

City of *Mt. Pleasant*

Public Participation & Engagement Strategy



Mt. Pleasant

[meet here]

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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 local government.

Philosophy

- The City recognizes that an educated, informed, and engaged citizenry is essential to the present and future success of a 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 are 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 communication and engagement methods and revise as needed.

Stakeholders

The City recognizes that stakeholders for each project or initiative will be different. The following is an extensive, but not comprehensive stakeholder list.

These 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

- Mid Michigan College
- Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe
- Mt. Pleasant Area Chamber of Commerce
- Mt. Pleasant Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Isabella County
- Charter Township of Union
- East Michigan Council of Governments
- Mt. Pleasant Housing Commission
- Taxing Jurisdictions
- Middle Michigan Development Corporation
- Property Owners or Developers
- Senior Citizens
- Students and Student Groups
- Children
- Public Employees
- Major Local Employers
- Civic and Social Organizations
- Community Service Agencies
- Transportation Agencies
- 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 more than 100 positions.

(Boards and Commissions continued on next page.)

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. This body also appoints the City Manager, who is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the City government. Members receive a stipend for their service.

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 staggered three-year terms, 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.

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.

(Boards and Commissions continued on next page.)

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 in 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 five-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 two 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. A seven-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 to review the schedule of public meetings

Regular meetings of the City Commission, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals are held in person in the City Chambers/City Hall (320 W. Broadway Street) with virtual attendance options as well. Non-voting participants may view the meeting live on the City's YouTube Channel www.youtube.com/MtPleasantMi on Spectrum Charter channel 188 or via Zoom.

If a virtual option becomes unavailable due to technical difficulties, the meeting will continue as scheduled. Residents who would like to provide a comment during the appropriate time are

welcome to come to the meeting at City Hall or email their statement to comments@mt-pleasant.org.

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 Comment

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 hold 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 as 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 as 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.
- Continually review and evaluate strategies and adjust as needed.
- 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 strategies are refined, share with others.

Planning

Public participation and engagement are critical project components, and proper planning is crucial to ensure 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.

Toolbox

Public participation and engagement are critical project components, and the City has a wide variety of methods at its disposal.

The use of the City website and social media channels should be conducted in accordance with guidelines developed by the Public Relations Department.

The appendix contains a list of communication, participation and engagement methods used and/or available to the City along with factors relevant to their usage. This list continues 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"/>				
Staff members were helpful.	<input type="radio"/>				
Staff members were friendly.	<input type="radio"/>				
Staff members were knowledgeable on topics presented.	<input type="radio"/>				
The days selected for the program were convenient.	<input type="radio"/>				
The normal location of the program was convenient.	<input type="radio"/>				
The equipment used for the program was of high quality.	<input type="radio"/>				
The content was age-appropriate.	<input type="radio"/>				
The activities presented were fun and engaging.	<input type="radio"/>				
My child benefited from this program.	<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

		Level of Participation				Urgency of Message Dissemination			Project Duration			Cost			Interactivity		
Method	Required by State or Local Statute in certain circumstances.	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
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		
Blog		X	X			X	X	X		X	X	X			X	X	
Radio Show		X	X		X	X				X	X	X			X		
City Website		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		
Community Presentations		X	X		X	X				X	X	X				X	
EConnections Newsletter		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		
Community Info Phone Line		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		
Open House		X	X			X				X	X		X				X
Posters		X	X			X				X	X			X	X		
Project Specific Webpage		X	X			X					X	X			X		
Reports		X	X			X					X	X			X		
Video		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	
YouTube		X	X				X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Facebook		X		X				X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Instagram		X		X				X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X
Twitter		X		X				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		
Smart 911		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		
Emailed notices		X	X					X	X	X	X	X			X		
Freebies / Novelties		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		
Newspaper Ad	X	X				X			X	X	X			X	X		
Press Releases		X						X	X	X	X	X			X		
Radio PSA's		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		
Recycle Bin Flyers		X				X				X	X		X	X	X		
Water Bill		X				X					X	X			X		
Yard Signs		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				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
Apps		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	
Charrette				X		X					X		X	X			X
Focus Group				X		X					X	X	X	X			X
Interviews				X		X					X	X					X
Public Hearings	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	