

**Amherst-Cheektowaga-Tonawanda**

**HOME Consortium**

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

**for**

**Community Development Block Grant**

**Consolidated Plan**

**This Citizen Participation Plan** sets forth the procedures and policies the Towns of Amherst, Cheektowaga and Tonawanda will use to encourage citizen participation in the development, operation and reporting of their Community Development Block Grants and the Consolidated Plan. Citizens are encouraged to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, and the Performance Report. This participation by low- and moderate-income persons, particularly those living in older areas of the Town and in areas where Community Development Block Grant funds are proposed to be used, and by residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, ( as defined by the Federal guidelines ) is particularly encouraged as is the participation of all residents, including minorities and persons with disabilities.

Each town also invites residents of public and assisted housing developments to participate in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan.

The Towns will make copies of this Citizen Participation Plan available upon request.

### **Anti-Displacement Plan**

The Towns of Amherst and Cheektowaga do not expect to undertake any activities that would result in the displacement of tenants or homeowners during the time frame of the current Consolidated Plan. Current Consortium policy gives priority to projects that will not entail such displacement. However, provisions have been made to minimize any relocation that may be required should any of the Towns undertake such a project.

(a) When possible, substantial rehabilitation of dwelling units will concentrate on vacant units first, allowing tenants to remain during and after rehabilitation.

(b) when necessary, suitable, alternative housing will be provided in the same area, if possible.

If relocation is necessary, the Community Development staff from the appropriate town will:

(a) suggest at least three alternative replacement dwelling units to tenants and homeowners.

(b) provide rental assistance according to Federal guidelines required by the Uniform Relocation Act .

(c) provide for reimbursement of any reasonable moving expenses, credit checks, security deposits and costs incurred through change of utilities due to displacement.

(d) provide relocation and housing counseling if needed.

Persons affected by such activity will be notified in writing by the Community Development staff of the appropriate town of their eligibility for assistance and alternatives available at least 90 days prior to the start of the project.

### **Development of the Consolidated Plan.**

(1) Before the Towns adopt the Consolidated Plan, they will each make available to citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties information that includes the amount of assistance they expect to receive (including both new 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) In order to afford citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties a reasonable opportunity to examine its contents and to submit comments, the Towns will publish a summary of the proposed Consolidated Plan and a notice of availability of the document for public review in the Amherst BEE, the Cheektowaga Times and the Kenmore Record as a display advertisement at least 30 days prior to its submission to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Complete copies of the proposed Consolidated Plan will be available at all Town libraries, the Amherst Planning Department, the Village Clerks' offices in Depew, Sloan, Kenmore and Williamsville and the Town Clerks'

offices. The summary will describe the contents and purpose of the Consolidated Plan, and will include a list of the locations where copies of the entire proposed Consolidated Plan may be examined. In addition, the Towns will provide a copy of the plan to citizen groups that request it and copies on disk to individuals.

- (3) Notice of a public hearing to be held during the development of the Consolidated Plan to invite public comments and inquiries will be placed in the legal sections of the Amherst BEE, the Cheektowaga Times and the Kenmore Record at least 10 days prior\*\* to the date of the hearing and as a display ad in these papers.
- (4) The Towns will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at the public hearings, during the preparation of the final Consolidated Plan. A summary of these comments or views, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore, shall be attached to the final Consolidated Plan.

**\*\*Amendments.** (see revision at end of doc)

- (1) Criteria for amendments to the Consolidated Plan.

In accordance with federal regulations in 24 CFR, Section 570.305, the following are the Consortium's criteria for what constitutes a definition of substantial change, that is, a change in the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of a project considered to be of a substantial nature requiring an amendment to the Consolidated Plan:

- (a) the Purpose or goals of a project are altered or revised so as to be significantly and notably different than those originally intended; or,
- (b) the Scope of a project is changed in such a way that the elements or components that constitute and characterize a project or the range of activities of a project are increased or expanded significantly in proportion to the project's original intent and design so as to meaningfully expand the project's original intent or outcome.
- (c) the project is physically Relocated from the census tract, neighborhood or target area for which it was originally intended; or,
- (d) the Beneficiaries are of a different category than those originally identified.
- (e) adding a project to the list of planned activities funded by Community Development Block Grant funds.
- (f) deleting a project from the proposed list funded by Community Development Block Grant funds

Any amendment will also include reasons for these changes.

- (2) In order to provide citizens with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on substantial amendments, the appropriate Town will place a display ad in its official newspaper, (the Amherst BEE, the Cheektowaga Times or the Kenmore Record) at least 30 days prior to implementation of any substantial amendment.
- (3) The appropriate Town will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at public hearings, in preparing the substantial amendment of the Consolidated Plan. A summary of these comments or views, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons therefore shall be attached to the substantial amendment of the Consolidated Plan.

### **Performance reports.**

- (1) Reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on the Performance Report will be provided by each Town through display ads published in the Amherst BEE, the Cheektowaga Times and the Kenmore Record at least 15 days prior to its submission to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Copies of the Performance Report will be available for review at local libraries, the Amherst Planning Department in the Amherst Town Hall, the Cheektowaga and Tonawanda Community Development offices, the Town Clerks' offices and the Village Clerks' offices and will be made available by each Town to citizen groups that request it.
- (2) Each town will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at public hearings in preparing the Performance Report. A summary of these comments or views will be attached to the Performance Report.

### **Public hearings.**

- (1) At least two public hearings per year will be held to obtain citizens' views and to respond to proposals and questions, to be conducted at a minimum of two different stages of the program year. Together, the hearings will address housing and community development needs, development of proposed activities, and review of program performance. To obtain the views and comments of citizens on housing and community development needs, including priority non-housing community development needs, at least one of these hearings will be held before the proposed Consolidated Plan is published.
- (2) Adequate advance notice will be given to citizens of each hearing, with sufficient information published about the subject of the hearing to permit informed comment. These notices will be in the form of legal ads and display ads placed in the Amherst BEE, the Cheektowaga Times and the Kenmore Record approximately 10 days prior to the hearings.
- (3) These hearings will be held at times and locations in each town convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries, and with accommodation for persons with disabilities. A signer will be provided, upon request, for the hearing impaired.

### **Meetings.**

The Towns will provide citizens with reasonable and timely access to local meetings, notice of which will be placed in the Amherst BEE, the Cheektowaga Times and the Kenmore Record

### **Availability to the public.**

The Consolidated Plan as adopted, substantial amendments and the Performance Report will be available to the public, including the availability of materials in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request. These can be reviewed at local libraries throughout the three towns and the Town Clerks' offices or provided to interested citizen groups upon request through the Amherst Planning Department and the Community Development offices of Cheektowaga and Tonawanda.

### **Access to records.**

Each Town will provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the Consortium's Consolidated Plan and its use of assistance under the programs covered by it during the preceding five years.

### **Technical assistance.**

Technical assistance will be provided to groups representative of persons of low- and moderate-income that request such assistance in developing proposals for funding assistance under any of the programs covered by the Consolidated Plan, with the level and type of

assistance determined by the Towns. (This assistance does not include the provision of funds to the groups.)

**Complaints.**

Appropriate and practicable procedures to handle complaints from citizens related to the Consolidated Plan, any amendments, and the Performance Report will be addressed by each town in a timely and substantive manner. A written response to every written citizen complaint, within an established period of time (within 15 working days, where practicable,) will be provided by the appropriate Town.

**Use of Citizen Participation Plan.**

The Towns must follow the Citizen Participation Plan.

**Town (Jurisdiction) responsibility.**

The requirements for citizen participation do not restrict the responsibility or authority of the Towns for the development and execution of the Consolidated Plan. (Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2506-0117).

**\*\*The Citizen Participation Plan will also be amended as follows:** (a) the publishing of notices in the newspapers regarding public hearings will be increased from 10 days to 14 days prior to the hearings; (b) Meetings: “reasonable and timely access to local meetings” shall further be defined that there will be 14 days notice given to the public by publication in each towns designated newspaper announcing meetings; (c) Access to records: “Each town will provide citizens, ...“ will be changed to “Each town will provide citizens, groups, ...” with “reasonable and timely access to information and records” which shall be further defined as “reasonable and timely access to information and records by the next business day of the request. Copies of records will be provided on or about a date that will be specified by the CD Office. The number of copies that are requested will determine the date they will be provided.”

The adjustments to the Citizen Participation Plan are the result of updated HUD regulations.