

2018 Community Needs Assessment (CNA)

I. Welcome and Introductions

See sign-in sheet for listing of participants

II. The Purpose of the Community Needs Assessment

- The CNA is a process that reviews the needs of the community as a whole
- It is a required step ahead of applying for funding from the Department of Commerce (see Grant Program Overview handout), and serves as the first of two required hearings on community needs as part of a future application
- The CNA affords an opportunity to discuss the activities the community may utilize to meet any identified development needs
- Areas of need include:
 - Capital improvements
 - Housing
 - Economic development
 - Urban renewal
- The outcome of this effort will be a list of potential projects or actions that will be pursued to improve our community
 - Will be presented to City and County Commissions for consideration

III. Grant Program Overview

See handout provided by Laura Erikson discussing Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), the Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME), the Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP), Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), and Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits (HRTC).

The County is sponsoring West Mont for a CDBG Housing and HOME grants to renovate the group home at the Farm & Gardens property. The County has a CDBG Public Facilities grant for the Murray Building remodel project, which should complete the summer of 2018. The County has an opening for a CDBG planning grant sponsorship.

City will shortly have an open CDBG planning grant, but is currently sponsoring the Center for Mental Health with a Public & Community Facility CDBG grant and is sponsoring Guardian Apartments for a HOME grant through the end of the year. The City plans to apply for a CDBG Small-Scale single-Family Housing Rehabilitation Grant in 2018. The City also has a TSEP grant award for the Westside infrastructure installation project that will be ongoing for the foreseeable future.

CDBG-ED Grant → Per MBAC, there are currently no Big Sky Trust Fund grants for planning needs. Hopefully, this pot of funding will return in 2019. Job Creation will be likely take applications in early summer. CDBG-ED applications can be submitted on a rolling basis.

IV. Public Comments

- 1) *Liz Mogstad (RMDC)* → Putting in a letter of intent in May to gain LIHTC funds and bonds to get 3 times the number of units in one competitive round. Will likely need to apply for HOME funds as CHDO (applying on behalf of themselves). The organization's general need is housing, particularly apartments (1, 2, and 3 bedrooms), and RMDC is venturing into the realm of family housing.
- 2) *Eric Seidensticker (MBAC)* → Expanding upon CDBG-ED, and are currently working with the county on a grant for High Country Jerky up in Lincoln. The application would be for retention of 45-50 jobs, and keeping the business operations in Lincoln while looking to expand jobs significantly in coming years. The project is a \$6 million project overall, and MBAC is specifically looking for \$400k that will be part of a RLF for economic development (making it a long-term leverage project). MBAC has been supportive of housing, but is most heavily invested in downtown revitalization efforts at the moment.
- 3) *David Smith (YMCA)* → YMCA has just completed a PAR with MBAC using BSTF money. The purpose of the project is to look at creating an early learning center (preschool) as part of a remodeled/repurposed YMCA facility. The YMCA is concurrently working with the Helena Regional Sports Association, who have a huge desire to see a community aquatic center built in Helena. The YMCA is looking to see if there is a way to create a community facility that will address ADA needs and address job creation (if new market tax credits persist and they can redevelop on-site). The plan that the YMCA has at present is to create a multi-purpose, community recreation facility. They are going to work with RMDC on a summer Head Start program this year. They also received a grant for a preliminary architectural report, partly because of the economic development activities happening in

the vicinity (e.g., SoFi and others who have similar infrastructure needs that they can collaborate on).

- 4) *Michael O'Neil (HHA)* → Provides housing for the community, and has done so for over 80 years. HHA provides a vital function in making Helena a welcoming community by providing homes to people who are low- to extremely-low-income earners, usually individuals with disabilities, heads of single-parent homes, etc. HHA believes that housing provides support for an array of parallel needs. Due to the HHA housing stock's age, the cost of renovating housing (especially Stuart Homes) is cost-prohibitive—all infrastructure needs to be replaced too. HHA is currently looking at all 366 housing units for renovation, and they would like to seek a CDBG Planning Grant for site assessments. The Rental Assistance Demonstration Program (RAD) may be a funding option, but it is a lengthy process that has only just begun. Long-term, HHA is looking to get CDBG, HOME, and LIHTCs to address their housing needs. The RAD program opens up private equity that generally would not be available to a group like HHA. HHA also runs the Housing Choice Voucher Program; even when there are vouchers, it's increasingly difficult for holders to find housing, especially for 1-bedroom units. HHA runs permanent supportive housing programs, working with UWLCC, RMDC, HIA, and others to link those with the greatest need to housing opportunities. They are currently working with St. Pete's on a Housing is Healthcare Grant to research the high cost of people not having adequate housing (i.e., emergency service and medical response costs from individuals not being housed appropriately). Transportation is a huge barrier to individuals in the community leading successful lives, and any expansion of services will provide an increasingly huge benefit to community members. Lack of transportation keeps people isolated and unable to participate in community life.
- 5) *Sandy Beattie* → Came to listen and learn. Biggest concern she has heard is lack of access to Commissioners, and she has intentions of reaching out to them to discuss areas of concern in the future.
- 6) *Trina Filan (UWLCC)* → In her capacity at UWLCC, Trina does a great deal of work with homeless intake and getting people into stable, affordable housing. The Coordinated Entry System has identified many barriers in getting people into housing. The Helena community needs a women and children's/family emergency shelter, a facility for people to detox/"dry out," an intake facility added onto God's Love to help mitigate the property's bedbug issue, a homeless youth facility, and more affordable housing in the form of SRO's or co-ops for the youth or elderly or those who need a less expensive place to stay. As a private citizen, she would like to see something done with Memorial Park Apartments, the closure of which caused the displacement of 26 low-income residents. The property has now become an

eyesore and is host to “nefarious activities.” Trina would like to see some utilization of the mall property as a community facility where emergency services and social service providers can be housed. Additionally, she would like to see some work done to fix the bridge in Anchor Park leading to M.E. Anderson Homes.

- 7) *Kevin Sandoval (HIA)* → Kevin worked with MBAC on a PAR for the HIA building (Sheridan Hall). HIA has seen a huge increase in demand for services in recent months, with a huge influx in referrals following cuts to the State. They have made modifications to the building and are trying to stay ahead of the curve with respect to serving the community’s needs. However, they now are struggling to figure out how to provide necessary program services with the space that they have, both at the current facility (Sheridan Hall) and their old property on Last Chance Gulch (the Colorado Building). The old building needs a great deal of heating, electrical, and other work done to improve it, but the current facility also requires further improvements to continue delivering services. Two stories of the Colorado Block are vacant.
 - a) *Julie Burrows (HIA)* → Enrollment Coordinator for the ACA: Sees a great deal of potential with the Colorado Block, and it’s a question of how to get it registered and what can be done with it. Sheridan Hall may need code updates. The sprinkler system was installed, and a PAR was completed a year ago. ADA access is a huge concern in Sheridan Hall (especially the elevator). There’s a lot of space in the clinic, but some are not accessible to those with mobility needs because they are located upstairs.
- 8) *Les Clark (MILP)* → MILP helps to coordinate services for those with disabilities. The organization sees issues with trying to find ways to house people that have been kicked out of shelters or other affordable housing units (and who have records for various offenses). MILP wants to see more supportive housing, but, as Michael O’Neil has stated, it’s difficult to place voucher holders in permanent housing with the supportive needs to keep them successful. The high percentage of people with disabilities who are low-income is a huge community need. Subsidized and accessible rides for people with low-income would be key for the transit system or through agencies that can seek funding to provide transportation. MILP currently provides transportation on evenings and weekends for those who are disabled, where possible. The sidewalk situation in town (or lack thereof in places) is problematic for access and for establishing additional transit stops. MILP sees the 2-route transit system as a huge help, but would like to see Capital Transit contract with taxi companies to help provide rides to those with specific needs because the transit buses are often over-taxed with providing pre-scheduled rides—there needs to be some way to handle the overflow to provide rides to those in need. Residents at, for example, Penkay Eagles cannot access Purview all the time because there are not transit stops due to the lack

of sidewalks in the vicinity to establish a transit stop along. MILP is working on helping get people in and out of their houses, and they are working with Habitat for Humanity to get ramps installed on homes and help the disabled have more accessibility and/or age in place. MILP is consistently working at funding opportunities to assist with Aging in Place work.

- 9) *Sharon* → The closing of Helena Industries is a huge loss for the community, with the loss of jobs with staff and clients. She anticipates seeing continued challenges for state case managers with similar situations that occur in the future. It will be a huge gap for that neighborhood because they occupy so much real estate in the Railroad District. She also fears the money from non-profits will continue to decline due to budgetary constraints at both the state and federal level. Just before Easter, there was a crisis at the apartments at 6th and Davis Sts. The Building Inspector and State Pathologist had to inspect the housing, and are continuing to have to assess small improvements that need to be made to make the units habitable for the building's 20 residents. The costs to make units such as those even the remotest bit habitable are exorbitant for many, and the state of such housing is deeply concerning. This is a continuing issue for the community. With Opportunity Zones, we can potentially see a large amount of investment in the community.
- 10) *Eric Brosten (Resident)* → Worries about government spending waste. Has talked to the mayor about some ideas.
- 11) *Laura* → Provided information on housing data.

V. Close