The City of Knoxville Community Development (now Housing and Neighborhood Development) Department completed a Five Year Consolidated Plan in May 2015 that outlined how it intended to use anticipated Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) grant and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) from July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2020. The City received annual allocations of CDBG and HOME from HUD during these years, and described in Annual Action Plans how it intended to spend the funds each year. While the City anticipated receiving ESG funds from HUD, it actually received them through the State of Tennessee’s allocation from HUD.

In March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus/COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic and President Trump declared the outbreak a national emergency. On March 27, 2020, President Trump signed the $2.2T Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) into law. Among other important measures, the CARES Act provisions include: Supplemental CDBG funding for grants to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus (CDBG-CV); Flexibility for CDBG grantees to make it easier to use CDBG-CV, and fiscal years 2019 and 2020 CDBG grants for coronavirus response and authorized HUD to grant waivers and alternative requirements; Supplemental ESG funding for grants to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus among individuals and families who are homeless or receiving homeless assistance and homelessness prevention activities (including reimbursing allowable costs incurred by states/local governments incurred prior to enactment of this measure); and Certain waivers of HUD requirements were made available.

The City of Knoxville was notified by HUD on April 2, 2020, that it would receive $1,036,418 in CDBG-CV and $513,272 in ESG-CV funds, along with information about flexibility and waivers of certain regulations and requirements.

The City intends to allocate: $829,135 in CDBG-CV and $67,760 in 2019-2020 CDBG funds for housing assistance for CDBG-eligible renters and homeowners; $203,893 in ESG-CV funds for Homelessness Prevention activities; $258,052 in ESG-CV funds for Emergency Shelter/Essential Services; and up to $207,283 in CDBG-CV and $51,327 in ESG-CV funds for administration. These priority projects and activities will benefit eligible individuals and households residing in the city of Knoxville adversely impacted by the coronavirus/COVID-19 and its economic impact. The Amendments will also authorize additional changes, including flexibility, waivers, and suspensions of regulations/requirements authorized by HUD that were not specifically identified but will be required to make the changes.

While the City of Knoxville is currently completing a draft of its 2020-2024/Five Year Consolidated Plan and 2020-2021 Annual Action Plan to describe how it intends to use CDBG, ESG, and HOME to fund projects and activities beginning July 1, 2020, Amendments are necessary for the City to quickly access the CARES Act CDBG-CV and ESG-CV funding. The City intends to submit the Amendments to its current 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan and its 2019-2020 Annual Action Plan, both ending June 30, 2020, to accept the CARES Act
funding and allocate them as described above. The drafts of the City’s Amendments can be found at www.knoxville.gov/development.

Revision of the City’s Citizen Participation Plan

HUD issued Memorandums to its Community Planning and Development (CPD) Field Offices on March 31 and April 10, 2020, with the purpose of explaining the availability of waivers of certain regulatory requirements associated with several CPD grant programs to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to facilitate assistance to eligible communities and households economically impacted by COVID-19. The Memorandums also covered waivers of consolidated plan requirements for all CPD formula programs in order to respond to requirements limiting public gatherings and the need to respond quickly to the growing spread and effects of COVID-19. The City of Knoxville notified HUD on April 2 and April 24, 2020, that it intended to use the waiver flexibility on its reasonable notice and opportunity to comment periods (reduced to no less than five days for Consolidated Plan Amendments) and that it intended to revise its Citizen Participation Plan to accommodate those and other changes to citizen participation notice, comment periods, in-person public meetings, and locations of hard copies of its other plans and reports, through the end of the COVID-19 state of emergency or the 2020 program year, as necessary. The draft of the City’s revised Citizen Participation Plan can be found at www.knoxville.gov/development

Invitation to Comment

All Knoxville residents are invited to comment on the drafts of the Amendments and Citizen Participation Plan. The City of Knoxville Housing and Neighborhood Development will accept public comments beginning May 1, 2020 through May 18, 2020. Comments may be submitted in writing to Linda Rust, Community Development Administrator by email (lrust@knoxville.gov) or by mail to P.O. Box 1631, Knoxville, TN 37901. Individuals with a disability who require an accommodation in order to participate may contact the City of Knoxville’s ADA Coordinator, Stephanie Brewer Cook at 865-215-2034 or scook@knoxville.gov no less than 72 business hours (3 business days) prior to the end of the public comment period. If you have Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and want to request interpretation services, please contact the City of Knoxville’s Title VI Coordinator, Tatia M. Harris at tharris@knoxville.gov or 865-215-2831, at least 48 hours (2 days) prior to the end of the comment period.