



City of Vancouver Citizen Participation Plan

Introduction

The City of Vancouver has established a Citizen Participation Plan to provide opportunities for citizen involvement in the process of developing and implementing the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, the HOME Program and other HUD programs administered by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

This Citizen Participation Plan outlines when, where and how citizens can access information, review and comment on major community plans and comment on progress of funded activities under these programs. The primary planning document for any of the HUD-assisted programs is the City of Vancouver Consolidated Plan, which is developed every five years to serve as a guide for strategic actions to enhance the City's housing and community development assets. Other major documents related to the Consolidated Plan and covered by this Citizen Participation Plan are the Annual Action Plan which describes the specific actions and project activities the City will carry out with the funds and the Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report (CAPER), an annual evaluation of progress in implementing program activities.

Encouraging Public Participation

The City of Vancouver welcomes and encourages the participation of all of its citizens in the development of these plans and in the review of progress in implementing plan activities. The City particularly encourages involvement by low and moderate income households residing in areas targeted for program activities (such as neighborhood revitalization areas and other neighborhoods), minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities. In addition, residents of public housing and other assisted housing are encouraged to participate. Finally, we encourage local and regional institutions and other organizations including businesses, neighborhood associations, housing developers including the Vancouver Housing Authority, and community and faith-based organizations to become involved in the planning process. Opportunities for citizen involvement occur in the initial stages of developing the long-range plan and the annual plan as well as during the implementation of activities. These opportunities include:

- Participation in public hearings to discuss needs, available funds and project/program activities

- Participation in meetings with committees and focus groups involved in planning housing and community development activities
- Review and comment on proposed plans and activities such as:
 - The Citizen Participation Plan
 - The Consolidated Plan
 - The Annual Action Plans
 - Amendments to the Plans
- Review and comment on the Consolidated Annual Performance Reports (CAPERs) describing progress on project activities

Anyone who wishes to be informed of the time/place of meetings and opportunities to review documents or who wishes to learn more about activities may ask to be placed on mailing and/or e-mail lists of interested citizens by contacting the City of Vancouver CDBG Program, City of Vancouver 1610 C Street, Suite 203, Vancouver, WA 98663 or mailing address 1313 Main St. P.O. Box 1995, Vancouver, WA 98668. Direct communication to Peggy Sheehan, Community Development Manager at (360) 487-7952 or by e-mail to peggy.sheehan@ci.vancouver.wa.us.

Public Hearings

During the process of developing the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, City staff meets with community groups, organizations and persons interested in housing and community development activities to discuss community needs and to provide information on the HOME, CDBG and other HUD Programs.

Purpose of the Public Hearings

A minimum of two Public Hearings will be held during the year to obtain the comments of citizens and representatives of public agencies, non-profit organizations and other interested parties. The Hearings provide opportunities to obtain the views of citizens on housing and community development needs, provide information on the amount of funds available (and the purposes for which they can be used), discuss proposed activities and review program performance over the previous year. All oral and written comments received at the Hearings will be considered in decisions on the HUD-assisted programs and their planning documents. A summary of the City's response to comments made in the Consolidated Planning process will be provided in the Appendix of the Plan submitted to HUD. At least one of the Hearings will be held prior to publishing the draft plan for public comment.

Location of Hearings

The location and timing of the Hearings will ensure maximum opportunities for citizens to participate. Hearings will be conducted in buildings that are accessible to persons with physical disabilities. Location of the hearings will be provided in all announcements and advertisements. Entrance to the Hearings is accessible to persons with physical disabilities.

Expanding Opportunities for All to Participate at Hearings

The City encourages all citizens to attend and participate in the hearings. A special effort will be made to assure that low and moderate income persons, households in

areas assisted by program activities and persons special needs have opportunities to participate. The City will provide translators for Non-English speaking persons who request assistance at least 3 days prior to the Hearing or other meetings in the planning process. Persons who need auxiliary aids or other assistance to be able to fully participate may request assistance at least 3 days in advance of the Hearing or meeting. Persons seeking all such assistance should contact the Community Development Manager at (360)487-7952 who will make all arrangements.

Notification of Hearing Dates and Locations

Notices of the location and timing of the hearings will be placed in the *Columbian* newspaper at least two weeks prior to the Hearing.

Opportunities to Comment on Proposed Plans and Reports

Several opportunities to comment on proposed plans and other documents are available to the general public and other persons affected by the activities of the programs. A notice will be published in the *Columbian* providing 15 days for the public to comment on the Citizen Participation Plan and the Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report; and 30 days for public comment on the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan (and any substantial amendments to these two plans). Comments may be sent in writing to the City of Vancouver CDBG Program, City of Vancouver 1610 C Street, Suite 203, Vancouver, WA 98663 or mailing address 1313 Main St. P.O. Box 1995, Vancouver, WA 98668. Direct communication to Peggy Sheehan, Community Development Manager at (360) 487-7952 or by e-mail to peggy.sheehan@ci.vancouver.wa.us. A summary of comments received on the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, CAPERs and any Amendments will be considered by the City and attached to the document (along with City comments responding to the views) when submitted to HUD.

These documents are briefly described as follows:

Citizen Participation Plan

The City of Vancouver Citizen Participation Plan outlines the steps the City will take to provide citizens with opportunities for input into the development of plans and to comment on performance of assisted activities.

Consolidated Plan

The City of Vancouver Consolidated Plan is a long-range strategic plan that assesses community needs, establishes priority objectives and outlines strategies the City will pursue over a 5 year period to improve the City's housing and community development assets principally benefiting low and moderate income persons.

Annual Action Plans

Each year, the City is required to prepare an Annual Action Plan for submission to HUD that outlines the programs and activities the City will undertake in the coming year to implement the strategies of the Consolidated Plan. The Annual Plans also describe how the CDBG, HOME and ESG funds will be used over the course of the year.

Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Reports (CAPERs)

Each year, the City prepares a description of how the CDBG, HOME and ESG funds were used over the prior program year and describes progress on other non-funded activities of the Consolidated Plan.

Amendments

From time to time, amendments to the plans will be necessary as conditions change. Amendments of a minor nature will be made as needed throughout the year. However, the public will be invited to review and comment on substantial amendments to adopted plans. The City will consider all comments received in writing or orally at the Hearings and will provide a summary of the comments and the City's response (and, if applicable, the reasons the comment was not accepted) to HUD with their request for a substantial amendment. The definition of a "substantial amendment" to the Consolidated and Annual Action Plans is defined as:

- Changes to project or activity budgets of more than \$25,000 – An increase or decrease in the budget of more than 25% (unless the decrease is caused by a budget under run).
- Changes to project or activity budgets of less than \$25,000 – An increase or decrease of 50% of the budgeted amount (unless the decrease is caused by a budget under run).
- Changes in the purpose, scope, beneficiaries, or location of a project or activity.
- Adding or canceling a project or activity.

Access to Information and Availability of Plan Documents

The City will provide citizens, public agencies and other interested parties reasonable and timely access to information and records on the adopted Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Citizen Participation Plan or Annual Progress Report as well as any amendments to those documents. In addition, reasonable accommodation will be made for non-English speaking persons and persons with disabilities who need assistance with documents or program information. These adopted documents and information on the use of funds and other program information will be available at the City of Vancouver CDBG Program, City of Vancouver 1610 C Street, Suite 203, Vancouver, WA 98663 or mailing address 1313 Main St. P.O. Box 1995, Vancouver, WA 98668. Direct communication to Peggy Sheehan, Community Development Manager at (360) 487-7952 or by e-mail to peggy.sheehan@ci.vancouver.wa.us. The documents will also be available at the Vancouver Public Library located at 1007 E. Mill Plain Blvd., Vancouver, WA 98663. A reasonable number of free copies of these documents are available upon request at the CDBG Office.

Technical Assistance

The City will provide technical assistance to groups representing low- and moderate-income persons to assist them in understanding the requirements for developing proposals for funding assistance under the Consolidated Plan. Technical assistance may include referral to information sources, providing information on programs and activities, application workshops, and one-one assistance.

Complaints and Grievances

Complaints concerning the three HUD Programs, Consolidated Plan, Annual Plan or Performance Report may be submitted in writing to the City of Vancouver CDBG Program, City of Vancouver 1610 C Street, Suite 203, Vancouver, WA 98663 or mailing address 1313 Main St. P.O. Box 1995, Vancouver, WA 98668. Direct communication to Peggy Sheehan, Community Development Manager at (360) 487-7952 or by e-mail to peggy.sheehan@ci.vancouver.wa.us. All complaints made in writing will be responded to in writing within 15 days. Persons not satisfied with the response may write an appeal of the decision and request a review of the complaint by Laura Hudson, Community Planning Manager at the above address. A written response from the City conveying the results of the review to the complainant will be made in writing within 21 days. All decisions will be final.

Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan

The City has an Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan to minimize the displacement of persons as a result of program activities and to assist any persons actually displaced. The policy is to discourage displacement unless it is clearly necessary to achieve the Plan's objectives and to minimize the adverse impacts of the displacement. In the event that displacement is unavoidable, displaced persons will receive the full benefits and assistance provided for under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended and HUD regulations.