



City of Santa Cruz

Citizen Participation Plan

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City of Santa Cruz

Citizen Participation Plan

A. INTRODUCTION

The City of Santa Cruz (City) receives annual funding from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the Home Investment Partnership (HOME) Programs. For these programs, the City's Five-Year Consolidated Plan and companion annual Action Plan provides direction for housing and community development activities to be carried out in the City.

The City strives to encourage and facilitate the participation of the residents of the City in establishing priorities, developing strategies, and funding allocations under the Consolidated Plan and annual Action Plan, substantial amendments of these Plans, and performance reviews for CDBG and HOME programs. The Citizen Participation Plan provides the framework and outlines the requirements to accomplish this, providing opportunities for the community to work in partnership with the City to identify community needs and to allocate CDBG and HOME funds.

Definitions

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): A grant program administered by HUD which allocates money to cities and counties for housing rehabilitation, affordable housing assistance, community services, and community development activities.

HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME): A grant program administered by HUD which allocates money to cities and counties for affordable housing development, including housing development and rehabilitation, and homebuyer assistance.

Consolidated Plan: The Consolidated Plan is a three- to five-year planning document for the CDBG and HOME programs. The Plan must contain a housing and community development needs assessment, a three- to five-year strategic plan to address the needs identified, a one-year action plan to identify specify activities and planned use of CDBG and HOME funds.

Annual Action Plan: This document updates the Consolidated Plan on an annual basis and allocates one year's funding (entitlement and program income) to specific projects and activities for the CDBG and HOME programs. The Action Plan is due at HUD 45 days before the beginning of a program year. The City of Santa Cruz CDBG and HOME programs begin annually on July 1, making the Plan due at HUD no later than May 15 of each year.

Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER): CAPER is an annual report summarizing the City's progress in implementing Consolidated Plan.

CAPER is due at HUD 90 days after the close of a program year. For the City of Santa Cruz, each program year ends on June 30, making the CAPER due at HUD no later than September 30 of each year.

B. Citizen Involvement

1. Citizen Participation Plan

The City of Santa Cruz recognizes that CDBG and HOME funds are tax money returned to the City to be used primarily to benefit extremely low-, low-, and moderate-income persons. City staff and officials are stewards of these public monies and will openly discuss all records, except those confidential records protecting a household's privacy. This Citizen Participation Plan is done in accordance with federal regulations under 24 CFR Parts 91, et al.

The Citizen Participation Plan seeks to involve the participation of citizens of the City of Santa Cruz and social service agencies in the development and adoption of the Consolidated Plan, the Action Plan, any substantial amendments, and the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER). Efforts will be made to focus on the involvement of low- and moderate-income persons, those persons living in slum and blighted areas, persons living in low- and moderate-income areas and persons living in areas where CDBG and HOME funds are proposed to be used. The Citizen Participation Plan consists of a number of elements designed to foster community involvement as specified in each section of the Plan.

Pursuant to HUD regulations, City will conduct a minimum of two hearings annually at different stages in the CDBG/HOME program year (July 1 through June 30). All public hearings and meetings will be conducted at City Hall at 809 Center Street in the City Council chambers. This facility is equipped to accommodate persons with physical disabilities. For non-English speakers, Spanish translation will be available at all public hearings if requested three (3) days prior to the hearing date. Other requests for reasonable accommodation (such as sign language) must be made three (3) days prior to the hearing date and the City will provide appropriate assistance to the extent feasible.

The schedule for review and adoption of the Consolidated Plan, annual Action Plan and CAPER is as follows:

- October – November – A notice of funds available (NOFA) is advertised inviting applications for CDBG or HOME funding. Applications are due in December.
- January – February – City Council Health in All Policies Committee (HiAPC), consisting of three City Council members, reviews programs and projects currently proposed for funding and a draft budget for CDBG or HOME funding. Social service providers and HOME/CDBG applicants receive written notice and a meeting notice is posted for the general public. The HiAPC makes recommendations to the full City Council.

- March – City Council public hearing to review proposals and applications for funding and the draft budget recommended by the HiAPC. The Council then directs staff to prepare a draft Consolidated and/or Annual Action Plan and when completed and the public is notified, the 30-day public review period begins.
- April – Public Hearing and Adoption of the Consolidated and/or Annual Action Plan by the City Council.
- May 15 – Submittal of the Consolidated and/or annual Action Plan to HUD, unless deadline is extended by HUD.
- September – Completion of the draft CAPER, a 15-day public review period, and submittal to HUD prior to September 30.

Adoption & Amendment of the Citizen Participation Plan

Prior to the adoption of the Citizen Participation Plan, the City will provide a notice of the availability of a draft Citizen Participation Plan, a 15-day public review period, and a public hearing on the Citizen Participation Plan, which will be noticed in the Santa Cruz Sentinel newspaper. The proposed Citizen Participation Plan will be available for public review at the following locations:

- Santa Cruz City Hall (Economic Development Office at 337 Locust Street)
- Santa Cruz City website

Upon request, the Plan will be made accessible to any person with disabilities. The City will provide a reasonable number of free copies of the Citizen Participation Plan to citizens and groups that request copies. Comments or views of citizens received in writing during the public review period or orally at the public hearing will be solicited by the Santa Cruz City Council. The Draft Plan will be adopted upon a majority vote of the Santa Cruz City Council at a designated and publicly noticed City Council meeting. After adoption of the Plan, a final Plan will be prepared, which will include, a summary of public comments and a summary of any comments not accepted with reasons therefore.

The City may amend its approved Citizen Participation Plan when a change in the public participation process, as outlined in this plan, is proposed. An amendment to the approved Citizen Participation Plan may be reviewed and approved by the HiAPC or the City Council. Notice of any amendment to the Citizen Participation Plan will be published in Santa Cruz Sentinel no less than 10 days prior to the review and adoption by the HiAPC or City Council to allow the public the opportunity to review and comment on the amendment. Appeals concerning the amendment should follow the appeal procedures outlined in Section G of this document.

2. Consolidated Plan (Five-Year Strategy and Annual Action Plan)

In developing the Consolidated and Annual Action Plans, the City of Santa Cruz is guided by the overall goal to assist extremely low, very low, and low-income households in the areas of :

1. Decent housing;
2. Expanded economic opportunities; and
3. A suitable living environment.

Inherent in this goal is ongoing citizen participation. The City of Santa Cruz believes it is essential to have widespread, meaningful participation throughout the planning process to ensure genuine community "ownership" of the Plan.

The Consolidated Plan consists of three parts: (1) the needs assessment, (2) housing and community development strategic plan, and (3) an action plan. Commonly known as the Consolidated Plan, the needs assessment and housing and community development strategic plan are updated every five years. The Action Plan is updated annually, reflecting annual CBDG and HOME funding allocations. The annual Action Plan includes the following elements:

- Dollar amounts proposed for each activity.
- A description and location of each activity.
- The entity responsible for implementation of each activity.
- Time frame for each activity.

In all cases, the Consolidated and Action Plans seek to minimize the displacement of residents from their homes or places of business.

Three groups are involved in the process of Consolidated and Annual Action Plan development including:

- Citizens and Citizen Groups.
- Housing and Community Development (HCD) Staff.
- HiAP and the City of Santa Cruz City Council.

Citizens and Citizen Groups - Citizens and citizens groups, including non-profit organizations, have two roles to play. Frequently they serve as the originators of programs and projects that eventually may be funded with CBDG or HOME funds. And in that role they work with City staff and other funding organizations to develop proposals. The second role is providing citizen input on the Consolidated and annual Action Plans, and the CAPER. The former is done through the application process and the latter through procedures outlined in the Citizen Participation Plan.

HCD Staff– Housing and Community Development Division staff are responsible for overseeing HUD-funded programs/projects and act in an advisory manner to the HiAP and the City Council concerning planning, implementing and assessing CBDG and HOME programs/activities. Responsibilities include:

- Collecting citizen input concerning neighborhood/community needs.

- Preparing a prioritized list of neighborhood/community needs for review by the HiAPC and the City Council.
- Preparing project recommendations for review by the HiAPC and City Council and for the Council's final approval; and
- Reviewing project/program progress.

HiAPC and the City Council - The City Council, along with the HiAPC, evaluates proposals and staff recommendations, makes recommendations that will be reviewed by the public, holds public hearings and carries out the procedures established in this Citizen Participation Plan. The City Council makes the final determination about the priority of various community needs that will guide the Council when annually allocating CBDG and HOME funds in the Action Plan.

Development of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan

The City of Santa Cruz will implement the following strategies to solicit meaningful community input in preparation of the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan. Specifically, the City will:

- Review past year performance and discuss priority needs for upcoming year(s) with the HiAPC.
- Consult public agencies including other City departments and relevant County agencies.
- Consult private organizations that provide health services, social services for children, elderly, disabled, homeless, persons with AIDS, victims of domestic violence, and persons with alcohol/drug abuses, etc.
- Conduct at least one public meeting during the development of the housing and community development needs assessment.

Citizen participation during the development of the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan will take place at meetings which are open to the public. The citizens of Santa Cruz are invited to take an advisory role in policy formation regarding program implementation by attending public hearings to make their views known. This will be made clear in all public announcements of the meetings or hearings. Additionally, the City will invite and address all written comments on the Plans.

Adoption of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan

The following procedures will ensure that all citizens will have a chance to influence the final Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan. Specifically, the City will:

- Publish an ad in the Santa Cruz Sentinel about thirty days in advance of the first public hearing notifying the community that two public hearings will be held for the Consolidated and/or Annual Action Plan.
- Conduct a public hearing to obtain citizen input on housing and non-housing issues or needs, priorities, and the potential uses of HOME and CDBG funds. Following this hearing, the Council will direct staff to prepare a draft Consolidated and/or Annual Action Plan.

- Publish an ad in the Cruz Sentinel at least thirty days in advance of the second public hearing. The ad shall contain a summary of the Draft Consolidated Plan and/or Action Plan and a list of the locations where copies may be examined, information about the second public hearing, and notification of the 30-day review period.
- Provide the Draft Consolidated Plan and/or Action Plan for public review at the following locations:
 - * Santa Cruz City Hall (City of Santa Cruz Economic Development Office at 337 Locust Street)
 - * Santa Cruz City website
- Make the Draft Consolidated Plan and/or Action Plan accessible to any person with disabilities upon request. The City will provide a reasonable number of free copies of the Draft Consolidated Plan and Action Plan to citizen groups that request copies.
- Notify by mail or electronic mail citizens, neighborhood or citizen groups who have requested notification about the upcoming City Council public hearing and commencement of the 30-day review period.
- Conduct a public hearing to obtain citizen input on the Consolidated and/or annual Action Plan.
- Following a 30-day review period, consider adopting and adopt the Consolidated Plan and/or annual Action Plan by a majority vote of the Santa Cruz City Council.
- Finalize Consolidated Plan and/or Action Plan including a summary of public comments and a summary of any comments not accepted and the reasons therefore.
- Publish a Notice of Adoption of the Final Statement and Intent to Request for Release of Funds, and Environmental Review findings, if required, in the Santa Cruz Sentinel at least 15 days in advance of submitting the Plan to HUD.

Amendment of the Consolidated Plan

The City may amend the adopted Consolidated Plan and Action Plan. The following outlines the criteria and procedures to be used when amending the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan.

Substantial Amendment Criteria

Consolidated Plan (Five-Year Strategy) - The City will amend its approved Consolidated Plan whenever a decision is made to propose a substantial change in allocation priorities. For the purpose of the Consolidated Plan, a “substantial change” will constitute a cumulative change equal to or in excess of 25% of the City’s CDBG or HOME entitlement for a program year.

Changes in funding priority not amounting to more than 25% of a program year will not be considered a substantial change to the Consolidated Plan; no formal amendment to the Consolidated Plan requiring public review and comment will be warranted. (For example, an amendment to the Consolidated Plan is needed if the five-year Strategy identifies only a low priority need for historic preservation, but during the five-year timeframe the City decides to establish a CDBG-funded historic preservation program that amounts to more than 25% of the City’s annual allocation.)

Annual Action Plan - The City will amend its approved Action Plan whenever one of the following decisions is made:

1. To carry out an activity not previously described in the Action Plan;
2. To cancel an activity previously described in the Action Plan;
3. To increase the amount to be expended on a particular activity from the amount stated in the Action Plan by more than 25%; or
4. To substantially change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.

Changes in funding for an existing activity (project) not amounting to more than 25% will not be considered a substantial change to the Action Plan; no formal amendment to the Action Plan requiring public review and comment will be warranted.

Amendment Process

The following procedures will ensure that all citizens will have a chance to comment on the proposed amendment to the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan.

- Publish a notice of a ~~15~~30-day public comment period on the proposed amendment to the adopted Consolidated Plan and/or annual Action Plan. The notice will be published in the Santa Cruz Sentinel and include a summary of the amendment and where copies of the proposed amendment may be examined. The proposed amendment will be available for public review the Santa Cruz Economic Development Office at 337 Locust Street.
- Upon request, the amendment will be made accessible to persons with disabilities whenever feasible.
- At the end of the 15-day review period, the City Council will consider adoption of the amendment upon a majority vote of the Santa Cruz City Council.
- A copy of the approved amendment will be ~~sent to the San Francisco HUD office~~submitted in the Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS) to HUD.

Interim Assistance Activities

Under the CDBG Program, Interim Assistance Activities are those immediate activities typically involving a quick repair or temporary alleviation of an emergency by performing work that would otherwise be considered ineligible, or is a minor repair that for accessibility reasons needs to be accomplished as quickly as possible. There are three types of interim assistance activities.

1. Immediate Interim repairs – These activities are to prevent further deterioration of public improvements and facilities. Permanent improvements must be made as soon as practicable.
2. Alleviating Emergency Conditions which threaten public health and safety – These activities require a determination by a City Official that an emergency condition exists and requires immediate resolution.
3. Minor repairs to provide handicap accessibility to a facility – These activities are limited to making improvements under \$25,000 that will provide immediate accessibility to a community facility that serves the low and moderate income community and are not accessible without this assistance.

Due to their emergent nature, interim assistance activities are exempt from the citizen participation, public hearing and legal noticing processes. The City Council is required to

document the emergency nature of the activities at the time it is asked to approve the activity for funding. However, these projects are not exempt from Davis-Bacon wage rates. All interim assistance activities must still meet at least one of the national objectives of the CDBG Program to be eligible.

In an Emergency

In the event of an emergency or disaster, to address the unforeseen needs of the community, the City of Santa Cruz may determine the need to make a substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan (CP) and Annual Action Plan (AAP) or to update not yet submitted CPs and AAPs. When a disaster is declared the following changes to the Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) will take effect.

Review Periods

In the event of an emergency or disaster that presents a serious and immediate threat to the health and welfare of the citizens of the City, the noticing requirements for public hearings and public comment periods shall be reduced to five (5) calendar days.

Public Comments

In lieu of physical meetings, public comments can be submitted online through the City's website (www.cityofsantacruz.com) or via email. During Public Hearings and Council Meetings, the City has a strong online presence equipped to receive, and publish public comments, questions, and when applicable is equipped to receive live comments via conferencing tools and social media platforms.

3. Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report

The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) details the accomplishments of the Consolidated Plan and the Action Plan. The following procedures will ensure that all citizens will have a chance to comment on the CAPER.

- A notice of the 15-day public comment period on the draft CAPER will be published in the Santa Cruz Sentinel. The notice will include a list of locations at which the draft CAPER can be reviewed.
- The draft CAPER will be available for public review at the following locations:
 - * Santa Cruz City Hall (City of Santa Cruz Economic Development Office at 337 Locust Street)
 - * Santa Cruz City website
- Upon request, the amendment will be made accessible to any person with disabilities when feasible.

C. Public Notification of Public Hearings

Staff will ensure adequate advance notice of all public hearings. Adequate noticing will include:

- Printing notices in the Santa Cruz Sentinel at least ten days prior to the public hearings.
- Posting notices at City Hall.
- Posting notices online on the City's website (www.cityofsantacruz.com) or social media platforms.

D. Access to Records

The City will provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the Consolidated Plan documents and the use of assistance during the preceding five years.

During the City Hall operating hours, all information regarding the HUD programs will be made available upon request, including a year-by-year breakdown of the program expenditures, the most recent monthly report of the program activities, prior years application, letters of approval from HUD, grant agreements, this Citizen Participation Plan, reports required by HUD, and the current proposed application.

During the period of planning for the next program year, information to be made available to the public will include such items as the amount of funds available to Santa Cruz, the range of activities that may be undertaken with these funds, the kind of activities previously funded in Santa Cruz, the processes involved in drawing up and approving Santa Cruz's application, the role of Santa Cruz's citizens in the CDBG and HOME programs and any other information necessary for Santa Cruz's citizens to participate in the process fully.

Requests for information and records must be made to the City of Santa Cruz in writing. Staff will respond to such requests within 15 working days or as soon as possible thereafter.

E. Technical Assistance

Upon request, staff will provide technical assistance to groups representing extremely-low, low- and moderate-income persons to develop funding requests for CDBG and HOME eligible activities. Technical assistance will be provided as follows:

- Answer, in writing or verbally, all inquiries received from citizens or representative groups relating to funding requests.
- Meet with groups or individuals as appropriate, to assist in identifying specific needs and to assist in preparing request/application for assistance.
- Provide bi-lingual translation on an as needed basis.

F. Comments and Complaints

1. Comments

Citizens as well as agencies providing services to the community are encouraged to state or submit their comments in the development of the Consolidated Plan documents and any amendments to these documents. Written and verbal comments received at public hearings or during the comment period, will be considered and summarized, and included as an attachment to the final Consolidated Plan documents. Written comments should be addressed to:

City of Santa Cruz
Housing & Community Development Manager
337 Locust Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Telephone Number (831) 420-5150

A written response will be made to all written comments within ten working days, acknowledging the letter and identifying a plan of action, if necessary. Every effort will be made to send a complete response within 15 working days to those who submit written comments.

2. Complaints

Citizen with complaints concerning the Consolidated Plan, the annual Action Plan, substantial amendments and the CAPER should contact City HCD staff by phone or in writing within 30 days from the date the document is published for comment. Complaints concerning any CDBG-funded or HOME-funded program in which the person believes access has been limited or denied, must be made within 30 days from the date of the occurrence. Staff will review each complaint based on the information provided within the complaint and provide a complete written responses to citizen complaints within 15 working days from the date of their complaint when practicable.

The City will accept written complaints provided they specify the following:

- (1) The description of the objection, and supporting facts and data
- (2) Name, address, and telephone number of complainant and a date of complaint

Complaints shall be sent to:

City of Santa Cruz
Housing & Community Development Manager
337 Locust Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

A record will be maintained of all complaints received that will include the nature of the complaint, City investigation of facts and evidences, referrals made, and the final disposition.

Citizens may contact HUD directly if they wish to object to any part of the Consolidated Plan, annual Action Plan or CAPER, or if they feel that they have been aggrieved by any program, activity or procedure funded through the CDBG or HOME funds. Such objections should be made to:

Director
Office of Community Planning and Development
U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development
One Sansome Street, Suite 1200
San Francisco, CA 94104-4430

G. Bilingual Opportunities

Translation services will be provided upon advance request to the extent feasible.

Translation services at public hearings and meetings will be provided in Spanish if translation services are requested at least 3 days prior to the meeting date.

H. Appeals

Appeals concerning the Consolidated Plan documents or decisions, statements, recommendations of the staff, or disposition of complaints should be made first to the City of Santa Cruz Economic Development Director, then to the City Manager, the City Council, and finally to the San Francisco Area Office of HUD if concerns are not answered.

I. Anti-displacement/Relocation

In the event that any residential displacement and relocation must take place in order to carry out a program activity, the City of Santa Cruz ensures that it will develop an Anti-displacement and Relocation Plan in connection with that project as applicable per Federal regulations.

In the event that any acquisition and relocation must take place in order to carry out a program activity, the City of Santa Cruz will also comply with the acquisition and relocation requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended and implementing regulations of 49 CFR Part 24.