

SECTION 2 - COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROCESS

HOUSING STEERING COMMITTEE

The **Housing Steering Committee** was comprised of 20 community representatives plus the staff of the Community Development Department, City of Manhattan. They met for a total of eight times from January, 1999 to January, 2000, to discuss issues related to housing and housing activities.

At their initial meeting, the Housing Steering Committee identified **opportunities, challenges and solutions** to developing housing in Manhattan and **general areas of focus**. Opportunities, challenges and solutions included:

- ◆ **a changing population and economic base; size and household composition *and incomes*;**
- ◆ ***the existing housing inventory;***
- ◆ ***and availability;***
- ◆ ***local policies and housing initiatives;***
- ◆ ***determining the overall need;***
- ◆ ***funding for housing;***
- ◆ ***creating a housing development program;***
- ◆ **community capacity to implement new housing programs;**
- ◆ ***housing development and the economy; and***
- ◆ **unique housing situations: students and soldiers.**

The general areas of focus determined by the Housing Steering Committee included:

1. ***Affordable housing;***
2. ***Senior housing;***
3. ***Community perceptions/education;***
4. ***New markets-potential population base ;***
5. ***Rehabilitation of existing housing stock and preservation of neighborhoods;***
6. ***Issues concerning Downtown Manhattan;***
7. ***Population bases;***
8. ***Quality of life;***
9. ***Financing of housing; and***
10. ***Historic preservation.***

The Steering Committee set the “*scope of services*” for the “Housing Manhattan: Planning for the Future” Housing Study.

COMMUNITY SURVEYS

Introduction

The Manhattan Housing Study included both quantitative and qualitative research activities. Qualitative research is discussed in this section, specifically the comprehensive citizen participation process used to gather the opinions of the Manhattan citizenry regarding housing issues. ***Planning for a community's future is most effective and accurate when it includes opinions from as many of the community citizens as possible.*** The Housing Study process included extensive community participation. The methods used to gather information from the citizens of Manhattan include **surveys, community focus groups, and an electronic town hall meeting.** "Sample" surveys are included in the Appendices. The results of community participation activities of the Housing Study process were then verified through statistical research.

Community Household Survey

In August and September of 1999, a **Community Household Survey** was implemented, in an effort to allow the general citizenry of Manhattan an opportunity for input into the Housing Study process. The survey was posted on the City's website and included with the City water bill. Preceding the implementation of the Household Survey, announcements were made with the newspaper and by radio to inform the public. In addition the survey was distributed through selected Manhattan employers.

A total of **1,316 Community Household Surveys** were returned. An estimated 50 percent of the respondents had lived at their current address six or more years, while 9 percent had lived at their current residence less than six months. Approximately 86 percent of households responding to the survey lived in a house and 81 percent were homeowners. Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents rated their dwelling as in good condition, 16.3 percent in fair condition, 2.4 percent in poor condition and 1.3 percent had no response. **Financial assistance for housing improvements in the form of low interest loans would be used by 24.7 percent of survey respondents, while 28.9 percent would utilize grants.**

The survey identified 13.9 percent of the respondents having a total family income of less than \$20,000 annually, while 29.7 percent had a total family income between \$20,000 and \$40,000 annually. Families with an annual income between \$40,000 and \$80,000 accounted for 41.4 percent of the respondents. The largest response, 29.3 or 26.2 percent, was in the income category of \$40,000 to \$59,999.

Housing needs

Survey participants were asked to give their opinion about specific housing types. They were asked if each housing type was greatly needed, somewhat needed, or not needed. **The top five responses for greatly needed and not needed were:**

Top Five Housing Types Identified as Greatly Needed

- ◆ Retirement housing for low income elderly
- ◆ Housing for low income families
- ◆ Subsidized financing for first time homeowners
- ◆ Housing for middle income families
- ◆ Single family housing

Top Five Housing Types Identified as Not Needed

- ◆ Housing for upper income families
- ◆ Mobile homes
- ◆ Apartment complexes
- ◆ Manufactured homes
- ◆ Retirement housing for upper income elderly

Provider Survey

A **survey of Providers (Housing Stakeholders)** was implemented in the summer of 1999, in an effort to obtain information from those organizations and individuals that provide housing or related human services in the Manhattan community to various consumer groups. Providers included developers, builders, realtors, and property management agencies, support referral agencies and property landlords. Providers serviced all types of populations from students to elderly to military personnel. Provider Surveys were mailed to 35 organizations, and a total of 19 surveys were returned.

The following profiles the population and services provided by the Providers:

Primary Population Served

- ◆ Families
- ◆ Seniors
- ◆ Military Personnel
- ◆ Persons with a mental disability

Services Provided

- ◆ Case Management
- ◆ Health and well being, including food
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Employment

Housing needs

Providers were asked to identify the most critical housing needs in Manhattan. The three most frequent responses were:

- ◆ Quality housing for the older population;
- ◆ Provide low and moderately priced housing, both rental and owner, for low and middle income families;
and
- ◆ Family housing for first time owners.

Other needed housing services identified as needed were improved public transportation, emergency shelter, removal of dilapidated structures and more Section 8 certificates and public housing.

Matrix of Capacity

The **Matrix of Capacity** was derived from the Provider Survey (Appendix A). The Matrix of Capacity was developed to provide a graphical representation of Providers, the types of housing provided and consumer groups. A matrix of this type provides an understanding of the capacity of the community to implement housing programs. The findings of this Matrix imply a lack of capacity. Lacking is the non-profit(s), especially churches, that most communities the size of Manhattan have to facilitate various community-based housing activities.

Consumer Survey

A **Consumer Survey** was implemented in an effort to identify the housing needs of specific populations in the Manhattan community. Providers were randomly selected to distribute the survey to their consumer group. A total of 123 surveys were returned.

Of the 123 respondents, 80 were renters. Of those renting, 47 (38%) indicated they would like to be homeowners. A total of 22 of the respondents received a rent subsidy and 51 had been on a waiting list for housing assistance. The survey identified 56 respondents as rating their home in good condition, while an equal number rated their home in poor or fair condition. Four survey respondents were homeless.

Housing needs

Respondents identified the three most critical housing needs for themselves and the three most critical housing needs in Manhattan. The top five responses named for both individuals and Manhattan were:

Top Five Critical Housing Needs for Individuals

- ◆ Affordable rent
- ◆ Food/nutrition
- ◆ Good/central location
- ◆ Utility assistance
- ◆ Quality/condition of home

Top Five Critical Housing Needs in Manhattan

- ◆ More low income/affordable housing
- ◆ More housing
- ◆ Quality affordable housing
- ◆ Food
- ◆ Utility assistance

Lender Survey

To obtain information associated with mortgage lending in Manhattan, as well as to receive input from lenders regarding the future housing needs of the community, a **Lender Survey** was implemented in the summer of 1999. The survey was sent to 17 lending institutions including commercial banks, savings and loans and credit unions. Seven of the 17 surveys were returned. Only one lender participated in FHA loans, and all but one would make conventional loans with five percent down, with maximum private mortgage insurance. Five lenders worked with construction loans and four lenders had experience with government funded projects. All seven lenders provided home improvement loans.

Housing needs

Respondents to the Lender Survey were asked to identify housing needs in Manhattan and indicated the specific factors that impacted housing. The most frequent responses were:

Critical Housing Needs

- ◆ Affordable housing
- ◆ In-fill redevelopment
- ◆ Rental housing
- ▶ Availability or supply of housing

Factors That Impact Housing

- ◆ Availability of lots and construction costs
- ◆ Special assessments
- ◆ Property taxes
- ◆ Risk to developers

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS

Ten focus group meetings were held in Manhattan to identify housing needs and related issues specific to various populations and to generate recommendations for addressing those needs. The focus groups responded to pertinent demographic and economic information and survey results. The focus groups included students, human services providers, businesses, human service groups, faith community, higher education, government/quasi-government, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, neighborhood representatives, and funding groups. The issues and desired housing programs expressed most often during the focus group discussions included:

- ◆ Affordable housing
- ◆ Transportation issues
- ◆ Parking associated with the University
- ◆ Housing for the elderly, disabled, and needy
- ◆ Availability of housing
- ◆ Land shortage and construction costs
- ◆ A need for a variety of housing

Focus group participants were given a **Community Report Card** and **Prioritization Exercise** and were asked how the community of Manhattan had done to meet the needs of its citizens during the last 10 years. Participants were given a list of specific housing indicators in three areas and asked to grade and prioritize each indicator. Not all indicators receiving low grades were prioritized. The most frequent responses were:

Current Housing Availability for Families/Individuals – Lowest Grades

- ◆ Low-income families/persons
- ◆ Persons with a mental and/or physical disability
- ◆ Low-income elderly families/persons
- ◆ Homeless families/persons
- ◆ Ethnic/racial groups

Future Housing Opportunities for Families/Individuals – Top Priorities

- ◆ Low-income families/persons
- ◆ Upper-income families/persons
- ◆ Married students
- ◆ Middle-income families/persons
- ◆ Low-income elderly families/person

Types of Housing Currently Available – Lowest Grades

- ◆ Single-room-occupancy housing
(Boarding homes)
- ◆ Rental rehabilitation
- ◆ Manufactured homes
- ◆ Housing in the downtown area
- ◆ Homeowner rehabilitation
- ◆ Group homes

Types of Housing Needed in Manhattan – Top Priorities

- ◆ Rental housing (general)
- ◆ Single family housing
- ◆ Housing in the downtown area
- ◆ Emergency shelters
- ◆ Rental rehabilitation
- ◆ First-time home ownership
- ◆ Homeowner rehabilitation

Number of Bedrooms – Lowest to Highest Grade

- ◆ 0 bedroom apartment
- ◆ One bedroom (apartment or house)
- ◆ Two bedroom (apartment or house)
- ◆ Three plus bedroom (apartment or house)

Number of Bedrooms – Top Priorities (in order of priority)

- ◆ Three plus bedroom (apartment or house)
- ◆ Two bedroom (apartment or house)
- ◆ One bedroom (apartment or house)
- ◆ 0 bedroom apartment

ELECTRONIC TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Electronic Town Hall Meetings were an innovative process to build consensus regarding pertinent housing issues and concerns. Local leadership utilized an electronic keypad system to respond to various housing related questions. A total of 68 local citizens responded to questions regarding their identity, involvement in housing in Manhattan, distribution of resources in Manhattan, future location of housing in Manhattan, and other related local planning issues. Other related local planning issues included architectural design, public transit and location of housing, cost of public transit, barriers to housing downtown, and a community rental inspection process.

Involvement in Housing in Manhattan

- ◆ 22% were interested citizens
- ◆ 20% represented business and industry
- ◆ 42% have been involved with housing for over 10 years
- ◆ 19% participated in housing ownership assistance
- ◆ 19% provided housing and services to special populations
- ◆ 17% were active in housing planning/research

Allocation of Resources – Invest More In . . .

- ◆ Community housing capacity building
- ◆ Housing ownership
- ◆ Rental housing for older adults
- ◆ Rental rehabilitation
- ◆ Owner rehabilitation
- ◆ Housing for persons/families with special needs.
- ◆ Emergency shelter beds
- ◆ Transitional housing units
- ◆ Housing support services
- ◆ Rent-to own programs
- ◆ Infrastructure for residential development opportunities.

Most Appropriate Housing Types -- Top Priority

- ◆ Rental apartments for non-traditional students and married student
- ◆ Rental apartments for traditional students
- ◆ First-time home ownership for families
- ◆ Home ownership opportunities for low income individuals/families
- ◆ Independent living apartments for older adults
- ◆ Housing rehabilitation for persons with a disability
- ◆ Short-term shelter beds for homeless persons

Most Appropriate Areas In And Adjacent Manhattan for Future Development

- ◆ Northwest, Grand Mere area for single family development
- ◆ Central/Northcentral for duplex housing
- ◆ Central/Northcentral for multifamily developments
- ◆ East Central for housing for older adults
- ◆ East Central for housing for persons with disabilities
- ◆ East Central for emergency shelters
- ◆ Northeast for mobile homes and/or manufactured housing

Other Related Manhattan Planning Issues (in order of discussion)

- ◆ 47% of town hall participants strongly agreed that some degree of architectural control should be required on new residences built in the Downtown area to insure that newer buildings are in character with the surrounding neighborhood.
- ◆ 39% rated the availability of public transit when developing housing for elderly/senior citizens as very important.
- ◆ 42% rated the availability of public transit when developing housing for low-income families as very important.
- ◆ 56% rated availability of public transit when developing housing for persons with disabilities as very important.
- ◆ 34% rated the availability of public transit when developing housing for students as somewhat important.
- ◆ The majority of participants indicated that the City of Manhattan should impose a transit tax on all residents to pay for public transit services.
- ◆ The majority of participants indicated that the City of Manhattan should take the lead role in the development of new housing and/or the improvement of existing housing.

- ◆ 81% indicated that an effort to develop housing in the Downtown is important.
- ◆ The majority of participants indicated that the lack of suitable sites was the greatest barrier to developing housing Downtown.
- ◆ 86% felt there is a need for a rental inspection program in Manhattan.
- ◆ 34% felt the current population in Manhattan was 50,001 - 52,000.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Manhattan Comprehensive Community Participation Process provided ample opportunity for input from various individuals, organizations, groups and community leaders. The information obtained through these the various participation activities greatly assisted in identifying and prioritizing housing needs in Manhattan. The Steering Committee provided the “scope of services” and direction for the “Housing Manhattan: Planning for the Future” program, while also providing valuable feedback throughout the planning process. Along with information on housing needs, the Electronic Town Hall meetings provided an opportunity to build consensus. ***“Housing Manhattan: Planning for the Future” could not have been completed without citizen participation.***