

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM FY 2004

### ANNUAL ACTION PLAN, PROGRAM YEAR 30 – 2004

The City of Long Branch has prepared the Program Year 2004 Action Plan in accordance with HUD regulations promulgated on January 5, 1994, November 9, 1995 and December 12, 1997. The Action Plan identifies those projects that address the housing and non-housing community development needs of extremely low-income, low-income and moderate-income persons and that are funded by HUD programs as well as other resources administered by the Office of Community and Economic Development. The projects proposed in the FY 2004 Action Plan are intended to implement the objectives of the Strategic Plan section of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan. The objectives of the Consolidated Plan are re-stated below:

- a. Preserve and increase the supply of affordable rental housing for extremely low and low-income persons (HOME funds from the County are a possibility);
- b. Coordinate planning efforts with the Long Branch Housing Authority to expand rental assistance to extremely low-income families;
- c. Support the Long Branch Housing Authority's strategies for addressing housing needs of extremely low-income families;
- d. Provide assistance to extremely low-income and low-income homeowners to rehabilitate their properties, including correction of code violations and energy efficiency measures;
- e. Preserve the supply of existing affordable owner-occupied housing through the residential rehabilitation program;
- f. Provide financial support to non-profit agencies which deliver services to special needs subpopulations and to extremely low and low-income individuals

- g. Stabilize low-income neighborhoods with infrastructure improvements financed, in whole or in part, with CDBG funds;
- h. Upgrade the condition of existing housing stock and stabilize low-income neighborhoods through stringent code enforcement, demolition and acquisition efforts;
- i. Provide economic opportunities for extremely low and low-income persons through job training programs, business retention efforts and redevelopment activities which create jobs;
- j. Provide opportunities for low-income and moderate-income renters to become homeowners.

In addition to these objectives, the 2004 Annual Work Program will improve public facilities in low-income areas, improve distressed business corridors and develop recreational parks that serve the low-income and moderate-income households.

## FORM APPLICATION

Standard Form 424 is included at the beginning of this Annual Plan submission. Tables and maps generated from the Consolidated Plan Community 2020 software are attached at the end of this document.

## RESOURCES

### 1. Federal Resources

The federal resources expected to be available during the 2003 Action Plan (FY 2004) are as follows:

- a. Community Development Block Grant Funds (\$623,000);
- b. 567 Section 8 Vouchers (567 current with 547 committed and 20 available for 2004) issued through the LBHA (in excess of \$4,000,000);
- c. 140 Section 8 Vouchers issued through the NJDCA and 201 through Monmouth County;

- d. Workforce Investment Board (WIB I & WIB II) \$150,000;
- e. Hope VI Application filed for 2004 (\$500,000 tentative).

## 2. Other Resources

Other resources expected to be available during the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the 2001 Consolidated Plan are as follows:

- a. Regional Contribution Agreements \$80,000 (an additional 1.5 million is tentative);
- b. HOME funds, Monmouth County Consortium \$200,000 (tentative).

## ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN

During the 2004 Action Plan period, the City will directly implement or support the activities described elsewhere in this report. The anticipated number of beneficiaries to be assisted is noted on the project forms generated by the Community 2020 software. The time-frame for each activity is January 1, 2004 – December 31, 2004.

The proposed allocations are in response to proposals submitted during the Annual Plan Development process. The Office of Community and Economic Development staff reviews the proposals for consistency with local community development objectives. Requests are recommended by the CDBG Advisory Committee and then reviewed and authorized by the Mayor and the City Council.

## GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Certain proposed activities will be directed toward specific target areas, while other activities will be implemented on a more comprehensive basis to serve low and moderate-income block groups. Maps illustrating specific program locations are included in this document. The geographic distribution of FY CDBG 2004 is noted on the project forms generated from Community 2020 software.

## HOMELESS AND OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS ACTIVITIES

In order to address the needs of Homeless and Other Special Needs populations, the City directly supports programs to preserve affordable housing and minimize the risk of homelessness and provides

financial support to non-profit agencies which deliver services to special needs subpopulations. The City refers homeless individuals to the Monmouth County Continuum of Care that provides supportive and transitional housing programs, shelters, housing for persons with disabilities and single room occupancy funding for individuals. The City of Long Branch is able to handle extreme emergency situations from a period of 2 weeks to 60 days.

## OTHER ACTIONS

The Office of Community and Economic Development has, throughout the past year, made an extra effort to meet with different groups throughout Long Branch. Monthly meetings were initially held at public locations and then meetings were arranged once a month to include all groups. Meetings were held with local housing authority officials to discuss concerns such as job training, employment opportunities, housing rehabilitation projects, public housing concerns, single and multi-family housing needs, grants for first-time homebuyers, parks development projects, lead-base paint hazards, testing of lead-base paint chips in Section Eight housing and low and moderate-income housing, bilingual proposals concerning economic development activities, public education, housing improvements, fair housing and other important community topics. Community participation greatly impacted the writing and production of the 5-Year Consolidated Plan and the 2004 CDBG Annual Work Program.

## HOUSING IMPROVEMENTS

The OCED continues to be the lead agency in partnering with non-profits, for-profits and other agencies to provide new affordable housing. The OCED also continues to offer several housing rehabilitation programs focusing on the abatement of existing code violations particularly to major systems in homes. Property improvement strategies were implemented to address residents' complaints relative to property maintenance and code violations in their community. Resident groups met to discuss possible resources and funding to address concerns and other problems. Where once vacant and unkempt lots existed, new homes now rest on these parcels. New affordable housing projects will continue to be built and other housing strategies will be deployed to meet the demand for affordable home ownership as well as affordable rental units. In the 2003 Program

Year 12 additional new, affordable units were built and the Proctor Estates (48 additional units) broke ground on July 16, 2003.

## LEAD BASE PAINT HAZARDS

In all of the OCED housing rehabilitation programs a vital component of the application process is the dissemination of pertinent literature admonishing and advising all applicants of the potential hazards of lead-base paint. Brochures are sent to every applicant discussing lead-base paint as well as possible funding sources for the reduction of lead-base paint in the home. The OCED has partnered with the City's Health Department and Public Housing Authority to dovetail efforts with testing lead in private Section Eight housing, to screen children and to provide information to parents and property owners about safeguarding their families and property from the hazards of lead-base paint. Any report of an elevated blood level in any child warrants an immediate response and investigation from the City's Health Department and the necessary steps to protect the family from further exposure are taken by the OCED including relocation, if necessary. The OCED and Health Department are strategizing and implementing other ways in an effort to be proactive regarding the publication of information relative to lead-base paint hazards.

## REDUCING POVERTY

The 2004 Annual Work Program will continue to support job training and self-sufficiency programs in collaboration with the Long Branch Housing Authority and the LBHA Department of Community Development. Eliminating poverty starts with the proper training of youth and the proper preparation of the young to do well in school and other training facilities. The OCED will support the improvements to a community/youth activity center in partnership with local fire departments. Activities such as after-school, tutoring and mentoring will be implemented in an existing community facility to assist in this endeavor. The OCED will also support training for adults and work with individuals in a local Job Bank Association (one that provides temporary work and on-the-job training for unemployed and the underemployed resident). Purpose At Heart, another non-profit that trains young people, will also be used in 2004.

The OCED will support economic development activity such as making improvements in all distressed commercial zones to improve

business and create jobs to decrease unemployment and help to raise median household income by providing a list of available jobs to those in need. The OCED will join with the local housing authority to monitor the placement of people in working environments and to offer assistance to abate any social problem such as transportation, childcare, health care or any other impediment that could prevent an individual from getting to work.

#### ENHANCING INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES AND COORDINATION BETWEEN HOUSING AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

The OCED has collaborated with local educational and health institutions to improve the delivery of services for the benefit of low to moderate groups. Monmouth University has implemented a volunteer program that gives young students an opportunity to work in the Long Branch community to assist with clean-up projects, childcare projects, recreational programs and many more. The OCED meets regularly with Brookdale Community College as the OCED Director serves on the Advisory Board to discuss educational needs and social needs that are provided for the residents of the Long Branch community. The Director serves on boards with the Chamber of Commerce, Community Bank, Monmouth-Ocean Development Council, Long Branch Housing Authority Advisory Board, National Association of Housing Rehabilitation Officials, Downtown New Jersey, Long Branch Tomorrow and boards of other agencies to help define and resolve problems and to address the needs of the local community. Participation in these agencies has facilitated the urgent need for timely delivery of services and benefits to low and moderate individuals, groups and community in Long Branch.

Housing needs will be better addressed in 2004 as new and older units will be added to the list of available units, healthcare will be provided as the OCED will support upgrades to a healthcare facility in the City, and with the support of the Oceanfront Redevelopment Project, hundreds of jobs will be created and an opportunity for gainful employment for many of the unemployed will be made possible. Other concerns such as code enforcement, community policing, fire prevention, recreation and business development will be addressed in the Annual Work Program for 2004.

## PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

### Funds Expected To Be Available

The City anticipates receiving \$623,000 in CDBG funds during the Action Plan period. The amount of program income will be \$12,000 or more from repayments of property liens from past demolition projects. The amount of funding anticipated by the Long Branch Housing Authority is stated in the Resources Section above.

### Monitoring

The City has a system of internal financial controls for the administration of the CDBG program. Annual audits are performed in compliance with the Federal Single Audit Act and with State budgetary law.

The OCED regularly monitors the quality and quantity of services delivered by subrecipients. The OCED has established subrecipient reporting formats to ensure accountability and compliance. OCED is also responsible for monitoring the timeliness of funded projects and expenditures.

Federal regulations stipulate that CDBG Entitlement grantees must monitor subrecipients and relevant allocations in order to ensure federal compliance with the expenditure of program funds. National objectives must be met and equal and fair opportunities must be affirmatively marketed and stated in order for any and all contractors to receive federal project awards.

The Office of Community and Economic Development closely monitors all subrecipients and/or agencies receiving assistance relative to all projects. The OCED staff regularly visits sites and projects that are ongoing. Any and all reports that are done during a visit are either completed or are communicated with the subrecipient and written reports are made available as well. Ways to improve the delivery of services and benefits are discussed periodically and specifically in citizens' participation forums.

The OCED will be responsible for enforcing and monitoring procedures relevant to the expenditure of federal funds for low and moderate-income individuals and groups to ensure that:

- Needed housing assistance and supportive services are available;
- The use of all funds is consistent with the priority needs table printed in the Consolidated Plan;
- Recipients are in compliance with applicable regulations regarding the disbursement of federal funds;
- Record keeping and financial management systems are provided to maintain documentation on program compliance and disbursement of federal funds in accordance with applicable laws;
- The information submitted to HUD is correct and complete.

Key components of the monitoring procedure should include the following or an approved equivalent:

#### Grant Application/Proposal

Recipients should be required to submit a project schedule and budget. The Grant Agreement is the contract specifying the activities to be completed and the conditions that must be met in order to carry out the activities. The Agreement should also specify the project liaison. Communication and consultation between the OCED staff and the liaison should occur on a regular basis.

#### Record Keeping

OCED staff should monitor to ensure that proper accounts, fiscal records, supporting documentation, bank statements and other pertinent data are established, maintained and made available to the public by the receiving agency.

#### On-Site Visitations

Regular on-site visits are conducted. Additional visits may include technical assistance, project pre-construction conferences, interim monitoring and final monitoring visits. In addition, a review of financial records, cash disbursements and an evaluation of program objectives are done. Such visits should be scheduled in writing and followed up with a letter to the agency. The letter should elaborate on

the results of the visit and specify concerns or recommendations regarding the operation and/or administration of the project or program.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM FY 2004 PROGRAM NARRATIVES

### A. Housing

#### Special Needs

Homelessness and family displacement numbers are on the rise. The shortage of affordable housing, affordable rental units and temporary housing was made more evident as more and more people are calling on the local Office of Community and Economic Development for housing assistance. The Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED) offers assistance for Special Needs cases. Under normal circumstances local clients are referred to the County of Monmouth where a program (Continuum of Care) is available. However, in the event there is an emergent need, the OCED is prepared to offer assistance. Emergency-temporary housing is provided as well as relocations when deemed necessary by the department of Health, Police or Code Enforcement. Demand has increased and expectations are that allocated funds will be used to help those in need.

#### Weatherization / Special Housing Assistance

In the event a low to moderate-income household experiences a hardship or if an event occurs that creates a hardship for such a family in need, and no other assistance exists, the OCED offers aid to help restore normalcy. Should a major system such as roof damage, trouble with the heating system or furnace during extreme weather conditions or any other uncontrollable act occur, the OCED can provide help to the household and individuals who require assistance.

#### Rehabilitation Administration

The OCED is the lead agency in the City to offer housing rehabilitation funds to abate code violations in very low to moder-

ate-income households. Regional Contribution Agreement (RCA) funds, RCA repayment funds and some local funds are used for this purpose. OCED staff administers all housing restoration programs and CDBG funds are requested to help with the administration of the OCED housing programs. New Regional Contribution Agreements are in the works and the City of Long Branch will continue to administer its own with funds that are repaid to the OCED when an assisted family chooses to sell the property or refinance the same.

### Code Enforcement

The City of Long Branch places high priority on Code Enforcement and property improvement. The OCED supports this effort as strategies to eradicate blight and sub-standard housing units have been implemented by the Building, Code Enforcement and Community Development departments. Whenever an individual or family moves out of an apartment unit, the landlord is mandated to put the City on notice so that an inspection can be made of the unit. In addition; a collaborative endeavor has been put in operation to monitor the issuance of Certificates of Occupancy in low and moderate-income zones. Units must be thoroughly inspected and approved before Certificates are issued. The OCED supports the administration of Code Enforcement as these initiatives have proven to work well in reducing blight and poverty conditions as well as improving underutilized business zones. In the past Program Year, over 1200 inspections were done in low to moderate areas that prompted the issuance of over 1200 Certificates of Occupancy.

### First-Time Homebuyer Program

The First-Time Homebuyer Project has been taken over by the County of Monmouth as a result of the City of Long Branch joining the Monmouth County Consortium (along with Asbury Park and Middletown). The program offers up to \$10,000 to defray closing costs or for down payment assistance toward the purchase of a home. The OCED maintains a small allocation to assist first-time buyers when smaller amounts are needed to complete purchase transactions. Grants ranging

from \$1,500 to \$3,000 are available to offset down payment and closing costs.

### Demolitions

Improving neighborhoods and communities is a vital part of community growth and stability. Abandoned and dangerous buildings are razed and liens are attached to any property that is cleared with the use of federal funds. Eventually the City will foreclose on such properties and the titles will be taken. City-owned lots are used to produce new affordable housing units. To date, some thirty-eight new units have been built and more construction of affordable units is planned as forty-eight market-rate assisted units are under construction. The City plans to build an additional 400 units of affordable homes, rental and dormitory-type units in the Broadway Redevelopment Zone area.

## B. Public Services

### Crime Prevention

Community Policing has been extremely effective and the results of supporting this project has led to reduced crime in the City. In recent years the crime rate has been reduced significantly in all parts of the City and more so in low-income zones. This is largely due to community policing strategies supported by the Office of Community and Economic Development. A new task force has been deployed in public housing areas to combat illicit drug activity and trespassers. There are increased vehicle patrol units, bicycle patrols, foot patrols and a substation now located in the public housing complex at Grant Court. This increased and sensitized police presence had not only reduced crime but has improved public relations between the police and the tenants who reside in the units. Criminal arrests are up and criminal infractions are reduced. The OCED will continue to support Crime Prevention and community policing objectives.

### Job Training

During the 2003 Program Year the local housing authority adjusted to the changes that occurred administratively in 2002. A

new program was instituted and successfully completed. The Certified Home Health Aid Training was implemented and this endeavor provided training for public housing tenants and others. Approximately 38 students completed the course and additional sessions are planned for 2004.

As the housing authority made adjustments to become familiar with local and federal procedures, the OCED positioned itself to present an improved Training Program and Self-Sufficiency project (ACCEPT, Adult Child Care Education and Program Training) to the housing authority. It is expected that a new agreement will be executed and put into effect to educate some forty to fifty new single parents and young people. Once the training is completed, the graduates are placed in gainful employment situations. This effort previously boasted a success ratio of close to 90%, that is, nine out of 10 people completing the course, found or was placed in a new career-enhancing situation.

#### Community Assistance/Aid to Non-Profits

Various non-profit groups and individuals request assistance for worthy causes during the program year. The OCED provides aid to non-profits for cultural, educational, recreational, social, economic and other causes. There is increased demand for financial assistance from many groups for the 2004 Fiscal Year. Most of the requests are too overwhelming for funding and many have come from faith-based groups. The OCED will use a CDBG Advisory Committee to review proposals and make recommendations to the Director of the OCED and to the Mayor and City Council as to what groups should be funded and which will ones will offer the greatest benefits to low and moderate individuals and groups. The recommendations will also be based on the availability of funds as determined by the OCED and the amount of the Federal annual allocation.

Groups that were helped in 2003 include the Monmouth County Drug Court, Zeybrah Cultural Ensemble, Martin Luther King Guild, Greater Long Branch NAACP, African American Cultural Group, Dolphin Lifesaving Inc., All Nations Street Festival and other groups.

## Recreation

The Department of Recreation for the City of Long Branch does an adequate job in rendering programs for youth groups, teenagers and seniors. The assistance given by the OCED specifically targets very low, low and moderate-income individuals who are often missed by the City-supported programs such as Pop Warner Football, soccer and wrestling. The OCED supplements the City program making it possible for educational/recreational excursions, sporting events, equipment and other needs not covered. The OCED also supports educational and cultural tours administered by the Department of Recreation and Human Services. Such activities target low to moderate-income youths and many of the young residents of the local housing authority.

### C. Public Facilities

#### Conrail Property Improvement

The Conrail site is a low to moderate-income zone that is used for open space, community gardens, flower gardens, a picnic area and other activities. Each year improvements are made to upgrade this area. The 2004 Annual Plan proposes to add additional walkways, benches improved flower sites, fencing and other upgrades until the area becomes fully accessible and safe for use by those in the area.

#### Community Gardens Site Improvement Project

Community garden sites are upgraded each year. Eventually there will be walkways, gardens, tables and benches, water system and natural barriers installed to make the gardens state-of-the-art. The 2004 Work Plan will continue to upgrade garden sites and add amenities as the allocated funding permits.

There are plans to build greenhouses on the site to accommodate students and field trips in the future. A new Anastasia School is under construction directly across the street and is expected to open in fall of 2004. The Seventh Avenue site will be an excellent opportunity for the OCED to coordinate horticulture sessions with the new elementary school.

The Liberty Street site may eventually be used for a new affordable housing project, however there are many sites along the Conrail right-of way that can be used for plantings. The new greenhouses are planned for construction in late summer of 2004 or 2005.

#### Community Health Facility

The past program year it was hoped that a community health facility would be supported by the OCED. Plans to go forward with this project were put on hold, however, as other leveraged funds were slow to be secured by the local health maintenance organization (Our House Adult Health Care, North Bath Avenue). The 2004 Work Program will include an allocation for this project, as it appears that the organization will be ready to go forward with the proposed construction. Since the facility already exists the needed improvements to the building have been considered for funding and the same will be applied once proof that the remaining funds have been obtained by Our House Health Organization.

2003 allocation will be redirected and used to support a public recreation facility. Reprogrammed funds, \$10,000 in this case, will be used for the development of Long Branch Recreation Center on Long Branch Avenue. The City's Recreation Program will relocate to this new site in December 2003.

#### Community Facility Improvements

Public and community properties that serve low to moderate-income families are systematically upgraded to efficiently handle demands and use. The public library is being rehabilitated and estimates came in at 1.5 million dollars. The Union Avenue Firehouse Project was suspended due to high bids received and the money was re-directed to assist the public library. The library will receive \$200,000 of bonded funds for the project. Other facilities that are slated for upgrades include the Senior Center at Second Avenue, Bucky James Community Center, Union Avenue Firehouse, Woodrow Wilson Community Club (Housing Authority), Ellis Avenue Club at Grant Housing Authority, Branchport Avenue Firehouse, Long Branch Avenue Recreation Facility, CD storage facility and other public buildings. The OCED will offer assistance on a first-come, first-

served basis to improve heating, air conditioning, monitoring systems, communication systems and other major systems in the facilities. The agency that best serves low to moderate-income individuals and groups will receive priority consideration.

#### Parks Improvement and Development

The OCED has become the responsible entity for aggressively initiating improvement and development to City-owned parks and recreation sites that serve low to moderate-income households. The OCED applied for and received supplementary funding from the NJ State Green Acres Program to improve the oceanfront, Pleasure Bay Park at Atlantic Avenue, Branchport Park, Van Court Park, Jackson Woods, Jerry Morgan Park, Bucky James Park and Manahasset Creek Park. Parks development projects will see some six million dollars of various funding go into these projects within the next two to three years. New playground apparatuses; new athletic fields; additional uses such as benches and tables and new landscaping will be done. The OCED will set aside an allocation in the 2004 Annual Work Program to help support the development of parks and open space recreation areas that serves low to moderate-income individuals and groups.

To date, Atlantic Avenue, Van Court Avenue and Jerry Morgan Park all saw improvements. Branchport Avenue, the Oceanfront Boardwalk, Bucky James Park, Cherry Street Park and the beachfront bathing areas are scheduled for improvements.

Recreation is a vital part of any community and this activity deserves priority consideration as it promotes the welfare, growth and overall health of youth, in particular as well as people of all ages.

#### Fire Prevention/Union Avenue Fire Station

The Union Avenue Station serves residents in a low to moderate-income area and will offer a meeting/utility room for use by the neighborhood. Additional bays will be added to consolidate City-owned equipment and bathrooms will be made ADA compliant.

Unfortunately, this project has been suspended indefinitely due to a change in priorities by the administration and high bids received on the project. This project was bid two times in 2002 and quotes came back too high to go forward. The project was modified in the winter of 2003, but bids came back in excess of the budget. It is unlikely that this proposal will go forward for the 2004 Work Program.

#### Community Improvement Fund/Debt Service

The OCED supports the debt service related to the improvements to be made at the Long Branch Public Library and Broadway corridor for new sidewalks and curb replacement. These improvements are upgrades to an existing facility that will be beneficial to library staff as well as local students and residents. The Library is located on Broadway, a HUD Zone, and use of the facility by much of the low-mod community is expected to increase with the many necessary improvements. A new elevator will help access, new heating and air climate unit, additional classroom/ study room space, weatherization upgrades and new equipment.

The debt service will be for five years as this reflects the terms of the capital bonds used to pay for the improvements. This is an approved project and the City is currently working with a contractor to finalize the agreement. Approximately \$46,000 for the next five years will be allocated toward repaying this debt. This is, however, a minor responsibility, considering the overall positive impact this project will have on the residents and community.

#### D. Economic Development

##### Oceanfront and Broadway Redevelopment Projects

The OCED continues to be the lead agency in supporting redevelopment projects in underutilized zones. Currently two sectors, Beachfront North and Pier Village are under developers' agreements and Pier Village started construction in the spring of 2002. Beachfront North broke ground in the spring of 2003. In addition, the Broadway business corridor recently was declared an area in need of redevelopment as the Mayor and City Council officially adopted the Broadway Redevelopment Plan.

This designation will give the City the tools it needs to go forward with development and new construction projects specifically for this historically underutilized business zone.

CDBG funds are used to defray fees associated with developer selection, project selection and project approval as pro forma plans are scrutinized and modified for conformity to CAFRA (Coastal Area Facility Review Act) and local guidelines.

The OCED will support these special redevelopment projects as they will offer sustainable development, create new jobs and remove blight in a major business community and contiguous low to moderate-income residential zones.

Beachfront South will be under a developer's Agreement by the end of 2003 and Broadway Gateway Sector is close to selecting a project.

Again, all of this activity translates into new housing, new business, new jobs and greater productivity for the City of Long Branch.

#### Special Economic Development Project (Technical Assistance)

##### OCED Business Development and Business Retention Program

The Office of Community and Economic Development is implementing a more focused strategy in an effort to promote economic growth and business development particularly in low to moderate-income business zones. This program will address needs associated with business development as well as business retention in low to moderate-income commercial zones, historically under-performing zones, historically underutilized zones, HUD zones and Urban Enterprise Zones. The OCED continues to monitor business development and the sustainability of such development, and this has been a study since 1996. Results of this activity reveal that while certain "destination businesses" have managed to survive, only a few have realized measurable growth. Others have floundered and many have failed. This new focus on commercial development will offer increased technical assistance to any business in need and will showcase some of the tools available to small

and struggling businesses to help them reap economic development, job creation, job retention, quantifiable growth, greater revenues and increased productivity. The overall benefits will specifically assist the small and medium-sized merchant and create more permanent shopping venues for customers, residents and people who shop in Long Branch.

### Goals

- 1) To assist businesses to ensure the provision and production of sustainable services and or products;
- 2) To offer residents and other shoppers, by way of technical assistance to business people, choices of services and products that are necessary for wholesome lifestyles;
- 3) To foster community revitalization through commercial productivity;
- 4) To improve the public perception that, in fact, the City of Long Branch is a great place to live and a great place to shop.

### Objectives

- 1) To create a database of all businesses located in distressed commercial zones and other business zones to monitor the number of low to moderate-income employees, the number jobs created, number of jobs retained (semi-annually), racial statistics and other demographic statistics;
- 2) To analyze business and consumer trends and to relate this information to local merchants as it may be helpful for borrowing money, inventory or other investments;
- 3) To improve the business operations of floundering establishments, specifically those in HUB, HUD or other distressed commercial zones, by offering technical assistance or other vital information;
- 4) To improve the surrounding business areas in order to attract new business and to improve existing businesses;

- 5) To increase the number of businesses participating in business improvement programs funded by the City of Long Branch, State of NJ (UEZ) or Federal Government (CDBG);
- 6) To decrease the number of vacant commercial space and properties on Broadway and other distressed commercial zones;
- 7) To provide technical or financial assistance where needed to eligible businesses to promote trade and business;
- 8) To promote events, seminars, lectures, job fairs, flea markets, concerts, training sessions, business group meetings, special sales, festivals and other activities in distressed commercial zones to assist merchants and to attract customers;
- 9) To provide information and other technical assistance to merchants to improve commerce and economic development activity;
- 10) To attend professional business training classes, sessions and seminars provided by certified institutions to aid City staff in providing relevant data and other pertinent information to merchants and business groups in an effort to improve business.

### Strategy

- 1) The OCED staff will compile information on all affected businesses located in distressed commercial zones. This data will constantly be upgraded. These files will have sundry statistical information regarding the number of workers at a certain business, racial make-up, gender, income strata, residential status and other relevant data;
- 2) The OCED staff will monitor the operations of specific businesses and will record any deficiencies and recommend ways to modify economic results;

- 3) The OCED staff will visit businesses periodically and provide technical assistance on inventory, service or product presentation. Customer service policies will also be evaluated as well as store appearance, exterior conditions and other operational matters that could impact productivity;
- 4) Financial assistance and the availability of any and all funding regarding loans, SBA information, federal grants, state grants, local funding and any other opportunity to enhance business productivity will be made known to merchants and the business community. Assistance will be provided by the OCED staff with the preparation and submission of funding applications;
- 5) The OCED staff will work in close relationship with all business improvement programs including the UEZ Program to efficiently deliver benefits and services to the business community;
- 6) The OCED staff will arrange and schedule business seminars, training programs, lectures, business events and introduce professional resource people to address merchants and to divulge helpful tips on entrepreneurship;
- 7) The OCED staff will continue to work with Brookdale Community College, Monmouth College, State of NJ EDA, HUD, County of Monmouth and other agencies and institutions to bring about job fairs, banking seminars, business training programs and other services that are geared to help persons in business;
- 8) The OCED staff will generate a report every six months that will effectively evaluate local business trends and operations in distressed commercial zones;
- 9) The OCED staff will utilize all forms of available media (local newspapers, cable network, City web-site, flyers periodicals, mailings, verbal announcements, etc.) to advertise the availability of assistance for businesses in need and to report to the public the results of these efforts;

- 10) The OCED will apprise the Mayor, City Council and general public the effectiveness of the Business Development and Business Retention Program and Service and communicate necessary improvements required to make this effort a positive impact with distressed commercial nodes.

This service and more focused initiative have been implemented and will be the responsibility of the CDBG Director and Assistant Director of Industrial Development. The program will be thoroughly evaluated in December and June of each operating fiscal year.

The past year was a good year and the following information is directly the result of the Special Economic Development Project. Over the course of Program Year 29 (the current year), the OCED staff conducted more than 50 meetings with developers, builders and business owners. More than two dozen site inspections were conducted, and several new businesses relocated to Long Branch as a result of the staff's efforts. The staff also provided companies with information on obtaining SBA loans, provided networking opportunities with various financial institutions, and provided information on various benefits of relocating a business to Long Branch, including participation in the New Jersey Urban Enterprise Zone Program and in the Federal HUB Zone Program.

The OCED applied a concerted effort to visit businesses located and operating in historically underutilized and underperforming zones.

Staff members are charged with continuous visits to businesses in Long Branch, and obtaining information regarding business development, employee information, income and revenue information and other data. It was discovered that 52 full-time and 36 part-time jobs were created. All 36 part-time jobs created were filled by low/mod income persons.

Additional detailed data to support the Special Economic Development Project is available in the OCED.

## E. Infrastructure Upgrades

### Sidewalk Repair and Parking Lots Improvements

Commercial sidewalks in many of the distressed zones have been addressed in previous years and this effort will continue in the 2004 Annual Work Plan. . City-owned parking lots that provide locations for customers to park while they shop were repaired in the previous year and other distressed areas will be targeted. Project Facelift is a project started by the OCED that addresses restoration of sidewalks and parking facilities. The OCED enters its eleventh year of Project Facelift. Areas in lower Broadway, upper Broadway, West End and Mid-town, all HUD zones, will be improved with resurfacing, re-stripping, new lighting, pavers, medians, curbing, landscaping and other amenities. Other funds outside the CDBG, such as Urban Enterprise Zone Funds, NJ State Department of Transportation funds and other resources will be leveraged to complete these objectives.

## F. Senior Programs

### Senior Center Upgrades and Senior Activities

A key component to providing comprehensive assistance to low and moderate-income residents is to offer relief to senior citizens. Each year aid is directed to the seniors in the form of social, recreational, educational, cultural and economical programs. A full-time Director works in conjunction with the OCED to abate needs and concerns of the elderly. Regular meetings are held as the Director of OCED serves on the Senior Center Advisory Committee. In addition, the OCED sets aside funds to upgrade the Senior building located at Second Avenue used, sometimes exclusively for the seniors. The OCED also supports an array of activities designed to give senior citizens active and wholesome lifestyles. These activities include yoga classes, senior bazaars, picnics, outings, transportation for shopping, special shows, holiday events, dances, safety classes, special seminars, craft shows, and other functions.

In addition, major upgrades are planned for the senior center in 2004.

## G. Youth Programs

### Youth Center/Equipment/Activities

Intrinsic in community planning is the act of providing choices for the youth who reside in the community. The OCED acts as a liaison between public schools, the City Recreation Department, various organizations, the local housing authority and area youths in the collaboration of making available various programs, projects and services to young girls and boys. The OCED specifically offers financial assistance to The Bucky James Community Center to support facility upgrades. In addition, the OCED provides funding to help enact youth programs and services. The OCED supports non-profits and other agencies that provide cultural, educational, recreational and social events for low and moderate-income young people. The OCED will also assist with the purchasing of recreational equipment and tools to complement other activities that are coordinated between agencies, schools and other organizations that target low and moderate-income youth. Some examples are Pop Warner Football, Long Branch Housing Authority Drug Elimination Program, Long Branch Recreation Little League and Bidly Basketball, Recreation Department Educational tour to Black Colleges, Jerry Morgan Park Family Day, Youth Basketball League, Long Branch Three-On-Three Tournament, Bucky James Back-To-School Event and many other events and activities.

## H. Planning and Administration

Program Administration, Economic Development Administration, Office Equipment, Furniture and Materials, Vehicle Operations, Memberships, Conferences and Related Expenses, Office Rent, Phone and Pager Service and Office Supplies are categories necessary to carry out objectives established by the CDBG program. We proudly and successfully enter the thirtieth (30<sup>th</sup>) year and will continue to provide service and deliver benefits to those very low, low and moderate-income households, groups and individuals. The CDBG Program remains the most viable and versatile assistance program in operation within the administrative services in the City of Long Branch, NJ.