

# City of Suffolk

## CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN



The goal of this Citizen Participation Plan is to develop an appropriate mechanism whereby the City of Suffolk may achieve active citizen participation in the consolidated planning submission process. The method used will provide ways for the distribution of information in order that citizens can actively participate in all phases of the Consolidated Plan. This Plan will provide a means to solicit input from the general public, specifically the residents of economically disadvantaged neighborhoods and lower income citizens in the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of the consolidated planning submission process.

### A) Participation Objectives

The objectives of the Citizen Participation Plan for the City of Suffolk are:

1. To conduct all aspects of citizen participation in an open manner, with freedom of access for all interested persons;
2. To encourage all citizens and particularly low, very low, and extremely low-income persons and residents of economically impacted neighborhoods to submit their views and proposals regarding the Consolidated Plan;
3. To provide for and encourage citizen participation, with particular emphasis on participation by persons of low, very low, and extremely low income who are residents of economically fragile areas and/or areas in which community

development funds are proposed to be used as well as other low, very low, and extremely low income neighborhoods;

4. To provide citizens with reasonable and timely access to local meetings, information, and records relating to the proposed use of funds, as required by regulations, and relating to the actual use of funds under this process;
5. To provide for technical assistance to groups representative of persons of low, very low and extremely low income that request such assistance in developing proposals with the level and the type of assistance to be determined by the grantee.
6. To provide for public hearings to obtain citizen views and to respond to proposals and comments at all stages of the consolidated planning process, including identifying housing and community development needs, reviewing proposed uses of funds, and reviewing program performance.
7. To provide for a timely written answer to written complaints and grievances, within 5 working days where practicable.

**B) Access to Information**

Citizens, public agencies and other interested parties will have the opportunity to receive information, review and submit comments on any proposed submission to HUD concerning the proposed activities. Information relative to the availability and location of Consolidated and Annual Plan documents, records and information may be obtained from the City of Suffolk Department of Planning and Community Development. The Consolidated Plan and the Annual Plan will also be available at the City public library for public review and comment. Additional copies are located in the Isle of Wight County, Southampton County and the City of Franklin municipal buildings for public review and comment.

**C) Anti-Displacement Policy**

The City of Suffolk seeks to minimize the displacement of persons by initiatives supported with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Program funds. In cases where displacement is necessary, assistance will be provided to residents and businesses in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. The Department of Planning and Community Development will be responsible for implementing the provisions of this policy with the aid of existing United States Department of Housing and Urban Development programs.

Once it is determined that an occupant will be displaced, the Department of Planning and community Development staff will work with the Suffolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority and other necessary City departments. The effected persons would receive guidance regarding the relocation process. A location convenient to the residents and a telephone number will be provided so that staff will be available to assist and maintain close contact with displaced residents. City staff will provide displaced persons with the assistance necessary to file for benefits claims.

Displaced businesses are eligible for actual reasonable moving and related expenses or a fixed payment in lieu of payment for actual moving and related expenses. Displaced homeowners are eligible for moving and related expenses and a replacement housing payment. Displaced tenants are eligible for moving and related expenses and rental assistance or down payment assistance (42 months under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and 60 months under Section 104[d] of the 1974 Community Development Act).

The timely dissemination of information notices to displaced persons is of vital importance to the success of revitalization projects. Notices serve different purposes and must be tailored to specific circumstances. There are several types of notices indicated by the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (URA) and Section 104[d] of the 1974 Community Development Act, as amended. They are as follows:

1. General Information Notice (GIN): Informs occupants of a possible project and of their rights under the URA. Stresses that the household should not move at this time.
2. Notice of Eligibility: Informs households to be displaced of their rights and levels of assistance under the URA. It is triggered by the initiation of negotiation between the property owner and the Department of Management Services.
3. Ninety (90) Day Notice: Informs displaced households of the date by which they must vacate the property.

D) Publishing the Plan

The following schedule for the Consolidated Plan and the Annual Plan is designed to enable citizens a sufficient opportunity to review the relevant document and provide comments. An announcement regarding the availability of the relevant document for review shall appear in the local newspaper, the Suffolk News Herald, of general circulation. Copies of the

proposed Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, and Performance Reports, as applicable, will be made available at the City of Suffolk Department of Planning and Community Development at the Municipal Building, the main administrative office in the Suffolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority and the City Library. Additional copies are located in the Isle of Wight County, Southampton County and the City of Franklin municipal buildings for public review and comment.

**E) Public Hearings, Notice of Hearing, and Access to Meetings**

**Methods of Notification**

The following methods to notify citizens of the Consolidated Plan submission process will be used: public notices in the Virginian Pilot news releases to area publications, public service announcements on cable TV, flyers to citizen organizations, social action agencies, and personal contacts on a community-wide and neighborhood basis. Public notices of citizen participation meetings shall be published in local newspaper, Virginian-Pilot. Public notices for the Annual Action Plan will be from 10 to 15 days. In the event of a pandemic, national disaster or if the city receives emergency funding from HUD the notification period will be 5 days.

The public shall receive adequate advance notice regarding the hearings conducted for the Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan. The City of Suffolk shall publish meeting notices in the Virginian Pilot newspaper at least 10 to 15 days in advance of the public meetings regarding the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan. Announcements regarding the public meetings will also be provided to the Suffolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority for distribution to the management offices of public and assisted housing communities. Citizens shall receive reasonable and timely access to local meetings pertaining to the Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan.

**Consolidated Plan Public Hearing**

The staff of the Department of Planning and Community Development will hold at least (2) public hearings, which are accessible to disabled persons, in the City for the purpose of soliciting comments from citizens on the Consolidated Plan. The meetings shall be conducted prior to the publication of the draft Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan. The other meeting shall be conducted during the public comment period for the Consolidated Plan or relevant Annual Action Plan.

1. The purpose of the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Plan documents.
2. An explanation of the Plan's three goals: (1) to provide decent housing, (2) elimination of slum and blight and (3) to expand economic development opportunities.
3. An explanation of the collaborative nature of the Plan, which unifies the vision of the City's development needs. The process enables the City to more effectively administer its funding programs by coordinating neighborhoods and community development strategies.
4. The role of citizens in the Consolidated Plan submission process.

The Department of Planning and Community Developments and the community development staff, will review the comments and recommendations presented in the public hearings or in writing. All such information will be complied, used to determine priorities and included in the Consolidated Plan, as appropriate.

#### **City Council -Public Hearing**

Recommendations presented at the public hearings or by mail will be reviewed and attached incorporated into the Plan and forwarded to City Council. City Council will hold a public hearing on the Consolidated Plan in Council Chambers, or other designated location, which is accessible to handicapped persons. The City Council will approve the Consolidated Plan prior to the document's submission to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

#### **F) Citizen Comments**

A draft Consolidated Plan will be available for review by citizens for at least 30 days prior to City Council review. When possible, comments will be included in the final submission document. A summary of all comments received during this period will be incorporated in the final Plan.

#### **G) Substantial Amendments**

When a substantial activity changes as defined below is being considered under the Consolidated Plan, the City of Suffolk will advertise such change(s) in the local newspaper(s) with a comment period of 30 days

however in case of an emergency such as a pandemic or natural disaster the public notification will be 5 days. Information regarding substantial amendments and reprogramming of funds or new funding will be made available to all affected groups, agencies or organizations within a reasonable amount of time. Each affected party will be allowed to comment on the proposed substantial amendment. The City will consider all comments and views received from the citizens and affected organizations while preparing the substantial amendment. A summary or comments and local reactions shall be attached to the substantial amendment and submitted to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The City of Suffolk will utilize the following criteria to determine if a substantial amendment is required:

### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) ACTIVITIES**

- 1. Community Development Block Grant New Eligible Activity**
  - A. If the cost of a new proposed activity is 5% or less of the annual Community Development Block Grant budget, it may be approved at the discretion of the City Manager.**
  - B. If the cost of the new proposed activity is more than 5% of the annual Community Development Block Grant budget, it will be considered a substantial amendment and will be handled under the amendment process.**
- 2. Community Development Block Grant Activity Elimination**
  - A. If an activity proposed for elimination is 5% or less of the annual Community Development Block Grant budget, it may be approved at the discretion of the City Manager.**
  - B. If an activity proposed for elimination is more than 5% of the annual Community Development Block Grant budget, it is considered a substantial amendment and will be handled as indicated under the amendment process.**
- 3. C. A Community Development Block Grant Budget Transfer Between approved Activities does not require a substantial amendment.**

### **HOME GRANT ACTIVITIES**

**4. HOME New Eligible Activity**

- A. If the cost of the new proposed activity is 5% or less of the annual HOME budget, it may be approved at the discretion of the City Manager.**
- B. If the cost of the new activity is more than 5% of the annual HOME budget, it is considered a substantial amendment and will be handled as indicated under the amendment process.**

**5. HOME Activity Elimination**

- A. If an activity is proposed to be eliminated and is 5% or less of the annual HOME budget, it may be approved at the discretion of the City Manager.**
- B. If an activity is proposed to be eliminated and is more than 5% of the annual HOME budget, it is considered a substantial amendment and will be handled as indicated under the amendment process.**

**6. HOME Budget Transfers Between Approved Projects**

**H) Annual Performance Report - Citizen Comments**

**The City of Suffolk shall provide citizens with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on the annual performance reports. Notice shall be provided in the Suffolk News Herald newspaper and the Virginian Pilot. The public comment period for the annual performance report shall be at least 15 days. Comments received during this period shall be attached to the performance report.**

**I) Availability of Plan to the Public**

**The Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendments, and the performance report will be available to the public. Such materials will be made in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request.**

**J) Access to Records**

**The City of Suffolk and the Suffolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority shall provide citizens, public agencies and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the Consolidated Plan and the use of assistance under programs covered by**

the Plan. The provision of such information shall be consistent with the requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

**K) Technical Assistance**

Throughout the entire Consolidated Plan submission and review processes, the City of Suffolk and/or the Suffolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority will provide technical assistance to the various established citizen organizations and community service organizations related to the ongoing and/or proposed activities of the Consolidated Plan. The types of technical assistance to be made available upon request will include as necessary:

1. Assistance in the development and preparation of written proposals and statements of views.
2. Data collection,
3. Assistance with budget preparation, and
4. Presentations by staff to address citizen's groups and boards representative of groups of low, very low, and extremely low-income that request such assistance and to provide them with general information about the consolidated planning submission process, as well as requested specific information which may assist the group with their decision to participate in the programs and assess the City's activities.

**L) Response to Complaints**

The City of Suffolk shall provide a timely, substantive written response to each written response to each written citizen complaint regarding the Consolidated Plan, amendments, the Annual Action Plan, and Annual Performance Report. All written complaints and grievances shall be answered in writing within fifteen (15) working days where practical. Such complaints may be submitted to the attention of:

City Of Suffolk Department of Planning and Community Development Attn: John Brooks or [jfbrooks@suffolkva.us](mailto:jfbrooks@suffolkva.us) or 757-514-4174