



Housing Division -- Development Services Department

April 24, 2020

Attn:

Christopher Patterson, Regional Administrator
Alice Walkup, Senior Community Planning and Development Representative
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
San Francisco Regional Office
One Sansome Street, Suite 1200
San Francisco, California 94104-4430

[Sent via email: CPD_COVID-19WaiverSFO@HUD.gov; and, Alice.Walkup@HUD.gov]

Re: Notification of Implementation of Available Consolidated Plan Requirement Waivers to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 by the City of Merced Housing Division

Dear Mr. Patterson, Ms. Walkup, and/or To Whom It May Concern,

This letter serves as a notice to the San Francisco HUD Field Office and our CPD Representative of the City of Merced Housing Division's intention to implement two of the available waivers for Consolidated Plan requirements that were released by email on April 1, 2020, in the Memorandum entitled "Availability of Waivers of Community Planning and Development (CPD) Grant Program and Consolidated Plan Requirements to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 and Mitigate Economic Impacts Caused by COVID-19."

The City of Merced intends to implement the following waivers for the first time on April 30, 2020:

- ***#8. Citizen Participation Public Comment Period for Consolidated Plan Amendment***

Specific Condition justifying use of waiver of Citation 24 CFR 91.105(c)(2) and (k):

This waiver grants a reduction of the required 30-day comment period to no less than five days, in order to balance the City's ability to respond to its citizen's needs and lessen the negative effects of the COVID-19 Coronavirus, with the regulatory requirement to provide its citizens with governmental transparency and the opportunity to comment on the proposed use of its HUD-issued funds.

The City of Merced has an additional urgency, in that, combined with a high poverty rate amongst its residents and a housing vacancy rate of less than 1% within the City limits, it is imperative that

the City have an expedited process for public comment, City Council approval of substantial amendments, and implementation of the CDBG-CV funding that will enable quick enactment of programs that will keep families in their existing units and keep their sources of income.

- **#9. *Citizen Participation Reasonable Notice and Opportunity to Comment***

Specific Condition justifying use of waiver of Citation 24 CFR 91.05(c)(2) and (k):

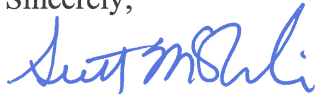
Recognizing a need to respond quickly, this waiver grants the City the ability to determine what constitutes reasonable notice and opportunity to comment regarding its intended uses of the CDBG-CV special allocation during its efforts to limit public gatherings and contain the spread of COVID-19.

The City takes pride in its history of transparency and public participation processes. Our established Citizen Participation Plan requires that documents be made available for review at the City's offices, and that comments may be made in person within 30 days from the date of public notice in the Merced County Times and Merced Sun-Star newspaper publications.

City offices are currently closed for the protection of employees and the public. Therefore, substantial change information will be made available online on the City's website and posted in a prominent locked see-through case outside the Merced Civic Center, but will not be available in person. Members of the public may still submit comments during a reduced, five-day comment period beginning and ending before the day of a teleconferenced public meeting. Comments received during the comment period will be read and/or played back during a meeting conducted by teleconference, with no in-person public access to the meeting location. Members of the public who have submitted comments may be called during the teleconference to provide additional comments during the meeting in real time. Additionally, the teleconference meetings will be broadcast on cable t.v., through website livestream, and via a live social media feed. Public notices will be published in the publications noted above approximately 15 days before the scheduled meeting date and will note the comment period and the altered comment procedures that will be followed.

If clarification is needed regarding these justifications or the City of Merced's intentions, I can be reached by email at McbrideS@cityofmerced.org. We appreciate HUD's granting the use of these waivers so that we can efficiently protect and assist the Citizens of the City of Merced and its employees.

Sincerely,



Scott McBride

Director of Development Services