

Public Participation Plan



NOVEMBER 5

City of Bay City
Bay City, Michigan



City of Bay City
Public Participation Plan

Table of Contents

Summary3

Goals and Objectives3

Federal and State Regulations.....4

Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976).....4

Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008).....5

Special Use Applications6

Key Stakeholders7

Communication Toolbox.....7

Basic Announcement Methods8

Collaborative Proactive Practices.....9

Outreach Strategies10

Communication Results12

Evaluation and Improvement.....13

Summary

The City of Bay City (the “City”) Public Participation Plan (the “Plan”) contains the policies and procedures for public involvement and outreach in the City’s planning and development and approval processes.

The City is required by State law, the City Code of Ordinances, and the bylaws of individual authorities and commissions to pursue public participation in planning and development projects. This process provides for timely information through public notice to support early and continuing involvement of stakeholders. The City’s boards and commissions hold public meetings and make information publicly available in accessible formats on social media outlets and the city’s website.

The City is committed to public participation, as it proves an effective means of communication with stakeholders in the planning and development process and recognizes the importance of public input in all aspects of the process.

The effectiveness of the Plan will be reviewed and updated annually in order to maximize success. City Staff will explore alternative methods of communication to reach specific project stakeholder groups to enable valuable community feedback.

A plan specific to the process and requirements of the Community Development Block Grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is contained in a standalone document entitled City of Bay City CDBG Citizen Participation Plan in accordance with 24 CFR Part 91.105.

Goals and Objectives

The City will conduct proactive and inclusionary public participation techniques during all phases of the master planning or comprehensive planning process. Proactive participation includes early and continuous involvement in important policy or project decisions before they are finalized.

The City will utilize effective and equitable avenues for distributing information and receiving input. Recognizing that no single technique or mechanism will work in all cases, the City will consider the special communication needs of the public and use the best approach to accomplish this objective.

The City will develop and maintain staff expertise in all aspects of participation. This will include techniques for managing language, cultural, and economical differences that may affect participation.

The City will strive to provide a means for ensuring equitable representation for all segments of the population and sectors of the community.

The City will support and encourage continuous improvement in the methods used to meet the public need for information and involvement. The City is committed to seeking new ways to engage and keep public involved throughout the process.

The City will record the results of public participation to the extent feasible and provide summaries back to the public. To properly capture concerns, priorities, and visions of the public, the City will develop a system to track the various techniques and mechanisms for public input. To maintain transparency and consistency, the City will develop a method for sharing public participation with the public.

The City will engage legal counsel as needed on potentially controversial issues to ensure the City is assisting the public to the extent legally feasible to resolve controversial concerns.

Federal and State Regulations

The State of Michigan legislation details minimum requirements for public participation. The City relies on state statutes to help guide participation activities. 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 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://legislature.mi.gov/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-act-267-of-1976.pdf>

In accordance with PA 267 of 1976, the City will hold meetings in places accessible to the public. The public will be notified within 5 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 regular meetings. If there is a change in the schedule, the public body will post a notice stating the new dates, times, and places of regular meetings within 3 days of the meeting in which the change is made.

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

When in-person public meetings are not feasible due to an emergency declaration, and an executive order has been issued to allow for electronic meetings, public bodies will use either telephonic or video conferencing to allow for two-way communication where members of the public body can communicate and hear each other and the public can listen to these communications, and members of the public can communicate and hear each other. When such a meeting is held, a notice will be placed on the City's website at a location that is accessible to the general public. The notice will contain an explanation of why the public body is meeting electronically, detailed procedures by which the

public may participate in the meeting electronically, procedures by which persons may contact members of the public body to provide input or ask questions on business that will come before the public body at the meeting, and procedures by which persons with disabilities may participate in the 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 Act provides for the creation, organization, powers, and duties of local planning commissions; to provide for the powers and duties of certain state and local governmental officers and agencies; to provide for the regulation and subdivision of land; and to repeal acts and parts of acts. The entirety of this act can be accessed through the state department or at the following website address:

[http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(xj3g1ja1er4tq45ve4x5vuz\)\)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-act-33-of-2008.pdf](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(xj3g1ja1er4tq45ve4x5vuz))/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-act-33-of-2008.pdf)

The City of Bay City updates the Master Plan every five years. In accordance with PA 33 of 2008, the following parties will be notified via first class mail, personal deliver, or electronic mail by the planning commission of the intent to update the Master Plan, and request the recipient's cooperation and comment:

- Bay County
- Each public utility company, railroad company, and public transportation agency owning or operating a public utility, railroad, or public transportation system within the City or any government entity that registers its name and mailing address for this purpose with the planning commission
- Bay 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 mater 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 the City. 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, the planning commission will publish the updated Master Plan on the City's website and may distribute copies of the master plan or of any report or employ other means of publicity and education.

Special Use Applications

A Special Use Application may be needed when an activity or development is not currently permitted in a current zoning district. This type of application requires approval by the Planning Commission, in accordance with the City of Bay City Code of Ordinances Chapter 122-Zoning, Article XVI – Special Uses, which can be found here:

https://library.municode.com/mi/bay_city/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_CH122ZO_ARTXVISPUS.

Sec. 122-351. – Planning commission approval – All special uses shall be subject to review and approval by the planning commission under the provisions of this article. A special use requiring a nonuse or dimensional variance shall first be approved by the planning commission before an application for such variance may be filed with the zoning board of appeals.

Sec. 122-356 – Review and Approval.

(a) The planning commission shall review the application and site plan and any reports and findings prepared by planning department staff and other city departments. Review of the site plan shall be concurrent with review of the application. Approval of the site plan shall be subject to the site plan approval standards set forth in article XV, section 122-326.

(b) The planning commission shall hold a public hearing on all applications. Notice of public hearings shall be given in accordance with the regulations of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, PA 110 of 2006 as amended.

(c) The planning commission may approve, approve with conditions, or deny approval of the application. It may also postpone action on the application at the request of the applicant or pending receipt of a revised site plan or supplemental information requested by the planning commission deemed necessary to an informed decision.

(d) Establishment of the special use shall be subject to the conditions of approval, if any, the standards and regulations applicable to the special use set forth in this chapter, any standards for specific uses set forth in article XXI, and the approved site plan.

Sec. 122-358 – Conditions.

Any conditions imposed with the approval of the special use shall be in accordance with the regulations of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, PA 110 of 2006 as amended.

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, PA 110 of 2006, can be found here:

[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)

Key Stakeholders

The stakeholders represent a diverse set of individuals, groups, and organizations that are interested or affected by the planning and City processes. A different group of stakeholders may be engaged in each of the planning and development review processes, dependent on the nature of the project or plan, the level of community interest, and the community's financial involvement in the project. Below is a list of Stakeholders

- Residents
- City Commission
- Planning Commission
- City Staff
- Commercial Business Owners
- Local Business Community
- Bay City Community Schools
- Bay County Government
- Bay Area Chamber of Commerce
- Bay Area Action Committee
- Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy
- Bay Future Inc.
- Civic and Social Organizations
- Students and student groups
- Potential investors and developers
- Relevant state agencies
- Local Colleges and Universities
- Local healthcare providers, human service organizations, environmental and conservation organizations
- Other relevant stakeholders

Communication Toolbox

The City is often required to offer opportunities for the public to participate in planning and development initiatives. Generally, these forms of engagement can be categorized as public commissions, public comments, public hearings, and public announcements. Because of their statutory requirements, local governments often have these activities well integrated into daily operations.

Public Commissions and Development Review Bodies

City boards and commissions provide recommendations to the City Commission on several important topics and issues. These groups often provide important expertise and volunteer time to address issues

pertinent to the community. Several existing boards and commissions that may be relevant to the planning and development process are listed below.

The City encourages public participation in local government planning and policy decisions. All residents are invited to apply for appointments to City boards and commissions, subject to the bylaws of the individual boards and commissions. Vacant positions are advertised on the City's website.

City's Boards and Commissions

- Board of Review
- Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
- Building Code Board of Appeals
- Charter Commission
- Citizen District Councils
- City Commission
- Columbus Avenue Management Board
- Compensation Commission
- Coordinating Council/Tax Increment Finance Authority
- Downtown Development Authority
- Downtown Management Board
- Economic Development Corporation
- Finance and Policy Committee
- Fire Board Code of Appeals
- Historic District Commission
- Housing Commission
- Human Relations Committee
- James Clements Airport Advisory Committee
- Midland Street Management Board
- Planning Commission
- Public Safety & Fire Pension Plan & Retirement System Board
- Wenonah Park Properties Board
- Zoning Board of Appeals

Basic Announcement Methods

- Website Posting
- Flier posting at City hall entrance
- Commission meeting announcements
- City social media accounts

Collaborative Proactive Practices

Strong partnerships and stakeholder engagement make education and collaborative visioning possible. Committed to getting wide-ranging public input, the City will use creative and innovative strategies along with the more traditional methods. Below is a list and description of methods currently used and ones likely to be explored in the future.

Surveys

Surveys are useful for identifying specific areas of interest or concentration from a broad scope of ideas and 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 the topic. Surveys can be useful to get a general idea on a topic but should not be used as the sole method of public input. As with most public input efforts, it is best to vary the delivery method. Technology has increased delivery methods of surveys, including via email blasts, social media and mobile phone texting.

Workshops/Open Houses

Workshops are designed to hear public input on a specific topic. Often, workshops are a great way to educate the community and hear concerns, questions, and ideas. There are a variety of venues the City can hold workshops, depending on the scope of the project and expected attendance. Workshops are typically conducted by City staff.

One-on-one interviews

Interviews are a great way to get specifics on a topic. Specific community leaders or vocal residents are identified, making them ideal candidates for an interview. One-on-one interviews are a great way to get perspective on how to address a topic. Interviews reflect the opinion of one individual and should not be considered the standing of the entire community.

Social networking

Technology offers a unique opportunity to give and receive information to a mass of people. This method is best used in conjunction with other methods because it excludes those who do not use social media. Social media has become an effective and efficient channel of communication between the City and the citizens. The social media efforts have advanced the City to a more visual digital presence. Social media's ability to drive community information, news and opinion in real time helps realize operating efficiencies, garner citizen engagement, and realize strategic objectives. Social media is used to update audiences on progress of a project, distribute meeting notifications, solicit feedback from surveys or general comments, and generally engage and inform users.

Website/NotifyMe®

Websites offer an omnipresent, easily accessible method for distributing information, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Users know where to go to get the information or can search for content online. The City’s website offers access to an abundance of information, service offerings, project information and much more. In addition, the City’s website offers NotifyMe® services where you can register your email address and choose a number of items to be notified of, including newsletter releases, notifications of public meetings, news flash notifications, and events.

Additionally, each city department has a webpage on the city’s website with a “Contact Us” and “Email the Department” links that enable citizens to directly email issues to specific staff to efficiently facilitate communication and resolution of community concerns.

SeeClickFix

With the free SeeClickFix mobile app and web tools, citizens are able to provide Bay City staff with pictures, videos, specific descriptions, and more – valuable information needed to get the job done efficiently. In addition, the SeeClickFix platform provides a centralized issue management system to track issues from creation to resolution – engaging citizens throughout the process. The mobile app is available in both Apple and Android versions.

Neighborhood Group Meetings

The City of Bay City has five Citizen District Councils composed of citizens with an assigned staff liaison. These councils meet monthly to discuss issues in their neighborhoods and provide feedback on city issues. Four members of each of these councils is assigned to the Coordinating Council. The Coordinating Council is the governing board for our Tax Increment Financing Authority and provides a collaborative opportunity for city-wide neighborhood discussion on city issues and a communication tool on updates to city plans. The Coordinating Council meets no less than twice yearly and has historically been a vital source of community input into the budgeting process for Community Development Grant dollars. Efforts to strengthen these groups continue to be on the forefront of the city’s goals to increase citizen involvement in the governmental process and as a source of education to the public on the value of citizen input.

Outreach Strategies

There are many situations in which the City will solicit public input for a plan or project. Public participation in the planning process not only satisfies political and public need, it also increases the likelihood of plan success by making a more durable document. When residents are involved in the plan process, they are more likely to stay involved afterwards by forwarding the vision and partaking in the action plan to better their community with a sense of ownership. Engagement efforts will vary depending upon the type, intensity, and location of a project or plan.

Master Plan Update

The Master Plan is the visioning document for the City which future developments and policy are created from. Therefore, it is the most important planning process to get the broadest engagement and most public input. The City uses a variety of communication tools with an effort to gain attention and involvement from the widest sample of residents to represent the entire City. Input on Master Plan updates are conducted through one-on-one interviews, surveys, and public hearings. The City posts notices on the Facebook page as well as the City website. The Planning commission and City Council both hold public hearings and consider all public feedback. Master Plan updates are published on the City's website. The Master Plan is updated every five years. Progress is assessed annually through the Planning Commission Annual Report, which is posted on the City's website.

Zoning Ordinance Update

The Zoning Ordinance is the regulating document which helps forward the vision of the City as well as promote the public health, safety and general welfare. Since the document establishes comprehensive zoning regulations and provides for the administration, enforcement and amendment of those regulations, it is important that the public are informed of and can give input about updates. Zoning regulations are based on the Master Plan and therefore do not need as extensive of an input process. However, informing and educating the public is important and the City utilizes newspaper and website postings to get the word out on any zoning ordinance updates or rezonings. Public hearings are also held to both educate the public on the updates and to hear public input.

Parks and Recreation Plan

Surveys, workshops, one-on-one interviews, social media and website postings are the targeted communication avenues the City will utilize when updating the Parks and Recreation Plan. The Parks and Recreation Plan is updated every five years.

Development Plan

Development plans require a review by the City staff. If the plan is low controversy, impacting an area of 3,000sqft or less, it may be approved administratively. If there are any questions, it may be forwarded to the Planning Commission for review and approval.

Development plans impacting a greater area than 3,000sqft, or requiring a special use permit, will most often require public hearings and input from relevant residents, business owners, and/or organizational leaders. Proactive notification and timely education can prevent controversy. Mailings, media, websites and other methods can keep residents informed to prevent misinformation and misunderstanding. Public hearings allow developers, residents, and officials to work through development plans and solicit input.

Disposition of City Owned Surplus Real Property Policy

The City maintains a listing and data files of all City owned real property, and all information in the City's possession concerning the real property, including, but not limited to, size, zoning, assessed value, available appraisals, legal description, liens, encumbrances, method of acquisition, grants, and any other available data. Prior to considering any sale or other disposition of City owned real property, the City Manager or their designee reviews the history of each parcel of City owned real property to determine whether the parcel is subject to grant or deed restrictions, laws (such as tax foreclosure proceedings), or other circumstances or conditions which may prohibit, restrict, or affect the sale or transfer of the parcel.

At least once annually, the City Manager or their designee determines, in accordance with the Disposition of City Owned Surplus Real Property Policy, whether specific parcels of City owned real property are no longer used for public purposes or will enhance economic or residential development within the City and therefore can be sold or disposed of in another manner. The City Manager or their designee coordinates and manages the sale or other disposition of Surplus Real Property in accordance with this Policy.

The Disposition of City Owned Surplus Real Property Policy is published on the City's website: <https://www.baycitymi.org/DocumentCenter/View/179/-Policy-for-the-Disposition-of-City-Owned-Surplus-Real-Property-PDF>.

Communication Results

The City will communicate results from public participation by including it in the final plan of the documents. Media will also be released as soon as practicable following a public input session, publishing attendance, a synopsis of the input results as well as solicit future participation for future meetings. This demonstrates that the responses were heard, shows that public input is desired, and creates an environment of transparency.

Public Meetings: Meeting minutes are posted on the City website.

Surveys: Surveys will be compiled by City staff no later than four weeks after the survey is complete. Results will be posted online or in the appendix of the plan.

One-on-one interviews: Interview results will be kept confidential for the comfort of the participants unless otherwise requested.

Social networking: The City Facebook page is operated by City staff. Engagement traffic is analyzed, and methods are adjusted accordingly.

Evaluation and Improvement

Continuous review of our public input processes is the only way that the City of Bay City will remain a thriving and connected community. The residents are what make Bay City such a great community to live in. Their creativity and talent are irreplaceable in the planning processes of the community. Therefore, reflection on communication and involvement efforts is needed to verify that optimal methods are used. The City of Bay City will review this Public Participation Plan every five years in order to monitor the effectiveness of the procedures outlined in this document. All public participation efforts will be recorded by the various City departments and reviewed on an annual basis. An annual summary will be published on the City's website as part of the Planning Commission Annual Report for those items relating to public participation activities for the Planning Commission and in the Economic Development Annual Report for all remaining public participation activities. Following evaluation of the outputs and outcomes of the Public Participation Plan, the City may revise these methods to incorporate new and innovative ways to involve the public in the planning decision-making process.

Public participation, when properly executed, builds community consensus, and strengthens sense of community. Creating a culture of collaborative visioning enriches democracy by allowing citizens to voice their ideas, not just their complaints. This plan is to be used and reviewed as a daily guide to best incorporate the public into decisions that affect the Bay City community.