

FINAL CDBG-R SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENT

Jurisdiction(s): City of Newton Lead Agency: Planning and Development Department Jurisdiction Web Address: http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/Planning/Special_Reports.htm	CDBG-R Contact Person: Amy Yuhasz Address: 1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, MA 02459 Telephone:617.796.1122 Fax:617.796.1142 Email:ayuhasz@newtonma.gov
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ENSURING RESPONSIBLE SPENDING OF RECOVERY ACT FUNDS

Funding available under the Recovery Act has clear purposes – to stimulate the economy through measures that modernize the Nation’s infrastructure, improve energy efficiency, and expand educational opportunities and access to health care. HUD strongly urges grantees to use CDBG-R funds for hard development costs associated with infrastructure activities that provide basic services to residents or activities that promote energy efficiency and conservation through rehabilitation or retrofitting of existing buildings. While the full range of CDBG activities is available to grantees, the Department strongly suggests that grantees incorporate consideration of the public perception of the intent of the Recovery Act in identifying and selecting projects for CDBG-R funding.

A. SPREADSHEET FOR REPORTING PROPOSED CDBG-R ACTIVITIES

Grantees must provide information concerning CDBG-R assisted activities in an electronic spreadsheet provided by HUD. The information that must be reported in the spreadsheet includes activity name, activity description, CDBG-R dollar amount budgeted, eligibility category, national objective citation, additional Recovery Act funds for the activity received from other programs, and total activity budget. An electronic copy of the spreadsheet and the format is available on HUD’s recovery website at <http://www.hud.gov/recovery>.

B. CDBG-R INFORMATION BY ACTIVITY (COMPLETE FOR EACH ACTIVITY)

- (1) Activity Name: (Grantees should follow the same order that activities are listed in the Spreadsheet for Reporting Proposed CDBG-R Activities – this will allow HUD to easily match activity narratives with the information provided in the spreadsheet.)

Pellegrini Park Accessibility Improvements and ADA Compliance
Stearns Park Accessibility Improvements and ADA Compliance
Nahanton Accessible Pathway and Handicap Parking Space
Newton Centre Accessible Pathway and Handicap Parking Spaces

- (2) Activity Narrative:

In addition to the Spreadsheet for Reporting Proposed CDBG-R Activities, grantees must provide a narrative for each activity describing how the use of the grantee's CDBG-R funds will meet the requirements of Title XII of Division A and Section 1602 of ARRA. The grantee's narrative must also state how CDBG-R funds will be used in a manner that maximizes job creation and economic benefit in relation to the CDBG-R funds obligated, and will address the Recovery Act, by:

- Preserving and creating jobs and promoting economic recovery;
- Assisting those most impacted by the recession;
- Providing investment needed to increase economic efficiency;
- Investing in transportation, environmental protection, or other infrastructure that will provide long-term economic benefits;
- Minimizing or avoiding reductions in essential services; or
- Fostering energy independence.

Pellegrini Park Accessibility Improvements and ADA Compliance

The City has previously used CDBG funds to complete the design of a master plan for Pellegrini Park, located in the Nonantum Target Neighborhood. Design work and neighborhood planning completed by the City as part of this master plan will enable the project to be awarded through a bid process within 120 days after Newton receives the CDBG-R funds.

The Pellegrini Community Center, located inside Pellegrini Park, contains a well used gymnasium and community room. City-wide events and adult organized sports are hosted inside the gymnasium. CDBG funds were recently used to retrofit the building for handicap accessibility through the installation of an accessible water fountain, bathroom, shower, and community room. The Pellegrini Community Center also operates as a polling place during the election season.

CDBG-R funds will be used to retrofit the park for handicap access by implementing the portion of the master plan that addresses the entranceway to the park and the parking lot. Currently the parking lot is a combination of stone dust, concrete, and asphalt. Pedestrians entering the park and traveling to Pellegrini Community Center use the same path of travel as vehicles. A new dedicated ADA accessible pedestrian pathway with lighting will provide a safe route from the Hawthorn Street entrance to the Pellegrini Community Center. A new asphalt eighteen space parking lot with handicap parking will be constructed to provide access to the park and the Community Center. Additional elements of the project include: creation of several green areas with ADA accessible benches, and the installation of granite curbing and fencing to define park uses and establish borders.

The various components of the Pellegrini Park Accessibility Improvements and ADA Compliance project require a diversity of job skills and manufactured goods. Each activity will create temporary construction jobs and retain machinists, factory workers, and other positions required to produce United States made goods. These industry fields, in particular construction workers, have been directly impacted by the economic downturn.

The Pellegrini Park Accessibility Improvements and ADA Compliance project will create a total of 17 jobs. These jobs include 15 construction jobs and 2 electrician jobs.

Stearns Park Accessibility Improvements and ADA Compliance

The City has also used CDBG funds in the past to complete the design of a master plan for Stearns Park, which is located in the Nonantum Target Neighborhood. Design work and neighborhood planning completed by the City as part of this master plan will enable the project to be awarded through a bid process within 120 days after Newton receives the CDBG-R funds. The specific elements of the project include:

- Construction of a new ADA accessible main entrance to the park including the installation of ADA accessible benches, shade structure, and ADA accessible drinking fountain
- Installation of a fully accessible safety structure, new play structures, and swings
- Construction of an ADA accessible half-basketball court
- Installation of associated fencing and landscaping

The various components of the Stearns Park Accessibility Improvements and ADA Compliance project require a diversity of job skills and manufactured goods. Each activity will create temporary construction jobs and retain machinists, factory workers, and other positions required to produce United States made goods. These industry fields, in particular construction workers, have been directly impacted by the economic downturn.

The Stearns Park Accessibility Improvements and ADA Compliance project will create a total of 25 jobs. These jobs include 15 construction jobs and 2 electrician jobs, 4 jobs associated with the installation of play equipment, and 4 jobs associated with the installation of the rubberized safety surface.

Nahanton Accessible Pathway and Handicap Parking Space

Nahanton Park, located on the Charles River, provides both active and passive recreation to Newton residents through walking paths, a soccer field, and a fishing dock. The existing ADA accessible pathway that provides access to all of the Park's recreational areas, is currently inaccessible because it cannot be reached from the driveway. CDBG-R funds will be used to complete a retrofit for handicap access by connecting the parking area to the accessible pathway. The project also includes the construction of a van accessible parking space. This accessible parking space will be located next to the pathway to create a designated pedestrian way, separate from vehicular traffic, for adults with disabilities. Design for the pathway and parking space have been completed and approved by the Conservation Commission, which will facilitate obligating funds for the project, through a bid process, within 120 days after Newton receives the CDBG-R funds.

The creation of additional impervious surface in the Riverfront Area will be mitigated through soil stabilization and erosion control. Erosion control measures will provide long term environmental protection to Nahanton Park.

The Nahanton Accessible Pathway and Handicap Parking Space project will provide a total of 5 temporary construction jobs.

Newton Centre Park Accessible Pathway and Handicap Parking Spaces

Newton Centre Park is a 17-acre park that supports a variety of athletic fields, playgrounds, and open space. The Park is frequently used for city-wide events because of its neighborhood location and accommodating size. Topographic limitations, including steep slopes, have created inherent access issues in the Park. CDBG-R funds will be used to retrofit the park for handicap access by

constructing an ADA accessible pathway from Bowen Street, which borders the westside of the Park, to meet an existing accessible pathway that originates on the eastside of Newton Centre Park. The construction of this pathway will complete an accessible route from east to west. In addition, handicap parking on Bowen Street would be implemented as part of this activity. Newton Centre Park currently has no handicap parking for adults with disabilities. Design for the pathway and parking spaces have been completed, which will facilitate obligating funds for the project, through a bid process, within 120 days after Newton receives the CDBG-R funds.

The Newton Centre Park Accessible Pathway and Handicap Parking Spaces project will provide at total of 5 temporary construction jobs.

All of the CDBG-R funded activities will provide a 100% benefit to low and moderate income residents.

- (3) Jobs Created: (Report the number of full- and part-time jobs estimated to be created and retained by the activity (including permanent, construction, and temporary jobs)).

Pellegrini Park Accessibility Improvements and ADA Compliance

Total 17 jobs

Construction – 15

Electrician – 2

Stearns Park Accessibility Improvements and ADA Compliance

Total 25 jobs

Construction – 15

Electrician – 2

Installation of play equipment – 4

Installation of safety surface – 4

Nahanton Accessible Pathway and Handicap Parking Space

Total 5 construction jobs

Newton Centre Park Accessible Pathway and Handicap Parking Spaces

Total 5 construction jobs

- (4) Additional Activity Information: (A description of how the activity will promote energy conservation, smart growth, green building technologies, or reduced pollution emissions, if applicable.)

Newton's CDBG-R park projects encourage smart growth principles by contributing to the preservation of open space. These parks also play a central role in fostering a sense of place in the City of Newton and maintaining elements of the City's walkable villages. The installation of bike racks in Pellegrini Park facilitates the use of alternative transportation. Both the rubberized surface and the accessible benches, installed in Pellegrini and Stearns, will be made from recycled materials.

- (5) Responsible Organization: (Contact information for the organization that will implement the CDBG-R activity, including its name, location, and administrator contact information)

Amy Yuhasz, Community Development Program Manager
Housing and Community Development Division
Planning and Development Department
City of Newton
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459
P: 617.796.1122
F: 617.796.1142
E: ayuhasz@newtonma.gov

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

Provide a summary of public comments received to the proposed CDBG-R Substantial Amendment.

Note: A Proposed CDBG-R Substantial Amendment must be published via the usual methods and posted on the jurisdiction's website for no less than 7 calendar days for public comment.

Response:

The City held a public hearing on the proposed CDBG-R projects June 1, 2009. Notice of the hearing was published in the NewtonTAB on May 27, 2009 and posted in City Hall, at the Newton Free Library, and on the City's webpage. The location of the meeting was handicap accessible. The CDBG-R Substantial Amendment and the CDBG-R Activity Spreadsheet were posted on the City's webpage from May 26, 2009 to June 5, 2009, the date of submission. Public comments were accepted from May 26, 2009 to June 1, 2009.

The public hearing held on June 1, 2009 was well attended by Newton residents as well as representatives of several organizations providing human services in

Newton. Several comments were made at the meeting concerning the lack of CDBG-R funded human service projects.

Ms. Rhoda Davidson voiced her desire to see the CDBG-R funds support services for persons with disabilities who are living independently in Newton. Specifically, Ms. Davidson made the request for a medical transportation taxi program and a Meals on Wheels program designed to serve persons with disabilities under sixty years of age. Ms. Rhoda Davidson along with her daughter, Ms. Lise Davidson also submitted the attached written comment.

Planning and Development staff responded to Ms. Davidson's comment during the meeting by stating that although human service projects are eligible underneath the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the proposed projects reflect the Housing and Urban Development Department's instructions to place a priority on "quick start" projects that can be bid 120 days after receipt of the funds. Staff are confident that Newton's proposed infrastructure projects encompass the intent of the Recovery Act through quick stimulation of the economy through job creation.

Four Newton residents, who are parents of autistic children, spoke about the need for affordable housing and support services for autistic adults 22 years and older. These residents stated that while CDBG-R funds may not be the best source of support for these services they would like to be involved in the City's Consolidated Planning process. These residents were invited and several attended a focus group held June 2 on affordable housing and supportive services. This focus group was part of the City's Consolidated Planning process.