

**CITY OF
FLINT
MICHIGAN**



**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
PLAN
(Amended 9/02)**

CITY OF FLINT CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Citizen Participation is a valuable and essential component of Housing and Community Development (Consolidated) programs. The knowledge and motivation of the community aids in the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs that are responsive to community needs. The City is committed to full and meaningful citizen participation. This Citizen Participation Plan describes the means by which the City of Flint will provide for citizen participation for Housing and Community Development programs.

A Consolidated Plan which includes a Housing and Community Development Five-Year Strategy and Annual Plan guides the delivery of consolidated programs. The Consolidated Plan currently incorporates the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership (HOME), Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), Section 108 Loan Guarantee and EDI Grant programs. The Consolidated Plan and Citizen Participation Plan are established according to requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and may be revised to comply with any future amended requirements.

Background

Citizen participation has been incorporated into Community Development (CD) programs since the inception of the Community Development Block Grant program in Flint in 1974. A Mayor's City-Wide Advisory Committee (CWAC) was established in the City Charter. This policy established the CWAC with forty-five citizen representatives appointed by the Mayor and Flint City Council, to make recommendations on funding for CDBG projects.

The Consolidated Plan of 1995 was developed with great emphasis on citizen participation. Citizen input was sought on several occasions over the course of ten months, at official public hearings, community meetings, and agency forums. City staff joined with officials of other governmental bodies and with citizen representatives, to seek public comment on community needs. The Community Development Citizens' Committee was considerably involved throughout the development of the Consolidated Plan.

At several stages of the development process, notices were mailed to an extensive list of individuals and organizations. Notices were published in a broad array of community publications, including publications serving minority communities and Spanish speaking residents. Flyers were also posted or distributed in numerous center city neighborhood locations, including public housing complexes.

These efforts to encourage citizen participation resulted in a number of citizen comments. Further detail on the citizen participation activities for the 1995 Consolidated Plan, along with

summaries of citizen comment and associated responses may be found in the 1995 Consolidated Plan.

II. GENERAL PROVISIONS OF THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

Citizen Input

This Plan provides for citizen input on the Consolidated Plan, on any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, and on the performance of programs described in the Consolidated Plan. The Consolidated Plan currently incorporates the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership (HOME), Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), Section 108 Loan Guarantee, and EDI programs.

The following general provisions apply to the Consolidated Plan and activities incorporated in the Consolidated Planning process. Individual programs may have additional provisions and procedures for citizen participation.

Notice

Notice of opportunity to comment will be published simultaneously with the notice of final public hearing in a newspaper of general circulation at least fourteen days prior to the final public hearing on the Consolidated Plan or the Annual Report. For substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, notice of opportunity to comment will be published at least thirty days prior to City Council action on the proposed amendment. For substantial amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan, notice of opportunity to comment will be published at least 14 days prior to City Council action on the proposed amendment.

An effort will be made to publish notices in publications serving minority communities and Spanish speaking residents, dependent upon availability and publication deadlines. Notices will also be mailed to affected organizations funded under the Consolidated Plan, to local media and to major community service providers, including providers serving minority communities and special needs populations. Notices will include information on assistance requests for accessibility for persons with physical disabilities or language barriers.

Notices will provide sufficient information about the subject of the comment period to permit informed citizen comment. In cases for which summaries or description of documents are published, citizens will also be provided the opportunity to review the full document(s).

Public Comment Opportunity

Opportunity will be provided for public comment on the Consolidated Plan, on any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, on performance of incorporated programs (including, but not limited to CDBG, HOME, ESG, HOPWA, Section 108, and EDI), and substantial amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan. Public comments will be incorporated prior to any required submission to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) of the Consolidated Plan, substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, or the Performance Report under the Plan.

A minimum of 30 days will be provided for public comment on the Consolidated Plan and any substantial amendment to the Plan. The public comment period begins the day after the final public hearing prior to submission to HUD of the Consolidated Plan or report. Council action can not be taken until the end of the public comment period. For substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan or CPP, the public comment period must occur prior to City Council action on the proposed change. A minimum of 15 days will be provided for public comment on the Performance Report under the plan and on the Citizen Participation Plan or any substantial amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan.

Incorporation of Public Comment

All written comments received during the public comment period, or oral comments made at public hearings will be considered. A summary of such comments on the Consolidated Plan, on substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, or on the Performance Report under the Plan, will be attached to the relevant Plan, Amendment or Report prior to submission to HUD. Any comments not accepted for incorporation in the Consolidated Plan or amendment will be included in the summary, along with the reasons the comments were not accepted for incorporation. Community needs reflected by citizens during the course of other meetings or activities relating to housing and community development programs will also be considered.

Public Hearings

At least one public hearing will be held prior to submission of the Consolidated Plan to obtain citizen input on the proposed Plan and funding amounts; at least one hearing regarding community needs will be held prior to publication for comment on the proposed Consolidated Plan; at least one hearing prior to submission of Section 108 Loan and EDI Grant applications and at least one hearing will be held prior to submission of the Annual Report to obtain citizen review and comment on program performance. Generally these hearings will be official public hearings before the City Council, but the annual Town Hall Meeting on CDBG community needs may serve as one of the above mentioned public hearings.

For all hearings, the City will aim to provide balanced accessibility as regards location, time and format, particularly over the course of a several year period. Coordination will be encouraged with other communities involved with community development programs. All hearings will be held in locations accessible to persons with mobility impairments. Assistance will also be made available upon request for accessibility for sensory limitations or language barriers such as sign language interpreters or Spanish translators. A language translator will also be made available for any hearing for which a significant number of non-English speaking persons are expected to participate.

Special topic meetings may be held to discuss the impact of a significant new project. Examples might be a neighborhood meeting or meeting with community representatives regarding a major public construction project or housing development.

Public Information and Access to Records

The Consolidated Plan and significant related documents for incorporated programs will be available for public review at the main office of the City of Flint Department of Community and Neighborhood Services during normal business hours. The Consolidated Plan will be made

available for review at one or more additional accessible public locations, including the Flint Public Library, office of the Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission, Genesee County Family Independence Agency, and the Flint Housing Commission. In addition to the Consolidated Plan and Amendments, major documents available for review include the Citizen Participation Plan and amendments and the Consolidated Plan Performance Report. These materials will be made available in a form accessible to persons with disabilities upon request.

May other records are available for review upon citizen request, such as prior year program applications and performance reports, copies of applicable federal regulations and laws, copies of funding proposals and contracts for incorporated Consolidated Plan programs, including Section 108 and EDI Grant applications, and environmental reviews and audits. Records on program performance and use of funds for the preceding five years will be retained and made available for review upon request.

Summary documents for incorporated Consolidated Plan programs will also be maintained and individual copies provided to the public free of charge. Such documents include project descriptions and funding; a fact sheet of cumulative CDBG program accomplishments; a Consolidated Target Area map; and income eligibility guidelines.

Copies of relevant summary documents will also be made available at public hearings and meetings. Citizen questions or requests for information recorded at public hearings will be responded to within 15 working days whenever practical.

Technical Assistance and City Staff Support

Major Grants will endeavor to respond to all reasonable requests for technical assistance or information for community groups, applicant for funding and citizen advisory boards for Consolidated Plan incorporated programs. An annual Town Hall Meeting on community needs will be conducted for potential funding applicants to the CDBG program.

City staff support will be provided to the Mayor's City Wide Advisory Committee (CWAC) to facilitate their role in citizen participation. Such support will include assistance with meeting arrangements and agendas, communications and program information.

III. REPRESENTATIVE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Citizen Representation

In addition to the many opportunities for citizens at large to provide input for housing and community development programs, citizen representatives considerably bolster citizen participation. Citizen advisory committees, client representation on organizational boards, and the advocacy roles of organizations serving program clients, all provide important representation of citizen views to housing and community development programs.

Community Development Citizen's Committee

The Mayor's City-Wide Advisory Committee (CWAC) serves a key function in providing continuing citizen input for CDBG programs. This committee's primary function, as established

in the Flint City Code of Ordinances, Article VI, Section 2-26, is to act in an advisory capacity to the City of Flint in connection with all community and economic development programs.

The CWAC is a multiple-member body appointed by the Mayor. Representation is evenly distributed among the nine city wards. Appointments aim for substantial representation of minority communities, potential program beneficiaries and women.

Organizational Advocacy

The City of Flint is fortunate to possess a strong network of community organizations and agencies that actively advocate for the needs of their clients. The City of Flint will make every effort to engage in continuing communication with organizations that serve persons who potentially may benefit from housing and community development programs. Notices of housing and community development public comment opportunities will be sent to organizations such as the Genesee County Family Independence Agency, Flint Housing Commission, community-based social service complexes in CDBG target areas, multi-service community agencies serving minority populations, and representative agencies serving persons who are homeless, who have disabilities, who are elderly, or who have AIDS/HIV. City staff will encourage cooperation with such organizations through such means as sharing of information; service on community committees and task forces that address housing and community development issues; and special issue forums to solicit agency input.

Citizen Representation on Organizational Boards

The representation of actual or potential program beneficiaries on boards of organizations implementing housing and community development programs serves to strengthen citizen input to housing and community development programs. Federal requirements for certain of the Consolidated incorporated programs ensure such representation in specific areas. In particular, the HOME program requires that low/moderate income persons serve on the boards of funded Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDO's). Additionally, the Emergency Shelter Grants program requires that homeless persons serve on the boards of funded provider organizations or in other decision-making capacities.

IV. SPECIAL ISSUES

Complaints

Every effort will be made to consider complaints as potentially informative responses to programs. Any written complaints will be maintained on file and responded to in a substantive manner within 15 working days whenever practicable.

Generally, unresolved complaints may be pursued sequentially by citizens to the Director of Community and Neighborhood Services, then City Administrator. Citizens may also file complaints directly with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Service providers may have additional specific procedures for citizen complaints or grievances.

Amendments to the Consolidated Plan

Substantial Amendments

The following criteria determine those amendments to the Consolidated Plan considered substantial and subject to a 30-day public comment period through published notice in a newspaper of general circulation. At the time of publication, the Major Grants Division will provide the CWAC an opportunity to review the proposed amendments.

1. The addition or deletion of a Priority Objective from the Consolidated Plan Five Year Strategy, unless due to circumstances not under the control of the locality.
2. A major change in local economic conditions or population characteristics necessitating a significant reorientation of program funding priorities in the Consolidated Plan Five Year Strategy.
3. Addition or deletion of a CDBG or HOME activity not previously described in the Consolidated Plan Annual Action Plan:
 - Unless such activity cost does not exceed 15% of the federal program grant (CDBG, HOME, or ESG) amount from which it is being funded for the fiscal year. Such new activities must be reviewed and approved by the City Council
 - Unless urgent community needs arise from state or federal declarations of emergencies or disasters and ensuing activities occur with City Council review and approval.

Other Amendments

The following types of amendments and additional minor changes to the Consolidated Plan will not be considered substantial amendments. These are not subject to a public comment period, but will be incorporated and submitted annually to HUD:

1. Change in scope, location or intended beneficiaries of a CDBG, ESG, or HOME activity described in the Consolidated Annual Action Plan, such that:
 - The activity's planned units of service are reduced
 - The activity's service area or boundaries change
 - The activity's intended beneficiaries change yet still meet regulatory guidelines
2. Changes in the service provider for the activity
3. Deletion of an activity described in the Consolidated Annual Action Plan
4. Budget increase of an already approved activity which does not exceed the 15% of the federal program grant amount for the fiscal year from which it is funded

Meetings

Citizens may attend any official meeting of the full committees of the City Council or Mayor's City-Wide Advisory Committee. Meeting schedules and agendas are available upon request.

Anti-Displacement Policy

The City is committed to minimizing the involuntary and permanent displacement of residents as a result of federally assisted projects. The City's CDBG, HOME and ESG programs are operated under a Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan as required by HUD. A copy of this plan is available upon request. While no displacement is expected as a result of proposed Community Development activities, the City is prepared to similarly assist any resident found to be so displaced. Relocation benefits, including payment for replacement housing and reasonable moving expenses, will be offered to residents who are displaced. Benefits and procedures for displacement would be carried out in Performance with the Uniform Relocation Act or Section 104(d) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1987, as amended.

Additional Information

Any question not covered here should be brought to the attention of the Major Grants staff person assigned to the Citizens' Participation Plan. Major Grants staff will address the item of concern in writing within fifteen (15) working days.

The Major Grants Division of the Community and Neighborhood Services Department is located in Flint City Hall, South Building, 1101 S. Saginaw Street, Flint, Michigan 48502. Telephone 810.766.7436.

The public is urged to use this plan, attend the meetings and public hearings and to become involved.

Citizens are advised to call the Major Grants Division to verify dates prior to meetings.

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