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**SECTION TEN:**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION  
PLAN**

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## I. Introduction

The City of Somerville annually receives Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) and Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development (HUD), which it administers through the Somerville Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development. The primary purpose of these formula grant programs is to develop viable communities through the provision of decent housing, a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons. As a recipient of these entitlement program funds, the City is required to produce the following documents:

1. **Consolidated Plan:** A five-year plan that documents Somerville's housing and community development needs, outlines strategies to address those needs, and identifies proposed program accomplishments.
2. **Annual Action Plan:** An annual plan that describes specific CDBG-, HOME- and ESGfunded projects that will be undertaken over the course of the upcoming fiscal year.
3. **Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER):** An annual report that evaluates the use of CDBG, HOME and ESG funds.

This Citizen Participation Plan has been developed to provide citizens and other interested parties with opportunities to participate in an advisory role in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the CDBG, HOME and ESG programs which primarily benefit Somerville's low- and moderate-income residents and to review and comment on each of the documents listed above.

## II. Public Hearing Process

1. **Frequency.** The City will hold a minimum of two public hearings annually, at different times during the consolidated plan process to obtain citizen input on proposed programs and projects.
2. **Location.** Hearings will be held in areas of the City where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, specifically in neighborhoods of predominantly low- and moderate-income citizens as defined by the most recent U.S. census data.
3. **Outreach.** Public meeting notices will be published in both English and Spanish two weeks prior to the date of the hearing in general circulation publications within the City.
  - Translations of the public meeting notice in Haitian Creole and Portuguese, in addition to English and Spanish, will be published on the City's cable wheel.
  - Meetings will be posted in English on the City's website.
  - Fliers of the meeting will be posted and distributed in the following locations throughout the City:
    - Mailing to all public service agencies with a request that the fliers be translated, if possible, into languages other than Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole or English, if this is appropriate for their constituency.
    - All branches of the Public Library
    - Front hall of City Hall
    - The Mayor's office
    - OSPCD front desk

- Other locations as deemed appropriate
- 4. Accessibility. All hearing/meeting locations will be handicapped accessible. Meetings will be advertised in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole (and other languages as appropriate). All ads, notices and fliers will include a TTY phone number and contact information to arrange for special accessibility requirements.
- 5. Information Provided. At the first public hearing after the City receives information on the amount of assistance it expects to receive from HUD (including grant funds and program income), the City will provide this information to the public. Generally, at each hearing the following information is to be provided:
  - Amount of assistance received from HUD annually (grants & program income);
  - The range of activities that may be under-taken using these funds, including the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low- and moderate-income;
  - The areas of the City where activities may be under-taken;
  - A description of the projects programs and services that are underway using currently available funds; and,
  - Copies of the most recently published consolidated plan; performance report; and other relevant documents (NRSA plans etc.)

### **III. Notification to Public Housing Authority**

The City will provide information on a regular basis to the Somerville Housing Authority about consolidated plan activities related to its developments and surrounding communities so that the housing authority can:

- Make this information available at the annual public hearing required under the Comprehensive Grant program.
- Encourage participation among residents in the process of developing and implementing the consolidated plan.

### **IV. Citizen Comment on the Consolidated Plan / Amendments, and Performance Reports**

1. Notification. The City will publish notification of the availability of the proposed Consolidated Plan in a newspaper of general circulation and on the City website giving citizens not less than 30 days for the Consolidated Plan and Amendments and not less than 15 days for the Performance Report to comment. This notice will include:
  - The date on which the plan will be available and the date by which comments must be received;
  - The name of the person and/or agency where comments should be directed; and,
  - The form that comments should take (written, email, fax etc.).
2. Location. The City will make the plan available at the following location for a period of not less than 30 days so that citizens may comment on the plan:
  - All branches of the public library;
  - Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development;
  - By email or parcel post as requested; and,
  - On the City website.
3. Consideration of Comments. All comments or views of Citizens received in writing, or orally at the public hearings will be considered in preparing the final consolidated plan.

**V. Criteria for Amendments to the Consolidated Plan**

A deletion or addition of an activity, source of income or objective will constitute a substantial change in the consolidated plan.

*VI. Availability to the Public*

The final Consolidated Plan and amendments and the final performance report will be made available to the public at the following locations and by the following means:

- All branches of the public library;
- Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development;
- By email or parcel post as requested; and,
- On the City website.

*VII. Technical Assistance*

The City will provide technical assistance to citizens, public agencies and other interested parties in providing technical assistance in developing proposals for funding under any of the programs covered by the Consolidated Plan.