



MINUTES

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT AND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

Monday, March 2, 2026

Community Meeting Center
11300 Stanford Avenue
Garden Grove, CA 92840

REGULAR SESSION - 6:30 P.M. – Council Chamber

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Commissioner de la O at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Commissioner de la O
Commissioner Kester
Commissioner Paredes
Commissioner Payne
Commissioner Tackney

ABSENT: Commissioner Jung
Commissioner Rubin

ALSO PRESENT: Monica Covarrubias, Sr. Project Manager; Timothy Throne, Project Manager; Dana Yang, Program Specialist; Kathy Nguyen, Program Specialist and Svetlana Moure, Recording Secretary

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Commissioner Payne

Staff introduced new staff member Kathy Nguyen.

A. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – PUBLIC: None

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Commissioner de la O moved and Commissioner Kester seconded to receive and file the Minutes from the September 8, 2025 meeting. The motion was carried by a 5-2 vote as follows:

Ayes: (5) de la O, Kester, Paredes, Payne Tackney
Noes: 0
Absent: (2) Jung, Rubin

C. REVIEW OF CODE OF ETHICS/ BROWN ACT BY ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY

City attorney James Eggart gave his annual review of the Code of Ethics and the Brown Act to the commissioners.

Code of ethics: All City commissions are required to annually review the Code of Ethics as set forth in chapter 2.02 of the Garden Grove Municipal Code. Commissioners were given a copy in their agenda packet. The City attorney proceeded to give a review of the Code of Ethics to the commissioners.

Brown Act / California's Sunshine Law: This applies to all decision making and advisory City Commissions. It establishes rules where the majority of a commission meets. It also imposes public notice requirements for what the commission is meeting about. It requires that the people's business be conducted publicly and the public have an opportunity to be present and to make comments to the commission before they act on issues.

D. MATTERS FROM STAFF: Commissioner de la O introduced the item and Program Specialist Dana Yang presented the FY 2026-27, Action Plan.

OBJECTIVE:

- The purpose of this report is to conduct a Public Hearing regarding the City's FY 2026-27 Action Plan for the use of HUD funds; and to
- Authorize the Action Plan's submission to the City Council and to HUD.

DISCUSSION:

- Approximately \$2.53 million in HUD funds will be available in FY 2026-27.
- This budget includes approximately \$520,000 of carryover, or previously unallocated HUD funds from prior years' entitlement allocations, and a new entitlement allocation of \$2.53 million in HUD funds.

HUD Funds	FY 2026-27 Allocation	Prior Year Carryover	Total Funding
CDBG	\$1,816,113	\$450,000	\$2,266,113
HOME	\$554,847	\$0	\$554,847
ESG	\$160,024	\$70,000	\$230,024
Total	\$2,530,984	\$520,000	\$3,050,984

During FY 2026-27, HUD funds will address a wide range of Garden Grove housing and community development needs as follows:

1. Public Services: Funding in the CDBG public service category is strictly limited by HUD regulatory formula to 15% of the total allocation, or \$272,417 for FY 2026-27.
 - *Special Resource Team* – Fund at **\$57,128** to assist 200 homeless individuals with essential services and referrals to emergency shelter.
 - *Senior Center Services* – Fund at **\$145,289** to assist 500 seniors.
 - *Meals on Wheels Program* – Fund at **\$20,000** to assist 140 individuals.

- *Work Force Readiness (WARP) Program* – Fund at **\$50,000** to assist 18 individuals.
2. *Public Facilities and Infrastructure:*
 - Approximately **\$700,000** in CDBG funds is recommended for the Rockinghorse Road Infrastructure Project and is projected to assist approximately 4,415 individuals.
 3. *Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation:*
 - Approximately **\$160,000** in CDBG funds will be allocated to Habitat for Humanity of Orange County and Azure Community Development to complete 20 owner-occupied rehabilitation projects for single-family homeowners in Garden Grove.
 4. *Economic Development:*
 - Approximately **\$221,590** in CDBG funds are recommended for economic development activities. The recommended funding for the *Boost Program* is **\$130,000**, and *Upwards* is anticipated to assist 17 childcare agencies in Garden Grove build their capacity and expand operations.
 - The recommended funding for the MicroBiz Program is **\$91,590**, with \$250,000 from prior year funds and an additional \$200,000 in revolving loan funds. The MicroBiz Program is anticipated to assist 10 businesses in Garden Grove.
 5. *Affordable Housing:*
 - \$250,000 in HOME funds are allocated to assist 14 households through the HEART Program administered by Interval House.
 6. *Emergency Solutions Grant:*
 - **Street Outreach** – Fund *Volunteers of America of Los Angeles* (VOALA) at \$45,000 to assist 40 homeless individuals with essential services.
 - **Emergency Shelter** – Fund *Interval House* \$45,000 to assist 40 homeless individuals with shelter and essential services.
 - **Rapid Rehousing** – Fund *Interval House* \$53,750 to assist 2 homeless households with rental assistance and essential services.
 - **Homeless Prevention** – Fund *Interval House* \$56,525 to assist 4 households who are at-risk of homelessness with rental assistance and essential services.
 - **Homeless Management Information System** – Fund *211 Orange County* \$4,800 to manage the County's Coordinated Entry System and Homeless Management Information System.
 7. *Administration:*
 - Approximately \$430,709 in CDBG, HOME, and ESG funds is recommended for staff and material costs for program management, project development and monitoring, public communication, HUD reporting, and financial administration.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

- Public notices regarding the draft Action Plan were published in February 25, 2026, in local English, Spanish, and Vietnamese language newspapers.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

- The proposed FY 2026-27 Action Plan will allow the City to access \$2.53 million in new entitlement grants from HUD and an estimated \$520,000 in prior year resources.
- Funds will be included as part of the upcoming biennial budget for FY 2026-27.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that Commissioners open the Public Hearing and accept comments, and then following discussion:

Transmit the FY 2026-27 Action Plan to the City Council for approval.

Commissioner Peredes expressed appreciation for the programs being funded and asked for clarification about the Meals on Wheels allocation and the Senior Center services funding. He wanted to know whether the \$20,000 for Meals on Wheels supports food costs or staffing, and whether the \$145,000 for Senior Center services funds the program itself.

Staff explained that the Meals on Wheels funding supports meals for Garden Grove seniors, including both home-delivered meals and congregate meals at the Senior Center, as well as associated staffing costs. Staff also clarified that the Senior Center is operated by the City's Community Services Department, and the funding helps support staffing and services that provide programs and resources for senior residents.

Commissioner Peredes noted that the per-person cost for the program appeared very low.

Staff explained that the City's funding only covers a portion of the Meals on Wheels program in Garden Grove, which currently serves about 140 individuals. The program relies on multiple funding sources, and while the City's contribution represents a small portion of the total funding, it helps support a program that provides a high level of service to the community.

Commissioner Tackney asked about the prior year CDBG carryover funds and whether carrying funds forward was intentional and expected in future years.

Staff explained that the carryover funds come from prior year allocations and are kept available because final funding amounts from HUD are not confirmed until later. In recent years, staff has intentionally left some funds unallocated to create a financial cushion in case future funding decreases.

Staff also noted that the \$450,000 in carryover funds from multiple fiscal years is being directed to the MicroBiz Program, a revolving loan fund. As businesses repay their loans, the funds return to the City as program income and can be reused to issue new loans. The program currently receives about \$200,000 in repayments annually and is expected to eventually sustain itself without requiring additional funding allocations.

Commissioner Kester asked whether providing loans to businesses that may already be experiencing challenges poses a risk and how that risk is managed.

Staff explained that risk is mitigated through extensive technical assistance before businesses are eligible to apply. Businesses must participate in a preparatory program with Grow America, which connects them with the Small Business Development Center for resources, funding guidance, and mentoring. After receiving a loan, businesses continue to receive one-on-one mentoring to help ensure the funds are used effectively for expenses such as payroll, business expansion, and job creation.

Commissioner Payne asked whether the \$250,000 allocated to the HEART program, administered by Interval House, goes entirely toward services for families or if some of it covers administrative costs.

Staff clarified that a portion of the funding supports administrative and staffing costs in addition to the services provided to families.

Commissioner Kester asked whether the program has experienced any failures in the past.

Staff responded that there have not been any program failures, including dating back to the earlier Jobs First Program, which later evolved into the MicroBiz Program. The revolving loan funds currently used come from prior CDBG Coronavirus (CV) funding, which were one-time allocations that are now being recycled through loan repayments. While a few businesses have experienced difficulty making payments, staff worked with them to amend loan terms so they could continue operating and meet their repayment obligations.

Commissioner Peredes asked about the qualifications for the Homeless Prevention Program and whether the assistance is ongoing or a one-time benefit.

Staff explained that households must be at immediate risk of homelessness, typically demonstrated by receiving an eviction notice and meeting income eligibility requirements. The program can help cover rental arrears and sometimes future rent payments, while also providing supportive services and coaching to help households stabilize and maintain their housing. Staff emphasized that preventing homelessness is significantly less costly and more effective than rapid rehousing once someone becomes homeless.

Commissioner Peredes followed up by asking how the program avoids enabling households who may continue to struggle after receiving assistance.

Staff explained that the service provider, Interval House, uses a gradual step-down approach. After helping households become current on rent, they progressively reduce the level of assistance while monitoring income and increasing the tenant's share of rent, helping ensure the household can sustain housing independently over time.

Commissioner Payne asked for more information about the Rockinghorse Road infrastructure project, noting she was not familiar with it.

Staff explained that the project involves resurfacing roads in and around Rockinghorse Road, with no street expansion or new construction. Projects like this are identified in coordination with the Public Works Department by overlaying Capital Improvement Projects with maps of eligible low-income census tracts. Because CDBG funds must benefit low-income areas, the project was selected based on eligibility and need, and it is expected to benefit approximately 4,000 residents.

Commissioner Tackney asked whether the \$160,000 allocated for the owner-occupied housing rehabilitation program includes assistance for seniors with housing needs. She noted familiarity with Habitat for Humanity but asked about Azure Community Development and whether there is a program specifically for seniors living in dilapidated housing.

Staff explained that the Home Repair Program is funded through the \$160,000 allocation and administered by Habitat for Humanity and Azure Community Development. The program is available to income-qualified Garden Grove homeowners, including seniors, and applies to single-family homes, condos, and townhomes, though it does not cover mobile homes.

Staff added that most participants in the program are seniors. The City previously operated a Senior Home Improvement Grant Program specifically for seniors, but it was expanded to include all eligible homeowners after the program began receiving repeated applications from the same seniors and reached participation limits.

It was moved by Commissioner Peredes, and seconded by Commissioner Tackney to close the Public Hearing and to accept staff's recommendation to transmit the FY 2026-27 Action Plan to City Council for adoption. The motion was carried by a 5-2 vote as follows:

Ayes: (5) de la O, Kester, Paredes, Payne, Tackney
Noes: (0)
Absent: (2) Jung, Rubin

E. MATTERS FROM COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Kester commented on the importance of the programs and noted the positive impact he has seen in addressing homelessness. He asked how other neighborhood improvement-related items could be brought forward for discussion.

Staff explained that a request can be made to add an item to the agenda, which the commission would then need to vote on. However, the commission can only discuss matters related to HUD-funded programs. Issues outside of HUD funding would need to be brought to the City Council, where a council member could choose to place the item on the agenda. Staff also encouraged commissioners to contact Neighborhood Improvement staff with questions or concerns so they can help determine the appropriate process.

Commissioner Paredes noted that homelessness is a significant issue and suggested inviting one of the service providers to give a presentation to the commission. He explained that this would help commissioners better understand how the programs work so they can more effectively guide individuals or families in need.

Staff responded that this would be appropriate since homeless services, including homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing, are funded through HUD programs. Staff noted that service providers have previously presented to the commission when seeking funding. Although many agreements are now funded on a multi-year basis to streamline the process, staff confirmed that a provider or staff representative could be invited to present at a future meeting.

Commissioner Paredes then formally requested that a service provider attend a future meeting to present on their programs and answer questions from the commission.

Commissioner Tackney asked to confirm that the Special Resource Team is part of the Garden Grove Police Department.

Staff confirmed this and noted that the City provides partial funding for the team through HUD-related programs. Staff also mentioned that the team has previously given presentations to the commission and could be invited to present again.

Commissioner Tackney commented that the City's contribution represents only a small portion of the team's funding.

Staff acknowledged this, explaining that while the team's overall budget is larger, the City supports part of the program because the team focuses on responding to issues involving the homeless population.

F. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm. The next meeting of the Neighborhood Improvement and Conservation Commission will be a Regular Meeting on Monday, June 1, 2026, at 6:30 p.m., in the Council Chamber of the Community Meeting Center, 11300 Stanford Avenue, Garden Grove, CA.