

City of Milford, Connecticut
Citizen Participation Plan
March 2010

INTRODUCTION

The City of Milford is an entitlement community, meaning that it receives an annual allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as authorized pursuant to Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. As a condition of its continued participation in the CDBG Program, the City of Milford is required to adopt a Citizen Participation Plan as required under 24 CFR, Part 91, Subpart B, Citizen Participation and Consultation (§91.105), and Subpart F, Amendments to the Consolidated Plan (§91.505). To accomplish this requirement the city shall adopt and abide by a Citizen Participation Plan to set forth its policies and procedures for citizen participation.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The Milford Community Development Department is the city department responsible for the administration of the CDBG Program. This document shall establish a guide for the City of Milford to coordinate public participation in the planning of housing goals and policies; give timely notice of public comment periods; and reasonable access to public hearings, information, and records relating to the grantee's proposed and actual use of CDBG funds. For further information on the aforementioned CDBG documentation, please visit the Department of Community Development, in Parsons Government Center, 70 West River Street, 2nd Floor, Milford, CT, or phone (203) 783-3230, during business hours.

In addition, the City of Milford will consult with adjacent governmental entities on community development needs of multi-jurisdictional impact as well as solicit planning input from city departments, and a variety of organizations and agencies whose programs serve a wide range of individuals including low to moderate-income persons and special needs citizens.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

A Citizen Participation Plan outlines specific steps the city will take to assure for public comment, public hearing(s) and the public availability of HUD required reports such as the Five-Year Consolidated Housing and Community Development Strategic Plan (the Plan); the Annual Action Plan (the Plan); the Environmental Review Record (ERR); the Consolidated Annual Performance

Evaluation Report (CAPER); the program performance reviews; and any substantial amendments to the aforementioned.

The city shall periodically review its Citizen Participation Plan and shall notice any proposed changes to the Citizen Participation Plan with a fifteen (15) day public comment period. The city shall make copies of its amended Citizen Participation Plan available for comment and viewing in the Community Development Department, the Main Branch of the Milford Public Library and the Office of City Clerk. Any person with a disability or a non-English speaking individual who needs assistance to review this Citizen Participation Plan should contact the Department of Community Development.

Furthermore, the aforementioned records, documents and information related to the CDBG program, and public participation schedule, are available for review throughout the year in the Department of Community Development and/or on the City of Milford Web site www.ci.milford.ct.us to anyone requesting a copy.

PUBLIC COMMENT & REVIEW PROCESS

To solicit community involvement, the Department of Community Development will publish a notice for public comment, a public hearing or a public review prior to its subsequent submittal of reports, substantial amendment or Plan(s) to the Hartford Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Department of Community Planning and Development (CPD).

Prior to any public comment the Department of Community Development will publish said notice in a local newspaper and/or on the City of Milford website www.ci.milford.ct.us. A public comment period will begin on the date of publication and will state the time period for which the public can submit written comments. The city will consider all written comments and views of citizens and attach a summary of said comments with its submittal to HUD including those comments not accepted and the reason for rejection. Written comments will be accepted in the Department of Community Development, Parsons Government Center, 70 West River Street 2nd Fl, Milford, CT.

PUBLIC HEARING

The City will hold public hearings at the City Hall or the Parsons Government Center during the evening as a convenience to the public. Both facilities and locations are physically accessible to disabled persons and convenient to those seeking information or wanting to make comments.

The Department of Community Development will conduct at least two (2) public hearings at two different stages of the planning and development of the Plan. The first hearing will take place at the onset of the citizen participation and planning stage of the Annual Action Plan. A second hearing will be held to solicit additional comments on the Plan prior to its adoption by the City of Milford Board of Alderman.

The notice of a public hearing will be published at least fifteen (15) days in advance of the scheduled hearing, and shall contain the purpose, the time and location of the hearing, and a describe how the Department of Community Development will assist persons with disabilities and non-English-speaking persons and with sufficient prior notice will make accommodations for persons with disabilities or non-English speaking persons. For example, the Department of Community Development will arrange for the services of a translator at meetings in which the it anticipates that a significant number of the expected attendees are non-English speaking persons. Any verbal comments expressed during a public hearing will be reflected in meeting minutes of the hearing as appendices its Plan to HUD.

CONSOLIDATED HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN / ANNUAL ACTION PLAN.

The Housing Partnership, whose members constitute a broad base of Milford community leaders and volunteers, will act in cooperation with the Milford Community Development Department, with the Mayor, to oversee and guide the citizen participation and grant decision making process.

The Department of Community Development will hold at least two (2) public hearings at different stages of the planning and development of the Plan. The Department of Community Development and the Housing Partnership will then analyze and review all comments, overall priorities, projects, and grant requests. It will then give its recommendation for proposed funding allocations that best reflect the City of Milford housing priorities and community interests as set forth in the Five-Year Consolidated Housing and Community Development Strategic Plan (ConPlan) to the Mayor. The Mayor will review their recommendations. The Department of Community Development will then proceed with the final draft of the ConPlan incorporating the Mayors comments.

In conjunction with, or shortly after, the second public hearing date, the Department of Community Development will notice a thirty (30) day public comment period, at which time a copy of the proposed Plan will be available for public review and comment in the Department of Community

Development, in the Office of City Clerk and in the Milford Main Public Library. Upon completion of a thirty (30) day comment period, the Community Development Department will submit the proposed Plan, with comments, for approval by the Board of Alderman, which meets the first Monday of every month.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW NOTICES

Upon acceptance of the Federal Community Development Block Grant funds from the Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) the city must subject all activities to an Environmental Review according to federal regulation 24 CFR Part 58 from National Environmental Policy Act requirements. The Department of Community Development assumes responsibility for environmental reviews prior to submission of any activity or expenditure of CDBG funds.

Once the environmental review records (ERR) are completed, the city must publish a Notice of Intent to Request Release of Funding (NOI/RROF) prior to its submittal of the approved Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan and/or Annual Action Plan to HUD, at least forty-five (45) days before the start of the each new program year, October 1st. The NOI/RROF consists of a fifteen (15) day public comment period to advise the community of the environmental review record and its notice of intent to request the release of CDBG funds.

Depending on the results of the ERR, the Department of Community Development may or may not combine one or more of the following additional review results in the same notice.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW RECORD (ERR)

The Department of Community Development must complete an environmental review record (ERR) on each proposed activity and submit its findings for final environmental review and approval from HUD. Upon completion of the ERR, the city will publish a notice to review its findings and a fifteen (15) day public comment period.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

If the Department of Community Development finds that its any of its activities do not fall under an exempt or categorically excluded regulations and do not require the completion of an Environmental Impact Statement then an Environmental Assessment (EA) 58.36 will be required of the specific activity(s). Once the Department of Community Development completes the necessary EA, it can combine the results of the EA with its NOI/RROF, otherwise an additional seven (7) day public comment period for the EA is required.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Moreover, any activity determined to have a potentially significant impact on the environment and/or that involves large-scale demolition, sewer or construction will require the Department of Community Development to complete an Environmental Impact Statement Determination (EIS) 58.37. Once completed, the city then publishes a fifteen (15) day notice of Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), which can then be combined with the RROF notice of fifteen (15) day public comment period.

CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE & EVALUATION REPORT (CAPER)

The city is required to report annually on project accomplishments and the progress that it has made in carrying out the goals outlined in the Consolidated and Annual Action Plans. This report is known as the Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report (CAPER). The city shall provide a fifteen (15) day comment period in which anyone may to receive comment on the performance report prior to its submission to HUD. The City shall provide notice in a local newspaper and/or on the City of Milford website. Also, contained in the notice is a general description of the purpose of the report, where copies of the report may be reviewed, how to submit comments on the report and the date by which those comments must be received. The City shall consider all comments expressed either verbally or in writing and received within the public comment period. The City shall append a summary of these comments to the CAPER in its submission to HUD.

SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS

The City will consider a Substantial Amendment to be a change in the use of CDBG entitlement funds from one eligible activity to another, or an additional allocation of program income or unprogrammed CDBG entitlement funding not otherwise included in the Plan, provided that the amount of such change is greater than or equal 10% of the most recent grant allocation.

Other substantial amendment(s) would include a change or correction to the Five-Year Consolidated Housing and Community Development Strategic Plan (ConPlan) process; the Environmental Review Record (ERR), the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) or any other previously noticed CDBG document. Engaging and funding in an activity that was not included in the Plan would also constitute a Substantial Amendment regardless of the amount of funding involved. Prior to implementing any such amendment, the City will publish a thirty (30) day public comment notice stating the proposed amendment(s) and a brief explanation. During that thirty (30) day public comment period citizens are invited to review and give written comment upon the propose

substantial amendment(s) to the Department of Community Development.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Community Development staff is available to provide information or technical assistance to local groups with interest in receiving funds. If a community group, non-profit organization or housing sponsor desire more intensive information, counseling, or technical assistance the Department of Community Development is available for a reasonable amount of time. The city will determine the level and type of assistance to be provided based on the specific needs of the group requesting such assistance.

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS/COMPLAINTS

In the event that a resident has a question or complaint about the CDBG Program or about a specific project, the matter will be referred to the proper department or individual for a response. The standard set time for a response will be fifteen (15) business days or less.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Department of Community Development
Parsons Government Center
70 West River Street
Milford CT 06460 203-783-3230 www.ci.milford.ct.us

Office of Housing and Urban Development
Community Planning Department
One Corporate Center, 19th floor
Hartford, CT 06103 860-240-4800 www.hud.gov