



City of Auburn, Maine

Business & Community Development

Glen Holmes, Director

60 Court Street | Auburn, Maine 04210

www.auburnmaine.gov | 207.333.6601

Citizen Participation Plan

2020-2024

Adopted July 18th, 2022

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has consolidated the planning, application, reporting and citizen participation processes of formula grant programs: Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), & Home Investment Partnerships (HOME). The Consolidated Plan is designed to help states and local jurisdictions to assess their affordable housing and community development needs and market conditions, and to make data-driven, place-based investment decisions. The consolidated planning process serves as the framework for a community-wide dialogue to identify housing and community development priorities that align and focus funding from the formula block grant programs.

The city of Auburn (City) encourages citizens, especially those earning low and moderate incomes, to participate in the development of the City’s Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan (“Consolidated Plan”). This Citizen Participation Plan outlines the responsibilities of the City for obtaining citizen participation in the process of preparing, amending, and updating the Five-Year Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER).

Citizen Participation Statutory Requirements

Plan/Report	Frequency	Due Date	Comment Period	Public Hearings
Consolidated Plan	Every 5 years	May 15*	30 days	2
Annual Action Plan	Every Year	May 15*	30 days	2
Amendments to Consolidated Plan Annual Action Plan	As needed		30 days	1
Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)	Every year	Sept. 30	15 days	1

*Unless otherwise extended by HUD CPD Notice

Timeline of Annual Tasks, Submissions & Approvals

February	Public Hearing to solicit consolidated/Action plan input Complete Department Program Budget
March 1st	Revisit Needs assessment and prioritizations Draft Consolidated/ Action Plan
April 1st	Publish Consolidated/ Action Plan Public Notice for 30-day Comment Period
1 st Council Meeting in May	Public Hearing Approval of Budget & Action Plan
May 15th	Submission of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidated/ Action Plan • Summary of Consultations • Summary of Citizen Participation/ Comments • Certifications & 424s
July 1st	Beginning of Fiscal Year
August 1st	Close out Previous year activities/ Budgets
September 15	Publish CAPER Public Hearing regarding CAPER
September 30th	Submit CAPER to HUD
December 1st	Release annual citizen participation survey Solicit unmet needs statements from area service providers

THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN AND THE ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

The Consolidated Plan examines the current housing situation, explores the housing and community development needs of the City, and sets priorities for spending HUD grant funds. The Annual Action Plan represents activities for years 2-5 of the Consolidated Plan. The City encourages inter-local government, public and private agency, and citizen participation in collaboratively identifying housing and community development needs. To provide varied opportunities for participation in the planning and preparation of the Consolidated Plan, the City will undertake the following actions:

Consultation

Prior to the development of the draft Consolidated Plan, the City will solicit information about housing and community development needs. This solicitation may take the form of one or more of the following:

1. Consultation with local public agencies which assist low-income persons and areas, including state and federal agencies, other local governments and regional councils of government.
2. Consultation with private agencies, including public and private housing developers, local not-for-profit service providers, local public housing authorities, homeless service providers, not for-profit housing developers, community action agencies, social service agencies and advocates.

3. Information collection at statewide affordable housing and homeless conferences, with established entities such as the Statewide Homeless Council and the Continuums of Care, MaineHousing and with professional associations.
4. Public Hearing to solicit input from the community.
5. Sharing of local data and plans with Auburn Housing Authority to be incorporated in the AHA public hearing process.

Participation of Citizens

The City encourages citizens to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action plans and all annual performance evaluations and reports. The City will take whatever actions are appropriate to encourage the participation of all residents, including minorities, non-English speaking persons, persons with disabilities, low- and moderate income persons, particularly those persons living in areas designated by the City as a revitalization area, or in a slum and blight area where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, as well as residents of predominantly low- and moderate income neighborhoods as defined by the most recent HUD census data. This includes translation services upon request for any written plans or notices as well as the increased use of the development of new, quantitative ways to increase and broaden public participation beyond the attendance of Public Hearings as required by 24 CFR 91.105 A-2 (iv).

Citizen participation will be accomplished through the following means:

1. Citizen Survey
 - An online survey of housing needs and service priorities will be provided via the City's websites. The availability of the online survey will be communicated through email and social media. Partner organizations will be encouraged to notify low-income clients of its availability.
 - A paper survey corresponding to the online survey will be provided locally through jurisdiction-wide service providers. These surveys will be translated into a minimum of three additional languages to include French, Portuguese & Somali.
2. Public Hearings/Forums
 - Public hearings will be scheduled at times and locations that are convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries.
 - Sites will accommodate persons with mobility impairments by being held in locations which meet ADA requirements, and special communication accommodations will be arranged if requested prior to the hearing date.

To the greatest extent practicable, the City may employ electronic means of communication and consultation, to include e-committees, online discussion forums and blogs, videoconferencing, online surveys, or similar methods. Upon request the City will provide Technical Assistance to groups representative of low- to moderate income communities who need assistance in developing proposals for funding assistance under any program included within the Consolidated Plan.

Public Notice

Reasonable notice will be given to announce the availability of the draft Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report. Availability of the drafts Plan or Annual Action Plan will be announced on the City's website and Social media.

To encourage citizen comment and attendance at public hearings/forums, notices will be emailed via City's mass email list as well as posted in city facilities including the local Housing Authority, the city Library, Senior Center and other service organizations which predominantly serve Low- and moderate-income residents.

These notices will include links to the draft plans and reports, contain information on how to access translation services and notify residents how to receive paper copies of the full proposals. The draft plans published will include the following as required by 24 CFR 91.105 (b)(1):

- HUD-provided data available to the public as cross-referenced to the data on HUD's Website
- the amount of assistance the local government expects to receive (including grant funds and program income);
- the range of activities that may be undertaken;
- the estimated amount of funding that will benefit persons of low- and moderate-income;
- the local government's plans to minimize displacement of persons and to assist any persons displaced, specifying the types and levels of assistance the local government will make available (or require others to make available) to persons displaced, even if the local government expects no displacement to occur; and

Public Hearings

Public hearings will be held before the submission of the final Consolidated & Annual Action Plan. This will be part of the 30-day public comment period. The purpose of this public hearing will be to gather citizen input on the proposed plans prior to submission.

Citizens will be notified of the public hearings at least two weeks before they are held. Public hearings will be announced in at least one Maine newspaper, by email, and on the City websites.

CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

A public comment period of at least 30 days will be provided prior to the adoption of the Consolidated Plan or implementation of substantial amendments. City staff will prepare a summary of all comments received in writing, or orally at the public hearing. In cases where citizens' views are not accepted, the city will provide reasons for the decision.

CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORTS

Before the City submits a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) to HUD, the proposed CAPER will be made available to those interested for a comment period of no less than 15 days. Citizens will be notified of the CAPER's availability by public notices as outlined above

The CAPER will be available on the City website during the 15-day public comment period. Hard copies will be provided upon request. Any comments from individuals or groups received verbally or in writing will be considered. A summary of the comments, and of the responses, will be included in the final CAPER.

SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS

A substantial amendment is defined as a proposed change in allocation of funds after the official adoption of the Consolidated Plan that affects 10 percent or more of the City's annual allocation of CDBG & HOME funds. A substantial amendment may also be required to carry out an activity not previously described in the action plan.

Any changes in the distribution of funds caused by changes in federal funding allocations after the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan's draft comment period has expired will not be considered a substantial amendment.

Substantial amendments to the approved Consolidated Plan will be made public by public notices as outlined above. The City will receive and consider comments delivered in writing or orally at a Public Hearing on substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan for 30 days before implementing those amendments. Approved amendments and a summary of comments will be attached and uploaded to the plan being amended within the Integrated Disbursement Information System.

If a state of emergency is declared which requires reallocation of funds and/or receipt of disaster recovery funding, the City will follow any abbreviated notice and approval process as published within a HUD CPD notice.

CITIZEN COMPLAINTS

Citizens who have objections or complaints about the Community Development Programs may submit a written complaint to:

Community Development Department
City of Auburn
60 Court Street
Auburn, ME 04210

The complaint should include the date, name, address, telephone number of the complainant, convenient hour to reach that person by telephone, nature of the complaint and location. The complaint may also be given orally. The person initiating the complaint will schedule a meeting with the Community Development Manager and a formal complaint will be formulated from the interview that will be signed by the complainant.

There will be a written response, within 15 days of receipt, to the complainant. The response will indicate the ultimate disposition of the complaint.

PUBLIC ACCESS : Availability of Documents

The final Consolidated Plan, any substantial amendments, and annual performance reports will be made available to the public on the city's website. Copies will be available in printed form or electronic means upon request.

Access to Records

The City will provide all interested parties with access to information and records related to the Citizen Participation Plan, Consolidated Plan, Action Plan and any amendments by posting it in a translatable form on the city website. Hard copies can be requested, and accommodations will be available to individuals with visual or hearing impairments. Records relating to these documents can be requested for the preceding five years. The public will be provided reasonable access to housing assistance records, subject to laws regarding privacy and obligations of confidentiality.

Accommodations

Arrangements will be made for non-English-speaking persons and persons with special needs for mobility, hearing and visual impairments, or the homebound. Please contact the Community Development Department in advance so that arrangements can be made to provide adequate communication assistance. Access to these accommodations can be attained by contacting the Community Development Office ahead of time at (207) 333-6601 or emailing CDBG@auburnmaine.gov .