VIII. COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN VISION FOR CHANGE – OVERALL GOALS

The key part of this strategic plan is to carefully design a program for consensus at both the state and local levels. Local governments need to buy into the goals and objectives of the plan and then set priorities within that general framework. Through the use of the locally developed consolidated plans we are able to obtain this commitment at all levels. The following priorities are listed based on state data and past expenditure evaluations. The primary data sources for this prioritization are the regional consolidated plans containing not only the capital improvement lists but also the regions priorities. We will apply available funding not necessarily limited to just HUD funds, based on the priorities that are established. The development of these plans at the regional level is unprecedented and the applicability is extending into other state funding programs. We will try to enhance this trend as well s to coordinate more effectively with entitlement cities land counties. There will be an effort made to develop a more coordinated approach to development with all other funding sources through the means of a rural development council already partially in place.

The intermingling of CDBG and HOME funds as well as Rural Development funds is also a reality in some housing applications that we encourage. The housing section of the plan has already established the housing priorities to which all HUD programs are subject. Applicants should not be confused about this intermingling. In that HOME, ESG and HOPWA are specifically targeted, they must be spent on housing projects. Housing projects compete well in the CDBG program and usually have no trouble being eligible and meeting national objectives. If gaps are present in the funding for housing projects, applicants should consider applying for CDBG to fill those gaps. Housing is an excellent, albeit administratively intensive use.

There will also be intermingling of CDBG, EDA, SBA and perhaps Rural Development funding in capitalizing revolving loan funds in the 5 loan funds where they currently exist. The priorities for economic development are listed in chapter IX, Economic Development of this document.

Community Development Priorities

Priority #1: Culinary Water Development

During all of the previous years of the CDBG program water development has been and continues to be the focus of the CDBG program and its highest priority. Being as Utah is a desert state it stands to reason that it is the direction of the CDBG policy committee that we should continue to spend approximately 30% of our yearly CDBG program funds on projects that are culinary water development based. This is the single largest funding category and therefore our top priority. It is the vision of this body to use CDBG funds to leverage at least two to one other state and local funding to make improvements to these system go as far as they can. Many water systems in Utah are 70 to 80 years old and are now either public health threats or are so inefficient that precious water is being wasted. Water will continue to the limiting factor to growth in this sate, forever. Despite the investment of millions of dollars into these systems over the years the problems continue. The 231 incorporated communities and many additional rural water companies will continue to need funds to improve their water systems indefinitely into the future. HUD funds will continue to play a large roll in making these improvements happen.

Priority #2: Community Planning, Growth Management and Capital Investment Planning

This priority continues to be a priority due to the growth which is occurring, although at a somewhat slower pace. In the rural areas the economy of scale dictates that some of this planning should be done at the region level. The AOG offices in some cases have the capability to conduct these planning efforts and now in all cases are doing some kinds of plan preparation. The only region without full time planning expertise on staff is the Uintah Basin. This service will help each community in their efforts to update antiquated land use ordinances and to administer planning on a day-to-day basis in addition to the economic development planning currently being done. Communities will be encouraged to solicit outside planning assistance as well for special projects. Due to the 20% cap on administration and planning we will only spend about 10% of CDBG funds on this activity. We will very carefully separate technical assistance from administration and planning.

As part of this planning function we continue to integrate the consolidated plan capital investment process as well. Virtually every community in the state is now involved in preparing detailed capital investment plans with the assistance of the regional planning agencies. It is the intent of this activity to make this a yearly process to determine priorities based on need and funding availability. The Consolidated Plan rewrite for 1999 is based on the content of these plans.

Priority #3: Transportation (including curb, gutter and sidewalk projects)

Most of the communities eligible for the small cities CDBG program are experiencing problems with the road systems in terms of maintenance, deterioration or even the entire lack of hard surface streets with curb, gutter and sidewalks. The available funds at the community level are limited to Class B and C road funds and whatever general funds can be appropriated. This problem is particularly acute at the county level in that they have many miles of roads to maintain over a large area. The CDBG funds are not a good source of funding for road projects in unincorporated areas due to national objectives limitations. Due to these national objectives complications as well as the limitation on the use of the funds for operation and maintenance, we will spend less than 10% of our funds on transportation projects and they will be mainly curb, gutter and sidewalk projects in low income neighborhoods.

Priority #4: Public Services

There has been a dramatic increase in the interest to do projects which will provide public services to targeted low income persons. The inclusion of projects which deal with illiterate persons as well as food pantries, counseling centers, etc. are being submitted in part, as a function of growth. It is evident that often communities and particularly non-profit agencies do not have very many options with which to pay for these activities and therefore turn to CDBG funding. Most other traditional forms of financial assistance do not allow for this use and by default CDBG then becomes the source of choice.

Priority #5: Sewer and Storm Drainage Systems

There have been many sewer projects completed with CDBG funds in the last several years and it appears that we will continue to spend consistent amounts on sewer projects when combined with storm drainage projects. The other side of this is that there have been several programs available to fund sewer projects and they are usually large projects requiring complex funding packages including bonding components. The niche that CDBG plays very well is two fold. We have used the money to pay “connection fees” on behalf of the elderly and other low income persons. This

is limited to lateral lines unless full environmental and Davis/Bacon requirements are met on the entire project from its initiation. There are very few programs which allow for the funding of storm drainage systems. CDBG has been used effectively to provide flood mitigation facilities in low income neighborhoods such as drains and detention/catchment basins. These funds have reduced the actual flooding potential or high water tables reducing the danger and maintenance problems of low income families. Because of the niches available we will likely spend 8% of the CDBG funds in this category. There will be significant leveraging of additional public funds for sewer and drainage projects.

Priority #6: Public safety, including youth crime prevention programs

The trend in the CDBG program over the last 3 or 4 years is to spend an increasing amount of program funding on fire protection. It appears as though this trend decreased in this program year. Because law enforcement projects are not readily eligible this use of funds will not occur. Localities will continue to apply for fire station construction primarily, but also the purchase of fire trucks and ambulances. It is critical, however, that these towns look into future capital budgets and amortize the acquisition of this equipment so as to be able to afford to replace it without using outside funding to do it. Wise use of local funds is a better way to obtain these items. There remain many smaller towns in Utah which do not have adequate, heated, fire stations. They cannot guarantee to citizens that when a fire does occur they will be able to respond to it efficiently. It is anticipated that we will spend approximately 10% of available funds for fire station rehabilitation or new construction as well as the purchasing of new fire trucks and equipment.

A new focus adopted by the CDBG policy committee is on the provision of programs which will address locally prevalent youth crime. This problem is becoming more pervasive in the state. Programs designed to get youth involved with other leisure time activities will be prioritized in some regions for 1999-2000.

Priority #7: Community Centers and Libraries

The state is expecting that there will be an increase in the number and type of community center type projects this year. There will be some senior center improvement projects which will be done. There are a large number of these centers around the state and the CDBG program is a good source of funding for them. This use will be about 2% to 3% of project costs.

Priority #8: Accessibility Projects

Most of the communities in Utah have completed their accessibility surveys and are now trying to complete the modifications to make the community facilities accessible. CDBG funds have played a significant role in this implementation over the last 2 or 3 years and it appears now that this use will continue to decrease. Based on the assessments there will still be 3-5% expenditures for elevators, ramps and modifications to city halls, libraries, restrooms in parks, etc.

Priority #9: Parks and Recreation

We have always considered community amenities to be very important in Utah and we have done some very nice park development serving primarily the lower income residents of the community and disabled persons. However, we have had a hard time saying that it is as important as basic

essential services such as water and sewer, transportation, police and fire protection, etc. The regional plans rated this higher, however, the policy committee rates it lower at least until some of the basic services are dealt with. In 1999 we will likely spend less than 3% on recreation projects.

In the regional surveys there were other kinds of projects listed as being important but with regional emphasis but not with statewide importance. Although education is a major issue statewide the use of these federal funds for this purpose is limited. The studies pointed out that other funds must be identified. State generated funds from a variety of sources should be used constructively to help resolve these ever increasing demands. Child care is a growing concern and we have used some limited CDBG funding to assist in providing quality services for low income persons. It will be the intent in the future years of the CDBG program to concentrate on increasing the use of these funds to help in providing more day care facilities distributed around the state where low income persons especially single female heads of households can access them.