

CITY OF BRISTOL, TENNESSEE
MEMORANDUM TO FILE

May 26, 2020

FROM: Christina Blevins
Community Development Specialist

SUBJECT: Citizen Participation Plan Adjustments for COVID-19 Updates

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Bristol, TN Citizen Participation Plan required updates/revisions to:

- Include virtual hearings as an allowed method for citizen participation when necessary for public health reasons;
- Provide a 5-day notice/comment period for proposed amendments necessary to expedite and facilitate the use of funds to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.
- Make minor edits that do not change current citizen participation policies. Please be advised that if virtual hearings are used, real-time responses and accommodations for persons with disabilities and/or with limited English proficiency will be made available to the greatest extent possible;
- Include provisions relative to the Consolidated Planning process and participation waivers made available under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act;
- Include provisions relative to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and other applicable U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development funding made available under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN
(COVID-19 Updates in RED)

CITY OF BRISTOL TENNESSEE

1.0 PURPOSE

The City of Bristol Tennessee Community Development Citizen Participation Plan represents a document and program that will actively seek the advice and input of the citizens of Bristol, Tennessee, in the preparation, administration and implementation of the Consolidated Plan. The Citizen Participation Plan shall be in compliance with Section 91.105 of the Department of Housing and Urban Development Final Rule and 24 CFR Part 5.

The express purpose of this Plan is to develop mechanisms to ensure the citizens of the City of Bristol Tennessee have an opportunity for ongoing citizen participation. It is also intended to establish procedures through which the Community Development staff and officials of the City of Bristol Tennessee may solicit and receive input from citizens, nonprofit organizations, and other interested parties and to give them an adequate opportunity to review and comment on the Community Development program and the goals, objectives and projects in the Consolidated Plan/Action Plan.

The City shall make available to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties information that includes the amount of assistance expected to be received (including grant funds and program income) and the range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low and moderate income.

2.0 METHODS OF APPROACH

Several approaches or techniques will be utilized to implement the Citizen Participation Plan. All methods shall retain the primary purpose of soliciting and receiving citizen input on the Community Development program, goals, objectives and projects.

Development of the Consolidated Plan/Action Plan

*The CARES Act made available additional funding in Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) funds. The CARES Act adds additional flexibility for both the CDBG-CV grant and, in some cases, for the annual HUD 2019/City's FY2020 CDBG grants in these unprecedented times. The public comment period is reduced to not less than 5 days, grantees may use virtual public hearings when necessary for public health reasons, the public services cap is suspended during the emergency, and States and local governments may reimburse costs of eligible activities incurred for pandemic response regardless of the date.

In addition, the CARES Act authorizes the Secretary to grant waivers and alternative requirements of statutes and regulations the Secretary administers in connection with the use of CDBG-CV funds and HUD fiscal year 2019 and 2020 CDBG funds (except for requirements related to fair housing, nondiscrimination, labor standards, and the environment). Waivers and alternative requirements can be granted when necessary to expedite and facilitate the use of funds to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

These edits do not change current citizen participation policies but have been modified to allow for necessary expedited actions during times of declared disaster or emergencies.

The City shall encourage, in conjunction with consultation with public housing authorities, the participation of residents of public and assisted-housing developments in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan, along with other low-income residents of targeted revitalization areas in which the developments are located.

The Community Development staff shall contact other City departments, local agencies and organizations to assist in the identification of housing and Community Development needs, review proposed use of funds, and review program performance. Public agencies and other interested parties shall include, but not be limited to, Bristol Housing Authority, Main Street Bristol, Community Development Advisory Committee, and the Bristol Tennessee Regional Planning Commission. A description of each agency and current membership list is on file in the Community Development office.

As lead agency for the preparation of the Consolidated Plan, the Community Development Office has the primary responsibility for developing and implementing the Citizen Participation Plan.

Public Hearings

The City of Bristol, Tennessee, will conduct two Public Hearings each fiscal year. At each Public Hearing the citizens of Bristol, Tennessee, will be invited to participate for the purpose of obtaining their views, as well as those of public agencies and other interested parties. The Public Hearings will identify housing and community development needs, review proposed uses of funds, and review program performance for Bristol's Community Development Programs.

**If virtual hearings are used, real-time responses and accommodation for persons with disabilities and/or with limited English proficiency will be made available to the greatest extent possible. Also, the virtual hearing method will only be used in lieu of an in-person hearing if national or local health authorities recommend social distancing and limit public gatherings for public health reasons.*

1. Prior to the drafting of the Consolidated Plan, the City of Bristol will conduct a Public Hearing in September at the Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) meeting which is held the second Tuesday of each month (September through April) at 5:30 p.m. in the Ewell L. Easley Municipal Annex Building. This hearing will be advertised at least two weeks prior to the meeting in the local newspaper of general circulation *in large print*.

The purpose of the Public Hearing will be to obtain the views of citizens, public agencies and other interested parties regarding the identification of housing and community development needs within the City of Bristol and to respond to proposals and comments received from citizens. Interested parties are encouraged to comment on the Consolidated Plan at this Public Hearing or within thirty (30) days following the Public Hearing.

2. A second Public Hearing will be conducted in April by the City Council which meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Slater Community Center Auditorium.

This hearing will be advertised at least two weeks prior to the meeting in the local newspaper of general circulation *in large print*.

The notice will include information that includes the amount of assistance expected to be received (including grant funds and program income) and the range of activities that may be undertaken, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low and moderate income.

Citizen comments on the proposed Consolidated Plan (housing and community development needs and development of proposed activities) that have been received in writing or by telephone will be addressed, as well as any from those attending this meeting. City Council will adopt the proposed Plan at this meeting.

Once the proposed Consolidated Plan is drafted, it will also be made available at the Bristol Public Library with information directing interested parties to the Community Development Office, 104 Eighth Street, Bristol, Tennessee, where free copies of the complete Consolidated Plan may be obtained.

**For projects utilizing CDBG funding under HUD FY 2019-2020/City FY 2020-2021, and the CARES Act CDBG-CV funding, the Bristol, TN City may provide a 5-day notice/comment period for proposed amendments necessary to expedite and facilitate the use of funds to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.*

Performance Reports

Citizens shall be given reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on performance reports at the September Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) meeting. Notice of a Public Hearing shall be placed in the local newspaper of general circulation *in large print* allowing a **fifteen-day comment period** on the Performance Report. Any comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally shall be considered, summarized and attached to the Performance Report.

Once the Annual Performance Report is drafted, it will also be made available at the Bristol Public Library with information directing interested parties to the Community

Development Office, 104 Eighth Street, Bristol, Tennessee, where free copies may be obtained.

Provisions for Participation

The Community Development staff will ensure participation activities are designed to provide for and encourage the participation of all citizens with an emphasis placed on residents with low, very low or extremely low household income who are most likely to be affected by the expenditure of housing and community development funds, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where housing and community development funds may be spent. Participation is encouraged at all stages of the planning, development and evaluation of housing and community development programs by all those who may be affected or wish to be involved in the process. Efforts will be made to assure that minorities, non-English-speaking persons, as well as persons with mobility, visual or hearing impairment have adequate assistance required to fully participate in the process. Anyone needing special assistance or interpretation may make special arrangements by contacting the Community Development Office at (423) 989-5521.

The Citizen Participation Plan guarantees the availability of information and technical assistance for the citizens, public agencies and other interested parties, including those most affected to have the opportunity to receive information, review and submit comments on the proposed Consolidated Plan/Action Plan including the estimates of amounts of funds available and the estimated amount proposed to benefit low, very low, and extremely low income residents. The City shall also provide citizens, public agencies and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the City's Consolidated Plan/Action Plan and the use of assistance during the preceding five years per Section 91.105(h)

of the Final Rule. Community Development information can be procured from the Community Development Specialist, Ewell L. Easley Municipal Annex, 104 Eighth Street, Bristol, Tennessee 37620 or by calling (423) 989-5521.

Displacement

Plans to minimize displacement and assist those displaced as a result of these activities shall be made available to all citizens, public agencies and other interested parties. Displacement shall be minimized by working with citizens to provide adequate housing through the Home Ownership Program. Where voluntary acquisition is involved, the HUD-approved City Acquisition and Relocation Guidelines (attached) shall be invoked; where involuntary acquisition is involved, the Federal Acquisition and Relocation Guidelines shall be invoked.

3.0 COMMUNITY-WIDE AND PROJECT AREA ACTIVITIES

In keeping with the scope of the Community Development program, the City of Bristol Tennessee has established and will utilize the Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) to provide broad citizen representation of the City concerning the Community Development program, goals, objectives and projects.

- * It is the responsibility of the City of Bristol Tennessee CDAC to act as a communication link between the citizens of the City and the Community Development staff.
- * The CDAC should make every effort to gather information regarding concerns of the citizens in regard to Community Development and to communicate these concerns to the

appropriate City officials.

The Community Development staff will disseminate project information to the Bristol CDAC and to other interested citizens. The Bristol CDAC will actively assist the Community Development staff in developing the Consolidated Plan. The members of the Bristol CDAC will bring to the attention of the Community Development staff those situations which may be particular to the City, including special needs and specific problems, and will identify housing and Community Development needs, use of funds, and program performance. The Bristol CDAC meetings will be open to the public and conducted on a regular basis. A copy of the Bylaws of the Bristol CDAC is attached to this Plan which explains the committee's organization and operation.

The City of Bristol Tennessee Citizen Participation Plan will utilize other citizen groups, including the Bristol Interagency Council and the Bristol Tennessee Regional Planning Commission to provide ongoing opportunity to comment on the Community Development program, goals, objectives and projects in keeping with the scope of the Consolidated Plan. Discussion will be conducted at the Interagency Council meetings in an effort to identify housing and community development needs, review proposed use of funds and review program performance on an annual basis. The Community Development staff will ensure that special procedures will be utilized to assist low and moderate income persons, elderly, handicapped, and non-English-speaking persons serving on or attending meetings dealing with Community Development issues and to afford them access to information and materials concerning the Consolidated Plan.

4.0 COMPLAINTS

The City of Bristol Tennessee shall take appropriate and practicable measures to resolve

complaints from citizens when received by correspondence or telephone call with regard to the Consolidated Plan, amendments and Performance Report. The City shall provide a timely, substantive written response to every written citizen complaint within fifteen (15) working days.

5.0 AMENDMENTS

Prior to the adoption of any substantial change, citizens shall be given reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on substantial amendments. A change to the Consolidated Plan will not be considered as a substantial amendment unless the change results in the elimination of a category of activity not included in the Consolidated Plan, the elimination or addition of a targeted area of service, a change in the category of beneficiary or eligibility criteria, a substantial change in the method of distribution of funds (a transfer exceeding twenty percent of the annual grant) as described in the Consolidated Plan or a change in the allocation of priorities established by the Plan. Any substantial change shall be advertised in the local newspaper of general circulation in large print. A period of time, not less than 30 days, shall be designated in which to receive comments on the substantial change before such amendment is implemented. Any comments or views of citizens, received in writing or orally, regarding a substantial amendment shall be summarized, with both positive and negative viewpoints, and such summary shall be attached to the substantial amendment of the Consolidated Plan.

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services cap is suspended during the emergency, and States and local governments may reimburse costs of eligible activities incurred for pandemic response regardless of the date.

In addition, the CARES Act authorizes the Secretary to grant waivers and alternative requirements of statutes and regulations the Secretary administers in connection with the use of CDBG-CV funds and HUD fiscal year 2019 and 2020 CDBG funds (except for requirements related to fair housing, nondiscrimination, labor standards, and the environment). Waivers and alternative requirements can be granted when necessary to expedite and facilitate the use of funds to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

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6.0 PLAN AMENDMENT

This Plan may be amended from time to time in order to enhance the process for encouraging constructive citizen participation in the Comprehensive Plan program, goals, objectives and projects. Prior to publication of this Plan and/or substantial amendment, the citizens of Bristol, Tennessee, nonprofit organizations, public agencies and other interested parties shall be invited to comment on the Plan/Amendments by notification in the *Bristol Herald Courier*, a newspaper of general circulation. This Plan will be made public in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request.

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The City of Bristol Tennessee is fully committed to the use of the Citizen Participation Plan.

Adopted by the Community Development Advisory Committee 1/10/95

Adopted by Bristol Tennessee City Council 3/7/97

Revised Pages 1-6 for clarity 8/97

Revised by Staff for clarity 12/17

COVID-19 Updates/Revisions 5/20

Displayed for Public Viewing & Comment 5/27/20 – 6/12/20

Presented to CDAC for Public Hearing – 06/09/20

Will be considered for adoption by the Bristol, TN City Council – 07/07/20