EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

CITY OF ST. MARYS 1994

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

2016

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

Adopted this 1ST day of February, 2016 (Resolution 16-4) by:
Robert V. Howard, Mayor
Gregory Gebauer, Deputy Mayor
Ned Jacob, Councilman
Lou Radkowski, Councilman
Robert Mohr, Councilman
Andrew Mohney, Councilman
Gary Anderson, Councilman

ADMINISTERED BY:
Timothy J. Pearson, City Manager
Tina Gradizzi – Community & Economic Development Coordinator

City Hall
11 LaFayette Street
St. Marys, PA 15857
www.cityofstmaryspa.gov

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN
CITY OF ST. MARYS, ELK COUNTY
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM

SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 1984 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enacted Act 179 establishing the State Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The purpose of the program was to provide certain counties and municipalities with an annual allocation of grant funding to help develop viable communities through the provision of decent housing, a suitable living environment and expanded economic opportunities for persons primarily of low-to-moderate income. The Commonwealth receives its CDBG funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) pursuant to Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended.

The Commonwealth's CDBG program is administered by the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and the funds are distributed according to the following state formula:

- 38% to eligible counties
- 38% to eligible boroughs, incorporated towns and townships
- 24% to eligible cities
- 13% for discretionary (competitive) projects
- 2% for state administrative costs

The City of St. Marys has obtained an "Entitlement" status as a result of having a population greater than 4,000, according to the latest Decennial Census and meeting the minimum standards of Physical and Economic distress. The City of St. Marys Community and Economic Development Department has been designated as the responsible entity to administer the City's CDBG program.

SECTION 2 – POLICY STATEMENT

It is the public policy of the City of St. Mars to provide for and encourage citizen participation in the planning, implementation and assessment of the City's CDBG program.

To facilitate this policy, the City has developed and adopted this "CDBG Citizen Participation Plan" which sets forth policies and procedures to maximize opportunity for citizen participation in the community development process. This Plan supersedes all other CDBG Citizen Participation Plans which may have been adopted by the City of St. Marys in the past.

In undertaking its CDBG program, the City of St. Marys strongly encourages participation by persons of low and moderate income, residents of blighted areas and residents of areas where community development funds are utilized. Additionally, participation is strongly encouraged from minorities and persons with disabilities.

SECTION 3 – SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION

The City of St. Marys will make reasonable efforts to provide for citizen participation during the community development process and throughout the planning, implementation and assessment of all CDBG projects undertaken by the City of St. Marys, including, but not limited to, the following phases:

1. Identification and assessment of housing and community development needs;
2. Determination of CDBG project(s) and the development of the CDBG application;

3. Revisions and/or modifications to approved CDBG projects; and
4. Assessment of CDBG program performance

SECTION 4 – CONTACT INFORMATION

The City of St. Marys, Community and Economic Development Department (C&EDD) is responsible for the development, publication and implementation of citizen participation of the CDBG Program. The C&EDD will disseminate information concerning proposed projects and status of current project activities; coordinate applicable groups participating in the community development process; receive written comments; serve as a conduit by which ideas, comments and proposals from local residents may be transmitted to local officials and monitor the citizen participation process and proposing such amendments to the CDBG Citizen Participation Plan as necessary.

All questions concerning the CDBG program including citizen participation in the community development process should be directed to: City of St. Marys, Community and Economic Development Department whose office is located at City Hall, Second Floor, Room 7, 11 LaFayette Street, St. Marys, PA 15857. The CDBG Administrator may be contacted by mail; phone (814)781-1718 ext. 225; fax (814) 834-1304 or email tina@cityofstmarys.com.

SECTION 5 – TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The City of St. Marys will be responsible for providing technical assistance to individual citizens and citizen groups, especially those groups representative of persons of low and moderate income, as may be required to adequately provide for citizen participation in the planning, implementation and assessment of the CDBG program.

Technical assistance shall be provided upon request and may include, but not limited to: interpreting the CDBG program and its rules, regulations, procedures and/or requirements; providing information and/or materials concerning the CDBG program; and, assisting low and moderate income citizens, and residents of blighted neighborhoods to develop statements of views, identify their needs, and to develop activities and proposals for projects which, when implemented, will resolve those needs.

SECTION 6 – PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings will be the primary means of obtaining citizen views and responding to proposals and questions related to community development and housing needs, proposed CDBG activities and past CDBG performance.

A minimum of two (2) public hearings will be held each fiscal year. Both public hearings will be held prior to the submission of the CDBG application to DCED. The CDBG Administrator will be responsible for conducting the public hearings.

The primary purpose of Public Hearing #1 is to assess community needs and problems in an effort to determine the most critical needs to be addressed by the CDBG program. Public Hearing #2 will identify the activities proposed to be undertaken with CDBG funds to address the needs. The time period between the hearings may be several weeks or months depending on several factors including when DCED indicates the date for submission of the application and the amount of grant funds allotted.

Information to be conveyed and program areas to be discussed at **Public Hearing #1** will include:

- Purpose of hearing and background information including reason for entitlement status and the amount of CDBG funding obtained over the years.
- Amount of funds anticipated for the upcoming fiscal year.
- Anticipated date when application will be submitted to DCED.
- Range of activities which may be undertaken with CDBG funds. Also, examples of ineligible activities.

- Identify the National Objectives of the CDBG program with particular emphasis on the primary objective of benefiting low-to-moderate (LMI) persons. At least 70% of funds must go towards meeting this objective.
- Explanation of what is a LMI person – 80% of median income. Provide current income limits.
- Explanation of "Primarily benefiting" – at least 51% LMI. Also, indicate that some groups of persons like the elderly and adults with disabilities are "presumed" by HUD to be LMI.
- How concentrations of LMI persons are determined – HUD census information or income surveys.
- Identification of the types and levels of assistance the City would make available to persons displaced by CDBG funded activities if such relocation was necessary.
- Review prior use of CDBG funds – usually previous three years.
- Review/revise prior Three Year CDBG Plan which assesses the city's needs and objectives related to housing; public facilities/improvement; public services; and economic development.
- Take comment on potential projects. Discuss the need for income surveys.
- Discuss remaining schedule of events for the program/fiscal year including anticipated date of Public Hearing #2.

Information to be conveyed at Public Hearing #2 will include:

- Identification of the activities proposed to be undertaken with CDBG funds.
- The amount of CDBG and other funds allocated for each activity.
- The National Objective which is being met
- In addition to identifying the proposed activity/project(s) for the current fiscal year, identify likely activities for years 2 and 3 of the Three Year Plan.
- Solicit citizen views and comments.
- Discuss remaining schedule of events including when City Officials will pass a resolution and when the application will be submitted to DCED.

All attendees at the hearings will be asked to sign-in and provide contact information. Minutes of the hearing will be taken by the CDBG Administrator and maintained in the C&EDD. Any individual unable to attend the public hearings may contact the CDBG Administrator and request a copy of any and all documents that were distributed at the hearing, including a copy of the minutes.

SECTION 7 – PUBLIC HEARING LOCATION

All public hearings will be held at City Hall, 11 LaFayette Street, St. Marys, in the Main Council Chambers in the basement. This facility is accessible to persons with disabilities. If hearing-impaired or non-English speaking residents request assistance to participate in a public hearing, the City Officials will seek to retain appropriate interpreter services to allow such residents to participate. City Officials will consider it mandatory only in instances where it is expected that a significant number of hearing-impaired or non-English speaking residents will be in attendance. Persons needing special accommodations or translators should make their requests at least five (5) days before the hearing to assure that special needs are met.

SECTION 8 – PUBLIC NOTICES

The public shall be provided advance notice of the public hearings. A notice shall be published in the Classified Section of The Daily Press under "Legal Notices" and if feasible, posted on the City's website at www.cityofstmaryspa.gov at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the hearing.

The Notice of Public Hearing #1 will contain the following information:

- The date, time and location of Public Hearing #1.

- A statement that the City of St. Marys intends to make application to DCED for CDBG funds for which it is entitled to under the provision of PA Act 179 of 1984.
- The amount of CDBG funds available or anticipated to be made available.
- The range of activities which can be undertaken with CDBG funds.
- Indicate that eligible activities must meet one of three (3) National Objectives and that the primary objective of the CDBG program is to benefit low-to-moderate income persons and that at least 70% of the CDBG monies must go towards meeting this Objective.
- A statement that citizens may comment/provide input on potential projects as well as comment on prior use of CDBG funds.
- A statement that the City has a Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan in place to address the possibility of the displacement of persons resulting from the undertaking of a CDBG funded activity.
- A statement that those unable to attend the hearing may comment on any of the topics to be discussed at the hearing by contacting the City's Community and Economic Development Department at (814) 781-1718 ext. 225.
- A statement that the City will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations for those with a disability, if requested.

The Notice of Public Hearing #2 will contain the following information:

- The date, time and location of Public Hearing #2.
- Sufficient detail on the proposed use of funds to permit meaningful citizen comments at the public hearing.
- The deadline for comment prior to the date that the City will meet to consider the application and where and when the proposed application may be inspected prior to the meeting of the local governing body.
- The date, time and location of the meeting where City Council will consider approval of the application. (This meeting will be held after the second public hearing and the deadline for public comment).
- A statement that the City will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations for those with a disability, if requested.

SECTION 9 – APPROVAL TO SUBMIT APPLICATION

The City of St. Marys will allow fifteen (15) days after Public Hearing #2 to inspect and review the CDBG application before submission. After the fifteen (15) day inspection and review period, City Council will be provided with a Resolution to approve for the submission of the fiscal year CDBG application as presented.

SECTION 10 – PROGRAM INFORMATION

Citizens will be provided full access to CDBG program information during all phases of the community development process. To facilitate citizen access, the CDBG Administrator will keep all documents related to the CDBG program on file at City Hall in the Community and Economic Development Department. Information from project files shall be made available for examination and duplication, upon request, during regular business hours. CDBG program information and materials will be available and distributed to the public at the scheduled public hearings as outlined in this Plan.

Materials to be made available shall include, but are not necessarily limited to: the CDBG Citizen Participation Plan; minutes of public hearings; mailings; CDBG program applications; letters of approval; grant agreements; environmental review records; procurement and financial records; project design and construction specifications; labor standards documentation; performance and evaluation reports; annual and semi-annual reports required by DCED; written comments or complaints concerning the CDBG program and written responses from the CDBG Administrator; and copies of the applicable Federal and State rules, regulations, policies, requirements and procedures governing the CDBG program.

In no case shall the CDBG Administrator disclose any information concerning the financial status of any program participant which may be required to document program eligibility or benefit. Furthermore, the CDBG Administrator shall not disclose any information which may, in the opinion of the City Solicitor, be deemed of confidential nature.

SECTION 11 – PROCEDURES FOR COMMENTS, OBJECTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

The Public Hearings described in this Citizen Participation Plan are designed to facilitate public participation in all phases of the CDBG process. Citizens are encouraged to submit their views and proposals at the public hearings. However, to ensure that citizens are given the opportunity to assess and comment on all aspects of the program on a continuous basis, citizens may, at any time, submit written comments or complaints to the CDBG Administrator who shall make every effort to provide written responses to citizen proposals or complaints within fifteen (15) working days of the receipt of such comments or complaints where practicable.

Records of all comments, objections and/or complaints by citizens concerning the CDBG program and subsequent action taken in response to those comments shall be maintained on file at the Community and Economic Development Department at City Hall and shall be made available for public inspection upon request.

SECTION 12 – MODIFICATIONS

The City, at times, may need to make a "modification" to a fiscal year CDBG program. Modifications to any CDBG program that triggers citizen participation requirements include: (1) A new activity is proposed or an existing activity is to be deleted and/or (2) the service area and/or beneficiaries of an approved activity are to be changed from what was approved by DCED.

Before the modification request can be submitted to DCED, a public hearing must be held before City Council to provide citizens with an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed changes. Items to be discussed at the hearing include a brief description of the existing project and reason for the changes and how the new activity meets the eligibility and fundability requirements for the CDBG program.

As with Public Hearing #1 and #2, the public shall be provided advance notice of the public hearing to modify the CDBG program. A Notice shall be published in the Classified Section of The Daily Press under "Legal Notices", and if feasible, posted on the City's website: www.cityofstmaryspa.gov at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the hearing.

SECTION 13 – MODIFICATION TO CITIZEN PARTIPATION PLAN

This CDBG Citizen Participation Plan may be modified when necessary provided such modifications are consistent with Federal/State law, regulations and administrative requirements covering citizen participation. Prior to any modification, the City will publish a Notice of Modification to the Citizen Participation Plan is the Classified Section of The Daily Press under "Legal Notices", and if feasible, post on the City's website: www.cityofstmaryspa.gov at least fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the acceptance of the modification by City Council.

SECTION 14 – NO RESTRICTION OF AUTHROITY PROVISION

No section or portion of this CDBG Citizen Participation Plan shall be construed to restrict the authority and responsibility of the City of St. Marys and the Community and Economic Development Department in the development, implementation and execution of the City's Community Development Block Grant Program.

RESOLUTION
16 – 4
RESOLUTION ADOPTING A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR THE

CITY OF ST. MARYS 1994

WHEREAS, The City of St. Marys is an "entitlement" City under the provisions of Pennsylvania Act 179 of 1984 which entitles it to receive an annual allocation of Community Development Block Grant funds from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (PA DCED) with said funds to undertake housing and community development activities which principally benefit persons of low-to-moderate income; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Marys Community and Economic Development Department is the responsible entity for the administration of the CDBG program for the City; and

WHEREAS, as the recipient of CDBG funds, the City of St. Marys is to have in place a Citizen Participation Plan which provides for, and encourages, citizen participation and which emphasizes participation by persons of low and moderate income, particularly residents of predominantly low and moderate income neighborhoods, slum or blight areas and areas in which the grantee proposes to use CDBG funds; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Marys has prepared a new CDBG Citizen Participation Plan which said plan shall supersede all other CDBG Citizen Participation plans which may have been adopted by the City of St. Marys; and

WHEREAS, no adverse public comments regarding the new plan were received during a thirty (30) day review and comment period; and

WHEREAS, the City of St. Marys Community and Economic Development Department recommends that the new CDBG Citizen Participation Plan be adopted.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of St. Marys officially adopts the CDBG Citizen Participation Plan attached as "Exhibit A" for the City of St. Marys.

I, TIMOTHY J. PEARSON, duly qualified Secretary of the City of Saint Marys, Elk County, Pennsylvania, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution duly adopted by a majority vote of the Saint Marys City Council meeting held Feb. 1, 2016, 2016 and said Resolution has been recorded in the Minutes of the City of St. Marys and remains in effect as of this date.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I affix my hand and attach the seal of the City of Saint Marys, this 1st day of February, 2016.

By: Robert V. Howard
Mayor Robert V. Howard

Attest: Timothy J. P
Secretary

(SEAL)

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