Appendix A

Citizen Participation and Consultation

Knox County’s Citizens’ Participation Plan is designed to insure that the public interest is protected through the provision of adequate opportunity for citizen participation in implementing and carrying out activities under the Community Development Block Grant program, the HOME program, and other federally funded formula grant programs, as described in regulations governing submission of the Consolidated Plan, as published in the Federal Register on January 5, 1995 as amended, and hereinafter referred to as the Community Development Program(s).

This plan is intended to establish minimum requirements to insure citizen involvement in the planning of activities under the aforementioned programs. The plan in no way restricts the County from providing additional information and assistance when deemed to be in the best interest of the citizens of Knox County.

Knox County’s plan for citizen participation shall:

- Provide for and encourage the involvement of interested citizens and organizations particularly persons of low and moderate income who are residents of slum and blight areas or residents of low and moderate-income neighborhoods;
- Provide for full public access to program information and affirmative efforts to make adequate information available to all citizens, as further described in this plan;
- Provide for and encourage citizens’ submission of views, proposals, input and/or complaints regarding the development and performance of the Community Development Program.

In order to stimulate and encourage citizens’ participation in the County’s Community Development Programs, the County shall, at a minimum, adhere to the requirements contained herein.

1. AGENCIES TO CONSULT

   a. The County encourages the participation of local and regional institutions, the Continuum of Care, businesses, developers, nonprofit organizations, philanthropic organizations, broadband internet service providers, organizations engaged in narrowing the digital divide, agencies whose primary responsibilities include the management of flood prone areas, public land or water resources, emergency management agencies, and community-based and faith-based organizations in the process of developing, revising, amending, approving, and implementing all documents covered by this Plan. This will be achieved through stakeholder interviews, focus groups and/or public meetings. A list of stakeholders typically consulted is attached at Appendix A.
b. The County encourages the participation of residents of Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers issued by Knoxville’s Community Development Corporation (KCDC), which serves as the local Housing Authority, in the process of developing, revising, amending, approving, and implementing the documents covered by this Plan. The County will provide information to the Executive Director of KCDC about the Analysis of Impediments, its affirmatively furthering fair housing strategy, and Consolidated Plan activities related to housing developments and communities so the PHA can make this information available at the annual public hearings required for its Public Housing Agency Plans.

The County encourages participation by KCDC stakeholders. This will be carried out by providing to the PHAs information on public meetings, surveys and other outreach initiatives related to the documents covered by this Plan.

2. PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. The County shall provide citizens with reasonable and timely access to local public meetings relating to the County’s proposed and actual use of funds under the Community Development Program by holding at least two public hearings per year to provide information to citizens, obtain their views, to respond to proposals and questions, and to report on performance. At a minimum:

i. One public hearing shall be conducted to address the County’s housing and community development needs and the development of proposed activities to be carried out under the Community Development Program.

ii. One public hearing shall be conducted to review the County’s performance in carrying out activities under the Community Development Program.

iii. In the event of an Amendment to the Action Plan, one public meeting shall be conducted to provide citizens with reasonable notice of, and opportunity to comment on proposed changes in use of funds.

b. Public hearings will be generally located at a downtown facility. The County will endeavor to schedule additional meetings at various handicapped accessible locations throughout the County, including in low-mod income areas of the County, at times that are generally convenient to the public (i.e. evening meetings).

c. Should it become reasonably apparent that non-English speaking residents could be expected to participate in public hearings; the County, utilizing necessary services, will make adequate efforts to provide information to these individuals in an understandable form.

d. Notice of public hearings will be published in newspapers of general circulation in accordance with Section 4 (Publication of Notices) of this Plan.

e. In the event of a local, state or federally declared disaster or emergency where public places may be closed to the public or in-person participation may not be feasible or large gatherings may be considered a public health risk, the county may opt to conduct public hearings and meetings virtually via conference call or live web-streaming with ability to ask
questions and provide comment in real time. Accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities upon request, such as sign language or translation services. Documents for public review will be shared via the County’s Website. Copies of the document will may be mailed or e-mailed upon request. The public comment and display period for any Substantial Amendment will shall be no less than five (5) days.

3. ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND RECORDS
   a. The County will provide citizens with reasonable and timely access to information and records relating to the County’s proposed and actual use of funds under these programs.
   b. Notice of availability of said documents shall be published in newspapers of general circulation within the County, along with information as to how citizens may obtain copies of the documents.
   c. All documents are posted online at http://www.knoxcounty.org/communitydevelopment
   d. Upon written request, individuals and groups will be provided with a copy of the Consolidated Plan, the Annual Action Plan, the Consolidated Annual Performance Report, and other documents related to program activities.
   e. All documents will be available for inspection at the following locations:
      Office of Knox County Community Development
      400 Main Street, Suite 630
      Knoxville, TN 37902
      KCDC
      901 N Broadway
      Knoxville, TN 37917
      Knox County Public Library
      500 W. Church Ave
      Knoxville, TN 37902
   f. In the event of a local, state or federally declared disaster or emergency where public places may be closed to the public or in-person participation may not be feasible or large gatherings may be considered a public health risk, the county may opt to conduct public hearings and meetings virtually via conference call or live web-streaming with ability to ask questions and provide comment in real time. Accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities upon request, such as sign language or translation services. Documents for public review will be shared via the County’s Website. Copies of the document will may be mailed or e-mailed upon request. The public comment and display period for any Substantial Amendment will shall be no less than five (5) days.

4. PUBLICATION OF NOTICES
   a. Notices of public meetings shall be published in newspapers of general circulation within the County not less than fourteen (14) days prior to the public hearing. The advertisement shall state the time, date, location and purpose of the hearing. The notice shall also include other pertinent information relative to the hearing, such as handicapped accessibility, etc. In the event of a local, state or federally declared
disaster or emergency, notice of public meetings shall be published at least one day prior to the public hearing.

b. The County may, at its option, utilize other forms of promoting citizens participation in the Community Development process, including but not limited to public service announcements and mailings.

c. A summary of proposed Consolidated Plan objectives and Annual Action Plan activities will be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the County, along with notice of availability of the Plan, in accordance with Section 6 (Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan) of this Plan.

d. Notice of the availability of the Consolidated Annual Performance Report will be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the County, along with notice of availability of the Report, in accordance with Section 7 (Consolidated Annual Performance Report) of this Plan.

e. Notice of Substantial Amendment to the County's Consolidated Plan or County's Annual Action Plan will be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the County, along with notice of availability of the Amendment, in accordance with Section 8 (Amendment to Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan) of this Plan.

f. Notice of the availability of the Consolidated Assessment will be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the County, in accordance with Section 7 (Consolidated Annual Performance Report) of this Plan.

5. COMMENTS/COMPLAINTS

a. The County shall respond with a timely written answer to written comments, requests, proposals, complaints and grievances, within 15 working days from receipt, where practicable. Whenever practical, responses will be made prior to formal local approval of any application under question. Said citizen comments will be taken into consideration throughout the planning/ performance/ evaluation process of carrying out the Community Development Program.

6. CONSOLIDATED PLAN/ANNUAL ACTION PLAN:

a. The County will hold at least one public hearing during the Consolidated Planning process to:
   i. Obtain the views of citizens on the County's community development, public service and housing needs.
   ii. Provide information to citizens on the amount of available funding and the range of community development and housing activities that may be undertaken.
   iii. Obtain views and comments on activities for inclusion in the development of the Annual Action Plan and respond to citizens’ questions as they relate to the Consolidated Plan.

b. The County shall publish a summary of the Consolidated Plan, so as to afford affected citizens an
opportunity to comment.

i. Said notice shall include the scheduled date for adoption of the Plan by the Knox County Commission, and the anticipated submission date to the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

ii. Said notice will provide clarification as to where and how the Plan may be obtained and the procedure for submission of citizens’ comments or questions.

iii. Said Notice shall be published not less than 30 days prior to adoption by the Knox County Commission.

c. The County shall consider citizen comments on the Consolidated Plan prior to submission of the formal document to the Department of Housing and Urban Development;

d. The County's Consolidated Plan shall be submitted to HUD no later than 45 days prior to the start of the Program Year, unless written approval is obtained from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to alter this date.

7. CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT:

a. A public hearing shall be held to review the County's performance in carrying out activities under the Community Development Program.

b. Notice of the completion of the Annual Performance Report shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation, in accordance with Section 4 (Publication of Notices) of this Plan. Said notice shall:

i. Be published not less than 15 days prior to submission of the Report to HUD.

ii. Inform the public of the date, time and purpose of the public meeting.

iii. Inform the public when the Report will be available for review and where and how it may be obtained.

iv. Include the date of submission to the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

v. Clarify the process for submitting comments regarding the plan.

c. Upon completion of HUD’s review of the Report, written comments regarding the content will be provided to the County. The County will respond in writing to any questions or concerns. HUD will review the County’s response and then issue its final written Assessment of the County's Performance.

d. A Notice of Availability of the Consolidated Assessment will be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the County, in accordance with Section 4 (Publication of Notices) of this Plan. Said Notice shall:

i. Inform the public where and how the Assessment may be obtained.

ii. Clarify the process for submitting comments regarding the Assessment.
8. AMENDMENTS TO CONSOLIDATED PLAN/ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

a. The applicable Federal law and regulation define the Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan as a single document which may be amended by single process amending the Annual Action Plan.

b. The County shall amend its Annual Action Plan whenever a substantial change occurs in activities. A substantial change to the Consolidated Plan/Action Plan shall be defined as:
   - Elimination of an activity;
   - The addition of an activity not previously included;
   - Revision of an activity, which will drastically change the purpose, scope, location or beneficiaries;
   - When a 50 percent change in federal funding occurs where the project is $50,000 or less;
   - When a 25 percent change in federal funding occurs where the project is more than $50,000.

   (1) A change in the type of activity (example: street improvements to recreational improvements) is considered to be a substantial change, regardless of location of the activity, since the total scope of the project has been revised.

   (2) When an activity has cost overruns or cost savings of greater than 50%.

c. Prior to amending its Plan, the County shall hold a public meeting to provide citizens with reasonable notice of, and opportunity to comment on proposed changes in its use of funds.

   i. Said meeting shall be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation, as further described in Section 4 (Publication of Notices) of this Plan.

d. The County shall consider any such comments and, if deemed appropriate, modify the amendment.

e. The County shall publish a description of the amendment in a newspaper of general circulation, in accordance with Section 4 (Publication of Notices) of this Plan.

   i. Said notice shall include the scheduled date for adoption of the Amendment by the Knox County Commission and the formal notification of amended activities to the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

   ii. Said notice will provide clarification as to where and how the Amendment may be obtained and the procedure for submission of citizens’ comments or questions.

   iii. Said notice will be published not less than 30 days prior to adoption by the Knox County Commission.

f. The final amendment shall be approved at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Knox County Commission.

g. A letter of description of the amended activities shall be submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development or submitted via the IDIS eCON Planning Suite.

h. In the event of a local, state or federally declared disaster or emergency where public places may be closed to the public or in-person participation may not be feasible or large gatherings may be considered a public health risk, the county may opt to conduct public hearings and meetings virtually via
conference call or live web-streaming with ability to ask questions and provide comment in real time. Accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities upon request, such as sign language or translation services. Documents for public review will be shared via the County’s Website. Copies of the document will may be mailed or e-mailed upon request. The public comment and display period for any Substantial Amendment shall be no less than five (5) days. Notice of public hearings associated with the amendment shall be published at least one day prior to the date of the scheduled hearing.

9. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
   a. The County shall provide technical assistance to groups and representatives of persons of low, very low and moderate income that request such assistance in developing proposals, with the level and type of assistance to be determined by the County.
   b. Additional information on technical assistance may be obtaining by contacting Knox County Community Development, 400 Main Street, Suite 630, Knoxville, TN 37902, or calling 865.215.3980.

10. ANTI-DISPLACEMENT
   a. It is the policy of the County that Community Development Program activities will not convert a low/mod dwelling unit to another use.
      Conversion shall mean an activity that results in an existing low/mod dwelling unit no longer being available as a low/mod unit, due to (1) the activity resulting in rents which exceed the Section 8 Fair Market Rents; or (2) the activity converts the unit to a use other than housing.
   b. It is the policy of Knox County that Community Development Block Grant funds will not be utilized for the demolition of a low/mod dwelling unit. Community Development Block Grant funded demolition will occur when the unit is vacant, substandard, and not suitable for rehabilitation.
   c. Vacant shall mean the unit was not occupied at any time during the 12 months prior to the date of the demolition contract with the property owner.
      i. Substandard shall mean that the unit has one or more code violations and does not meet, at a minimum, the Section 8 Existing Housing Quality Standards.
      ii. If the cost of required rehabilitation to bring the unit to Housing Quality Standards exceeds 50% of the post-rehabilitation property value, the unit is considered not to be suitable for rehabilitation.
      iii. For each unit proposed for demolition, a list of the code violations will be prepared by the municipality’s code enforcement officer and submitted to Knox County Community Development for review. After review, Knox County Community Development will determine the fundability of the demolition activity with CDBG dollars.
d. Should extenuating circumstances lead to displacement of residents, or elimination of County low/mod
dwelling units, the County will adhere to the requirements of the Uniform Acquisition and Relocation
Act and utilize either HOME or CDBG funding to aid in the development of replacement housing.