CITY OF CLEARWATER

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

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Prepared by

City of Clearwater

Economic Development and Housing Department

Housing Division

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**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The City of Clearwater’s Citizen Participation Plan provides for a process that will promote public participation in the identification of local needs and priorities in regards to the City’s planned expenditures concerning the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME). Regulation 24 CFR Part 91.105 requires the City to develop a plan that encourages participation by very-low to moderate-income persons, especially those living in targeted slum and blighted areas.

The City of Clearwater encourages citizens to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan(s) that deal with the City’s Federal Housing and Community Development Grant funding. These activities include:

* The Citizen Participation Plan
* Identification of Needs and Priorities
* The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment PartnershipsProgram (HOME) Regulations and Requirements
* Program Amendments
* Program implementation
* Performance Assessment
* Consideration of Objections and Complaints

While Consolidated Plan legislation allows local governing bodies flexibility in meeting the requirements, it does mandate certain guidelines. These requirements are developing and publicizing a plan for citizen participation in the formulation of grant applications and program development.

The City of Clearwater encourages all citizens to participate in the development of local Housing and Community Development programs, with particular emphasis on participation by persons of very-low to moderate-income that are residents of areas targeted for funding. The City of Clearwater will provide citizens with access to local meetings, information, and records relating to proposed use of funds. The Housing Division will offer technical assistance to develop program proposals for groups representing persons of very-low to moderate-income upon request.

The City of Clearwater will hold public hearings to obtain citizen views and respond to citizen proposals and questions about proposed activities and program performance. The City will provide written answers, within 15 working days, to written complaints and grievances. The City will provide translation for non-English speaking residents at public hearings where many non-English speaking residents are expected to participate. The City encourages minorities and non-English speaking persons, and persons with mobility, visual or hearing impairments to participate in the process.

The City of Clearwater encourages participation of public and assisted housing residents in the preparation of the Consolidated Plan. The City also encourages very-low to moderate-income residents of targeted revitalization areas to participate in the process.

The City of Clearwater will provide information to the Clearwater Housing Authority about consolidated plan activities affecting their developments and surrounding communities.

**CONSULTATION**

Regulations in 24 CFR Part 91.100 establishes the minimum requirements the City will follow to consult with the public on the needs of the community that can be addressed with federal housing and community development funding. These regulations require the City to consult with the following entities when preparing the Consolidated Plan:

* Public and private agencies that provide assisted housing, health services, and social services (including those focusing on services to children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and their families, homeless persons) during preparation of the consolidated plan.

* Adjacent units of general local government, including local government agencies with metropolitan-wide planning responsibilities where they exist, particularly for problems and solutions that go beyond a single jurisdiction, to the extent practical.
* Local public housing agency participating in an approved Comprehensive Grant program concerning consideration of public housing needs and planned Comprehensive Grant program activities.

**PHILOSOPHY OF CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT**

Citizen participation is important in the development of the Consolidated Plan and/or Action Plan. The plan emphasizes the need for a broad range of citizen opinions in establishing goals, objectives, projects, and priorities in the use of CDBG and HOME funds or other funds the City of Clearwater receives and in the application, monitoring, and evaluation of funded programs. The philosophy that governs the planning process supports and encourages all sectors of the community to participate in the development of the City’s grant applications and in all phases of the City's federal and state programs, and to ensure that as many citizens as possible receive adequate information to form their recommendations.

The role of Housing Division staff is to make information available to educate citizens, solicit their opinions and to translate these opinions into specific recommendations within the program planning framework.

Citizens should see their recommendations as advisory, recognizing that the final authority for decision-making rests with the City Council.

**NEIGHBORHOOD** **AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD (NAHAB)**

The City Council created the NAHAB (Ordinance 8068-09) consisting of seven members; members are appointed by the City Council and are as follows:

1. One citizen who is a real estate professional in connection with affordable housing
2. One citizen who is an advocate for low-income persons in connection with affordable housing
3. One citizen who is in the banking or mortgage industry in connection with affordable housing
4. One citizen who is in the residential home building industry in connection with affordable housing
5. One citizen who is a not-for-profit provider of affordable housing
6. One citizen who resides within the city limits of the City of Clearwater
7. One citizen who represents employers within the city limits of the City of Clearwater

The NAHAB elects from its membership a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and such other officers as the Board finds necessary. Each officer of the Board shall serve a term of one year. The chairperson shall not serve consecutive terms as chairperson.

The City Manager designates a City employee to serve as staff liaison for the Board and assists the Board in the performance of its duties, including the appointment of a Recording Secretary to meet the administrative needs of the Board. Any request by the Board for information, reports, or other significant work efforts that will reasonably be expected to exceed eight hours of staff time shall require the advance approval of the City Council.

**Powers and Duties of the NAHAB**

The Board shall have the following powers and duties:

1. Review the programs of the City which are directed to improving the physical environment and lifestyle of very-low to moderate-income persons assisted by the various federal and state housing and community development programs the City receives, by:
2. Assessing neighborhood needs;
3. Formulating neighborhood goals and objectives;
4. Establishing priorities for projects within neighborhoods;
5. Monitoring programs; and
6. Evaluating programs.
7. The monitoring and evaluation of programs to include the following activities:
8. Attending and participating in public hearings regarding programs;
9. Reviewing condition data;
10. Reporting citizen reactions to projects and programs;
11. Reviewing reports regarding projects and program activities;
12. Reviewing goals and objectives and recommending priorities for the order in which activities are to be undertaken; and
13. Reviewing applications for the funding of selected programs.
14. Make recommendations to the City Manager and City Council regarding such programs.
15. Carry out the duties of an advisory committee when, and to the extent that an advisory committee may be required, for the various state and federal housing community development programs the City receives.

**CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROCESS**

The City of Clearwater encourages all citizens to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, Substantial Amendments to the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan and Annual Performance and Evaluation Report. The plan places particular emphasis on participation by very-low to moderate-income persons, particularly those living in slum and blighted areas and in areas where federal housing and community development funds are proposed to be used, and by residents of predominantly very-low to moderate-income neighborhoods. The City will take whatever actions are appropriate to encourage the participation by minorities and non-English speaking persons, as well as persons with disabilities. The City of Clearwater will provide translation for non-English speaking residents at public hearings where many non-English speaking residents are expected to participate.

The City will solicit citizen involvement at the community level through public meetings and hearings on community development matters.

1. All aspects of citizen participation shall be conducted openly with freedom of access to all meetings, information and public records by all interested persons.

2. The NAHAB and the Housing Division will solicit the involvement and opinions of very-low to moderate-income persons, members of minority groups, residents of targeted areas, the elderly, handicapped and other persons directly affected by, or interested in, community development programs.

3. Where applicable, the NAHAB will participate through all stages of the program, including development of the application, program implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

4. The NAHAB and the Housing Division will provide the citizens of the City of Clearwater with adequate and timely information, through press releases, advertisements, and neighborhood meetings to enable them to be involved in decisions at various stages of the program.

5. To ensure that opportunities are available to hearing impaired citizens to participate in the process, assisted living devices will be available.

1. To ensure that opportunities are available to non-English speaking people to participate in the process, the City will provide an English translator for public hearings where many non-English speaking residents are expected to participate.
2. The City will also take measures to encourage participation of residents of public and assisted housing developments and very-low to moderate- income residents of targeted revitalization areas.
3. The City will provide citizens with access to local meetings, information and records relating to its proposed use of funds. The Housing Division will offer technical assistance to non-profit service providers to develop program proposals for groups representing persons of very-low to moderate-income.
4. The City will hold public hearings to obtain citizen views and respond to citizen proposals and questions about proposed activities and program performance. The City will provide written answers, within 15 working days, to written complaints and grievances. The City encourages minorities, non-English speaking persons, and persons with mobility, visual or hearing impairments to participate in the process.

**SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION**

The NAHAB, as citizen representatives, shall participate through all stages of the program and, with the Housing Division, will be responsible for the development and inclusion of citizen comments.

The NAHAB is to comment on all plans and programs they feel necessary before they are submitted to the City Council for public hearings. These plans and programs may include:

1. Citizen Participation Plan

1. Consolidated Plan
2. Annual Action Plan(s)
3. Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP) - SHIP Program
4. Identifying community development and housing needs, and the setting of priorities
5. Subsequent amendments and other changes to the above
6. Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)

The NAHAB is to act as an advisory committee for any programs becoming operational under the Housing Division. With City Council approval, the Housing Division and/or their designees may directly assist in the operation of certain types of activities such as, but not limited to, other types of involvement that become feasible as tools to carry out the programs administered by the Housing Division.

The NAHAB is to be given regular progress reports concerning implementation of activities funded under the Housing Division and will solicit opinions from individuals and groups directly affected by ongoing activities about the effective performance of the implemented activities.

**SUBMISSION OF VIEWS AND PROPOSALS**

The Housing Division and the NAHAB encourage the submission of views and proposals regarding programs by citizens, particularly those very-low to moderate-income persons residing within targeted areas to include submissions:

1. Directly to the City during the planning period and before public hearings on the application.

2. Directly to the NAHAB during regularly scheduled meetings.

3. During neighborhood and other public meetings scheduled by the Housing Division and/or the NAHAB (before public hearings).

4. During formal public hearings, including City Council meetings.

The Housing Division shall respond to all proposals submitted directly to the department, and/or referred by the NAHAB, including written responses to written proposals stating the reasons for the actions taken by the City on the proposal.

**PROGRAM AMENDMENT CRITERIA**

For the purposes of this Plan a Substantial Amendment to the City’s Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan(s), and/or CAPER, shall be defined as and will be necessary when:

1. There is a reallocation/reprogramming of funds equaling more than 25% in the aggregate of the City’s overall combined Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) allocations previously described in the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan(s).
2. A decision is made to carry out an activity that does not follow one of the priority needs described in the Consolidated Plan.
3. The purpose, scope, location(s) or beneficiaries of an activity are substantially changed. An activity will be considered substantially changed when any of the following criteria applies:

A. The activity will no longer principally benefit the targeted population as identified in the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan(s).

B. The activity will no longer address the very-low to moderate-income needs identified in the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan(s) or the activity ceases to address the qualifying National Objectives as per 24 CFR Part 570.208.

C. The activity location changes so that the completed activity will principally serve beneficiaries other than those originally intended.

* + 1. The scope of the activity has increased to the point where its completion would result in the inability to carry out another approved activity, or would require reducing the scope of another activity to a point where it would not accomplish its intended purpose.

1. The City will adhere to all internal City policies in terms notifying and obtaining proper approvals on all Substantial Amendments.

Before doing Substantial Amendments to the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action

Plan(s), the City shall provide citizens with information concerning the proposed change(s), an opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments(s) and reasonable notice of such proposed changes. The City shall consider such comments and modify the proposed changes as appropriate. The City shall make available to the public, and to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a description of such changes as adopted. The City will provide a period, not less than 30 days, to receive comments on a Substantial Amendment before the amendment is implemented.

The City will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at public hearings, in preparing Substantial Amendments to the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan(s). A summary of these comments or views shall be attached to any Substantial Amendment of the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan(s).

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

The Housing Division shall provide technical assistance through staff or other resources. Such assistance shall be available regularly:

1. To the NAHAB for their participation in planning, implementation and evaluation;

2. To groups representing persons of very-low to moderate-income that request assistance developing proposals for funding under any of the programs covered by the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan(s); and

3. To assist citizens in carrying out Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan(s) activities.

**ADEQUATE INFORMATION**

The City, through the Housing Division, will provide full disclosure and public access to citizens, public agencies, and interested parties, of all program information. The information will include:

1. Expected funds to be available (including annual grants, program income and any unprogrammed funds);

2. Range of activities that may be undertaken with those funds;

3. Estimated funds proposed for activities that will benefit very-low to moderate-income persons;

4. Proposed activities likely to result in displacement and the City's plans for minimizing such displacement of persons because of its proposed activities; and

5. Types and levels of assistance the City will make available, or require others to make available, to persons displaced by funded activities, even if the City expects no such displacement to occur.

The City will publish a summary of the proposed funding and activities in the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan(s) in a local newspaper 30 days before a public hearing. The advertisement will identify the location by which interested parties can view the document or obtain a copy of the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan(s). The City will provide copies of the Consolidated Plan and/or Annual Action Plan(s), Substantial Amendments, and CAPER to the public, upon request.

**ACCESS TO RECORDS**

The City will provide citizens, public agencies, and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records about the City's Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan(s) and the City's use of funding under the programs covered by the Plans.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

The City will provide citizens with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the Citizen Participation Plan. The City will publish in the local newspaper a Notice of Public Hearing and a Notice of Availability of the proposed Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan(s). Copies of the proposed plan will be available in the City's Housing Division and the City Clerk’s Department.

The City will establish a 30-day comment period on the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan(s) to receive public comments. The City will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at the public hearings, in preparation of the final Consolidated Plan. A summary of these views and comments and a summary of any comments or views shall be attached to the final Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan(s).

**PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

The City will provide citizens with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on the annual Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report. The Citizen Participation Plan provides a period of not less than 15 days to receive comments on the annual Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report before its submission.

The City will consider any comments or views of citizens received in writing, or orally at public hearings, in preparing the performance report. A summary of these comments or views shall be attached to the final Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

The City will hold at least two public hearings on the Consolidated Plan and annual Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report and one public hearing on the Citizen Participation Plan and Annual Action Plan(s). Public hearings will address housing and community development needs, development of proposed activities, and the review of program performance. At least one hearing will be held before the proposed Consolidated Plan is published for comments. For the purposes of this Citizen Participation Plan, the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report, Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan(s), a meeting of the NAHAB shall be considered a Public Hearing.

The City will place an ad in the local newspaper 10 days before each public hearing to notify the citizens of each hearing, with sufficient information about the subject of the hearing to allow informed comments. The public hearings will be held at times and locations convenient to potential and actual beneficiaries and with accommodations for persons with disabilities.

**RESIDENTIAL ANTI-DISPLACEMENT** **AND RELOCATION ASSISTANCE**

According to section 104(d) of the Act, the City will adopt, make public, and certify that it is following a residential anti-displacement and relocation assistance plan providing one-for-one replacement units and relocation assistance.

Before the City enters a contract committing it to provide funds for any activity that will directly result in the demolition of low/moderate-income dwelling units or the conversion of very-low to moderate-income dwelling units to another use, the City will make public, and submit the following information in writing to the HUD Field Office for monitoring purposes:

A. A description of the proposed activity;

B. A location map that provides the location and number of dwelling units by size (number of bedrooms) that will be demolished or converted to a use other than for low/moderate-income dwelling units as a direct result of the activity;

C. An estimated time schedule for commencement and completion of the demolition or conversion and source of funding and a time schedule for the provision of replacement dwelling units; and

D. The basis for concluding that each replacement unit will remain a low/moderate-income dwelling unit consistent with HUD funding source.

**CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS AND GRIEVANCES**

Any objection or grievance initiated by a citizen and received in written form will be referred for administrative disposition to the Economic Development and Housing Director who shall reply directly to the citizen in written form within 15 days of receipt, and further indicate to the citizen, avenues of appeal available. If the citizen is not satisfied with the determination of the economic Development and Housing Director, he/she may appeal to the NAHAB presenting the complaint in written or oral form. The NAHAB may decide that staff has sufficiently addressed the problem and take no further action or it may request that staff respond in another manner.

**DOCUMENTS**

Documents used for the Housing Division administered federal and state programs are available upon request, during normal working hours. Copies of the following materials are available from the Housing Division and/or Official Records located at City Hall, 112 S. Osceola Avenue, Clearwater, FL 33756.

1. Mailings and promotional material;

2. Records of hearings;

3. Documents to include, prior applications, letters of approval, performance reports, evaluation reports, other reports required by HUD and the State of Florida, and the proposed and approved Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan(s), and Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report for the current year; and

4. Copies of regulations and issuances governing the program.

To give adequate notice of public hearing:

1. Prior to each public hearing, the City shall publish a notice in easily readable type, no smaller than seven-point, in the non-legal section of the local newspaper. The City may supplement this with advertisements in neighborhood newspapers or periodicals serving very-low to moderate-income neighborhoods. The City shall, if required and at the determination of the City Attorney, publish additional legal notices. Such notices shall include the dates, times, places and procedures of the hearing, the topics to be considered, basic information about the program, and the procedures and timing being followed in the development and approval of the application; and

2. The City may, as appropriate, use radio, television, newspapers, and other media to publicize public hearings.

**APPENDIX**

**CITY OF CLEARWATER**

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

**I. POINTS OF CONTACT FOR CONSOLIDATED PLAN ACTIVITIES**

As a guide for citizen interaction through the Consolidated Planning process, the following specific contacts are as follows:

**A. LOCAL GOVERNMENT:**

George N. Cretekos, Mayor-Councilmember

P. O. Box 4748

Clearwater, FL 33758

Phone: 727-562-4050

William B. Horne, II, City Manager

# P. O. Box 4748

# Clearwater, FL 33758

Phone: 727-562-4046

Charles H. Lane, Jr., Assistant Director

P. O. Box 4748

Clearwater, FL 33758

Phone: 727-562-4023

**B. NEIGHBORHOOD AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD:**

Carmen Santiago, Chair

1101 Tuskawilla Drive, #2

### Clearwater, FL 33756

Phone: 727-315-3820

**C. U.S. DEPT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT:**

Thomas Bilodeau, Program Manager

Community Planning and Development

U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

Jacksonville Office

301 West Bay Street, Suite 2200

Jacksonville, FL 32202

904-208-6001

# Larry M. Lopez, Senior Community Development Representative

Community Planning and Development

# U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development

Jacksonville Office

301 West Bay Street, Suite 2200

Jacksonville, FL 32202

# Phone: 904-208-6008

**II. MEDIA USAGE:**

All requisite public notices and advertisements shall be advertised in the Tampa Bay Times.

**III. DEPOSITORIES OF INFORMATION:**

All program documents; mailings; promotional material; records; prior applications; grant agreements; this plan; performance reports; evaluation reports; regulations and any other documentation concerning the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) and State Housing Initiative Program Grant (SHIP) are available during normal working hours at:

City of Clearwater

Economic Development and Housing Department

Housing Division

112 South Osceola Avenue

Clearwater, FL 33756

Copies of documentation will be furnished to interested persons without charge.

In addition, copies of the current Citizen's Participation Plan; the Consolidated Plan; Annual Action Plan(s); and the most recent Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report are available during normal working hours at:

City of Clearwater

Economic Development and Housing Department

Housing Division

112 South Osceola Avenue

Clearwater, FL 33756