CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program
HOME Investment Partnership Act (HOME) Program
Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) Program
Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program
Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)

Citizen Participation Plan

Consistent with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Consolidated Plan, Contra Costa County has revised its Citizen Participation Plan. Implementation of the Plan will enable the community to discuss housing and community development needs, and the proposed allocation of funds available to address those needs.

Through the Citizen Participation Plan, the County hopes to obtain a broad perspective of housing and community development needs from citizens and organizations involved in affordable housing development and community development activities. It is the intent to provide for and encourage citizen participation with particular emphasis on participation by persons of very low- and low-income who are residents of the Urban County[1]. The County will consult with other public and private agencies that provide emergency housing for homeless, assisted housing for other special needs populations, transitional housing, health services, social services, and infrastructure needs. The County will also consult with participating Urban County and Consortium[2] cities, particularly concerning problems and solutions that go beyond a single jurisdiction.

Goals

The five major goals of the Contra Costa County citizen participation process are as follows:

[1]The Urban County consists of all of Contra Costa with the exception of the cities of Antioch, Concord, Pittsburg, Richmond and Walnut Creek. These cities are separate entitlement jurisdictions under the CDBG program.

[2] For the purposes of the HOME program, the Consortium includes the Urban County and the cities of Antioch, Concord, Pittsburg, and Walnut Creek. The City of Richmond operates its own HOME program.

1. To provide citizens with adequate and timely information about the range of activities that may be undertaken through its CDBG, HOME, ESG , HOPWA and NSP programs ("programs"), the kinds of activities previously funded in the County, the level of funding available to carry out these activities, and the estimated amount of funds that will benefit very low- and low-income persons;

2. To provide an appropriate means to ensure the involvement of very low and low-income residents most likely to be affected by the programs and to provide reasonable efforts to ensure continuity of involvement of citizens or citizen organizations throughout all stages of the programs.

3. To provide citizens with an adequate opportunity to articulate needs, express preferences about proposed activities, assist in the selection of priorities, and the development of the programs;

4. To provide citizens with the opportunity to assess and submit comments on all aspects of program performance; and

5. To conduct meetings and respond to information requests in a manner consistent with the County's Better Government Ordinance (95-6 attached).

The Citizen Participation Process

Contra Costa County, in its citizen participation process, has instituted a variety of activities to accomplish the above-stated goals:

1. The program year begins with an annual public meeting. This meeting is designed to encourage very low- and low-income persons, members of minority groups, members of non-English speaking groups, and other residents to express their views and ideas of what they perceive as community development and housing needs in Contra Costa County. The widely-publicized public meeting is held to advise residents and nonprofit organizations of program requirements and processes to be followed in developing and approving applications. Information about the amount of program funds to be available for housing and community development activities and for planning and administrative activities is provided. In addition, the range of activities that may be undertaken with these funds and the kinds of projects previously funded are explained. Participants are invited to discuss community needs in the areas of affordable housing, economic development, infrastructure/public facilities, and public

services. The discussion is structured to identify unmet needs of very low- and low-income households that can be addressed through the programs, and to identify appropriate projects and programs to meet those needs. The application, evaluation and approval process are also explained as well as the process timeline to facilitate citizen participation.

2. Citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties have information available to them that includes the specific amount of assistance the jurisdiction expects to receive and the range of eligible activities that may be undertaken. This information is published in the non-legal section of one or more newspapers of general circulation at least thirty (30) days prior to the date applications for funding are due.

3. To facilitate the involvement of low- and moderate-income persons, non-English speaking persons, and residents in areas most likely to be affected by the programs, staff provides technical assistance in developing project proposals. Information and technical assistance is also provided to community organizations so they may adequately develop project proposals and participate in planning and assessing the programs.

4. Additional public meetings may be held at various stages of the funding process. Meetings are scheduled at times and locations that permit broad participation by very low and low-income persons. When needed or upon request, translators are made available for non-English speaking attendees and the hearing-impaired.

   The public is notified of each public meeting at least fourteen (14) days in advance through posting at 651 Pine Street in Martinez, CA and/or a published notice in the non-legal section of the local newspapers. The notice will indicate the date, time, place, and topics to be considered at the meeting.

5. The County has a formal proposal and evaluation process to guide the evaluation, prioritization, and selection of project proposals for funding. This process is used by staff to evaluate each proposal according to the following criteria: (1) eligibility, (2) ability to meet one of the national objectives, (3) target population and demonstrated need, (4) financial analysis, (5) experience and capacity, (6) project readiness and timeliness, (7) past performance, and (8) environmental, historical preservation, relocation, and prevailing wage issues. Staff reports are made available to all applicants prior to funding

recommendations by the responsible oversight committee of the Board of Supervisors.

6. Citizens are provided a thirty (30) day review period prior to the submission of the Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, or Substantial Amendment to HUD. Notice of the availability of the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan is published in the non-legal section of one or more local newspapers. All verbal or written comments are included with the final Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, or Substantial Amendment submission to HUD.

7. Citizens can register comments or complaints by letter, facsimile, telephone, email, or in person regarding any aspect of the operation of the programs at the following address: Contra Costa County Department of Conservation & Development – Economic and Redevelopment Division 2530 Arnold Drive, Suite 190, Martinez, California, 94553, by calling (925) 335-7200, or by faxing (925) 335-7201. All written complaints will be answered in writing within 15 working days.

8. The following information will be available to the public at the Department of Conservation & Development – Economic and Redevelopment Division during normal working hours:

    a. All mailing and promotional materials.
    b. Records of public meetings.
    c. All key documents, including applications, letters of approval, performance reports, and any other reports required by HUD.
    d. Copies of the regulations and issuances governing the programs.
    e. Explanation of important program requirements, such as contracting and operations procedures, environmental policies, fair housing, and other equal opportunity requirements, and relocation provisions.
    f. A copy of the Citizen Participation Plan.
    g. Copies of each written comment or complaint about the programs' performance, and a description of any actions taken and/or written response.
    h. Copies of the Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, and any Substantial Amendments. Copies shall also be made available at the Pleasant Hill (Main), Antioch, and Pinole Libraries.

Substantial Amendments to the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan

If after the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan has been submitted to HUD, changes are proposed in the use of program funds (provided the proposed change in funding is greater than $10,000 or 10 percent of a project's total allocation, whichever is greater) from one eligible activity to another, this shall constitute a Substantial Amendment. A change in project/program scope, location and/or beneficiaries will be considered a change in eligible activity. Citizens will be given reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on Substantial Amendments made to the Consolidated Plan or Action Plan.

There will be a public review period of thirty (30) days during which written or verbal comments on the Substantial Amendment may be made before the Board of Supervisors take action on the amendment. A public notice will be published in the non-legal section of at least one local newspaper, and posted at 651 Pine Street in Martinez, CA thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. The notice shall describe the proposed amendment and provide the date for Board of Supervisors action on the amendment. The notice will be made available in formats accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request. Any comments received will be presented to the Board of Supervisors prior to their taking action. A summary of the comments will be attached to the Substantial Amendment upon submission to HUD.

Eligible Activities

Non-housing Community Development – The Board of Supervisors adopted the following goals for programs/projects funded with CDBG and ESG funds:

(a) CD-1: General Public Services: Ensure that opportunities and services are provided to improve the quality of life and independence for lower-income persons, and ensure access to programs that promote prevention and early intervention related to a variety of social concerns such as substance abuse, hunger and other issues.

(b) CD-2: Seniors: Enhance the quality of life of senior citizens and frail elderly, and enable them to maintain independence.

(c) CD-3: Youth: Increase opportunities for children/youth to be healthy, succeed in school, and prepare for productive adulthood.

(d) CD-4: Non-Homeless Special Needs: Ensure that opportunities and services are provided to improve the quality of life and independence for persons with special needs, such as disabled persons, battered spouses, abused children, persons with HIV/AIDS, illiterate adults and migrant farmworkers.

(e) CD-5: Fair Housing: Continue to promote fair housing activities and affirmatively further fair housing.

(f) CD-6: Economic Development: Reduce the number of persons with incomes below the poverty level, expand economic opportunities for very low- and low- income residents, and increase the viability of neighborhood commercial areas.

(g) CD-7: Infrastructure and Accessibility: Maintain quality public facilities and adequate infrastructure, and ensure access for the mobility-impaired by addressing physical access barriers to public facilities.

(h) CD-8: Administration/Planning: Support development of viable urban communities through extending and strengthening partnership among all levels of government and the private sector, and administer federal grant programs in a fiscally prudent manner.

Housing –The Consolidated Plan establishes the following priorities for affordable housing programs and projects funded with CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA funds:

Affordable Housing

(a) AH-1: Expand housing opportunities for extremely low-income and moderate-income households through an increase in the supply of decent, safe and affordable rental housing and rental assistance.

(b) AH-2: Increase homeownership opportunities.

(c) AH-3: Maintain and preserve the existing affordable housing stock.

(d) AH-4: Reduce the number and impact of home foreclosures.

Special Needs Housing

(e) AH-5: Increase the supply of appropriate and supportive housing for special needs populations

(f) AH-6: Preserve existing special needs housing.

(g) AH-7: Adapt or modify existing housing to meet the needs of special needs populations.

(h) AH-8: Improve access to services for those in special needs housing.

Homeless

(a) H-1: Assist the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless by providing emergency, transitional, and permanent affordable housing with appropriate supportive services.

(b) H-2: Reduce the incidence of homelessness and assist in alleviating the needs of the homeless.

Residential Antidisplacement and Relocation Assistance Plan

The Department of Conservation and Development (DCD) has established a plan to minimize displacement of persons or businesses as a result of projects funded with CDBG, HOME, ESG, or HOPWA funds. See Appendix D.

Complaint Process

Citizens have an opportunity to register complaints by letter, telephone, email, or in person directly to DCD. Citizens are encouraged to initially register complaints by telephone, directly to the program staff involved in the relevant program, since oftentimes complaints can be resolved satisfactorily at this level. Staff will investigate complaints and respond as quickly as possible. Staff will respond in writing to all written citizen complaints within fifteen (15) working days of their receipt, where practicable.

Any citizen not satisfied by the response of program staff, may request further review of their complaint by the Deputy Director – Redevelopment of DCD. The Deputy Director will respond in writing to all written complaints within thirty (30) working days of their receipt,

where practicable. If not satisfied at this level, citizens may request further review by the Contra Costa County Director of Conservation & Development

Citizens may also file complaints directly to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Per HUD procedures, HUD will forward the complaint to the County Administrator's Office of Contra Costa County. A copy of the letter accompanying the complaint will be sent to complainant. The County Administrator's Office has fifteen (15) working days from the date of the HUD letter to respond directly to the complainant and must forward a copy of the response to HUD for their review.

All documentation including final disposition of the complaint will be retained by DCD for a period of no less than three years from the date of disposition.

APPENDIX A

Refer to County Ordinance #95-6, Better Government Ordinance, and subsequent County Counsel memos regarding the Ordinance.

APPENDIX B

Summary of Public Meetings, Noticing, and Publishing

1. 5-Year Consolidated Plan
   (a) At least one focus group meeting
   Noticing: By invitation

   (b) At least two public meetings
   i. During development
   Noticing: Letters (regular U.S. mail and/or email) to interested party mailing list and published in non-legal section of at least one local newspaper at least fourteen (14) days prior to the date of the meeting.

   ii. Board of Supervisors Meeting to approve Consolidated Plan
   Noticing: Letters (regular U.S mail and/or email) to interested party mailing list and published in non-legal section of at least one local newspaper at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the meeting. Posting at 651 Pine Street, Martinez, CA. Notice must include a summary of the proposed plan.

   (c) Publishing: A copy of the Consolidated Plan will be made available at one library in each of the three regional areas of the County, as well as the Department of Conservation and Development office.

2. Annual Action Plan – 1st Year of Two-Year Funding Cycle ("Non-housing" and "Housing" Community Development priorities)
   (a) Notice of funding availability (NOFA)
   Noticing: Letters (regular U.S mail and/or email) to interested party mailing list and published in non-legal section of at least one local newspaper at least thirty (30) days prior to application due date.

   (b) At least two public meetings
   i. During development
   Noticing: Letters (regular U.S mail and/or email) to interested party mailing list and published in non-legal section of at least one local newspaper at least fourteen (14) days prior to the date of the meeting.

ii. Board of Supervisors Meeting to approve Action Plan
Noticing: Published in non-legal section of at least one local newspaper at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the meeting. Posting at 651 Pine Street, Martinez, CA.

(c) Publishing: A copy of the Action Plan will be made available at one library in each of the three regional areas of the County, as well as the Community Development Department office.

3. Annual Action Plan – 2nd Year of Two-Year Funding Cycle ("Housing" Community Development priorities only)
   (a) Notice of funding availability (NOFA)
   Noticing: Letters (regular U.S mail and/or email) to interested party mailing list (housing related categories) and published in non-legal section of at least one local newspaper at least thirty (30) days prior to application due date.

   (b) At least two public meetings
   i. During development
   Noticing: Letters (regular U.S mail and/or email) to interested party mailing list (housing related categories) and published in non-legal section of at least one local newspaper at least fourteen (14) days prior to the date of the meeting.

   ii. Board of Supervisors Meeting to approve Action Plan
   Noticing: Published in non-legal section of at least one local newspaper at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the meeting. Posting at 651 Pine Street, Martinez, CA.

4. Substantial Amendment
   (a) At least one public meeting
   i. Board of Supervisors Meeting to approve Amendment
   Noticing: Published in non-legal section of at least one local newspaper and posting at 651 Pine Street, Martinez, CA at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the meeting.

(b) Publishing: A copy of the Action Plan will be made available at one library in each of the three regional areas of the County, as well as the Community Development Department office.

5. Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)

(a) Board of Supervisors Meeting to approve CAPER
Noticing: Published in non-legal section of at least one local newspaper at least fifteen (15) days prior to the date of the meeting.

(b) Publishing: A copy of the CAPER will be made available at one library in each of the three regional areas of the County, as well as the Community Development Department offices.

APPENDIX C

<u>Sample Calendar</u>

September	Issue Request for Proposals (Funding Availability)
October	Conduct Funding Kickoff Meeting
December	Applications due
January/February	Applicant Interviews
March/April	Applications / Staff Recommendations considered by Committees
May	Board of Supervisor's review and approval of Action Plan Submit Action Plan to HUD
June	Subrecipient Meeting, and Contract Negotiations
July	Start of new Fiscal Year
August	Program monitoring (ongoing through May) Public Notice of CAPER
September	CAPER submitted to HUD
October	Semi-annual labor standards report MBE/WBE Report

APPENDIX D

Refer to Residential Antidisplacement and Relocation Assistance Plan (RARAP).