

Attachment G

Public Comments

1. I've seen so much improvement in the last few years. Sometimes it's literally "one building at a time". The recession was real tough and it forced many people to move into homes with other people. I may be a bit too much of a neat freak but I think if the city is going to invest in projects that help lower income families and individuals who are homeless there should also be a standard upheld for recipients to live up to. I live in an older neighborhood and we started the "garden bench" project which has helped our community become closer and people have vastly improved the atmosphere by making sure that certain standards are kept i.e. no aluminum foil in windows, only patio furniture permitted on porches, drying laundry on out of view clotheslines, no broken down vehicles permitted for more than a week. A sense of pride is just as contagious as a sense of hopelessness with blight being allowed to creep in. Many people don't like HOA's but if the city is helping someone it should be expected the recipients help in spreading pride, not blight caused by lack of participation in maintaining surroundings. With our garden bench project we inherited an automatic block watch without actually having an official committee. The visual presence of the benches creates a sense of community, and lawbreakers do not like witnesses. On a final note, surrounding businesses should only be permitted to have so much signage, but many times I feel like I'm driving through a state fair with extra banners and homemade signs littering every square inch in front of strip malls. Less debris please! Thank you for your time and effort.
2. There needs to be much more section 8 money available there are too many people having to barely survive on social security disability because the rent in the valley is so high. The list in Mesa has not been open for years. My daughter was on it for 4 years and never got a thing.
3. Dear City of Mesa Housing and Community Development Department,

Thank you for your time and interest in the Consolidated Plan process. We are very proud of the work that has been done by City of Mesa staff, the consultants,

community groups, and the various non-profits to better engage with the greater community during the consolidated planning process. While no process is perfect, this represents a great step forward and a future base to build upon in our next Consolidated Plan process. This plan has had a larger breadth of reach to not just sub-recipients, but to the community as a whole, because of this additional attention and work. We applaud the efforts made by staff to make this happen.

As a group of sub-recipients and neighbors, we have come together with a list of comments and suggestions based on the draft 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan. Consolidated Plans represent the direction and best coordination of services that use federal funds in the City of Mesa and the region, and as such, it is important that we have a quality, inclusive plan, and that we make sure that the plan, once completed, is implemented with fidelity. It is our goal to support the implementation of the Consolidated Plan as the City and non-profit community's touchstone document for future direction of federal funding for critical community activities and services.

This plan offers a huge step forward for the City of Mesa, one that allows us to focus on our areas of opportunity and to leverage public dollars to be able to best benefit our community comprehensively. We now have the opportunity to redefine success to one of impact, leverage and exponential community benefit.

The following comments represent a consensus of comments of a large group of stakeholders, sub-recipients and residents.

- We greatly appreciate the focus on a transit-oriented approach and are hopeful that, in the implementation process, these goals are carried forward. Using a place-based approach for the expenditure of these extremely limited funds allows them to be used and leveraged to better benefit the community comprehensively.
- The plan's focus on jobs and economic development, such as in support and education of small- and micro-businesses, is important. Successful technical assistance for small business means employment for the LMI workforce.
- We support implementing a coordinated system for services in Mesa, in coordination with the Maricopa Association of Governments Continuum of Care goals. In addition, service providers have identified a need for an East Valley access point to support the needs of our community members.
- Non-profits and the City of Mesa should continue, and aid in, the facilitation of a regional social service collaborative to coordinate services and spearhead community-wide solutions to local needs.
- We recognize the need for a review of the work of various departments and divisions within the City and to seek opportunities for collaborations

between similar programs both within, and outside of, the City of Mesa that could coordinate, eliminate duplication of, and/or leverage greater services.

- The attention to affirmatively furthering fair housing, including outlining the current need for increasing the supply of affordable housing units in our community that are decent, safe, sanitary and in good repair, is welcome.
- We appreciate the acknowledgement that affordable housing (whether stand-alone or part of mixed-income development) is more effective for those who are looking for pathways out of poverty when these developments are built in proximity to efficient, frequent, and predictable public transportation, job centers, and other opportunity factors.
- We support follow-up to the recommendation that the City should develop an incentive program to encourage developers to include affordable units in their projects. This comment in the plan is important, but needs to be expanded to understand the steps needed to create true mixed-income developments, especially to outline the types and sources of these incentives from the City of Mesa. These steps should be outlined in the plan.
- The section referring to “implementing transit-oriented strategies for community development” needs to be expanded to include an analysis of barriers to transit for low- and moderate-income individuals and families, as well as communities of color, especially in regards to the physical infrastructure for people walking and riding bicycles. We understand that there are many legacy impediments in our built environment that need to be addressed, and that without specific goals and strategies laid out in the consolidated plan, these needs will not be properly addressed.
- Paratransit services are only briefly mentioned in the consolidated plan. The Plan should call for an evaluation of all paratransit services within the first two years of the new plan to expand access to light rail for:
 - individuals with physical or other access challenges
 - low-income individuals and families living more than a half-mile from light rail who do not have access to a car
 - individuals and families who do not have access to a car
- The protection of small, locally-owned businesses as a component of economic vibrancy is not directly addressed, but is an important aspect of the community’s long-term economic stability and should be included.
- Mesa has, and continues to, invest heavily in the arts. Nationally, the arts have been used as an important economic development tool, including with development, creative placemaking activities and community engagement. Though the ‘HEAT’ acronym does not include the arts, it would be remiss to not mention the opportunity to utilize our investments in the arts as an important economic development tool for LMI individuals and in LMI areas.
- Public libraries are not currently mentioned in this draft consolidated plan. Libraries are an important part of the community fabric and, as such, should be properly addressed in the Consolidated Plan.

While not exhaustive, these comments represent the consensus view of many residents, stakeholders, sub-recipients and other organizations.

We appreciate your interest and attention to the comments and suggestions.

Regards,

RAILmesa: Retail, Arts, Innovation & Livability

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