



Citizen Participation Plan

*Adopted July 9, 1998
Amended 7/25/02; 5/24/05*

INTRODUCTION

Citizen Participation Plan Amendment Process Description

The City began conducting its participation process in January 1998 after receiving official notification of entitlement in late December 1997. The process consisted of four components of involvement and information exchange. These components were community needs assessment, CDG program and Consolidated Plan process, Neighborhood Improvement Process, and the Action Plan. The city conducted public involvement activities that included public hearings, neighborhood meetings, formal presentations, Advisory Group discussions, surveys, participatory planning sessions, public review and comment of the Consolidated Plan, and individual discussions with interested and concerned citizens. The City also provided information exchanges across the entire media spectrum to include television coverage, newspaper articles and announcements, the City's web pay and e-mail, and hard copy availability of planning documents.

A second plan amendment changed reference to a specific report. The Annual Performance Report was changed to the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) for consistency.

Citizen Participation Plan City of Round Rock

The City of Round Rock is required by law to have a Citizen Participation Plan which contains the City's policies and procedures for public involvement in the Consolidated Plan process and the use of CDBG money. This Citizen Participation Plan must be available to the public.

Encouraging Public Participation

The law requires that our Citizen Participation Plan both provide for and encourage public participation, emphasizing involvement by low and moderate income people-especially those living in low and moderate income neighborhoods. Also, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) expects the City of Round Rock to take whatever actions are appropriate to encourage participation of minorities, people who do not speak English, and people with disabilities.

Copies of this Citizen Participation Plan, as well as summaries of basic information about CDBG and the Consolidated Planning process are available in the languages of residents who comprise a significant portion of the low- and moderate-income population. Residents needing materials in other languages are encouraged to contact City staff.

The Role of Low- and Moderate- Income People

The law declares that the primary purpose of the programs covered by this Citizen Participation Plan is to improve communities by providing: decent housing, a suitable living environment, and growing economic opportunities – all principally for low- to moderate-income people.

The Various Stages of the Consolidated Plan Process

The policies and procedures in this Citizen Participation Plan relate to several stages of action mentioned in law or regulation. In general, these stages or events include:

1. Identification of housing and community development needs.
2. Preparation of a draft use of funds for the upcoming year, called the proposed Annual Action Plan. Sometimes there might also be the development of a proposed new Five-Year Strategic Plan.
3. Formal approval by elected officials of a final Annual Action Plan or Five-Year Strategic Plan.
4. On occasion during the year, it might be necessary to change the use of the money already budgeted in an Annual Action Plan, or to change the priorities established

in the Five-Year Strategic Plan. In that case, a formal Substantial Amendment will be proposed, considered, and acted upon.

5. After a "program year" is complete, an Annual Performance Report must be drafted for public review and comment and then sent to HUD.

The Program Year

The first Annual Action Plan for the City of Round Rock actually covers activities from January 1, 1998 to September 30, 1999. All program years from then on will start on October 1 and end twelve months later on September 30.

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.

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 "timely"; it is given with enough lead time for the public to take informed action. The amount of lead time can vary, depending on the event. Specific amounts of time are given for different events later in this Citizen Participation Plan. The content of notices will give residents a clear understanding of the event being announced.

Forms of Public Notice

1. a. Public notices will be published in the *Round Rock Leader* as display advertisements in a non-legal section of the newspaper.

b. In addition, press releases will be sent to the *Austin American Statesman*.
2. Display ads and press releases will also be placed in convenient locations in neighborhoods such as schools, churches, shopping centers, and community centers when possible.
3. Notifications and documents also will be posted on the City's internet web page

4. Notice will also be given through letters to neighborhood organizations, public housing resident groups, religious organizations and agencies providing services to low- to moderate-income people.
5. Notice will be sent to any person or organization requesting to be on a mailing list.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

As required by law, the City of Round Rock will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the data or content of the Consolidated Plan as well as the proposed, actual, and past use of funds covered by this Citizen Participation Plan. Regarding the past use of funds, the law requires reasonable public access to records about any uses of these funds during the previous five years. Also, as required by law, the City of Round Rock will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to local meetings relating to the proposed or actual use of funds.

Standard Documents

Standard documents include:

- The proposed and final Annual Action Plans.
- The proposed and final Five-Year Strategic Plan (the "Consolidated Plan").
- Proposed and final Substantial Amendments to either an Annual Action Plan or the Five-Year Strategic Plan.
- Annual Performance Reports.
- The Citizen Participation Plan.

Availability of Standard Documents

In the spirit of encouraging public participation, copies of standard documents will be provided to the public at no cost and within two working days of a request. These materials will be available in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, when requested.

Places Where Standard Documents Are Available

Standard documents will be available at the Round Rock Library and the Office of Community Development Department. These documents also will be posted on-line on the City of Round Rock web page (<http://www.ci.round-rock.tx.us/planning/>).

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings are required by law in order to obtain the public's views and to provide the public with the City's responses to public questions and proposals.

The law requires public hearings at all stages of the process, including at least a hearing about community needs, a public hearing to review proposed uses of funds, and a public hearing to assess how funds were spent during the previous program year. (More about these specific hearings is in the sections of this Citizen Participation Plan relating to each of the "stages.")

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 Citizen Participation Plan, including a display advertisement in the non-le-al section of the newspaper 14 days prior to the public hearing. Public hearings will be held at a time and location convenient to most people who might benefit from the use of funds.

Public Hearings and Populations with Unique Needs

All public hearings will be held at locations accessible to people with disabilities, and provisions will be made for people with disabilities when requests are made at least five working days prior to a hearing.

Translators will be provided for people who do not speak English when requests are made at least ten working days prior to a hearing.

The Conduct of Public Hearings

To ensure that public hearings are meaningful to residents, public hearings will be conducted in the presence of the Mayor and City Council and by the Community Development Advisory Commission. Also, each resident choosing to speak will be allowed to make a verbal presentation. Prepared presentations over five minutes must be coordinated with City staff five days prior to public hearing to ensure audio-visual support is available. Presentations will be limited to a maximum of 15 minutes.

THE STAGES IN THE PROCESS

A. Identifying Needs

Because the housing and community development needs of low- and moderate-income people are so great and so diverse, priorities must be set in order to decide which needs should get more attention and more resources than other needs. This is the basic reason the Consolidated Plan exists.

The laws and regulations require a public hearing each year to obtain residents' opinions about needs, and what priority those needs have. In order to encourage public involvement, 3 public hearings will be held to determine the specific needs and priorities identified by low- and moderate-income people. Public hearings about needs will be completed 60 days before a draft Annual Action Plan is published for comment, so that the needs identified can be considered by the City and addressed in the draft Annual Action Plan.

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

The law providing the funds covered by this Citizen Participation Plan calls for improved accountability of jurisdictions to the public. In that spirit and in compliance with the terms of the law, the City of Round Rock will use the following procedures.

General Information

At the beginning of this stage, the City of Round Rock will provide the public with an estimate of the amount of CDBG funds it expects to receive in the upcoming year, along with a description of the range of types of activities that can be funded with these resources. Also, the public will be given an estimate of the amount of these funds which will be used in ways that will benefit low and moderate income people.

The plans of the City of Round Rock to minimize the extent to which low and moderate income people will have to leave their homes as a result of the use of these federal dollars (called "displacement") will also be available at this time. This "anti-displacement plan" will also describe how the City of Round Rock will compensate people who are actually displaced as a result of the use of these funds, specifying the type and amount of compensation.

Technical Assistance

City staff will work with organizations and individuals representative of low and moderate income people who are interested in submitting a proposal to obtain funding for an activity. All potential applicants for funding are encouraged to contact City staff for technical assistance before completing a proposal form.

Availability of a Proposed Annual Action Plan

Sixty days after the last public hearing about housing and community development needs, the City of Round Rock will notify the public that a Proposed Annual Action Plan is available. The means of "notice" described earlier in the section on "Public Notice" will be used.

Also, the date the Proposed Annual Action Plan is available to the public will be at least 45 prior to the date a Final Annual Action Plan is approved by the Mayor and City Council so

that low- and moderate-income people will have a reasonable opportunity to examine it and to submit comments

Copies of the Proposed Annual Action Plan will be made available to the public for free and without delay. In addition, copies will be available at the locations specified above in the section, "Public Access to Information." A summary of the Proposed Annual Action Plan will also be written and provided free of charge to those requesting it.

So that low and moderate income people can determine the degree to which they might be affected, they will be provided complete copies of the Proposed Annual Action Plan, containing: all HUD-required sections, the HUD-required Priorities Table, and a written description of all proposed uses of CDBG. At a minimum, this description shall include the type of activity, its location, and the amount of federal money to be allocated to it.

Public Hearing and Further Action

A public hearing about the Proposed Annual Action Plan will be conducted by the Mayor and City Council 30 days after it is available to the public. In addition, this public hearing will be held so that there are another 14 days before a Final Annual Action Plan is approved by the Mayor and City Council so that the elected officials can consider the public's comments from the public hearing.

In preparing a Final Annual Action Plan, careful consideration will be given to all comments and views expressed by the public whether given as verbal testimony at the public hearing or submitted in writing during the review and comment period. The Final Annual Action Plan will have a section that presents all comments and explains 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 and within two days of a request. 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)

The Final Annual Action Plan will be amended any time there is: a change in one of the Priorities presented on the HUD required Priority Table; a change in the use of money to an activity not mentioned in the Final Annual Action Plan; or, a change in the purpose, location, scope, or beneficiaries of an activity (described more fully later). The public will be notified whenever there is an amendment.

"Substantial" Amendments

The following will be considered "substantial" amendments:

1. A change in the use of CDBG money from one activity to another.
2. A change in the use of HOME, ESG, or HOPWA money from one activity to another.
3. The elimination of an activity originally described in the Annual Action Plan.
4. The addition of an activity not originally described in the Annual Action Plan.
5. A change in the purpose of an activity, such as a change in the type of activity or its ultimate objective, for example, a change in a construction project from housing to commercial.
6. A meaningful change in the location of an activity.
7. A change in the type or characteristics of people benefiting from an activity. Among the "characteristics" are:
 - a. The HUD-recognized income levels of 0-30 percent of area median income, between 31 percent and 50 percent of AMI; and between 51 percent and 80 percent of AMI.
 - b. Race or ethnicity.
 - c. Renter or homeowner
 - d. Single households, small ones (two to four persons), large ones (five or more persons).
8. A 20 percent decrease in the number of low or moderate income people benefiting from an activity.
9. A change in the scope of an activity, such that there is a 20 percent increase or decrease in the amount of money allocated to the activity.

Public Notice and Public Hearing for Substantial Amendments

There must be reasonable notice of a proposed Substantial Amendment so that residents will have an opportunity to review it and comment on it. Notice will be made according to the procedures described earlier in this Citizen Participation Plan, with the addition of the following procedures specifically for Substantial Amendments:

1. There will be 30 days advance notice of and availability of a proposed Substantial Amendment before there is a public hearing about it.

2. A detailed written description of the proposed Substantial Amendment will be made available to the public at no cost within two working days of a request. Also, copies will be available at the locations indicated earlier in this Citizen Participation Plan under " Public Access to Information."
3. There will be a public hearing regarding the proposed Substantial Amendment conducted by the Mayor and City Council. This public hearing will not take place until the public has had 30 days to review the proposed Substantial Amendment.
4. The public hearing will be held no sooner than two weeks prior to submission to HUD.
5. In preparing a Final Substantial Amendment, careful consideration will be given to all comments and views expressed by the public, whether given as verbal testimony at the public hearing or submitted in writing during the review and comment period. The Final Substantial Amendment will have a section that presents all comments and explains why any comments were not accepted.

E. The Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)

Every year, the City of Round Rock must send into HUD a CAPER report within 90 days of the close of the program year. In general, the CAPER must describe how funds were actually used and the extent to which these funds were used for activities that benefited low- and moderate-income people.

Public Notice and Public Hearing for Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)

There must be reasonable notice that a Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report is available so that residents will have an opportunity to review it and comment on it. Notice will be made according to the procedures described earlier in this Citizen Participation Plan, with the addition of the following procedures specifically for Annual Performance Reports:

1. There will be 30 days advance notice of and availability of a CAPER before there is a public hearing about it.
2. A complete copy of the CAPER will be made available to the public at no cost within two working days of a request. Copies will be available at the locations indicated earlier in this Citizen Participation Plan under "Public Access to Information."
3. There will be a public hearing regarding the CAPER. [Editorial Note: Although the law clearly calls for a public hearing at this stage, HUD's regulations do not

explicitly require one at this point. However in the spirit of "enhanced public accountability" (also in the law), a public hearing at this stage is very important.

4. This public hearing will be conducted by the Mayor and City Council in the interest of public accountability. It will not take place until the public has had 30 days to review the CAPER.
5. In preparing the CAPER for submission to HUD, careful consideration will be given to all comments and views expressed by the public, whether given as verbal testimony at the public hearing or submitted in writing. The CAPER sent to HUD will have a section that presents all comments and explains why any comments were not accepted.

Contents of the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)

The CAPER presented to the public will contain at least as much detail as CAPER Performance Report will have an accounting for each activity in any Action Plan, until an activity is officially "closed-out" with HUD by the jurisdiction. For each activity the details presented will include, but not be limited to:

1. Activity Number from the Action Plan.
2. Name of the Activity plus its HUD "Activity Title " with regulation reference.
3. A description of the activity that is in enough detail for the public to have a clear understanding of the nature of the activity.
4. The name of the entity carrying out the activity.
5. The location of the activity.
 - a. Generally, this will be a street address or some other information showing specifically where the activity was (or is) being carried out.
 - b. For public facility activities such as street reconstruction not located at a specific street address, the beginning and ending points of the activity will be indicated.
 - c. For activities claiming to meet the "area-wide benefit test." the location will also include the census tracts and/or block groups making up the service area of the activity. Also, the percentage of low/mod income persons in the service area will be indicated.
 - d. For multifamily housing activities, the address of each building and the number of units in the building both before and after assistance will be given.

6. The description of economic development activities will include the amount of the loan, the interest rate, and the length of the loan. It will also indicate the number of permanent, full-time jobs to be created or retained, with the number of such jobs to be held by or available to low/mod income people indicated in parentheses. The same information will be provided for part-time jobs, stating the number of hours per week the part-time jobs offer.
7. "Float Loan Funded" activities and "Section 108 Loan Guaranteed" activities should be clearly identified as such.
8. The date the activity was initially funded.
9. The "national objective" the activity claims to meet.
10. The status of an activity, such as whether it is completed, underway, or canceled.
11. The amount of CPD dollars "budgeted" and the amount "spent." The amount "spent" shall be given for the year, and separately or the life of the activity to date.
12. For public service activities, the amount of money which meets HUD's definition of "unliquidated obligation " will be reported.
13. If "program income" dollars and/or "revolving loan fund" dollars are being used for an activity, this will be indicated.
14. The accomplishments for the activity will be a description of what was actually done, including numerical measures when appropriate, such as number of units of housing rehabbed and number of individuals or households served. For economic development activities, the report will show (when applicable) the total number of jobs created or retained, plus the number of these held by or available to low/mod income people.
15. For activities that provide a direct benefit to individuals or households, the report will show: the number of individuals or households served; the number which were "moderate" income; the number which were "low" income; and, the number which were White, Black, Latino, or Asian.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Written complaints from the public will receive a meaningful, written reply within 15 working days.

CHANGING THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

This Citizen Participation Plan can be changed only after the public has been notified of any 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 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION

The City of Round Rock will create a Community Development Advisory Commission (CDAC) in the spirit of the law, which calls for increased accountability to the public, as well as the encouragement of active participation by low and moderate income people.

The CDAC is a 7-member body that contributes to public participation by helping to: identify housing and community development needs; establish priorities relating to those needs; propose activities and projects to address high-priority needs; and, suggest the amount of federal, state, and local monies to be allocated to those activities.

At any given time, no less than 70 percent of the CAC membership shall be comprised of individuals representing low income people and/or organizations which serve low income people. All CDAC meetings are open to the public and are advertised as described above in the "Public Notice" section of this Citizen Participation Plan.

All CDAC meetings will be held at times convenient for lower income people, so that as many people can participate as possible.

The CDAC will receive quarterly performance updates which shall also be available to the public. Performance updates will be provided to the CDAC seven days prior to a quarterly meeting.

The CDAC will recommend to the Mayor and City Council how to allocate all CDBG funds, including "program income " associated with these, monies left unspent and unobligated from the previous program year and any additional (not previously anticipated) federal fund allotments. In no event shall CDBG funds be allocated without review by the CDAC.