



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

(Revised as of April 1, 2017)

Community Development Department
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City of Gloucester
Community Development
Citizen Participation Plan
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Pursuant to the requirements of 24 CFR 91.105, the City of Gloucester hereby issues its latest revision of the Citizens Participation Plan to provide for and encourage citizens to participate in the development of the City of Gloucester’s Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, substantial amendments thereto and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER).

Community Development in Gloucester

The City of Gloucester (the City) implements a Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG Program) to meet certain needs in the community. The CDBG Program is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which has national objectives of decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities. The Gloucester CDBG Program will enter its 29th year in July 2017 with a proud record of accomplishment at revitalizing neighborhoods and meeting the needs of low- and moderate-income people. HUD allocates approximately \$500,000 to \$750,000 to the City each year.

Every five years, the Gloucester Community Development Department (the Department) prepares the Consolidated Plan (ConPlan), which examines the community’s need and projects certain goals and objectives to implement with Community Development funding over a five year period. The latest ConPlan is for the Five year period from 2015 – 2019. The Annual Action Plan distills these goals to specific projects and programs for each program year during this period. These Plans may be amended from time to time. The City also submits an Annual Performance and Evaluation Report to HUD after each program year, to report activities undertaken in each previous program year.

This Citizen Participation Plan provides information on how residents, institutions, businesses, and community organizations may participate in the development of the City’s ConPlan, Annual Action Plan, Performance Report and any amendments to the ConPlan or Action Plan.

Copies of this Citizen Participation Plan are available from the Community Development Department, at 3 Pond St., Gloucester, MA 01930, and at Gloucester's Sawyer Free Library.

The City has adopted a philosophy of increasing citizen participation and citizen engagement in the preparation of the ConPlan and Action Plan. The City also collaborates with a number of public and non-profit agencies offering services in Gloucester. Governed by boards of directors, these public and non-profit agencies work to represent the needs of their clients and thus provide two important links to the community.

The responsibility for preparation and execution of the CDBG Program rests with the Mayor of the City. The Mayor certifies compliance to HUD. The Mayor has delegated responsibility for the CDBG Program to the staff in the Community Development Department.

Outreach and the Development of the Consolidated Plan

Community outreach for the ConPlan and Annual Action Plans is ongoing to support the community and the City in formulating and implementing these plans.

Staff will be periodically assisted in the development of the ConPlan and the Action Plan by consultants. Each program year, a series of formal public hearings and informal consultations concerning the ConPlan and the Action plan take place over a 150-day period starting approximately December and continuing through May of the following year. Other informal outreach efforts will continue throughout the year. The Community Development staff regularly work closely and confer with citizens, representative agencies, non-profits, City boards and elected and appointed officials.

Dates of the formal public hearings will be set forth annually in each Action Plan and CAPER. The public hearings will review the concept of the ConPlan and initial input from the various consultations. The ConPlan will then be written in draft form and available for review. Comments and views on the proposed ConPlan will be received for not less than thirty (30) days. After the comment period has expired, the City's Community Development staff and the consultant will review and consider all comments and views regarding the proposed ConPlan. A summary of all comments and views shall be attached to the final ConPlan.

Annually, in addition to ongoing informal consultations, there will be at least one public hearing to review the Community Development program.

The ConPlan will then be submitted to the Mayor for approval before final submission to HUD.

Development of the Action Plan

Eligible projects to be included in the Action Plan are listed below. After public notice, applications for CDBG grants are generally available in December or January. The public notice includes the following information:

- The amount of assistance the City expects to receive in the upcoming community development program year;
- Community priorities and the range of eligible activities;
- The amount of assistance that will benefit persons of low and moderate-income; and
- The plans to minimize displacement of persons and to assist any person displaced.
- Such other information as the city deems relevant.

The date for submission of project proposals for the Action Plan is generally set for a date certain in late February. In the following March there will be an extended public meeting regarding project proposals to be included in the Action Plan. The Action Plan will then be submitted to the City Council as well as the Mayor for review and approval. The Action Plan will then be available to the public for review and comment, before submission to HUD.

National Objectives

HUD has established specific National Objectives that can be funded to assist low to moderate income persons. The National Objectives are:

- Provide decent, safe and sanitary housing
- Provide a suitable living environment
- Expand economic opportunities

Furthermore, under HUD regulations, each activity to be funded meets one of the objectives if it does one or more of the following:

- Serve low or moderate income residents. Low to moderate income residents are defined as individuals, families or households with an annual income less than the Section 8 low income limits or 80 percent or less of the median area income as established by HUD each year.
- Eliminate or reduce slum or blight.
- Meet an “urgent need” such as damage caused by a flood, hurricane or blizzard.

Eligible Activities

Among the activities eligible for financial assistance under the CDBG Program are:

- Acquisition by purchase, lease, donation, or otherwise, of real property for eligible public purposes;
- Disposition of real property acquired with CDBG funds or its retention for public purposes;
- Acquisition, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or installation of public facilities and improvements (except buildings or portions of buildings used predominantly for the general conduct of government) carried out by the City or other public or private non-profit entities;

- Clearance, demolition, and removal of buildings and improvements;
- Public services, including, but not limited to, those concerned with employment, crime prevention, child care, health, drug abuse, education, fair housing counseling, energy conservation, welfare, or recreational needs;
- Interim assistance when immediate action is necessary to arrest deterioration and when permanent improvements will be carried out as soon as practicable and alleviate emergency conditions threatening the public health and safety;
- Payment of the cost of completing an urban renewal project funded under Title I of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended;
- Relocation payments and other assistance for permanently or temporarily displaced individuals, families, businesses, non-profit organizations, and farm operations where required by federal regulations or otherwise determined appropriate;
- Payment to housing owners for losses of rental income incurred in holding, for temporary periods, housing units to be utilized for the relocation of individuals and families displaced by program activities;
- Special projects directed to remove materials and architectural barriers which restrict the mobility and accessibility of elderly or handicapped persons;
- Acquisition, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or installation of distribution lines and facilities of privately-owned utilities;
- Economic development activities such as job creation; and
- Rehabilitation of privately-owned buildings and improvements for residential purposes, low-income public housing and other publicly-owned residential buildings and improvements otherwise eligible for assistance, and manufactured housing that is part of the permanent housing stock.

Amendments

The ConPlan or the Action Plan can be amended, in accordance with federal regulation (24 CFR 91.505) when the Community Development staff makes one or more of the following decisions:

1. To make a substantial change in the allocation priorities (that is, to add or delete a priority category) or a substantial change in the method of distribution of funds (that is, to change from distributing funds through a government agency to a private one or vice versa).
2. To carry out an activity using funds from any program covered by the ConPlan (including program income) not previously described in the Action Plan.
3. To substantially change the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of the selected programs.

The Community Development staff will provide the public an opportunity to comment on substantial amendments. Notice for amending the ConPlan or the Action Plan will be provided to the public.

A minimum of thirty (30) days will be allowed in which to receive comments on the proposed amendment(s) before said amendment(s) is/are implemented. A summary of all comments and views will be attached to the amended ConPlan or Action Plan.

Performance Report

The City publishes the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The CAPER is made available to the public in the Community Development Office and the Sawyer Free Library for comments for a minimum of fifteen (15) days prior to being submitted to HUD.

Collaboration

There are multiple groups that the Community Development Department collaborates with for the development of the ConPlan and the Action Plan.

- City Departments. There are a number of city departments that work on the planning and implementation of the CDBG projects and programs. For instance, the Public Works department installs sewer lines and hookups that have been an important part of the Gloucester Community Development Program. The Planning Department is responsible for the Community Development Plan and the Comprehensive Plan, which includes elements on housing and economics. The efforts and coordination of City departments is essential for the ConPlan.
- Non-profit entities. A number of non-profit agencies implement programs in Gloucester that reach neighborhoods and people who are the focus of community development programs. For instance, Action, Inc. implements the state lead hazard reduction program in Gloucester. The City coordinates its housing rehabilitation program very closely with Action, Inc.
- Other city boards. Gloucester has a number of appointed boards which plan for and serve the needs of neighborhoods and persons who are the focus of the CDBG Program.
- Public entities. The plans and activities of the Gloucester Housing Authority will be an important consideration in formulating the ConPlan, in particular. Other public entities, including state agencies or surrounding communities, may also be considered.
- Gloucester Downtown Business Groups. The Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Development Committee are groups composed of small business owners and representatives of larger businesses. Representatives of both of these groups will be consulted in the formulation of the ConPlan and the Action Plan.

Technical Assistance

The City of Gloucester is committed to providing technical assistance to any group seeking information or wishing to provide input to the community development process. For instance, more detailed information is available about the (Federal) legislative

mandate of the program, the City's policies and procedures, and the strategies and activities designed to comply with the regulations. Community Development staff is available to respond to questions and comments about the program.

Public Access

The public hearings will be held with sufficient notice to the general public. Location and time of all public hearings will be both handicap accessible and convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries. Translation assistance for non-English speaking persons and interpreter assistance for the hearing impaired will be provided if requested at least 48 hours prior to the hearing.

Notices for all public hearings will be published in the non-legal section of The Cape Ann Beacon and/or Gloucester Daily Times, and posted at the City Clerk's Office, The Community Development Office, and the Sawyer Free Library.

Displacement Plan and Assistance

Occasionally the Action Plan will fund projects that may cause the displacement of families, individuals or business concerns. Involuntary displacement of families and individuals may take place on a temporary, limited basis due to the regular activities of the housing rehabilitation and/or lead hazard reduction program. Buildings and other structures considered as unsafe or unfit for human habitation will be posted as such and any occupants relocated in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Uniform Relocation Act. If displacement was to occur, the City would implement all appropriate provisions of the Uniform Relocation Act, including residential housing payment and business reestablishment payments

Contacts

Community Development staff can be reached at 978-325-5243. The contact person on the staff with the responsibility for the ConPlan and the Action Plan is the Community Development Director. If the Director or staff is unavailable for the initial call, calls will be returned promptly.

Comments and Complaints

Gloucester's Community Development staff will accept any comments or views of citizens in writing or orally at any time in preparing the ConPlan, Annual Action Plan or amendments to either or to the performance reports. A summary of all comments or views received will be attached to the final ConPlan, Action Plan, amendments or the performance reports for which those comments or views apply.

The Community Development Department is also responsible for responding to complaints from citizens regarding the ConPlan, Annual Action Plan, related amendments, the performance report and the Citizens Participation Plan. Comments may

be submitted in writing to the Community Development Department by mail or in person. When submitting a complaint, citizens shall provide a description of the specific activity or project that is the subject of the complaint, information on the organization responsible for carrying out the activity or project and a detailed statement of the grievance. Complaints must be mailed or hand delivered to the Community Development Department at 3 Pond Road, Gloucester, MA 01930.

Staff will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within fifteen (15) working days (where applicable) of receipt. Thereafter the staff will investigate the complaint and respond in writing to the complainant within ninety (90) working days of the complaint.