

CITY OF GARDENA

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN
FOR THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM**

December 2001

City of Gardena
1700 West 162nd Street
Gardena, CA 90247

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CITY OF GARDENA CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN DOCUMENTS

I. PURPOSE

The City of Gardena is an entitlement jurisdiction receiving Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds directly from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Pursuant to the CDBG program regulations, the City is required to prepare a five-year Consolidated Plan and annual updates to guide and report on the use of CDBG funds. Annual reviews of program performance are also required.

This Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) sets forth the City of Gardena's policies and procedures for citizen participation in the development of the Consolidated Plan and related documents and any subsequent amendments. The CPP provides an opportunity for nonprofit service agencies and the community to work in partnership with the City to identify needs and allocate CDBG funds. While this plan will aim to ensure the participation of all citizens, special assurances will be made to ensure the participation of the following groups:

- extremely low-, low-, and moderate-income persons;
- persons living in areas where federal funds are proposed to be used;
- residents of assisted housing;
- low-income residents of target revitalization areas;
- minorities;
- non-English speaking persons; and
- persons with physical disabilities.

II. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, the following definitions will apply:

Consolidated Plan Documents - For the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for the City of Gardena, the Consolidated Plan Documents will include the following:

- Five-Year Consolidated Plan
- One Year Action Plan
- Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)

Low- and Moderate-Income Households - Pursuant to HUD regulations, the primary beneficiaries of the CDBG program should be low- and moderate-income households, defined by HUD as follows:

Extremely Low-Income - 0-30% County Median family income (MFI) adjusted for household size.

Low-Income - 31-50% County MFI adjusted for household size.

Moderate-Income - 51-80% County MFI adjusted for household size.

Low- and Moderate-Income Neighborhood - Generally defined as a census tract(s) or block group(s) in which a minimum of 51 percent of the residents have an income not exceeding 80 percent of the area median family income.

Slum or Blighted Area - An area which meets the definition of a slum, blighted, deteriorated or deteriorating area under State or local law typically identified as Redevelopment Project Areas, or where there is a substantial number of deteriorating or dilapidated buildings or improvements throughout the area.

III. CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

A. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN (CPP)

The City of Gardena recognizes that Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are tax money returned to the City to be used primarily to benefit extremely low-, low-, and moderate-income persons. City staff and officials are stewards of this public money and will openly discuss all records, except those confidential records protecting a household's privacy. The City presents the following as its policy defining its Citizen Participation Plan (CPP), in accordance with 24 CFR Parts 91, et al.

The Citizen Participation Plan seeks to involve the participation of citizens of Gardena and social service agencies in the development and adoption of the Consolidated Plan, the Action Plan, any substantial amendments, and the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report. In addition, efforts will be made to focus on the involvement of low- and moderate-income persons, those persons living in slum and blighted areas, persons living in low- and moderate-income areas and persons living in areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used in the development of the above documents. More specifically, the City will consult and encourage the involvement of the Los Angeles County Housing Authority and the participation of residents of assisted housing developments in the City. The Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) consists of a number of elements designed to foster community involvement as specified in each section of the Plan.

Pursuant to HUD regulations, City will conduct a minimum of two hearings annually at different stages in the program year. The City will conduct public hearings at locations and at times which are convenient to the public, especially for those persons affected by program resources, and the locations will be equipped to accommodate persons with physical disabilities. As such, all public hearings will be conducted at City Hall, City Council Chambers, 1700 West 162nd, Gardena.¹ For

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The City of Gardena complies with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) in all respects. If an attendee or participant at a public hearing needs special assistance beyond what is normally provided, the City will attempt to make accommodations in every reasonable manner. The City Clerk must be notified at least 48 hours prior to the public hearing.

non-English speakers, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, and Tagalog translation will be available at all public hearings if requested in advance.

1. Adoption of the Citizen Participation Plan

Prior to the adoption of the Citizen Participation Plan, implementation of the following public comment, review, and adoption procedures will ensure that all citizens have a chance to participate in development of the Plan.

- a. The City will provide a notice of the 30-day public review period and public hearing on the Citizen Participation Plan in the *Gardena Valley News*. The notice will be printed in *Gardena Valley News* a minimum of 14 days prior to the public hearing date.
- b. The proposed Citizen Participation Plan will be available for public review at the following locations:
 - City Clerk's Office
 - City Manager's Office
 - Mayme Dear Memorial Library
 - Kiyoto Ken Nakaoka Memorial Community Center
 - Rowley Park
 - Masao W. Satow Library

Upon request, the Plan will be made accessible to any person with disabilities. The City will provide a reasonable number of free copies of the CPP to citizens and groups that request copies.

- c. Comments or views of citizens received in writing during the public review period or orally at the public hearing will be considered by the Gardena City Council.
- d. The Draft Plan will be adopted upon a majority vote of the Gardena City Council at a designated and publicly noticed City Council meeting.

After adoption of the Plan, a Final Plan will be prepared. The Final Plan will include a summary of public comments and a summary of any comments not accepted and the reasons therefor, all of which will be attached to the final Citizen Participation Plan.

2. Amendment of the Citizen Participation Plan

The City will amend its approved Citizen Participation Plan whenever a change in the public participation process, as outlined in this plan, is proposed.

An amendment to the approved Citizen Participation Plan will follow the same guidelines as the adoption of the CPP regarding public comment, review, and approval as listed above.

B. CONSOLIDATED PLAN

The Consolidated Plan consists of three parts: the needs assessment, housing and community development strategic plan, and an action plan. The needs assessment and housing and community development strategic plan are updated every five years whereas the action plan is updated annually reflecting annual CBDG funding allocation.

Two groups involved in the process of Consolidated Plan development include the Staff Working Group and the City Council. The responsibilities of these two groups are:

Staff Working Group - The working group comprised of representatives from the various City departments and divisions, including Community Development, Economic Development, and the City Manager's Office. The group will perform in an advisory manner to the City Council concerning planning, implementing and assessing CDBG programs/activities through the following:

- Collecting citizen input concerning neighborhood/community needs;
- Preparing a prioritized list of neighborhood/community needs for City Council's review and final approval;
- Disseminating information during the CDBG application process;
- Preparing project recommendations for City Council's review and final approval; and
- Reviewing project/program progress.

City Council - The City Council will fulfill its role by holding public hearings and carrying out the procedures established in this Citizen Participation Plan. The City Council makes the final determination about the priority of various community needs that will guide the Council when annually allocating CBDG funds in the Action Plan.

1. Development of the Consolidated Plan

The City of Gardena will implement the following strategies to solicit meaningful community input in preparation of the Consolidated Plan. Specifically, the City will:

- a. Consult public agencies including City staff, adjacent local governments, economic development interests, and state and local health agencies.
- b. Consult private agencies that provide health services, social services for children, elderly, disabled, homeless, persons with AIDS, victims of domestic violence, and persons with alcohol/drug abuses, etc. The City maintains a mailing list of more than 50 service providers. Notices regarding opportunities to participate in the Consolidated Planning process will be mailed to agencies on the mailing list.
- c. Consult City commissions and committees, including:
 - Planning and Environmental Quality Commission

- Recreation and Park Commission
- Human Services Commission
- Senior Citizens Commission
- Economic Development Committee
- Gardena Beautiful

- c. Prepare a needs assessment after consultation with stakeholders and interested parties.
- d. Publish 1st and 2nd notice of the 30-day public comment period and public meeting(s) on the development of the Consolidated Plan and the potential uses of CDBG funds for the upcoming year. Notices will be published in the *Gardena Valley News*, with the 1st notice appearing at least 14 days prior to the public meeting(s).

The notices will serve as the City's Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). Organizations with CDBG-eligible projects may apply to the City of Gardena for funding under the CDBG program. At the minimum, the application should contain detailed information on the following:

- Name of organization, contact person(s), and history of operation
- Name of project and detailed description of project
- Documentation of need for project
- Financial summary, including amount of CDBG funds requested and other resources to leverage CDBG funds, as well as potential uses of funds
- Target beneficiaries and objectives of project
- If the organization is requesting CDBG funds from a number of jurisdictions to same project, include information on amount requested and potential benefits for each jurisdiction

The Staff Working Group will verify the eligibility of the projects, evaluate the projects for merits and feasibility, and make recommendations to the City Council. (See description of the Staff Working Group on page 4.) The applicants will be notified by mail within ten days of Council decision on funding applications.

- e. Conduct at least one public meeting and provide for a 30-day public comment period for residents and interested parties to provide input on housing and neighborhood/community development needs.

2. Adoption of the Consolidated Plan

The following procedures will ensure that all citizens will have a chance to influence the final Plan. Specifically, the City will:

- a. Publish 1st and 2nd notice of 30-day public comment period and public hearing on the Draft Consolidated Plan and the One-Year Action Plan. Notices will be published in the *Gardena Valley News* and include a summary of the Draft Consolidated Plan that describes the contents and purpose and a list of the locations where copies of the Draft Plan may be examined. The 1st notice will be published at least 14 days prior to the public hearing.

b. The Draft Consolidated Plan and Action Plan will be available for public review at the the following locations:

- City Clerk's Office
- City Manager's Office
- Mayme Dear Memorial Library
- Kiyoto Ken Nakaoka Memorial Community Center
- Rowley Park
- Masao W. Satow Library

Upon request, the Draft Consolidated Plan and Action Plan will be made accessible to any person with disabilities. The City will provide a reasonable number of free copies of the Draft Consolidated Plan and Action Plan to citizens and groups that request copies.

c. The City Council will conduct a public hearing on the Draft Consolidated Plan and Action Plan.

d. At the end of the 30-day review period, the City Council will consider adoption of the Draft Consolidated Plan and Action Plan. The Draft Consolidated Plan and Action Plan will be adopted upon a majority vote of the Gardena City Council.

After adoption of the Plan, the Final Consolidated Plan and Action Plan will be submitted to HUD. The Final Plan will include a summary of public comments and a summary of any comments not accepted and the reasons therefor, all of which will be attached to the Final Plan.

3. Amendment of the Consolidated Plan

The City may amend the adopted five-year Strategic Plan and one-year Action Plan. The following outlines the criteria and procedures to be used when amending the Strategic Plan and Action Plan.

Substantial Amendment Criteria

Five-Year Strategic Plan - The City will amend its approved five-year Strategic Plan whenever a decision is made to propose a substantial change in allocation priorities, or a substantial change in the method of the distribution of funds. For the purpose of the five-year Strategic Plan, a "substantial change" will constitute a cumulative change equal to or in excess of 25% of the City's CDBG entitlement for a program year.

Changes in funding priority not amounting to more than 25% of a program year will not be considered a substantial change to the five-year Strategic Plan; no formal amendment to the Strategic Plan requiring public review and comment will be warranted.

One-Year Action Plan - The City will amend its approved Action Plan whenever one of the following decisions is made:

- 1) to carry out an activity not previously described in the Action Plan;
- 2) to cancel an activity previously described in the Action Plan;

- 3) to increase or decrease the amount to be expended on a particular activity from the amount stated in the Action Plan by more than 50%; or
- 4) to substantially change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.

Changes in funding for an existing activity not amounting to more than 50% will not be considered a substantial change to the one-year Action Plan; no formal amendment to the Action Plan requiring public review and comment will be warranted.

Amendment Process

The following procedures will ensure that all citizens will have a chance to comment on the proposed amendment to the Consolidated Plan. Specifically, the City will:

- a. Publish a notice of the 30-day public comment period on the proposed amendment to the adopted five-year Strategic Plan and/or the one-year Action Plan. The notice will be published in the *Gardena Valley News* and include a summary of the amendment and where copies of the proposed amendment may be examined.
- b. The proposed amendment will be available for public review at the following locations:
 - City Clerk's Office
 - City Manager's Office
 - Mayme Dear Memorial Library
 - Kiyoto Ken Nakaoka Memorial Community Center
 - Rowley Park
 - Masao W. Satow Library

Upon request, the amendment will be made accessible to any person with disabilities.

- c. At the end of the 30-day review period, the City Council will consider adoption of the amendment upon a majority vote of the Gardena City Council.

C. CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORT

The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) details the accomplishments of the Consolidated Plan and the Action Plan. The following procedures will ensure that all citizens will have a chance to comment on the CAPER.

- a. Publish a notice of the 15-day public comment period on the draft CAPER. The notice will be published in the *Gardena Valley News*. The notice will include a list of locations at which the draft CAPER can be reviewed.
- b. The draft CAPER will be available for public review at the following locations:
 - City Clerk's Office
 - City Manager's Office
 - Mayme Dear Memorial Library

- Kiyoto Ken Nakaoka Memorial Community Center
- Rowley Park
- Masao W. Satow Library

Upon request, the amendment will be made accessible to any person with disabilities.

- c. At the end of the 15-day public comment period, the draft CAPER will be adopted upon a majority vote of the Gardena City Council at a designated and publicly noticed City Council meeting.

IV. PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF PUBLIC MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

Staff will ensure adequate advance notice of all public meetings and hearings. Adequate noticing will include:

- Printing notices in the *Gardena Valley News* at least 14 days prior to the public meetings and hearings.
- Posting notices at City Hall

V. ACCESS TO RECORDS

The City will provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the Consolidated Plan documents and the use of assistance during the preceding five years. Information to be made available will include budget and program performance information, meeting minutes, and comments received by the City during the development of the Consolidated Plan documents.

Requests for information and records must be made to the City of Gardena in writing. Staff will respond to such requests within 15 working days or as soon as possible thereafter.

VI. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Upon request, staff will provide technical assistance to groups representing extremely-low, low- and moderate-income persons to develop funding requests for CDBG eligible activities. Technical assistance will be provided as follows:

- a. Establish an annual project proposal submission and review cycle [Notice Of Funding Availability (NOFA)] that provides information, instructions, forms and advice to interested extremely low-, low- and moderate-income citizens or representative groups so that they can have reasonable access to the funding consideration process. The NOFA will be published in the *Gardena Valley News*.

- b. Answer, in writing, all written questions and answer verbally all verbal inquiries received from citizens or representative groups asking questions on how to write or submit eligible project proposals.
- c. Meet with groups or individuals as requested, to assist in identifying specific needs and to assist in preparing project proposal applications.
- d. Obtain information in the form of completed project proposal forms from citizens or local non-profit agencies and assemble a list of proposals available for public review.
- e. Conduct a project eligibility analysis process to determine, at an early stage, the eligibility of each project. Eligibility criteria will be based on HUD-established requirements for the CDBG program. In cases where only minor adjustments are needed to make proposals eligible or otherwise practical, City staff will advise the applicants on the options available and desired changes to the proposals.
- f. Provide bi-lingual translation on as needed basis.

VII. COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

A. COMMENTS

Citizens or the City government, as well as agencies providing services to the community, are encouraged to state or submit their comments in the development of the Consolidated Plan documents and any amendments to these documents. Written and verbal comments received at public hearings or during the comment period, will be considered and summarized, and included as an attachment to the final Consolidated Plan documents. Written comments should be addressed to:

City of Gardena
1700 West 162nd Street
Gardena, CA 90247-3778

A written response will be made to all written comments within ten working days, acknowledging the letter and identifying a plan of action, if necessary. Every effort will be made to send a complete response within 15 working days to those who submit written proposals or comments.

B. COMPLAINTS

Complaints regarding the program planning process and/or amendments must be made within 30 days from the date the document is published for comment. A written response will be made to all written complaints within five working days, acknowledging the letter and identifying a plan of action, if necessary. Staff will provide complete written responses to citizen complaints within 15 working days from the date of their complaint when practicable.

The City will accept written complaints provided they specify the following:

- (1) The description of the objection, and supporting facts and data
- (2) Provide name, address, telephone number, and a date of complaint

VIII. BILINGUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Wherever a significant number of extremely low- and low-income persons speak and read a primary language other than English, translation services at all public hearings will be provided in such language if translation services are requested in advance.

IX. APPEALS

Appeals concerning the Consolidated Plan documents or decisions, statements, or recommendations of the staff should be made first to the CDBG Coordinator, then to the City Manager, the City Council, and finally to the Los Angeles Area Office of HUD if concerns are not answered.

X. ANTI-DISPLACEMENT/RELOCATION

In the event that any residential displacement and relocation must take place in order to carry out a program activity, the City of Gardena ensures that it will develop an Antidisplacement and Relocation Plan in connection with that project as applicable per Federal regulations.

In the event that any acquisition and relocation must take place in order to carry out a program activity, Gardena will also comply with the acquisition and relocation requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, and implementing regulations of 49 CFR part 24.

XI. ASSURANCES

A review and, as applicable, revision of the Consolidated Plan documents will be conducted during the fourth quarter of each program year. Changes to these program documents will require City Council approval. Prior to City Council approval, citizens will be given a reasonable opportunity to comment on the original Consolidated Plan documents and on any amendments to such.

The City of Gardena assures that the most diligent effort will be made to comply with the process and procedures outlined in this CPP.

XII. GLOSSARY

Citizen Participation Plan (CPP): The CPP governs the citizen participation process for the City of Gardena in implementing the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): A grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This grant allots money to cities and counties for housing rehabilitation, affordable housing assistance, community services, and community development activities (including community facilities and economic development).

Consolidated Plan (CP): The Consolidated Plan is a three- to five-year planning document for the CDBG program. The CP must contain a housing and community development needs assessment, a three- to five-year strategic plan to address the needs identified, a one-year action plan to identify specify activities and planned use of CDBG funds. The CP is due at HUE 45 days before the beginning of a program year. The City of Gardena CDBG program begins annually on July 1, making the CP due at HUD no later than May 17 of each year.

Consolidated Planning Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER): CAPER is an annual report summarizing the City's progress in implementing Consolidated Plan. CAPER is due at HUD 90 days after the close of a program year. For the City of Gardena, each program year ends on June 30, making the CAPER due at HUD no later than September 28 of each year.

Median Family Income (MFI): HUD surveys major metropolitan areas annually to development an index of median family income by household size. Most CDBG-funded activities and programs must benefit primarily the lower and moderate income households. For the CDBG program, an extremely low income household earns no more than 30% of the County MFI; a low income household earns no more than 50% of the County MFI; and a moderate income household earns no more than 80% of the County MFI.

Staff Working Group (SWG): The Staff Working Group for the CDBG program is comprised of representatives from the various City departments and divisions, including Community Development, Economic Development, and the City Manager's Office.