

Appendix 3 – Citizen Participation Plan



Life. Well Crafted.

Citizen Participation Plan

City of Hickory, North Carolina.

Participation

The City of Hickory provides for and encourages citizen participation in the development and implementation of the Consolidated Plan and any subsequent amendments, Action Plans and performance reports. Particular emphasis is placed on participation by persons of low and moderate income who are residents of low and moderate income neighborhoods and/or slum and blighted areas, and residents of public housing.

Access to Information

The City of Hickory provides citizens with reasonable and timely access to local information and records related to the City's proposed and actual use of funds. This is done through public meetings of the City, which are advertised in a local newspaper of general circulation. Meetings are held within the City limits in or near areas identified as slum and blighted and areas of predominantly low and moderate income persons. All meetings of the City are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Anti-displacement

In order to comply with the requirements of Section 104(d) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, the City of Hickory intends to minimize any displacement resulting from any HUD activities. However, should any displacement occur as a result of a HUD activity, the City intends to follow the regulations for displacement and relocation as described in 24 CFR 570.606. Should any real property acquisition result because of a HUD assisted activity, the guidelines of 49 CFR part 24 subpart b will be followed.

Publishing the Plan

A summary of the plan was published in the Hickory Daily Record in April 2020. Copies of the full Consolidated Plan were made available for public inspection at libraries, government offices and public housing authority offices within the City. Copies of the Plan were made upon request in accordance with City policies regarding making copies. The City considered any and all comments or views in writing or

orally received at the public hearing in preparing the Consolidated Plan, and such comments will be attached to the final plan to be submitted to HUD.

Public Hearings

The City of Hickory provides for a minimum of two public hearings per year to obtain citizen's views and to respond to proposals and questions at all stages of the Consolidated Plan, including its development, substantial amendments, Annual Action Plans and Annual Performance Reports. Public hearings are advertised twice in a newspaper of general circulation ten days prior to the hearings and the day of the public hearings. The City of Hickory will provide a translator for non-English speaking residents in the case of public hearings when the City is notified that a non-English speaking resident will be in attendance. An interpreter will be provided for hearing-impaired residents as needed. Such requests must be made to the City Clerk's office no later than 48 hours prior to the public hearing. *In emergency situations such as the global COVID-19 pandemic, an expedited procedure may be enacted if approval is given by US Housing and Urban Development. In May 2020, this expedited procedure must include notice and reasonable opportunity to comment of no less than 5 days. The 5-day period can run concurrently for comments on the consolidated plan, annual action plan, plan amendments and amended citizen participation plan. Public hearings during emergency situations will not be required to substantially amend Consolidated Plans and/or Annual Action Plans, provided an exception is given by HUD. In May, 2020 this exception has been given and the expedited procedure will not include public hearings.*

Notice of Hearings

A public notice of the plan was published in a newspaper of general circulation in January 2020 for hearings held January 23, 2020 and January 29, 2020. A third public hearing was held in May 2020. Copies of the full Consolidated Plan were available for public inspection at libraries, government offices and public housing authority offices within the City. Copies of the entire plan are available upon request in accordance with City policies regarding making copies. The City considered all comments or views in writing or orally received at public hearings in preparing the Consolidated Plan, and such comments are attached to the final plan to be submitted to HUD. *In emergency situations such as the global COVID-19 pandemic, an expedited procedure may be enacted if approval is given by US Housing and Urban Development. In May 2020, this expedited procedure must include notice and reasonable opportunity to comment of no less than 5 days. The 5-day period can run concurrently for comments on the consolidated plan, annual action plan, plan amendments and amended citizen participation plan. Public hearings during emergency situations will not be required to substantially amend Consolidated Plans and/or Annual Action Plans, provided an exception is given by HUD. In May, 2020 this exception has been given and the expedited procedure will not include public hearings.*

Access to Meetings

The City of Hickory held three meetings in identified low- and moderate-income neighborhoods and City Hall during the development of the Plan. All public meetings and hearings were advertised ten days prior to their date and the dates of the meetings. These notices are published in the Hickory Daily Record. All locations of public meetings are handicapped accessible. *In emergency situations such as the global COVID-19 pandemic, an expedited procedure may be enacted if approval is given by US Housing and Urban Development. In May 2020, this expedited procedure must include notice and reasonable opportunity to comment of no less than 5 days. The 5-day period can run concurrently for comments on the consolidated*

plan, annual action plan, plan amendments and amended citizen participation plan. Public hearings during emergency situations will not be required to substantially amend Consolidated Plans and/or Annual Action Plans, provided an exception is given by HUD. In May, 2020 this exception has been given and the expedited procedure will not include public hearings.

Comments

There will be a 30-day comment period prior to the submission of the Consolidated Plan and subsequent Action Plans beginning April 5, 2020. Comments will be considered and incorporated in the final approved Plan submitted to HUD. The availability of the Plan will be advertised in the Hickory Daily Record detailing where the Plan can be reviewed. The Plan will be available at the City Planning and Development Department of the Julian G. Whitener Municipal Building, 76 N. Center Street, Hickory. *In emergency situations such as the global COVID-19 pandemic, an expedited procedure may be enacted if approval is given by US Housing and Urban Development. In May 2020, this expedited procedure must include notice and reasonable opportunity to comment of no less than 5 days. The 5-day period can run concurrently for comments on the consolidated plan, annual action plan, plan amendments and amended citizen participation plan. Public hearings during emergency situations will not be required to substantially amend Consolidated Plans and/or Annual Action Plans, provided an exception is given by HUD. In May, 2020 this exception has been given and the expedited procedure will not include public hearings.*

Amendments to the Consolidated Plan

A public hearing will be conducted whenever amendments are proposed which add, delete or substantially change the adopted Consolidated Plan and subsequent Action Plans. Proposed amendments to the plans will be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation for two consecutive weeks at least 10 days prior to the public hearing, stating the time, date and place. A period of 30 days will be provided to receive public comments. A change to the Consolidated Plan is considered substantial whenever a budget line item is changed 25% or more, if an objective is deleted or added to the Plan, or if an activity within an annual Action Plan is added or deleted. *In emergency situations such as the global COVID-19 pandemic, an expedited procedure may be enacted if approval is given by US Housing and Urban Development. In May 2020, this expedited procedure must include notice and reasonable opportunity to comment of no less than 5 days. The 5-day period can run concurrently for comments on the consolidated plan, annual action plan, plan amendments and amended citizen participation plan. Public hearings during emergency situations will not be required to substantially amend Consolidated Plans and/or Annual Action Plans, provided an exception is given by HUD. In May, 2020 this exception has been given and the expedited procedure will not include public hearings.*

Performance Reports

The City of Hickory will perform a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) to report the use of CDBG funds. Further, an independent audit will be performed annually to examine the use of CDBG funds. Such reports will be available for public inspection and review. A notice will be published stating where and when the CAPER will be available to the public for inspection. The CAPER will be made available for public inspection for at least 15 days prior to its submission to HUD. Further, a public hearing will be held to receive citizen comments, input and questions regarding the CAPER prior to its submission. All comments, written or oral, received at the public hearing will be considered and a summary of those comments will be attached to the CAPER.

Availability to the Public

The City of Hickory will make available to the public the Consolidated Plan, substantial amendments and the CAPER will be made readily available to the public both upon request at the City Office of Business Development and on the City's website. Copies will be provided according to the City's policies of making copies for the public. Translated copies into specific languages will be provided upon request to non-English speaking city residents. Access to Records -- The City will make available to anyone during normal business hours access to information and records relating to the Consolidated Plan and use of funds for programs in previous years.

Technical Assistance

The Hickory Community Development Office provides technical assistance to groups providing services to low and moderate income persons. Those groups must meet the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) national objectives and providing programs and activities consistent with this Consolidated Plan. Further, participation by residents of public and assisted housing is expressly encouraged. Notices of upcoming meetings and public hearings are mailed to and posted at public housing sites and posted in areas known to be predominantly low and moderate income.

Complaints

The City will be responsible for receiving and responding in writing to written complaints and grievances related to the Consolidated Plan activities. All complaints will be reviewed by the Citizens Advisory Committee at their next regularly scheduled monthly meeting. City staff will respond to written complaints and grievances in writing within 15 days of their receipt, where practical, based on the Citizens Advisory Committee's finding if the complaint(s) is (are) justified.

Appendix 4 – Fair Housing Plan Activities

The City of Hickory is committed to affirmatively further fair housing, increasing awareness of Fair Housing laws. There are three components of Fair Housing planning. The first was the development of an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, which the City completed in 2013. Now the City is committed to addressing the issues identified in that analysis and will continue to implement its plan to affirmatively further Fair Housing opportunities. Since education and awareness of Fair Housing laws were identified as the primary impediment to fair housing choice, education and awareness efforts are at the core of the Fair Housing activities for FY 2014 as identified in the Fair Housing Plan activities listed below.

The City of Hickory Community Development Department has determined a list of actions that will assist in affirmatively furthering fair housing in its jurisdiction. The City will take an active role through the following activities as it strives to meet its Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan goals:

- The City of Hickory will continue to explore options to create affordable housing on current city owned vacant properties.
- The City of Hickory will continue to serve on the Catawba Valley Board of Realtors Equal Opportunity in Housing Committee. This committee works to ensure equal housing opportunity in the region.
- The City of Hickory will continue to serve on a regional bank's Community Reinvestment Act advisory committee. This committee works to inform communities within the region of possible opportunities to create affordable housing.
- City staff will partner with the City's Community Relations Council on an annual basis to discuss fair housing issues and plan additional events to promote fair housing the community. This council is tasked with furthering good human relations in the community.
- City staff will also discuss fair housing issues with the Hickory International Council and the Citizen's Advisory Committee on at least an annual basis. The Hickory International Council promotes positive relations among different nationalities residing within the city. The Citizen's Advisory Committee provides input to city council on various issues related to housing and community development.
- The City of Hickory staff will provide information to various neighborhood associations or groups about local housing programs offered throughout the area. Staff will make available printed materials designed to inform citizens of their fair housing rights as outlined in state and federal fair housing laws. Information will be translated into Spanish for our Hispanic population.
- City of Hickory will observe April as "Fair Housing Month." The Hickory City Council will adopt a fair housing resolution each April to recognize and support fair housing. The City of Hickory will sponsor public service announcements regarding fair housing and promote "Fair Housing Month" in local newspapers and/or radio.
- The City of Hickory will work with the Catawba Valley Hispanic Ministry, better known as "Centro Latino." Centro Latino is a non-profit organization offering a wide variety of programs including: health, social and educational services, community building, and advocacy for the Latino community of the region. Written material will be provided in Spanish and English.
- Fair Housing brochures and other material supplied by HUD and the North Carolina Human Relations Commission will be made available at the City of Hickory Municipal Building for citizens. The City of Hickory will order supplies of fair housing materials in English and Spanish.

- The City of Hickory will participate semi-annually in community meetings in predominately African-American neighborhoods in order to present information about various local housing programs and to make available printed materials designed to inform citizens of their fair housing rights as outlined in state and federal fair housing laws.
- The City of Hickory will use its utility bills and utility bill inserts to inform citizens of their rights to fair housing. These will include articles in the city's utility bill newsletter on a semi-annual basis.
- The City of Hickory will use its social media channels to promote fair housing and information about all local housing programs offered throughout the area.
- The City of Hickory will supply informational posters, brochures and/or flyers to historically African-American churches and community centers to inform citizens about their fair housing rights.
- The City of Hickory will continue to promote down-payment assistance for first-time low to moderate income homebuyers through the Western Piedmont Council of Governments. Staff will make a concerted effort to ensure that this program is affirmatively marketed to minority populations, especially African Americans and Hispanics.
- The City of Hickory will look to partner with local radio station to air public service announcements related to Fair Housing.
- The City of Hickory will make public improvements related to low income housing tax credit projects that will be developing affordable housing for low to moderate income families, older adults and disabled persons. Examples of this include sidewalks and landscaping in city rights of way directly adjacent to properties being developed as affordable housing.
- The City of Hickory will continue to partner with Habitat for Humanity to assist in the provision of housing to low to moderate income families. Recent partnership efforts have included the development of an eleven-lot single family subdivision to provide affordable housing units in the city's Green Park neighborhood and a 20-lot single family development of mixed income (affordable and market rate homes) in the Falling Creek area of the City. The city also provides grant funding to support the Habitat Repairs! Program that assists with rehabilitation of existing housing units.
- The city will continue to provide grants and loans to low- and moderate-income homebuyers in order to assist in the rehabilitation of owner-occupied housing units.