

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

I. HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

The city is required to have a Consolidated Plan for Housing & Community Development in order to receive funding under two federal programs: the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership Act (HOME) programs. The CDBG program is a principal revenue source for local communities to address the roots and consequences of poverty. The HOME program is designed to create affordable housing for low-income households through building, buying, and/or rehabilitating housing for rent or homeownership. The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) administers these programs on a national basis and awards grants to “entitlement communities” – urban counties and larger cities, including the city of Burlington – on a formula basis each year. The city in turn awards grants and loans to local nonprofits as well as providing direct services to residents and businesses through several CDBG-funded programs. The city currently receives around \$880,000 a year in CDBG funding and around \$490,000 a year in HOME funding. This Consolidated Plan assumes that these funding streams will remain at those same levels for the next five years.

This document serves as the city’s plan for housing and for economic development. The Consolidated Plan provides detailed information about city demographics, the local housing market and the local economy. It outlines housing and community development needs and priorities for the city. This Consolidated Plan covers the five-year period beginning in July 2008.

The federal statutes that created the CDBG and HOME programs lay out three basic purposes against which HUD evaluates the Consolidated Plan and the city’s performance under the Plan. Those three statutory program purposes are:

DECENT HOUSING, which includes:

- Assisting homeless persons obtain affordable housing;
- Assisting persons at risk of becoming homeless;
- Retaining the affordable housing stock;
- Increasing the availability of affordable permanent housing in standard condition to low-income and moderate-income families, particularly to members of disadvantaged minorities without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, or disability;
- Increasing the supply of supportive housing which includes structural features and services to enable persons with special needs (including persons with HIV/AIDS) to live in dignity and independence; and
- Providing affordable housing that is accessible to job opportunities.

EXPANDED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES, which includes:

- Job creation and retention;
- Establishment, stabilization and expansion of small businesses (including micro-businesses);

- The provision of public services concerned with employment;
- The provision of jobs to low-income persons living in areas affected by those programs and activities, or jobs resulting from carrying out activities under programs covered by the plan;
- Availability of mortgage financing for low-income persons at reasonable rates using non-discriminatory lending practices;
- Access to capital and credit for development activities that promote the long-term economic and social viability of the community; and
- Empowerment and self-sufficiency for low-income persons to reduce generational poverty in federally assisted housing and public housing.

A SUITABLE LIVING ENVIRONMENT, which includes:

- Improving the safety and livability of neighborhoods;
- Eliminating blighting influences and the deterioration of property and facilities;
- Increasing access to quality public and private facilities and services;
- Reducing the isolation of income groups within areas through spatial deconcentration of housing opportunities for lower income persons and the revitalization of deteriorating neighborhoods;
- Restoring and preserving properties of special historic, architectural, or aesthetic value; and
- Conserving energy resources.

The Consolidated Plan is organized into three chapters. Chapter One includes an overview of what the Plan is and how it was developed as well as a summary of goals, strategies, objectives, outcomes and indicators. Chapter Two describes the community, its principal needs, and what currently exists to meet those needs. Chapter Three selects priorities among the existing needs, describes the city's specific objectives for the next five years (given available resources), and describes how the city will carry out its action strategies.

Many sections of the Consolidated Plan respond to specific requirements of federal regulations. Those requirements are found in Title 24, Part 91 of the Federal Code of Regulations. Where a section addresses a specific regulation, the federal requirements are described in italics in the margin.

There are two other plans and reports related to these funding sources. Each year, the city prepares an Action Plan to address the Consolidated Plan priorities. Each annual Action Plan details how the city plans to spend local resources – and in particular, the CDBG and HOME resources that the city receives from HUD – on specific activities. Then, after the close of each program year, the city prepares a Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) to report on progress and on CDBG and HOME expenditures during the year.

There are a number of other municipal plans which are relevant to and which inform the Consolidated Plan. They are identified in Appendix A of this Plan.