



TOWN OF FAIRFIELD

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
BLOCK GRANT**

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
PLAN**

Office of Community & Economic Development

January 2018

Town of Fairfield, Connecticut
Citizen Participation Plan
January 2018

I. Introduction

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program is authorized pursuant to Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, and is administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through its Office of Community Planning and Development. The Town of Fairfield is an entitlement community, meaning that it receives an annual allocation of CDBG funds. As a condition of its continued participation in and receipt of funds under the CDBG Program, the Town of Fairfield is required to prepare and adopt a Citizen Participation Plan. This plan sets forth the Town's policies and procedures for citizen participation as required under 24 CFR, Part 91, Subpart B, Citizen Participation and Consultation (§91.105), and Subpart F, Amendments to the Consolidated Plan (§91.505).

II. Citizen Participation

The Town of Fairfield encourages its citizens to participate in the planning and development of the Consolidated Plan, including any substantial amendments made thereto, as well as the Annual Action Plan, the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) and other reporting requirements of the CDBG Program. The Town encourages the active participation of all of its citizens, including persons with disabilities, minorities and non-English speaking persons, and particularly those of low to moderate income, those living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used. The Town will take reasonable steps to keep the community informed of its CDBG activities, including upcoming hearings, public comment periods, and proposed changes to the CDBG Program. Specific measures are further outlined below.

III. Public Hearings

The Town will conduct at least two (2) public hearings each year to obtain citizens views and to respond to proposals and suggestions from the public. A hearing will take place during the initial development of the Annual Action Plan, and will address housing and community development needs and overall program performance, as well as entertain suggestions from the public on projects or activities for funding consideration. A second hearing will be held to elicit additional comments on the Plan prior to its adoption by the Representative Town Meeting (RTM) and its submission to HUD. The Town will make every effort to conduct such hearings at times and locations convenient to residents, and will make accommodations for persons with disabilities or non-English speaking persons, with sufficient prior notice. For example, the Town will arrange for the services of a translator at meetings in which the Town anticipates that a significant number of the expected attendees are non-English speaking persons. Prior to any public hearing, the Town will publish notice in at least two newspapers of general circulation within the community. Such notice will be published at least fifteen (15) days in advance of the scheduled hearing, and shall contain the purpose, the time and location of the hearing, and a description of how the Town will meet the needs of persons with disabilities and non-English-speaking persons.

IV. Public Comments

Prior to submission to HUD, the Town will provide a 30-day public comment period for citizens to review and comment upon the Plan or any substantial amendment proposed thereto. The public comment period will begin on the date of publication, and the notice shall provide a date through which comments may be submitted. Comments expressed orally during a public hearing will be reflected in the minutes of the hearing. Written comments will be received by the Office

of Community and Economic Development, Old Town Hall, 611 Old Post Road, Fairfield, CT, 06824. The Town will consider all comments or views of citizens expressed orally or in writing in preparing the final plan or any subsequent amendments proposed thereto. The Town will prepare and append to its report to HUD a summary of all timely comments received, including those not accepted and the reasons therefor. In the case of an Environmental Review Record (ERR) or a Request for Release of Funds (RROF), the Town shall provide at least fifteen (15) days for citizens to review these records prior to their submission to HUD. Additional written comments may be submitted directly to HUD within 15 days of the date HUD receives the Town of Fairfield's ERR or RROF. During the public comment period, copies of the document or report in question will be made available for review in the Office of Community and Economic Development, the Office of the Town Clerk and the Main Branch of the Fairfield Public Library. Additionally, the Town will make available the report, or a summary of the report, on the Town's web page at <http://www.fairfield.org>, whenever possible. All documents will remain available for review in the Office of Community and Economic Development for a period of not less than five (5) years following the date of submission.

V. Development of the Consolidated Plan

The Town shall consult with other agencies and solicit citizen input during development of its Consolidated Plan. The Town shall encourage, in conjunction with the public housing authority, the participation of residents of public and assisted housing in the development and implementation of its Plan. Prior to the adoption of its Plan, the Town shall provide public agencies, citizens and other interested parties with information concerning the amount of assistance the Town expects to receive from grant funds as well as program income, the range of activities that may be undertaken, and the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low and

moderate income. At a minimum, the Town will perform the following activities to encourage citizen participation in the planning process.

The Town shall notify Town departments, public agencies, past recipients and other interested parties of the commencement of the consolidated planning process. In this notification, the Town shall invite the involvement and participation of these groups in the development of the Plan. The Town shall further publish notice in two newspapers of general circulation within the community as outlined above in Section IV. Such notice shall describe the contents and purpose of the Plan, provide a list of locations where the Plan can be viewed in its entirety and specify how interested parties may comment upon the Plan. The Town shall make available copies of the Consolidated Plan in the Office of Community and Economic Development, in the Office of the Town Clerk and in the Main Branch of the Public Library. The Town shall also provide information regarding the Consolidated Plan on the Town's web site, whenever possible. The Town shall conduct at least one public hearing during development of the Plan to solicit citizen views on housing and non-housing community needs, overall program performance and on suggestions for future projects and/or activities. The public hearing shall be noticed in accordance with the procedures outlined above in Section III. The Town will provide at no charge an executive summary of the Plan to all members of the general public who request such a copy.

VI. Amendments

The Town will consider a substantial amendment to be a change in the use of CDBG entitlement funds from one eligible activity to another, or an additional allocation of program income or unprogrammed CDBG entitlement funding not otherwise included in the Plan, provided that the amount of such change is greater than or equal to \$10,000. Prior to implementing any such

amendment, the Town will publish a notice of the proposed amendment(s) and provide a 30-day public comment period, as outlined above in Section IV.

VII. Performance Reports

The Town is required to report annually on project accomplishments and the progress that it has made in carrying out the goals outlined in the Consolidated and Annual Action Plans. This report is known as the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER). The Town shall provide notice in at least two newspapers of general circulation within the community regarding the availability of the CAPER. The notice shall provide a minimum of fifteen (15) days in which to receive comments on the performance report prior to its submission to HUD. The notice shall also provide a general description of the purpose of the report, where copies of the report may be reviewed, how to submit comments on the report and the date by which those comments must be received. The Town shall consider all comments expressed either orally or in writing and received within the public comment period in preparing the CAPER. The Town shall append a summary of these comments to the CAPER in its submission to HUD.

VIII. Technical Assistance

The Town, in its role as the participating jurisdiction, will provide technical assistance to groups representative of persons of low and moderate income that request such assistance in developing proposals for CDBG funding. The Town will determine the level and type of assistance to be provided based on the specific needs of each group requesting such assistance.

IX. Complaints

The Town will promptly investigate and provide a timely, substantive written response to every written citizen complaint within fifteen (15) business days, whenever practicable. Persons wishing to submit a written complaint on any aspect of the CDBG Program should direct such correspondence to the Office of Community and Economic Development, Old Town Hall, 611 Old Post Road, Fairfield, CT, 06824. Persons may also contact the office by telephone at (203) 256-3120, or in person during normal business hours.

X. Citizen Participation Plan

The Town shall adopt and abide by its Citizen Participation Plan. The Town shall make available copies of its Citizen Participation Plan through the Office of Community of Community & Economic Development, the Main Branch of the Fairfield Public Library and the Office of the Town Clerk. The Town shall provide the public with annual notice of the availability of its Citizen Participation Plan. The Town shall review and update, as necessary and appropriate, its Citizen Participation Plan annually. The Town shall notify the general public of any proposed changes to the Citizen Participation Plan in accordance with the procedures outlined above, prior to implementation. The Town shall make its Citizen Participation Plan available in a formal accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request. Any person with a disability or a non-English speaking individual who needs assistance to review this Citizen Participation Plan should contact the Office of Community and Economic Development. It is noted that the responsibility for developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan rests solely with the Town of Fairfield. Nothing herein should be construed as limiting or restricting the responsibility or authority of the Town of Fairfield for the development and execution of its Consolidated Plan.

Submitted by:

(To be signed & dated after public comment period)

Mark S. Barnhart, Director
Office of Community and Economic Development

Date

Approved by:

(To be signed & dated after public comment period)

Michael C. Tetreau, First Selectman

Date

**PUBLIC NOTICE
TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
Community Development Block Grant
Notice of Intent to Amend the Citizen Participation Plan**

TO ALL INTERESTED AGENCIES, GROUPS AND PERSONS:

Notice is hereby provided that the Town of Fairfield is accepting public comment on a proposed revision to its Citizen Participation Plan. The Town is required to prepare and adopt a Citizen Participation Plan, setting forth the Town's policies and procedures for citizen participation, as a result of its participation in, and receipt of funding through, the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program.

The citizen participation plan encourages community involvement in the development of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan(s), as well as the preparation of the Environmental Review Record and Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER). The Town encourages the participation of all residents and interested parties, including persons with disabilities, minorities and non-English speaking persons, and particularly those of low to moderate income and those residing in areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used. The Town will take reasonable steps to keep the community informed of its CDBG activities, including upcoming hearings, public comment periods, and proposed amendments to the Annual Action Plan(s). This current revision is to amend the definition of a "substantial amendment" under the plan. Previously, a substantial amendment was an additional allocation of program income or unprogrammed CDBG entitlement funding not otherwise included in the Plan provided that the amount of such change is greater than or equal to \$5,000. In this update, the amount will increase to \$10,000.

A copy of the Plan is available for review at the Office of Community and Economic Development, Old Town Hall, 611 Old Post Road, Fairfield, CT 06824, (203) 256-3120, the Office of Town Clerk, Old Town Hall, and the Fairfield Main Branch Library, 1080 Old Post Road, Fairfield, CT. It may also be viewed on our website: www.fairfieldct.org, click on COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT. Written comments on the Plan will be accepted by the Office of Community and Economic Development, Old Town Hall, 611 Old Post Road, Fairfield, CT 06824. All comments received during the 30-day comment period, ending December 11, 2017 will be considered. Persons with disabilities and non-English speaking person(s) requiring special assistance to review the document should contact the Office of Community and Economic Development.

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Citizen Participation Plan Appendix

The Citizen Participation Plan was last updated in 2010 to amend the definition of a “substantial amendment” under the plan. Previously, a substantial amendment was an additional allocation of program income or unprogrammed CDBG entitlement funding not otherwise included in the Plan, provided that the amount of such change is greater than or equal to \$1,000. In the 2010 update, this amount was increased to \$5,000. Now in 2018, this amount will increase to \$10,000.

Notice of the amended Citizen Participation Plan was provided in the CT Post and Fairfield Citizen News, as well as on the Town Of Fairfield website. The notice indicated that public comments would be accepted until the close of the business day on December 11, 2017. There were no comments received by the established deadline.