

CITY OF PETALUMA
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM
AMENDED CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN 2024

First Modified January 27, 2021

Draft for March 7th 2024

INTRODUCTION

The City of Petaluma receives an annual entitlement grant under the federal government Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. As a requirement for receiving these entitlement grants, Title I of the National Affordable Housing Act mandates that jurisdictions prepare:

1. A five-year Consolidated Plan (Con Plan) and Consolidated Annual Action Plan (Annual Action Plan or AAP) that identify the local community development needs and set forth a funding strategy to address those needs. The purpose of the Consolidated Plan (Con Plan) is to state, in one document, the jurisdiction's plan to pursue the CDBG program's goals of developing viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities principally for low- and moderate-income persons.
2. A Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER) that assesses the jurisdictions annual achievements relative to the goals described in the Consolidated Plan and is the last step in the annual process.
3. Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH) is an analysis of fair housing data, an assessment of fair housing issues and contributing factors, and identification of fair housing priorities and goals. The AFH analyzes fair housing issues in the City and surrounding region, which results in goals the City sets forth to achieve over its planning cycle and can be found on the city housing webpage at: <https://cityofpetaluma.org/housing-reports-documents/>.
4. The Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) describes the City's process to facilitate and engage citizens to participate in an advisory role in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans (Action Plan).

The March 2024 Citizen Participation Plan amends the 2011 Plan and modifies the 2021 Citizen Participation Plan to more fully describe the actions that Petaluma will take to support the

participation of all residents of the City. The key changes to the CPP in March 2024 are as follows:

1. **Providing new data on fair housing barriers:** Per HUD guidance the federally mandated Analysis of Impediments / Assessment of Fair Housing (AI/AFH) document was added to the list of requirements of entitlement jurisdictions.
2. **Increasing accessibility to city resources:** Updates to communication methods to encourage public participation including webpage translation of information up to 120 languages including English and Spanish, and upon request, the city will provide appropriate auxiliary aids or services for those individuals with hearing, sight, or speech impairments.
3. **Clarifying communication procedures:** Updates to include instructions for submitting written comments to clerks or through agenda portal on the city webpage.
4. **Adding the city's capacity building efforts through its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiative with its staff:** Starting in 2021, the City initiated a program aimed at enhancing race relations, refining policing policies, and fostering inclusive communication within our community. Recent efforts in this regard include providing internal staff with Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) training and crafting a strategic plan for DEIB implementation.
5. **Increasing accessibility to city meetings in the event of a public emergency:** In the event of a natural disaster or pandemic, the city urges the public to attend City Council and commission meetings online rather than in person. Public comment can be submitted electronically instead of in-person attendance. Virtual hearings will ensure accessibility for citizens, prompt responses to questions, and accommodation for disabilities and language barriers. While City Council meetings currently offer a hybrid format, allowing both in-person and virtual participation, virtual comments via Zoom are temporarily suspended, but attendees can still observe meetings virtually and submit comments via email.

Encouraging Public Participation

Citizens are encouraged to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans, any substantial amendments to an adopted Consolidated Plan, and the annual performance report. Special efforts will be made to encourage participation by person of low- and moderate-income who are, per HUD guidelines: 1) residents of slum and blighted areas, 2) residents of areas in which community development funds are proposed to be used, 3) residents of predominantly low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, 4) residents of any designated neighborhood revitalization areas, 5) minorities, 6) non-English speaking persons, and 7) persons with mobility, visual or hearing impairments.

In an attempt to reach the low- and moderate-income citizens listed above, the City will distribute notices announcing 1) public hearings and other public meetings related to the consolidated planning process, 2) funding availability and applicant workshops, 3) publication of the draft Consolidated Plan and 5) publication of the draft annual performance report. The notices will be distributed to community-based organizations throughout the City and serve low- and moderate-income persons. Notice will be sent to any person or organization requesting to be included in a mailing list. Information will be posted on the City's website where it can be read in over 120 languages including English and Spanish. Also, the City of Petaluma's website has implemented considerations for screen readers for better accessibility to our website.

Notices of public hearings and other public meetings related to the consolidated planning process, funding availability and applicant workshops, availability of the draft Consolidated Plan and annual Action Plans and the annual performance report will also be published in the *Argus Courier* both in English and in Spanish, as well as posted on the City's official website at: <https://cityofpetaluma.org/housing-reports-documents/>. Upon request, the city will provide appropriate auxiliary aids or services for those individuals who have hearing, sight, or speech impairments.

Copies of Petaluma's Citizen Participation Plan, the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan, and the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) are currently available only in English. Residents needing those (or any other) materials in other languages are encouraged to contact the City of Petaluma Community Development Department staff at:

11 English Street
Petaluma, CA 94952
707-778-4563
housing@cityofpetaluma.org

Every effort will be made to fill those requests.

The City will provide technical assistance, particularly to any persons or groups representing persons with very low and low income. Such assistance shall be used to develop funding proposals for assistance with the CDBG program. Assistance will include at least one annual applicant workshop where City staff will provide information and assistance on funding applications. Additional technical assistance will be available by individual appointments with the City staff. Technical assistance might include the following:

- Assisting with forms/applications

- Explaining the process for submitting proposals
- Explaining federal and local requirements
- Providing comments and advice on the telephone or in meetings
- Reviewing and commenting on draft proposals

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Citizen Participation Plan

The Citizen Participation Plan is designed to facilitate and encourage residents to participate in the Consolidated Plan process. In particular, the Citizen Participation Plan seeks to encourage the involvement of low- and moderate-income persons.

The City will use the following process to adopt and make any subsequent changes to its Citizen Participation Plan.

- The City will place public notice in the *Argus Courier* newspaper, and on the City's website
- To engage harder-to-reach populations, additional outreach might include targeted events in underserved neighborhoods and utilizing social media platforms for broader reach.
- Residents will be provided 30 days to review the Citizen Participation Plan from the date of the notice.
- During the 30-day public review and comment period, the document will be available for review at the City Hall, 11 English Street. Copies of the document will be available to the public upon request.
- Residents may submit written public comment by emailing comments to cityclerk@cityofpetaluma.org or through the agenda portal on the City of Petaluma webpage <https://cityofpetaluma.org/meetings/> select the date of meeting and the scroll to the options column on the right and click the icon 
- Residents may file comments in writing at City Hall, 11 English Street, Petaluma during the 30-day period from the date of the notice
- The City Council will adopt the Citizen Participation Plan and any substantial amendments of the Plan.

Below are some of the ways we strive for inclusivity in our communications:

ADA Compliance

From our website to our public meetings to our social media channels, we strive to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design. These standards require organizations to offer and maintain websites that people with disabilities can use and access. We welcome your feedback on how we can continue to improve: econdev@cityofpetaluma.org.

Spanish Translations

Petaluma is proud to be home to a large Spanish-speaking population. It is our pleasure to make much of our city communications (like emails, website content, social media posts, and flyers) available in both Spanish and English so each of our community members has access to important information. Key public meetings are also broadcast in both Spanish and English. Additionally, we have equipped our website with a translate button to easily turn English to Spanish.

Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan

To identify the needs of low- and moderate-income persons of the City, priorities will be established based on housing and community development needs. To solicit community input, the following will occur:

- City staff will encourage the participation of residents of assisted housing development in developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan and the Action Plan.
- City staff will consult with private agencies, including nonprofit service providers and advocates such as homeless service providers, nonprofit housing developers and social service agencies.
- The City will place public notices, in English and Spanish, in the *Argus Courier* newspaper and on the City's Website (<https://cityofpetaluma.org>).
- A public meeting will be held before the City Council meeting to solicit input on needs and priorities for the Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan. An estimate of funding will to be used for activities that benefit low- and moderate-income persons will be provided at this public meeting. The meeting will be held in a location accessible to all interested persons.
- Residents have 30 days to review the draft Consolidated Plan and/or draft Annual Action Plan from the date of the notice.
- Residents may file comments at City Hall, 11 English Street, Petaluma during a 30-day period from the date of the notice.

- A public hearing will be held before the City Council to receive comments and approve and Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan.
- The City Council will adopt the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan.
- In preparing the final Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan, careful consideration will be given to all comments and views expressed by the public, whether given as verbal testimony at the public hearing or submitted in writing during the review and comment period. The final documents will have a section that includes all comments, plus explanations as to why any comments were not accepted.

The Role of Low-Moderate Income Programs and Services

The law requires that the primary purpose of the programs covered by this Citizen Participation Plan is to improve communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and growing economic opportunities – all focused on providing services for low- and moderate-income people.

To ensure programs are meeting the needs of the low and moderate income households in the community, it is necessary that the city’s public participation plan include all members of the community but specifically to ensure that low to moderate income households are encouraged to participate and are involved at all stages of the process:

- Identifying needs
- Setting priorities among those needs
- Monitoring program implementation

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging in Action

The City of Petaluma prioritizes fostering a prosperous, healthy, and equitable community. Embracing diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) in all policies, programs, and services is essential to our success. City employees representing most city departments are participating in internal DEIB training. We actively listen, take action, and remain committed to advancing inclusivity, ensuring a safe environment for all Petaluma residents.

To review the ways we support inclusivity in communications please see the section Public Participation found on pages 3 and 4 of this document or visit the city DEIB webpage at:

<https://cityofpetaluma.org/departments/diversity-equity-inclusion-and-belonging/>

The Stages of the Consolidation Plan Process

The policies and procedures in this Citizen Participation Plan relate to several stages of action mentioned in law or regulation:

1. Identification of housing and community development needs
2. Preparation of a draft use of funds for the upcoming year (the Annual Action Plan) and the Consolidated Plan every five years
3. Formal approval of the Annual Action Plan by the Petaluma City Council
4. On occasion during the Plan year, it may prove necessary to redirect funds already approved in the Action Plan. In that event, an amendment will be proposed, considered, and acted upon by the Authorizing Official (the City Manager) or the City Council.
5. After a program year is complete, the CAPER is drafted for public review, City Council review, and submittal to HUD.

The Program Year

The “Program Year” for the City of Petaluma coincides with our fiscal year, July 1 through June 30.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Items Covered by the Public Notice Requirement

There shall be advanced public notice once a federally required document is available, such as the Annual Action Plan, 5-year Consolidated Plan, proposed “substantial” amendment (i.e., any funding change amounting to more than 10% of the annual grant), and the CAPER.

In addition, there shall be advanced public notice of all public hearings relating to funding or the planning process covered by the Citizen Participation Plan.

“Adequate” Public Notice

Adequate advance notice is “timely;” and it is given with enough lead time for the public to take informed action. The amount of lead time for the notice will be at least 30 days and the content of the notice will give the residents a clear understanding of the event and the issues being noticed.

Forms of Public Notice

1. Public notice will be published in the Argus-Courier in English and Spanish, and posted to the city housing webpage at:
<https://cityofpetaluma.org/departments/housing/>

2. Notices will also be provided to the owner-operators of the City's low-mod income housing communities and nonprofit agencies providing service to lower income residents.
3. Notice will be sent to any person or organization requesting to be included in a mailing list.

Public Access to Information

As required by law, CDBG staff will provide the public with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the data or content of the Consolidated Plan, as well as the proposed, actual, and/or past use of funds covered by this Citizen Participation Plan. Regarding the past use of funds, the law requires reasonable public access to records about any use of these funds during the past five years.

Standard Documents

Standard documents include:

- The proposed and Approved Annual Action Plan
- The proposed and Approved Consolidated Plan
- Any proposed and Approved "substantial" amendments to either the Action plan or the Consolidated Plan
- The CAPER
- The Analysis of Impediments / Assessment of Fair Housing (AI/AFH)
- The Citizen Participation Plan

Availability of Standard Documents

In the spirit of encouraging public participation, copies of standard documents will be provided (either pro bono or on a loaner basis) within two working days of a request. The materials will be available in a form accessible to persons with a disability, to the greatest extent possible.

The standard documents will be available at the Petaluma Public Library during public notice periods and, at all times, on-line and at Petaluma City Hall at 11 English Street in Petaluma.

Access to Public Hearings

Public hearings will be held only after there has been adequate notice (as described earlier in this Plan). Hearings will be held at the regularly scheduled evening City Council meeting (6:30 start time). The meetings will be held in the City Council Chambers in City Hall (11 English Street), which is wheelchair accessible, accessible by bus, and is not an intimidating building to those who might benefit from the use of the funds or might have comments to make regarding the use of the funds or other program input.

When non-English speaking residents are expected to attend a public hearing, upon request, the City will supply interpreter services from appropriate service organization assisting such persons.

Upon Request, the City will provide sign language interpreters, materials in accessible formats for the visually impaired, or ensuring virtual participation options for those unable to attend in person.

Beginning March 1, 2023, all committee and commission meetings will be held in-person in the same manner they were prior to when the COVID-19 emergency protections went into effect. City Council meetings are currently being held in a pilot hybrid format. At this time, the City is temporarily suspending virtual participation (comments) by Zoom at City Council meetings and will re-evaluate it at a future date. Members of the public attending through Zoom will be able to observe the meeting only and will not be able to provide comments through Zoom. Members of the public who are unable to attend in-person, but who still wish to comment on items may submit their comments to the City Clerk at cityclerk@cityofpetaluma.org.

Information on how to join a City Council meeting via Zoom is published at the top of the agenda for each meeting. Public meetings may also be viewed on the Public Access channel. Petaluma Community Access broadcasts on Comcast and Petaluma's local channels 26, 27, and 28. With AT&T U-Verse, PCA's channels are accessible through channel 099. Local channels are not currently available on Satellite/DISH Networks. We will be recording each meeting and the recording is available to the public on the city webpage at <https://cityofpetaluma.org/meetings/>.

Allowance of Virtual Meetings During a Public Emergency

In case of an unexpected and uncontrollable circumstance that makes holding in-person public gatherings unfeasible or ill-advised, like during a natural disaster or a pandemic, the City of Petaluma encourages the public to view City Council and commission meetings online instead of attending in person. Members of the Public who wish to comment on matters before the Council, in lieu of attending in person, may submit comments.

Virtual hearings will provide reasonable notification and access for citizens, timely responses from local officials to all citizen questions and issues, and public access to all questions and responses. In addition, accommodations for people with disabilities and people with limited English proficiency will be made available to the greatest extent possible. Beginning March 1, 2023, all committee and commission meetings will be held in-person in the same manner they were prior to when the COVID-19 emergency protections went into effect. City Council meetings are currently being held in a pilot hybrid format, allowing live public participation via Zoom as well as in-person in the Council Chamber. The hybrid format is a pilot project and not yet available for committee or commission meetings. The public may watch the live stream video of committee and commission meetings from the City website but will need to submit public comments in writing prior to the meeting or attend in-person to provide oral comments.

City Council meetings are currently being held in a pilot hybrid format, allowing both in-person participation and virtual observation. At this time, the City is temporarily suspending virtual participation (comments) by Zoom at City Council meetings and will re-evaluate at a future date. Members of the public attending through Zoom will be able to observe the meeting only and will not be able to provide comments through Zoom. Members of the public who are unable to attend in-person, but who still wish to comment on items may submit their comments to the City Clerk at cityclerk@cityofpetaluma.org.

Information on how to join a City Council meeting via Zoom is published at the top of the agenda for each meeting. It is a good idea to set yourself up to attend the meeting in advance.

If you are having trouble streaming a live meeting, try tuning into our local Public Access channel. Petaluma Community Access broadcasts on Comcast and Petaluma's local channels 26, 27, and 28. With AT&T U-Verse, PCA's channels are accessible through channel 099. Local channels are not currently available on Satellite/DISH Networks. We will be recording each meeting and making that recording available to the public even if it is not available for live streaming.

The Conduct of Public Hearings

To ensure that public hearings are meaningful to the residents, each public hearing will be conducted in the presence of the Mayor and City Council. After completing and submitting a brief speaker's card, each resident wishing to speak will be given 3 minutes to do so.

Public Comment for items not on the agenda takes place at the beginning of the Council meeting. Public Comment on agenda items takes place before each item on the agenda. If you wish to speak, you must fill out a Speaker Card (available at the rear of the Council Chambers) and give it to the City Clerk before the Public Comment period starts. Each speaker

has three minutes (per Public Comment period)) to express his/her views. If you wish to make an audio/video presentation during Public Comment, please contact the City Clerk's office.

In Writing: Letters to City Council can be mailed to or dropped off at the City Clerk's office, 11 English Street, Petaluma, CA, 94952. You can send email to Council Members individually, as a Council, or in care of the City Clerk.

Complaint Procedures

Written complaints from the public will receive a meaningful written or verbal response immediately.

Persons wishing to object to HUD approval of an application shall submit such objections to the HUD regional Office within thirty (30) days of the publication of the notice that the application has been submitted to HUD. Complaints should be addressed to:

ATTN: Mr. Jason Pu / David Passey

San Francisco Regional HUD Office

One Sansome St, Suite 1200

San Francisco, CA 94124-6572

415-489-6400