

City asks for \$4.5M in CDBG funding

By John Zucal Managing Editor, Orange Transcript

January 14, 2010

City officials in Orange seem to be aiming for the stars as Essex County officials begin the process of evaluating municipal requests for Community Development Block Grant applications.

City Council members gave city officials permission during their Dec. 15 meeting to file the city's \$ 4.5 million request with the county's Division of Housing and Community Development. The division oversees administration of the funding program for the 18 municipalities in Essex County which are included in the county's application. The federal grant program provides funding to projects which are designed to improve the quality of life through the public or private sector or a combination of both.

A municipality's request does not guarantee funding of any amount. Essex County awarded \$ 10.6 million in CDBG funds in 2009.

Approximately two-thirds of Orange's requests, \$ 3.1 million, would go toward road projects. Municipal projects also are ranked on the basis of their interpretation of importance; city officials have listed the road projects as the first three of the 17 items submitted.

The YWCA of Essex and West Hudson also is hoping for success as city officials have nearly \$ 500,000 in requests. The organization continues work on restoring its Main Street headquarters since it reopened the facility after low finances forced its closure several years ago.

The key requests are \$ 197,000 for renovations to the indoor pool area and \$ 169,000 for roof replacement. More funds are being sought for an air circulation system, outdoor lighting and replacement of the gymnasium and dance studio floors, boys' and girls' locker rooms.

Another item city officials have requested is \$ 350,000 for a facade improvement program. In a written description to accompanying the request, city officials stated Main Street business and commercial owners could receive grants of up to \$ 25,000 under a program to improve the appearance of their buildings.