

Citizen Participation

Encouragement of Citizen Participation

As required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) rules and regulations, the City of Tampa complies with regulation 24 CFR 91.105, Citizen Participation Plan for local governments as outlined. The city has adopted a citizen's participation plan that sets forth the city's policies and procedures for citizen participation.

The City of Tampa is committed to providing opportunities for its citizens to participate in an advisory role in the planning, implementation and assessment of its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), and Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) programs. The city recognizes that those persons affected by, or involved with projects under these programs can provide meaningful assistance to those responsible for program implementation. In order to encourage and support the participation of citizens, the city will provide adequate information, hold public hearings, technical assistance workshops, attend community meetings and provide the opportunity for citizens to comment and participate.

The City of Tampa's citizen participation process is designed to provide maximum citizen participation in an open forum with access for all interested persons for all Consolidated Plan programs activities. The city, on an annual basis, will make available to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties, information that includes the amount of assistance the city expects to receive, including specific grant funds, available unspent prior year funds, and related program income. The city will also disclose the range of activities that may be undertaken including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low- and moderate-income. In addition, active neighborhood associations are notified of the planning process.

The laws governing the grant programs established three basic goals which consist of: providing decent housing, providing a suitable living environment, and expanding economic opportunities. Each of these goals must primarily benefit low- and moderate-income persons. The benefit of having a consolidated plan is that it ensures a collaborative and comprehensive process to establish a unified vision for community development actions.

Committee Composition

The Community Development Block Grant Advisory Committee serves as the city-wide Community Development Block Grant Advisory body in the citizen participation process for the Consolidated Plan programs (CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA). Community involvement in the Consolidated Plan programs shall include, but is not limited to, public notices in the local newspapers for citizen participation, public hearings and the Citizen Participation Advisory Committee. The composition of the committee includes persons from various neighborhoods and the project areas.

The Census Tracts that comprise the Community Development (CD) eligible areas of the city are diffusely located throughout the city. The city has nine (9) block areas with groups that are geographically linked. In order to ensure the community-wide nature of citizen participation, a Citizen Participation Advisory Committee has been established and is comprised of the primary member and an alternate member of each block area. This Citizen Participation Advisory Committee functions through the City of Tampa's Community Affairs Office. This office assists the committee in scheduling quarterly meetings, formulating agendas and other documents that are presented to the Tampa City Council. The meeting times and locations are outlined below:

CDBG CITIZEN PARTICIPATION ADVISORY MEETING Locations and Dates

Date	Time	Held By	Location
October 8, 2008	6:00 to 7:00 p.m.	CDBG Citizen Participation Advisory Committee	Union Station, 601 N. Nebraska Avenue, Tampa, FL 33602
January 22, 2009	6:00 to 7:30 p.m.	CDBG Citizen Participation Advisory Committee	Union Station, 601 N. Nebraska Avenue, Tampa, FL 33602
February 19, 2009	6:00 to 7:00 p.m.	CDBG Citizen Participation Advisory Committee	Community Affairs, 102 E. 7 th Avenue, Tampa, FL 33602
June 11, 2009	6:00 to 7:30 p.m.	CDBG Citizen Participation Advisory Committee	Community Affairs, 102 E. 7 th Avenue, Tampa, FL 33602

Committee Duties and Responsibilities

The Citizen Participation Advisory Committee seeks input of community needs from neighborhoods throughout their block area as well as individual citizens. It is then the responsibility of these individuals to meet on a regularly scheduled basis and to discuss the various needs of the residents they represent. These needs are prioritized and then discussed with Tampa City Council and other city officials for consideration and possible implementation. The Citizen Participation Advisory Committee is allowed an opportunity to review city department's recommendations and meet with city operating departments to hear about programs and processes.

Both at the community-wide level and at the neighborhood or block area level, the City of Tampa's citizen participation structure affords accomplishment of the following:

1. The conduct of open meetings with free access for all citizens;
2. The assurance of participation by low- and moderate-income persons, members of minority groups, the elderly, persons with disabilities, non-English speaking persons, and any other persons affected by the programs; and
3. The provision of continuity of participation throughout various stages of the programs from the development of the Proposed Plan through the review of program performance.

Public Hearings

In compliance with federal requirements, a minimum of two (2) public hearings held at two different stages of the program year, will inform the citizens of eligible areas, eligible projects, and to solicit suggestions for projects to be funded in future years. The locations are selected to provide access for physically challenged persons. The first public hearing was held at City Council Chambers on February 26, 2009, and the second public hearing on June 18, 2009, at the same location.

PUBLIC HEARINGS Locations and Dates

Date	Time	Held By	Location
February 26, 2009	5:30 to 6:30 p.m.	City Council, Budget Office, Housing and Community Development, and Community Affairs	City Council Chambers, Third Floor, City Hall, 315 East Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33602
June 18, 2009	5:30 to 6:30 p.m.	City Council, Budget Office, Housing and Community Development, and Community Affairs	City Council Chambers, Third Floor, City Hall, 315 East Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33602

The purpose of the public hearings is to obtain citizen views, respond to proposals, answer questions at all stages in the development of the community needs, and may include the review of proposed activities, substantial amendments, and program performance. Hearings are held after adequate notice, at times and locations convenient to potential or actual participants, and with reasonable accommodations for those persons with disabilities and for non-English speaking residents.

Notification Requirement

A notification is advertised in two (2) local newspapers of general circulation to inform the public that a draft Action Plan is available for examination and subject to public comment. The notification provides a summary of the proposed Action Plan and describes the contents and purpose of the plan. The notice is also posted on the city's web page (www.tampagov.net) and on City of Tampa Television (CTTV).

Thirty (30) days prior to the adoption of an Action Plan, information is made available to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties. This information includes the amount of assistance expected to be received, the range of activities that may be undertaken, the proposed benefit to extremely low- and low-income persons, and plans to minimize the displacement of persons and assistance to any persons displaced.

Additionally, the city provides a reasonable number of free copies of the Action Plan upon request. The objective is to encourage participation at planned hearings, present community development needs and encourage the submission of views and proposals for community development activities. The public notice states the proposed plan will be available for review on the city's website and at the following locations for thirty days:

City Clerk's Office
City Hall, Third Floor
315 East Kennedy Boulevard
Tampa, Florida 33602

Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library
900 North Ashley Street
Tampa, Florida 33602

Performance Report

At the end of each program year, as required by HUD, a Comprehensive Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) must be submitted to HUD by December 29th. The CAPER provides an account of activities that were outlined in the Action Plan. This report discloses how the city maintained and expended funds and discusses the accomplishments achieved during the previous program year.

Upon completion of the CAPER, and at least fifteen (15) days prior to its submission to HUD, the city will make the report available to the general public for review and comments. Any comments received from the general public, along with the city's responses and a summary of any action taken will be included in the CAPER.

The city will provide a notice in two (2) local newspapers for the availability of the CAPER, which will begin a fifteen (15) day review and comment period. Copies of the CAPER will be distributed at the public library and City Clerk's Office for public review. The notice will also be posted on the city's web page (www.tampagov.net) and on CTTV.

Citizen input will be used by city staff and the Community Development Area Advisory Committee in planning for the next activity year. Copies of comments resulting from the notice, and a summary of the actions taken, will be distributed to the committee and maintained on file for interested neighborhood organizations and the general public.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance shall be provided on-going through staff resources in order to facilitate citizen input and provide partner organizations the assistance they need with regard to the planning, implementation and assessment of the community development program. Additionally, technical assistance workshops are provided annually for all funding sources and individual assistance is provided upon request.

Access to Records

The city will provide citizens, public agencies and other interested parties access to information and records relating to the city's Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, Citizen Participation Plan, and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report upon request. Citizens will have the opportunity to review and comment on these documents in draft form prior to final adoption by Tampa City Council. Citizens must allow adequate time to compile and provide the information requested by the citizen.

Amendment to Consolidated Plan

The city will amend its approved plan under the following circumstances:

1. To make a change in the goal, priority or activity of the Consolidated Plan; or
2. To carry out an activity, using funds from any program covered by the Consolidated Plan (including program income), not previously covered in the Action Plan; or
3. To change the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of an activity included in the Action Plan.

Each amendment must be authorized by Tampa City Council and submitted to HUD. A program amendment may result if a new activity is selected and funded, or if there is a substantial change in an activity. Criteria for substantial change is defined as follows: any activity which equal to at least 15% of the annual entitlement grant. Public notices will provide citizens reasonable notification and an opportunity to examine and submit comments on amendments. A period of not less than 30 days will be allowed to receive comments before any amendment is implemented.

Complaints

All written complaints received from citizens shall be responded to in writing in a timely, substantive fashion (within fifteen working days of the receipt date of the complaint). Citizens with complaints related to the Consolidated and Action Plans, amendments, and the annual performance report must submit the complaint to:

City of Tampa, Budget Office
Attn: Dennis Rogero
306 E. Jackson Street, 8E
Tampa, FL 33602

Citizen Comments

Information from the City of Tampa's public hearing regarding the Proposed Statement of Housing and Community Development Action Plan held June 18, 2009, and from the required advertisements and comment period, the following comments and views were presented. The meeting transcript is available via the web at http://www.tampagov.net/dept_City_Council/.

President of Citizen Advisory Committee at Public Hearing on 6/18/09:

City-wide Needs and Recommendations (other city funds may be utilized for these programs):

1. Homeless Outreach- Explained that the committee was pleased to hear that the Homeless Coalition will be receiving \$1.5 million in federal stimulus dollars. Advised that this funding would do a great job to eliminate some of the problems of homeless.
2. Tampa Police and Tampa Fire Rescue Community Outreach- Stated the group was disappointed with the reduction of community outreach for party in the parks. But understood due to the current budget restrictions the program was limited to one event. Suggest looking for private partnerships, sponsorships, and get other people involved so we can continue to have free parties in the park.
3. City-wide Recycling Campaign- Recommended doing a small pilot study now and see how it's working. Or observe a small neighborhood that's already implemented, see how that goes, and expand it as it goes along.
4. Anti-Litter Initiative- Stated we fully support funding this crucial area, and please remember it wasn't that many years ago that Tampa was on a list of one of America's dirtiest cities, and the clean city division has come a long way to clean up the city and we would like that to be considered a high profile funding area.
5. City-wide Drainage Ditches- Explained dissatisfaction with the answer received: *there are too many ditches city-wide*. The group has suggested starting with the ditch along Spruce between Lois and Dale Mabry, or the ditch along Gandy and Brady between Spruce to Laurel. Then maybe go to the Wellswood neighborhood, and get the one along Westshore.
6. Fertilizer Use and Application Ordinance- Stated related to the Environmental Protection Agency, basically if a county ordinance is passed the committee is asking the city to draft an ordinance right away.

Audience Participation at Public Hearing: 1) A citizen advised a few years back there were complaints that the response to the recommendations weren't being taken seriously by administration. It's clear by the responses that the city is taking these seriously. There are now substantive responses and go into detail about what they can and cannot do. It's also interesting to read through these responses because on these needs and recommendations we are essentially asking neighborhoods, tell us what you need, and those neighborhoods who do submit requests for recommendations is a way for the city to prioritize to see what neighborhoods think is important.

2) A citizen explained the response from transportation division indicated that there was some money to design along Bermuda Boulevard but not the park side of the sea wall. So there's basically no money for repair.

The other item regarding the community plan and design guidelines for Palmetto Beach. Hopes that the city can prioritize the community planning process and design guidelines. Design guidelines are not addressed in the response. The citizen believes it to be very important, probably even more so than a community plan.

3) A citizen stated the park; in Virginia Park located on Bay to Bay is one of the city's oldest parks. It's falling apart and doesn't meet the needs of the residents. Three associations, Virginia Park, Sunset Park, Paul Palma Ceia, and the residents got together to discuss improvements to park. The city has advised it takes seven years park plans to be completed. We have the plans and only need financial support.

We realize we don't qualify for CBDG funding but funding can be provided out of gas tax or the general fund. Also, is aware of the city's issues, but believes funds can be identified. Request

city staff to go back when they bring this year's budget to come up with the funds needed to redo the park.

Summary of Efforts to Broaden Public Participation

The City of Tampa strongly encourages citizen participation by holding public hearings and having technical assistance meetings prior to the deadline to submit grant applications of CDBG, HOME, HOPWA, and ESG funds. The city also notifies the public by advertising in newspapers of general circulation, special publications, government access TV announcements and the internet for the targeted audiences requesting citizen involvement in the Action Plan process. The city's Housing and Community Development Division and the Budget Office consult with other general units of local government in the preparation of the Consolidated and Action Plans. The Housing and Community Development Division (HCD) and the Budget Office work in conjunction with the other governmental entities, citizens, and not-for-profit organizations to continually assess community needs and how best to meet those needs. HCD and the Budget Office attended all Citizen Advisory meetings to answer questions and provide additional information as requested.

The city announces public hearing dates, call for requests for proposals, and summaries of funding for HUD grants in a local Spanish newspaper. The city's neighborhood liaison and disability coordinator assimilates this information to ensure further citizen participation of more minorities and non-English speaking or disabled citizens.