

**The amended Citizen Participation Plan below includes required language from the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) regulations:**

## **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

*The purpose of this Citizen Participation Plan is to encourage residents of Pittsfield to participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, Amendments to the Consolidated Plan, the Performance Report, the Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH), and any revisions to the AFH. This plan will encourage participation of low and moderate-income residents, residents of public and assisted housing developments and recipients of tenant-based assistance from low/moderate income neighborhoods where 51% or more of the residents are at or below 80% of median income, where housing and community development funds may be spent.*

*The Citizen Participation Plan and Amendments set forth the policies and procedures for resident's participation that are required and must address the following:*

### **DEVELOPMENT of the CONSOLIDATED PLAN and ASSESSMENT OF FAIR HOUSING (AFH):**

**Availability of AFH HUD-provided Data** - As soon as feasible after the start of the public participation process, the jurisdiction will make the HUD-provided data and any other supplemental information the jurisdiction plans to incorporate into its AFH available to its residents, public agencies, and other interested parties. The jurisdiction may make the HUD-provided data available to the public by cross-referencing to the data on HUD's web site.

**Publicizing Consolidated Plan and AFH Public Hearings and the Process** - Multiple types of media will be used to reach residents to inform them of the first public hearing to provide input and comments regarding the preparation of the proposed Consolidated Plan or the proposed AFH (as applicable), especially those who will be directly affected by the decisions made or who live in local neighborhood target areas.

- Two weeks before the public hearing(s), display advertisements shall be placed in newspapers of general circulation, notably *The Berkshire Eagle* and *The Pittsfield Gazette*.
- Press Releases will be sent prior to the hearing(s).
- Notices will be placed in *The Berkshire Eagle* "Today's Calendar" column.
- Flyers will be placed at Pittsfield Housing Authority (PHA) public housing developments and at the PHA's administrative office to encourage the attendance of resident advisory board members, residents of public and assisted housing developments, and recipients of tenant-based assistance, at the neighborhood schools and social service agencies especially those located in and who serve residents residing in the City's targeted revitalizations areas.
- Notification and flyers will be distributed to local and regional institutions and other organizations, with whom the City and Department consult on an ongoing basis in order to encourage attendance including businesses, developers, community and faith-based organizations, fair housing organizations, and other public and private fair housing service agencies, to the extent that such entities operate within the City of Pittsfield.

- Additional outreach efforts will be undertaken as appropriate in order to enhance citizen participation and input, including interviews, focus groups, on-line and paper surveys.
- Notice of public hearing(s) will be posted on the City of Pittsfield's website and advertised on the local access television "Carousel" at PC TV.

**Public Hearings for the Consolidated Plan and the AFH** will be held in order to provide the community an opportunity to comment and respond to housing and community development issues and fair housing issues. HUD regulations require the City provide two public hearings per year for this purpose.

**First Public Hearing** - Scheduled during the development process of the proposed Consolidated Plan or the proposed AFH (as applicable) and before the proposed Consolidated Plan or the proposed AFH is published for comment. The public hearing will be held in order to obtain the views of residents on housing and community development needs, and the development of proposed activities, including priority non-housing community development needs. As applicable, a public hearing will also be held to obtain the views of the community on AFH-related data and affirmatively furthering fair housing in the jurisdiction's housing and community development programs.

**Second Public Hearing** - This hearing will be scheduled to review the proposed Consolidated Plan or the proposed AFH (as applicable). The proposed Consolidated Plan public hearing will include a description of the amount of CDBG funds Pittsfield expects to receive; the range of eligible activities; the amount of funds anticipated to benefit low and very low-income persons; a review of program performance, and plans to minimize displacement and to assist those displaced. The proposed AFH public hearing will provide a summary and description of the contents of the proposed AFH including proposed strategies and actions for affirmatively furthering fair housing.

**Access** - The first public hearing shall be held in the evening hours at a location in one or both of the City's low-to-moderate income neighborhoods at the community schools in order to attract residents from those neighborhoods. The second public hearing shall be held in City Council Chambers in the evening. In order to meet the needs of residents with disabilities and language barriers, the following steps will be taken to ensure all residents have the ability to participate in the process:

- The Morningside and Conte Community Schools and the City Hall City Council Chambers are wheelchair accessible.
- Upon request, the City will attempt to obtain translators for the hearing impaired. At meetings where a significant number of non-English speaking residents can be reasonably expected to participate an interpreter will be in attendance.
- Materials handed out at the public hearing(s) will be prepared to accommodate non-English speaking residents.
- Upon request, the City will use its best effort to provide transportation.

**Written Information to be provided to the Public** – The proposed Consolidated Plan or the proposed AFH (as applicable) will be published in a manner that will afford its residents, public agencies, and other interested parties a reasonable opportunity to examine its content and to submit comments. Public notice of the availability of the proposed Consolidated Plan or the proposed AFH (as applicable) will be provided as follows:

**Public Notice - Proposed Consolidated Plan and Proposed AFH** – Two weeks prior to the second public hearing, a public notice shall be published annually in newspapers of general circulation to notify the public of the availability of the proposed Consolidated Plan or the proposed AFH (as applicable), the 30-day public comment period, and the second public hearing. A press release will also be prepared and sent to the newspapers. The newspaper notice and press release shall include the following information:

- The amount of funding anticipated, including grant funds and program income.
- The range of eligible activities.
- The amount of funds anticipated benefiting persons of low and very low income,
- The plans to minimize displacement and to assist displaced persons.
- A summary of the proposed Consolidated Plan or the proposed AFH (as applicable), including the contents and purpose of the plan.
- A list of locations where copies of the entire proposed Consolidated Plan or the entire proposed AFH (as applicable) are available such as the local library, government office, and other public place.
- Copies of the entire proposed Consolidated Plan or the entire proposed AFH (as applicable) will be posted on the City of Pittsfield's website.
- Free printed copies of the proposed Consolidated Plan or the proposed AFH (as applicable) will be made available to residents and groups that request it.
- A statement of the beginning and end of the 30-day comment period for the Consolidated Plan or the AFH (as applicable).
- The date, place, and time of the second public hearing to review the proposed Consolidated Plan or the proposed AFH (as applicable).

**Availability to the Public** – a separate public notice will be published upon the adoption of the Consolidated Plan, Consolidated Plan substantial amendments, HUD accepted AFH, revisions to the AFH, and the performance report informing residents of the opportunity to examine the documents, including the availability of materials in a form accessible to persons with disabilities, upon request. The public notice will include a list of locations where the completed plan(s) may be obtained free of charge. The final adopted Consolidated Plan, Consolidated Plan substantial amendments, HUD accepted AFH, revisions to the AFH, and the performance report will be posted (as applicable) on the City of Pittsfield's website to afford the public the opportunity to view them.

**Access to Records** - The City of Pittsfield will provide residents of the community, public agencies and other interested parties with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the Consolidated Plan, AFH, and use of CDBG funds for the preceding five years.

**Meetings** - The City of Pittsfield encourages participation by low and very low-income persons, minorities, non-English speaking persons and persons with mobility, visual or hearing impairments and residents of public and assisted housing developments in the process of developing and implementing the Consolidated Plan and the AFH. The City will provide residents of the community with reasonable and timely access to local meetings, consistent with accessibility and reasonable accommodation requirements, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the regulations at 24 CFR 8; and the Americans with Disabilities Act and the regulations at 28 CFR parts 35 and 36, as applicable.

The first public hearing for the Consolidated Plan is held in conjunction with the regular Westside and Morningside Initiative Steering Committee monthly meetings. The public hearings are held at Conte Community School and Morningside Community School which are both accessible. These two areas of the City represent the highest concentrations of low/very low-income and minority residents. The second public hearing for the Consolidated Plan is held at City Hall in the City Council Chambers which is also accessible. The second public hearing at City Hall is televised on the local public access television station, PC TV.

The first and second public hearings for the AFH will be held in a similar fashion to the Consolidated Plan public hearings. The proposed and final Consolidated Plan and AFH are posted on-line on the City's website and the format is compatible with web readers for the visually impaired, as required by 24 CFR Part 8. Draft and final copies of the Consolidated Plan and the AFH are available for review at publicized locations.

**Technical Assistance** - Upon written request, the City of Pittsfield will provide technical assistance to groups requesting such assistance in commenting on the AFH and in developing proposals for funding assistance under any of the programs covered by the Consolidated Plan that strengthen and expand the role of community based development organizations in planning, retail, commercial, affordable housing and other public improvements through CDBG funds. The assistance need not include the provision of funds to the groups.

**Public Comments** - The City of Pittsfield shall consider the comments and views of residents received in writing, or orally at the public hearings, in preparing the final Consolidated Plan or the final AFH (as applicable). A summary of these comments or views, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons why, shall be attached to the final Consolidated Plan or the final AFH (as applicable).

**Complaints** - The City shall provide a timely, substantive written response to every written resident complaint, within 15 working days, where practicable.

**Plan Adoption** - The City of Pittsfield shall publish a notice in newspapers of general circulation providing notice of the availability of the final Consolidated Plan or the final AFH and the locations where they are available for public review.

**AMENDMENTS:** Amendments allow for changes in the Consolidated Plan and the Citizen Participation Plan. Prior to submission to HUD of any substantial change in these plans and proposed use of funds, the residents of Pittsfield will have reasonable notice of and opportunity to comment on any proposed Amendment.

**Criteria for Amendment to Consolidated Plan** - The City of Pittsfield shall amend its approved Consolidated Plan when it decides to carry out an activity using CDBG funds not previously described in the plan; substantially changes the scope, location or eligible activity; or changes the amount of funds allocated to a specific activity by \$50,000.

**Criteria for Revision to the AFH** – The City of Pittsfield shall revise its approved AFH due to a material change in circumstances in the jurisdiction that affects the information on which the AFH is

based, to the extent that the analysis, the fair housing contributing factors, or the priorities and goals of the AFH no longer reflect actual circumstances.

**Public Notice – Amendments and Revisions** - A public notice shall be published at least 30 days prior to receive comments on the Consolidated Plan substantial amendment, an amendment to the Citizen Participation Plan, or any revision to the AFH before the Consolidated Plan substantial amendment is implemented or the revised AFH is submitted to HUD for review.

**Public Comments - Complaints** - The City of Pittsfield shall consider the comments and views of the residents of the community received in writing, or orally at public hearings, if any, in preparing the substantial amendment to the Consolidated Plan or significant revision to the AFH (as applicable). A summary of these comments or views, and a summary of any comments or views not accepted and the reasons why, shall be attached to the substantial amendment of the Consolidated Plan or significant revision to the AFH (as applicable). The City shall provide a timely, substantive written response to every written resident complaint, within 15 working days, where practicable.

**Submission of Amendments and Revisions** - All approved substantial amendments to the Consolidated Plan or significant revision to the AFH (as applicable) will be submitted in writing to HUD.

**PERFORMANCE REPORTS:** At the end of each program year, the jurisdiction will prepare a Performance Report. This report will show actual accomplishments undertaken with CDBG funds. It will evaluate overall performance, including whether activities and strategies undertaken during the year actually made an impact on the goals and needs identified in the Consolidated Plan. Information will be accurate and up-to-date in a form that residents can clearly understand. Residents of Pittsfield will be given reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on the Performance Report in the following manner:

**Public Notice** - A public notice shall be published at least 15 days prior to the submission of the Performance Report to HUD, in order to receive comments from residents. The notice will inform residents how to obtain a copy of the Performance Report, the dates of the 15 day public review period and a statement that comments may be submitted in writing or orally anytime during the 15 day public review period.

**Availability of Performance Report** – Copies of the Performance Report will be posted on the City’s website and provided to residents upon request at least 15 days prior to the submission of the report to HUD.

**Public Comments** – The City will consider any comments or views of residents received in writing, orally at public hearings in preparing the Performance Report. A summary of these comments or views shall be attached to the Performance Report and submitted to HUD.

**Submission of Performance Report** - The Performance Report, once approved, will be submitted to HUD. After submission, the final Performance Report will also be posted on the City of Pittsfield’s website to afford the public with the opportunity to view it.

**Use of Citizen Participation Plan** – The City must follow its citizen participation plan.

**Jurisdiction Responsibility** – The requirements for citizen participation do not restrict the responsibility or authority of the City for the development and execution of its Consolidated Plan or AFH (as applicable).

### **End of Citizen Participation Plan**

Amended Effective: May 15, 2017

DRAFT