



Public Participation Plan

2020

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Introduction and Purpose

As a government organization, we make a lot of plans. Plans for zoning, recreation opportunities, utilities, and more mean that planning is an integral part of government operations. To plan effectively, citizen participation and feedback is important, and this document outlines how that happens. If you've ever wanted to know how to make your voice heard, this document will show the different ways you can participate in local government.

In order to effectively engage the public, there needs to be an explicit plan of action which outlines the purpose and process used in soliciting input from the public. Creating a public participation plan ("P3" as referred to by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities program) will allow the City to thoughtfully engage the public during major planning, zoning, and development projects and retain institutional knowledge over time. Moreover, by documenting and analyzing information on participation efforts, the City of Wayland will be able to more objectively assess its efforts and adjust accordingly thereby creating a dynamic and effective set of best practices the Village may consult for future uses.

The City of Wayland has developed this document to help guide decisions for formulating public information gathering processes during planning and development projects and the application of best case practices. This document contains a series of policies and procedures for public involvement and outreach for tasks such as: master plan updates, zoning ordinance and map updates, capital improvement project planning and review, grant opportunities and more.

Public engagement is a not a "one size fits all" exercise. Certain strategies are more appropriate in some circumstances than others, and a successful practice in one situation may not be as successful in another. To this point, this guide is intended to serve as an internal resource for ideas on how to best engage productive collaboration with stakeholders and the public in the future.

The City will consider new methods of communication and engagement as they become available, and update this guide as needed. The public participation actions described throughout this guide do not preclude additional public involvement or engagement efforts. In circumstances when the Village consults with a third party entity, that entity shall adhere to the provisions of this guide, if applicable.

Public Participation Goals

1. Maintain open government to promote integrity
2. Provide educational materials and design participation initiatives that will support and encourage effective participation
3. Promote a participative options and seek broad identification and representative involvement of all residents of the community.
4. Utilize effective and equitable avenues for distributing information and receiving comments.

State Regulations

State of Michigan legislation details the minimum requirements for public participation. The City abides by this legislation and strives to go above and beyond the traditional practices to be proactive in soliciting public input for all projects. Below are the laws regarding public input set by the state:

Open Meetings Act (PA 267 OF 1976)

The Michigan Open Meetings Act was created to require certain meetings of certain public bodies to be open to the public, to require notice and the keepings of minutes of the meetings. The entirety of the act can be accessed through the state department or at the following website address: <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-act-267-of-1976.pdf>

Virtual Meeting Provision: When required or recommended by executive order, meetings shall be conducted virtually over Zoom and/or similar video conferencing platform. Before the meeting, meeting code and link will be posted on the City Website. Please stay muted while on the call, unless it is your turn to speak during public comments. Meetings will proceed as normal from there.

The following captures important highlights from the act.

In accordance with PA 267 of 1976, the City of Wayland will hold meetings in the City Hall building at 103 S. Main St., which is accessible to the public. The public will be notified within 10 days of the first meeting of a public body in each calendar or fiscal year; the body will publicly post a list stating the dates, times, and places of all its regular meetings at City Hall.

If there is a change in schedule, within three days of the meeting in which the change is made, the public body will post a notice stating the new dates, times, and places of regular meetings.

For special and irregular meetings, public bodies will post a notice indicating the date, time, and place at least 18 hours before the meetings.

Note: A regular meeting of a public body which is recessed for more than 35 hours can only be reconvened if a notice is posted 18 hours in advance. Public bodies will hold emergency sessions without a written notice or time constraints if the public health, safety or welfare is severely threatened and if two-thirds of the body's members vote to hold the emergency meeting.

Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 OF 2008)

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act was created to provide for county, city, and village planning and codify laws regarding it. The entirety of the act can be accessed through the state department or at the following website address:

[http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(xj3g1jal1er4tq45ve4x5vuz\)\)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-act-33-of-2008.pdf](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(xj3g1jal1er4tq45ve4x5vuz))/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-act-33-of-2008.pdf)

The following captures important highlights from this act.

In accordance with PA 33 of 2008, the following parties will be notified via first class mail, personal delivery or electronic mail by the planning commission of the intent to revise the master plan and request the recipient's cooperation and comment:

- *Allegan County*
- *West Michigan Regional Planning Commission*
- *Dorr Township*
- *Leighton Township*
- *Wayland Township*
- *Hopkins Township*
- *Public Utility Companies*
- *Allegan County Road Commission*
- *Michigan Department of Transportation*

After the draft master plan has been submitted to the legislative body for review and approval for distribution, the draft plan will be submitted to the previously listed entities for review. Before approving a proposed master plan, a planning commission will hold not less than one public hearing on the proposed master plan.

The hearing will be held after the expiration of the deadline for comment as outlined in the act. The planning commission will give notice of the time and place of the public hearing not less than 15 days before the hearing by publication in a newspaper of general circulation within Wayland.

The planning commission will also submit notice of the public hearing by first class mail, personal delivery or electronic mail to the previously listed entities for review. After the adoption of the master plan, a planning commission may publish and distribute copies of the master plan or of any report, and employ other means of publicity and education.

Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006)

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act was created to provide for county, city, and village zoning (regulation of development and use of land) and codify laws regarding it. The entirety of the act can be accessed through the state department or at the following website address:

[http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(x3eqqx2ix0ez34nsk1zysl45\)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-Act-110-of-2006.pdf](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(x3eqqx2ix0ez34nsk1zysl45)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-Act-110-of-2006.pdf)

The following captures important highlights from this act.

In accordance with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006), consideration of the following requires advertised public hearings pursuant to the Open Meetings Act:

- *Zoning text amendments*
- *Zoning map amendments*
- *Variances*
- *Appeals*
- *Interpretations*
- *Special land uses*

In all the above cases, the City of Wayland shall provide public notice of the hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in the area not less than 15 days before the date of the hearing and all persons to whom real property is assessed within 300 feet of the subject property and to the occupants of all structures within 300 of the subject property shall be notified.

Key Stakeholders

Stakeholders represent a diverse set of individuals, groups, and organizations which have a vested interest or are affected by the planning and land use development process. Different groups of stakeholders may be engaged in each of the planning and development review processes dependent upon the nature of the project or plan, level of community interest, and the potential impact of the project.

Local, state and federal organizations from both the public and private sectors assist and enhance the City's decision-making process through their input.

Specifically for the master plan, the City will involve stakeholders like Wayland School District, Gun Lake Tribe, City Council, Boards and Commissions, City Staff, Wayland Area Chamber of Commerce, large employers, Downtown Development Authority, community organizations, and others in order to get the best picture of the community.

For purposes of Community Development Block Grants, an emphasis will be placed on resident stakeholders "of Low and Moderate Income (LMI) who are residents of slum or blighted areas and of areas in which funds are proposed to be used"¹ according to program guidelines.

In all formal planning situations, the City will use citizen participation to help guide the planning process. Interested stakeholders can use the tools in the below communication toolbox to better target their participation.

¹ <https://www.miplace.org/49cf0c/globalassets/documents/cdbg/gam/chapter-11/reading/citizen-participation-and-other-requirement.pdf>

Identifying the Right Approach and Communicating Results

This document is intended to be a living document that can adapt to changes in technology and best meet the needs of residents. Therefore, this strategy is reviewed annually and updated as necessary. Methods that have failed will not be removed but will be reviewed and documented so that the same mistakes will not be made in the future. The results will identify strengths and weaknesses and allow staff to maximize outreach methods. This feedback loop will create a continuous review process that enables officials to make improvements to strategy.

Surveys

Surveys are questionnaires on various topics that will show how citizens feel about various topics. Surveys are useful for identifying specific areas of interest or concentration from a broad scope of ideas or issues. These areas of interest can then be further explored using other methods like the ones outlined below. A community may use a survey to identify where to start in the planning process, or the general climate surrounding a topic.

Surveys will be compiled by person no later than amount of time after the survey was completed. The results will be posted online and published in the quarterly newsletter.

Open House Meetings and Communication Workshops

Open House Meetings and Community workshops are a special opportunity to ask questions and receive answers about a specific plan or topic, as well as learning more about different opportunities or ways to be involved and engaged in the planning process. A specific topic will be the theme of the workshop, and activities of the workshop will revolve around that topic. Workshops will generally be held in City Hall, which is ADA accessible, although like public meetings above, if due to state orders, the workshops may be held virtually as well. Municipal staff will facilitate the workshops, although in some cases, consultants might be brought in. If you need additional accommodations for a workshop, such as an interpreter, please request one ahead of time. Workshops will generally be held in the evening in order to accommodate the most citizens, although for important documents, where public input is crucial, more than one workshop might be held at varying times to allow for more citizens to participate.

Someone will be charged with taking notes during community workshops. These notes will be posted on the City's Facebook page no later than amount of time after the workshop or the charrette. In addition, the results of these events will be communicated as an agenda item in the next council meeting. Additional information can be incorporated into the appendix of adopted plans.

Charrettes/Design Workshops

The Charrette process is a more intensive workshop experience, and will only be used for the creation of the recreation plan. A charrette is a type of design workshop, which is a multi-day event where designers and planners work on a plan in-between what are called “feedback loops.” Usually between three and seven days, citizens can come to City Hall and offer ideas while the charrette team facilitates and observes. From these suggestions, the designers and planners change the plan to suit community input and present their creation the next day where the community offers feedback again. This makes up one cycle of a “feedback loop.” There can be up to five feedback loops, resulting in a final plan shortly thereafter.

Someone will be charged with taking notes during charrettes. These notes will be posted on the City’s Facebook page no later than amount of time after the workshop or the charrette. In addition, the results of these events will be communicated as an agenda item in the next council meeting. Additional information can be incorporated into the appendix of adopted plans.

One-to-One Interviews

One-to-One Interviews are an opportunity for citizens to individually speak to staff, appointed, or elected officials, and share about the issues that they feel passionate about. Please contact the person you’d like to speak with individually to schedule this.

Interview results will be kept confidential for the comfort of the participants unless requested otherwise.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are when the City will gather a small group of citizens to give their in-depth opinion on a given topic, narrowing down concepts, or to understand a specific side of the story. This group will meet when it is convenient for the members of the given focus group.

Focus group results will be kept confidential for the comfort of the participants unless requested otherwise.

Digital Tools of Communication

Technology offers a unique opportunity to give and receive information to a mass of people. Municipalities can post events, share information and even solicit feedback. This strategy will be used in conjunction with the other methods, and is simply meant to amplify the other strategies: when they’re happening, what happened, etc. The City will make use of their Facebook page to do so.

Person is responsible for monitoring the municipal Facebook page. They will respond to public posts made by the City no later than amount of time after the post was made.

News Media

When a public hearing is required, the City will publish a notice in the newspaper, as is required by the Open Meetings Act. In addition, the City may notify the press of any upcoming public planning processes through a press release in order to notify them of the project, although the newspaper may or may not decide to cover said story.

Public Hearing

Public Hearings are a formal process, described under the Open Meetings Act, in which a finished draft of the proposal is presented to Boards and Commissions, and the Public, and it is the last opportunity of any plan to provide feedback on the document. Public Hearings, in accordance with the Open Meetings Act will have a published announcement in the newspaper preceding the event, in order to notify citizens of the event. At the time of the public hearing, there will be a dedicated time for citizens to provide feedback during public comments. All public hearings are ADA accessible.

For purposes of Community Development Block Grants, additional public hearings are required by law throughout the application, development, and reporting process. These hearings will be for the development of needs, review of proposed activities, and review of program performance.

Complaints

If you are unsatisfied with the opportunities for civic participation, and feel your voice is not being heard, you may file a written complaint and/or grievance with the city and can expect a timely response from a city official within 15 days.

Evaluating Success

Public participation, when properly executed, builds community consensus and strengthens sense of place. Creating a culture of collaborative visioning enriches democracy by allowing citizens to voice their ideas, not just their complaints.

Public participation is intended to be inclusive of all members of the public, of many diverse backgrounds, and accommodations for those who need it in order to participate. The City will also specifically reach out to specific stakeholders when their input is needed on a section of the plan.

We hope that by reading this plan, you the citizen, will have a better idea of how to get involved with the City, and how your voice can be heard.

ⁱ **Master Plan:** A master plan is a dynamic long-term planning document that provides a conceptual layout to guide future growth and development. A master plan includes analysis, recommendations, and proposals for a site's population, economy, housing, transportation, community facilities, and land use. By law, the Master Plan must be updated every 5 years.

ⁱⁱ **Downtown Development Plan:** A Downtown Development plan is a dynamic plan that guides the vision and planning for Wayland's downtown area. The Downtown Development Authority Board in conjunction with the Downtown Development Director will guide this process.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Zoning Amendments:** Zoning Amendments are the dynamic part of the Code of Ordinances, which govern the land uses of a given area, as well as the design of buildings on said land. The Planning Commission governs the zoning amendment process creation, and Council ratifies amendments.

^{iv} **Environmental Projects:** Environmental projects primarily refer to either brownfield redevelopment or energy or environmental policy. Brownfields are environmentally contaminated sites in which in order to make them ready for development, must be rehabilitated.

^v **Capital Improvements Plan:** The Capital Improvements Plan is a 5-10 year plan which looks at the upgrading or creation of new city assets, such as park facilities, roads, building improvements, or vehicles, and plans and budgets for such events on a long-term basis. This plan is updated annually.

^{vi} **Parks and Recreation Plan:** The Parks and Recreation plan involves a survey of current assets, and looks into the goals and objectives of the parks department in future years. In order to be eligible for many grants, the City must update this plan every 5 years.

^{vii} **Community Development Block Grant:** The Community Development Block Grant is a federal grant opportunity specifically for areas of low and moderate income peoples, to improve their neighborhoods. The City will not apply for Community Development Block Grants each year, but may decide to when a qualified project arises. Special consideration will be given to these groups, and before any public hearing for the Community Development Block Grant program, meeting times, information, and records for the meeting will be offered in a timely matter. In addition to this, LMI peoples may request technical assistance to develop proposals.