



City of Rochester, New Hampshire
Office of Economic & Community Development
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FY 2020 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Activities Summary Report for the City of Rochester

submitted to the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources on July 10, 2020

This report has been prepared by the City of Rochester's Community Development Coordinator in compliance with the monitoring and reporting provisions of the Programmatic Agreement between the City of Rochester, NH and the Hampshire State Historic Preservation Officer ("Programmatic Agreement"), entered into June 2016.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) activities undertaken during FY 2020 are:

Exempt and Categorically Excluded Activities

The following activities are administrative/management, economic development, or public services that have no physical environmental impact or result in any physical environmental changes. As a result, all have been reviewed under 24 CFR 58 and have been found to be exempt from the provision of the National Environmental Policy Act and other laws and authorities cited in 24 CFR 58.5. No Request for Release of Funds or further environmental review is required. Compliance with any applicable requirements of 24 CFR 58.6 is required.

Description of exempt and categorically excluded CDBG activities and citations of applicable activity under 24 CFR 58:

1. CDBG Administration and Planning – 24 CFR 58.34(a)(3)
2. Community Partners – 24 CFR 58.35(b)(2)
3. Cross Roads House – 24 CFR 58.35(b)(2)
4. Dover Adult Learning Center – 24 CFR 58.34(a)(4)
5. Job Opportunity Benefit (JOB) Loan Program – 24 CFR 58.34(a)(11) and 24 CFR 58.35(b)(4)
[individual loans subject to HUD's Categorically Excluded Statutory Checklist for §58.35 (a)(3)(iii) activities]
6. My Friend's Place – 24 CFR 58.34(b)(2)
7. MY-TURN – 24 CFR 58.35(b)(3)
8. SHARE Fund – 24 CFR 58.35(b)(2)
9. Strafford Nutrition Meals on Wheels – 24 CFR 58.35(b)(2)
10. Tri-City Co-op – 24 CFR 58.35(b)(2)

Non-Exempt Activities

1. Rochester Child Care Center – Fire Sprinkler System

This activity is upgrading the existing fire sprinkler system within the Rochester Child Care Center (95 Charles Street, Rochester, NH 03867) to bring the system up to local fire codes. This site is

already developed and paved, and it is located just outside the urban core of the city in a highly developed, mostly residential area. A Request for Project Review was submitted to the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources in May 2019, and a determination of “No Historic Properties Affected” was received.

While originally scheduled to take place entirely during FY 2020, commencement of this project was delayed due to procurement process issues, and then the COVID-19 pandemic impacted project progress. The project is anticipated to be fully complete in early FY 2021. Thus far, no problems have been encountered during this project.

2. Community Action Partnership for Strafford County – Weatherization Program

This activity performs small-scale weatherization renovations on single-family homes owned by low to moderate income residents. Many of these homes are manufactured homes less than 50 years old. During FY 2020, all forty-eight individual projects performed under this activity have fallen within the activities stipulated as not requiring review by the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, under Appendix I of the Programmatic Agreement. No projects involved ground disturbance, and all involved little to no work that affected the exterior of the residences. Projects primarily involved replacement of furnaces and water heaters, insulation installation, replacement of faulty plumbing, etc. Individual project files are available for review upon request.

No problems were encountered during any of the projects.

3. Rochester Opera House – Chairlift Project

This activity installed a chairlift on a half-flight of stairs located on the second floor of the Rochester Opera House (31 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH 03867). This activity fell within the activities stipulated as not requiring review by the New Hampshire Division of Historical resources, under Appendix I of the Programmatic Agreement. All work occurred inside the existing Rochester Opera House building structure. No problems were encountered during this project.

4. East Rochester Library – Building Renovations

This activity repaired the foundation and exterior brick masonry on the East Rochester Library building (55 Main Street, Rochester, NH 03868). A Request for Project Review was submitted to the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources in May 2019, and a determination of “No Historic Properties Affected” was received. No problems were encountered during this project.

5. Rochester Riverwalk Canoe and Kayak Launch Project

The project was planned to install a seasonal, removable dock for small watercraft along the Cochecho River (10 Hillsdale Road, Rochester, NH 03867). Installation was delayed to spring 2020 due to state concerns regarding potential disturbance of protected wildlife, and then the COVID-19 pandemic created further delays for installation. A Request for Project Review was submitted to the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources in May 2019, and a determination of “No Historic Properties Affected” was received. The dock is anticipated to be installed in early FY 2021.

6. Gonic Pool/Recreation Area Improvements

This project involves the replace the existing tennis court at the Gonic Pool recreation area (8

Railroad Avenue, Rochester, NH 03839) with a pavilion and light landscaping work. A Request for Project Review was submitted to the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources in June 2019, and a determination of “No Historic Properties Affected” was received. The project began in fall 2019 and then was placed on hold due to winter. While the project was scheduled to resume in spring 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed project resumption. The project is anticipated to be fully complete in early FY 2021.

7. Historic District Commission Downtown Façade Improvements Program

This project involved microgrants to downtown property owners and business owners for improvements to the signs and front exteriors of their buildings. In FY 2020, three businesses received microgrants for façade improvements: 33 North Main Street, 7 Hanson Street, and 107 North Main Street. For 33 North Main Street, a Request for Project Review was submitted to the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources in November 2019, and a determination of “No Adverse Effect” was received. For 7 Hanson Street, the replacement of an existing sign fell within the activities stipulated as not requiring review by the New Hampshire Division of Historical resources, under Appendix I of the Programmatic Agreement. For 107 North Main Street, a Request for Project Review was submitted to the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources in November 2019, and a determination of “No Adverse Effect” was received. The Historic District Commission also approved all projects before they commenced. No problems were encountered with any of these projects.

As not all funds allocated for the program were expended in FY 2020, the remaining funds will be made for additional downtown façade improvements in FY 2021.

8. Homeless Center for Strafford County Land Acquisition

This project involved the acquisition of undeveloped land located at 202 Washington Street, Rochester, NH 03867 for the construction of a new homeless shelter. A Request for Project Review was submitted to the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources in May 2019, and a determination of “No Historic Properties Affected” was received. The land was purchased in spring 2020, and construction of the shelter is anticipated to begin in FY 2021.

9. My Friend’s Place Back-up Generator Project

This project was planned to involve the installation of a back-up generator at the My Friend’s Place homeless shelter (368 Washington Street, Rochester, NH 03820). A Request for Project Review was submitted to the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources in July 2019, and a determination of “No Historic Properties Affected” was received. Commencement of the project has been delayed due to a delay in obtaining necessary engineering specifications for a separate kitchen project. It is anticipated that the project will commence in FY 2021.

The City of Rochester did not receive any disputes or objections during its efforts to carry out the aforementioned activities and/or the terms of the Programmatic Agreement.

Public Involvement

The City of Rochester notifies the public about its CDBG program and CDBG activities through three formal processes—the Consolidated Action Plan, the Annual Action Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The Consolidated Action Plan is a five-year planning

document for the CDBG program that is created with extensive input from the general public and low to moderate income residents in particular. The Annual Action Plan is an annual planning document that outlines specific activities for the upcoming program year, and it is also created with extensive input from the general public and low to moderate income residents in particular. The current Consolidated Action Plan, as well as the Annual Action Plans for each year under the current Consolidated Plan, are made available at the City Clerk's Office, the Rochester Public Library, and the Office of Economic & Community Development. They are also posted on the city's website at <https://www.rochesternh.net/community-development-division/pages/action-plans>. (Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and state stay-at-home orders, the draft FY 2020-2025 Consolidated Plan and draft FY 2021 Annual Action Plan were made available on the city's website and via email.)

The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report provides a summary of all activities and accomplishments for the completed program year. CAPERs dating back to 2010 are posted on the city's website at <https://www.rochesternh.net/community-development-division/pages/annual-reports>. Before the CAPER is submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for review and approval, an official public notice and solicitation of public comments is posted in the local newspaper as well as on the city website.

In addition, all of the non-exempt FY 2020 CDBG activities, before they commenced, were disclosed to the public in a combined Finding of No Significant Impact and Notice of Intent to Request the Release of Funds (FONSI/NOIRROF). The FONSI/NOIRROF for the Historic District Commission Façade Improvements Program, East Rochester Library building renovations, and Rochester Child Care Center fire sprinkler system project was published on June 7, 2019. No comments were received.

The FONSI/NOIRROF for the Riverwalk Committee canoe and kayak launch project was published on June 20, 2019. An objection was received on July 12, 2020 from a Rochester resident, which was sent to both the City of Rochester and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Region I office. In response to the objection, HUD informed the city that an environmental assessment level of environmental review was required for the project as opposed to the categorical exclusion level of environmental review initially conducted. The City of Rochester revised its environmental review, and a new FONSI/NOIRROF was published on October 19, 2020. No objections were received for this FONSI/NOIRROF.

This report, after its submission to the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, will also be made available to the public through publication on the city's website at <https://www.rochesternh.net/community-development-division/pages/annual-reports>.