



Cumberland County, Maine

Consolidated Plan

For

HUD Programs

Annual Action Plan

July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010

**Community Development Office
Cumberland County Executive Department
142 Federal Street, Portland, Maine
Tel. 207-871-8380**

Federal Fiscal Year 2009 Annual Action Plan

Introduction

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program will enable Cumberland County to channel \$1,476,134 million into public facilities and improvements, housing, and social services to benefit low and moderate-income communities and residents.

In 2009 Cumberland County plans to expend 50.6% for Public Improvements/Infrastructure; 10.8% for Housing Activities; 5% for Social/Public Services; 13.5% for Downtown Improvements; 3.7% for Planning Activities; and 16.2% for Program Administration.

Federal Funding Program	2009 Allocation
Fiscal Year 2009 CDBG Funds	\$1,476,134.00

Funding for this program is provided through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Cumberland County has completed a five-year Consolidated Plan governing the use of federal funds for 2007-2011. HUD also requires Cumberland County to prepare an "Annual Action Plan" to describe how federal funds will be expended each year to accomplish the goals stated in the Consolidated Plan.

The purpose of Cumberland County's 2009 Annual Action Plan is to clearly present projects, programs and initiatives intended to be funded during FFY'09 to accomplish goals identified in the Consolidated Plan. The County Commissioners welcome and encourage public comment on the 2009 Annual Action Plan

The Cumberland County Entitlement Jurisdiction (CCEJ) for the 2009 Annual Action Plan includes the Towns of Baldwin, Bridgton, Cape Elizabeth, Casco, Chebeague Island, Cumberland, Falmouth, Freeport, Gorham, Gray, Harpswell, Harrison, Long Island, Naples, New Gloucester, North Yarmouth, Pownal, Raymond, Scarborough, Sebago, Standish, Windham, Yarmouth and the City of South Portland.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECTS

Following is a description of how the FY2009, funds will be allocated to address the goals of the Community Development Program

The descriptive listing is divided into two categories: Cumberland County, including the Town of Bridgton; and the City of South Portland.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY & TOWN OF BRIDGTON

[Municipal Oversight Committee – MOC)

HOUSING

Freeport Housing Rehabilitation/Replacement Program

This project will continue work begun in 2007 to rehabilitate and replace aged, sub-standard mobile homes. The primary focus is the mobile home park owned by the Freeport Housing Trust on the Ward Town Road. Some projects may occur at scattered sites throughout the town

Town Request	\$60,000	Beneficiary: 4 LMI households
MOC Recommended	\$40,000	
<i>County Commissioners</i>	<i>\$40,000</i>	

Matrix: 14A, 14H Citation 570.202 Benefit: 04 Households Objective/Outcome: 1-1

Regional Housing Rehabilitation – PROP

The Regional Housing Rehabilitation program provides funding to PROP our regional Community Action Agency to continue operating its single-family housing rehabilitation program.

Agency Request	\$200,000	Beneficiary: 12 LMI households
MOC Recommended	\$180,000	
<i>County Commissioners</i>	<i>\$180,000</i>	

Matrix: 14A, 14H Citation 570.202 Benefit: 04 Households Objective/Outcome: 1-1

Regional Handicap Access Ramp Program – Alpha I

The program will provide ramps for handicap adults to facilitate access to their homes. A similar program is currently operated by Alpha I with funds provided by the State CDBG program, but that program is not available to residents participating in Cumberland County's community development program.

Agency Request	\$50,000	Beneficiary: 8 LMI households
MOC Recommended	\$40,000	
<i>County Commissioners</i>	<i>\$40,000</i>	

Matrix: 14A, 14H Citation 570.202 Benefit: 04 Households Objective/Outcome: 1-1

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS, PUBLIC FACILITIES

Wayside Sewer Leach Field Reconstruction

The reconstruction and expansion of the Wayside Sewer Leach Field is a critical component of Bridgton's ongoing Downtown Revitalization initiative. The septic field has deteriorated extensively and must be reconstructed to retain sanitary sewer service in the downtown neighborhood. The Wayside Field serves the low/moderate income downtown community development target area. This is Phase I of a multi-year plan to improve sanitary sewer service in Bridgton's Downtown. No construction occurred during 2007. With two years of funds now saved for the project, construction will begin this summer.

Town Request	\$192,468	Beneficiary: LMI Households
<i>County Commissioners</i>	<i>\$192,468</i>	

Matrix: 03J Citation 570.201(c) Benefit: 11 Public Facility Objective/Outcome: 2-3

Food Pantry Building – Gorham

This project will establish a permanent home for the Gorham Ecumenical Food Pantry. The Town is providing the building, a 24'X60" portable classroom type structure. Grant funds will pay for building renovations, slab foundation and electrical & plumbing hook-ups.

Town Request	\$50,000	Beneficiary: 500 LMI Households
MOC Recommended	\$44,000	
<i>County Commissioners</i>	<i>\$44,000</i>	

Matrix: 03 Citation 570.201(c) Benefit: 04 Households Objective/Outcome: 2-1

Community Center – Naples

Essential renovations and improvements to the historic Grange Hall in Naples Village, now owned by the Town and renamed the Singer Community Center will include: installation of sprinkler system, handicap access ramp, foundation repairs, new heating system, new fire-proof doors, water filtration system, and kitchen upgrades. Without these improvements the facility will continue to remain unusable. Entire town is low/moderate income qualified for CDBG funds

Town Request	\$51,840	Beneficiary: 3,266 persons
MOC Recommended	\$50,000	
<i>County Commissioners</i>	<i>\$50,000</i>	

Matrix: 03 Citation 570.201(c) Benefit: 11 Public Facility Objective/Outcome: 2-1

Steep Falls Library Renovations – Standish \$31,000

Critical improvements to the historic Steep Falls Library will include repairing the slate roof, electrical upgrades, repair to the front granite stairs and reconstruction of two chimneys. Library serves Steep Falls low/moderate income target area.

Town Request	\$36,400	Beneficiary: 2,656 persons
MOC Recommended	\$31,000	
<i>County Commissioners</i>	<i>\$31,000</i>	

Matrix: 03 Citation 570.201(c) Benefit: 11 Public Facility Objective/Outcome: 2-1

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Gray Downtown Revitalization

This is a multi-faceted program to inaugurate a comprehensive downtown revitalization effort. The project includes building façade improvements, new sidewalks, streetlights and development of a small park.

Town Request	\$150,000	
MOC Recommend	\$85,000 - \$135,000 (depending on funds)	
<i>County Commissioners</i>	<i>\$106,000</i>	

Matrix: 03 Citation 570.201(c) Benefit: 01 Objective/Outcome: 2-1
Matrix: 14E Citation 570.570.202 Benefit: 08 Objective/Outcome: 2-3

PUBLIC SERVICES

Regional Homeless Services – PROP/Preble Street

This grant would continue the case management services program for homeless persons and those on the brink of homelessness. The program serves residents within and from the 23 communities of the Cumberland County community development program. Increase of \$9,000 from 2007 funding level.

Agency Request	\$125,000	Beneficiary: 300 LMI people
MOC Recommended	\$115,000	
<i>County Commissioners</i>	<i>\$115,000</i>	

Matrix: 05 Citation 570.201(e) Benefit: 01 People Objective/Outcome: 1-1

ADMINISTRATION & PLANNING

These activities are proposed under the County's 20% Administrative and Planning funds.

Regional Housing Planning – GPCOG

The planning study would develop an affordable housing strategy for the region. This is a first step in the development of a comprehensive plan for housing in anticipation of the County receiving HUD HOME program funds. The study would be conducted by the Greater Portland Council of Governments.

Agency Request	\$15,000
MOC Recommended	\$15,000
<i>County Commissioners</i>	<i>\$15,000</i>

Matrix: 20 Citation 570.205 Benefit: N/A Objective/Outcome: N/A

General Program Administration – Town of Bridgton

Building and sustaining administrative capacity in Bridgton is an important component of their long-term Downtown Revitalization and Community Development program. Funds pay a portion of the salary for program staff.

Town Request	\$25,868
<i>County Commissioners</i>	<i>\$25,868</i>

Matrix: 21A Citation 570.206 Benefit: N/A Objective/Outcome: N/A

General Program Administration – Cumberland County

The general administration of the Cumberland County Community Development Program includes all expenses associated with the operation of the program. The budget includes: utilities, supplies, travel, advertising, technology and 1 full-time and 1 part-time staff position. The County will be repaid \$17,801 for program development costs incurred prior to the initial award of CDBG funds in 2007.

Program Request	\$134,032
MOC	\$134,032
<i>County Commissioners</i>	<i>\$134,032</i>

Matrix: 21A Citation 570.206 Benefit: N/A Objective/Outcome: N/A

CITY OF SOUTH PORTLAND

[Community Development Advisory Committee – CDAC]

HOUSING

Single Family Housing Rehabilitation

The housing rehabilitation program is a program being carried over from FY2006. In FY2006 the City continued a partnership with PROP to administer the housing rehabilitation program. The program is currently undergoing the rehabilitation of two homes in South Portland. Last year the program was funded \$50,000 was has been untouched due to the need to spend FY2005 funding first.

Staff Request	\$ 36,597.00	Beneficiary: 2 LMI Households
CDAC Recommended	\$ 36,597.00	
<i>City Council</i>	<i>\$ 36,597.00</i>	

Matrix: 14A Citation: 570.202 Benefit: 04 Households Objective/Outcome: 1 - 1

Economic Development

This year's application cycle did not receive a viable candidate for CD funds for economic development. Over this fiscal year, an effort will be made to make local businesses aware of the programs offered under this category. Staff did develop a business façade improvement program, but when it came to funding the program, the CDAC felt as though the enhancement of the homebuyer assistance program was more in need of additional funding than funding the business façade program.

N/A

PUBLIC SERVICES

Recreation Scholarships

The allocation of funding into scholarships to benefit South Portland children, adults, and seniors who want to participate in a recreation program or preschool, but may not have the means to do so. In FY2007 the program was funded \$10,000.00. The past four years of funding this program have resulted in upwards of 50 individuals being served each year.

Staff Request	\$ 10,000	Beneficiary: 50 LMI Persons
CDAC Recommended	\$ 10,000	
<i>City Council</i>	<i>\$ 10,000</i>	

Matrix: 05 Citation: 570.201(e) Benefit: 01 People Objective/Outcome: 2 - 2

Home Energy Conservation

The proposed program would be geared towards a whole-house approach to create healthy, comfortable and energy-efficient homes and can help you make informed decisions about your home. The work to be done through the wrapping of pipes, changing light bulbs, covering leaking windows, or closing cracks would be done to 1) reduce the energy costs of a home; 2) improve the health and safety in a home; 3) increase personal comfort; 4) increase your home and appliance longevity; and 5) increase a home's value. The program would look not to solve all the issues, but look for low hanging fruit for energy efficiency and start the process in helping the homeowner to reduce their reliance on electricity and fossil fuels.

Staff Request	\$ 5,000	Beneficiary: 11 LMI Households
CDAC Recommended	\$ 9,500	
<i>City Council:</i>	<i>\$ 9,500</i>	

Matrix: 05 Citation: 570.201(e) Benefit: 04 Households Objective/Outcome: 2 - 2

South Portland Transportation Department – Bus Passes

The South Portland Bus Service is requesting funding of \$2,500 to provide free 10-ride bus passes to help low income people needing transportation to work, medical appointments, school and shopping. South Portland Bus Service has worked closing with Ingraham Volunteers, STRIVE, Day One Services, Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and other organizations whose clients are in desperate need of transportation.

Staff Request	\$2,500	Beneficiary: 200 persons
CDAC Recommended	\$2,500	
<i>City Council</i>	<i>\$2,500</i>	

Matrix: 05 Citation: 570.201(e) Benefit: 01 People Objective/Outcome: 2 - 2

Heating Assistance

The heating assistance program is one of the most popular programs from year to year. The City contracts with PROP to handle the administration of this program due to their previous knowledge with the LI-HEAP program. The FY2007 request was \$15,000. The program is geared towards helping South Portland residents who don't qualify for the LI-HEAP Program (30% and below median income). To qualify for the CDBG fuel program, a South Portland household needs to fall in between 30% to 60% median incomes. In FY2007 the Program allocated \$300.00 per applicant. In FY2007 the City was able to supply clients with fuel oil under the city fuel bid. This resulted in clients getting 136 gallons (2.19 per gallon) for \$300.00 a significant savings and more importantly a greater capacity in fuel for each household.

Staff Request	\$ 18,000	Beneficiary: 17 LMI Households
CDAC Recommended	\$ 18,000	
<i>City Council</i>	<i>\$ 18,000</i>	

Matrix: 05 Citation: 570.201(e) Benefit: 01 People Objective/Outcome: 2 – 2

Boys and Girls Club

The South Portland Chapter of the Boys and Girls Club is requesting funding to assist with purchasing needed furnishings and appliances for the club building. The Club was founded in 1974 and membership and youth/community use of its facilities has and continues to grow. The Club would like to purchase three lunch/game room folding tables, furniture for the Learning Center and a large refrigerator.

Staff Request	\$ 5,000	Beneficiary: 640 Club Members
CDAC Recommended	\$ 5,000	793 Other Residents
<i>City Council</i>	<i>\$ 5,000</i>	

Matrix: 05D Citation: 570.201(e) Benefit: 01 People Objective/Outcome: 2 - 1

Peoples Regional Opportunity Program – Senior Companion

The Foster Grandparents Program assigns senior volunteers to elementary schools providing valuable academic support that strengthen learning through participation in classroom activities. They review homework, assist with math skills, and read to and with the children. The program also funds seniors visiting other seniors who may be unable to leave their home on a daily basis.

Staff Request	\$9,719	Beneficiary: 8 LMI Seniors
CDAC Recommended	\$9,719	
<i>City Council</i>	<i>\$9,719</i>	

Matrix: 05 Citation: 570.201(e) Benefit: 01 People Objective/Outcome: 2 – 1

South Portland School Department – English As Second Language

CDBG funds will be used to continue Brown School’s after-school program and expand services for English as a Second Language (ESL) to students in grades 2-5. The program is designed to foster academic achievement and healthy social development. The program offers homework assistance and opportunities to participate in a variety of cognitively challenging enrichment activities. The program also provides some support services to the children’s families.

ESL Request	\$10,000	Beneficiary: 65 Students
CDAC Recommended	\$10,000	
<i>City Council</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>	

Matrix: 05 Citation: 570.201(e) Benefit: 01 People Objective/Outcome: 2 - 1

Center for Therapeutic Recreation – Living Skills and Aquatics

The Center provides therapeutic recreation and aquatic services to children and adults with special needs who reside in Southern Maine. The purpose of this grant request is for an appropriation to help support South Portland’s residents with disabilities that would like to participate in the Center’s programs. The programming offered by the Center includes primarily aquatics activities under this funding source.

Center’s Request	\$ 8,000	Beneficiary: 6 Clients
CDAC Recommended	\$ 8,000	
<i>City Council</i>	<i>\$ 8,000</i>	

Matrix: 05B Citation: 570.201(e) Benefit: 01 People Objective/Outcome: 2 – 1

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS, PUBLIC FACILITIES

South Portland Parks Dept. – Mill Creek Park Gazebo

The City of South Portland Parks Department proposes to enlarge the Mill Creek Park gazebo. The enhancements would also include provisions to make the gazebo ADA accessible. The gazebo plays an important role as an asset to the neighborhood by bringing people of the neighborhood and community to a centralized area for special events, holiday lighting and the city’s summer weekly music schedule.

Parks Dept. Request	\$ 85,000	Beneficiary: 776 Persons
CDAC Recommended	\$ 85,000	
<i>City Council</i>	<i>\$ 85,000</i>	

Matrix: 03 Citation: 570.201(c) Benefit: 01 People Objective/Outcome: 2 – 1

Ferry Village Neighborhood (Target Area) – Sidewalk Rehabilitation

Because of the traditional character of the neighborhood, a high number of residents walk to services and facilities within the neighborhood, and to visit with neighbors. A survey conducted a few years back showed that the installation of additional sidewalks and the replacement of existing sidewalks was one of the top priorities identified, and necessary to guarantee pedestrian safety and access to the neighborhood and services. The sidewalk will be located along Spring Street, which connects the Ferry Village target area to Small School. This street represents the main road connecting the Ferry Village neighborhood with the districts elementary school. Currently there is no sidewalk on Spring Street and kids need to walk in the road.

Public Works	\$ 90,000	Beneficiary: 1400 Lineal Feet
CDAC Recommended	\$ 80,000	
<i>City Council</i>	<i>\$ 80,000</i>	

Matrix: 03L Citation: 570.201(c) Benefit: 01 People Objective/Outcome: 2 – 1

Memorial Middle School – Tennis Court Rehabilitation -Target Area Improvement

The Memorial Tennis Courts are in drastic need for repair. It is currently unsafe to play tennis on the surface today. With tennis demand at all time lows, staff have developed a plan to rehabilitate the area and instead of tennis courts install a full court basketball court and a roller-hockey court.

Neighborhood's Request	\$ 15,000	Beneficiary: 822 Persons
CDAC Recommended	\$ 10,000	
<i>City Council</i>	<i>\$ 10,000</i>	

Matrix: 03 Citation: 570.201(c) Benefit: 01 People Objective/Outcome: 2 - 1

Waterman Drive Reconstruction Phase II – Target Area Improvement

A follow-up to the FY2004 alternative design study of the Waterman Drive right-of-way, this request for funding would represent a third year of the funding from CDBG in order to continue the construction of the boulevard on Waterman Drive. Phase I was completed in the fall of 2007. This funding will go towards Phase II items such as benches, trash cans, wooden guardrail fence, and lighting.

Staff Request	\$ 50,000	1300 Lineal Feet
CDAC Recommended	\$ 38,500	
<i>City Council</i>	<i>\$ 38,500</i>	

Matrix: 03K Citation: 570.201(c) Benefit: 01 People Objective/Outcome: 2 - 1

Redbank Neighborhood Improvements – Target Area Improvement

During the fall of 2007, the Preble Street Resource Center conducted a neighborhood meeting in an attempt to gain momentum for the establishment of a neighborhood association. Historically, the Redbank Neighborhood has been a silent voice in the city due in part of being a large rental neighborhood. The neighborhood has seen tremendous growth over the last eight years (adding around 400 units) as a result having some issues surrounding their growth. During the neighborhood meeting, the City heard the need for public improvements including, but not limited to: sidewalks, speed mitigation, street trees, playgrounds and many more.

Staff Request:	\$ 39,750.87	Beneficiary: 2,056 Persons
CDAC Recommended:	\$ 39,750.87	
<i>City Council:</i>	\$ 39,750.87	

Matrix: 03 Citation: 570.201(c) Benefit: 01 People Objective/Outcome: 2 - 1

South Portland Parks Department – Big Belly Trash Compactor

The South Portland Parks Department is requesting their second Big Belly Trash Compactor from the CDBG Program. In FY2007, the Program purchased the first compactor, which was located in Mill Creek Park. The compactor is a mailbox shaped trashcan that is self-enclosed to prevent trash from blowing and birds from picking trash out of the park cans. Additionally, the compactor (powered by solar) compacts the trash resulting in the container needing to be emptied half the amount of time compared to a conventional trashcan.

Staff Request	\$ 4,100	Census Tract 30
CDAC Recommended	\$ 4,100	
<i>City Council</i>	\$ 4,100	

Matrix: 03 Citation: 570.201(c) Benefit: 01 People Objective/Outcome: 2 - 2

South Portland Parks Department – Beautification Crew

These funds enable the City to hire two part-time employees to perform improvements to the streets and parks in target area neighborhoods during the summer months.

With the shrinking staff levels of the City, certain beautification items around the city have been neglected for some time. To address this issue the Program proposed last year to pay for two Parks Department personnel (new hires) from Memorial Day to Labor Day to routinely travel through target areas and maintain city owned property either through right-of-ways or park settings. The crew last year did graffiti removal, mulched, trimmed and planted trees, repaired plow damage, mowed/weed-wacked overgrown areas. All work was done within

Staff Request	\$ 12,500
CDAC Recommended	\$ 12,500
<i>City Council</i>	\$ 12,500

Matrix: 03 Citation: 570.201(c) Benefit: 01 People Objective/Outcome: 2 - 1

DuraTherm Crosswalks – Greenbelt Crossings –Target Area Improvement

In a continued effort to increase safety while decreasing maintenance the City is proposing to install two Duratherm crosswalks at the Greenbelt Walkway crossings of Ocean Street and Cottage Road in the Knightville/Mill Creek neighborhood. The crosswalks are more visible at night featuring recessed plastic in the pavement for longer lasting wear.

Staff Request	\$ 12,000	Beneficiary: 514 LMI Persons
CDAC Recommended	\$ 12,000	
<i>City Council</i>	\$ 12,000	

Matrix: 03 Citation: 570.201(c) Benefit: 01 People Obj/Outcome:

South Portland Accessibility – Various Buildings

In a continued effort to bring the City’s building into handicap accessibility, the CDBG program has been petitioned to provide funding for these initiatives. Handicap accessibility to municipal buildings is an allowable use under the CDBG program.

Staff Request	\$ 17,000	Beneficiary: 514 LMI Persons
CDAC Recommended	\$ 17,000	
<i>City Council</i>	\$ 17,000	

Matrix: 10 Citation: 570.201(k) Benefit: 01 People Obj/Outcome:

South Portland Transportation Department – Bus Hub in Knightville

The South Portland Bus Service is requesting funding of \$40,000 for the creation of a bus shelter hub to be located on city-owned property at the intersection of Ocean and Thomas Streets (behind city hall). Beyond the operational aspects of timed transfers, the transit hub will provide a comfortable and convenient experience for current riders and hopefully attract new riders. The hub will include lighting, benches/seating, trash receptacles, clock, route and schedule information, landscaping, and a heated waiting area (bus shelter).

Staff Request	\$ 40,000	Beneficiary: 514 LMI Persons
CDAC Recommended	\$ 40,000	
<i>City Council:</i>	\$ 40,000	

Matrix: 03 Citation: 570.201(c) Benefit: 01 People Objective/Outcome: 2 – 1

ADMINISTRATION & PLANNING

The following items are proposed under the City's 20% Administrative and Planning funding.

Planning Grant – Redbank/Brick Hill Neighborhood Association Project

City officials and staff members are proposing to initiate the beginning developments of a neighborhood association in the Redbank/Brick Hill neighborhood. The funding under request would serve as seed funding in support of working with the neighborhood. The funding would be used for neighborhood literature, meeting supplies, and possibly a neighborhood gathering.

Staff Request	\$ 10,000
CDAC Recommended	\$ 10,000
<i>City Council</i>	\$ 10,000

Matrix: 20 Citation: 570.205 Benefit: 01 People Obj/Outcome: N/A

Planning Grant – Mill Creek Park Design

Over the last year a newly formed group called The Friends of Mill Creek Park has initiated a movement to look at improvements to the Mill Creek Park located in the Mill Creek/Knightville neighborhood. The group is reviewing many aspects of the park's design including the gazebo, the footbridge, water quality; the pond's eroded edges and the fountain. The group is at the point that they need to bring in consultants to map out a feasibility plan and prioritize improvement projects.

Staff Request	\$ 6,000
CDAC Recommended	\$ 5,000
<i>City Council</i>	\$ 5,000

Matrix: 20 Citation: 570.205 Benefit: 01 People Objective/Outcome: N/A

General Program Administration

The general administration of the CD Program includes all expenses that are associated with running the program. The CD Program budgets for utilities, supplies, travel, advertising, technology, and part-time / full-time positions. Each year, staff attempts to reduce the overhead expenses.

Staff Request	\$ 61,776
CDAC Recommended	\$ 61,776
<i>City Council</i>	<i>\$ 61,776</i>

Matrix: 21A

Citation: 570.206

Benefit: N/A

Objective/Outcome: N/A

Cumberland County Community Development

Annual Action Plan - 2009

Public Comments & Response to Public Comments

The Public Comment period for the 2009 Annual Action Plan began on April 3, 2008 and ended May 5, 2008. Formal Public Hearings were held by the Cumberland County Commissioners on April 13 & April 27, 2008 at the Peter Feeney Conference Room, Cumberland County Court House, Portland, Maine.

Comments were received either in writing by mail, e-mail during the 30-day comment period or orally at the Public Hearing. A total of 3 comments were received from individuals or organizations.

I. Comments of general support of the 2009 Annual Action Plan or specific project or activities contained in the Plan.

George Theborge, Economic Development Director, Town of Gray:

Like to make three comments: 1) Overall Program Comment. Many communities are involved with communities being able to select projects and apply for funds based upon local priorities. You can see from the diversity of funded activities that giving communities the freedom to choose is working. 2) Benefit to Gray. Gray Village has been in decline for over 25 years. The historic Clark Block has had low value tenants, if any tenants at all, for many years. If you go through Gray now you'll see that the Clark Block facades are under reconstruction, we've got new sidewalks and streetlights to be installed this spring. Coupled with funds to continue the project this will be a success. We're investing in our downtown exactly as suggested in the Brookings Institute report. 3) Like to recognize the work that Aaron Shapiro does for the program. He's got a balanced, flexible approach; he's hands on and goes the extra mile to make the projects work.

II. Comments supporting the use of Homelessness Prevention Funds to support the work of PROP & Preble Street.

Kaki Dimmock, PROP & Jon Bradley, Preble Street

The homelessness prevention program that you've funded for the past two years with CDBG funds has been a success. We endorse using the new Homelessness Prevention and Rapid-Rehousing Funds (HPRP) to run a similar and expanded program over the next three years. We support the use of the now available CDBG funds for other important community or regionally based activities.

No response to these supportive comments is necessary.