



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 7, 2021

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of Draft Citizen Participation Plan for Housing and Community Development Activities.

ISSUE: Consideration of Draft Citizen Participation Plan for Housing and Community Development Activities.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (a) Receive the Draft Citizen Participation Plan for Housing and Community Development Activities and schedule it for public comment at the Public Hearing on Saturday, December 18, 2021; and,
- (b) Following public hearing, approve the Plan.

DISCUSSION: The City of Alexandria's Draft Citizen Participation Plan for Housing and Community Development Activities ("Participation Plan") has been prepared in accordance with regulations set forth by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) which refers to the Participation Plan as the "Citizen Participation Plan" in all official documents. These regulations require that participants in certain HUD programs including, but not limited to, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) programs, have a Participation Plan describing how low- and moderate-income people can participate in, and comment on, the creation of the Annual Action Plan for Housing and Community Development ("Action Plan") and review Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER).

The Draft Participation Plan is attached. It describes the methods to be used for outreach to low- and moderate-income persons, lists housing and community development organizations to be consulted, documents changes in public participation processes during emergency situations, and contains other information required by HUD.

These methods will be used during upcoming planning processes. The approved Participation Plan will be effective until the City chooses to revise it, or HUD requirements change and a revision is needed.

BACKGROUND: The Office of Housing prepares the Participation Plan in accordance with HUD regulations and guidance. The document is occasionally updated to better reflect the needs of the community, changing technologies used for public outreach, and updated HUD guidance. The last Participation Plan update was in 2009.

HUD requires the Participation Plan to describe how the City will provide residents with reasonable and timely access to local meetings, information, and records related to the City's proposed and actual use of funds; provide for public hearings to obtain citizen views and to respond to proposals and questions; provide for timely written answers to written complaints and grievances; and identify how the needs of non-English speaking residents will be met in the case of public hearings where a significant number of non-English speaking residents can be reasonably expected to participate.

The Participation Plan is being revised because of the changes in communications technologies, HUD guidance since the last revision in 2009, and to incorporate new procedures for public participation during disasters or other emergencies. HUD allowed alterations to the public participation process due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but these measures were temporary. This made staff aware of the lack of emergency procedures in the 2009 Participation Plan and the need to include them in a revised version of the Participation Plan.

The revisions to the Plan include the addition of procedures for public participation during emergency situations (based on HUD's guidance for such procedures); the inclusion of new communications methods, such as social media, to inform the public about the Action Plan and CAPER; the specification of relocation policies for residents affected by federally-funded housing and community development activities; an updated list of stakeholders to be consulted about the Action Plan and CAPER; and the removal of outdated or redundant information.

The Draft Participation Plan was released on October 12 for a required 30-day public comment period, which ended on November 15. To solicit public comments, the Draft Participation Plan's release was announced by notices placed in local newspapers, via social media, the City's eNews service, and the Office of Housing website. Hard copies were available for review in City libraries and at the Office of Housing. It was also distributed to a host of interested parties on October 14 via email. No comments from the public were received during the comment period.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Citizen Participation Plan for Housing and Community Development Activities
2. Citizen Participation Plan Presentation

STAFF:

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