



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

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VILLAGE OF BELLAIRE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

PARTICIPATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Village of Bellaire strives to involve the community in the decision-making process. Village staff uses a variety of methods of communication and outreach in an effort to understand what our citizenry want. Goals of the Public Participation Process include:

Solicit Public Participation Throughout the Planning Process: The Village has used its website, social media, local newspaper, and direct mail to request community participation and comment during the planning process. Being proactive in seeking public involvement assures opportunities for the citizenry to express their opinions and to be involved in the decision-making process.

Effective and Attentive Communication with Residents: The Village strives to assure that every resident has a voice in the planning process. Residents with opposing viewpoints are actively recruited to attend meetings and to serve on committees involved. Recognizing that using technology does not appeal to everyone, the Village continues to subscribe to traditional methods of communication. The Village recognizes that the key to effective communication is to know its residents.

Provide Educational Materials and Design Participation Initiatives that will Support and Encourage Active and Effective Participation: Generally, residents are willing to participate if they believe they are fully informed. An explanation of land use issues and available funding mechanisms provide the framework for making local investment decisions. The use of educational materials, including visualization aids, that are clear, concise, and straightforward optimize public understanding of issues and concepts. Visualization techniques may prove especially helpful when considering specific sites or areas of redevelopment.

Develop and Maintain Staff Expertise in all Aspects of Participation: This includes techniques for bridging differences, including language, cultural, and economic, that may affect participation. Village staff works to assure that issues and information are conveyed to all segments of the population and sectors of the economy.

Support and Encourage Continuous Improvement in the Methods Used to Meet the Public Need for Information and Involvement: The Village of Bellaire is committed to seeking innovative ways to engage the community to keep them updated and involved throughout the planning process.

Record Results of Public Engagement and Recount these Results Back to the Public: The Village of Bellaire has used its website, Facebook, local newspaper, and direct mail in an effort to capture the concerns, priorities and comments from the public. For transparency and consistency, the same methods will be used to share participation results with the public.

STATE LAW

Michigan law details the minimum requirements for public participation. The Village of Bellaire abides by state law and endeavors to go beyond the traditional practices to be proactive in soliciting public input for all projects. The following are the Michigan laws regarding public input:

Open Meetings Act (Act 267 of 1976)

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-Act-267-of-1976.pdf>

The express purpose of the Open Meetings Act is “to require certain meetings of certain public bodies to be open to the public; to require notice and the keeping of minutes of meeting; to provide for enforcement; to provide for invalidation of governmental decisions under certain circumstances; to provide penalties; and to repeal certain acts and parts of acts.”

In accordance with Act 267 of 1976, the Village of Bellaire will hold a public meeting in the Village offices at 202 N. Bridge Street. The Village offices are 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 public body will publicly post a list stating the dates, times, and places of its regular meetings at the Village offices.

If there is a change in the schedule, within 3 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 its regular meetings.

For a rescheduled regular or a special meeting, a public notice stating the date, time, and place of the meeting shall be posted at least 18 hours before the meeting in a prominent and conspicuous place at the Village offices and on the Village website at: http://www.bellairemichigan.com/ag_min_council.html

A meeting of a public body that is recessed for more than 36 hours shall be reconvened only after public notice is posted at least 18 hours in advance.

Public bodies will hold emergency sessions without a written notice or time constraints if the public health, safety, or welfare of the public is threatened and if 2/3 of the members serving on the body vote to hold the emergency meeting.

Any citizen can request that public bodies put them on a mailing list so that they are notified in advance of all meeting by contacting the following:

Village of Bellaire
Attention: Village Clerk
P.O. Box 557
Bellaire, MI 49615

Michigan Planning and Enabling Act (Act 33 of 2008)

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-Act-33-of-2008.pdf>

The express purpose of the Michigan Planning and Enabling Act is “to codify the laws regarding and to provide for county, township, city, and village planning; to provide 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 Village of Bellaire is in the process of reviewing its Master Plan. In accordance with Act 33 of 2008, on March 15, 2018 the following parties were notified via first class regular mail.

Antrim County Planning
Attn: Mathew Cooke
PO Box 187
Bellaire, MI 49615

Antrim Board of Commissioners
Attn: Peter Garwood
PO Box 187
Bellaire, MI 49615

Antrim County Clerk
Attn: Sheryl Guy
PO Box 520
Bellaire, MI 49615

AT&T
PO Box 8100
Aurora, IL 60507

Consumers Energy Company
One Energy Plaza
Jackson, MI 49201-2276

DTE Company
One Energy Plaza
Detroit, MI 48226

Charter Communications
2668 Crossing Circle
Traverse City, MI 49684

MDOT Gaylord TSC
1088 M-32 East
Gaylord, MI 49735

Patty O'Donnell
MDOT North Regional Planner
1088 M-32 East
Gaylord, MI 49735

Antrim County Road Commission
PO BOX 308
Mancelona, MI 49659

Forest Home Township
Attn: Suzanne C. Mahan
PO Box 317
Bellaire, MI 49615

Kearney Township
Attn: Sally Petrie
PO Box 51
Bellaire, MI 49615

After the draft Village of Bellaire Master Plan is submitted to the village council for review and approval for distribution, the draft plan will be submitted to those listed above for review.

Before approving the proposed master plan, the planning commission will hold not less than one public hearing on the proposed 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 Village of Bellaire.

The planning commission will also submit notice of the public hearing by first-class mail, personal delivery, or electronic mail to those above-listed for review.

After the adoption of the master plan, the planning commission may publish and distribute copies of the master plan or of any report, and employ other means of publicity and education.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Below is a list of groups that are able to assist in and enhance the public participation process, as well as identify groups that are often not involved. During each public event, the list will be reviewed in order to make sure that the appropriate people and groups are invited to participate. Since groups and businesses, and their associates, are constantly changing, this list is intended only as a reference upon which to build for each event.

- Local residents
- Downtown Development Authority
- Bellaire Chamber of Commerce
- Large employers
- Commercial business owners
- Neighboring municipalities
- Potential investors
- Public employees (village, library, police, fire, education)
- Real estate professionals
- Religious groups
- Senior groups
- Social organizations (Rotary Club, Lions, etc)
- Veterans' organizations
- Students
- Young professionals
- Entrepreneurs

The Village of Bellaire is fortunate to have many active residents who strive to make their community better. The Village always encourages its citizenry to get involved. The Village of Bellaire will use various methods of communication and outreach in support of these efforts.

COMMUNICATION TOOLBOX

While the Village of Bellaire's communication toolbox is full, village staff are always looking for more effective ways to communicate with the public. Village staff are charged with evaluating innovative opportunities, researching technological solutions, and promoting new media communication. Improving customer/resident service performance is a top priority.

The Village of Bellaire uses its website and Facebook page to enhance and streamline online communications.

The majority of the Village of Bellaire residents speak English. There are no identified sub-populations that do not speak English. In order to prevent miscommunications, the Village will make accommodations if it is found that a resident(s) have a language barrier.

Minority representation is as important as representation from all ages, races, education levels, income levels, and political beliefs, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

BASIC ANNOUNCEMENT METHODS FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS INCLUDE:

- Open Meetings Act
- Newspaper postings
- Website postings
- Facebook postings
- Flier postings on community hall door
- Postcard mailings
- Attachments to water bills
- Announcements at village council and planning commission meetings

Strong partnerships and stakeholder engagement make education and collaborative visioning possible. The Village of Bellaire is committed to getting wide-ranging public input. Consequently, the Village uses creative and innovative strategies along with the more traditional methods. The following methods have been used in the past and will likely be used in the future.

Surveys

Surveys are useful for identifying specific areas of interest or concentration from a broad scope of ideas or issues. Areas of interest may then be further explored via other methods. A community may use a survey to identify where to start in the planning process, or the general climate surrounding a topic. While surveys are useful, they should not be the only means of soliciting public input. It is helpful for a municipality to administer surveys with partners. As with most public input efforts, it is best to vary the delivery methods used.

Workshops

Workshops may be as simple as question-and-answer sessions or as creative as developing a board game. Often, workshops are a great way to educate the community and to hear concerns, questions, and ideas. Workshops have been held in the Village offices.

Using a consultant to lead public involvement adds objective and professional supervision to help participants resolve disagreements and to develop effective solutions. Networks Northwest is assisting the Master Plan Committee with the current master plan process that includes visioning forums and a series of focus groups.

Focus Groups

Focus groups can help to narrow concepts or represent another point of view. During the current master plan process, focus groups were identified to prioritize issues and gather input on specific questions and topics.

Standing Committees

These are focus groups that meet repeatedly and will differ depending on the needs of a community. They are perfect for concerned residents, underrepresented groups, or groups that may have specific needs in the community, such as students or seniors. Standing committees provide the community with

the opportunity to tap into resident expertise, perhaps organizing a standing committee of realtors, brokers, and business owners to offer feedback.

Social Networking

Technology offers a unique opportunity to disseminate information to a large group of people. Municipalities are able to post events, share information, and solicit feedback. Social networking is best used in conjunction with other methods. There are certain downsides to social media that make it important to plan for its use. First, not everyone uses social media. Second, it is easy to spread misinformation or post disrespectful comments. Social media has become an effective and efficient channel of communication between the community and their local unit of government. Its ability to drive community information, news, opinion in real time helps the Village realize operating efficiencies, encourage citizen engagement, and realize objectives. The Village of Bellaire adopted Policy #023, *Social Media Use and Procedures*, July 21, 2010, specifically stating,

The Village of Bellaire has a need to augment traditional communication methods with the use of social media. This need stems from public demand and the rapid growth of social media (aka Web 2.0) use by other local, state and federal government entities as an indication that social media, used effectively, can enhance communications. The Village supports the use of social media technology to enhance communication, collaboration, and the exchange of information.

While the use of social media presents opportunity, it also poses risks. This document establishes Village social media use policies, protocols and procedures intended to mitigate associated risks from use of this technology where possible. Should the Village change its direction on social media use, this policy will be revised and social media activity shall be adjusted accordingly.

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Social media is used to update audiences on the progress of a project, to solicit feedback from surveys or general comments, and generally engage and inform users. The Village of Bellaire's complete policy is available at the Village offices.

Websites

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 may search for content online. The Village of Bellaire's website offers a user-friendly platform to access a database of contact information, service offerings, FAQs, and much more.

Telephone/Mobile

These days, almost everyone has a mobile home. Texting is considered to be a technology that most people have access to and know how to use. Texting potentially reaches the widest audience. Children and young adults with mobile devices are more likely to communicate via text than other social media methods. Senior and low-income populations are the most likely to not text, but more and more are

gaining access every day. Texting technology is becoming more affordable and widespread. The Village will explore the different options that are available.

Outreach Strategies

There are many situations in which the Village of Bellaire 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. Broad engagement in the planning process helps to prevent delays caused by unforeseen issues. Engagement efforts will vary depending upon the type, intensity, and location of a project or plan.

To ensure that applicants seeking project approval pursue early and effective public participation in conjunction with their proposed developments, the Village strongly encourages developers to discuss development plans with surrounding neighbors. Getting the public involved from the beginning can foster community support of a project.

Master Plan Update

The Master Plan is the visioning document for the Village from which future developments and policy are created. For this reason, it is the most important planning process to get the broadest engagement and most public input. A variety of communication tools should be used with an effort to gain attention and involvement from the widest sample of residents, representatives of the entire Village.

At least two workshops or visioning forums should be held. Notice will be given to all residents when the planning process begins and when a draft plan has been created. A public forum will be held to review the draft document. Various other input methods, including but limited to, web surveys, interactive mapping projects, electron updates, or focus groups, should be used as well.

Zoning Ordinance Updates

The Zoning Ordinance is the regulating document which helps forward the vision on the Village 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 regulation is based off the master plan and therefore does not need as extensive of public input process. However, informing and educating the public about updates or revisions of the ordinance is important. Traditional communication methods are most appropriate.

Downtown Development Plan

The Downtown Development Plan is the guiding document for the vision and success of the downtown. Downtown development planning is integral to the success of a village and its economic development. Public input and engagement in this process is important. Education on topics, including TIF financing, make this process easier. Visioning techniques can help the public understand various planning

concepts. Owners can be useful in bridging any misunderstandings. Public visioning sessions, websites, interactive mapping, and focus groups can all be useful in creating the downtown development plan.

Parks and Recreation Plan

Workshops, focus groups, surveys, websites, and/or alternative methods are useful in recreation planning. The recent Village of Bellaire Parks and Recreation Plan had a public input process that included a community survey and multiple public meetings.

Low-Controversy Development Plan

Development plans require a review of Village staff and the planning commission. If the plan is low-controversy, it may be approved administratively. If there are any questions, it will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for review and approval.

High Controversy Development Plan

A high-controversy development plan will most likely require one or more focus groups of relevant residents, business owners, and/or organizational leaders. Proactive notification and timely education can prevent some controversy. Mailings, media, websites, and other methods can keep residents informed to prevent misinformation and misunderstanding. Public hearings can allow developers, residents, and officials to work through development plans and solicit input.

Communicating Results

Results from public participation session will be included in the final plan document.

Public Meetings/Standing Committees/Focus Groups: Meeting minutes, including meetings to which focus groups are invited, are posted online.

Surveys will be compiled by a consultant or village staff no later than three to four weeks after the survey is complete. Results will be posted online or in the appendix of the plan.

Social Networking: The Village Clerk and Deputy Clerk are responsible for monitoring the social networking sites used by the Village of Bellaire.

EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

Continuous review of our public input processes assures that the Village of Bellaire will remain a thriving and connected community. The residents make the Village of Bellaire a great community in which to live. Their creativity and talent are irreplaceable in the community planning processes. Evaluation of communication and involvement efforts is important to verify that optimal methods are used. A Communication Satisfaction Survey (see Appendix) will be used at each event. Results will be analyzed through keeping records of participation, including the types of communication used, the quality and quantity of comments received, and the number of participants involved.

Each plan and project shall include a Public Participation Review (see Appendix). Documentation will contribute to a public participation process that is continuously evolving to better obtain public input. To insure that communication methods are effective, the Public Participation Plan will be reviewed annually and updated when necessary. Methods of communication that have failed will not be removed from the plan but will be reviewed and documented to avoid future mistakes.

CLOSING

Public participation, when properly executed, builds community consensus and strengthens sense of place. This plan is to be used and reviewed as a guide to involving citizens in planning decisions that affect the community.

APPENDIX

COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY
Event:
How did you hear about this event?
Was this event held at a convenient location and time? What time or location would have been better?
Are you glad you came to the event? How would you improve it?

INTERNAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION EVALUATION
Type of public participation:
Date and time:
How was this event advertised?
Where was the event held?
How many people attended? Was there a group under-represented? Over-represented?
Who facilitated the event?
What ways could the event have been improved?