

St. Johns County

Community Development Block Grant

Citizens Participation Plan

BACKGROUND

St. Johns County is an annual recipient of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), which is a federal grant administered by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Pursuant to 24 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 91, Subpart B, the County has prepared a Citizen Participation Plan to explain the opportunity all citizens have to participate in processes related to the CDBG program. CDBG documents that are required by HUD and covered by the Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) include the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER). Substantial Amendments to the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan may become necessary and are also covered by the Citizens Participation Plan. St. Johns County's original Citizen Participation was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on June 7, 2016, with Resolution 2016-168.

INTRODUCTION

St. Johns County seeks citizen participation and involvement in the planning, implementation, and assessment of its housing and community development programs funded by the CDBG program. The CDBG program is intended to develop viable urban communities with decent housing and a suitable living environment, and to expand economic opportunities, especially for low and moderate income persons.

The primary goal of this Citizen Participation Plan is to provide the opportunity for citizens of St. Johns County to participate in all phases of the CDBG program; with an emphasis on participation by persons of low and moderate income, residents of blighted areas, residents of low and moderate income neighborhoods, and residents of those areas in which funds are utilized. Low and moderate income neighborhoods are those that have a majority of households earning less than 80% of the Area Median Income in St. Johns County.

The Citizen Participation Plan establishes policies and procedures for public participation in the community development process and supersedes all other Citizen Participation Plans which may have been adopted by the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners. St. Johns County receives the CDBG entitlement grant due to its designation as an urban county, with a population greater than 200,000 residents. HUD has implemented a process by which incorporated municipalities within an urban county may periodically decide to participate in the county's CDBG program, or opt out of inclusion.

St. Johns County values and encourages participation and input from its citizens and community groups affected by, or involved with, any housing and community development projects. The final responsibility for the development and implementation of CDBG programs lies with the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners.

CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION

The Citizen Participation Plan is designed to ensure early, consistent and effective citizen participation in the planning, development, and implementation of proposed CDBG programs and related documents. The process will include the following actions:

1. The County shall actively seek the participation of citizens of all income levels to participate in the development, implementation, and assessment of the Citizen Participation Plan, Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, any Substantial Amendments made to these plans, and the CAPER.
2. Particular emphasis will be placed on encouraging persons of low and moderate-income, persons who reside in areas of slum and blight, residents of neighborhoods that are currently designated as target areas, residents located in areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, and clients of human service agencies.
 - a) The definition of low and moderate-income persons will be consistent with HUD current guidelines. (Person whose income is 80% or less of area median income)
 - b) The definition of a low to moderate-income neighborhood will be consistent with HUD guidelines. Typically, a low to moderate-income neighborhood is one in which at least 51% of the residents are deemed to be of low to moderate-income. HUD also publishes guidelines for exception grantees. Guidelines for exception grantees may allow for a lower percentage of low to moderate-income households within a community, for it to be deemed a low to moderate-income neighborhood. At any point that the County is deemed to be an exception grantee, the exception percentage determined by HUD will be utilized.
3. The County shall encourage the participation of local and regional institutions, as well as businesses, developers, community organizations, faith-based organizations, and the Continuum of Care, in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, substantial amendments, and the CAPER.
4. The County will publish Public Notices about CDBG events in the St. Augustine Record, as well as posting these Public Notices at the St. Johns County Courthouse and in the St. Johns County Health And Human Services lobby. Public Notices will also be posted on the County's website at <http://www.sjcfcl.us/Housing/index.aspx>.
5. Public Hearings will be held to provide information and to obtain citizens' comments. A public comment period will be defined to allow citizens adequate time to provide comments. Public notification of meetings will be provided to human service agencies and faith-based organizations to encourage the participation of minorities, non-English speaking persons, persons with disabilities, persons receiving supportive services, and persons residing in publicly supported housing.
6. Citizens may request information or documents related to the CDBG program. Reasonable and timely access to records, information, and the use of funds will be provided to citizens requesting such information.
7. Technical assistance to eligible groups requesting funding assistance under the CDBG program will be provided.
8. Procedures for handling complaints have been developed and stated in the CDBG Policies and Procedures Manual; additional information can also be found on page 10 of this Plan.

DEVELOPMENT OF, AND AMENDMENTS TO, THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

The Citizen Participation Plan was developed with guidance from HUD and pursuant to the requirements of 24 CFR Part 91, Subpart B. Public input was also utilized to develop the Plan, including two public

hearings prior to the Board of County Commissioners adopting the Plan. Substantial Amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan are allowable under the following criteria:

1. In the development of the CPP two Public Hearings will be held, one to solicit input into the development of the draft of the Plan. The second Public Hearing will be held to review the draft of the Plan and to receive and discuss public comments, prior to the Board of County Commissioners approval of the Plan.
2. A proposed Substantial Amendment to the Citizen Participation Plan will be publicly noticed 30 days prior to final action on the proposed changes. Citizens are encouraged to provide comments during this 30 day period. All written comments will be addressed within 15 days of receipt.
3. The Public Notice will identify at least two Public Hearings to be held on the proposed Substantial Amendment. The purpose of these Public Hearings is to publicly disseminate information about proposed changes to the Plan and to solicit citizens' input into the development of the Plan.
4. The Board of County Commissioners will take final action on Substantial Amendments to the Citizens Participation Plan during regularly scheduled and publicly noticed Board meetings.

ACCESSIBILITY OF THE CITIZENS PARTICIPATION PLAN, CONSOLIDATED PLAN, ANNUAL ACTION PLAN, SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS, AND CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT

Any person who requires assistance in reading or understanding the Citizen Participation Plan, Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Substantial Amendments, and the CAPER due to disability or difficulty with the language, will be provided assistance sufficient to enable them to understand these documents.

1. The Citizen Participation Plan, Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Substantial Amendments, and CAPER are available on the County website, which is ADA compliant and accommodates the visually impaired. A summary of the Consolidated Plan will be published through a Public Notice in the St. Augustine Record and posted in at least two community locations.
2. The Citizen Participation Plan, Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Substantial Amendments, and CAPER are available for public review, 8:00 AM – 5:00PM, Monday – Friday, at the Health and Human Services Building, Suite 2300, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084.
3. With the development of and/or substantial amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan, Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan or CAPER, the County will assess the language needs existing within the County. Census data, as well as data compiled by the St. Johns County School District, will be used to assess the number of persons speaking languages other than English. This data will help the County determine which languages to have CDBG documents pre-printed in and to prepare for acquiring translation services for in-demand languages, to ensure that non-English speaking residents can participate in all phases of the CDBG program.
4. Upon request, copies of the Citizen Participation Plan, Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Substantial Amendments, and the CAPER will be made available in a format that is ADA compliant; this includes providing oral, Braille, large print, electronic copies, and copies in requested languages. Copies of documents may be delivered to the homebound.

THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN & ANNUAL ACTION PLAN PROCESS

The policies and procedures in this Citizens Participation Plan relate to several stages of action mentioned in law or regulation related to the CDBG program. These stages or events include:

- 1) Identification of housing, public services, and community development needs.
- 2) Development of a proposed five-year strategic plan, the Consolidated Plan (done once every five years).
- 3) Preparation of proposed use of funds for the upcoming year, called the Annual Action Plan.
- 4) Formal approval by the Board of County Commissioners of a final five-year Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan.
- 5) A formal Substantial Amendment may be proposed when it becomes necessary to change the use of funds previously allocated in an Annual Action Plan, or to change priorities established in the five-year Consolidated Plan.
- 6) All proposed Substantial Amendments shall be approved by the Board of County Commissioners.
- 7) After a "program year" is complete, a Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) will be drafted for public review and comment. The CAPER, including public comments received, is forwarded to HUD for review.
- 8) St. Johns County "CDBG program year" and the County's fiscal year is October 1st through September 30th.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Items Covered by the Public Notice Requirement

1. Advanced public notice will be given whenever a federally required document is available in draft and final form, such as the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Substantial Amendments, and the CAPER.
2. Advanced public notice will be given for all public hearings relating to the funds or the planning process covered by actions in the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Substantial Amendments, and the CAPER.
3. All public notices will have language to the effect: "In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons needing a special accommodation to participate in these proceedings should contact the ADA Coordinator at 904-209-0650, or at the County Administration Building at 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084. Deaf and/or hard-of-hearing individuals may use Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD): 904-209-0650, or the Florida Relay Service: 800-955-8770. The public meeting will be conducted in English. If you require a translator, please call 904-209-0650. To request services, please notify the County at least five business days prior to each meeting."
4. Public Notices posted in community locations and those made available for public review will be typed in size 12 font.
5. Sufficient notices will be given for the public to take informed action. The amount of lead-time can vary depending on the event. Specific amounts of times are specified for different events. The content of notices will give residents a clear understanding of the event being announced.

FORMS OF PUBLIC NOTICE

1. HUD requires that Public Notices must be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the County, or posted in public locations. St. Johns County publish will publish Public Notices in the *St. Augustine Record*.

2. Additionally, Public Notices will be posted at the St. Johns County Courthouse and in the lobby of the St. Johns County Social Services. Public Notices may also be posted at community locations within communities in which CDBG projects will be executed.
3. Notice may additionally be given through announcements to neighborhood organizations and agencies providing services to lower-income people or special needs clientele.
4. Notices will be sent to any person or organization requesting to be on a Housing & Community Services email list. Requests to be added to this email list may be sent to housing@sjcfl.us.
5. The County will post Public Notices at the St. Johns County Courthouse and in the St. Johns County Health And Human Services lobby. Public Notices will also be posted on the County's website at <http://www.sjcfl.us/Housing/index.aspx>.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. A minimum of two public hearings will be held each year to provide information about the CDBG program to obtain citizens' views and answer questions regarding proposed CDBG actions. Public Hearings will be conducted at distinct stages in the planning, implementing, and assessment periods of the CDBG program, so that the public can participate in all phases. At least one of these hearings to be held before Consolidated Plan is published.
2. The St. Johns County will provide citizens with reasonable and timely access to hearings. Public Notices announcing public hearings will be issued a minimum of 15 days prior to the date on which the meeting is held.
3. To encourage participation and informed comments, sufficient information will be published about the subject of hearings.
4. St. Johns County will consider all comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally at Public Hearings. A summary of these comments or views will be included in the Annual Action Plan or the CAPER, including a summary of any comments or views not accepted, and the reasons they were not accepted.
5. Public Hearings will address housing and community development needs, development of proposed activities, proposes strategies and actions for affirmatively furthering fair housing, and reviews of program performance.
6. Public Hearings will be held in locations which can be accessed by all citizens. The common locations are the Board of County Commissioners Chamber and the St. Johns County Health and Human Services Building. These locations are well known to citizens and are ADA compliant. Times of hearings may vary from day to evening, affording more citizens the opportunity to attend. On occasion, Public Hearings may be held in a church, library, or community center. At all times, Public Hearings shall be held at convenient locations that that are ADA compliant.
7. Translations will be provided whenever requested by deaf or non-English speaking citizens. All Public Notices that announce Public Hearings shall have language stating: "In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons needing a special accommodation to participate in these proceedings should contact the ADA Coordinator at 904-209-0650, or at the County Administration Building at 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084. Deaf and/or hard-of hearing individuals may use Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD): 904-209-0650, or the Florida Relay Service: 800-955-8770. The public meeting will be conducted in English. If you require a translator, please call 904-209-0650. To request services, please notify the County at least five business days prior to each meeting."

LOCAL MEETINGS:

1. The County will provide citizens with reasonable and timely access to local meetings. A minimum 15-day notice will be afforded to citizens before the actual meeting is held.
2. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons needing a special accommodation to participate in these proceedings should contact the ADA Coordinator at 904-209-0650, or at the County Administration Building at 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084. Deaf and/or hard-of hearing individuals may use Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD): 904-209-0650, or the Florida Relay Service: 800-955-8770. The public meeting will be conducted in English. If you require a translator, please call 904-209-0650. To request services, please notify the County at least five business days prior to each meeting.”

PUBLIC ACCESS TO CONSOLIDATED PLAN, ANNUAL ACTION PLAN, SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS, CAPER, AND RECORDS

As required by law, St. Johns County will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the data and documents of the CDBG program, as well as proposed and actual use of funds during the previous five years. All CDBG records will be retained and available to the public for five fiscal years after completion of grant cycle.

1. Proposed and adopted versions of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Substantial Amendments, CAPER, and Citizens Action Plan will be made available at no cost to the public, up to fifteen copies of the document requested.
2. When requested, information and materials will be made available in a form accessible to persons with disabilities.
3. Drafts and adopted documents, such as the CCP, Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Substantial Amendments, CAPER, and other records and information relative to the CDBG program will be available 8:00 AM – 5:00PM, Monday – Friday, at the Health and Human Services Building, Suite 2300, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084. Information may also be obtained by contacting housing@sjcfl.us or by calling 904-827-6890 during business hours of 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.
4. Proposed and adopted versions of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Substantial Amendments, CAPER, and Citizens Action Plan are available on the County website at: <http://www.sjcfl.us/Housing/index.aspx>. The webpages and documents are ADA compliant. A summary of the Consolidated Plan will be published in the St. Augustine Record. The summary will include a description of the content and purpose of the Consolidated Plan; and a list of locations where copies of the proposed or adopted Consolidated Plan may be obtained.
5. St. Johns County may charge reasonable fees for the duplication and provision of materials. Confidential information normally protected under state and federal freedom of information laws will not be available for public review.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The County will gladly provide technical assistance to individuals and groups representative of persons of low and moderate income that request such assistance. The technical assistance includes developing potential proposals for funding and information regarding the CDBG program, such as rules, regulations and eligible activities, thereby allowing citizens to effectively participate in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the CDBG process. Technical assistance may be requested by contacting the Housing

and Community Services Division at 904-827-6890, during regular business hours or by email at housing@sjcfl.us.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN

Pursuant to the requirements of 24 CFR Part 91, the Consolidated Plan serves as St. Johns County's planning document, application for federal funds, strategic plan in carrying out HUD programs, and an action plan that provides the basis for assessing performance. In the development of the Consolidated Plan, the County will make the plan available and encourage participation by low and moderate income persons, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, and by residents of predominantly low and moderate income neighborhoods, public agencies and other interested parties.

Prior to the Board of County Commissioners adopting the Consolidated Plan, the following actions will be taken in addition to holding a minimum of two Public Hearings will be held:

1. Inform citizens as to the anticipated amount of CDBG funding, potential program income, possible program activities, the cost and location of proposed activities, and the impact on low to moderate income persons. HUD requires CDBG recipients to expend at least 70 percent of allotted CDBG funds on activities that benefit low to moderate income residents. The County will provide information on strategies employed to meet this requirement.
2. Provide citizens with a forum for input on housing and community development needs and priorities as part of the preparation of the Plan. A 30-day comment period will be provided to encourage comments from citizens. All comments and views expressed orally and in writing by the public will be considered when developing the final version of a Consolidated Plan.
3. Will make available for discussion the range of activities that may be implemented and the estimated amount that will benefit persons of low and moderate-income, including activities to be undertaken with Section 108 guaranteed loan funds.
4. Will make available for discussion the Citizen Participation Plan and its goal of providing citizen participation in the community development process.
5. Provide information about the County's plans for minimizing the displacement of persons , to assist any persons displaced, specifying the types and levels of assistance the County will make available (or require others to make available) to persons displaced as a result of acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of real property for Federal or federally funded projects (even if no displacement is expected to occur) in keeping with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act. The County's displacement plan will be made available for review.
6. The County will encourage participation with developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan among residents of assisted housing (including any resident advisory boards, resident councils, and resident management corporations) as well as other low- income residents of targeted revitalization areas in which assisted housing is located. St. Johns County does not currently have a Public Housing Authority or public housing. In the event that public housing is established within the County, the residents of public housing, as well as the boards/councils representing them, will be encouraged to participate in the development and implementation of the Consolidated Plan.
7. All information related to the development of the Consolidated Plan will be available to citizens at public meetings as well as in person, 8:00 AM – 5:00PM, Monday – Friday, at the Health and Human Services Building, Suite 2300, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084. Information may also be obtained by contacting housing@sjcfl.us or by calling 904-827-6890 during business hours of 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Copies of the draft and adopted Consolidated plan can also be obtained at the St. Johns County website at: <http://www.sjcfl.us/Housing/CDBG.aspx> and at the St. Johns County Main Library at 1960N.

Ponce de Leon Blvd, St. Augustine, FL 32084 and at the Hastings Branch Library at 6195 S. Main Street, Hastings, FL, 32145.

Consultation Requirements:

1. During preparation of the Consolidated Plan, St. Johns County will consult with local and regional institutions, including public, private, non-profit, and philanthropic agencies that provide publicly assisted housing, health services, social services, and fair housing services, including those focusing on services to children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, and homeless persons.
2. Participation will be encouraged from persons receiving services from the types of organizations identified above, as well as persons of low and moderate-income, persons who reside in areas of slum and blight, residents of neighborhoods that are currently designated as target areas, and residents located in areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used.
3. When preparing the portion of the Consolidated Plan relating to the homeless strategy, St. Johns County shall consult with the Continuum of Care, public and private agencies that provide assisted housing, health services, and social services to determine what resources are available to address the needs of any persons that are chronically homeless.
4. When preparing the portion of the Consolidated Plan concerned with lead-based paint hazards, St. Johns County will consult with State or local health and child-welfare agencies and examine existing data related to lead-based paint hazards and poisonings, including Department of Health data on housing units in which children have been identified as lead poisoned.

Public Hearings/Notification:

1. At least two public hearings will be held during the development of the Consolidated Plan. In order to establish a unified vision for future community development needs, the first hearing will occur prior to publishing a summary of the proposed activities and Consolidated Plan. Public Notice of the first public hearing will appear in the newspaper a minimum of 15 days prior to the hearing. The second hearing will occur after the draft Consolidated Plan is written and the summary is published for comment. The published summary will describe the contents and purpose of the Consolidated Plan and list the locations where copies of the entire Consolidated Plan may be examined. Advertisement of the second public hearing will appear in the newspaper a minimum of 30 days prior to the hearing and prior to submission to HUD in order to allow for a 30-day public comment period.
2. Public Hearings will be held in an ADA-compliant location and at times that are generally convenient to the public.
3. Public Notices will be published in the St. Augustine Record and posted in at least two community locations. Copies will be available at the Health & Human Services Building, Suite 2300, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL, 32084. and on the County's website at <http://www.sjcfl.us/Housing/index.aspx>. Upon request, free copies will be made available.
4. In preparing the final Consolidated Plan, the St. Johns County will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally at the public hearings. A summary of these comments or views, a summary of any comments or views not accepted, and the reasons therefore shall be incorporated into the Consolidated Plan.

ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

Pursuant to the requirements of 24 CFR Part 91, the Annual Action Plan provides the public with an estimate of the amount of CDBG funds the County expects to receive in the upcoming year. The Plan also provides a description of the types of activities that are to be funded with these resources and how these funds will be used in ways that will benefit low and moderate-income people.

Citizens Participation:

1. The County will encourage participation by low and moderate income persons, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where CDBG funds are proposed to be used, and by residents of predominantly low and moderate income neighborhoods.
2. The County shall encourage the participation of local and regional institutions and other organizations (including businesses, developers, and community/faith-based organizations) in the process of developing and implementing the Annual Action Plan.

Public Hearings/Notification:

1. During the development of the Annual Action Plan, at least two Public Hearings will be held. Public Notice of the first Public Hearing will be issued a minimum of 15 days prior to the hearing. The first hearing will occur after the initial announcement of the availability of funds and will explain the application process to those interested in applying for funding.
2. Notice of the final Public Hearing will be advertised along with the summary of the proposed Annual Action Plan. The summary will include an estimate of the amount of funds the County expects to receive in the upcoming year; provide a description of the types of activities that are to be funded with these resources; and explain how these funds will be used in ways that will benefit low- and moderate-income people. The summary will list the locations where copies of the Annual Action Plan may be examined. This notice will appear in the St. Augustine Record a minimum of 30 days prior to the final hearing and prior to submission to HUD in order to allow for a 30-day public comment period.
3. Public hearings will be held in an ADA-compliant location and at times that are generally convenient to the public.
4. Copies of Public Notices will be available at the Health & Human Services Building, 200 San Sebastian View, Suite 2300, St. Augustine, FL, 32084 and on the County's website at <http://www.sjcfcl.us/Housing/index.aspx>. Upon request, free copies will be made available.
5. In preparing the final version of the Annual Action Plan, St. Johns County will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally at the Public Hearings. A summary of these comments or views, a summary of any comments or views not accepted, and the reasons therefor shall be incorporated into the Annual Action Plan.

SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENTS

Pursuant to the requirements of 24 CFR 91.505, St. Johns County will consider the following changes to be substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan, and the Annual Action Plan, and will be subject to the citizen participation process, in accordance with this Citizen Participation Plan:

1. Addition of a new activity or project not previously described in the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan.
2. Deletion of an activity or project previously described in the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan.
3. Change in the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity or project previously described in the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan.
4. Change in the use of CDBG funds from one eligible activity or project to another previously described in the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan by more than fifty percent (50%). (Movement of funds from cancelled activities to eligible alternate activities, or funding alternate activities with excess program income are not considered Substantial Amendments.)
5. Change in an activity or project (previously described in the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan by more than fifty percent (50%).

Public Hearing/Notification/Citizen Comment Requirements:

1. At least two Public Hearings will be held prior to, or in conjunction with, the Board of County Commissioners approving a Substantial Amendment.
2. A Public Notice will be issued regarding proposed Substantial Amendments. Public Notices will provide sufficient information about the amendment to foster informed comment. Public advertisement of the hearing will appear in the newspaper a minimum of 30 days prior to the final hearing.
3. St. Johns County will provide at least 30 days to receive public comments on a Substantial Amendment before it is approved by the Board of County Commissioners and submitted to HUD. All comments and views expressed orally and in writing by the public will be considered when developing the final version of a Substantial Amendment.
4. St. Johns County will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at public hearings, in preparing the Substantial Amendment. A summary of these comments or views, a summary of any comments or views not accepted, and the reasons therefor shall be attached to the substantial amendment.

CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORTS (CAPER)

On an annual basis, St. Johns County will review and report in a HUD-mandated format, on the progress it has made in the execution of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan for the CDBG Program. The Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) includes a description of resources made available, how the resources were utilized, geographic distribution and location of funded projects, demographic information of households and persons assisted, as well as any other actions indicated in the Consolidated Plan and Action Plan. HUD requires that the report be submitted no later than ninety (90) days after the close of the County's program year.

Availability of the CAPER - Public Notice:

In an effort to ensure the public is aware of the availability of the CAPER, St Johns County will publish a notice in the St Augustine Record and will establish a fifteen (15) calendar day public review and comment period. The notice will also encourage any interested parties to participate and to provide comment and input on the CAPER as well as indicate locations where copies of the entire proposed CAPER report may be examined by the public. Upon request, the County will also provide a reasonable amount of free copies of the proposed CAPER report to interested groups and citizens.

Publication and Public Hearing for the CAPER:

St Johns County will conduct a public hearing to provide an opportunity for citizens to comment or ask questions regarding the CAPER. This hearing will occur after the fifteen (15) calendar day public review and comment period mentioned above. Notice of this hearing will be published at least fifteen (15) days in advance of the hearing in the St. Augustine Record. St Johns County will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing or orally at the public hearings in preparing the annual CAPER report. A summary of the comments or views will be attached to the annual CAPER report. Written public comments should be emailed to: housing@sjcfl.us - or sent via US mail to: Housing and Community Services, Attention: CDBG Program, 200 San Sebastian View, Suite 2300, St. Augustine, FL 32084.

Availability to the Public

The County will provide access to the adopted Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, any Substantial Amendments, CAPER to the public by publishing them on the Housing and Community Services Department of the St Johns County website. These materials will be made available in a format accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request. Additionally, copies of the approved plans and reports will be available for review at:

Health and Human Services
Housing and Community Services

- or -

Board of County Commissioners Office
500 San Sebastian View

WAIVERS/PROVISIONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

During times of Federal or State declared emergencies, the County reserves the right to use any waivers, flexibilities, or provisions granted by HUD, when such are aimed at increasing the County's flexibility or efficiency to respond to emergency situations and to expedite the use of grant funds.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, HUD approved waivers to certain requirements to allow the County to safely and rapidly respond to the crisis. One HUD-approved waiver the County reserves the right to use is limiting public meetings held for the purpose of informing citizens about the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the CDBG program and soliciting questions and comments from the public. Limiting public meetings is intended to reduce the spread of COVID-19 during gatherings of people. Another HUD-approved waiver the County reserves the right to use is reducing the Public Comment period for substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan from 30 days to no less than 5 days. This waiver is intended to make the County more agile in implementing activities in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

COMPLAINTS/OBJECTIONS/GRIEVANCES

Any citizen or citizens' group desiring to comment or object to any phase of the planning, related to the Consolidated Plan, amendments, and the performance report, development or approval of the application for CDBG funds, or to the implementation of the CDBG program, should submit comments or objections in writing via email to: housing@sjcfl.us - or via US mail to: Housing and Community Services, Attention: CDBG Program, 200 San Sebastian View, Suite 2300, St. Augustine, FL 32084.

St. Johns County will provide a substantive, written response to every written citizen complaint related to the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Substantial Amendments, and the CAPER within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint.

PROVISIONS FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING, DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING, OR OTHER DISABLED CITIZENS

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for any non-English speaking, deaf or hard of hearing individuals, or organizations that make a written request a minimum of four (4) days prior to any public hearings to the Housing and Community Development Department, Attention: Housing Program Specialist, 200 San Sebastian View, Suite 2300, St. Augustine, FL 32084.

ANTIDISPLACEMENT AND RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PLAN

The St. Johns County will take all reasonable steps to prevent and minimize the displacement of families, individuals, businesses, non-profits organizations and farms as a result of activities assisted under the CDBG Program. In the event that a project requires relocation of persons, St. Johns County will inform citizens of the Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan in place to address relocation needs. The Consolidated Plan will include a section with a detailed Anti-Displacement Plan.