

# CITY OF HANCOCK PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Prepared by the Western Upper Peninsula Planning &  
Development Region (WUPPDR)

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FOR  
PLANNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
PROJECTS

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the City of Hancock Public Participation Plan is to outline policies, procedures and methods to effectively engage stakeholders during major planning, zoning and development process. In addition to required State measures, the plan will allow for additional methods of public involvement and will also act as a tool for accountability and transparency, and to disseminate results in a timely manner.

The city recognizes the importance of public input, and the city is committed to encouraging citizen participation and to engaging a diverse group of stakeholders in all planning processes.

The plan will ensure that outreach efforts are continually evaluated for effectiveness and adjusted accordingly in order to maximize success, gather feedback, and improve communications with public stakeholders.

## 1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOALS

The purpose for establishing this Public Participation Plan is to have a clear set of policies, procedures, and methods to apply across a wide range of city initiatives to ensure the public has appropriate venues and timing for feedback. This is meant to be a “living document” that is updated periodically to respond to changes in staffing, noticing, and community needs.

Public participation goals for the city include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Foster a culture within Hancock’s local government which prioritizes public participation in city planning and development activities.
- Provide diverse opportunities for stakeholders to participate and provide public input.
- Conduct all aspects of public participation transparently, while making sure stakeholders can freely access the process if they are interested.
- Evaluate each project individually and determine scope, stakeholders, limitations, body of approval, community impact during each decision making process, resources, and the level of appropriate public participation.
- Track and analyze results of public participation to feasible extent and share the results of such activities with the broader public.
- Develop and maintain staff expertise in all aspects of public participation.
- Continuously encourage and support improvement in the city’s approach to public participation.

## 2. STATE AND LOCAL REGULATIONS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

As required by law, the city, through the work of city council and individual boards and commissions, follows the local and state regulations listed below. These regulations include provisions for the public review process, public participation, and public hearings.

- Home Rule City Act (PA 279 of 1909)
- City Charter<sup>1</sup>
- City Code of Ordinances<sup>1</sup>
- The Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976)
- 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)
- The Plant Rehabilitation and Industrial Development Districts Act (known as the Industrial Facilities Exemption) (PA 198 of 1974)
- The New Personal Property Exemption Act (PA 328 of 1998)
- The Corridor Improvement Act (PA 280 of 2005)
- Other relevant local and State legislation

Along with a desire to include a diversified public in its planning processes, the City of Hancock relies on State statutes to help guide its participation activities.

### MICHIGAN PLANNING ENABLING ACT

In Michigan, the Michigan Planning Enabling Act determines the rules and regulations local governments must follow when preparing the Master Plan. In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008) the following parties will be notified via first class mail, personal delivery, or electronic mail by the planning commission of the intent to plan and request the recipient's cooperation and comment:

- The Houghton County planning commission.
- The Western U.P. Planning & Development Region (not required).
- Each public utility company, railroad company, and public transportation agency owning and operating a public utility, railroad, or public transportation system within the local unit of government, and any government entity that registers its name and mailing address for the purpose with the planning commission.
- If the master plan will include a master street plan, the Houghton County Road Commission and the Michigan Department of Transportation.

After the draft master plan has been submitted to the legislative body for review and approval for distribution, the draft plan will be submitted to the previously listed entities for review.

Before approving a proposed master plan, the city planning commission will not hold less than one public hearing on the proposed master plan. The hearing will be held after the expiration of the deadline for comment as outlined in the act.

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<sup>1</sup> City Charter and Code of Ordinances are available at: [http://www.amlegal.com/hancock\\_mi/](http://www.amlegal.com/hancock_mi/)

The city 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 local unit of government. The city planning commission will also submit notice of the public hearing by first class mail, personal delivery or electronic mail to the previously listed entities for review.

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

## MICHIGAN OPEN MEETINGS ACT

In accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976), the City of Hancock holds city council meetings at Hancock City Hall Council Chambers. Work sessions begin at 6:30 p.m. and the meetings begin at 7:30 p.m., which is accessible to the general public.

The public is notified within 10 days of the first meeting of the public body in each calendar or fiscal year; the body will publicly post a list stating the dates, times, and places of all its regular meeting at its principle office. If there is a change in schedule, within three 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 regular meetings.

For special and irregular meetings, public bodies will post a notice indicating the date, time, and place at least 18 hours before the meeting. Note: A regular meeting of a public body which is recessed for more than 36 hours, can only be convened if a notice is posted 18 hours in advance. Public bodies will hold emergency sessions without a written notice or time constraints if the public health, safety, or welfare is severely threatened and if two-thirds of the body's members 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 meetings by contacting the City Clerk's Office at 399 Quincy Street, Hancock, MI 49930, by phone (906) 482-2720, or e-mail to Mary Babcock, City Clerk at [clerk@cityofhancock.net](mailto:clerk@cityofhancock.net).

### 3. KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Hancock is comprised of a diverse array of stakeholders with varied interests and each can play an important role in the planning and land use process. Depending on the nature of the plan or project, the city may engage with all or a subset of these different groups. Possible stakeholders include but are not limited to:

- **Community Development**
  - Banks & other financial institutions
  - Hancock Police & Fire Departments
  - Keweenaw Community Foundation
  - Portage Health Foundation
  - Real Estate and Insurance Professionals
  - Senior Organizations such as Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly
- **Community Health**
  - Portage Health System
  - Western U.P. Health Department
- **Economic Development**
  - Hancock Downtown Business Association
  - Keweenaw Chamber of Commerce
  - Keweenaw Convention & Visitors Bureau
  - Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance
  - Keweenaw Young Professionals
  - Large employers
  - Michigan Works!
  - Western U.P. Planning & Development Region
- **Education**
  - Local schools & Copper Country Intermediate School District
  - Finlandia University
- Gogebic Community College
- Michigan Technological University
- **Environmental**
  - Keweenaw Land Trust
  - Northwoods Conservancy
  - Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
- **Local Government**
  - City Council
  - City's boards and commissions
  - Steering Committees
  - Houghton County Commission
  - Hancock Downtown Development Authority
  - Neighboring municipalities such as the City of Houghton, Franklin Township, Ripley, Quincy Township, and Hancock Township
- **Recreation**
  - Trails clubs
  - Recreation leagues
- **Residents**
- **Transportation**
  - Hancock Public Transit
  - Michigan Department of Transportation
  - BIKE!/ Hancock Bike and Pedestrian Committee

## 4. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND TOOLBOX

The City of Hancock affords residents, and stakeholders in general, with numerous opportunities to get involved in the planning development process. This section describes both required public participation mechanisms as well as tools to help facilitate additional outreach and input.

### CITY COUNCIL

There are seven councilors. Four are elected at large from the entire city, and one each from the three wards. Each represents the city as a whole, and their respective wards individually. The mayor and mayor pro-tem are elected from the council by the councilors and serve a one year term. Councilors are elected by the registered voters of the city and serve a four year term. The council's duties and responsibilities include:

- Adopting and amending City laws.
- Determining City policies and standards.
- Determining how money is spent, and for what purposes.
- Determining what City taxes shall be.
- Approving contracts and agreements.
- As a whole, representing the City of Hancock

A city council meeting is the process of making and amending laws, developing policy and making decisions. Governing your city by citizens elected by you.

The council follows a regular order of business in the conduct of its meetings. The agenda is prepared in advance and subjects on it usually have been investigated by the city manager or a department head, so that the council can have all available facts. Copies of the agenda are available in the city clerk's office.

Business presented to the council is disposed of by one of the following methods:

- **Communications:** A motion is ordinarily used to indicate majority approval of a procedural action.
- **Public Hearing:** This gives the public audience an opportunity to make comments upon a particular subject that the council is considering.
- **Resolution:** A resolution may be passed to approve contracts, to express the policy of the council, or to direct certain types of administration action. It requires only one reading before council action may be voted upon by a roll call or voice vote.
- **Ordinances:** An ordinance is a "legislative act" and requires two readings at separate council meetings, after which a vote is taken. An ordinance becomes a law: 1) immediately upon passage if it is determined to be an emergency to public health, safety, or welfare; 2) on the effective date specified in the ordinance, or 30 days following adoption of the ordinance, whichever is later.

All council meetings are held in the Hancock City Hall Council Chambers. A work session begins at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. Meeting schedules can be found on the city's website at <http://www.cityofhancock.com/info-council.php>.

## BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

City boards and commissions provide recommendations to the city council on a number of important topics and issues. All citizens are invited to apply for appointments. These groups often provide important expertise and volunteer time to address issues pertinent to the community.

Several existing boards and commissions that may be relevant to the planning and development process within the city are listed below.

- Planning Commission
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
- Economic Development Authority
- Historic Preservation Committee

Visit <http://www.cityofhancock.com> for a full list of Hancock boards and commissions, meeting agendas, minutes, and in order to be kept informed of any schedule variations, or location changes.

Individual boards and commission will hold public meetings pursuant to the boards' and commissions' bylaws and State regulations. Meeting agendas and packets of the city council, planning commission, and other boards and commissions shall be made available on the city's website in advance of the meeting.

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

The city council and its various boards and commissions hold public hearings when required by enabling legislation or when doing so provides benefits to the community on a variety of topics. Hearings provide an opportunity for the public to both receive information from city officials as well as provide public comment on the topic of the hearing. These comments are summarized in publically accessible meeting minutes.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

While public hearings are often the most visible opportunity for public comment, comments can also be submitted via mail, email, and through the city's website. Planning processes (e.g. master planning, recreation planning, etc.) often require review periods of documents proposed for city adoption. Stakeholders are able to review these documents and submit feedback in writing to the responsible public body charged with developing the plan. These comments are often reflected in the appendix section of the plan after adoption.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The city is often required to provide public notification of events, disseminate information to the public, and announce opportunities for public involvement. The city recognizes that a variety of methods should be used as stakeholders have different preferences and barriers for receiving information (e.g. lack of internet access, inability to attend city meetings, etc.). Below is a list of communication channels the city can use convey such information and make stakeholders aware of opportunities for public participation.

- Posting to the city's website

- Newspaper posting of public hearing notices (e.g., The Mining Gazette)
- Flyer postings at the city hall and other city building entrances
- Announcements during the meetings of the city council and city's boards and commissions
- Press releases and communications to media. Press releases are typically distributed to a media list containing local or statewide print and broadcast organizations
- Notifications through mail or e-mail
- Postings to city and city-affiliated social media accounts
- Collaborating with local stakeholder groups to share announcements through their respective communication channels (e.g. e-newsletters, social media, meetings, etc.)
- Local door-to-door canvassing through tools like door-hangers and flyers
- Attachment to water and tax bills
- Other methods as deemed appropriate

### PROACTIVE APPROACHES TO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

As previously discussed, public commissions, hearings and comment opportunities are often required by legislation, and often take place well after critical decisions are already made during the planning or development process. These requirements also often fail to accommodate many stakeholders' schedules or preferred participation styles. Below is a list of additional engagement strategies available to the city to solicit public input during planning and development processes.

### COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Hosting a community meeting is a common tool used to generate public participation on planning and development projects. Community meetings differ from public hearings in that they are not required by legislation and are not required to follow the common public hearing format. In fact, the format of these meetings can take a variety of forms ranging from a traditional presentation and question and answer session to a facilitated workshop intended to generate new ideas and strategies for the city's planning and development efforts. These meetings can be held in local venues other than city hall like the Finnish American Heritage Center, the Hancock high school auditorium, and even the Orpheum Theatre. Optimal meeting dates and times can vary depending on the intended target audience, and the city can advertise the meetings through a variety of sources such as the newspaper, its website and social media accounts, and mailing efforts.

### SURVEYS

A survey (also referred to as a questionnaire) can be used to collect standardized, quantifiable information from a wide range of stakeholders on a topic(s) of interest relevant to planning and development projects. Surveys are a great means to solicit public participation since they often give stakeholders an opportunity to provide feedback, often anonymously, without requiring them to attend meetings. While public meetings are an important tool for the city, the environment may be intimidating for stakeholders who are uncomfortable speaking in public or are unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts. Surveys can be used to get input from the general public or specific target populations (e.g. business owners) and used to generate statistical information to help guide city efforts. Surveys can be distributed through a variety

of methods (e.g. online, mail, in-person, etc.) with results posted online, published in the city's newsletter, social media, and communicated to the city council, residents, survey participants, investors, developers, and other stakeholders. The city has access to a variety of technical resources through partnerships with local universities (e.g. Michigan Technological University and Finlandia University) as well as the Western U.P. Planning & Development Region to help design, distribute, and analyze surveys.

### ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

Interviews are a great tool to gain in-depth insight from key stakeholders. Unlike surveys, which are often restricted to structured question sets with fixed response options, interviews can provide a wealth of qualitative information based on the interviewee's expertise and level of interest. In general, the information collected during interviews are kept confidential unless requested otherwise.

### FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups are a tool the city can use to gather input feedback from a small group of stakeholders on a pertinent development or planning topic. Focus groups are often comprised of five to eight pre-selected stakeholders who often represent key target audiences from whom the city is seeking input. Generally, the group is led through a series of predetermined questions by a facilitator allowing for discussion between the participants. An important element of a focus group session is the ability for to explore potentially unanticipated topics brought to light by the group's discussion. This may help the city to identify important concerns or benefits of a project. Depending on the resources of the city or the importance of the project of interest, multiple focus group sessions could be held with different sets of stakeholders

### STEERING COMMITTEES

The city may organize steering committees consisting of residents, business owners, university representatives, board and commission members, and other stakeholders in order to provide guidance on development projects or elements of a planning efforts. These committees differ from those previously described as these committees are often temporary and disband after the project or take is complete. Members may be selected based on their expertise, interest, and background as they relate to the focus of the individual steering committee. Meetings can be open to the public with results and recommendations disseminated through final reports shared online and in print.

### CHARRETTES/ DESIGN WORKSHOPS

The city may engage the community through charrettes or design workshops. These sessions are often intense, multi-day workshops where participants help craft a vision and design for major development or planning projects. 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 charrettes for specific proposed projects with significant community interest.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Through the use of social media tools like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, the city is able to both share information with and generate public participation from stakeholders. Commonly, local governments use social media to distribute information (e.g. meeting announcements; local project updates, etc.); however, these tools also present an inexpensive means for community members and other stakeholders to get involved with city projects in addition to providing feedback. Increasingly, social media platforms offer tools to facilitate tasks like surveys, interviews, public meetings, focus groups and even design charrettes and are preferred communication tools for community members.

## BUS OR WALKING TOURS

Walking and bus tours are a great way for the city to collect feedback from stakeholders on potential planning and development projects for topics like transportation initiatives (e.g. bike lanes); zoning updates; and development initiatives. The process allows participants to share feedback with city officials on proposed projects or offer new alternatives to the project's design. Depending on the topic, city staff or consultants will facilitate tours. The facilitator(s) may take notes during the tour and share them with the participants and the community.

## 5. STRATEGIES FOR OUTREACH

In an effort to maximize the benefits of public participation, the city has developed the following table which outlines the proposed use of various strategies for different planning and development project scenarios.

Strategy	Process/Project						
	Master Plan	Zoning Ordinance Update	Downtown Development Plan	Corridor Improvement Plan	Recreation Plan	Low Controversial Development	High Controversial Project
Public Hearing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Press Release	X	O	X	X	X		X
Website Posting	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Water/Tax Notification	O		O		O		O
Email/Mailing	X	O	O	O	O		O
Canvassing	O	O	O				O
Community Meeting	X	O	X	O	O		X
Standing Committee	X	X			X	O	X
Survey	X	O	X		X		O
Interview	O	O	O	O			X
Focus Group	O	X	X	X	O		O
Charrette	O		O				O
Social media	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tours	O	O	O	O	O		O

Key: X = Required; O = Encouraged but optional

## 6. COMMUNICATING RESULTS

The city recognizes that it is important to communicate the results of the public participation in order to demonstrate accountability and transparency. As described previously, the city has a number of communications channels at its disposal that can be leveraged to disseminate results to various stakeholder groups. Below is a non-comprehensive list of methods the city will implement in order to communicate the results of public participation.

Strategy	Responsible Party	Communication Methods	Timeframe Goal
Community Meeting/workshop	Facilitator/City Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website post</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Council meetings</li> </ul>	7 days after event
Standing Committee	Committee Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting minutes</li> <li>• Website posting</li> <li>• Social media</li> </ul>	10 days after meeting
Survey	Consultant/Committee Chair/City Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final report/plan</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Council meetings</li> </ul>	30 days after survey completion
Interview	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No formal communication mechanism due to confidentiality</li> </ul>	N/A
Focus Group	Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final report/plan</li> </ul>	X
Charrette	Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web posting</li> <li>• Final report</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Council meetings</li> </ul>	Recap report 7-10 days after charrette session
Social media	Various city staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media responses</li> </ul>	Varies
Tours	Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Final report/plan</li> <li>• Council meetings</li> </ul>	Recap report 7-10 days after tour

## 7. EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARTICIPATION EFFORTS

The city strives to continuously improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its public participation efforts. In order to make informed decisions for improvement, the city will need to identify opportunities to quantitatively and qualitatively measure indicators of public participation. In many cases this can be done by consistently tracking attendance and participation engagements; however, qualitative feedback, gathered through anecdotal evidence, experience, and discussions is also of high value. It is also important to note that sheer quantity of participation can also be misleading if participation is dominated by a specific stakeholder group(s) while under representing other groups. Therefore, evaluation efforts should attempt to understand not just how *much* participation is occurring, but also the *representativeness* of the participation based on the community's diverse nature. The city's public participation plan will be reviewed annually by city administration in conjunction with the city's annual review of its master plan. Indicators available for use to review the city's public participation efforts could include, but are not limited to:

- Attendance at community public hearings, community meetings and workshops
- Response rates for surveys implemented
- Number of social media engagements and website visits
- Number of stakeholders engaged during planning and development project efforts
- Participation rates on standing committees, commissions and boards
- Periodic questionnaires requesting feedback on public participation efforts can be hosted online and promoted through social media and tax/utility mailings
- Qualitative feedback from participants who completed Community Event Satisfaction Surveys (Appendix) and staff/facilitator feedback via Internal Public Participation Evaluation Form (Appendix)

APPENDIX

COMMUNITY EVENT SATISFACTION SURVEY	
<b>Event Title:</b>	
<b>Event Date:</b>	
<b>Name (optional):</b>	
<b>How did you hear about this event?</b>	
<b>Was this event held at a convenient time? If “no”, please let us know what date and time would have worked better.</b>	
<b>Did you have any challenges attending or participating in this event? If “yes”, please describe these challenges:</b>	
<b>In your opinion, what were the most positive/beneficial parts of this event?</b>	
<b>How would you improve this event?</b>	
<b>If you would like more information on the results from this event or to learn more about future events please provide your contact information below:</b>	
<b>Phone:</b> _____ <b>Email:</b> _____	

**INTERNAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION EVALUATION**

**Date:**

**Type of public participation:**

**Where was the event held?**

**How many people attended?**

**Was there a group that was under-represented?**

**Who facilitated/completed the event?**

**How could this event be improved for future?**