



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

## CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

### CITY OF FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA

#### **Office of Planning and Community Development**

Adopted: February 28, 1995

Amended: March 9, 1999

November 27, 2001

July 14, 2009

The City of Fredericksburg encourages the public to participate in the development of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) plans and programs, as well as to comment on the City's past performance in its use of CDBG funds. The following citizen participation plan contains policies to achieve this end and conforms to the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 24, Part 91.105, Citizen Participation Plan - Local Governments.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The City of Fredericksburg will provide the opportunity for the public to participate in the following planning evolutions:

1. Developing community development plans
2. Substantially amending community development plans
3. Evaluating the City of Fredericksburg's performance in implementing community development plans

By providing the opportunity to comment on the above activities, the City encourages participation by all citizens, including those who live in predominately low- to moderate-income neighborhoods where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, those who are of a minority population group, those who may not speak English, and those who have disabilities in accordance with 24 CFR Part 8.

Predominantly low- to moderate-income neighborhoods are defined as those where greater than fifty percent (50%) of residents have total household incomes which are at or below 80% of the area median income. Data on households and income levels is collected from the U.S. Census by tract and block group.

The map entitled "Areas of Predominately Low / Moderate Income Concentration and Minority Concentration" in the appendix identifies specific areas or neighborhoods which will be contacted directly by the City.

### **Developing Community Development Plans**

#### **Policies**

**Public Participation** - The City will provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment when developing CDBG plans.

The following specific information will be provided on an annual basis:

1. The amount of CDBG funds expected to be available. Available funds include the annual CDBG grant from the federal government, program income generated by

CDBG activities that is anticipated to be received during the program year, and any program income received during the preceding program year that has not been programmed for use;

2. The range of eligible activities that may be undertaken with such funds;
3. The amount of funds proposed to be used for activities and the estimated benefit to low and moderate income households. Low and moderate income households (individuals or families residing in one residence) are defined as those which have total household incomes of eighty percent (80%) of area median income or below, adjusted according to household size in accordance with the most current Section 8 income limit thresholds, as provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)(24 CFR 5.609).

**Anti - Displacement** - The City will also show the public how it plans to minimize the displacement of persons, as a result of CDBG activities. Even if the City expects no such displacement to occur, it will specify the types and levels of assistance it will make available (or require others to make available) to persons displaced by CDBG activities. The City of Fredericksburg adopted a Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan on April 23, 1996. A copy is available in the Office of Planning and Community Development (Room 209 of City Hall, 715 Princess Anne Street).

### **Procedures**

During development of the consolidated plan and / or annual action plan, the City will hold a public hearing to obtain the views of citizens on community development needs. This hearing will coincide with one of City Council's regularly scheduled public hearings for the month of February. In addition to the formal hearing, the Planning staff will contact each predominantly low- to moderate-income neighborhood/civic association and neighborhood/civic association where there is a concentration of minority members within the City and extend an offer to meet with them directly, to solicit public comments at an organization's regularly scheduled meeting.

Following completion of the consolidated plan and / or annual action plan, the City will ensure citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties have a reasonable opportunity to examine its contents and comment. This public participation will be accomplished as follows:

1. Publish a summary of the consolidated plan and / or action plan as a display advertisement in the Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star newspaper. This ad will describe the plan's contents and purpose and specify where copies of the entire proposed plan may be examined.
2. Provide a summary of the consolidated plan and / or annual action plan to neighborhood/civic organizations.

3. Ensure copies of the proposed consolidated plan and / or annual action plan are available on the City's website (www.fredericksburgva.gov), at the Central Rappahannock Regional Library (1201 Caroline Street), and in the Office of Planning and Community Development (Room 209 of City Hall, 715 Princess Anne Street).

Once the completed consolidated plan and / or annual action plan has been made available for comment, the City will allow a 30-day period for citizens, public agencies, and interested parties to respond.

Comments may be submitted in writing directly to the Office of Planning and Community Development as well as orally at public hearings and neighborhood meetings. The City will consider all comments when it prepares the final consolidated plan and / or annual action plan. The City will summarize the comments and make this summary part of the plan. Further, the City will attach a summary of any comments that were not accepted and provide a written justification for not using them.

### **Amending, Substantially, Community Development Plans**

#### **Policies**

As referenced in CFR 24, Part 91.505, the City will officially amend its approved consolidated plan whenever it decides to pursue any of the following:

1. To change allocation priorities or the method of distribution of funds; or
2. To carry out an activity by using funds from any program covered by the consolidated plan (including program income), but not previously described in the action plan; or
3. To change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.

**Substantial Amendment Criteria** - The City will provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment if any amendment to the consolidated plan is deemed substantial. The criteria for substantial change is defined as a fiscal change that is ten percent (10%) or greater than the total annual CDBG entitlement.

#### **Procedures**

If a substantial amendment is proposed to the consolidated plan, the City will seek to ensure citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties have reasonable opportunity to examine its content and comment. This public participation will be accomplished as follows:

1. Publish a summary of the substantial amendment as a display advertisement in the Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star newspaper. This ad will describe the amendment and specify where copies of the full amendment may be examined.
2. Provide a summary of the substantial amendment to neighborhood civic organizations.
3. Ensure copies of the proposed amendment are made available on the City's website ([www.fredericksburgva.gov](http://www.fredericksburgva.gov)), at the Central Rappahannock Regional Library (1201 Caroline Street), and in the Office of Planning and Community Development (Room 209 of City Hall, 715 Princess Anne Street).

Once the proposed amendment has been made available for comment, the City will allow a 30-day period for citizens, public agencies, and interested parties to respond.

Comments may be submitted in writing directly to the office of Planning and Community Development as well as orally at any scheduled neighborhood meetings. The City will consider all comments in preparing the substantial amendment. The City will summarize the comments and make this summary part of the amendment. Further, the City will attach a summary of any comments that were not accepted and provide a written justification for not using them.

### **Evaluating the Implementation of Community Development Plans**

#### **Policies**

The City will provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on performance reports.

#### **Procedures**

Following preparation of an annual performance report, the City will ensure citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties have reasonable opportunity to examine its contents and comment. This public participation will be accomplished as follows:

1. Publish a summary of the performance report as a display advertisement in the Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star newspaper. This ad will describe the performance report and specify where copies of the full report may be examined.
2. Provide a summary of the performance report to neighborhood civic organizations.
3. Ensure copies of the report are available on the City's website ([www.fredericksburgva.gov](http://www.fredericksburgva.gov)), at the Central Rappahannock Regional Library (1201

Caroline Street), and in the Office of Planning and Community Development (Room 209 of City Hall, 715 Princess Anne Street).

Once the report has been made available for comment, the City will allow a 15-day period for citizens, public agencies, and interested parties to respond.

Comments may be submitted in writing directly to the Office of Planning and Community Development as well as orally at public hearings and scheduled neighborhood meetings. The City will consider all comments in preparing the performance report. A summary of comments will be attached to the report.

## **ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES**

### **Public Hearings**

The City will conduct at least two public hearings per year to obtain citizen's views and to respond to proposals and questions.

The first scheduled hearing shall coincide with one of City Council's regularly scheduled public hearings during the month of February. This is the time when plans are being developed for the coming program year, but before a final plan is adopted. The purpose of this hearing is to obtain the views of citizens on housing and community development needs (including priority non-housing community development needs) as well as the development of proposed activities. In addition to the formal hearing, the Planning staff will notify each predominantly low- to moderate-income neighborhood/civic association and neighborhood/civic association where there is a concentration of minority members and extend an offer to meet with them directly, to solicit public comments at an organization's regularly scheduled meeting.

The second scheduled hearing shall coincide with one of City Council's regularly scheduled public hearings during the month of August. This is the time when a performance report is being developed for the past program year, but before a final report is approved for submittal to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The purpose of this hearing is to allow citizens to review and comment on the City's implementation of the previous community development plan and / or annual action plan.

Notice of public hearings shall be published in the local newspaper and mailed directly to neighborhood civic organizations and other interested parties. Published notice shall appear in the Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star newspaper once a week for two successive weeks, with the public hearing to occur during the third successive week, as specified in the City Code. Notices mailed directly shall be sent in a timely manner so they reach the respective neighborhood groups or interested parties in time for the announcement to be made at a regularly scheduled meeting of the group or party.

Notice of public hearing will be provided through the local chapter of the National Organization for the Advancement of Hispanics and any translation and further distribution in Spanish will be coordinated through this organization, upon request.

Hearings shall be held in City Hall Council Chambers, at 7:30 p.m. This evening hour is established during non-working hours to allow interested persons to attend. Council Chambers are fully accessible and are centrally located to allow all City residents to attend. If a significant number of non-English speaking persons are reasonably expected to participate, the City will provide an appropriate interpreter.

### **Documents and Records Available to the Public**

All adopted consolidated plans, annual action plans, substantial amendments, and performance reports will be made available to the public. Copies will be provided to the Central Rappahannock Regional Library (1201 Caroline Street) and will be available on the City's website ([www.fredericksburgva.gov](http://www.fredericksburgva.gov)) and in the Office of Planning and Community Development (Room 209 of City Hall, 715 Princess Anne Street). Both of these facilities and website are fully accessible. If necessary, materials will be made available, upon request, in a form accessible to persons with disabilities or in a language that can be understood by non-English speaking persons.

Information and records relating to the City's consolidated plan and its use of CDBG funds during the preceding five (5) years shall also be made available to the public. Citizens, public agencies, and interested parties shall be able to obtain timely access to such information in the Office of Planning and Community Development (Room 209 of City Hall, 715 Princess Anne Street).

### **Technical Assistance**

The Office of Planning and Community Development shall provide technical assistance to groups representative of persons of low and moderate income that request such assistance in developing proposals for funding assistance under any of the programs covered by the consolidated plan. This technical assistance shall consist of the provision of available and relevant information rather than funds.

### **Complaint Procedures**

Complaints related to the consolidated plan, amendments, and performance reports should be made to the Office of Planning and Community Development. The Planning Office will respond, in writing, to all written complaints, within 15 calendar days. If a citizen does not believe his or her complaint has been adequately addressed by the Planning Office, they shall have the option of taking their complaint to the City Manager.

# APPENDIX

