

# Public Participation Strategy



*Middleville*  
WELL ROUNDED. PERFECTLY CENTERED.

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## Table of Content:

- I. Purpose of Strategy
- II. Regulations
- III. Key Stakeholders
- IV. Communication Toolbox
- V. Communicating Results
- VI. Evaluating Success

### I. Purpose of Strategy

This doctrine was designed for anyone with interest in the Village of Middleville. This explains various communication tools that the village utilizes to better engage with its residents. Additionally, it shows when the public should receive communication on various planning measures. This doctrine further gives the Village Council a standard for entities to update them annually for efficacy when engaging with the public.

### II. Regulations

The Village of Middleville has local and state regulations that determine how public participation occurs. The Village Code of Ordinances can be found through Municode's digital library. Further information can be found from the below resources:

**Michigan Open Meetings Act** In accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976), we hold meetings in Village Hall located at 100 E Main St., which is accessible to the general public. The public will be notified within 10 days of the first meeting of a 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 meetings 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 meetings. Note: A regular meeting of a public body which is recessed for more than 36 hours, can only be reconvened 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 logon to the village website and learn more about upcoming meetings along with going to [Documents-on-Demand](#).

**Michigan Planning Enabling Act** 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 County in which the municipality is located in
- ◇ Each public utility company, railroad company, and public transportation agency owning or 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 this purpose with the planning commission
- ◇ If the master plan will include a master street plan, the county road commission and the state transportation department 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, a planning commission will hold not 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. 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 local unit of government. The 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, a planning commission may publish and distribute copies of the master plan or of any report, and employ other means of publicity and education.

### **LIST OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Residents                  | 8. Real Estate Agencies                           |
| 2. Thornapple Township        | 9. Barry County                                   |
| 3. Thornapple-Kellogg Schools | 10. Barry Chamber & Economic Development Alliance |
| 4. Commercial Businesses      | 11. Financial Institutions                        |
| 5. Manufacturers              | 12. DDA, ZBA, LDFA                                |
| 6. Agriculture Community      | 13. Community Health Organizations                |
| 7. Developers                 |   |

## BASIC METHODS

1. Public Notice – placed at Village Hall, on Village website, in newspaper, mailings, flyers.
2. Other practices – charettes, surveys, door-to-door notifications, focus groups, workshops, Village Facebook page, radio spots.

## STAFF EDUCATION

All staff has been encouraged to use public participation in any planning process possible. For certain processes (i.e. master plan) an outside consultant can assist in the public participation process; however, it is imperative that staff inform the consultant of stake holder priorities. They have been informed of various methods of public participation and are encouraged to select the method most beneficial to their process and the target audience. Staff is also encouraged to report out to the public the findings of the process when complete.

## VILLAGE PROCESSES UTILIZING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

**Site Plan Review** (Contact the Zoning Administrator): Prior to submitting an application or a site plan, an applicant may choose to submit a sketch plan or a draft plan for review by the zoning administrator. The review shall be informal and advisory only and shall not constitute any form of approval or authorization. The review shall be done without cost to the applicant and the interested party will learn about what is needed to obtain approval along with a tentative timeline. For further information, please review Village of Middleville [Development Guide](#).

**Surveys:** the village may conduct surveys at the beginning of the planning process to determine the scope of any issues or later to assist with generating ideas. These sometimes occur with effected organizations within the Thornapple area. While surveys are not to be used as an exclusive tool for public engagement, they are used by multiple organizations within the Village of Middleville, and we work with residents to accommodate any language barriers.

For examples of surveys being conducted, please see [Recreational Plan 2021-2025](#)

**Community Workshops:** community workshops can be as simple as a series of question-and-answer sessions with the public or as creative as interactive map exercises. Formal presentations can be given to a large audience, and then a less formal exchange of information may follow. They provide a more casual and fun setting to encourage participants to think critically and creatively about important issues.

**Walkabouts:** Walkabouts offer candid feedback from a variety of stakeholders when discussing a specific area. They can be paired with community workshops or charrettes to measure the perceived safety and comfort of pedestrians in a downtown neighborhood or corridor. Walkabouts are also useful for identifying desired designs, problem properties, or safety concerns.

Village staff and affiliates offer walking tours for local stakeholders and collect their thoughts and feedback to take into consideration for future city planning.

**Focus groups:** Like interviews, focus groups can help to narrow down concepts or get a specific side of the story. Stakeholders groups make ideal participants of a focus group.

**Standing Committees:** These are focus groups that repeatedly meet 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 a community, such as students or seniors. The village has multiple standing committees such as: The Village Council Committee of the Whole, Site Plan, Ordinance, Joint Planning and many DDA committees.

**Social Networking:** Technology offers a unique opportunity to give and receive information to many people. Municipalities can post events, share information, and even solicit feedback. This public participation method is best used in conjunction with other methods because it excludes those who do not use social media.

**Public Hearing:** The City Council and its various boards and commissions shall 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.

## Recommended Communication Methods

The table below is the usage guide for each public participation tool for different types of project/development related efforts. For example, site plan review is required to have public participation tools for a major development, while all other tools are considered optional or not applicable. This is a general guide to communication tool usage; the village and its employees have the flexibility to choose which method to utilize, depending on what suits best for that specific project.

**Recommended**

**Optional**

**Required**

## Communication Toolbox

	Master Plan	Zoning Amendments	Downtown Development	Capital Improvements Plan	Corridor Improvement Plan	Parks and Recreation Plan	Major Development
Site Plan Review	N/A	Optional	Optional	N/A	N/A	N/A	Required
Surveys	Recommended	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Recommended	Optional
Workshops	Recommended	Optional	Optional	Required	Required	Optional	Optional
Walkabouts	Optional	Optional	Optional	Recommended	Required	Recommended	Optional
Focus Groups	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional
Standing Committee	Optional	Required	Recommended	Optional	Optional	Recommended	Required
Social Networking	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional
Public Hearing	Required	Required	Required	Optional	Required	Required	Recommended