

**City of Warwick**  
**Citizens Participation plan**  
**2020-2024**

The City of Warwick is a Community Development Block Grant (“CDBG”) entitlement community, and as such annually receives funds from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (“HUD”). The City’s Office of Housing & Community Development (“OHCD”) oversees and manages the Community Development Program (“Program”) for the City of Warwick. The Program was established to meet certain needs in the community and to ensure that HUD’s national objectives of benefiting low-and moderate income persons; preventing or eliminating slums or blight; and meeting urgent needs are achieved. The Program has a proud record of accomplishment of revitalizing neighborhoods, supporting non-profit organizations working to meet the needs of low- and moderate- income people, and assisting in the development of decent affordable housing.

The City of Warwick, as a requirement of receiving CDBG funds, is required to produce various plans & documents including; the Consolidated Plan (“ConPlan”) - a five-year strategy outlining the City’s housing & community needs and provides a strategy for addressing those needs. The Annual Action Plan (“Action Plan”) - a plan that provides detailed information on specific projects and organizations funded with CDBG funds during the year. The Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation Report (“CAPER”) - an annual review of how the City utilized CDBG funds and documents accomplishments and performances associated with specifically funded projects and initiatives. The Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (“AIFHC”) - a plan produced every five years that details the impediments to fair housing in the City and outlines specific strategies to address such impediments.

The City of Warwick’s Citizens Participation Plan was developed to provide residents, community organization, local non-profits, and other parties the opportunity to participate in the development, implementation & evaluation of CDBG funded programs that have been established to benefit Warwick’s low-and moderate income population. In addition, the Citizens Participation Plan provides opportunities for citizens & interested parties to review and provide comments on the ConPlan, Action Plan, CAPER, AIFHC, & any amendments to these plans & documents.

The City of Warwick encourages all citizens to be involved in the development of its CDBG funded programs. The City, through the OHCD, provides many opportunities for citizens and stakeholders with access to current Program information and opportunities to comment and participate in the development of amendments and alterations to Programmatic guidelines and projects. The City strives to be as comprehensive as it can when it comes to encouraging active citizen participation. To accomplish this, the OHCD seeks input from area non-profits and social service agencies that provide resources to the City’s eligible populations, resident stakeholders

that reside in one of the City's target neighborhoods and the Warwick Housing Authority, when it is proposing changes, updates or amendments to any of its plans. Participation by members of the general public and those eligible citizens that may not be affiliated with one of the groups listed above are also an important part of the City's Citizen's Participation. Those requiring assistance such as those from a minority population, non-English speaking, or require sign language interpreting services, along with those that have a disability are provided access and involvement into the development process through special accommodations.

In addition, The City of Warwick established the Warwick Community Development Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee). The Advisory Committee has been in existence for over 35 years and is the primary mechanism for ongoing citizen participation in the City's Community Development Programs. The Committee, appointed by the Mayor, is composed of residents of the City, that represent a diverse background of career and life experiences, representing neighborhoods, economic development interests and persons with disabilities. Through the work of the Committee, all activities requesting funding through the CDBG Program are reviewed and evaluated for compliance and relevance to meeting HUD's National Objectives. The Committee then presents its recommendations to the Mayor and subsequent submission to HUD.

#### **Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice ("AIFHC")**

The Office of Housing & Community Development has once again partnered with Rhode Island Housing, the State of Rhode Island's Office of Housing & Community Development & the other RI entitlement communities, to produce a more concise regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice for 2020-2024. Based on the geographic size of Rhode Island, by looking at the issues of Fair Housing on a regional scale, a more thorough and comprehensive analysis of the impediments can take place versus each community performing the same analysis and providing a disjointed approach.

The Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice ("AIFHC") is being developed by the State's Consultant with input from the local communities, through public stakeholder meetings held throughout the State and in the City of Warwick.

#### **2020-2024 Consolidated Plan ("ConPlan") & 2020 Annual Action Plan**

The City of Warwick secured the services of the consulting firm CEW Advisors, to assist the Office of Housing & Community Development in formulating the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan ("ConPlan") and 2020 Annual Action Plan ("Action Plan"). During the process of developing the ConPlan & Action Plan, staff members from CEW Advisors ("Consultant") reached out to the community in a series of consultations with various stakeholders in the process; non-profit & social service agencies, municipal & State departments and agencies, the Continuum of Care, local business leaders and employers, and other community based organizations for input and comment on the various aspects and elements of the Plans.

These consultations and meetings were complemented by various public hearings in which interested citizens were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the development of the Plans. There was a preliminary public hearing in November, 2019 and two (2) hearings in February, 2020. Notifications of the hearings were advertised in the *Warwick Beacon*, on the City's Website, & on the Secretary of State's Open Meetings Website. The times at which the hearings were held was chosen in order to provide the greatest opportunity for participation of citizens and interested stakeholders. All the public hearings were held in the Lower Conference Room of Warwick City Hall, a handi-cap accessible building. The City also provided an opportunity for translation services to those that are non-English speaking, or required sign language interpreting services.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the declarations of states of emergency from both the State of Rhode Island and the City of Warwick and the requirement for social distancing, notice of availability of the Draft 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan, 2020 Annual Action Plan, 2020-2024 Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, and the 2020-2024 Citizens Participation Plan was published in the *Warwick Beacon* on April 2, 2020 and on the OHCD's Web Page, with a Public Hearing held virtually via UberConference on April 8, 2020 from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Every effort was afforded to the general public to make the documents available and open for comment while maintaining the directives provided by the Centers for Disease Control, State of Rhode Island Department of Health, and the City of Warwick. The public was provided 30-days to review and provide written comments on the contents of the draft Plans. The public Comment period coincides with the statutory requirement of submission of the City's Plans, to HUD, by May 15, 2020. All comments received during the public comment period were reviewed, by OHCD staff, and evaluated for incorporation into the appropriate Plan. Comments could have been mailed to Office of Housing & Community Development, 3275 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886 or submitted via email to: [william.r.facente@warwickri.com](mailto:william.r.facente@warwickri.com). A summary of all comments shall be attached to the final Plans.

#### **Annual Action Plan (PYs 2021 - 2024)**

The Annual Action Plan ("Action Plan") details the how the City proposes to utilize its CDBG funds in addressing the needs and goals outlined in its ConPlan. The Action Plan becomes the guiding plan in which the OHCD will fund various projects, activities and programs that coincide with meeting the needs and goals contained in the ConPlan.

The OHCD shall publish an announcement in the *Warwick Beacon* and on the City's Website detailing the funding it shall receive as part of its entitlement. The published announcement includes the following information:

- The amount of assistance the City expects to receive in the upcoming community development program
- The range of eligible activities
- The amount of assistance that will benefit persons of low and moderate income and
- The plans to minimize displacement of persons and to assist any person displaced.

The OHCD will host a public informational meeting for stakeholders, non-profits, and community organizations in November of the preceding funding year to update the attendees on funding availability and priorities relating to meeting the needs and goals outlined in the ConPlan. The period for submitting an application, for projects, programs, & services, to the OHCD shall begin in November and close in January. Upon OHCD receipt & review of applications, the Community Development Advisory Committee will hold extended public hearings on the applications for funding to be included in the Action Plan. These public hearings will be held on consecutive days in February at the Lower Conference Room, City Hall, 3275 Post Road, Warwick. At the end of the second hearing, the Community Development Advisory Committee will make funding recommendations of activities and projects to be contained in the Action Plan, which will then be forwarded to the Mayor for approval.

Notice of availability of the Draft Annual Action Plans shall be published in the *Warwick Beacon* normally in the month of March or April and on the City of Warwick's Web Page to allow for a minimum of 30-days for public comments, with a Public Hearing to be held in the Lower Conference Room of City Hall during the 30-day comment period. The public Comment period coincides with the statutory requirement of submission of the City's Annual Action Plan, to HUD, by May 15<sup>th</sup> annually. The draft version of the Plan will be made available at the OHCD's Office, 61 Hoxsie Avenue, Warwick, RI 02886, and at the City Clerk's Office, 3275 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886. The public shall be provided 30-days to review and provide written comments on the contents of the draft Plan. All comments received during the public comment period will be reviewed, by OHCD staff, and evaluated for incorporation into the Plan. Comments can be mailed to Office of Housing & Community Development, 3275 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886 or submitted via email to: [william.r.facente@warwickri.com](mailto:william.r.facente@warwickri.com). A summary of all comments shall be attached to the final Plan.

#### **Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (PYs 2020 - 2024)**

As with other plans and reports contained in this Plan the City's Office of Housing & Community Development publishes the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report ("CAPER") at the end of a program year. The CAPER evaluates the OHCD's performance in meeting the expectations and goals of the prior year Action Plan and overall goals and priorities of the 5-Year ConPlan.

Notice of availability of the Draft CAPERs shall be published in the *Warwick Beacon* normally in the month of September and on the OHCD's Web Page to allow for a minimum of 15-days for public comments. The public Comment period coincides with the statutory requirement of submission of the City's CAPER, to HUD, no later than 90-days after the end of the preceding Program Year. The draft version of the CAPER will be posted to the Office's Web Page and be made available at the OHCD's Office, 61 Hoxsie Avenue, Warwick, RI 02886, and at the City Clerk's Office, 3275 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886. The public shall be provided 30-days to review and provide written comments on the contents of the draft CAPER. All comments received during the public comment period will be reviewed, by OHCD staff, and evaluated for incorporation into the CAPER. Comments can be mailed to Office of Housing & Community Development, 3275 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886 or submitted via email to: [william.r.facente@warwickri.com](mailto:william.r.facente@warwickri.com). A summary of all comments shall be attached to the final Plan.

### **Amendments**

From time to time the OHCD may propose changes or amendments to the City's ConPlan or Action Plan. The OHCD, in accordance with federal regulation (24CFR91.505(a)), when a substantial change to either the ConPlan or Action Plan is proposed, will afford citizens not less than 30-day notice to comment on the proposed amendment(s) before said amendment(s) is /are implemented. A summary of all comments and views will be attached to the amended ConPlan or Action Plan. Notice of the substantial change will be published in the *Warwick Beacon* and on the City's Website.

### **Substantial Amendments**

A substantial amendment to the City of Warwick's Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan means any one of the following actions:

- Change in Consolidated Plan Allocation Priorities (High, Medium and Low) where a priority changes from High to Low or from Low to High;
- Addition of a new activity or deletion of an approved activity in the Annual Action Plan involving funds of \$150,000 or more;
- Revising the allocation of funds of 33% or \$100,000 (whichever is greater) of an individual activity budget among the categories of housing, public facilities, public infrastructure, public services, and economic development.
- Substantial change in the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries of an activity, defined as:
  - Changes of at least 33% of the service area of an activity; or
  - Changes of at least 33% of the expected outputs of an activity; or
  - Changes in the eligible beneficiaries of an activity that add or delete a beneficiary category.

### **CARES Act/COVID-19 Pandemic**

Any allocation of Community Development Block Grant Funds received by the City of Warwick directly tied to or as a result of the enacted CARES Act or the COVID-19 Pandemic will be allocated at the discretion of the Mayor and not trigger an amendment of either the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan.

### **Other Amendments**

When it is deemed necessary to make Other Amendments to the Consolidated Plan or Annual Action Plan (changes other than those described as substantial above), OHCD staff will consult with affected parties prior to taking action. Final approval of these Other Amendments will be made using OHCD discretion. No further action will be necessary.

### **Neighborhood Participation**

The City of Warwick is comprised of a collection of neighborhoods and villages, many dating back over 100 years. As of this Plan, the City's CDBG Program has three "target neighborhoods," that qualify under the CDBG guidelines; they are Oakland Beach, East Natick, and Apponaug Village. The City's CDBG Program has developed a neighborhood planning program that includes continuous resident participation. Each of the target neighborhoods has a unique "Master Plan" that the neighborhood and OHCD staff utilize to guide revitalization efforts. The Master Plans are drawn one neighborhood at a time with public meetings set to allow residents to determine its own revitalization priorities. The meetings are held in the neighborhood and the priority exercise is reflected in the plan. Thus this systematic neighborhood planning effort provides the "community table" for neighborhood concerns. The neighborhood meetings, facilitated by planning consultants who write the plan, bring together interested and necessary parties to create strategies and plans that address neighborhood issues including infrastructure improvements, beautification, recreational facilities, and economic development opportunities.

### **Technical Assistance**

The City of Warwick is committed to providing technical assistance to any individual, group or organization seeking information or input to the City's CDBG Program and its process. The Office of Housing & Community Development will provide technical assistance to its fullest ability when requested. Requests for technical assistance should be directed to the member of the OHCD staff listed in the Contact section of this plan.

Depending on the nature of the assistance requested, the OHCD may refer technical inquiries to the Ask a Question feature on the HUD Exchange website: <https://www.hudexchange.info/get-assistance/my-question/>. In addition, OHCD staff may also seek assistance in responding to technical questions from the staff of the Boston Regional HUD Office and from HUD technical assistance providers, as available.

### **Public Access**

All public hearings/meetings will be held with sufficient notice to the general public. All public hearings/meetings will be held, generally in the Lower Level Conference Room of Warwick City Hall or at a location that is both handicap accessible and convenient to stakeholders, citizens and the general public. The time of the public hearings/meetings will also be scheduled to be convenient to the majority of the interested parties. Translation assistance for non-English speaking persons and interpreter assistance for the hearing impaired will be provided if requested at least 48 hours prior to the hearing.

Notices for the public hearings/meetings will be published in the non-legal section of the *Warwick Beacon* and on the City of Warwick Web Page.

### **Access to Records & Availability to Public**

The Office of Housing & Community Development ("OHCD") is the custodian of the records for the City's CDBG Program. All adopted and amended plans including, but not limited to, the current Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance & Evaluation

Report, and the Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice are available to the public for inspection & review in the OHCD Office located at 61 Hoxsie Avenue, a handicap accessible building, during normal business hours of the City of Warwick. At the time of this plans publication those hours are Monday – Friday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm (excluding observed holidays and weather emergencies). In addition to the current plans listed above, the OHCD also maintains copies of previous plans and documents that are also made available to those interested in viewing them upon request. Requests to view plans and documents should be addressed to the member of the OHCD staff listed in the Contact section of this plan.

### **Contingency Plan for Public Hearing & Access to Records & Availability to Public**

In the event that a state of emergency is called by either the President of United States, Governor of the State of Rhode Island or Mayor of the City of Warwick that interrupts the normal course of business to the Country, State or City that directly impacts the ability of the OHCD to adhere to the above outlined dissemination of any of the plans, documents, amendments or notices covered under this Citizens Participation Plan, then the OHCD will institute its contingency plan for public hearings, comment, and access to records.

The Contingency Plan shall include, but not be limited to, utilization of alternative/virtual access such as webinar, video conferencing, social media, virtual meeting platforms, and teleconference call to provide the public to plans, documents, amendments or notices. This alternative/virtual access will be implemented in a manner that provides the public with sufficient ability to review and comment on proposals before them while meeting the spirit of the law and adherence to those directives issued by governmental authorities.

### **Displacement Plan and Assistance**

For the Action Plan year 2020-2021, the City of Warwick does not intend to fund projects that may cause the displacement of families, individuals or business concern. However, involuntary displacement of families and individuals may take place on a temporary, limited basis due to the regular activities of the housing rehabilitation and/or lead hazard reduction program. Buildings and other structures considered as unsafe or unfit for human habitation will be posted as such and any occupants relocated in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Uniform Relocation Act.

### **Comments and Complaints**

The City's Office of Housing & Community Development staff will accept any comments/complaints or views of citizens in writing or orally at the public hearings, or sent directly to the OHCD in preparing the final ConPlan, amendment(s) of the Action Plan or CAPER. A summary of all comments or views received will be attached to the final ConPlan, amendment(s) of the Action Plan or CAPER for which those comments/complaints or views apply.

The Community Development staff will respond in writing to all comments/complaints and views received within fifteen (15) working days (where applicable) of receipt of said comments or views.

**Contacts**

The City's Office of Housing & Community Development is located at the former Randall Holden Elementary School, 61 Hoxsie Avenue, Warwick, RI 02886. The OHCD's primary point of contact is:

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