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The Chain of Lakes City

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

JUNE 2011

City of Winter Haven
Citizen Participation Plan Amended June 2011

Introduction

The City of Winter Haven Community and Economic Development Department

The Community and Economic Development Department provides long-range strategies for the City's growth management and revitalization, and the preservation of its character, neighborhoods, and natural environment. Through a team effort, the Department ensures the completion of projects that promote and stimulate quality development that invigorates the City economically, aesthetically and socially; with the objective of forming partnerships and improving communication with residents, businesses and organizations.

Since 2004, The City of Winter has an agreement with Polk County for CDBG program oversight and technical assistance.

Mission of the Polk County Housing and Neighborhood Development

The mission of Polk County Housing and Neighborhood Development (HND) is to improve the quality of life for the very low, low and moderate income citizens of Polk County, while renewing community pride through economic and political empowerment and development of lasting partnerships between government and the community.

Housing & Neighborhood Development administers federal and state grant programs. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) programs serve low-income families in unincorporated Polk County, as well as, in other cities and towns throughout the county. The division's primary objective is assisting in the development of sustainable communities by implementing neighborhood revitalization strategies, economic development initiatives, and providing improved community facilities and services.

The Housing & Neighborhood Development Division also administers the affordable housing and the homeowner rehabilitation programs funded by the HOME Investment Partnership Program and the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program. These programs aim to increase the availability of affordable housing for very low, low and moderate income households and to rehabilitate substandard structures. In addition, Polk Housing & Neighborhood Development administers two rental assistance programs; The Housing Choice Voucher Program (Formerly Section 8) and the HOME funded Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program (TBRA).

Overview of City Funding Sources

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The Community Development Block Grant program provides annual grants on a formula basis to entitled cities and counties to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons. The program is authorized the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

The US Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development (HUD) awards grants to entitlement community grantees to carry out a wide range of community development activities directed toward revitalizing neighborhoods and providing improved community facilities and services. The City of Winter Haven is an entitlement community and receives direct allocations of CDBG funds from HUD. The City of Winter Haven's estimated allocation of CDBG funds is approximately \$249,041.00 annually. The vast majority of CDBG funds are used primarily for low and moderate income persons and households, in accordance with CDBG regulatory requirements.

The City of Winter Haven City Commission has ultimately has responsibility for the CDBG program and has designated the City Community and Economic Development Department as the lead agency to handle the operations of the CDBG program. Since 2004, the City of Winter Haven has a Cooperative Agreement with Polk County BoCC for CDBG program oversight. Polk County Housing and Neighborhood Development provide program administration and technical assistance to the City of Winter Haven.

The City of Winter Haven CDBG funds have primarily been used for large scale public improvement / infrastructure projects such streetscape improvements, drainage improvements, improvements, construction of community facilities, recreational facilities in eligible areas.

Because the need for infrastructure improvements and public facilities are so great in the low and moderate income portions of the city, the Winter Haven CDBG program remains committed to providing funding for necessary infrastructure improvement projects. In addition to infrastructure improvements, CDBG funds are also used to provide public services to eligible agencies that provide services for the of following populations, seniors, persons with disabilities, homeless populations, victims of domestic violence, youth services .

State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program

The State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP) provides funds to local governments as an incentive to create partnerships that produce and preserve affordable homeownership and multifamily housing. The program was designed to provide very low, low and moderate income families with assistance to purchase a home, money to repair or replace a home, and many other types of housing assistance. The SHIP program was created by the William Sadowski Act in 1992.

The City of Winter Haven uses SHIP funds to provide down payment / closing cost assistance, homebuyer education, rehabilitate owner-occupied housing and construct affordable housing units.

In previous years, Winter Haven received approximately \$275,000 annually in SHIP funds. The SHIP trust fund has been reduced in response to the State of Florida efforts to balance the state budget. The Florida Housing Finance Corporation manages the SHIP program at the state level and keeps cities and county's informed of any proposed changes to the SHIP Program. In accordance with SHIP Program guidelines SHIP funds are used primarily for construction activities and homeownership focused projects. Winter Haven SHIP funds may be used to assist households with incomes less than 120% of the area median income for the Lakeland-Winter Haven MSA.

In accordance with Florida Statutes and the Florida Administrative Code, The City has an Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) that represent 9 specific areas of expertise with regard to planning and affordable housing. The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) purpose and responsibilities are listed below:

The purpose of the AHAC is to recommend specific initiatives and incentives to encourage or facilitate affordable housing as provided in Florida Statute §420.9076.

Triennially, the advisory committee shall review the established policies and procedures, ordinances, land development regulations, and adopted local government comprehensive plan of the appointing local government and shall recommend specific actions or initiatives to encourage or facilitate affordable housing while protecting the ability of the property to appreciate in value. The recommendations may include the modification or repeal of existing policies, procedures, ordinances, regulations, or plan provisions; the creation of exceptions applicable to affordable housing; or the adoption of new policies, procedures, regulations, ordinances, or plan provisions, including recommendations to amend the local government comprehensive plan and corresponding regulations, ordinances, and other policies. At a minimum, each advisory committee shall submit a report to the local governing body that includes recommendations on, and triennially thereafter evaluates the implementation of, affordable housing incentives.

The Polk County Affordable Housing Committee meets at least once quarterly additional meetings re called if necessary. The AHAC usually meets on _____ of the month at the John Fuller Auditorium, Winter Haven City Hall, located at 451 Third Street NW Winter Haven, Florida 33881 The AHAC meetings are public. Meeting notices are

posted in the Winter Haven City Hall , and are also announced on the City of Winter Haven website: www.mywinterhaven.com The City Community Planning and Economic Development Department provides staff support to the AHAC.

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Purpose of Citizen Participation Plan

The City of Winter Haven Citizen Participation Plan outlines the various opportunities and means in which interested Citizens may participate in the Strategic and Annual Planning and Performance evaluation phases of the Community Development Block Grant, (CDBG) program associated with the Consolidated Plan. The City of Winter Haven encourages residents to participate in an advisory role in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the Consolidated Plan and subsequent Annual Action Plans by providing comments on the initiatives and projects contain in each plan or evaluation report. The City recognizes that meaningful feedback from the community is an integral part of a successful community revitalization effort. Persons or groups involved with, affected by or implementing projects under the County's programs can provide meaningful assistance to City staff that is responsible for the overall implementation and evaluation of the program. It is important to remind the community that while citizen participation is an essential part of the strategic planning and evaluation process, their input is advisory. The final authority for decision making rests with the Winter Haven City Commission. The City Commission is ultimately responsible to the Federal Government and the citizens of Winter Haven and must balance the interests of each.

The Winter Haven Citizen Participation Plan seeks to accomplish the following:

1. Encourage and provide opportunities for meaningful citizen participation with representation of low and moderate income persons as defined by HUD who are in areas where Polk County Federal CDBG funds are proposed to be used.
2. Provide citizens with access to local meetings and information regarding Winter Haven's proposed and actual use of program funds.
3. Provide opportunities for citizens to participate in public hearings to obtain feedback throughout the strategic and action planning process including establishing program needs and priorities and review of proposed activities. Hearings will be held after providing notice at the Winter Haven City Hall or other locations as needed. Accommodations will be made by request for handicapped persons.
4. Provide citizens with opportunities to submit written comments on the Strategic Plan, Annual Action Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance Report or proposed project contained in these documents.
5. Provide technical assistance to groups representing persons of low and moderate income that request such assistance in developing proposals for funding assistance under any of the CDBG program.

Definitions

Consolidated Plan – serves as the plan in which City of Winter Haven must submit to HUD in order to apply for funding under the CDBG program. The Consolidated Plan establishes a vision for community development actions. Winter Haven describes its goals and plans for community development and housing programs for a 5 year period. The US Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development will evaluate the City's performance by reviewing the City's accomplishments.

Annual Action Plan- serves as the application for funding under the CDBG program. The Annual Action Plan includes the amount of assistance the City expects to receive (including grant funds and program income) from each of the federal programs and a description of the activities, including funding allocations that the City will undertake to address the needs and priorities established in the Consolidated Plan.

Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) - This report describes the accomplishments of each activity undertaken during the previous program year. The report will be prepared on a yearly basis and will outline the accomplishments made and the persons assisted in the CDBG program.

Substantial Amendment - Federal Regulations (24 CFR 91.505) require The City of Winter Haven to establish criteria which defined actions or events that constitute a substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan, HUD requires a substantial amendment to make a change in allocation activities, to undertake and activity not described in the action plan, or to substantially change the purpose, scope, location, or beneficiaries of an activity.

Winter Haven defines substantial changes as follows:

- 1) A change in the basic activities as defined in 24 CFR 570.201 or
- 2) A change in funding of more than seventy-five percent (75%) or
- 3) A change from an area benefit activity to a limited clientele activity or vice versa;
or
- 4) A change in location from one service area to another

Very Low-Income Household: A household with a total annual gross income that does not exceed 50% of the annual median income adjusted for household size within the Lakeland-Winter Haven MSA.

Low/ Moderate- Income Household: (CDBG Program): A household with a total annual gross income that does not exceed 80% of the annual median income adjusted for household size within the Lakeland-Winter Haven MSA.

The following changes are **not** considered substantial amendments:

- Changes to the budget are less than seventy-five percent (75%) of the activity budget
- Consolidated Plan data updates such as census data, income limits, fair market rents, subsidy limits, and similar types of data does not constitute a substantial change.

Implementation of the Citizen Participation Plan

The City of Winter Haven encourages public participation throughout the strategic planning, annual action plan, and evaluation process. The following section outlines the different ways in which Winter Haven residents may participate.

Public Meetings and Public Hearings

The City of Winter Haven or designee holds at least two public meetings/hearings per year to obtain feedback on community development needs, the amount of assistance the County expects to receive and the range of activities that may be undertaken. Pre publication meetings can occur throughout the year. The City Neighborhood Services office coordinates frequent meetings with neighborhood organizations and groups. For the development of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, there will be at least one public hearing that will occur during the planning process, to obtain feedback on the draft plan. The Public Hearing will be held in the J. Fuller Auditorium which is located in Winter Haven City Hall, 451 Third St. NW Winter Haven, FL 33881 or other accessible public facility. Additional public meetings and/or hearings may be held if necessary to receive comments on proposed substantial amendments to previously approved projects or other citizen participation purposes. Summaries of Consolidated Plan Proposed activities and project budget will be advertised and made available for public comment. Notices for public hearings will be advertised in the Winter Haven News Chief, a newspaper of general circulation. The summaries and related documents will also be posted on the City of Winter Haven website and copies will be available at the City Planning and Economic Development Department for public inspection.

Community Need Assessment Survey

The public is encouraged to complete a community need assessment survey to help The City of Winter Haven determine how to best prioritize the needs of low and moderate income persons in the county. The survey also requests feedback with regard to fair housing choice. The surveys are distributed at community meetings, distributed to neighborhood associations, Housing Choice Voucher (formerly section 8) program participants and Public Housing residents. The surveys are also available on the city website for those who wish to submit their survey online. The survey results are combined with other public input and provide the basis for establishing the goals and objectives of the Consolidated Plan.

Written Comments/Complaints

All written comments received during the public meetings/ public hearings or by mail, email are considered and included in the Citizen Comment portions of the Consolidated Plan, Action Plan or CAPER. The public inspection and comment timeframes are as follows:

Consolidated Plan /Action Plan	30 days
Substantial Amendment	30 days
CAPER	15 days

Written comment or complaints may be sent to:

City of Winter Haven
Community and Economic Development Department
Attn: CDBG Program
PO Box 2277
Winter Haven, FL 33881

Staff makes every effort to respond to legitimate complaints in a timely manner and adhere to program regulations. If a complaint is not resolved with staff, the Neighborhood Services or Planning Manager will consider the complaint and provide a written response.

View of Public Documents

All information, records, documents related to the CDBG are maintained at Polk County Housing and Neighborhood Development, located at 1290 Golfview Avenue, Suite 167, Bartow, FL 33830. Materials are available for review between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm, except on County Holidays. Many of the plans and evaluation reports are also located on the City of Winter Haven Website www.mywinterhaven.com.

Additional Citizen Participation Information

Minimizing Displacement

In an effort to minimize displacement, The City of Winter Haven complies with the acquisition and relocation requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, as required under 49 CFR 24 and federal implementing regulations. The County also follows a residential anti-displacement and relocation assistance plan required under Section 1049d) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, and the relocation requirements of 49 CFR 24 governing optional relocation assistance under section 105(a) (11) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended.

List of Winter Haven Consolidated Plan/ Action Plan Tasks

1. Pre-publication announcement of funding advertised
2. Pre- publication public meeting/ public hearing notification and facilitation of meeting/ hearing
3. Data collection for consolidated Plan */ Action Plan
4. Community Needs surveys*
5. Public meetings/ Needs assessment surveys*
6. Public Services/Homeless Services Proposal Development
7. Preliminary budget / Project list development
8. Public inspection and comment period
9. Post publication public meeting/ public hearing notification and facilitation of meeting/ hearing
10. Final Budget/ Project List Development
11. Environmental Reviews and publication of Environmental advertisement
12. Consolidated Plan/ Action Plan approved by City Commission
13. Consolidated Plan Action Plan submitted to HUD
14. HUD review of Consolidated Plan*/ Action Plan
15. Request for release of funds

16. HUD release of funds

17. Implementation of projects

* Conducted every five years in conjunction with the Consolidated Plan

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Appendix

Sample Consolidated Plan Flyer

Community Needs Assessment Survey

Community Organization Letter

Public Notices

AHAC Committee Chart

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