



Community Planning and Development Program

Citizen Participation Plan

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CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

The City developed and is following a written Citizen Participation Plan that details normal procedures on how citizens can be involved in the Consolidated Plan process and the Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH). The technique employed will provide avenues for the distribution of information in order that citizens can actively participate in all phases of the Consolidated Plan and the AFH. This Citizen Participation 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 and the AFH process and submission.

Participation Objectives

The objectives of the Citizen Participation Plan for the City of Portsmouth 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 including public housing and Housing Choice Voucher residents and other assisted housing developments, including resident advisory boards, resident councils, and resident management corporations as applicable, to submit their views and proposals regarding the Consolidated Plan and revisions to the Consolidated Plan and AFH and revisions to the AFH;
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 two 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. Such hearings shall be held after adequate notice, at times and locations convenient to potential or actual beneficiaries, and with accommodations for persons with mobility, visual or hearing impairments and when applicable, non-English speaking persons;
6. To provide for a timely written answer to written complaints and grievances, within 15 working days where practical;
7. Provide formalized channels of communication for direct and indirect beneficiaries of the community development program.

Consultation

1. When preparing the Consolidated Plan the City shall consult with other public and private agencies that provide assisted housing, health services, and social services including those focusing services to children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, and homeless persons.
2. The City's consultation process shall include consultation with regional government agencies in addition to adjacent units of general local government and local government agencies. This includes local government agencies with metropolitan-wide planning and transportation responsibilities, particularly for problems and solutions that go beyond a single jurisdiction.
3. When preparing the Consolidated Plan, the City shall consult with the Portsmouth Redevelopment and Housing Authority (PRHA) to consider public housing needs, planned programs, and activities under the Consolidated Plan. The consultation process requires the City to address the needs of public housing and, where necessary the manner in which it will provide financial or other assistance if PRHA is designated by HUD as troubled to improve PRHA's operations and remove the designation of troubled.
4. The City will consult with PRHA on the AFH, on strategies for affirmatively furthering fair housing in the public housing and Housing Choice Voucher programs, and on proposed actions to affirmatively further fair housing on the Consolidated Plan. The City's consultation with PRHA will help ensure that activities with regard to affirmatively furthering fair housing, local drug elimination, neighborhood improvement programs, and resident programs and services, those funded under PRHA's program and those funded under a program covered by the Consolidated Plan, are fully coordinated to achieve community development goals and affirmatively further fair housing. If PRHA is required to implement remedies under a Voluntary Compliance Agreement, the City should work with or consult with PRHA, as appropriate; to identify actions the City may take, if any, to assist PRHA in implementing the required remedies.
5. Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing.
 - a. The City shall consult with community-based and regionally-based organizations that represent protected class members, and organizations that enforce fair housing laws, such as State or local fair housing enforcement agencies (including participants in the Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP)), fair housing organizations and other nonprofit organizations that receive funding under the Fair Housing Initiative Program (FHIP), and other public and private fair housing service agencies, to the extent that such entities operate within the City.
 - b. This consultation must occur with any organizations that have relevant knowledge or data to inform the AFH and that are sufficiently independent and representative to provide meaningful feedback to the City on the AFH, the Consolidated Plan, and their implementation.
 - c. Consultation must occur at various points in the fair housing planning process, meaning that, at a minimum, the City will consult with the organizations described in this part in the development of both the AFH and the

Consolidated Plan. Consultation on the Consolidated Plan shall specifically seek input into how the goals identified in an accepted AFH inform the priorities and objectives of the Consolidated Plan.

Access to Information

Citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties will have the opportunity to receive information, review that information and submit comments on any proposed submission to HUD concerning the proposed activities. Information relative to the availability and location of Consolidated Plan and AFH documents, records and revisions and information may be obtained from the City of Portsmouth Planning Department and will be posted on the Planning Department's webpage at <https://www.portsmouthva.gov/395/Community-Planning-Development-Program>. The Consolidated Plan and AFH ~~will~~ ~~may~~ ~~also~~ be available at ~~all~~ Portsmouth public library branches for public review and comment. The City shall take reasonable steps as necessary to provide language assistance to ensure meaningful access to participation by non-English-speaking and limited English proficiency residents of the City.

The City will make available within 30 days of initiating the AFH planning process the HUD provided data via a link on the Planning Department's website.

Anti-Displacement Policy

The City of Portsmouth seeks to minimize the displacement of persons by initiatives supported with Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funds. In cases where displacement is necessary, assistance will be provided to residents and businesses in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. The sub-recipients will be the responsible agency for implementing the provisions of this policy.

Once it is determined that an occupant will be displaced, the relocation staff will meet with the affected person to explain the relocation assistance and payments for which they may be eligible. This interview will explain the individual preferences concerning replacement dwellings. 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. The Relocation 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 (reestablishment 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 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 issuance of information notices to displaced persons is of vital importance to the success of revitalization projects. Notices serve different purposes 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:

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.

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 Authority.

Ninety (90) Day Notice: Informs displaced households of the earliest date by which they must vacate the property.

Publishing the Plan

The publication schedule for the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, Performance Reports, and the AFH 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 a newspaper of general circulation. Copies of the proposed Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, AFH, and Performance Reports, as applicable, will be made available at the City of Portsmouth Planning Department at City Hall, and all Portsmouth public library branches.

Public Hearings, Notice of Hearings and Access to Meetings

Methods of Notification

The public shall receive adequate advance notice regarding the hearings conducted for the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, and the AFH. The City of Portsmouth shall publish meeting notices in a newspaper of general circulation at least thirty (30) days in advance of the public meetings regarding the Consolidated Plan, and/or the Annual Action Plan, and the AFH. Citizens shall receive reasonable and timely access to local meetings pertaining to the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, and AFH.

Public Hearing

The City will hold at least two (2) public hearings, which are accessible to disabled persons, in the City for the purpose of soliciting comments from citizens on the Consolidated Plan or the Annual Action Plan. The meetings shall be conducted at two different stages of the program year. Generally, one meeting shall be conducted prior to the publication of the draft Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan or AFH. The other



meeting shall be conducted prior to the adoption of the Consolidated Plan or relevant Annual Action Plan or AFH by City Council.

The following information shall be presented and made available at the sessions:

1. The purpose of the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan or AFH documents.
2. An explanation of the Consolidated Plan's three goals: (1) to provide decent housing, (2) to provide a suitable living environment, and (3) to expand economic opportunities.
3. An explanation of the collaborative nature of the Plan, which allows the City to establish a unified vision of the City's development needs. The process enables the City to administer more effectively its funding programs by coordinating neighborhoods and community development strategies.
4. The AFH's data and plan for affirmatively furthering fair housing in the City and the City's community development program.
5. The role of citizens in the Consolidated Plan and AFH submission process.

City Council – Public Hearing

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

Citizen Comments

A draft of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, and AFH will be available for review by citizens for at least 30 days. The documents ~~may be reviewed at the local libraries and the Planning Department in the City Hall building~~ will be posted on the Planning Department's webpage at <https://www.portsmouthva.gov/395/Community-Planning-Development-Program>. The documents may also be available at Portsmouth public library branches for public review and comment. When possible, comments will be included in the final submission document. A summary of all comments received during this period will be forwarded with the Plan.

Substantial Amendments

When a substantial activity change as defined below is being considered under the Consolidated Plan and/or the Annual Action Plan the City of Portsmouth will advertise such change in the local newspaper with a comment period of 30 days. This will serve the purpose of providing information regarding substantial amendments and reprogramming of funds to all affected groups, agencies, or organizations. 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 of comments and local reactions shall be attached to the substantial amendment and submitted to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

By a memorandum dated March 31, 2020, HUD issued waivers to provide additional flexibility to communities to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and better assist individuals and families. As authorized by the memorandum, the City of Portsmouth reduces the 30-day minimum comment period to 5-days for the required public comment period for substantial amendments concerning the proposed uses of CDBG and HOME funds. The waiver is available through the end of the City's FY 20-21 program year.

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

1. The addition of any eligible activity.
2. The deletion of any eligible activity.

Revising an Accepted AFH

An AFH previously accepted by HUD must be revised and submitted to HUD for review under the following circumstances:

1. A material change occurs. A material change is a change in circumstances in the City that affects the information on which the AFH is based to the extent that the analysis, the fair housing contributing factors, or the priorities and goals of the AFH no longer reflect actual circumstances. Examples include Presidentially declared disasters, under title IV of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 *et seq.*), in the City that are of such a nature as to significantly impact the steps the City may need to take to affirmatively further fair housing; significant demographic changes; new significant contributing factors in the City, and civil rights findings, determinations, settlements (including Voluntary Compliance Agreements), or court orders; or
2. Upon HUD's written notification specifying a material change that requires the revision.

Annual Performance Reports – Citizen Comments

The City of Portsmouth shall provide citizens with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on the Comprehensive Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER). Notice shall be provided in a newspaper of general circulation. The public comment period for the annual performance report shall be at least 15 days. Comments received during this period shall be considered and reviewed. A summary of such comments will be attached to the performance report.



Availability of Plan to the Public

The Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, any substantial amendments, AFH, and the CAPER will be available to the public. Furthermore, such materials will be made in a form accessible to persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency, upon request.

Access to Records

The City of Portsmouth 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. Furthermore, the provision of such information shall be consistent with the requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

Technical Assistance

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

1. Assistance in the development and preparation of written proposals and statements or views.
2. Provision of available information and data, which would pertain to the preparation of proposals for funding through the Entitlement Program or statements of view concerning ongoing programs or policies. Presentations by staff to address citizens groups and boards representative of groups of low and low-moderate income that request such assistance and to provide them with general information about the Consolidated Plan 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.

Response to Complaints

The City of Portsmouth shall provide a timely, substantive written response to each written complaint regarding the Consolidated Plan, amendments, the Annual Action Plan, AFH, and the CAPER. 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 Portsmouth
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801 Crawford Street
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