

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN
City of Grand Rapids
Community Development Department

Adopted June 27, 1995
Revised June 9, 1998
Revised October 2, 2001
Revised July 26, 2005

OVERVIEW

Introduction

The Citizen Participation Plan describes the policies and procedures for involving citizens in critical planning issues related to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program, and Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) program. Opportunities for citizen involvement are available regarding:

- (1) Housing and Community Development Needs
- (2) Five-Year Consolidated Plan
- (3) Annual Action Plan
- (4) Consolidated Annual Performance Report
- (5) Substantial Plan Amendments
- (6) Citizen Participation Plan

Public Comment

The following identifies the specific procedures the City will follow to assure opportunities for public comment on housing and community development programs.

Public Notice. Notice of opportunity to comment will, at a minimum, be published in a newspaper of general circulation. Topics that include a public hearing will be published at least 10 days prior to the public hearing. An effort will be made to also publish notices in publications serving minority communities and non-English speaking residents, dependent on availability and publication deadlines. Notices will also be mailed to affected organizations. Notices will include information on assistance requests for accessibility for persons with physical disabilities or language barriers.

Public Hearings. Public hearings shall be held in accordance with Table 1, and will generally be official public hearings before the City Commission. 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.

Public Comment Period. A minimum public comment period ranging from 15 days to 30 days will be provided depending on the topic. Public comment opportunity will be provided sufficiently in advance of proposed actions so that comments may be incorporated. All written comments received, or oral comments made at public hearings, will be considered. A summary of such comments will be attached to the relevant plan or report.

Other Provisions

The Citizen Participation Plan also sets forth the criteria for Substantial Plan Amendments, access to records, technical assistance, complaint procedures, and anti-displacement policy.

TABLE 1
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

Needs Assessment (Housing & Community Development Needs)	Comment Period: 15 Days Public Hearing: Yes Scheduled: September (and As Needed)
<p>Once a year, the City Commission will hold a public hearing on general housing and community development needs within Grand Rapids. This hearing will be held prior to the start of the annual funding process, and will provide input to the Annual Action Plan and the Five-Year Consolidated Plan (as applicable).</p> <p>In addition, the City may periodically seek citizen input on housing and community development needs via other methods, including but not limited to surveys, outreach meetings, special study groups, and community reports and plans.</p>	
Proposal Review Process (Review of Annual Funding Requests)	Scheduled: January – March
<p>The Community Development Department will review annual funding requests and make specific funding recommendations to the City Commission. City staff may request input from community partners as appropriate.</p>	
Annual Action Plan (Funding Recommendations)	Comment Period: 30 Days Public Hearing: Yes Scheduled: March - April
<p>Following the presentation of funding recommendations to the City Commission, the recommendations will be published in a newspaper of general circulation. The public notice will include a brief description of the proposed activities, date, time and location of the public hearing, the deadline by which written comments must be received, and where to get further information. Citizens may provide verbal comments at the public hearing and/or written comments during the comment period.</p> <p>A draft of the Annual Action Plan, which includes these recommendations, is available for public review in the Community Development Department during regular business hours throughout the comment period and at www.grcd.info.</p>	

Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (Reporting on Funded Activities)	Comment Period: 15 Days Public Hearing: Yes Scheduled: September
<p>The Community Development Department prepares an annual report on the performance of funded activities. Citizens may provide verbal comments at the public hearing and/or written comments during the comment period. A draft of the Annual Performance Report is available for public review in the Community Development Department during regular business hours throughout the comment period and at www.grcd.info.</p>	
Five-Year Consolidated Plan (Housing and Community Development Plan)	Comment Period: 30 Days Public Hearing: Yes Scheduled: As Needed
<p>Every five years, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires the City to re-evaluate its policies and strategies for addressing housing and community development needs in the community. The Consolidated Plan includes information on population and housing conditions, as well as strategies for achieving outcomes identified in the Neighborhood Investment Plan. In addition, the Housing Continuum of Care contributes information on homeless issues and strategies to end homelessness.</p> <p>Following the completion of the draft Consolidated Plan, a public notice will be published in a newspaper of general circulation. The notice will include an outline of the Consolidated Plan, the date, time and location of the public hearing, and the deadline by which written comments must be received. Citizens may provide verbal comments at the public hearing and/or written comments during the comment period. A draft of the Consolidated Plan will be available for public review in the Community Development Department during regular business hours throughout the comment period and at www.grcd.info.</p>	
Substantial Plan Amendments (Amendments to the Annual Action Plan)	Comment Period: 30 Days Public Hearing: No Scheduled: As Needed
<p>Following the adoption of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, it may be necessary to make amendments. Plan amendments that are defined as “substantial” will be reviewed by the City Commission. They will also be subject to public notice and comment. The following criteria will be used to define a substantial plan amendment.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The addition of a new program or activity that has not been funded in the previous three program years; or 2) An increase in funding for a program or activity that is greater than the applicable percentage of the corresponding entitlement grant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDBG – 7.5% ESG – 10% HOME – 20% <p>The following changes will <u>not</u> be considered as substantial amendments: 1) changes between new construction and substantial rehabilitation, and 2) changes arising from urgent community needs due to emergency or disaster situations. Non-substantial amendments do not require a public comment period.</p>	

<i>Citizen Participation Plan</i> (Procedures for Public Comment on Housing and Community Development Plans and Programs)	Comment Period: 15 Days Public Hearing: No Scheduled: As Needed
<p>The Citizen Participation Plan will be reviewed and updated as needed. Changes in the language of the Citizen Participation Plan are subject to a 15-day public comment period. A public notice will be published in a newspaper of general circulation and a draft of the Citizen Participation Plan will be available for public review in the Community Development Department during regular business hours throughout the comment period and at www.grcd.info.</p>	

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

Access to Records

Plans and significant related documents will be available for public review at the City of Grand Rapids Community Development Department during normal business hours. Plans will also be made available for review at one or more additional accessible public locations, such as the Grand Rapids Public Library. Individual copies of summary documents for current programs and activities will be provided to the public free of charge. These documents will also be made available at public hearings and meetings.

The City of Grand Rapids will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to the data or content of the Consolidated Plan, as well as the proposed, actual, and past use of funds covered by this Citizen Participation Plan. A person should notify the City's Community Development Department of a request to review documents at least 5 to 7 days in advance. When administratively reasonable, the City will attempt to make information available for review in less time.

Technical Assistance

At least one annual workshop describing the process and requirements for submitting proposals will be conducted for potential funding applicants.

Complaint Procedures

Complaints regarding the programs and activities covered by this Citizen Participation Plan will be answered by the Community Development Department staff in a timely and responsive manner. The staff will make every reasonable effort to provide written responses within 15 working days. Entities that receive CDBG funding from the City of Grand Rapids are also required to have a written complaint policy.

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 the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. 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, would be offered to residents who are displaced. Benefits and procedures for displacement would be carried out in conformance with the Uniform Relocation Act or Section 104(d) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1987, as amended.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information, contact the Community Development Department, 4th Floor City Hall, 300 Monroe Avenue, NW, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49503; 616-456-3677.