



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN 2020-2024

Prepared by the Community Services Department



City of Auburn

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN 2020-2024

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Citizen Participation Plan

AS AMENDED

A. Overview

An essential component of determining the need for government action is to obtain input from the local public. Citizen involvement in program planning and development is recognized as essential, not simply because of State and Federal requirements, but because 1) to better inform the public about community needs and resources available; 2) to learn more about hidden community needs, and 3) to allow citizens to bring forward ideas on how to address community needs.

To encourage and support the participation of citizens, the City of Auburn (City) will provide information, hold public hearings, and offer citizens the opportunity to comment on the City's programs and activities that are financed with entitlement funds from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The City will also provide citizens the opportunity to assess the results of the use of these funds.

This amended Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) set forth the manner and period in which citizens will be informed and encouraged to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, subsequent amendments to these plans, and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). A brief description of these plans follow:

Consolidated Plan – The City, as a recipient of entitlements funding from HUD, must submit a Consolidated Plan every five years. The Consolidated Plan is a five-year planning framework, which describes needs, resources, priorities, and proposed activities to be undertaken with funding under the CDBG program. The Consolidated Plan also includes a one-year Action Plan. Each year thereafter during the five years, a one-year Action Plan is required.

Annual Action Plan – The Annual Action Plan is a yearly update of the Consolidated Plan. The Annual Action Plan states the amount of assistance the City expects to receive from the CDBG program and the specific projects that will be undertaken to address the needs and priorities established in the Consolidated Plan. The Annual Action Plan is due to HUD by April 15.

CAPER – The CAPER is a yearly report that describes the projects that were funded the previous program year, including funds that were budgeted for each project, the amount expended for each project, and the accomplishments achieved. The City's CDBG program year begins June 1 and ends May 31 of the following year. The CAPER is due to HUD within 90 days of the close of the program year.

Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice – The Analysis of Impediments (AI) to Fair Housing Choice is a process that entitlement cities of grant funds from HUD undertake as part of their obligation to affirmatively further fair housing under the Fair Housing Act. The Plan includes an analysis of fair housing data, assesses fair housing issues and contributing factors identifies impediments to fair housing choice in the City, and outlines the strategies to address impediments identified. The City will submit the AI to HUD, along with the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan and the CPP.

The goal of the Housing and Community Development Act and the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) is the development of viable urban communities. These viable communities are achieved by providing the following:

1. Decent, safe, and sanitary housing;
2. Suitable living environment; and to
3. Expand economic opportunities.

The program’s primary beneficiaries are low to moderate-income (LMI) households, defined as having incomes within 80% of the Area Median, adjusted for family size, and established by HUD.

Each CDBG activity will meet one of the three HUD National Objectives:

1. Provide a benefit to low- and moderate-income persons;
2. Prevention or elimination of slums and blight; or
3. Meet an urgent community need that threatens the health or welfare of residents.

B. Consultation Process

The City will consult with the following during preparation of the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan:

1. The City will encourage, in conjunction with consultation with Auburn Housing Authority, the participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments.
2. The City will consult with other public and private agencies that provide assisted housing, health services, and social services.
3. The City will consult with local health and child welfare agencies to obtain data on lead-based paint to gather information on locations of units where lead-poisoned children live.
4. The City will consult with adjacent units of local government to identify and discuss non-housing community development needs.

C. Public Hearing

The City will hold at least two (2) public hearings before submission of the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan. The first public hearing will be held during the development process before the Consolidated Plan/Action Plan is published. During this hearing, the City will receive citizen views on the proposed use of funds, discuss the application process for the use of CDBG funds, and answer any questions that may arise during the phase of developing the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan. The City will encourage those desirous of developing proposals for CDBG funding to contact the City's Community Services Department for technical assistance and program requirements. The second public hearing will be held to receive comments on the draft Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan.

The City will hold at least one public hearing during the comment period for substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan, adoption of the CAPER, and revisions to the CPP.

The following guidelines have been formulated for public hearings:

1. A public hearing will be prominently advertised at least fifteen (15) calendar days before the date of the hearing, with sufficient information about the subject of the public hearing, times and location.
2. A public hearing will be held at a convenient time and place to facilitate broad citizen participation.
3. A public hearing will be held at either a City building or a location that is conducive to the intended program beneficiaries. All sites will be accessible to persons with disabilities.
4. The following information will be furnished to citizens attending public hearing regarding the Consolidated Plan/Action Plan:
 - (a) Summary of the proposed project;
 - (b) Amount of funds available for proposed community development;
 - (c) Range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount of funds, proposed to be used for activities benefiting LMI persons; and
 - (d) Actual use of funds by the grantee.
5. A roster of citizens who attended the public hearing will be kept. This record will include the name and address or organization of each person present.

6. Minutes will be kept of all public hearings. The minutes will be kept on file at the Community Services Department to provide documentation of the public hearing. A summary of the public hearing, including alternatives discussed, levels of opposition to the proposed plan, and the source of opposition will be included in the minutes.
7. The City will use the most current Census to determine the number of residents of Limited English Proficiency. The following procedures will be followed to meet the needs of citizens of Limited English Proficiency.
 - (a) Where the history of public hearings has shown no participation and involvement of Limited English Proficiency residents, and where the Census shows no significant number (less than 5 percent) of Limited English Proficiency residents, no special measures will be taken.
 - (b) Where the history of public hearings has shown participation and involvement of Limited English Proficiency residents, and the Census shows a significant number (more than 5 percent), the following measures will be taken to overcome any language barriers that may exist so that the informational needs of these residents will be met:
 - (1) The hearing will be held as scheduled with a translator/interpreter in attendance for translation.
 - (2) Notices of public hearings will be placed in local specialty newspapers (when available) and posted in appropriate places.

D. Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice

The process for developing the AI and citizens' participation is the same processes for developing the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan, and substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan concerning public hearing notices, public hearings, public comment periods, and publication.

The City will amend its approved AI whenever (1) a material change occurs that affects the information on which the AI is based; (2) significant changes in the City's demographics; and (3) significant contributing factors in the City that limits fair housing choice.

E. Access to Public Records

The City will provide full and timely disclosure of CDBG program records and information consistent with applicable laws regarding personal privacy and obligations of confidentiality. Program records will be kept at the Community Services Department located at 400 Boykin Street for convenient inspection by the public, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The City may charge a reasonable fee for copies to recover the cost of materials.

Copies of the following plans and reports will be available for review at the locations listed under the “Public Review Sites” section of this Plan:

1. Adopted Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan
2. Substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan
3. Consolidated Annual Performance Report
4. Citizen Participation Plan
5. Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice

F. Publication of Notices and Documents

To provide citizens an opportunity to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan, CAPER, AI, and CPP, the City will publish notices of public hearings, availability of draft documents, and comment periods.

Notices

Notices will be published and posted as follows:

1. The notice of the time, place, and purpose of the public hearing will be published as a display ad, in the non-legal section of one of the local newspapers.
2. Notices of the public hearing will be placed in local specialty newspapers (as needed and when available) and posted in appropriate places.
3. Notice of public hearing may also be distributed to affected citizens, interested persons, various community organizations, and non-profit groups through electronic mailings, press releases, statements by public officials, media advertisements, public service announcements, newsletters, contacts with neighborhood organizations, and/or through social media.
4. Notice of a public hearing will also be posted on the official bulletin boards in City buildings at least fifteen (15) days before the date of the public hearing.
5. Notice of a public hearing on the draft Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan, substantial amendments, AI, and CAPER will be published on the City’s website at <https://www.auburnalabama.org/community-development/resources/>.
6. The time and place of outreach public meeting will be posted – or announced in public places frequented by citizens residing in the service area.

Documents

The City will publish the following documents:

1. Executive summary of the draft Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan, AI, CPP, or substantial amendment will be published in one of the local newspapers and on the City's website at <https://www.auburnalabama.org/community-development/resources/>.
2. Adopted Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan, CAPER, AI, CPP, and a substantial amendment will be published on the City's website at <https://www.auburnalabama.org/community-development/resources/>.

G. Public Comment Period

The public will be provided with a comment period to review and submit comments on the following:

1. Draft Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan. The public will be provided with a 30-day comment period on the Draft Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan.
2. CAPER. The public will be provided with a 15-day comment period on the CAPER.
3. Draft Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. The public will be provided with a 30-day comment period on the Draft Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice and any subsequent revisions.
4. Substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan. The public will be provided with a 30-day comment period to receive comments on a proposed substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan.
5. CPP. The City will amend the CPP as Federal/State regulations require and the City deems necessary. Citizens will be provided a 15-day comment period on a CPP amendment.

Citizen comments received during the public comment period will be summarized in writing and included in an attachment to the relevant final plan submitted to HUD. The summary will include city staff responses to the comments received.

Documents that require a public comment period will be available for review at the locations listed under the "Document Review Sites" section of this Plan.

The City will include the following address in public notices stating where to send written comments:

City of Auburn
Community Services Department
144 Tichenor Avenue
Auburn, Alabama 36830

Also, the City will include the name, telephone number, and email address of the Community Services Department staff responsible for receiving written citizen comments.

H. Technical Assistance

The City of Auburn will provide the following technical assistance to organizations or groups desiring to develop proposals on behalf of LMI persons residing in the City:

1. Staff available to answer questions concerning the CDBG program, including the application process and program management and implementation.
2. Staff assistance in developing the written proposal. Staff will explain how the proposal should be organized and presented.
3. Staff assistance in interpreting program data collected by the City.

The City will provide notification of the formal application process and will encourage applicants to contact the City's Community Services Department for technical assistance. Applicants will be informed at the public hearing regarding the application process of the anticipated amount of funds available, deadline for submission of the application, the range of projects that are funded, and any relevant program requirements. Also, applicants will be informed that applications submitted after the date and time indicated will not be accepted for funding.

Technical assistance should not be construed to infer that the City is required to subsidize the operating expense of those developing proposals.

All requests for technical assistance must be submitted in writing to the Community Services Director. If a request for assistance lies outside the areas of expertise of the City staff, the requesting person/organization will be notified and referred, when possible, to an appropriate agency.

When practicable, the Community Services Department will meet with community organizations to obtain their views on housing and non-housing needs and respond to technical questions, such as determining program eligibility.

I. Grievance Process

Any citizen/organization (hereafter referred to as the “complainant”) who is aggrieved because of any aspect of the local community development program and wishes to file a complaint or grievance must follow the following procedures:

1. The complainant will first present his or her grievance in writing to the Community Services Director who will make careful inquiries into the facts and circumstances of the complaint. The Community Services Director will attempt to resolve the problem promptly and give a reply to the complainant within fifteen (15) working days from the date the grievance is submitted.
2. A complainant who is dissatisfied with the decision of the Community Services Director may submit his or her grievance in writing to the Development Services Executive Director. The Development Services Executive Director will attempt to resolve the problem promptly and give a reply to the complainant within fifteen (15) working days from the date the grievance is submitted.
3. A complainant who is dissatisfied with the decision of the Development Services Executive Director may submit his or her grievance in writing to the City Manager. The City Manager will make a separate inquiry and inform the complainant of his decision and reasons therefore within 15 days where practicable.
4. If the complainant is still aggrieved, his or her authorized representative may request in writing to the Mayor, within 30 days, a review of the grievance by the Auburn City Council. Such a request will be accompanied by all the facts of the nature of the grievance and all written answers given thereto. The Mayor will introduce the complaint or grievance at the first regular Council meeting. Following receipt of the grievance, all affected parties will be asked to attend the meeting to review the grievance. The Auburn City Council will give their decision in writing to the complainant within 15 working days of the date of the meeting.
5. If the complainant is still aggrieved, he may submit the grievance in writing to the HUD, for review and further information.
6. If the Community Services Director, Development Services Executive Director, City Manager or City Council does not act on the grievance within the specified time, the complainant may submit it to the next higher level, following the applicable procedures.

J. Method of Amending the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan

A Substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan will be considered if the modification is justifiable and the change meets one of the following criteria:

1. A change in its allocation priorities or a change in the method of distribution of funds over thirty-five percent (35%) of the CDBG annual award plus program income;
2. The addition or deletion of an activity not previously described in the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan; and
3. A change in the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.

K. Minimize Displacement

There are no planned public projects or private development activities that would result in displacement. The City will assist such individuals, should such a displacement occur acquire replacement housing per all applicable federal statutes and regulations governing relocation assistance.

L. Document Review Sites

Documents that require a public comment period will be available at the following locations:

Auburn City Hall
144 Tichenor Avenue, Suite 1
Auburn, AL 36830

Auburn Public Library
749 E Thach Avenue
Auburn, AL 36830

Community Services Department
400 Boykin Street
Auburn, AL 36832

City Website:

<https://www.auburnalabama.org/community-development/resources/>.