

EXHIBIT A

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

In conformance with the provisions of 24 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) 91, "Consolidated Submissions for Community Planning and Development Programs" and more specifically with the provisions of 24 CFR 91.105, the City of Port Orange has adopted the following Citizen Participation Plan.

This Citizen Participation Plan outlines the methods used in the development of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, and describes how the City will provide for citizen participation in the development of the Consolidated Plan.

The method established by the City for obtaining citizen participation and input for the development of the Consolidated Plan, amendments to the Plan, and reports on performance and progress, is meant to encourage the participation of City residents and particularly the persons most likely to be affected by the Plan. It is the intent of the City to provide for a significant level of citizen participation, particularly from lower income residents or those living in deteriorating neighborhoods, in order to gather meaningful, thorough and effective input from those persons most likely to benefit from or be affected by these programs.

The following subjects are addressed in the Plan:

1. Technical assistance
2. Public hearings/meetings
3. Project identification
4. A thirty-day public comment period
5. City Council approval
6. Submission of the Consolidated Plan
7. Program information/records
8. Handicapped and bilingual provisions
9. Provision for complaints and inquiries
10. Amendments
11. Updates to the Citizen Participation Plan
12. Special Efforts
13. Minimizing Displacement

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SECTION 1: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance will be provided to citizens, citizen groups, nonprofit organizations and agencies that need assistance in understanding the program and developing project proposals. Such assistance is available upon request. Bilingual assistance and information provided include HUD low-income population data (per area), applicable regulations, project request forms, maps and other public data as available. Anyone needing technical assistance should contact the City at (386)506-5737.

SECTION 2: PUBLIC HEARINGS/MEETINGS

At the beginning of the annual Plan development process there will be a public notice concerning the amount of grant funds and program income expected, and of the anticipated dates and times of the public hearings. Participation in the public hearings and comments will be encouraged. Additional public hearings will be held at different stages of the program year as described below.

The annual cycle of public hearings held for the Consolidated and Annual Plan are designed to provide the City's residents full disclosure of CDBG and its operations. The hearings will allow the City to obtain citizen views, comments and responses to Consolidated Plan related proposals, requirements, regulations, performance, and questions.

Public hearings/meetings will be held at times and locations convenient to the residents of the City. They will be held after traditional working hours and will be held in easily identified locations.

The public will be notified of all hearings/meetings through the City's general circulation newspapers and the City's website. Notices will be published approximately 10-15 days prior to each hearing/meeting. **Given the need to expedite actions to respond to declared disasters and/or health crisis the statutory requirement to provide public notice for citizens may be subject to HUD waiver in whole or part.**

Notices will be printed in readable size and placed in the newspaper. The notices will provide complete summary information on the purpose of the meeting, the date, time and location. They shall provide a name and phone number for persons who may have questions about the hearing/meeting, along with information regarding accessibility for the disabled.

The Citizen Participation Plan, containing information on this process, is a portion of the five-year Consolidated Plan, and will be posted on the City's website.

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A minimum of two public hearings will be held at different stages during each program year. The following subjects will be covered, and may be combined, if appropriate:

1. Review of Program Performance Hearing & citizen comment regarding the C.A.P.E.R. (Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report) Submission.

A Program Performance Hearing will be held at the end of the program year. Citizens will be provided with copies of the draft C.A.P.E.R. to be submitted to HUD. The purpose of the hearing will be to update citizens on the status of completed and ongoing projects, and on the amount of the funds expended. It will enable citizens to comment and offer suggestions on performance and the Report, or to comment in writing for a period of not less than 15 days. Citizen comments will be considered and will be incorporated into the C.A.P.E.R. for submission to HUD. **Exceptions to public meetings notifications, scheduling, and/or dismissal may be made when responding to declared disasters or a health crisis. The 15-day minimum public comment period may be exempted when HUD approves waivers to reduce comment period based upon declared disasters and/or health crisis.**

2. Housing and Community Development Needs Hearing

A public hearing to address the City's housing and community development needs and priorities will be held early in the program year, prior to the development of the Plan. The hearing will provide an opportunity for citizens and organizations to provide input on needs, to obtain information about the eligibility of various kinds of activities, and to ask questions regarding the program. Attendees will be informed of the amount of funds expected, the range of activities that may be undertaken, and any activities that are likely to displace residents or businesses.

3. Hearing on Proposed Plan

During the 30-day public comment period on the proposed Consolidated Plan/Action Plan, a hearing will be held for the purpose of providing information on the development of proposed activities the proposed Plan, and obtaining comments. The discussion of proposed activities will include the estimated amount of funds that will benefit low-and moderate-income persons. **The statutory 30-day minimum public comment period may be exempted when HUD approves waivers to reduce comment period based upon declared disasters and/or health crisis.**

A summary report on all citizen comments received at each of the public hearings will be prepared. This summary will include a staff report, reviewing the comments and stating the reasons if any of the comments were not incorporated into the resultant product.

Additional meetings and forums may be held at various times throughout the year to provide information and gain input from citizens. When requested by interested citizen groups or organizations, the City will meet with the organizations to review programs and respond to any questions or concerns.

SECTION 3: PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Based on input from the public meetings and discussions with individual citizens, citizen groups, nonprofit organizations, and other County agencies and departments, City staff will identify potential projects. Staff will then summarize each project for citizen and public review.

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SECTION 4: THIRTY-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The City will publish the proposed Consolidated Plan/Annual Plan, or a reasonable summary thereof, in the newspaper and post it on the City's website. The publication will be at the beginning, or during, a 30-day public comment period during which the public hearing on the proposed plan will also be held. The publication will describe the contents and purpose of the proposed Plan, the amount of funds expected to serve low- and moderate-income persons, and the location where the entire document is available for review. A reasonable number of free copies of the Plan or portions thereof will be available to citizens or groups that request it.

During this 30-day period the City will receive written comments on the proposed Plan. Any written comments received by the City will be responded to in writing within fifteen days of their receipt. Comments and responses will be included in the final Plan. **Exceptions to public meetings notifications, scheduling, and/or dismissal may be made when responding to declared disasters or a health crisis. The statutory 30-day minimum public comment period may be exempted when HUD approves waivers to reduce comment period based upon declared disasters and/or health crisis.**

SECTION 5: CITY COUNCIL

Citizen participation requirements shall not be construed to restrict the responsibility or authority of the City for the development and execution of its Community Development Block Grant program activities. The City Council remains the sole approving authority for the program and any amendments.

The Council's first action is to authorize the publication of the proposed Plan. Following the public comment period, the Council will meet to review the Plan, consider any public comments received, make any adjustments to the Plan they deem appropriate, and approve the Plan for submission to HUD.

SECTION 6: SUBMISSION OF THE PLAN

Following approval by the City Council, the Plan will be submitted to HUD along with certifications of compliance with program requirements. HUD approves the Plan following a 45-day review, unless the submission is incomplete or lacks all required certifications of program compliance.

SECTION 7: PROGRAM INFORMATION/RECORDS

All reports, minutes and records of meetings and hearings, grant agreements, monitoring reports, proposed applications for other programs, Consolidated Plans, program amendments, Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Reports (C.A.P.E.R.) and program files are part of the public record. These may be viewed by citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday at City Hall. Copies of most items are available upon request at no charge. Records will be retained and available for a period of five years.

Interested parties may also access many of the program documents at the City's website. www.port-orange.org.

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SECTION 8: HANDICAPPED AND BILINGUAL PROVISIONS

Disabled: The City will meet all the requirements of Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. All public meetings will be held in handicapped accessible buildings. Written material will be available for persons with hearing disabilities and a staff person will be available to read to anyone who is sight-impaired. If any additional accommodations are needed for persons with disabilities request should be made a minimum of 24 hours prior to the meeting. Persons with hearing impairments may contact the City to make arrangements.

Bilingual: If requested in advance, a Spanish-speaking staff member will attend all public hearings.

SECTION 9: COMPLAINTS AND INQUIRIES

Complaints and inquiries concerning the consolidated plan, any amendments, or the performance reports, can be conveyed by contacting the City:

Complaints and related comments on the programs may also be offered at the public hearings. Written complaints and comments will receive a substantive written response within 15 working days of receipt.

If not satisfied by the City response, written complaints may also be made to the Jacksonville Office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

SECTION 10: AMENDMENTS

If it should be necessary, the City can make changes to the Plan. If the change involves addition of a new activity, removal of an activity, or a "substantial change to the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity," an amendment will be required.

The City has, pursuant to HUD regulation 24 CFR 91.505 (b), developed the following criteria for what constitutes a **SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE**:

1. A change to the purpose/stated objectives, budget, or beneficiaries of an activity so that more than 50% of the anticipated beneficiaries will no longer be eligible to benefit from the activity. This criterion includes transfer of funds from *one* activity to another.
2. The addition or cancellation of any activity.
3. A change in the location of an activity so that more than 50% of the anticipated beneficiaries will no longer be able to benefit from the activity.
4. A change in the City's allocation priorities or a change in the method for the distribution of funds.
5. A change to the name, eligible activity category, or national objective of an activity will not be considered a substantial change unless more than 50% of the anticipated beneficiaries will no longer be eligible to participate or benefit from the activity.

Prior to amending its Consolidated Plan for a new activity or a substantial change, the City will publish a notice of the substantial change in area newspapers. This notice will establish a 30-day period in which to obtain public comment. **Exceptions to public meetings notifications, scheduling, and/or dismissal may be made when responding to declared disasters or a health crisis. The 30-day minimum public comment period may be exempted when HUD approves waivers to reduce comment period based upon declared disasters and/or health crisis.**

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Following the public comment period, the City Council will meet to review the amendment, consider the public comment that has been obtained, and make any adjustments that they deem appropriate before approving the amendment for submission to HUD. A summary of the public comments, and reasons that some of the comments or views were not accepted, will be attached to the amendment.

SECTION 11: CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN UPDATE

The City of Port Orange's Citizen Participation Plan may be updated and amended as the City Council deems necessary depending upon changes in the applicable regulations, recognized needs by staff, or suggested changes by citizens. The Citizen Participation Plan, and any changes to the Plan, will be made public, and be available to persons with disabilities upon request.

SECTION 12: SPECIAL EFFORTS

It is the intent of the City to encourage the participation of residents of lower income neighborhoods, and of deteriorating neighborhoods, as they are the persons most likely to benefit from the use of CDBG funds. Meetings will be held at times and locations convenient for working people and people with children.

SECTION 13: MINIMIZING DISPLACEMENT

The City does not have, nor does it anticipate funding any activities that will displace any residents or businesses. If displacement does occur, the residents or businesses displaced would be entitled to compensation and/or assistance under applicable federal laws. Should the need for displacement ever arise, the City will officially notify the residents or businesses expected to be displaced as soon as practicable following approval of the activity. The notice will include a description of the proposed action, a discussion of how they might be affected, and information concerning their rights and benefits.

The City's Local Relocation and Anti-Displacement Policy provides more information on this subject.