

**CITY OF EAST LANSING
CONSOLIDATED PLAN PROCESS AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM-CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

INTRODUCTION

The City of East Lansing is required by law to have a detailed Citizen Participation Plan (hereafter called the “Plan”) which contains the City’s policies and procedures for public involvement in the Consolidated Plan process and the use of CDBG money including CDBG funds, Section 108 Loan funds, and other grants. This Plan must be available to the public.

Encouraging Public Participation

The City of East Lansing will make reasonable efforts to provide for citizen participation during the community development process and throughout the planning, implementation and assessment of all CDBG program(s) undertaken by the City. Local officials will make every effort to involve citizens in all phases of the development, implementation and assessment of community development programs including, but not limited to, the following phases:

- a. identification and assessment of public infrastructure, housing and community development needs; determination of CDBG project(s) and documentation
- b. changes and/or amendments to approved CDBG projects; and,
- c. assessment of CDBG program performance.

All phases of the community development process will be conducted by local officials in an open manner. Citizens of the City of East Lansing are encouraged to participate at all levels and will be given access to program information during each phase of any CDBG program as outlined herein.

The Program Year

The “program year” chosen by East Lansing is July 1 through June 30.

THE STAGES IN THE PROCESS

A. Identifying Needs of the Annual Action Plan

The City of East Lansing seeks to obtain citizen input each year to identify public infrastructure, housing, and community development needs and what priority those needs have. East Lansing identifies the needs of the community when it begins planning for the next program year through outreach activities which may include public meetings, neighborhood meetings, focus groups, and surveys. Needs are assessed throughout the year; however specific public meetings shall be held between March-April. It is important to note that as documented within the 2016-2020 Consolidated Plan document, members of the public and City Council identified housing and public infrastructure projects and high priorities for funding.

B. Public Input Process & Development of Annual Action Plan

The following process is followed to create the Annual Action Plan.

During the months of January-March, City Community Development Staff will prepare an annual budget of CDBG funds. The budget will outline funding allocations to specific agencies and projects.

The East Lansing City Council will hold a first public hearing in March or April to hear comments on the draft fiscal year budget. A second public hearing will be held sometime between April-May.

Notices for both public hearings shall be disseminated when possible to stakeholder and neighborhood groups or organizations including: East Lansing Council of Neighborhood Presidents; organizations providing public services; organizations concerned with housing and related supportive services; and special needs groups. In addition, the City will focus on encouraging participation of minority groups as well as low and moderate income persons, particularly those residing in low and moderate income areas.

Following approval of the proposed CDBG budget and activities by the East Lansing City Council, staff shall prepare a draft Annual Action Plan for review by the public, prior to its submission to the Department of Housing & Urban Development. Public notice is given that the draft Annual Action Plan is available for public review and comment on over a period of 30 days. The public notice includes:

- a. The total amount of CDBG and other funds anticipated by the City for housing and community development activities, including planning and administrative activities,
- b. The range of activities that may be undertaken with these funds and the kind of activities previously funded in the community, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low and moderate income.
- c. The role of citizens in the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan, as provided for in this Citizen Participation Plan

During times of declared disasters or emergencies by the local government, state government, or federal government, the public comment period for substantial amendments to both the Action Plan document and Consolidated Plan document is reduced to not less than 5 days. The City of East Lansing may also use virtual public hearings, when necessary for public health reasons. If virtual public hearings are used, real time responses and accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made to the farthest extent possible.

Technical Assistance -The City's Community Development Staff shall be available throughout the year to meet with individuals and groups, discuss their project proposals, and provide information and assistance. Technical assistance is available both to plan projects eligible under the City's Consolidated Plan and to help form a neighborhood or project area organization. Staff shall also attend neighborhood association meetings when requested to review the Community Development Program with its members and discuss project proposals. Citizens must directly request technical assistance from the City.

All individuals and groups who submit a proposal for CDBG funding must notify and solicit comments from any property owner who might be affected by any physical improvement project or program. City staff, in reviewing proposals, will require the name of the affected property owner/contact person in order to verify and/or solicit comments from the person. If the group making a project/proposal is not able to provide City staff with the comments or position of the affected property owner, City staff will seek such comments or position.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Items Covered by the Public Notice Requirement

There shall be advanced public notice once a federally required document is available, such as the Proposed Annual Action Plan or Five-Year Consolidated Plan, any proposed Substantial Amendment to the Action Plan or Consolidated Plan, and the Annual Performance Report (CAPER).

In addition, there shall be advanced public notice of all public hearings and all public meetings relating to the funds or planning process covered by this Citizen Participation Plan.

“Adequate” Public Notice

Adequate advance notice is given with enough lead time for the public to take informed action. Specific amounts of time are given for different events later in this Plan.

Forms of Public Notice

Public notices for Public Hearings on the Consolidated Plan, CDBG development, Amendments, and Performance Reports will be published as display advertisements in the legal section of one of the following local publications, the *Community News* (“*Towne Courier*”), *Lansing State Journal*, *State News*, and the *City Pulse*. Project review public hearings may be similarly advertised or may be advertised through neighborhood groups and through direct mailings to project area residents. The content of notices will give residents a clear understanding of the event being announced. Notices may also be posted on the City’s website.

Public Information - General Consolidated Plan and CDBG Program information shall be provided at the discretion of Program staff. Notice shall be publicized through one or more

of the following: area newspapers and newsletters, cable television or radio, the City's web site, or direct mailings to agencies, neighborhood associations, groups and individuals.

Citizen comment periods - The City shall provide a 30-day comment period on the proposed Consolidated Plan, and proposed annual Action Plans and proposed program amendments, including proposed changes to the Citizen Participation Plan. A comment period of not less than 15 days shall be provided on performance reports to be submitted to HUD.

During times of declared disasters or emergencies by the local government, state government, or federal government, the public comment period for substantial amendments to both the Action Plan document and Consolidated Plan document is reduced to not less than 5 days. The City of East Lansing may also use virtual public hearings, when necessary for public health reasons. If virtual public hearings are used, real time responses and accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made to the farthest extent possible.

In addition, the CARES Act authorizes the Secretary to grant waivers and alternative requirements to statutes and regulations the Secretary administers in connection with the use of CDBG funds and HUD Program Year 2019 and 2020 (except for requirements related to fair housing, nondiscrimination, labor standards, and the environment). Waivers and alternative requirements can be issued when necessary to expedite and facilitate the use of funds to prevent, prepare for, and respond to Coronavirus.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

As required by law, the City of East Lansing will provide the public with reasonable public access to information and records relating to the data or content of the Consolidated Plan. Documents relevant to the Program shall be made available at the City's Community Development Office during normal working hours for citizen review upon request. "Standard Documents" include the following:

- a. Annual Action Plans
- b. Five-Year Strategic Plan (the "Consolidated Plan").
- c. Substantial Amendments to either an Annual Action Plan or the Five-Year Strategic Plan
- d. Annual Performance Reports
- e. The Citizen Participation Plan

The City shall also provide for full and timely disclosure of its program records and information consistent with applicable State and local laws regarding freedom of information, personal privacy and obligations of confidentiality. These documents include all key documents such as prior applications for funding, all prior Statements of Objectives and Projected Use of Funds documents, letters of approval, grant agreements, other reports required by HUD; all mailings and promotional material; records of hearings; documents regarding other important program requirements, such as contracting procedures, environmental policies, fair housing and other equal opportunity requirements, and

relocation provisions; copies of the regulations and issuances governing the program.

Availability of Standard Documents

These materials will be available in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, when requested.

Places Where Standard Documents are Available

The City shall make copies of the Standard Documents listed above available at City Hall and the East Lansing Public Library. A reasonable number of free copies of the proposed and approved Consolidated Plan and annual Action Plans shall be provided by the City for citizens and groups. The City may also post documents on the City website.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings are held to obtain the public's views and to provide the public with the City's responses to public questions and proposals. The law requires at least two public hearings to address community needs, to review proposed uses of funds, and to assess how funds were spent during the previous program year.

Access to Public Hearings

Public hearings will be held only after there has been adequate notice as described in the Public Notice part of this Plan, including a display advertisement in the non-legal section of the newspaper 12 days prior to the public hearing. Public hearings will be held at a convenient time and location to facilitate broad citizen participation, particularly by low-moderate-income persons and residents of targeted neighborhoods.

Public Hearings and Populations with Unique Needs

All citywide public hearings shall be held at accessible locations to allow for the full participation of residents with disabilities. For neighborhood meetings, if no accessible neighborhood facility is available, the notice of public hearing shall so indicate and invite the submission of written comments by residents with disabilities. Non-English speaking citizens wishing to attend a public hearing must notify the City at least five days prior to the event to arrange for translation services. The City of East Lansing may also use virtual public hearings, when necessary for public health reasons. If virtual public hearings are used, real time responses and accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made to the farthest extent possible.

B. The "Proposed" Annual Action Plan (and/or Five-Year Strategy)

Based upon the review of programs and proposals received, City Staff shall prepare a draft Annual Action Plan for review by the East Lansing City Council. Public notice is given that

the draft Annual Action Plan is available for public review and comment. The public notice includes:

1. The total amount of CDBG funds, Section 108 Loan funds, and other grants anticipated to be made available by the City for the coming year, including program income anticipated to be generated by the activities carried out with CDBG or guaranteed loan funds, for housing and community development activities, including planning and administrative activities,
2. The range of activities that may be undertaken with these funds and the kind of activities previously funded in the community, including the estimated amount proposed to be used for activities that will benefit low- and moderate-income persons.
3. The role of citizens in the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan, as provided for in this Plan,
4. A summary of other important program requirements such as Davis-Bacon, environmental policies, equal employment opportunity, fair housing, Section 3 Affirmative Action Plan requirements.
5. Any proposed activities likely to result in displacement and the public entity's relocation provisions.

The East Lansing City Council will hold two public hearings in March-May. Final approval of the CDBG budget will be made in the form of a majority vote, held in April or May.

Availability of a Proposed Annual Action Plan

The City will make the Plan available to the public at least 30 days prior to approval by so that persons of low- and moderate- income will have a reasonable opportunity to examine it and to submit comments.

Public Hearing and Further Action

The final public hearing on the Annual Action Plan is held in April or May at a City Council meeting.

In preparing a Final Annual Action Plan, careful consideration will be given to all comments and views expressed by the public, including verbal comments from public hearings or written comments submitted during the review and comment period. The Final Annual Action Plan will include a summary of all comments received and explain why any comments were not accepted.

C. The “Final” Annual Action Plan (and/or Five-Year Strategy)

Copies of the Final Annual Action Plan and a summary of it will be made available to the public for free. In addition, copies will be available at the locations specified above in the section “Public Access to Information.”

D. “Amendments” to the Annual Action Plan (and/or Five-Year Strategy)

This Plan specifies the criteria East Lansing will use for determining when one or several cumulative change(s) in the jurisdiction's planned or actual activities exceed the amendment threshold and constitute a need for amendment to the Consolidated Plan. A change in the use of CDBG or Section 108 Loan funds from one eligible activity or cumulative activities which is 10% or less of the fiscal year CDBG entitlement amount is not considered "substantial" and will not require an amendment to the Action Plan.

Under Program Regulations the City must amend any Annual Action Plan whenever it decides:

1. not to carry out a CDBG or Section 108 Loan -funded activity described in any Action Plan;
2. to carry out a CDBG or Section 108 Loan -funded activity not previously described; or,
3. to substantially change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of a CDBG or Section 108 Loan -funded activity as described below:
 - a. "Substantial change in purpose" shall mean that the original purpose of a proposed activity shall either not be accomplished or shall be accomplished to only a minimal degree or that a new purpose shall be the primary purpose of such activity.
 - b. "Substantial change in scope" shall mean that the original scope of a proposed activity shall either not be accomplished or shall be accomplished to only a minimal degree or shall mean that a new scope shall be the primary scope of such activity.
 - c. "Substantial change in location" shall mean that the location in which a proposed activity is to be carried out shall be changed so that the activity shall not be carried out at all or to any significant degree in the originally proposed location or shall mean that a new location shall be the primary location for undertaking such activity.
 - d. "Substantial change in beneficiaries" shall mean that the group or groups of individuals that an activity was intended to benefit or was believed would benefit, shall either not benefit or shall only benefit to a minimal degree or shall mean that another group of individuals shall be the primary beneficiaries of such activity.

Contingency and Local Option Activities

The City Staff shall recommend to the CD Committee or City Council the contingency and/or local option activity (ies) desired to be specified in the Annual Action Plan. After receiving the Staff recommendation, the CD Committee shall make a recommendation to the City Council.

Public Notice and Public Hearing for Substantial Amendments

Notice to the public of proposed program amendments shall be given to the public as specified in the “Public Notice” section above. The City shall also contact citizens and groups who may be directly affected by a proposed program amendment either by mail or by telephone and shall provide notification of the proposed amendment and the scheduled public hearing.

Proposed program amendments shall be placed on the agenda of the East Lansing City Council. The City Council will determine whether to hold a public hearing at one of its regularly scheduled Council meetings and shall thereupon either approve or disapprove the proposed program amendment.

At least 30 days shall be allowed for citizen comments on any proposed Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan amendment. The 30-day comment period shall begin on the date public announcement is made of the proposed amendment. No amendment shall be implemented by the City until after the 30-day citizen comment period.

The City shall include a summary of any citizen comments not adopted in response to any proposed Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan amendment, and the reasons that those views were not adopted in the amended Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan.

During times of declared disasters or emergencies by the local government, state government, or federal government, the public comment period for substantial amendments to both the Action Plan document and Consolidated Plan document is reduced to not less than 5 days. The City of East Lansing may also use virtual public hearings, when necessary for public health reasons. If virtual public hearings are used, real time responses and accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made to the farthest extent possible.

E. The Annual Performance Report

Every year, the City of East Lansing must send a Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER) to HUD within 90 days of the close of the program year. In general, the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report describes the specific use of program year funds and the extent to which funded activities benefited low and moderate income people.

Public Notice and Public Hearing for Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report

Notice shall be given that the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) is available so that residents will have an opportunity to review and comment on it. Notice will be made according to the procedures described earlier in this Plan with the addition of the following procedures specific for the Annual Performance Reports:

1. A complete copy of the report will be made available to the public at no cost. Copies will be available at the locations indicated earlier in this Plan under “Public Access to Information.”
2. Community Development Program Staff shall hold a citywide performance hearing each year prior to the date the City submits the CAPER in order to obtain comments from the public and in order to review program progress and performance.
3. City of East Lansing citizens and citizen organizations shall be given the opportunity to assess and submit comments on all aspects of the City's Consolidated Plan performance, including the performance of the City's grantees and contractors. They shall also be given the opportunity to assess projects and activities to determine whether objectives are achieved. Such participation in the assessment of the City's Consolidated Plan performance shall be elicited from citizens and citizen organizations at the public hearing. A comment period of not less than 15 days shall be provided on performance reports to be submitted to HUD.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

The City's Community Development Staff shall provide a written response to complaints within 15 working days of their receipt, where practicable. Upon successful resolution of the complaint no further action shall be taken. If further action is required, a copy of the complaint along with the Staff's proposed resolution and response shall be sent to Director of Planning, Building & Development. Formal complaints should be written and mailed, e-mailed, or delivered to the Department of Planning, Building & Development office.

CHANGING THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

This Plan can be changed only after the public has been notified of intent to modify it, and only after the public has had a reasonable chance to review and comment on proposed substantial changes to it. The public notice and comment period shall be the same as for a substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan, which is 30 day unless a local, state, or federal disaster is declared. In such a case, public comment regarding a substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan document shall be no less than 5 days.

APPENDIX I
CRITERIA FOR WAIVING PROJECT REVIEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Standard Design/Predetermined Location

Project review hearings will not be held in the case of a public improvement project which has a design which cannot be modified by the public and where the location of the project has been predetermined through the CDBG Program development process.

2. General Agreement Reached At First Project Review Hearing

A second project review public hearing will not be held for those projects where general agreement on the project design was reached at the first public hearing. For those projects where this criterion applies, staff will notify all property owners directly abutting the project location about the project design and give such owners ten days from the receipt of the notification to comment on the design. If as a result of this notification process a major concern is raised, Staff will either schedule a second public review hearing or notify the East Lansing City Council as to the concern which has been raised.

3. Project Constituency Is Not Neighborhood Based

For those projects where the constituency is not neighborhood based (e.g., bike racks, or handicap ramps in a commercial area) a citywide public review hearing may be held. Comments will be solicited from organizations and persons who have shown or are known to have interest in the project.