

**FY 2022-23 WARREN CDF**  
**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN**

**Public Participation in Program Development**

*Community Involvement and Support*

In Warren, the Board of Selectmen formed the Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) nearly twenty years ago. Their continuing mission is to meet as an appointed body, assist with the development and management of community development activities, and make recommendations which are in the best interest of the community. The CDAC also serves as the review committee for a Community Development Strategy (CDS), which presents a summary of the town's planning efforts, identifies priority needs, and presents an action plan for addressing those needs. Although no longer part of the MA DHCD CDBG program, the Committee periodically reviews, and updates goals outlined within the strategy. The committee also holds meetings to discuss needs and projects which fit within the framework of their mission and the CDS. The CDAC builds from previous efforts and evaluates the most pressing needs of the community while conforming to the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles. The CDS was first adopted by the Board of Selectmen in January 2005 and is continually evaluated for its effectiveness. Changes are openly discussed and acted upon as needed. Projects and activities are identified and evaluated based on the overall community need, need to low- and moderate-income persons, previous efforts to rectify the need, available sources of funds, ability to proceed, location of the proposed project, support for the project or activity, and compliance with local, state and federal initiatives.

This proposed FY2022-23 CDF initiative is part of a long and well thought out strategy to conduct comprehensive infrastructure improvements to the older School Street neighborhood located in Warren Center. The neighborhood streets are School Street, Prospect Street, Otis Street, Richardson Street, Quaboag Street, Lombard Street and Moore Avenue. The School Street Improvement Project – Phase 2 is the primary activity of this proposed FY 2022-23 CDF. It follows the successfully FY21 CDBG funded Phase 1 that is in the process of rehabilitating subsurface infrastructure of School Street as well as replacing a larger retaining that supports road and sidewalks surfaces. As part of the preparation for this proposal, numerous discussions were held as part of selectmen and community development committee meetings as far back as 2011 and culminating with the final public hearing February 16, 2023. School Street is centered within the neighborhood, and comprehensive improvements to the entire neighborhood are a top priority of the Board of Selectmen, CDAC, local departments and Warren residents.

A public works analysis of the neighborhood occurred in 2012 through the FY11 CDF and was completed by Weston & Sampson Engineers. The study indicated that the neighborhood infrastructure was outdated, and replacement or upgrades was warranted throughout the area. The study also provided a phasing plan, which recommended improvements first occur to Quaboag Street, Lombard Street and Moore Avenue given their position as entrance/egress points into the neighborhood. As such, an engineering design grant was sought and subsequently funded through FY2016 CDF. Design plans and specifications were completed for the three streets, which led to construction activity: FY17 Quaboag Street Improvements and FY19 Lombard and Moore Improvements. The Quaboag Street project was fortunate to have benefitted

through combined CDBG and MassWorks funds. The CDF program funded water main replacement and sewer repairs, whereas the MassWorks program provided for road, sidewalk, and drainage improvements. The combination of these funds allowed for a large comprehensive project, which led to a favorable bid. Following the completion of the Quaboag Street project, and with DHCD approval, the FY17 CDF program was amended to allow for unused funds to complete engineering design of Otis Street, Prospect Street and School Street. Design plans and specifications were completed in December 2019. Meanwhile, the physical improvements of Moore Avenue and Lombard Street were completed in 2021 through the FY19 Warren CDF program. Community Involvement and Support were integral to these efforts.

With design plans and specifications in hand, town officials met regularly to develop a strategy for the remaining School Street neighborhood improvements and sought assistance through the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC). CMRPC staff informed Warren officials of opportunities through the state's new One Stop for Growth Program and suggested infrastructure improvements may be considered through the program to complement CDBG efforts. With information provided by Weston & Sampson engineers, it was determined that work on Prospect Street could be completed through the One Stop's Rural and Small-Town Development Fund and the program's \$400,000 cap. Infrastructure improvement needs for School Street were far greater with construction cost estimates well over \$1 million. Following the revised FY2021 One Year plan CDBG changes, CMRPC staff convened with the CDAC and other town officials to re-evaluate the strategy for School Street neighborhood improvements. It was determined that the needed School Street improvements would be phased, commencing with (Phase 1) subsurface water and sewer improvements, and restoration of a large retaining wall. The remaining surface improvements (Phase 2) would occur through future One Stop applications, CDBG and local resources.

To date, Prospect Street was funded through the state's One Stop for Growth program. Simultaneously, School Street (Phase 1) was funded through MA DHCD's FY21 CDBG. An application through the state's One Stop for Growth (MassWorks) program was submitted for the surface improvement of School Street, which was not funded. The town now wishes to pursue School Street's phase 2 work through the FY22/23 CDF program.

The target population has had and will continue to have additional significant opportunity for input regarding the CDF program through the CDAC, regularly scheduled public meetings and hearings, and through opportunities to meet with program staff by appointment at the municipal building. Written comments will also be accepted preceding and following posted meetings. Program marketing and information will be made available at the selectmen's office and through the town's web site. This helps to ensure that the target population is aware of these opportunities for input into the program. A written grievance procedure has also been developed that will ensure that the program is working to meet the needs of the clients and that any needed changes in the program can be identified and implemented.

The Town of Warren and their appointed Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) will assume control of this FY 2022-23 Warren program. This proposed Warren CDF has specific public participation components and residents will be continually afforded an opportunity to comment. At least two formal public hearings will be held to gauge the performance of the overall CDF program, obtain public input, and inform the target area residents about ongoing and planned CDBG activities. The CDAC meets monthly, and all meetings are posted by the town clerk with the agenda. Due to the nature of the CDBG program,

extensive public interaction and input are considered essential to the program's success. Surveys may occur to ensure public opinion and input has been accommodated. All future hearings under this grant will be posted and advertised to allow for written inquiries and comments to be submitted by mail or email within two weeks preceding and following the hearing date.

### **Community Development Fund Application Hearing**

The town of Warren held its FY22-23 CDF public hearing on February 16, 2023. The legal notice for this hearing was publicly posted in the Warren Shepard Municipal Building. It was also available on the town's web site and in the Ware River News weekly newspaper. The public hearing was attended by 12 people inclusive of the Warren Board of Selectmen. The hearing was approximately 30 minutes with questions and comments from members of the Board. Those in attendance supported the application as presented concluding with a resolution vote and authorization to submit. [See Public Hearing attachments.](#)

### **Procedures for the Resolution of Complaints and Grievances:**

The grievance procedure will be as follows:

**Level 1:** If a complaint or grievance is received, the Program Manager (CMRPC) will discuss the nature of the complaint or grievance with the client(s). The Program Manager will then review the complaint or grievance with the program staff and review any paperwork or documents as necessary. The Program Manager, in consultation with the Town Administrator, will then make a determination on the complaint or grievance and advise the client of his/her decision in writing. If the client(s) is dissatisfied with the decision he/she may appeal the decision to the Warren Community Development Advisory Committee.

**Level 2:** The client(s) will be given an opportunity to submit his/her complaint or grievance in writing or to meet with the Community Development Advisory Committee who will then review the complaint or grievance with the program staff and review any paperwork or documents as necessary. The Advisory Committee will then make a determination on the complaint or grievance and advise the client of his/her decision in writing. If the client(s) is dissatisfied with the decision he/she may appeal the decision to the Warren Board of Selectmen.

**Level 3:** The client(s) will be given an opportunity to submit his/her complaint or grievance in writing or to meet with the Board of Selectmen who will review the grievance with the Community Development Advisory Committee. Any and all paperwork or documents deemed necessary to review the complaint or grievance would be made available to the Board of Selectmen. Once the Board of Selectmen makes a determination on the complaint or grievance, the client(s) will be advised in writing. The decision of the Board of Selectmen is final.

Once a complaint or grievance is received, the Program Manager will document the process in the general administration records and in the program file. All documents relating to the complaint or grievance will be filed in this manner. Information regarding the grievance procedure will be provided to the program participants through program literature. The grievance procedure will be posted appropriately in each community through the respective clerks' offices.

**Technical Assistance to Low- and Moderate-Income Groups:**

A notice of the FY 2022-23 CDF award will be published in local newspapers. The notice will also be posted in various locations throughout the town. The Warren CDAC will continue to hold regular project development meetings as needed, with CMRPC staff in attendance.

The CMRPC, who will serve as the administrative consultant for the FY 2022-23 CDF Program, will conduct a program of community outreach and technical assistance targeting low and moderate groups. Community outreach will involve contacting groups that typically serve low- and moderate-income people, such as the Council on Aging and Commission on Disabilities. Technical assistance will consist of information and referrals, funding searches and project development.

**Program Performance**

Approximately midway in the FY22-23 performance period, the Town of Warren will hold a performance hearing to evaluate program performance to date and to solicit input from program beneficiaries and Warren residents. Performance information will also be collected as part of specific projects within the grant. This will include photographic evidence before, during and after the project. Area residents will also be engaged by CMRPC staff as the project is ongoing and their comments will be logged as to how they are impacted by the project. All comments will be reviewed to evaluate overall program operations and to help shape existing and proposed policies and procedures.

**Accommodations for Handicapped and Non-English-Speaking Residents:**

Public hearings will be held, as legally required, to fully discuss any project changes, concerns or similar matters. Hearings will be held in locations which are accessible. Grant staff will make any additional provisions necessary, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and HUD Section 504 regulations, to serve handicapped individuals as necessary to conduct the program.

When necessary, the towns will procure the services of an interpreter for any non-English speaking residents.