

CITY OF MT. PLEASANT

# **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**



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# INTRODUCTION

The Public Participation and Engagement Strategy is intended to be a resource to staff of the City of Mt. Pleasant (hereafter “the City”) when communicating and engaging with members of the Mt. Pleasant community.

The strategy is also intended to help community members better understand the opportunities available to them to obtain information and participate in our local government.

# PHILOSOPHY

- The City recognizes that an educated, informed, and engaged citizenry is essential to the present and future success of our community.
- The City will meet or exceed all applicable federal, state, and local statutory requirements for public notice and participation.
- The City will strive to be clear, consistent, comprehensive, and creative in all communications with and engagement of the public.
- The City will ensure that a broad and representative cross-section of stakeholders is reached.
- The City will be attentive to the needs of stakeholders who face barriers to participation in city affairs, including but not limited to cultural, linguistic, physical, and socio-economic barriers.
- The City will regularly evaluate the use of various methods of communication and engagement and make adjustments to this strategy as needed.

# STAKEHOLDERS

The City recognizes that the stakeholders for each project or initiative will be different. The following is an extensive but not comprehensive list of common stakeholders with which communications or engagement should be considered.

These stakeholders groups are also likely partners in communicating with the community through their meetings, publications, and other avenues.

- City Commission
- City boards and commissions
- Steering committees
- Residents
- Business owners
- Neighborhood associations
- Mt. Pleasant Public Schools
- Central Michigan University
- Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe
- Mt. Pleasant Area Chamber of Commerce
- Isabella County
- Charter Township of Union
- East Michigan Council of Governments
- Taxing jurisdictions
- Property owners or developers
- Senior citizens
- Students and student groups
- Children
- Public employees
- Major local employers
- Civic and social organizations
- Community service agencies
- Isabella County Transportation Commission
- Relevant state agencies
- Other interest groups

# STATE AND LOCAL REGULATIONS

The City will meet or exceed all applicable federal, state, and local statutory requirements for public notice and participation.

# BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

The City aims to provide residents and community members with various and extensive ways in which to participate in local government.

One of the most important ways residents can participate is through service on a City board or commission. There are currently 20 boards, commissions, or advisory committees with over 100 positions in which residents or community members serve.

Below is a partial list of those boards and commissions.

## **City Commission**

The City Commission is the legislative and policy-making body for the City government. Seven commissioners are elected at large for staggered three-year terms. The Mayor and Vice Mayor are selected by the commission. The commission also appoints the City Manager, who is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the City government.

## **Historic District Commission**

The purpose of the Mt. Pleasant Historic District Commission (HDC) is to safeguard the heritage of the City of Mt. Pleasant by preserving one or more districts which reflect elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, political or architectural history. The Historic District Commission will also preserve historic landmarks in the City; stabilize and improve property values in such districts; foster civic beauty; strengthen the local economy; and promote the use of historic districts for the education, pleasure, and welfare of the citizens of the City. The seven board members are appointed by the City Commission and serve a three-year term without pay.

## **Parks & Recreation Commission**

The Mt. Pleasant Parks & Recreation Commission is a citizen advisory board made up of seven city residents who advise the City Commission on leisure time needs of the community. The commission also plans for development of park facilities and recreation programs. Board members are appointed by the City Commission and serve a three-year term without pay.

## **Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission is a nine-member citizen advisory board, whose task is to guide the physical development of the City and advise the City Commission on a suggested policy for growth. Members are appointed by the City Commission and serve staggered three-year terms without pay.

*(Boards and Commissions continued on next page.)*

### **Economic Development Corporation / Brownfield Redevelopment Authority**

The EDC deals with financing land purchases for economic development in the city, and a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority that helps provide financing to assist with the redevelopment of environmentally contaminated or structurally or economically obsolete sites in the city. A nine-member advisory board oversees the operation of all the EDC/Brownfield Redevelopment Authority listed above. Board members are appointed by the City Commission and serve staggered six-year terms without pay.

### **Downtown Development Authority**

Mt. Pleasant's Downtown Development Authority (DDA) encompasses Mission Street (from Bluegrass to the north city limit), Pickard Street (from Arnold to Packard), and Broadway Street (from Mission to Fancher). An eleven-member advisory board oversees the operation of the DDA and the City's tax increment finance authorities. Board members are appointed by the City Commission and serve staggered four-year terms without pay.

### **Principal Shopping District Board**

The purpose of the Principal Shopping District (PSD) is to act as the Board in accordance with Act 120 of the Public Act of Michigan of 1961, to initiate projects and programs to halt property value deterioration and increase property tax valuation the designated downtown district, to eliminate the causes of deterioration, to promote economic growth and encourage expansion of commercial and industrial enterprises in the designated districts. A nine-member advisory board oversees the operation of the City's PSD. Board members are appointed by the City Commission and serve staggered four-year terms without pay.

### **Tax Increment Finance Authorities**

Mt. Pleasant has three Tax Increment Finance Authorities (TIFA). The authorities initiate projects and programs to halt property value deterioration and increase property tax valuation in designated districts. One authority was created for the Central Business District (CBD) which describes Mt. Pleasant's downtown area. Another TIFA district was created for the Industrial Park North area, located east of North Mission Road near US-127. The third was created for the University Park district that is situated on the south end of the Central Michigan University campus. A nine-member advisory board oversees the operation of the City's tax increment finance authorities. Board members are appointed by the City Commission and serve staggered four-year terms without pay.

## **Zoning Board of Appeals**

The Mt. Pleasant Zoning Board of Appeals is a six-member (five regular members and one alternate) citizen advisory board responsible for hearing appeals on decisions regarding enforcement of the Zoning Ordinance. Board members are appointed by the City Commission and serve staggered three-year terms without pay.

# **PUBLIC MEETINGS**

All meetings of the City Commission and its various boards and commissions shall be open to the public in accordance with the Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976 as amended), except closed session meetings as provided for in the Act.

Public notice of meetings shall be given in accord with the Act.

All meetings shall be held in a facility accessible to persons with disabilities and the City shall provide reasonable accommodations, such as interpreters for the hearing impaired and audiotapes of printed materials being considered at this meeting, upon notice to the City prior to the meeting. Individuals with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodations or services should contact the Human Resources Department.

Interested persons are encouraged to contact City Hall or check the City's website at [www.mt-pleasant.org](http://www.mt-pleasant.org) in order to review the schedule of public meetings.

Regular meetings of the City Commission, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals are aired live on MAC TV Network (Channel 188). Meeting videos are also available via an on-demand playback option via [www.mactvnetwork.org](http://www.mactvnetwork.org). Additional special meetings and presentations are routinely aired live or taped and available for viewing via [www.mactvnetwork.org](http://www.mactvnetwork.org) or the City's YouTube account (user name: MtPleasantMI).

Individual boards and commissions hold public meetings pursuant to their respective bylaws and state and local statutes. Meeting agendas and packets are made available on the City's website in advance of each meeting. The City also provides a mailing list for interested residents or community members to receive automatic email notification of public hearings.

Meeting minutes are coordinated by the staff liaison and posted on the City's website following approval by said board or commission.



# PUBLIC COMMENTS

Opportunities for public comment are available at any meeting of the City Commission or City's boards and commissions pursuant to their respective bylaws. The meeting agenda allows for public comments under the 'Public Comment' section. The participation of interested persons shall be recorded in the meeting minutes. Approved meeting minutes are made available to the public through various methods, including being posted on the City's website.

# PUBLIC HEARINGS

The City Commission and its various boards and commissions holds public hearings when called for in their local and state enabling legislation, or when otherwise prudent, to provide the opportunity for public comment on specific topics.

## **City Commission**

The City Commission holds public hearings are required under local and state statute. Notices are published in the Morning Sun. Additional notification by mail occurs as required under local and state statute.

## **Planning Commission**

Notification of a public hearing before the Planning Commission is published in the Morning Sun in accordance with state statute and provided by mail to the owners and occupants of property within 300 feet of the subject property. Notification signs are also posted on the property to alert the general public of the pending action.

## **Other Boards and Commissions**

Public hearings are held needed and pursuant to their respective bylaws. Public hearings are noticed as required in advance of the meeting.



# EXPECTATIONS

- Plan your public participation and engagement strategy in advance.
- Utilize this strategy document to assist your planning.
- Share your strategy with others for feedback.
- Be flexible when implementing your strategy. Make adjustments as necessary.
- When the project ends, or periodically for ongoing initiatives, review and evaluate your strategies and make adjustments as necessary.
- Solicit feedback and utilize it to improve future efforts.
- Avoid the use of jargon (specialized terms used by a group or profession) and unexplained or uncommon acronyms and abbreviations.
- Explain the ground rules for conversation and set expectations. For example, if a decision is to be made explain how, when, and to what degree the public can help to shape the outcome.
- As you refine your strategies, share what you learn with others.

# PLANNING

Public participation and engagement is a critical component of all projects, and proper planning is crucial to ensure the appropriate stakeholders are reached.

Prior to seeking to inform, educate, engage, or partner with the community on a specific project or issue, City staff are encouraged to consider the following questions:

- What is the objective of this participation or engagement? Is it to inform, educate, engage, or partner with the community?
- What are the minimum requirements for public participation and engagement under local and state statutes related to this project or issue?
- Who are the key stakeholders?
- What are the key messages?
- How much time is available?
- What is the budget for this issue?
- Are there limitations on how the public can impact the outcome of the project or issue? For example, notifying the public about an emergency repair versus development of a new City program.
- What methods are most likely to reach these groups? Multiple methods may be necessary to reach different stakeholder groups for one project.
- Is this a large or potentially controversial project? Additional outreach may be necessary.

# EVALUATION

Ongoing evaluation of methods is necessary in order to ensure successful engagement of the community. Surveying participants is one means by which methods can be evaluated. A sample participant survey is included in the toolbox.

Results of these surveys will be used to refine this document, will inform future participation and engagement strategy development, and will be shared with staff and the public as a measure of how we are doing

# TOOLBOX

Public participation and engagement is a critical component of all projects, and The City has numerous methods of public participation and engagement at its disposal. Each method offers distinctive benefits and limitations. Most projects and issues will require a combination of methods for comprehensive participation and engagement.

The use of the City website or social media should be conducted in accordance with guidelines developed by the Communications office.

The appendix contains a list of participation and engagement methods used by or available to the City along with factors relevant to their usage. This list will continue to evolve as methods change over time.



Feel free to write additional comments in the margins.

1. Please rate the following:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This program was organized well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff members were helpful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff members were friendly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff members were knowledgeable on topics presented.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The days selected for the program were convenient.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The normal location of the program was convenient.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The equipment used for the program was of high quality.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The content was age-appropriate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The activities presented were fun and engaging.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My child benefited from this program.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. How did you hear about the program (check all that apply)

- Newspaper
- Calendar of Events
- Friend
- Radio WCFX
- Radio WUPN
- Daycare Flyer
- Other (please specify)

3. Would you suggest this program to friends and family?

Yes

No

4. Additional comments/suggestions

# APPENDIX

Method	Required by State or Local Statute in certain circumstances	Level of Participation				Urgency of Message Dissemination			Project Duration			Cost			Interactivity		
		INFORM	EDUCATE	ENGAGE	PARTNER	Low (More than 1 week)	Medium (2 days - 1 week)	High (24-48 hours)	Short (Less than 1 week)	Medium (1-2 months)	Long (more than 2 months)	None	Low (less than \$100)	High (over \$100)	Low	Medium	High
#tagging/sharing		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	
Community Events		X	X	X		X				X	X	X	X				X
Door to Door		X	X	X		X				X	X	X					X
Over the Counter		X	X	X		X			X	X	X	X					X
Phone		X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X					X
QR Codes		X	X	X		X				X	X					X	
Billboard		X	X			X				X			X				
City Newsletter		X	X			X				X	X					X	
City Website		X	X			X			X	X	X	X				X	
Community Presentations		X	X			X				X	X	X				X	
eConnections		X	X			X				X	X	X				X	
Flyers at Community Locations		X	X				X			X	X		X			X	
Flyers in City Buildings		X	X				X			X	X		X			X	
Napkins		X	X			X				X			X			X	
Open House		X	X			X				X	X		X				X
Placemats		X	X			X				X			X			X	
Posters		X	X			X				X			X			X	
Project Specific Webpage		X	X			X				X	X		X			X	
Reports		X	X			X				X	X					X	
Table Tents		X	X			X				X			X			X	
Video		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
YouTube		X	X				X		X	X	X	X				X	
Facebook		X		X				X	X	X	X	X				X	
Instagram		X		X				X	X	X	X	X				X	
Twitter		X		X				X	X	X	X	X				X	
Banners		X				X				X			X			X	
City Calendar		X				X			X	X	X	X				X	
City Hall Display Case	X	X				X			X	X	X	X				X	
Code RED		X						X	X	X	X	X				X	
Direct Mail		X	X				X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Door Tags		X						X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Emailed notices		X						X	X	X	X	X				X	
Freebies / Novelties		X				X				X	X		X	X	X	X	
LinkedIn		X				X			X	X	X	X				X	
Lobby		X				X			X	X	X	X				X	
MAC TV		X						X	X	X	X	X				X	
Mailed notices	X	X					X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Newspaper Ad	X	X				X			X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Press Releases		X						X	X	X	X	X				X	
Radio		X						X		X	X	X				X	
Recycle Bin Flyers		X				X				X	X		X	X	X	X	
Tabling		X				X				X	X		X			X	
Truck Signage		X				X				X			X			X	
TV		X						X	X	X	X	X				X	
Water Bill		X				X				X	X		X			X	
Yard Signs		X				X				X	X		X	X	X	X	
Neighborhood Groups			X	X	X	X				X	X	X				X	
Roundtable Discussion			X	X		X				X	X	X					X
Training / Education			X	X		X				X	X	X	X	X			X
Walking Tour			X	X		X				X	X	X					X
Workshop			X	X		X				X	X	X	X	X			X
Standing Committees				X	X	X				X	X	X					X
Apps		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X					X	
Charrette				X		X				X		X	X	X			X
Focus Group				X		X				X	X	X	X				X
Interviews				X		X				X	X	X					X
Public Hearings	X			X		X				X	X	X	X	X		X	
Surveys				X		X				X	X	X	X	X	X		
Board or Commission	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X				X	