



108 E. Green St.
Ithaca, NY 14850
(607) 274-6565

In-Person Public Meetings: The IURA can no longer conduct Public Meetings remotely. All Public Meetings must now be conducted in person, in compliance with NYS Open Meeting Law (OML). OML applies to all legislative bodies, quasi-judicial boards, advisory committees, and comparable organizations, whether or not voting occurs at any particular meeting. If you would like to participate in or observe a meeting of the IURA Board or its Committees, please plan to attend in person at City Hall (108 E. Green St.). Public Comments will continue to be accepted by mail or e-mail; and can be read into the record if requested.

AGENDA

IURA Neighborhood Investment Committee (NIC)

8:30 A.M., Friday, June 10, 2022

Third Floor Conference Room

City Hall, 108 E. Green St., Ithaca, NY 14850

I. Call to Order

II. Changes/Additions to Agenda

III. Public Comment

IV. Review of Minutes: May 2022

V. New Business

A. Action Item: Resolution — Minor Amendment to [2019-23 Consolidated Plan](#)

B. Discussion and Q & A: City of Ithaca Sidewalk Program

C. Discussion: Reprogramming CDBG-CV Funds

1. Method for Identifying Alternate Sponsors + Activities
2. Next Steps

VI. Other Business

- A. IURA Grant Summary
- B. Staff Report

VII. Motion to Adjourn

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Written public comments may be submitted until 4:00 p.m., the day before the meeting to: amendizabal@cityofithaca.org.



If you have a disability and require accommodation in order to fully participate, please contact the CITY OF ITHACA CLERK'S OFFICE at 274-6570 at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.



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DRAFT MINUTES
IURA Neighborhood Investment Committee (NIC)
8:30 am, Friday, May 13, 2022
Virtual Meeting

YouTube:

- Present:** Karl Graham (Chair); Fernando de Aragon (Vice-Chair); Paulette Manos; Steven Williams.
- Absent:** **None**
- Staff:** Anisa Mendizabal, Community Development Planner
- Guests:** None

I. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

II. Changes/Additions to Agenda

The Chair added an item regarding the composition of the Committee. See "Other Business, Item C."

III. Public Comment

None

IV. Review of Minutes - April 2022

The Chair moved, second by Williams. **Accepted 4-0.**

V. New Business

- A. **Discussion** - Homelessness & Housing Needs Assessment Report by Lisa Horn Consulting, commissioned by the City of Ithaca/IURA and the Tompkins County Continuum of Care

The Chair asked Mendizabal to lead the group through the report. The discussion focused on the "Opportunities" section, which is bulleted below. See *Summary of Questions from Committee* below. Graham noted that when the IURA looks at funding for 2023, this report IURA can think of priority IURA wants to give to groups that provide housing and homeless services. Outreach might be possible to those groups.

- **Creating a new low-threshold shelter, or shifting the current shelter to a low-**

barrier shelter, could provide a bridge for people living in the encampments to access permanent housing.

- Mendizabal - “Low-threshold” likely means taking a harm reduction approach to allow a broader range of people and behaviors to exist withing a space than the shelter that currently exists allows. This could be expanding the shelter that currently exists or being a different one.
- **In the 2016 Housing Strategy, the county identified a need for 100 single room only (SRO) beds. To date, only four SROs have been built. Investing in the creation of SROs, or other similar type of housing, could address the needs of a large number of the currently homeless individuals and households in the county.**
 - De Aragon wondered if there were any architectural design opportunities and barriers in the City, and what regulatory barriers there might be. (See *Summary of Questions*, below.)
 - Williams noted that the cost of sprinkler systems can be a barrier.
 - Graham noted that commercial developers have pushed back on minimum requirements for inclusion of affordable units. Housing for those with income below 30% AMI has been especially challenging.
- **There is potentially a large population of people who are precariously sheltered, and are not effectively being served by the current homeless and housing system. Outreach to young people and people of color, in particular, to identify those most at risk for homelessness, or in unsafe living conditions, could prevent longer-term, negative outcomes.**
 - Graham noted that an organization that has a significant impact on the youth population is Learning Web, and they have a new Executive Project, Olin Mack.
 - Mendizabal said Learning Web has been involved in the Youth Homeless Demonstration Project (YHDP). YHDP has an RFP, and perhaps the Learning Web will apply.
- **Some navigational support is provided to homeless households by volunteers, and other community service providers, but intentional, funded navigator positions coupled with coordinated outreach could better serve clients in need. In addition, providing intensive case management support and housing assistance to individuals in the emergency shelter may address the cyclical homelessness common to the populations.**
 - Mendizabal noted that IURA Board Members have commented on the high number of organizations presenting Action Plan proposals that say they provide intensive case-management.
 - Liddy Bargar has commented that a community-wide understanding, perhaps with training, of the components of intensive case management for consistency.
 - Graham said something that stood out in the report were the comments about the administrative hurdles to receive assistance. DSS was one of the agencies mentioned requiring a great number of application forms. The need for someone that can reduce or consolidate the administrative

process or someone who can anticipate the needs and take people across the silos to get ID, health insurance, financial support-- if that could be made easier. This needs to be addressed.

- DSS Representatives are involved in the Continuum of Care. Deena Bodner (Deputy) is on a CoC Committee. Other DSS staff attend, including the Commissioner, attend as available.
- Mendizabal reported that Natalya Cowilich, Community Outreach Worker and member of the Enhanced Street Outreach Team met with Uses and Spaces 24/7 Task Force made a similar comment about the need for navigation services. She observed that outreach workers of all kinds provide services for people who are homeless, but then there is a gap once those same people get into housing. The support that people have built up during the time they are homeless isn't available for them once they get housed.
- Graham noted that in conversation with an Arthaus resident, the resident described Arthaus as being a mess. The resident observed that many of the residents don't seem to have the skills necessary to be a good neighbor, nor how to maintain their status in housing. Once someone is housed, there are still some steps needed to be successful that seem to be missing.
- 40 ESSHI funded units in Arthaus have built in wrap around support (contract with TCA). If others need those services, who provides them? The ESSHI subsidy is deep for those 40 units (and for 5 years), but is not available to other residents.
 - There are a number of reasons that may have created some of the conditions we are seeing at Arthaus:
 - Pandemic - The federal government released a greater number and several different kinds of housing vouchers because of the public health emergency.
 - Chronically homeless people, normally on extremely long waiting lists, with the help of community outreach/case workers, were able to access vouchers.
 - Mendizabal noted that when Liddy Bargar spoke to the NI Committee last year, she stated that at that time (just prior to Arthaus' opening), most everyone in the County's Coordinated Entry System at that time who needed one had a "funding mechanism" for housing. But there was a bottleneck at the time for units. When Arthaus opened it was therefore able to accept the residents who had just received vouchers.
 - The pandemic-related housing vouchers, as important as they are, did not necessarily include supportive services. For someone coming from longterm homelessness, supportive services are important for adjusting and reaching success.
 - When Arthaus was planned, 40 units was seen as a lot of permanent supportive housing (PSH). The pandemic was not anticipated-- how could it be? Nor was the release of many different types of vouchers able to be anticipated. Arthaus was seen as an important resources for housing,

and it was just opening. However, for all of these reasons, there wasn't the preparation in place to provide the level of support needed for people coming out of homelessness into Arthaus.

- Question was asked at a previous NIC meeting, in the absence of other services, doesn't it fall to the property manager to ensure that all the residents are complying with rules, live in community, etc? Would seem to be so.
 - Manos: Going back to impediments, wouldn't that then [responsibility for providing adequate services for residents to be successful] be an impediment for creating this type of housing, then?
 - Graham: During the discussions about Vecino's Asteri project, the discussion of management came up quite a lot. Management is really important there.
 - Williams: An impediment is the value of real estate downtown. Housing is created on the fringes of town and is not connected to housing. People living in encampments are living closer to downtown. If you keep building for homeless people with no transportation connected, an endless cycle is created.
 - De Aragon: TCAT is exploring providing service where they currently aren't. The issues of service rural areas will continue to exist. However, they are looking at on-demand services to replace or supplement existing services and expand to greater area. There is some savings in fuel and driver hours, etc. This will probably occur at the fringe of the urban area, possibly focusing on West Hill. TCAT is applying for NYSERDA grant to pilot such services.
 - In terms of Cherry Street, the IURA did see a TCAT proposal for new stops, Manos noted.
 - A committee members wondered how someone who is homeless accesses payment for TCAT bus service. De Aragon: That should be the lowest impediment. Fairbox revenue at TCAT is marginal and TCAT has toyed with the idea of eliminating fares. They are implementing to reduce or free fares for youth. No reason why couldn't be made possible for others.
 - Manos: In terms of armed guard and "managing" Arthaus. we need to define what "managing" means and what it includes for people in that situation [of needing support]. Hiring armed guards is not necessarily that.
 - Mendizabal: Security guard training spans to gamut-- not necessarily well-trained-- there is not an industry standard, to Mendizabal's knowledge.
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- **Recently added PSH has offered housing, and hope, to the county's unhoused population. Additional PSH could be helpful, particularly with support focusing on mental health, trauma, and other physical health conditions. Increasing the**

capacity of local housing and service providers will be necessary to increase PSH.

- Mendizabal - seems there are two barriers to PSH
 - Capacity issue: Increasing the ability of housing and service providers to provide that support. Mendizabal doesn't know if Horns means funds to hire and/or train people.
 - Cost: The service aspect of PSH is ongoing, and therefore expensive to maintain and to obtain ongoing funding for, unlike the building of housing, which is very expensive, but concrete and finite.
- Williams noted another barrier: People being displaced while housing is being built, such as at Northside. Cited development of Maplewood (in the Town). Students were put into hotel rooms, which displaced people who might have been housed there as SROs. There doesn't seem to be a mechanism for preventing this.
 - Mendizabal: For projects involving HUD funding, HUD requires that when relocation is necessary due to substantial rehabilitation or reconstruction. The housing provider must facilitate temporary relocation and allow income-qualified permanent residents back when the project completes. IHA left some units vacant while preparing for the project.
- **The creation of additional, affordable housing units is vital to disrupt the homelessness cycle.**
 - Mendizabal commented that in the community, sometimes similar concerns come up: Affordable housing "all in one place" (i.e. downtown), density concerns-- this recent change brings up lots of feelings for people, especially long term residents; questions about it/why affordable housing isn't happening outside the City.
 - Street Outreach workers have identified a small number of families who have lived in the jungle multi-generationally.

Summary of Questions and Select Comments on the Homelessness & Housing Needs Assessment by Lisa Horn Consulting

1. Are there regulatory impediments to the construction of microunits?

Answer/Response:

- a. NYS Homes and Community Renewal, which oversees Low-Income Tax Credit (LIHTC) projects requires a minimum of 400 square feet per unit.
 - i. LIHTC investors are also concerned to retain demand/occupancy during the first 15 years of occupancy. They may hesitate to undersize units and be at a competitive disadvantage with other affordable housing.
- b. Local code requires approximately a minimum of 150 square feet of "occupiable space" per unit. The code does not allow bathrooms and kitchens as occupiable space. As a result, there is some vagueness or question about the actual minimum square footage. One local architect has calculated that the unit would need to be about 350 square feet to comply.
- c. City zoning code limits density in R-1, R-2, and R-3 districts based on

number of units/sq. ft. of land. If the parcel in these zoning districts is small, a developer may elect to build fewer multi-bed units than more efficiencies to maximize revenues.

2. How much did Lisa Horn speak to youth-serving orgs (LW, The Village, Family and Childrens) and/or what are those organizations' responses/thoughts since the report discusses the need to outreach to youth.

Answer/Response:

Whether or not these specific agencies were consulted, Mendizabal's conversation with one of these organizations lends credence to Horn's findings. This service provider agreed that youth do not know about services that may be available to them. They may not consider themselves homeless at all, especially if they are couch surfing. Additionally, youth may not want to share what is going on in their lives with others, and so others who could help them could be unaware of their needs. Youth may not even know about 211, and if they do know, may not identify themselves as "homeless" if they call. It may be possible at times for 211 operators to make referrals to appropriate youth-serving organizations based on context clues, however, that cannot be guaranteed.

3. Remaining issue: Supportive housing with lower barriers (rules) -- for people not abstaining from substance use, for those who have pets, etc.-- does not exist in Ithaca. There is no organization operating with a Housing First model.
4. Need for housing/services for shocking number of young people.
5. Questions about youth emancipation and when/how it can occur and, if it can occur, can emancipated youth under 18 sign leases?

Answer/Response:

1. A youth may be emancipated at age 16 or older, but not younger.
Additional information: <https://www.lawny.org/node/9/emancipation-new-york>
2. The minimum age for signing a contract, including a lease, in NYS is age 18.

6. How many people have come from other areas? How long have they stayed?

Answer/Response:

Mendizabal reviewed informal data collected by the Community Outreach Worker and did not see this data captured. Twelve individuals were counted as multi-year residents of the encampments (a question that has arisen on other occasions).

VI. Other Business

A. IURA Grant Summary

Manos asked about expenditures for CDBG-CV funding. Moving slowly. Salvation Army's project for Homeowner Assistance is ending; that could be reprogrammed.

REACH, Salvation Army, OAR, and Black Hands Universal need to submit reports.

B. Staff Report

The comment period for the 2023 Draft Action Plan is open. In addition to the notification by legal ad, Mendizabal has provided reminders via various channels. She has received no comments to date. It is not unheard of to receive no/few comments for the Draft Action Plan, especially if none of the projects are considered controversial. Regardless, she will continue to reach out to elicit comments.

The City Attorney is clarifying Open Meeting provisions regarding remote meetings. It is probable the June 2022 NI Committee meeting will be in-person.

C. Committee Resignation (added)

The Chair acknowledged Mano's resignation and thanked her for her work and dedication. Manos said she has had a great time serving on the Committee and thinks it does important work. The Chair discussed various ways to approach outreach for applicants to fill the vacancy and among them, encouraged Members to let their networks know.

As her last action as Committee Member, Manos motioned for adjournment.

Manos will be missed.

VII. Motion to Adjourn

Motion by Manos; second by de Aragon. **4-0**. Adjourned at 10:03 a.m.

**Proposed Resolution
Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency (IURA)
Neighborhood Investment Committee
June 10, 2022**

Minor Amendment to 2019-2023 Consolidated Plan: Food Banks

WHEREAS, 10.5% of American households have experienced food insecurity since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to such national sources as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and United States Census Bureau, and

WHEREAS, rates of food insecurity are substantially higher than the national average for single-parent households and for Black and Hispanic households, and

WHEREAS, 35% of people living below the Federal Poverty Level are food insecure, and

WHEREAS, some of the local food resources established early in the pandemic have now diminished or been discontinued, and

WHEREAS, Economic Impact Payments from the Federal government (“stimulus checks”) available earlier in the pandemic have been discontinued, and

WHEREAS, according to U.S. Department of Labor, the national annual inflation rate was 7.0% in 2021 and 8.3% in 2022, now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the City of Ithaca’s 2019-2023 Consolidated Plan hereby be amended to add “Food Banks” to the Priority Needs list, as a high priority.

IURA Grants Summary

April 2022

#	ON SCHEDULE	HUD ENTITLEMENT ACTIVITIES	SPONSOR	BUDGET	TOTAL BUDGET	EXPENDED	Entitlement Funds UNEXPENDED	TOTAL UNEXPENDED	% SPENT
		Unexpended HOME Program Income						0.00	
		HOME Program Income Unassigned						0.00	
		Total Unexpended HUD Funds						1,763,056.39	
		Unexpended CDBG-CV Funds						402,712.80	
		Unexpended CDBG-CV Program Income						29,200.00	
		Total Unexpended COVID-19 Funds						431,912.80	
		Total Unexpended HUD Funds						2,165,769.19	

1.5 CDBG Spend Down Ratio Analysis (must be less than 1.5 by June 1st of each year):

CDBG Spend Down Ratio = total unexpended CDBG funds/most recent annual CDBG award

Most Recent Annual CDBG Award:	690,793
1.5 x Most Recent CDBG Award:	1,036,190
Current Unexpended CDBG Funds:	1,192,096.61
Current CDBG Spend Down Ratio:	1.7257
Compliance With 1.5 CDBG Spend Down Ratio:	No
Amount Required to be Expended by 6/1 to Meet CDBG Spend Down Ratio:	155,907.11