



Hudsonville  
Public Outreach  
&  
Citizen Input Plan

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOALS

Hudsonville is committed to acquiring feedback and involving the public in the planning process. The city has established three primary goals within our Public Outreach & Citizen Input Plan.

1. Solicit citizen input in planning processes; track and report back on input.
2. 'Bring the meeting to the citizens' mindset of public outreach.
3. Continually improve our communication and input process.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

Basic requirements for public participation are mandated in state and federal laws for certain public projects and development reviews. The city shall follow the local and state regulations listed below. These regulations include provisions for the public review process, public participation, and public hearings.

- [City Code of Ordinances](#)
- [The Michigan Open Meetings Act \(PA 267 of 1976\)](#)
- [The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act \(PA 110 of 2006\)](#)
- [The Michigan Planning Enabling Act \(PA 33 of 2008\)](#)
- [Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act \(PA 381 of 1996\)](#)
- [Downtown Development Authority Act \(PA 197 of 1975\)](#)
- Other relevant local and State legislation

## 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. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- Chamber of Commerce
- City Boards and Commissions
- Commercial Business Owners
- Community's largest employers
- Downtown Development Authority
- Hudsonville Community Schools
- Potential Investors
- Public employees (police, fire, health, education)
- Religious groups
- Senior groups
- Social Organizations
- Students

- Neighborhood Groups
- Young Professionals
- Neighboring Municipalities
- Other entities familiar with the community

The city is committed to ensuring the public is notified and involved in its planning process. More effort is needed to reach beyond the public meeting as many residents will not attend a meeting even if the invitation is extended to them. Technology and information sharing through the city's website helps with this issue. The city uses a newsletter signup system via the website to offer residents the opportunity to stay informed. Hudsonville's social media presence for public notification could be improved. It is used for city events and information but not for public notification unless there is a survey currently open. The city also does not collect and analyze data on residents who attend public meetings or the nature of the comments that are made. The city shall work to identify these stakeholders and make a concerted effort at bringing them into the decision-making process.

## THE COMMUNICATION TOOLBOX

### **Basic announcement methods for public meetings**

The following methods are often used to advertise public meetings. These methods tend to reach most of our stakeholders for larger public meetings/input, but for the more common public hearings (Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals) the notification process is set and impacts residents who are in close proximity to that specific project versus a diverse range of stakeholders.

- Legal Notice published in local newspaper
- Legal Notice sent to neighboring resident/occupants within 300' of specific project
- Website posting
- Legal Notice posted at City Hall
- Attachments to water bills (more for surveys, community feedback)
- Emails to newsletter subscribers
- Social media
- Press release to media
- City newsletter articles
- Applicant is encouraged to seek input from adjacent property owners prior to submitting application for development plans.

### **Citizen Input**

- **Public Meetings:** It allows the resident to address concerns/comments with the relevant Board or Commission whether they be positive or negative. The Board/Commission then takes those comments into consideration when discussing/deciding on a project.

Residents/Business Owners are also encouraged to submit comments to City Hall if they cannot make the meeting.

- Focus Groups/Visioning Workshops: Focus groups can help narrow down concepts or get a specific side of the story. Key stakeholders are the ideal participants for a focus group. City Staff/Consultant would host the focus groups or visioning workshops. Focus Groups/Visioning workshops could be done at a city building, virtually or on the proposed project site and include a series of question-and-answer sessions after a presentation of a specific idea or concept.
- Community Open Houses: Community open houses would be similar to the focus groups/visioning workshops with the community being able to come in throughout the day to view what a project would look like with the different concepts/ideas displayed. The community open house would take place at a city building with the visual aids also posted online for those who would not be able to make it in person. The open house would also be run by City Staff or a consultant.
- Resident survey (Printed or electronic): A resident survey allows for comments and feedback to be given at an anonymous level. Past resident surveys have done very well due to residents being able to fill them out whenever they want, and give feedback that they may not otherwise give if it was a public forum or meeting. The survey if done physically would most likely correspond with the city newsletter since it goes out to every resident at one time. The water bill could also be utilized, but the city is done in sections, so the survey would need to be open long enough for each section to get the survey and have time to take it.

## STRATEGIES FOR OUTREACH

Communication Toolbox					
	Major Developments	Downtown Development Authority	Master Plan	Parks and Recreation Planning	Zoning Ordinance
Attachments to water bills					
City newsletter articles					
Community Open Houses					
Emails to newsletter subscribers					
Focus Groups/Visioning Workshops					
Legal notice in newspaper					
Legal notice on bulletin board at City Hall					
Legal notice to neighbors within 300 ft					
Press release to media					
Public hearing					
Social media					
Surveys					

Recommended    Optional    Required

## COMMUNICATING RESULTS

### Water Bills

Water Bills are a helpful tool as every property in the city receives one, but this happens at various times throughout the year. When public input was requested, the results could be made known on each water bill cycle until every section of the city has been covered. This would be done by the DPW Executive Assistant.

### City Newsletter

An announcement that results from surveys or other forms of community feedback will be reported in the next quarterly newsletter. Due to limited space, the full display of results would be available to view on the city website or at City Hall. Newsletter articles are written by the department that requested the feedback with assistance from the Marketing Department.

### Community Open Houses

City Staff/Consultant is charged with taking notes during community workshops and charrettes. These notes could be posted on city social media within a week after the workshop or the charrette. In addition, the results of these events could be communicated in a wrap up

community meeting. Additional information can be incorporated into the appendix of adopted plans.

### **Newsletter Groups**

The sign up for the newsletter groups is located on the city website under the 'how do I?' tab. These include development projects, economic development news, master plan updates, recreation news, and Planning/City Commission agendas (which would have updates on the Zoning Ordinance). Results from community feedback could be sent to the relevant newsletter groups by the Marketing Department.

### **Focus Groups/Visioning Workshops**

Focus group results will be kept confidential for the comfort of the participants unless requested otherwise. Visioning Workshop results will be used to further the progress of a development plan/city plan. Then the results would be used to help establish more specific information/questions at a community open house.

### **Press Release**

For large public participation sessions, a press release with a summary of results is a good option to get information out to as many people as possible, especially if this is for a key city project, like the Village Green or public amenity. Press releases are done by the Marketing Department with input from the City Manager.

### **Public Meetings**

City Commission Meetings are televised on WCET as well as YouTube. Other Boards and Commission have minutes taken that are posted to the website no later than 10 business days after a meeting.

### **Social Media**

The Marketing Department is responsible for monitoring the municipal Facebook page. The Marketing Department will post on behalf of the municipality concerning community events and public participation results.

### **Surveys**

Surveys will be compiled by the department that requested the public input no later than two weeks after the survey was completed, depending on the volume of results. An announcement that the results are available to view on the city website or at City Hall would be made on the city social media and published in the quarterly newsletter. A summary of results could be published in the newsletter, but not all, due to limited space. The announcements would be done by the Marketing Department.

Public engagement activities are reported to the governing body (City Commission) via the minutes from each board (Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Commission, DDA, and more). The minutes are a detailed report of what took place at those meetings. The minutes and public notices for those meetings are all located on the city's website, <https://www.hudsonville.org/1->

[agendas-minutes](#) . The annual report that is written for RRC that details the year for the Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Commission will also be published on the website in the same location for the public to view.

## EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTICIPATION EFFORTS

The City of Hudsonville is committed to continually seeking opportunities to be creative in reaching citizens in a way that is accessible and easy for the citizens. As such, for each plan update, we will review our methods to seek plan-specific creative ways to engage. We are also committed to an annual review of this plan to include new technologies or input methods. The plan will be updated every two years.

## CLOSING

The public participation plan is a great tool for the city to have to know the proper steps for communication to the residents of the city. It will help a city employee to know what types of communication they should use for certain situations or plans. It also might show a way of communication that wouldn't have been used if they didn't reference the plan. The plan will be used any time communication with the public happens to make sure all the options for types of communication are explored.