

**FINAL DRAFT May 2014**



**CITY OF BIDDEFORD, MAINE**

**Year 2 Action Plan**

**July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015**

**U.S DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT  
ENTITLEMENT PROGRAM**



**The City’s Entitlement Mission Statement is as follows:**

“To create a Strategic Plan for the next five years that continues to enhance the community and economic development of the City of Biddeford through targeted public facility and infrastructure improvements, social services, housing, economic development projects, and activities that benefit residents, including low to moderate income persons and special needs population groups.”

**Objectives and Outcomes**

The following are the priorities, objectives and outcomes for the new Consolidated 5 Year Plan that began on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. These priorities, objectives and outcomes also are part of each individual year’s Action Plan. Detailed projects and programs for each of the five years are developed and prioritized from this list. Priorities are listed in the order in which they rank (highest Priority #1, etc.) Each is also addressed within narrative of the Consolidated Plan and are part of the multifaceted approach to continue to address the City’s issues. It should be noted that although Infrastructure is Priority 1 from comments collected at the Public Hearings and from the Citizens Advisory Committee, Priority 2, Housing, is to be funded equally with Infrastructure. This was also approved in the City’s Five Year Consolidated Plan.

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Priority 1** - To eliminate slum and blight in the downtown area through infrastructure and public facilities improvements that benefit LMI neighborhoods.

HUD OBJECTIVE – CREATING A SUITABLE LIVING ENVIRONMENT  
Outcome – Improving sustainability by promoting viable communities

Objective 1 - Increase access and provide public facilities that provide for the health and safety of residents in LMI neighborhoods.

- Actions:
1. Implement sidewalk and other street improvements, ADA projects and beautification projects in LMI neighborhoods for safe and adequate access to services and facilities.
  2. Implement park, trail and walkway developments in LMI neighborhoods for safe and adequate recreation needs through acquisition, demolition and redevelopment.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **HUD OBJECTIVE – CREATING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**

Outcome – Improving sustainability by promoting viable communities

Objective 2 - Increase business attraction to promote job creation

- Actions:
1. Provide loan/grant assistance to commercial property owners and businesses through a Downtown Micro Loan Program.
  2. Provide for projects that increase the economic viability of the downtown.
  3. Implement sustainable energy related projects in the downtown.

## **HOUSING**

**Priority 2** - To provide a strategy to meet the increasing need for transitional to affordable and supportive housing.

### **HUD OBJECTIVE – PROVIDING DECENT HOUSING**

Outcome – Improving availability or accessibility of units

Objective 1 - Increase the supply of safe and adequate affordable housing for low to moderate-income persons.

- Actions:
1. Consider making the City's "surplus" and/or tax acquired real estate available for the development of affordable housing.
  2. Consider revisions to the City's zoning and land use standards which would provide incentives, e.g. density bonuses for the development of affordable housing.
  3. In partnership with other public/private parties, explore the adaptive re-use and redevelopment of non-residential properties, e.g. mills, churches, etc. into affordable housing.
  4. Consider and implement when feasible combinations of housing and community space that support LMI neighborhoods and enhance opportunities for housing occupants.

Objective 2 - Preserve and upgrade the City's housing stock serving low to moderate income persons.

- Actions:
1. Consider establishment of low interest loan programs to help finance the rehabilitation of the City's downtown housing stock.

2. Consider acquisition and demolition of blighted properties for construction of new housing when applicable.
3. Provide funding to low to moderate income homeowners for improvements comprised of energy conservation.
4. Consider establishment of low interest loan programs to help finance the rehabilitation of the City's downtown housing stock.
5. Undertake a systematic and concentrated program of code enforcement to ensure life safety standards are met and to prevent blighting influences on neighborhoods.
6. Encourage participation by landlords in the Biddeford Landlords Association and encourage partnerships that provide resources for landlords and tenants.

Objective 3 - Increase opportunities for homeownership for low and moderate income persons.

- Actions: 1. Consider a partnership with other public/private organizations to pool resources to help finance home ownership, e.g. down payments, loan assistance, mortgage interest rate write-downs, and other financing mechanisms.

## **SOCIAL SERVICES**

**Priority 3** - Provide educational and work opportunities for homeless and low to moderate income persons, and special needs populations that provide avenues to obtain jobs and/or better paying work opportunities.

### **HUD OBJECTIVE – CREATING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**

Outcome – Improving availability or accessibility of units or services

Objective 1 - Increase the economic prosperity of homeless and low to moderate income persons, and special needs populations, and their ability to afford housing, and health and safety amenities by providing work opportunities and partnerships that provide housing and housing services.

- Actions: 1. Provide opportunities for homeless and low to moderate income persons, and special needs populations to participate in work force preparedness and financial management programs that enhance their ability to have access to affordable housing.
2. Provide child care and youth programs that increase the opportunity for homeless and low to moderate income persons, and special needs populations to attend educational and training programs, while

providing enrichment programs for youths of all ages.

3. Link local programs to secondary education and training that would be the "next step" for low to moderate income persons, homeless and special needs populations, and implement training and educational programs for these populations.

**Priority 4** - Implement strategies to aid the elderly and special needs populations with access to information and services to increase health and safety and reduce reliance on the City's overburdened Health and Welfare Department that can only provide minimal assistance.

**HUD OBJECTIVE – CREATING A SUITABLE LIVING ENVIRONMENT**

Outcome – Improving availability or accessibility of units or services

Objective 1 - Improve the health and safety of the elderly and special needs populations.

Actions: 1. Provide and coordinate programs that outreach to the elderly and enable the elderly to access assistance that enhances their quality of life.

**Priority 5** - To reinforce and strengthen the emergency shelter and transitional housing system that is already in place which includes housing, counseling, education and a wide variety of homeless, special needs and LMI assistance.

Objective 1 - Assist and work with the City's Health and Welfare Department, volunteer organizations and agencies to seek collaborative efforts to assist homeless, low to moderate income and special needs populations in Biddeford.

Actions: 1. Encourage network meetings of area resources and services.

\* The following falls under all priority listings and pertains to special needs populations thus giving it a stand alone Objective and Action.

Objective 1 - Provide for a seamless network of social services and assistance for special needs populations.

Actions: 1. Continue to gather all social service information and examine gaps in existing systems for all special needs population groups (includes diagnostic, rehabilitative, educational, housing and work opportunities).

Year 2 Projects are detailed below under their respective objectives and actions. Also listed are those projects from the current Year 1 Action Plan proposed for reallocation and/or to be carried over from Year 1. Year 1 is the current project year from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

Construction/reconstruction of sidewalks, other street improvements and additional qualifying sidewalks is targeted for a total of \$100,000 (23.5%), \$100,000 (23.5%) for housing projects, and \$57,075 (13%) for Park Projects

The Micro Loan Program is to be funded at \$20,000 (5%), Public services are targeted to LMI citizens citywide and are funded for a total of \$63,900 (15%) for implementation of new services and expansion of current services. Administration is funded at \$85,243 (20%). Approximately 80% of the total funds will go to benefit LMI citizens.

The budget is based on \$426,218 that has been allocated for Year 2.

***The total carryover of funds from Year 1 will be approximately \$200,000.***

1. Identify specific long-term and short-term community development objectives (including economic development activities that create jobs), developed in accordance with the statutory goals described in section 24 CFR 91.1 and the primary objective of the CDBG program to provide decent housing and a suitable living environment and expand economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

## **Infrastructure**

**Priority 1** - To eliminate slum and blight in the downtown area through infrastructure and public facilities improvements that benefit LMI neighborhoods.

HUD OBJECTIVE – CREATING A SUITABLE LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Outcome – Improving sustainability by promoting viable communities

**Objective 1** - Increase access and provide public facilities that provide for the health and safety of residents in LMI neighborhoods.

- Actions: 1. Implement sidewalk and other street improvements, ADA projects and beautification projects in LMI neighborhoods for safe and adequate access to services and facilities.

Project Title: Sidewalk Improvements

Timeline: July 1, 2014 to June 30th, 2015

Cost: \$100,000

Benefit: 1,000+/-feet

The City of Biddeford has once again determined that the reconstruction/construction of

sidewalks is a top priority. The following is a list of projects for consideration in Year 2.

- 1) Main Street Sidewalk – continue sidewalk/Electrical project
  - a. Clear both sides from Alfred to Adams Street/Lincoln Street, (Construction to be from Alfred to York north side and Alfred to Washington South Side)
  - b. Clear at least 100’ up each side street along the route
  - c. Clear Shevenelle Park for potential utility infrastructure
  
- 2) South Street
  - a. Clear both sides Green to Elm Street, approx. 550’
  - b. Clear north side from Kossuth Street to Green Street, approx 280’
  - c. Clear 100’ up side streets along route
  
- 3) Green Street
  - a. Clear both sides from South to Center Street, approx 400’
  
- 4) Jefferson Street
  - a. Clear sections that have not been done, from Main St. to Adams St, approx 1000’
  - b. Clear 100’ up sides streets in those sections

In addition, Lincoln Street continues to be at the top of the list but there are design issues since mill buildings are located on one side of the street and there is a question as to if sidewalks should be on both sides of the street. Currently, there are sidewalks on only one side of the street. The design for this street will need to take into consideration the possibility of future businesses locating on this street. The street needs full base reconstruction and has not had major maintenance of any kind since the 1970s. The street is in poor condition and both the street and sidewalks are badly deteriorated posing safety threats.

Water Street from Main to Sullivan, and others located in LMI Census tracts are also under consideration. The possibility of new street lighting and other amenities is also a consideration when any sidewalk is reconstructed/constructed.

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Project Title: Park Projects  
Timeline: July 1, 2014 to June 30th, 2015  
Cost: \$57,075  
Benefit: TBD

The City owns the Diamond Match property which is a large parcel of land located along the Saco River in Census Tract 252\_01 Block Group 4. The City of Biddeford began restoration planning in 2005 by assessing the condition of the site through a Brownsfields Development Grant. Woodard & Curran completed Phase 1 and 2 of site assessments at the property and Maine Department of Environmental Covenants in April 2008 with final deed recording taking place in November of 2008.

The City plans to continue to convert this former industrial site into a public park with the park

becoming part of the “river walk” trail system along the river. The park will retain, to the extent possible, the natural character of the riverside habitat by retaining indigenous trees and shrubs, limiting site clearing, and utilizing granite slabs (currently at the site) for development into an amphitheater with seating. The park will include walking paths, an outdoor amphitheater, play space, open space, and river views, and will be free and open to the public. Its location in an LMI Census tract will allow residents access to recreational activities and an increased quality of life for residents. In addition, the neighboring Census Tract 252-01 Block Group 1 is comprised of the highest LMI percentage in the City (85.9%) and residents who live in this area are within walking distance to the park. In Phase 2 as listed above construction will begin to develop the park’s trails, play space and amphitheater.

In Year 3 of the previous Consolidated Plan, historical and prehistoric archaeological surveys were completed. Engineering and a full flood zone review were completed. In addition, in April 2014 an abandoned railroad trestle was demolished and removed.

The City will also consider additional park space on City owned property designated for park usage in LMI Census tracts, including any outstanding work to be completed in the Williams Court Park Extension Project. Construction of additional park space on City owned and designated space could include demolition, design, engineering, construction of access roadways, parking and general park development, including lighting, benches, etc.. In efforts to provide green space in dense LMI neighborhoods, the City will also consider acquisition of property according to HUD procedures when opportunities may present themselves in Year 2 of the new 5-Year Consolidated Plan.

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## **Economic Development**

**Priority 1** - To eliminate slum and blight in the downtown area through infrastructure and public facilities improvements that benefit LMI neighborhoods.

HUD OBJECTIVE – CREATING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Outcome – Improving sustainability by promoting viable communities

Objective 2 - Increase business attraction to promote job creation.

Actions: 1. Provide loan/grant assistance to commercial property owners and businesses through a Downtown Micro Loan Program.

Project Title: Micro Enterprise Loan Program

Timeline: July 1, 2014 to June 30th, 2015

Cost: \$20,000

Benefit: Job creation (TBD)

A Micro Enterprise is typically a commercial enterprise with 5 or fewer employees including the owner. A micro enterprise loan provides credit to establish, stabilize or expand an eligible micro



enterprise. The loan can also be used for technical assistance and or to provide general support to the business including equipment and renovations. The owner, or at least 51% of the employees, must be low or moderate income, or the business must create 1 full time or 2 part time jobs per \$20,000. The business must be located within the City of Biddeford. This expanded program will continue to be used to provide funding to encourage the development and location of micro enterprises within the City. The program is implemented in partnership with the Biddeford Saco Area Economic Development Corporation.

## **Community Development**

**Priority 4** - Implement strategies to aid the elderly and special needs populations with access to information and services to increase health and safety and reduce reliance on the City's overburdened Health and Welfare Department that can only provide minimal assistance.

HUD OBJECTIVE – CREATING A SUITABLE LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Outcome – Improving availability or accessibility of units or services

Objective 1 - Improve the health and safety of the elderly and special needs populations.

Actions: 1. Provide and coordinate programs that outreach to the elderly and enable the elderly to access assistance that enhances their quality of life.

Project Title: Southern Maine Agency on Aging – Benefits Specialist

Timeline: July 1, 2014 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Cost: \$16,000

Inkind Commitment \$52,429

Numbers To Be Served/Benefit: 200

The Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA) will provide a Benefits Specialist trained in assisting additional low-income elderly residents of Biddeford to access the programs and entitlements they are eligible for. The Benefits Specialist will be located at the fully accessible McArthur Library to help seniors in understanding and applying for programs which may include the following: MaineCare, Food Stamps, Fuel Assistance, Veteran's Benefits, Medicare Buy-In, Drugs for the Elderly (DEL), Health Insurance Counselling, Medicare D, and the Tax and Rent Rebate Program. In addition to assisting Biddeford residents for the first time, the Benefits Specialist will be available for annual recertification that many of the programs require and will help residents research their Medicare D prescription plans every year to assure they are in the one that best meets their medication and financial needs. The Benefits Specialist also visits homebound Biddeford elderly who need assistance. The Benefits Specialist will initiate any appropriate appeals processes and lend support during the outcomes associated with denial of benefits to clients whenever possible.

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**Priority 3** - Provide educational and work opportunities for homeless and low to moderate income persons, and special needs populations that provide avenues to obtain jobs and/or better

paying work opportunities.

## HUD OBJECTIVE – CREATING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Outcome – Improving availability or accessibility of units or services

Objective 1 - Increase the economic prosperity of homeless and low to moderate income persons, and special needs populations, and their ability to afford housing, and health and safety amenities by providing work opportunities and partnerships that provide housing and housing services.

Actions: 1. Provide child care and youth programs that increase the opportunity for homeless and low to moderate income persons, and special needs populations to attend educational and training programs, while providing enrichment programs for youths of all ages.

Project Title: VSA Arts of Maine - ArtVan Program

Timeline: July 1, 2014 to June 30th, 2015

Cost: \$4,000

Inkind Commitment: \$810

Numbers To Be Served/Benefit: 30

Many children and youth in the Mechanics Park, Bacon Street and downtown area live in low income housing and do not have ready access to traditional summer programs and who lack opportunities for safe self expression, adult supervision and creative outlets for learning. Children who attend the ArtVan Program are provided a safe, creative and tangible way to express art and discover ways to beautify their neighborhood while working together. The program will continue to expand its program in partnership with the Canopy Park Resource Center on Bacon Street and the Community Bicycle Center, Heart of Biddeford, Biddeford Recreation Department and University of New England to engage referrals, provide space and volunteers, and artistic opportunities. In exchange, the ArtVan Program provides a “community arts” program that no entity has the staffing to provide. The program plans to serve additional youths in the program and provide new experiences for those returning to the program. Expanded opportunities for Biddeford youths including; expanding the “Teen Art” section with the Heart of Biddeford to be a larger part of the mill arts community, link with businesses that may use “youth art”, and possibly provide participants opportunities to market art products. Teens will be encouraged to participate in the program as mentors for the younger children, assisting program leaders, and developing neighborhood art that replaces unsightly graffiti. The program will be held at various parks and spaces, located in LMI Census Tracts. The program enables parents and guardians the time to participate in training, parenting or work opportunities knowing that their child is in a supportive and supervised learning environment.

The crux of the program will be the creation of the art work for the 6th Annual Bacon Street Festival to be held in August on Bacon Street. The Art Work will be comprised of recycled materials and will consist of large and small sculptures, as well as hanging and flat pieces. A Teen Art Team will also be a part of the festival.

3. Link local programs to secondary education and training that would be the "next step" for low to moderate income persons, homeless and special needs populations, and implement training and educational programs for these populations.

Project Title: Seeds of Hope Career Center  
Timeline: July 1, 2014 to June 30th, 2015  
Cost: \$10,000  
Inkind Commitment: \$3,290  
Numbers To Be Served/Benefit: 100

With the increasing number of unemployed in the Biddeford area, and with the closing of the Career Center in Saco, the resources to help people with resume development, on-line applications, interviewing skills, etc. are now only located in Portland and Springvale. Many of the City's unemployed do not have the financial resources to travel to these communities.

Christ Episcopal Church will continue to sponsor the space for the Career Center and expand the Center's resources to assist additional clients. The Career Center will continue to expand its partnerships with the MacArthur Library, City of Biddeford's General Assistance, Public Access, the Biddeford School District, Biddeford/Saco Chamber of Commerce and Goodwill Workforce Solutions, of which the Career Center is a Workforce Solutions Site. The program will provide expanded services including, the HIRE LOCAL! Program, basic skills programs, support groups, employer pre-screening processes, resume and interview preparedness, etc.

The Career Center will also continue to expand ways to assist clients in becoming Internet literate and confident since many applications are now accessible only online.

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Project Title: Maine Way Inc. - Representative Payee Program  
Timeline: July 1, 2014 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
Cost: \$16,000  
Inkind Commitment: \$9,500  
Numbers To Be Served/Benefit: 150

The Representative Payee Program will be expanded in Year 2 to serve additional clients. The program is implemented by The MaineWay Inc., a transitional housing entity in Biddeford. This service will work with additional LMI clients who receive SSDI and/or SSI. Generally clients come to or seek transitional housing with finances in a state of disarray. They are often severely behind in rent payments or have been served with an eviction notice and CMP disconnection notices. The Maine Way will continue to work with landlords and CMP to develop a plan to bring payments current and provide stable housing for clients. The Maine Way also develops a financial agreement with the client and works with Social Security to maintain the client's benefits. Clients will learn budgeting skills and will be encouraged to access community and other social services. The goal will be to help additional clients attain self-sufficiency in

handling finances and to help clients to develop and/or recognize skills for employment opportunities. In addition, the MaineWay will work closely with the Biddeford Housing Authority to link clients that may be seeking housing in the City's Housing Program projects while accessing assistance from MaineWay services.

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Project Title: ENGINE – Maine FabLab / Design Apprenticeship Program  
Timeline: July 1, 2014 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
Cost: \$4,000  
Inkind Commitment: \$5,000  
Numbers To Be Served/Benefit: 84 (56 LMI)

ENGINE is launching a Design Apprenticeship Program that will introduce the concept of 3D design and digital machining as part of ENGINE'S Maine FabLab Program. The Design Apprenticeship Program will engage students from the local public schools (K-8), Biddeford Center of Technology, universities, and community colleges, and others, in learning 3D design and fabrication. As a City with a strong manufacturing sector, it is important that Biddeford's youth be prepared for the innovative technologies of the future.

Fab labs are small, community-based workshops that give members of the public, from students to small businesses, access to educational resources and high-tech equipment that can design, develop, and create new products. This Fab Lab Program will be focused on Biddeford youth who will be introduced to new vocations through project based learning. There is a national initiative to create a network of community based Fab Labs and Biddeford may be positioned to be the first in southern Maine.

The FabLab Program will provide scholarships to four low to moderate income students per class, for the 14 weeks of the fall 2014 semester. The class capacity is six students per class. The class will be held after-school from 3:30-5:30 for two hours, one day a week and will be comprised of 3D modeling for printing, graphic design, illustration, and other practical trade courses, including utilizing Khan Academy and Skillshare online courses with in-person mentorship/instruction. It is the goal of this pilot program to introduce Biddeford youth to new technology in manufacturing, while perking the interest of Biddeford's manufacturing sector.

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Project Title: Learning Works – Graffiti Busting Program  
Timeline: July 1, 2014 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
Cost: \$13,900  
Inkind Commitment: \$15,500  
Numbers To Be Served/Benefit: 30

Learning Works will establish and implement a graffiti removal program free to local businesses and similar to the successful "Graffiti Busting" program that Learning Works administers in Portland. This program is an opportunity for youth who need community service hours to fulfill their requirement by providing a service that teaches the importance of community service while

benefiting the City. In addition to being trained in the technical aspects and equipment use, program participants will also speak and engage with public officials and business owners gaining valuable social skills. Learning Works is the agency responsible for supervision of this program and acting as the liaison between business owners who need graffiti removed and referral sources. These referral sources include: YouthBuild Biddeford, Targeted Case Managers, Biddeford School Department, and Juvenile Community Corrections Officers.

## **Housing**

**Priority 2** - To provide a strategy to meet the increasing need for transitional to affordable and supportive housing.

### HUD OBJECTIVE – PROVIDING DECENT HOUSING

Outcome – Improving availability or accessibility of units

Objective 1 - Increase the supply of safe and adequate affordable housing for low to moderate-income persons.

- Actions:
1. Consider making the City's "surplus" and/or tax acquired real estate available for the development of affordable housing.
  3. In partnership with other public/private parties, explore the adaptive re-use and redevelopment of non-residential properties, e.g. mills, churches, etc. into affordable housing.
  4. Consider and implement when feasible combinations of housing and community space that support LMI neighborhoods and enhance opportunities for housing occupants.

Objective 2 - Preserve and upgrade the City's housing stock serving low to moderate income persons.

- Actions:
2. Consider acquisition and demolition of blighted properties for construction of new housing when applicable.
  5. Undertake a systematic and concentrated program of code enforcement to ensure life safety standards are met and to prevent blighting influences on neighborhoods.
  6. Encourage participation by landlords in the Biddeford Landlords Association and encourage partnerships that provide resources for landlords and tenants.

Objective 3 - Increase opportunities for homeownership for low and moderate income persons.

- Actions: 1. Consider a partnership with other public/private organizations to pool resources to help finance home ownership, e.g. down payments, loan assistance, mortgage interest rate write-downs, and other financing mechanisms.

Project Title: Housing Program

Timeline: July 1, 2014 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Cost: \$100,000

Numbers To Be Served/Benefit: TBD

Potential housing activities in Year 2 include, acquisition, housing rehabilitation, gap financing, energy conservation improvements, purchase of blighted buildings, purchase of vacant lots, demolition, and/or housing that benefits low to moderate income persons or presumed benefit populations (transitional, seniors, etc.). Several potential housing projects are under consideration in partnership with the Biddeford Housing Authority. In addition, housing funding may be used to finish projects carried over from the previous year designated as a Phase 2 of the specific project. If the opportunity presents itself and is identified as a benefit, community nonprofit space will be considered in housing projects. Site specific projects will be submitted for complete review and approval. Program income received from the sale of housing or vacant lots developed with CDBG funds will be returned to the program for the next project.

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Administration is to be funded at a total of \$85,243 for office staff, equipment, supplies, and any other administrative expenses.