

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

**MEETING MINUTES**  
2025-2029 Consolidated Plan Steering Committee  
(Non-Housing) Community Development

**Tuesday, March 5, 2024 at 7:30 AM**  
**Virtual**

**Agencies Represented:**

Elizabeth Knapp-Spooner	Community Action, Inc.	Jacqueline Revels	Rock County Human Service
Steve Howland	Beloit League of Women’s Voters, Board of FPGB, BATFoH leadership team	Katrina Harwood	Rock County Public Health Department
Drew Pennington	Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation	Megan McBride	City of Beloit
Brian Gile	City of Beloit		

**1. Purpose of the Consolidated Plan**

- a. Entitlement community “application” for CDBG. This document is what makes the City eligible for Block Grant funding.**

Megan McBride explained that since Beloit is an entitlement community, CDBG funding is received annual based on a formula. In order to receive the City’s allocated funding, the City is required to prepare and submit three plans. The Consolidated Plan must be prepared and submitted every 5 years to identify community needs and summarize how CDBG funds will be used to address those needs. Each year the City must prepare and submit an Annual Plan which gives a greater level of detail on how CDBG funds will be spent, and also must be tied back to the 5-year Consolidated Plan. Finally, each year the City is required to submit a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) which details accomplishments and residents assisted with CDBG funding the prior year.

- b. City of Beloit completed a 5-year plan in 2019 which expires at the end of 2024.**

Megan McBride explained that the City is in the final year of its current Consolidated Plan, which was prepared in 2019. In 2024, the City will prepare its 2025- 2029 Consolidated Plan. She explained that the City’s Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas (NRSA) Plan will also be

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updated in 2024 for the same 2025- 2029 timeframe. Beloit’s NRSA neighborhoods are the Merrill and Hackett neighborhoods, and having an up-to-date NRSA Plan connected to the City’s Consolidated Plan allows Beloit to invest additional federal funds into public service activities which specifically benefit residents of the NRSA neighborhoods.

**c. This committee will help identify the needs in the Beloit community to be addressed over the next five years.**

Megan McBride explained that input received from the steering committee meetings, along with input received from residents, will inform the needs and priorities included in the City’s Consolidated Plan. This will guide how federal CDBG dollars are allocated over the next five years.

**2. Needs Assessment**

**a. How Well Are We Currently Meeting Needs**

Existing services and community initiatives identified included:

- Community non-profits work well together and are able to collaborate well.
- The City of Beloit works well with non-profit partners. The City’s participation in the Beloit Area Task Force on Homelessness (BATFoH) is important and helps facilitate partnership and understanding.
- Family Services will have the new Next Steps transitional living facility completed in 2025. This is on the west side of Beloit, and will offer community child care as well. They would also like to increase the accessibility to resources including a community room.
- Rock County Health Department is working with school districts to focus on absenteeism by using neighborhood walking school buses.
- Rising Tide is offering new programs in the Todd neighborhood.
- A micro-transit study is taking place in Beloit to assess having a mix of fixed route and on-demand public transportation to help address gaps.
- Food Collaborative group is looking to bring together agencies around the issue of food access

**b. Identify Gaps in Service**

**i. Transportation**

- Expansion and improved connectivity of infrastructure for alternative modes of transportation, including biking paths, walking accessibility. Schools are too far and people struggle to get to the schools (especially walking to school).

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- Expand public transportation to be offered on nights and weekends. It is difficult for people to access employment opportunities, especially ones with shift work.

**ii. Childcare**

- Affordable and accessible child care is a major need in the city.
- Family Services is currently doing fundraising for the new facility that will also provide child care and will open in 2025.

**iii. Housing and Neighborhoods**

- Increased landlord requirements for income, credit scores, and deposit amounts make it very difficult for many people to find housing (especially seniors).
- Limited resources available for assistance to individuals and families who have a house fire. Red Cross only supports for three days, and due to income restrictions, they may not fit into income-based programs or services.
- Outside entities have been purchasing homes in Beloit, which leads to homes sitting vacant most of the year. This can create nuisances for neighborhoods, and also contributes to the lack of housing options available for residents.
- The health department sees many hazards in homes, including lead and hazards which arise from deferred maintenance. Many people are not able to prioritize basic maintenance (especially in rentals), so funding support for preventative maintenance and repairs is needed.
- Emerging need is planning related to unpredictable extreme weather events which have been occurring with increasing frequency. This type of planning needs to be done in advance, and look at things such as tree canopies as ways to help mitigate higher temperatures in the summer.
- There is a need for relationship-building between service providers and local landlords, which the City could help facilitate.

**iv. Healthcare**

- Food access is an area of focus for the health department currently. This should be a larger focus of coordination between the city and agencies with CDBG funds.

**v. Public Facilities and Infrastructure**

- Shelter space and transitional living facilities are greatly needed as many are full and have a waitlist.

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- Schools have traditionally been community centers, and this is not occurring right now. The city should work more closely with the schools to bring this practice back.
- Parks and Recreation areas should be highlighted and made more attractive and accessible so programs are more utilized. More diversity of parks and better maintenance. We need more long-term planning for parks and what can be done.

**vi. Supports for Residents with Limited English Language Proficiency**

- Language barriers have come up in the past as something that people struggle with when it comes to job opportunities and experiencing a sense of community.
- Family Services is seeing a lot of need for their bilingual service providers to translate outside of major community events.
- Need for more community events which focus on promoting belonging and a sense of community for residents who do not speak English as their first language. Past events such as this have been very popular and well-attended, so efforts should be made to offer more in the future.

**vii. Stigma, the System, and Providers**

- Service providers treating people with dignity.
- Capacity of providers to meet community needs is not able to keep up with the demand, and staffing challenges as well as restrictions on funding sources received are barriers to service expansion.

**viii. Lack of Available Job Training**

- The types of jobs available do not pay enough to secure housing in the city. Many people are working two or three jobs and still struggle to afford housing.
- Wages are far too low in the area for physical labor jobs.
- Computer literacy training is a large need in the community, and is often a barrier for people to access higher wage employment opportunities. The ability to operate and perform basic troubleshooting of computer is becoming a standard skill needed in many jobs. These are not skills that all residents have, or have access to training opportunities to learn.
- There is a need for more training opportunities specific to job needs, such as working in data management systems.

**ix. Business Education Partnership**

- Engagement with local landlords is greatly needed.

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- City needs to focus on connecting service providers and businesses that can help with things such as legal services for rental questions or auto mechanics for emergency repairs.
- Opportunity for the City to work with local banks on offering small loans at affordable interest rates for addressing urgent expenses (car repairs, home repairs, etc.) and may not be eligible for assistance under existing programs

### 3. Prioritize Needs and Objectives

High priority needs identified included:

- Affordable Childcare
- Transportation (all transportation including walking, biking, vehicles, public transportation, etc.)

Medium priority needs identified included:

- Planning for extreme weather events
- Improvements to public facilities is an ongoing need

### 4. Strategies

#### a. Activities that will help Address Needs and Meet Objectives

Strategies identified to address needs discussed included:

- Access to micro-loans with reasonable interest rates to meet short-term urgent needs such as car repair, housing needs, etc. This would help people to meet their needs and address unexpected expenses without having to resort to predatory loans with very high interest rates (e.g., Pay Day Loans).
- Expanded programs and assistance for residents to access programs to help with life and employment skills.
- Computer literacy training opportunities important to help agencies with job placement of participants, and also assist agencies in finding qualified applicants for open positions.
- We need more training specific to jobs such as working in data management systems.
- Service providers treating people with dignity rather than just meeting requirements.
- Implementation of the micro-transit study recommendations to help address gaps in existing public transportation services.
- Inventory existing vacant properties to understand the extent of the issue, where they are located, and monitor so that they do not become nuisances for the surrounding neighborhood.