efforts, the Municipality will be able to continue to addressing issues through workshops on fair housing rights, advocating for victims of housing discrimination and engaging in awareness campaigns targeting realtors and homeowners about block busting and panic selling.
- The Municipality will also continue funding a Code Enforcement activity in a concentrated target area (see description in budget narrative) with payment for **four** officers including their vehicles. CDBG funding is being matched with Municipal General Funds.

Community Development Needs

Other Resources

The Municipality's economic base has been eroded and population has also declined steadily. Much of the Municipality's infrastructure was installed prior to 1950 and most of it is antiquated and continues to deteriorate. The Municipality is in constant competition with its surrounding affluent newer suburban neighbors. The Municipality's demographic landscape has also changed substantially. Over the past 10 years the Municipality has seen rapid growth in the Hispanic community among others.

The Municipality's most significant current needs are to revitalize its stagnant economy by rehabilitating its infrastructure, public parks and facilities in order to attract businesses and residents back into Norristown. The Municipality will continue its efforts to augment small business activity through the small business assistance center and other mechanisms. The Municipality will also work to identify and meet the needs of its growing Hispanic community. Efforts that will be in place in FY 2013 for implementing the above measures include the following:

- Continued funding of the DeKalb Street Avenue of the Arts Streetscape Projects. This streetscape activity involves new curb and sidewalks, urban friendly trees and historically correct pedestrian and vehicular lighting. CDBG funds in prior years are being matched with Montgomery County Community Revitalization Funds.
- Additionally the Municipality has set aside funds for façade improvements along the Avenue of the Arts Corridor to help with the preserving of historic structures.
- Continued funding of park improvements, specifically, Simmons Park. Simmons Park was funded by DCNR in the amount of \$200,000 with the match for this park coming through Montgomery County Open Space Funds and CDBG funds which will be applied to Phase II and III. Phase I has been completed and involved mainly storm water management at both sites.

Housing and Community Development Strategic Plan

To address the above housing and community development needs, the Municipality has developed the following short and long-term objectives that assist in the budgeting of CDBG funds. In developing these objectives, consideration was given to requests made by citizens and citizen organizations, concerns voiced by Municipality officials regarding public safety and economic development.

Short Term Strategy /Objectives

- Priority 1. Rehabilitate and upgrade housing stock and improve the quality of life in residential areas.
- Priority 2. Promote economic and community development.
- Priority 3. Eliminate conditions detrimental to the public's health, safety and welfare.
- Priority 4. Upgrade and replace antiquated community infrastructure.
- Priority 5. Expand recreational opportunities by developing and rehabilitating park and playground Facilities.
- Priority 6. Promote the preservation of historic structures and neighborhoods.

Long Term Strategy /Objectives

- Priority 1. Improve the economic base of the community so that Norristown will become economically self-sufficient to an extent that will allow the local government to provide an adequate level of services to all its residents.
- Priority 2. Upgrade the housing stock for residents of all income levels in order that every resident will occupy safe, healthy, and decent living quarters.
- Priority 3. Enhance neighborhood values by keeping them physically sound and visually attractive, and by providing recreational facilities and other amenities that will have a positive effect on the quality of life. And also eliminate conditions detrimental to the public's health safety and welfare.
- Priority 4. Preserve and enhance the unique historic, architectural, and cultural features that characterize Norristown.

FY 2013 DRAFT ACTION PLAN—PROPOSED ONE YEAR USE OF FUNDS

In Fiscal Year 2013, the Municipality of Norristown expects to receive \$758,731.00 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The following is the One-Year Proposed Action Plan:

5. FAIR HOUSING - (Required) \$ 35,000.00

Activity funded will involve an awareness campaign targeting realtors and homeowners with warning about prohibitions against block busting leading to panic selling in Norristown low income neighborhoods, workshops on fair housing rights for homeowners, advocacy for victims of housing discrimination and other efforts addressing unanticipated critical need areas. [CFR.570.206(c), LMC 570.208(a)(2)]

MUNICIPAL PROJECTS

1. MAIN ST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE \$ 35,000.00

(New/Continued)

Continuation of Economic Development initiative for the downtown business district to help in job creation and retention. Expected number served – 1.5 jobs [24CFR570.203(b) Eligibility 570.208(a)(4) LMJ]

2. SIMMONS PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT- Phase II \$ 38,731.00

(Continued)

Continuation of improvements to the park inclusive of site furnishings, and landscaping and hardscape. Expected number of people served – 2,637. [(LM=70%) CFR.570.201(c), Eligibility 570.208(a)(1) LMA]

3. SEVERE SERVICE FIRE ENGINE \$ 70,000.00

(Continued)

Payment of a Fire Truck for the Norristown Fire Department. Expected number of people served – 1200 calls.[24CFR570.201(c)Eligibility– 570.208(a)(1)LMA]

ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING

1. SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE CENTER \$ 40,000.00

(Continued)

Continuation of business outreach center to help small businesses locate and remain in Norristown and to assist in the preparation of business plans, start-up assistance, resource library and development of resource materials. Businesses served have to meet the micro-business criteria of five (5) or fewer employees one or more of which own the business. CFR.570.201(O)(1)(ii)LMC

2. ADMINISTRATION -

\$150,000.00

(Required)

Planning Department's staff salaries, wages and related costs required for the general management, oversight and coordination of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Other costs for goods and services required for administration of the CDBG program, including services such as rental or purchase of equipment, insurance, utilities, and office supplies. Public information on CDBG program available to all Municipal residents and administrative services performed under third party contracts or agreements including, but not limited to, legal services, accounting services, audit services and appraisal services. [CFR.570.206, 570.208(a)(1)]

Under the proposed Fiscal Year 2013 budget, the Municipality estimates 80% of the 2013 funds will benefit low to moderate-income persons.

In accordance with Historic Preservation regulations (36 CFR Part 800), the Municipality of Norristown is taking this opportunity to ask interested persons or organizations concerned with the effects of our projects on historic properties to make themselves known by writing the Department of Planning and Municipal Development, 235 E. Airy Street, Norristown, PA 19401, so that we may involve them in the historic review process.