

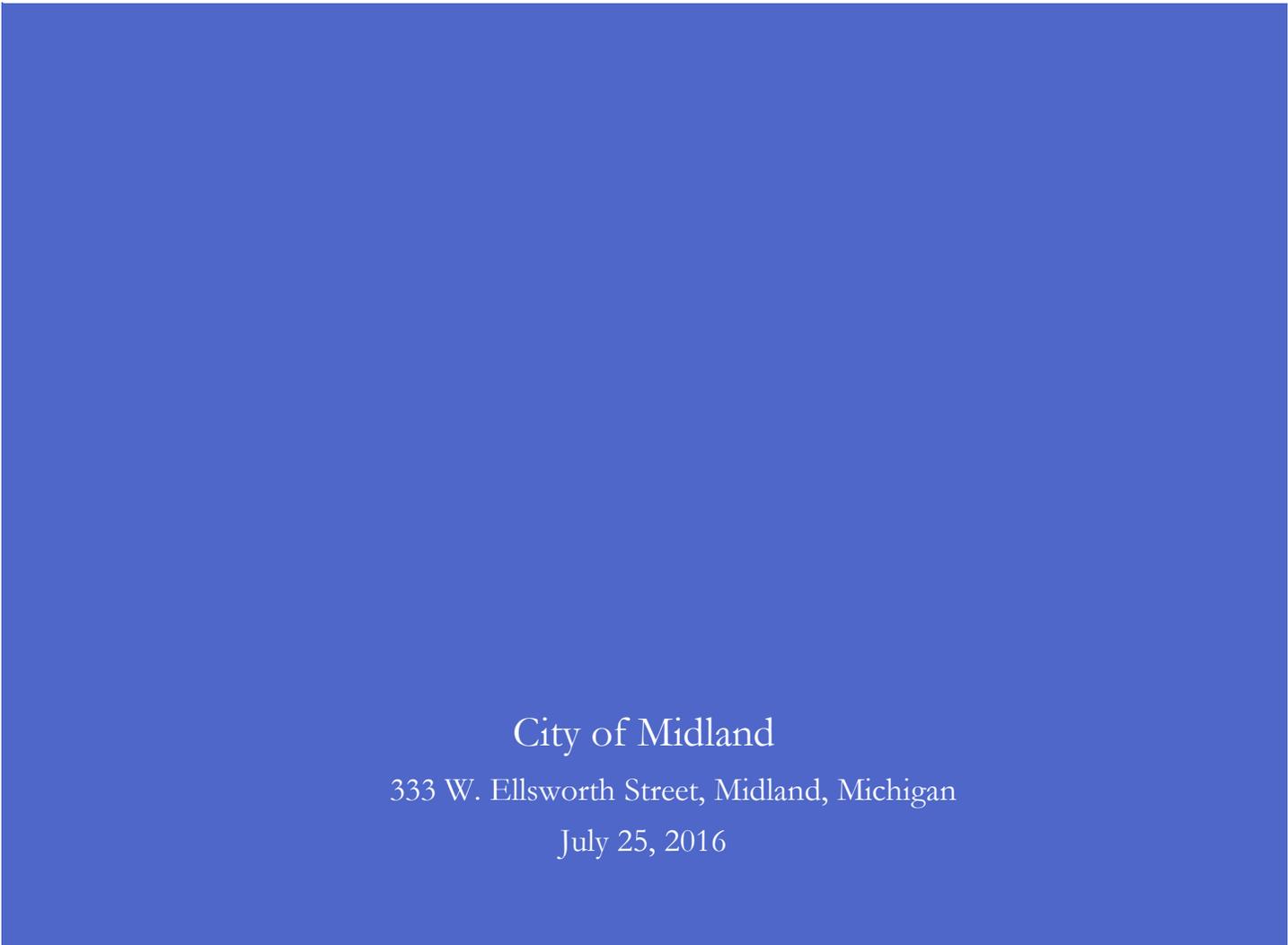


CITY OF MIDLAND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

City of Midland

333 W. Ellsworth Street, Midland, Michigan

July 25, 2016



City of Midland Public Participation Plan for Development Projects



1. Purpose

The City of Midland Public Participation Plan is a guide to gathering public input during the planning and the development review and approval processes. The City of Midland is required by State laws, as well as City Ordinances and bylaws, to gather public input throughout the development process to ensure public involvement in all phases of the development process. This document shall serve as a guide for seeking and gathering public input, and to create a uniform understanding of all requirements and goals of the city in utilizing public opinion.

Beyond State requirements, the City of Midland will enable the public to participate in decision-making processes by providing clear information on the issues, the ways to participate and how the public's participation will contribute to the decisions made. In doing so, the city is committed to maintaining a safe environment that cultivates and supports respectful public engagement and will expect all participants to do the same.

All meetings of the city's boards and commissions will be made open to the public and as accessible as possible. When the gathering of broader public input is required, this guide will outline those procedures.

2. Public Participation Goals

The City of Midland's commitment to public participation is reflected in this plan. The City recognizes the importance of public input in all aspects of the development process. Additionally, the City recognizes that effectively utilizing public opinion requires efficient means of gathering and reviewing these opinions. Therefore, the City is dedicated not only to the gathering of public input, but also the regular review of the means used within this plan. The City will regularly seek new and more effective means of utilizing public input to ensure the system at hand is most beneficial to the public. With that in mind, the strategies and goals outlined herein do not preclude any new efforts which may be used in the future.

- *The City of Midland shall conduct all matters of public business in an open and accessible manner.*
- *The City of Midland shall seek public input in each phase of the planning and the development review and approval processes.*

- *The City of Midland shall encourage the involvement of residents most affected by any planning activity or application and shall make reasonable efforts to ensure continued participation throughout all stages of the review and approval processes.*
- *The City of Midland will seek input from a diverse group of stakeholders within the City.*
- *The City of Midland will strive to provide open, timely and transparent information to the public in relation to all planning and development processes.*
- *The City of Midland will provide and make known the results of public input whenever feasible.*

3. Key Stakeholders

As previously mentioned, the City of Midland is committed to welcoming the input of all pertinent stakeholders within the City. A different group of stakeholders may be addressed for any given project, depending on the location, size, scope, financial implications, community interest or any other pertinent factors of the proposed development. This list does not preclude any other current or future stakeholders.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ❖ Residents | ❖ Civic and Social Groups |
| ❖ City Council | ❖ Students and Student Groups |
| ❖ City Boards and Commissions | ❖ Environmental Groups |
| ❖ Local Business Owners | ❖ Dial-A-Ride |
| ❖ Neighborhood Associations | ❖ State Agencies |
| ❖ Midland School Districts | ❖ Potential Investors |
| ❖ Northwood University | ❖ Midland Tomorrow |
| ❖ Senior Citizens | ❖ Transportation Agencies |
| ❖ Midland County | ❖ Airport Authorities |
| ❖ Real Estate Professionals | ❖ Taxing Jurisdictions |
| ❖ Commercial Developers | ❖ Neighboring Communities |
| ❖ Local Employers | ❖ Resident Employees |
| ❖ Chamber of Commerce | ❖ Public Employees |
| ❖ Community Foundations | ❖ Other Relevant Stakeholders |

4. State and Local Regulations

The City of Midland is subject to a number of state and local regulations pertaining to public participation. All City of Midland boards and commissions follow the guidelines contained within the following acts:

- ❑ **The Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976)**
- ❑ **The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008)**
- ❑ **The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006)**
- ❑ **City Charter**
- ❑ **City Code of Ordinances**
- ❑ **Zoning Codes**
- ❑ **Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act (PA 381 of 1996)**
- ❑ **Downtown Development Authority Act (PA 197 of 1975)**
- ❑ **Corridor Improvement Authority Act (PA 280 of 2005)**
- ❑ **Midland Municipal Planning Commission Rules of Procedure**
- ❑ **Other relevant local and State legislation.**

5. Review Bodies

The City of Midland provides numerous opportunities for residents, as well as the public at large, to present their opinion during the planning and development review and approval process. The City also welcomes and encourages feedback on development proposals, zoning and planning applications, development assistant programs, and any other pertinent topics. Below is a list of review bodies before which the public has opportunity to provide their input directly to City officials.

City Council

Midland City Council is the legislative body for the City and is responsible for the creation of policies and ordinances related to the development process. City Council is also responsible for final decisions on several development application related processes.

All meetings of the City Council are open to the public, and public hearings are frequently held at such meetings. Through both formal public meetings and more informal opportunities for public comment on agenda-related matters, the community at large is provided the opportunity to voice their opinion directly to City Council members.

Also provided for at every City Council meeting is the opportunity for public comment on matters not listed on the Council agenda. During this public comment period, interested persons are able to speak directly to City Council, raising any questions of items of concern. As appropriate, City staff take such comments under advisement for later report and reply.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is responsible for preparation and adoption of the City of Midland Master Plan that guides the physical development of the city. The Planning Commission is also the primary advisory commission to City Council on development related applications including zoning petitions, conditional use permits, site plans, subdivisions and condominiums, capital improvement plans, and other related land use proposals,

All meetings of the Planning Commission are open public meetings and public comment is provided for on each agenda. The meeting agenda and meeting packet are made available on the City's website in advance of every meeting.

It has been an ongoing practice of the City that the Planning Commission hold public hearings for all land use and development applications that come before them, even though public hearings are not required by State law for all such applications. Notice of such hearings is provided in accordance with the public hearing notification requirements of the Zoning Enabling Act, PA 110 of 2006. Such notice is provided at least 15 days in advance of the public hearing to the applicant, the property owner, all property owners within 300 feet of an affected property, and by publication in the Midland Daily News. The applicant and the City Council receive written notification of the Planning Commission's recommendation.

Other Boards and Commissions

All meetings of the City's various boards and commissions are open and accessible to the public. Public comments are taken during these meetings, allowing stakeholders in the City of Midland to voice their opinions and recommendations.

Beyond the City Council and City Planning Commission, public hearings may be held at various boards and commissions in regards to specific planning and development proposals. At these times residents may express their opinions and comments on developments slated for the City, as well as ask questions concerning the development request. Boards and commissions most likely to consider such requests are:

- Center City Authority
- Downtown Development Authority
- Parks & Recreation Commission
- West Main Street Historic District Commission
- Zoning Board of Appeals

6. Development Project Review

The City shall follow, at a minimum, the provisions of the local and State regulations, including those listed in this Plan, to review development projects related to planning and zoning applications, permits, and business assistance. This applies to the review process for site plans and conditional use permits, rezoning and variance request applications, brownfield or downtown redevelopment assistance, personal property tax exemptions, and industrial facilities exemptions. In such circumstances, the City Council and its boards and commissions will hold public hearings, noticed in accordance with State legislation, and allow for public comment on the proposed development project during its regular meetings. Depending on the nature of the project, the community's interest, and the community's financial involvement, additional methods of engagement may be used to gather community feedback.

Site Plan Reviews

The submittal, review and approval of detailed site plans are required for most developments that take place within the City of Midland. In many cases, those site plans are reviewed by the Planning Commission and a public hearing is held before a recommendation is made to City Council. This public hearing is noticed both in the local newspaper as well as by direct mail to all property owners within 300 ft of the land proposed for development. This public hearing is when many members of the community first hear of the proposed development.

Unlike many of the other city processes, site plan applications may only be reviewed to determine if they comply with the established standards of the City of Midland Zoning Ordinance. The public hearing process allows for public input but the information received may only be used to determine ordinance compliance. While this can cause both confusion and frustration on the part of the public, the city is required to comply with state law as set out in the State of Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. If and when a proposed site plan can show full compliance with the City of Midland Zoning Ordinance, approval must be given.

7. Other Opportunities for Engagement

There may be times that the City of Midland sees fit to gather public input outside of the instances mentioned above. While the previous methods of public participation can be viewed as "reactive" public participation, these methods can be viewed as "proactive." Instead of gathering public input as it comes in, these events are times the City will actively seek public input.

Adoption of or Changes to the Master Plan

Periodically, the City of Midland will find it fitting to review and update the Master Plan. At these times, the City may take any of the outreach activities mentioned in this guide, or any other method not mentioned, which is deemed fit for the occasion. Depending on the scope of the change to the Master Plan, relatively small or relatively large outreach may be pursued, as decided by City officials.

Unless City Council asserts its authority to adopt the Master Plan or any amendment thereto, the master plan is ultimately adopted by the Planning Commission. In preparing a new master plan or master plan update, the City shall, at a minimum, follow the public notification provisions of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008.

[Adoption of or Changes to the Zoning Ordinance](#)

As local and state conditions and practices evolve, changes to the City of Midland Zoning Ordinance will become necessary. Making these changes requires legislative action from City Council. At these times, the public is welcome to voice their opinions on prospective changes to City representatives. The scope of the public outreach may be varied, depending on the scope of the ordinance changes, when broader community concerns are involved or broader public impact can reasonably be expected. The City may decide to implement one or more of the methods outlined in this plan, as well as any other methods deemed fit, including options not specifically mentioned in this plan.

In preparing a new zoning ordinance or any amendment to the zoning ordinance, the City shall, at a minimum, follow the public notification provisions of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, PA 110 of 2006.

[Development Application Review of Projects with Broad Community Interest](#)

The City of Midland recognizes that at times development applications will involve matters of broad community interest or result in a need for heightened public involvement. At these times, the City may decide to engage the public through more intensive means than those used during the typical review process. The City may decide to implement one or more of the methods outlined in this plan, as well as any other methods deemed fit, including options not specifically mentioned in this plan.

[E-CityHall](#)

E-CityHall is an online forum for civic engagement where interested persons can learn about and participate in current city happenings. Read what others are saying about important Midland topics, then post your own statement. Input provided via this forum will be read by City officials and will then be incorporated them into the decision process.

When you post your first statement, you will be asked for your name and home address. This confidential information is only used to identify statements from residents in and near Midland - so that users know which statements are from local residents.

E-CityHall is available directly from the City of Midland website but is run by [Peak Democracy](#), a non-partisan company whose mission is to broaden civic engagement and build public trust in government. They will keep your information confidential per their strict [privacy agreement](#).

8. Public Comments

The City of Midland provides opportunity for public comment on every City Council, board and commission agenda under a Public Comment section of each such agenda. The participation of every interested party who provides comment or questions to any of these public bodies is recorded in the meeting minutes.

9. Methods of Advertising Community Participation

The City of Midland recognizes that to properly utilize public input, it is necessary at times to communicate the results of these efforts back to the public. These efforts increase transparency and allow the City to gain a more clear understanding of public opinion.

Methods of Communication

The City of Midland will continue to utilize multiple avenues of communications to present and make information easily available to the public. These methods of communication will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Local Cable Access Television
- City Website Updates
- Newspaper Postings
- Flyer Postings in City Hall and the City Library
- Social Media
- Press Releases and other communications to local media outlets
- Mailings and Email
- Community Newsletters
- Other Methods Deemed Appropriate

10. Additional Outreach Activities

The City of Midland recognizes that certain times may arise when the typical avenues of public participation will not be able to fully evaluate the scope and depth of public opinion. These times could include large scale development, controversial applications, changes to the City zoning ordinance or code of ordinance, or changes to the City's Master Plan. The City shall review and communicate the results of the following activities whenever feasible:

One-on-One Interviews

The City may hold interview with various stakeholders to get specific information on a topic. In general, the information collected during interviews will be kept confidential unless requested otherwise. The information may be compiled and analyzed together with other information collected from stakeholders on a specific topic.

Focus Groups

The City may conduct focus groups for gathering the community's opinion on specific issues, developmental proposals, development sites of major importance, or the community vision, as needed. A variety of groups may be invited to attend the focus groups depending on the location and nature of the development site or project, including Council members, affected neighborhood associations, community members, business leaders, students, board and commission members. The City will choose sites that are accessible and barrier-free to accommodate all persons. The minutes from the focus groups or community workshops may be shared with participants (that chose to share their contact information) and the community. The results of these meetings will be included in any report or plan generated based on the community feedback collected during these meetings.

Workshops

The City may engage the community through workshops. This tool may most often be used for specific development projects that involve significant changes to the urban form and require public input on the design layout. The City may encourage developers to hold workshops for specific proposed projects with significant community interest.

Steering Committees

For any project deemed necessary or appropriate, the City may organize steering committees consisting of residents, business owners, board and commission members, and other stakeholders. Members may be selected based on their expertise, interest and background as they relate to the focus of the individual steering committee. This structure will allow for focused discussion related to a specific topic (e.g., economic development). Meetings will be open to the public, and a synopsis of the meeting may be posted online. The results of the meetings and discussions of the steering committees will be incorporated into the plan generated based on the information collected during these meetings.

Surveys

The City may employ surveys, whenever beneficial and feasible, to identify key citizen concerns. These surveys provide valuable direction specifically as it relates to the City's Comprehensive Plan or planning documents. The City may design and implement, through a third party partner or City staff, surveys to gather the community's opinion with regard to specific topics (e.g., general City services, housing needs, amenities, the downtown). The surveys may be distributed through various methods of delivery to ensure the broadest reach, based on the nature of the target group (e.g., mail, e-mail, website access, copies available at City facilities). The responsible party will compile the survey results following the closing of the survey. The survey results may be posted online, published in the City's newsletter, and communicated to the City council, residents, survey participants, investors, developers, and other stakeholders.

11. Accessibility and Availability of Information

The City of Midland recognizes that all information and public events must be as accessible to all members of the public as possible to gather a broad and representative body of public input. The City of Midland therefore strives to foster an environment of accessibility and, towards this goal, maintains several practices as follows:

Meeting Locations and Accessibility

Most meetings of public bodies are held on the first floor of City Hall. City Hall is a centrally located facility that is barrier-free and accessible to the entire community. Meetings may also take place at other locations, including the Grace A Dow Memorial Library, which are barrier-free and accessible.

Hearing Impaired Assistance

A hearing impaired system is installed in the City Council Chambers at City Hall where most boards and commissions meet. Headset units for this system are available at the staff table in the council chambers. Additionally, with 72 hours advance notification, the City Clerk's office will provide sign language interpreting services.

Live Streaming Video

City meetings are streamed "live" for remote viewing on 4 Charter Communications cable access channels, AT&T U-verse and via the City website. Live streams can only be viewed at the time a meeting is held. Access to these streaming services can be found as follows:

Charter Communications

- Channel 188 - MGTV, the government access channel
- Channel 189 - MCTV, messages
- Channel 190 - MPS-TV, the Midland Public Schools channel
- Channel 191 – MCTV, Community Voices, the public access channel

AT&T U-Verse

- Channel 99: Local Government Education and Public Access application. Select Midland Community Television in the menu. A listing of Midland's 4 community access channels is provided.

City Website

- www.cityofmidlandmi.gov located under the On-demand Video link

In addition, the MGTV-188 message board is streamed live 24/7 except when meetings or special programming is being aired.

All meetings of City Council, as well as all meetings of nine boards and commissions, are live streamed. Televised boards and commissions include the following:

- Aviation Advisory Commission
- Cable Access Advisory Commission

- Center City Authority
- Downtown Development Authority
- Library Board
- Parks & Recreation Commission
- Planning Commission
- West Main Street Historic District Commission
- Zoning Board of Appeals

On-Demand Video Services

All live streamed City meetings are also recorded and archived for future on-demand viewing. Links to many past City meetings from 2005 to the present can be found on the On-demand video page on the City website.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of all public meetings are maintained by city staff and are made available to the public online after each meeting. Minutes may also be obtained by contacting City Hall.

12. Contact Information

The following contact information should be utilized for questions on the public participation process for each identified Council or Commission.

Council or Commission	Contact Department	Phone #
City Council	Clerk	989-837-3310
Aviation Advisory Commission	Engineering	989-837-3348
Cable Access Advisory Commission	MCTV	989-837-3474
Center City Authority	Clerk	989-837-3310
Downtown Development Authority	Clerk	989-837-3310
Library Board	Library	989-837-3430
Parks and Recreation Commission	Public Services	989-837-6900
Planning Commission	Planning	989-837-3374
West Main Street Historic District Commission	Planning	989-837-3374
Zoning Board of Appeals	Planning	989-837-3374