

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

PUBLIC INPUT MEETINGS

In the spring, an informational notice was sent to people on the Consolidated Plan mailing list inviting individuals, agencies, and organizations to participate in the preparation of the Montana Consolidated Plan Annual Action Plan for the year beginning April 1, 2008. Display advertisements were placed in major newspapers around the state asking for public comment, giving dates and locations of the upcoming public input meetings. Additional display advertisements for each of the individual meetings were placed in the local newspapers, and personal invitation letters were sent to local officials, public agencies, and interested citizens in each area. The meeting notices were also posted on the *Discovering Montana* E-Calendar at:

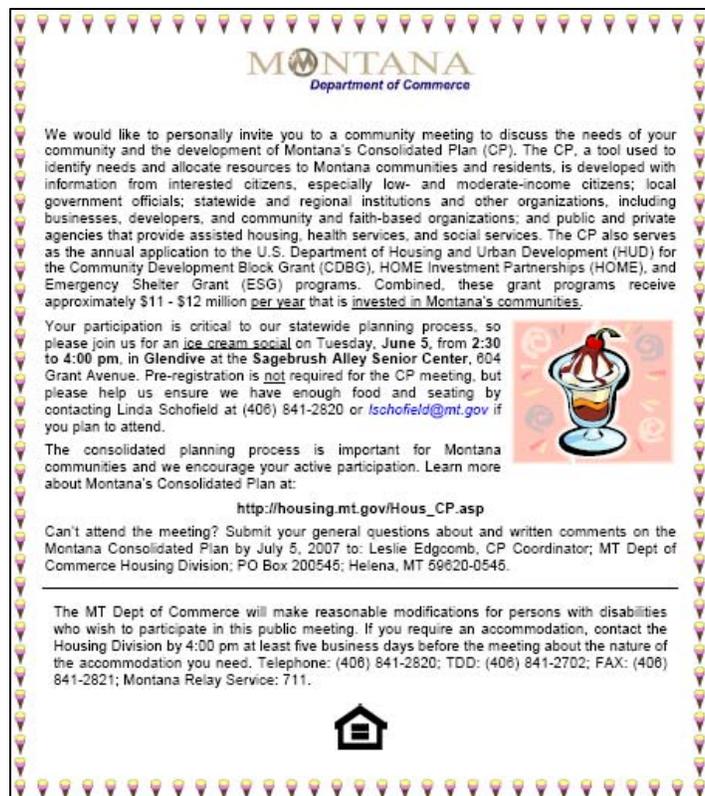
<http://app.mt.gov/cal/html/event?eventCollectionCode=comm>

The information on the dates, times, and locations of the public meetings was also posted on the "Current Events" section of the Consolidated Plan web page:

http://housing.mt.gov/Hous_CP_Apps.asp

In May and June 2007, two on-site community input meetings were held in Bozeman, on May 31; and Glendive, June 5.

The Bozeman meeting was being held during the lunch break for the Montana Board of Housing's Tax Credit Workshop and included a free lunch buffet. The meeting in Glendive was held at the newly constructed Sagebrush Alley Senior Center. The meeting, held the day before an MBOH board meeting, ran from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. and included a free ice cream social. Representatives from HOME, CDBG, and the Montana Board of Housing were present at all the meetings to answer questions and respond to public comments.



MONTANA
Department of Commerce

We would like to personally invite you to a community meeting to discuss the needs of your community and the development of Montana's Consolidated Plan (CP). The CP, a tool used to identify needs and allocate resources to Montana communities and residents, is developed with information from interested citizens, especially low- and moderate-income citizens; local government officials; statewide and regional institutions and other organizations, including businesses, developers, and community and faith-based organizations; and public and private agencies that provide assisted housing, health services, and social services. The CP also serves as the annual application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), and Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) programs. Combined, these grant programs receive approximately \$11 - \$12 million per year that is invested in Montana's communities.

Your participation is critical to our statewide planning process, so please join us for an ice cream social on Tuesday, June 5, from 2:30 to 4:00 pm, in Glendive at the Sagebrush Alley Senior Center, 604 Grant Avenue. Pre-registration is not required for the CP meeting, but please help us ensure we have enough food and seating by contacting Linda Schofield at (406) 841-2820 or lschofield@mt.gov if you plan to attend.

The consolidated planning process is important for Montana communities and we encourage your active participation. Learn more about Montana's Consolidated Plan at:

http://housing.mt.gov/Hous_CP.asp

Can't attend the meeting? Submit your general questions about and written comments on the Montana Consolidated Plan by July 5, 2007 to: Leslie Edgoomb, CP Coordinator; MT Dept of Commerce Housing Division; PO Box 200545; Helena, MT 59620-0545.

The MT Dept of Commerce will make reasonable modifications for persons with disabilities who wish to participate in this public meeting. If you require an accommodation, contact the Housing Division by 4:00 pm at least five business days before the meeting about the nature of the accommodation you need. Telephone: (406) 841-2820; TDD: (406) 841-2702; FAX: (406) 841-2821; Montana Relay Service: 711.



Turnout at the public input meetings was very good. In addition to MDOC and MBOH staff presenters, 31 people signed in at Bozeman. Forty-eight people, in addition to MDOC and MBOH staff presenters, signed in at the Glendive meeting.

PUBLIC REVIEW MEETINGS

The draft Consolidated Plan Annual Action Plan for 04/01/2008 – 03/31/2009 was released to the public in mid-November 2007. A public comment period was open through December 31, 2007. Notifications were sent to individuals and organizations on the Consolidated Plan mailing list. Display advertisements were placed in key newspapers announcing: the comment period, the website address for the documents, where to obtain hard copies of the document, where to send written comments, and the date and locations of the public review meeting. The meeting notice was also posted on the *Discovering Montana* E-Calendar and the Consolidated Plan web page.

Three public review meetings were held in November:

Sidney **November 14;** Elks Lodge; 123 3rd St SW

Red Lodge **November 15;** Rock Creek Resort; 6380 US Highway 212 S

Polson **November 28;** KwaTaqNuk Best Western Hotel; 303 US Hwy 93 E

In order to maximize participation and minimize travel time and costs, the Consolidated Plan meeting was held over the lunch hour at the free joint housing application workshop. Participating agencies for the housing workshop included the MDOC's CDBG and HOME programs, MBOH, and USDA Rural Development. Representatives from each agency presented overviews of their housing programs, requirements for application, and deadlines.

In addition to staff, 12 people attended the meeting in in Sidney, 32 in Red Lodge, 26 in Polson.

MEETING SUMMARIES

Copies of the meeting summaries from the public input meetings are on file with the Montana Department of Commerce, Housing Division; 301 South Park Avenue; P.O. Box 200545; Helena, Montana 59820.

Public Comments

A variety of comments were received at the meetings, as well some written comments. In general, the questions were program-specific. Some questions were able to be answered on the spot by representatives from the individual programs. Other questions requiring a more in-depth response were referred to the appropriate program staff for follow-up.

In addition, a short questionnaire was developed and passed out at the public review meetings. Questions were included on economic development, housing, and other community needs. The questionnaires provided the MDOC with some insight about what was going on those three distinct areas of the state and helped to spur additional conversation during the public review meetings.