



Housing &
Community
Development

Citizen Participation Plan

City of Houston
Housing & Community Development
2100 Travis Street | 9th Floor | Houston, TX 77002

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Introduction

The Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) has been prepared and implemented pursuant to federal regulations (U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Regulations 24 CFR Part 91.105) and the City of Houston's desire to encourage and support public participation in the development of the documents related to the consolidated planning process.

The purpose of the CPP is to establish a viable means by which residents of the City of Houston (City), public agencies, and other interested parties can actively participate in the development of documents related to the consolidated planning process, including:

- The Consolidated Plan
- The Annual Action Plan
- Amendments to Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan(s)
- The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)
- Amendments to the CPP

The actions described in the CPP relate to the planning and expenditure of funds provided to the City by the HUD Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD). CPD formula grants received by the city include the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), Economic Development Initiative (EDI), Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program, and other grants, as may be added by law.

Encouragement of Citizen Participation

The City of Houston strives to encourage and facilitate the participation of its residents in the development of priorities, strategies, and funding allocations related to the consolidated planning process. The City will emphasize the involvement of low- and moderate-income persons, especially those living in slum and blighted areas, areas designated as a revitalization area, areas where the funds are proposed to be used, and low- and moderate-income neighborhoods where at least 51% of the residents are at or below 80% of the area median income (AMI).

The City encourages the participation of local and regional institutions, the Continuum of Care, and other organizations (including businesses, developers, nonprofit organizations, philanthropic organizations, and community/faith-based organizations) in the process of developing and implementing documents related to the consolidated planning process. Also, the City will encourage participation from broadband internet service providers, organizations engaged in narrowing the digital divide, agencies that manage flood-prone areas, public land or water resources, and emergency management agencies.

To encourage citizen participation that emphasizes the involvement of low- and moderate-income residents, the City will continue to work with public housing authorities, neighborhood

groups, and other organizations representing the City's low- and moderate-income areas and residents.

The Citizen Participation Plan ensures that all parties, including residents, non-profit organizations, and other interested stakeholders, are afforded adequate opportunity to review and comment on plans and reports covering the grants listed above. This includes minority populations, people with limited English proficiency, and persons with disabilities.

The City may alter some requirements listed in this Citizen Participation Plan based on waivers or suspensions provided by HUD for the CPD funding listed, typically in response to disasters or other emergencies. For example, HUD may shorten the public comment period of a consolidated planning document to allow the City to more quickly respond to a disaster or emergency.

Consolidated Planning Activities

Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan

Every five years, the City of Houston develops a Consolidated Plan, as required by HUD, detailing how the City plans to invest its resources to meet Houston's ongoing affordable housing, community development, economic development, and public service needs over the next five years. The Consolidated Plan is a strategic plan and is developed using a collaborative community engagement process that results in a shared strategic vision for how resources are allocated to meet needs.

The Annual Action Plan outlines the community's needs, budget priorities, local and federal resources, and proposed activities for the upcoming year. Public hearings and draft documents are requirements in the citizen participation process.

Public Hearings

Public hearings will be held at key stages in the consolidated planning process to obtain public input and response regarding community needs, proposed use of funds, and program performance.

According to HUD regulations, the City will conduct a minimum of two (2) public hearings to be held at different stages within the program year before submission of the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan to allow for resident participation in the development process. At least one (1) of these hearings will be held during the development of the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan, before the proposed plan is published for comment.

Draft Plan(s)

Before the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan is adopted by the City Council and submitted to HUD (i.e., mid-May), the City will make the plan(s) available to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties for review and will also establish the means to submit comments. Information made accessible to the public will include the amount of grant funds the City expects to receive (including program income), the range of activities to be undertaken, and the anticipated number of low- and moderate-income persons to benefit from funded activities. The City will publish its Draft Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan for no less than thirty (30) days so that all affected residents will have sufficient opportunity to review and comment on the draft plan(s). A summary describing the contents and purpose of the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan will be published in one or more newspapers of general circulation. The summary will be available in English, Spanish, and other languages when feasible. The notice will detail locations where the entire draft plan(s) will be made available for review. Locations may include:

- Housing and Community Development Department – 2100 Travis Street, 9TH Floor
- City of Houston’s Housing and Community Development Department Website – www.housingtx.gov/housing
- City of Houston’s Main Public Library – 500 McKinney Street

A reasonable number of free copies will be available at the City of Houston, Housing and Community Development Department – 2100 Travis Street, 9th Floor, upon request.

The City will consider any comments or views of residents of the community received in writing, or orally at the public hearings, in preparing the final Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan. A summary of these comments or views, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons why, shall be attached to the final Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan.

Amendments to the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan

For the Citizen Participation Plan, amendments to the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan are divided into two categories: Substantial Amendments and Minor Amendments.

Substantial Amendments

Occasionally, it may be necessary for the City to process a Substantial Amendment to the Consolidated Plan or an Annual Action Plan to allow for new activities, modification of existing activities, or other program changes.

Substantial amendments are subject to the citizen participation process and require formal action by the City Council and submission to HUD by the end of the program year. The City announces substantial amendments to the public through a public notice published on our website, and the City may utilize additional methods for general circulation, for 30 days, to provide an opportunity for public review and comment regarding proposed substantial

amendments in accordance with 24 CFR 91.105(b)(2). The notice will be available in English and may also be available in Spanish and other languages, as feasible. The City will consider all written or oral comments or views received from the public concerning proposed Substantial Amendments in accordance with 24 CFR 91.105(c)(3). A summary of these comments and views, including comments or views not accepted and the reason why, shall be attached to the substantial amendment.

When using funds from any program covered by the consolidated plan process (except for EDI as discussed in a later section), the following criteria will be used by the City for determining what constitutes a Substantial Amendment to its approved Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan.

- Adding a new activity¹ not previously described in the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan
- Deleting an activity previously described in the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan
- Changing the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity previously described in the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan
- Changing allocation priorities or changing the method of the distribution of funds
- Changing an activity total dollar amount allocated or budgeted by more than 25 percent from the amount previously described in an Annual Action Plan or its most recent Substantial Amendment

Non-substantial Amendments

The City classifies any change to the Action Plan that does not meet the criteria for a "substantial amendment" as a non-substantial amendment. Because the public is already informed of new project activities through separate public notices, adding a project² to an activity does not necessitate an amendment to the Action Plan. The City does not require a public comment period for these non-substantial changes. *City of Houston* will notify HUD five (5) business days before the change is effective. All amendments will be numbered sequentially and posted to the website into one final, consolidated plan.

Transparency Notice

The City classifies any allocation of funding to a project (a subrecipient, developer, institutions, businesses, other city departments, and/or infrastructure sites) before council approval as requiring a "transparency notice". As the City identifies projects under this grant, it will post this notice on our website for seven (7) days to provide an opportunity for public review and comment.

¹ Activity: The first level of HUD categories of activities at 24 CFR 570.201-206 and listed on the Annual Action Plan budget page that accompanies the SF-424 Form, i.e. public services, public facilities, and improvements, etc.

² Project: Allocation of funds under an activity to a subrecipient, developer, institutions, businesses, other city departments, and/or infrastructure sites.

Citizen Participation Plan

City Of Houston | Housing & Community Development Department
2100 Travis Street | 9th Floor | Houston, TX 77002 | 832.394.6200 | www.houstontx.gov/housing

Substantial Amendment, Non-substantial Amendment, vs Transparency Notice Chart

To make it easier to determine the difference between a substantial amendment, non-substantial amendment, or transparency notice, the City has created the chart below:

Substantial Amendment	Non-substantial Amendment	Transparency Notice
• A change in program benefit or eligibility criteria • The addition or deletion of an activity • A new allocation or reallocation of more than or equal to 25% of an activity on the budget page	• Any change to an approved action plan or amendment • A new allocation or reallocation of less than 25% of an activity on the budget page • Edits or formatting changes to an approved action plan or amendment	• Any allocation of funding to a project (a subrecipient, developer, institutions, businesses, other city departments, and/or infrastructure sites) before Council approval

Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)

The City is required to submit a CAPER for its CPD programs to HUD no later than 90 days from the end of a program year. The CAPER describes how funds were spent and the extent to which these funds were used for activities that benefited low- and moderate-income people.

To allow the public to comment on the performance report, the City of Houston will publish a notice in one or more newspapers of general circulation that its Draft CAPER is available for review. The notice will be available in English and may also be available in Spanish and other languages, as feasible. The notice will detail locations where the entire Draft CAPER will be made available for review.

Locations will include:

- City of Houston Housing and Community Development Department – 2100 Travis Street, 9th Floor
- City of Houston’s Housing and Community Development Department Website – www.houstontx.gov/housing
- City of Houston Main Public Library – 500 McKinney Street

The public will have at least fifteen (15) days to comment on the Draft CAPER. All comments received during the comment period will be considered and shall be included in the performance report.

Citizen Participation Plan (CPP)

This Citizen Participation Plan is available to the public on the City's website. The City will provide citizens with a reasonable opportunity to comment on amendments to the citizen participation plan. Notice of the opportunity to comment will be posted on the City's website. Upon request, the Citizen Participation Plan can be made available in a format accessible to persons with disabilities.

Meetings and Public Hearings Schedule

The City of Houston's program/fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30.

Fall:

The first Public Hearing on Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan is held during plan development (performance review and citizens express their needs regarding priority housing and non-housing community development needs and affirmatively furthering fair housing).

Spring:

Draft Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan is made available to the public for a review period of no less than thirty (30) calendar days.

The second Public Hearing on Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan is held (citizens express agreement or concern(s) on the draft plan(s) and proposed use of funds).

Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan is submitted to HUD.

Fall:

Draft CAPER is made available to the public, a fifteen (15) day review period is held, and the CAPER is submitted to HUD.

General Requirements

Public Hearings and Public Meetings

During the consolidated planning process, the city may hold both public hearings and/or public meetings (when resources allow). Public hearing locations are intended to be convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries and will be held at a central location in the city or in a neighborhood close in proximity to low- and moderate-income residents.

Public hearings and public meetings are held at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries, and accommodations for persons with disabilities and interpretation for persons with limited English proficiency or persons with hearing impairments will be provided, upon request. The City may also provide interpreters if a public hearing is held where a significant number of non-English speaking residents are expected to participate. Additional accommodation may be made upon advance request.

Public hearings shall be held after a minimum of fourteen (14) days' notice, where practicable, in at least one newspaper of general circulation. Notices will be available in English and may also be available in Spanish and other languages, as feasible.

Public hearings and public meeting notices are posted on the bulletin board at City Hall, readily accessible to the general public at least three (3) days (72 hours) before the meeting date, per the Texas Open Meetings Act.

In certain circumstances, including health and safety concerns related to public gatherings, the City may utilize virtual public hearings and meetings to meet HUD requirements.

Technical Assistance

The City will provide technical assistance, as requested, to groups representing low- and moderate-income persons that are developing proposals for entitlement-funded housing and community development activities in the City of Houston. This technical assistance will be offered at any time proposals for the use of entitlement funding are requested.

Access to Records

The City of Houston will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to information and records related to the consolidated planning process, as well as the proposed, actual, and past use of funds covered by the Citizen Participation Plan.

The public will be provided with reasonable access to information, subject to local, state, and federal public information laws and laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality. Confidential documents will be set apart from public information, and those requesting this information will be promptly informed. The public will have access to records for at least five years from the publication date of the requested document.

Availability to the Public

Copies of documents related to the consolidated planning process, as described below, will be available to the public:

- Final Consolidated Plans
- Final Annual Action Plans
- Final Substantial Amendments to an Annual Action Plan or Consolidated Plan
- Final Consolidated Annual Performance Reports (CAPER)

Copies of these documents will be available for review at the following locations:

- Housing and Community Development Department – 2100 Travis Street, 9th Floor
- City of Houston's Housing and Community Development Department Website – www.houstontx.gov/housing

Additional single copies of these documents may be obtained from the Housing and Community Development Department at no charge. These documents will also be available in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request to the Planning and Grant Reporting Division at 832.394.6200.

All documents related to the consolidated planning process will be placed on file in the City of Houston, Housing and Community Development Department file room located at 2100 Travis Street, 9th floor, Houston, Texas 77002.

Language Assistance

Based on HUD guidance, the City assesses language needs through a four-factor analysis in its *Language Assistance Plan*. Vital documents and notices related to the consolidated planning process will be available in English and may also be available in Spanish and other languages, as feasible.

Anti-Displacement and Relocation

The City's consolidated planning activities are designed to eliminate or minimize the displacement of residents. The Program guidelines and limitations are structured so that permanent displacement is unlikely.

Tenants in occupied rental properties are made aware of their rights concerning displacement and relocation. Property owners are made aware of their rights and responsibilities. Property owners must assume financial responsibility for the relocation of their tenants.

If displacement occurs due to any planned actions, the City will comply with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, as described in 49 CFR Part 24. If displacement should occur because the dwelling is deemed uninhabitable, it is the City's policy to provide advisory service and, if applicable, make relocation payments in accordance with local, state, and federal law.

Citizens' Complaints

Written complaints from the public related to the City's Citizen Participation Plan, Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plans, Substantial Amendments, or CAPERs will receive careful consideration and will be answered in writing or by other effective methods of communication, within fifteen (15) business days, where practicable. Written complaints should be sent to:

Attn: Planning and Grant Reporting
City of Houston
Housing and Community Development Department
2100 Travis Street, 9th Floor
Houston, Texas 77002

Economic Development Initiative (EDI)/Section 108 Loan Program

It should be noted that the process for amending the EDI/Section 108 grant application differs considerably from that used for the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, and non-EDI Section 108 programs. First, in accordance with item 8 of the executed grant agreement between the City of Houston and HUD, the EDI agreement can only be amended with the prior written permission of HUD. Second, federal regulations require that a public hearing be held when amending the EDI/Section 108 grant application. For any program amended, verbal and written citizen comments will be summarized and submitted to HUD along with the City's response to each.

EDI/Section 108 applications and funding are subject to all CPP requirements applicable to the consolidated planning process, where they are the same and as specifically required under 24 CFR §570.704.