



# CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN



HAMILTON COUNTY  
Planning +  
Development

# ***Hamilton County Planning and Development Citizen Participation Plan***

(updated March 2015)

This Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) provides for and encourages the participation of all jurisdictions/citizens in the development of Community Development programs. Several opportunities are provided for citizen participation before, during and after each program year (March 1 – February 28).

The CPP will involve a broad range of citizens with an emphasis on very low, low, and moderate income residents, where housing and community development funds may be spent.

Citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties, including those most affected, will have the opportunity to receive information, review and submit comments on any proposed action.

All the meetings, including the Public Hearings will be:

- Conveniently timed for people who might or will benefit from program funds
- Accessible to people with disability
- Adequately publicized
- Receptive to views of citizens, public agencies and other interested parties
- Held in a central location to outreach low-income areas in each community

The Planning and Development Department will provide technical assistance to Low-Moderate income citizens, jurisdictions or groups who request such assistance in preparing and submitting Community Development Project requests.

Below is an outline of the Citizen Participation Process at the Community and Countywide Levels. A chart outlining the process follows.

## **Stage One**

### **Community Level Assessment**

1. First Public Hearing at the Local Government Level - Each participating local community in Hamilton County schedules a public hearing to obtain citizen views on housing and community development needs. Prior notice of this hearing is provided by the community, and low-moderate income residents or those who reside in blighted areas are encouraged to attend the meeting and make their needs known.
2. Local Public Officials develop proposed Community Development projects - After the hearing is held, the local governing body makes a final determination of local priorities and projects for which Community Development funding will be requested.
3. Second Public Hearing at the Local Government Level - A second public hearing is scheduled to present to the citizens the proposed projects for consideration and input.

4. Local Public Officials approve and submit a list of projects to Hamilton County for funding consideration.

### **County Level Assessment**

1. Staff outreaches and consults with public housing agencies and public/private community service organizations to determine county-wide needs, coordinate actions and recommend projects for county-wide funding consideration.
2. Staff holds a meeting of the Community Development Advisory Committee to consider county-wide needs and projects.

### **Stage Two**

#### **Preparation of the Annual Action Plan**

After receiving applications from the communities and agencies, the staff will prepare a proposed Annual Action Plan and Three-Year Plan, taking into consideration comments received at the previous meetings. This is essentially a list of proposed projects for HUD funding.

#### **County-Wide Public Hearings**

Following completion of the first draft of the Annual Action Plan and Three-Year Plan, a notice is published in a newspaper of general circulation informing the public of two opportunities to comment on the draft plans. The first opportunity is a public hearing held concurrently with a second Community Development Advisory Committee Meeting and the second is a public hearing scheduled before the Board of County Commissioners.

### **Stage Three**

#### **Approval Process**

Following the public hearing before the Board of County Commissioners, the Commissioners will review the proposed Three-Year Plan and Annual Action Plan and any citizen comments and then direct the staff in their preparation of the final plan. The final plan is then approved by the Board of County Commissioners and submitted to HUD for review. The Final Action Plan can be examined at the Community Development Department Office during business hours.

### **General Guidelines**

This full three stage process will be repeated every three years in conjunction with the CDBG urban county qualification process to develop the Community Development Three-Year Plan. During the second and third years of that cycle, local governments need only reaffirm projects that were part of the plan. Should a local community wish to change projects scheduled for year two or three of the plan, the stage one, Community Level Assessment process must be followed. Stage two (except for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Community Development Advisory Committee Meeting) and Stage three of this Citizen Participation Plan will be followed in developing the annual action plan for years two and three of the three year cycle.

## **Plan Amendments**

The Community Development program also provides opportunity for citizen comment whenever a “substantial change” in the use of funds is proposed during the program year. A substantial change includes:

- A) Any proposal to delete a previously approved project or to add a new project.
- B) Any change in a project budget by 25% or more.
- C) Any significant change in the character, scope, scale or location of a project that requires an amended environmental review.

When a community proposes a “substantial change”, the local governing body must publish a notice describing the proposed change and set a public hearing before the local governing body to receive citizen comments. After citizen comments (if any) have been received and considered, the governing body submits the proposal to the Community Development Department. Formal action by the Board of County Commissioners is taken to amend the Action Plan. A copy of the amended Action Plan is sent to HUD.

A similar process is followed for substantial changes proposed by the County for any “county wide” projects. In these cases, notice is published by the Community Development Department for a hearing to receive citizen comments on the proposal. The Board of County Commissioners then formally takes action to amend the Action Plan and send it to HUD. The amended final Action Plan is available for review at the Community Development office during regular business hours.

## **Reports and Information**

Interested citizens may request information about the Consolidated Plan or the status of any plan activities during the program year. In addition, at the completion of each program year, the Community Development Department prepares for submission to HUD a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). This summarizes the status of all active projects in the Hamilton County program. Preparation of the CAPER is completed within 60 days of the end of the program year.

The CAPER is then made available for review and comment by interested parties. Notice of its availability is published in a newspaper of general circulation. All written comments concerning the CAPER that are reviewed by the Community Development office within the following 15 days are included with the CAPER submission to the Department of HUD. The CAPER and comments must be submitted to the Federal agency within 90 days of the end of the program year. Other public documents relating to the Community Development program are also available at the Community Development Department.

The County Community Development Department will provide a written response to all written complaints or grievances within 15 working days. If a response cannot be given within 15 days, the complainant will be told why the response is delayed and when a response may be expected.