

**Columbus Consolidated Government
Council Meeting Agenda Item**

TO:	Mayor and Councilors
AGENDA SUBJECT:	Amendment to the Citizen Participation Plan of the FY 2017 – FY 2021 Five Year Consolidated Plan.
AGENDA SUMMARY:	Approval is requested for the filing of amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan of the FY 2017 – FY 2021 Five Year Consolidated Plan. The amendments will include virtual hearings as an allowed method for citizen participation and a 5-day public comment period.
INITIATED BY:	Community Reinvestment

Recommendation: Approval is requested for the filing of amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan of the FY 2017 – FY 2021 Five Year Consolidated Plan. The amendments will include virtual hearings as an allowed method for citizen participation and a 5-day public comment period.

Background: In December 2019, a new coronavirus known as SARS-CoV-2 was first detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, People’s Republic of China, causing outbreaks of the coronavirus disease COVID-19 that has now spread globally. The first case was reported in the United States in January 2020. In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic and President Trump declared the outbreak a national emergency. In response, President Trump has signed The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The CARES Act:

- Makes available \$ \$981,189 in supplemental Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for grants to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus (CDBG-CV grants);
- Provides flexibilities for CDBG grantees to make it easier to use CDBG-CV grants and fiscal years 2019 and 2020 CDBG grants for coronavirus response and authorizes HUD to grant waivers and alternative requirements;
- Requires CDBG-CV grantees to prevent the duplication of benefits, which means grant funds may not be used to pay costs if another source of financial assistance is available to pay that cost

To provide additional flexibility to communities to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and better assist individuals and families, including those experiencing homelessness, infected with the virus or economically impacted by the virus, HUD has provided for the immediate availability of a 5-day public comment period for amendments and new plan submissions associated with the Columbus Consolidated Government’s FY 2017 – FY 2021 Five Year Consolidated Plan. To fully utilize this regulatory waiver, an amendment to the current Citizen Participation Plan is needed.

The Citizen Participation Plan is required as part of the administration of the Community Planning and Development (CPD) programs funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Citizen Participation Plan presents the City's plan for providing for and encouraging all citizens to participate in the Consolidated Planning process.

The Citizen Participation Plan sets forth the policies and procedures for citizen participation. It outlines the procedures for community approval of the Consolidated Plan, for addressing concerns and complaints, and for making amendments to the plan after approval. The Citizen Participation Plan emphasizes the need to provide citizens with adequate information and to allow them the opportunity to give meaningful input. It encourages participation among our potential program beneficiaries: persons of extremely low, low, and moderate incomes and residents of slum and blighted areas. In addition, it allows citizens to participate in a collaborative process that involves proposing activities and assessing performance.

Analysis: A resolution is needed to authorize the filing of amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan of the FY 2017 – FY 2021 Five Year Consolidated Plan. The amendments will allow the Columbus Consolidated Government to establish expedited procedures to draft, propose, or amend consolidated plans. Expedited procedures must include notice and reasonable opportunity to comment of no less than 5 days. The 5-day period can run concurrently for comments on the action plan amendment and amended citizen participation plans.

In-person public hearings are not required. Grantees may meet public hearing requirements with virtual public hearings if: 1) national/local health authorities recommend social distancing and limiting public gatherings for public health reasons; and 2) virtual hearings provide reasonable notification and access for citizens in accordance with the grantee's certifications, timely responses from local officials to all citizen questions and issues, and public access to all questions and responses.

Financial Considerations: The sources of federal funding and programs are the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for grants to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus (CDBG-CV grants);

Legal Considerations: Council must approve the revisions to the Citizen Participation Plan.

Recommendation/Action: Approve the attached Resolution authorizing the filing of amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan of the FY 2017 – FY 2021 Five Year Consolidated Plan.

A RESOLUTION

NO.

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA, AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AMENDMENTS TO THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN OF THE FY 2017 – FY 2021 FIVE YEAR CONSOLIDATED PLAN.

WHEREAS, the Consolidated Government of Columbus, Georgia wishes to come into compliance with Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended and the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990 as amended; and,

WHEREAS, the FY 2017 – FY 2021 Five Year Consolidated Plan and the Citizens Participation Plan for the Consolidated Government of Columbus, Georgia has been developed as prescribed by the Federal Regulations of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and,

WHEREAS, The CARES Act permits HUD to waive, or specify alternative requirements for, any provision of any statute or regulation that the Secretary administers in connection with the CDBG-CV funds, FY2019 and FY2020 CDBG funds (except for requirements related to fair housing, nondiscrimination, labor standards, and the environment), upon a finding by the Secretary that any such waivers or alternative requirements are necessary to expedite or facilitate the use of such amounts to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus; and

WHEREAS, the amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan have been developed as prescribed by the Federal Regulations of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the public interest will be served by the adoption of the proposed amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan of the FY 2017 – FY 2021 Five Year Consolidated Plan,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA, AS FOLLOWS:

That the proposed amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan of the FY 2017 – FY 2021 Five Year Consolidated Plan, are hereby approved for filing with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and further authorizes the City Manager and/or his designee to execute all contracts, agreements, and understandings related to expedite or facilitate the use of such amounts to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia held on the _____ day of May 2020 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of ten members of said Council.

Councilor Allen voting _____.
Councilor Barnes voting _____.
Councilor Crabb voting _____.
Councilor Davis voting _____.
Councilor Garrett voting _____.
Councilor House voting _____.
Councilor Huff voting _____.
Councilor Thomas voting _____.
Councilor Thompson voting _____.
Councilor Woodson voting _____.

Sandra T. Davis, Clerk of Council

B.H. "Skip" Henderson, Mayor