

4. Citizen Participation and Consultation Process in the FY 2015-2020 Five Year Consolidated Action Plan

The purpose of the Citizen Participation Plan developed for the FY 2015-2020 Five Year Consolidated Action Plan is to make the process of investing in the City of Rochester's community as inclusive as possible. It is the desire of the Community Development Division to have the objectives and activities undertaken with received CDBG funds reflect the needs and desires of the people of the City of Rochester.

This process is an ongoing activity and includes both formal and informal outreach to the area community. Staff works actively to communicate with its citizens, neighborhood coalitions, City departments and law enforcement, nonprofit agencies, local business interests, community and faith-based organizations, and the New Hampshire Balance of State Continuum of Care. Specific efforts will be made to reach residents living in revitalization areas, slum, or blighted area, as well as neighborhoods designated by HUD as 51% or greater low- to moderate-income. This will include staff attendance at neighborhood meetings in these areas, outreach to the Rochester Housing Authority's residents and resident advisory board, and related activities.

All official public hearing notices and other important documents will be posted in accordance with the City of Rochester's Language Access Plan, which provides that such documents include a notice in French that oral interpretation of such documents is available for free upon request. The full Language Access Plan is available on the Community Development Division webpages at <http://www.rochesternh.net/community-development-division/pages/policies-and-procedures>.

The Community Development Division provides technical and other assistance to citizens, public agencies, and any interested parties in the development of projects or activities to address priority needs in Rochester. Copies and summaries of the Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan drafts are available in the Office of Economic & Community Department and on the Community Development Division web page, located at <http://www.rochesternh.net/community-development-division>. These documents are also available via electronic attachments upon request. Applications and comments will be available for public inspection throughout the application evaluation period.

As part of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan processes, staff make efforts to bring the developing plan concepts to the community via available community gatherings and forums. This includes public service networking groups, neighborhood coalition meetings, presentations to community group and associations, and postings to the Office of Economic & Community Development's social media accounts (e.g., Facebook and Twitter). Creativity in receiving input from the public and the effective use of modern communicative technology are the goals of the Community Development Division.

The City of Rochester's citizen involvement plan includes the following:

Public Hearing (First): Public is gathered at a formal public hearing, held prior to the City Council workshop on December 16, 2014. This meeting is intended to solicit the public's feedback on current CDBG projects and performance, perceived needs for future projects, and general opinions and concerns regarding community development in the City of Rochester.

This meeting is held in a location that is accessible to people with physical disabilities. Accommodations for people with visual or hearing impairments, as well as accommodations for Limited English Proficiency speakers, are made upon request. This hearing is advertised in one

or more local newspapers within ten to fourteen days of the hearing. Public notice also is provided at strategic sites of public interest, including the public library, community center, and City Hall. Notice is provided via electronic means, as well, including but not limited to email announcements to community stakeholders (e.g., currently-funded non-profits and community business associations), postings to the Community Development Division's website, and postings to the Office of Economic & Community Development's social media accounts (e.g., Facebook and Twitter).

Following this hearing, minutes are made available on the City of Rochester's website, and interested parties can view the hearing in its entirety on the local government channel as well as online. The online "On Demand" video for the first public hearing is available online at <http://rochesternh.pegcentral.com/player.php?video=7055a81448541f30916f011a4198b567>.

Funding Notice: The Economic & Community Development Office annually announces the Community Development Block Grant funds anticipated from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, as well as the procedures and deadlines for making application to the City of Rochester. Notices of application availability are sent via U.S. postal mail and/or electronic means to current public service partners and groups with projects in development, as well as to other identified public service agencies that engage in work that is eligible for CDBG funding. Notice also is provided via electronic means, including but not limited to email announcements to community stakeholders (e.g., currently-funded non-profits and community business associations), postings to the Community Development Division webpage, and postings to the Economic & Community Development Office's social media accounts (e.g., Facebook and Twitter). The application will include actual or estimated funds available for distribution, a timetable for application evaluation, public hearing, and public comment period.

Application Period: Applications for project funding are due in mid January.

Application Evaluation Process: All applications are reviewed by staff, and recommendations are relayed to the City's Community Development Committee. The Community Development Committee scores each application according to predetermined objectives that have been aligned with the City's identified priorities and needs. Once the applications have been scored, recommendations from the Community Development Committee are presented to the City Council at the City Council's next regular meeting (generally April) in the form of the recommended Annual Action Plan.

Public Hearing (Second): The draft Annual Action Plan is subject to a public hearing (preceding the April City Council workshop or May City Council meeting). This meeting is held in a location that is accessible to people with physical disabilities. Accommodations for people with visual or hearing impairments are made upon request.

This meeting is held in a location that is accessible to people with physical disabilities. Accommodations for people with visual or hearing impairments, as well as accommodations for Limited English Proficiency speakers, are made upon request. Notification of this public hearing and draft plan availability are published in one or more local newspapers within ten to fourteen days of the public hearing. Public notice is provided at strategic sites of public interest, including the public library, community center, and City Hall. Notice also is provided via electronic means, including but not limited to email announcements to community stakeholders (e.g., currently-funded non-profits and community business associations), postings to the Economic & Community Development Office's website, and postings to the Economic & Community Development Office's social media accounts (e.g., Facebook and Twitter).

Following this hearing, minutes are made available on the City of Rochester's website, and interested parties can view the hearing in its entirety on the local government channel as well as online.

Public Comment: Comments are accepted throughout the Consolidated Plan and first-year Annual Action Plan preparation process via in-person meetings, postal mail, telephone, and electronic means of communication; however, a formal 30-day public comments period is also announced via publishing in one or more general newspapers of local circulation. The notice will include a summary of the plan(s), details or estimate of available funding, details as to proposed activities, and information on where copies of the plan can be obtained by members of the general public. Free copies of the plan(s) will be made available upon request.

Comments received during the public comment period, as well as comments received during public hearings and at other public meetings, are summarized and included in the Annual Action Plan and Five Year Consolidated Plan. Comments may be oral or written. The Community Development Division responds to concerns and directives through appropriate programming allocations or refers concerns and directives to the proper City department for follow-up. Any comments not accepted will include a response from the Community Development Division as to why the comments were not accepted. These comments are forwarded to HUD as part of the completed Consolidated Plan and first-year Annual Action Plan.

It should be noted that the second public hearing and all City Council discussions and actions taken regarding the Community Development Block Grant are held in the City Council Chambers and are televised via the Government Channel carried by the local cable television company. These meetings are also replayed several times in the week following the meeting.

Substantial Amendments: The City's Consolidated Plan may be amended if substantial changes in planned or actual activities must occur due to new information about the make-up, needs, or growth of the City of Rochester's communities. Creation of new goals, funding of entirely new activities, and/or changes in funding in excess of \$50,000 triggers review by the Community Development Committee. The Community Development Committee evaluates changes to the Consolidated Plan, and their recommendations are forwarded to the City Council for further input as needed. Substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan herein are subject to the public participation process, outlined above, as well as to full City Council approval.

All other amendments are considered minor and are not subject to the public participation process. Instead, the minor amendment will be posted to the Community Development Division's webpages and made available to the general public upon request.

Complaints: The Community Development Division will respond to all citizen complaints submitted in writing within fifteen (15) business days. This response may be a statement that more time is needed to provide a more substantive response, in which case the substantive response will be provided within thirty (30) business days.