



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN
for
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Adopted by the Escanaba City Council

February 20, 2020

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Evaluate development projects and processes on an individual basis to determine scope, stakeholders, limitations, approving body, points of community impact during the decision-making process, internal and external resources, and level of appropriate community involvement.
- Make information available in a transparent and timely manner to enable interested parties to be involved at various stages of the review and development process.
- Strive to engage a diverse group of stakeholders in planning, land use, and development decisions, especially residents most affected by the proposed projects and persons of Low and Moderate Income in projects incorporating Community Development Block Grant funding.
- Encourage involvement of citizens throughout all stages of the planning and review process such as the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance updates.
- Record results of public participation, and report all results of records to the citizens/public, analyzing and using the data to inform future citizen engagement efforts.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- City Council
- City Boards and Commissions
- City Residents
- Escanaba Area Public Schools
- Bay de Noc Community College
- Delta County Chamber of Commerce
- Central U.P. Planning and Development Regional Commission
- Delta County Economic Development Alliance
- Next Michigan Superior Trade Zone
- U.P. Economic Development Alliance
- Escanaba Downtown Development Authority
- Escanaba Downtown Partners in Business
- Commercial Business Owners
- Commercial Brokers and Real Estate Professionals
- Potential Investors and Developers
- Senior Citizens
- Public Employees
- Major Local Employers
- Civic and Social Organizations
- Students and Student Groups
- Environmental Groups
- Delta Area Transport Authority
- Relevant State Agencies
- Neighborhood Groups
- Religious Groups
- William Bonifas Fine Arts Center
- Any Other Relevant Stakeholders

GOVERNING STATE REGULATIONS & LOCAL ORDINANCES

MICHIGAN OPEN MEETINGS ACT

(PA 267 OF 1976)

The City of Escanaba will hold meetings in City Hall at 410 Ludington Street which is accessible to the general public.

The public will be notified within 10 days of the first meeting a public body in each calendar year. A list stating the dates, times, and places of all its regular meetings will be posted at City Hall, published in the newspaper, and posted on the website.

If there is a change in 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 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.

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 to be put on a mailing list so that they are notified in advance of all meetings by contacting the Clerk's Office.

Drafts of public meeting minutes will be posted on the website within 8 business days of the meeting to which they refer.

Approved public meeting minutes will be posted on the website within 5 business days of the meeting at which they are approved.

MICHIGAN PLANNING ENABLING ACT

(PA 33 OF 2008)

This Act regulates planning activities for municipalities, townships, and counties such as:

- the formation and guidelines for Planning Commissions,
- procedures for preparing, adopting, amending, and implementing Master Plans, including requirements for public participation.

MICHIGAN ZONING ENABLING ACT

(PA 110 OF 2006)

This Act authorizes zoning in cities, villages, townships, and portions of counties, and regulates zoning activities, such as:

- The development and use of land
- The adoption of zoning ordinances and districts
- The formation of a Zoning Board of Appeals
- Public participation requirements for various zoning concerns

MICHIGAN FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

(PA 442 OF 1976)

This act provides for public access to certain public records of public bodies and permits certain fees for obtaining this information.

FOIA requests are processed through the City Clerk's office. More information and forms are located on the website at escanaba.org.

LOCAL REGULATIONS

City of Escanaba City Charter

(Adopted August 29, 1921, as amended)

City of Escanaba Code of Ordinances

(Adopted August 29, 1921 as amended)

City of Escanaba Zoning Ordinance

(Adopted October 16, 2003, as amended)

PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Interested stakeholders are encouraged to check the City's website at www.escanaba.org, or the City's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/cityofescanaba>) in order to be kept informed of any meeting/hearing changes or cancellations.

All meetings/hearings that take place in the City Hall Council Chambers are live-streamed through the City's website. In addition, all regularly scheduled Escanaba City Council meetings are televised on Charter Public Channel 191.

Agenda packets are generally available a week before the scheduled meeting on the City's website and Facebook page, or through City Clerk's Office.

Public Hearing Notifications will be published in a newspaper, on the City's website, and on the Facebook page at least 15 days before the scheduled hearing date. Additionally, direct notification of neighbors within 300' of a project will be done via mail for:

- Rezoning of Property
- Special Land Use Applications
- Variance Requests

Notifications will include all required information required by federal, state, and local regulations, such as meeting date, time, and location, project description, process for submitting written comments, etc.

Drafts of the meeting/hearing minutes are posted on the City's website within eight (8) business days after the meeting. Approved meeting/hearing minutes are posted on the City's website within five (5) business days after the meeting at which they were approved.

The City of Escanaba will provide all necessary, reasonable auxiliary aids and services to individuals with disabilities at the meeting/hearing upon five days' notice to the City of Escanaba Clerk's Office.



REVIEW OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

This document is intended to be a living document that can adapt to changes in technology and best meet the needs of residents. Therefore, this plan will be reviewed every six (6) months and updated as necessary, as part of the Planning Commission's Annual Report to City Council and then again in mid-summer. Record-keeping and reporting will include items such as the types of public involvement strategies employed, the number of public participants, survey result summaries, group/meeting outcome summaries, analysis of strengths/weakness of efforts, and recommendations for future strategy implementation.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIES

There are a number of different public involvement strategies that may be implemented as part of the development process. The table below provides a guide as to when certain methods may be optimal, followed by a listing of the particular considerations for each of the strategies:

| | Master Plan | Zoning Amendments | Environmental Projects | Capital Improvement Plan Projects | Parks and Recreation Planning | Major Developments |
|--|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Pre-Application Meetings | | | | | | Recommended |
| Surveys | Recommended | Optional | Recommended | Recommended | Recommended | |
| Open House Meetings and Communication Workshops | Recommended | Optional | Recommended | Recommended | Recommended | Optional |
| Charrettes/Design Workshops | Optional | | | | Optional | Optional |
| Walking Tours | Optional | Optional | Optional | Optional | Optional | Optional |
| One-on-One Interviews | Optional | Optional | Optional | Optional | Optional | Optional |
| Focus Groups | Optional | Optional | Optional | Optional | Optional | Optional |
| Digital Tools of Communication | Recommended | Optional | Optional | Optional | Recommended | Recommended |
| Local Events (Farmers' Market, school, service clubs, etc.) | Recommended | Recommended | | | Recommended | Optional |
| News, Media | Optional | Recommended | | Recommended | Optional | Recommended |
| Public Hearing | Required | Required | Required | Required | Required | Required |

Pre-Application Meetings: Before submitting an official zoning permit application, an applicant may meet with the Planning & Zoning Administrator to review the proposed project, applicable sections of the Code of Ordinances, and the Master Plan. A pre-application conference may be held with the Planning Commission for the purpose of establishing general guidelines and eliciting feedback from the members of the Planning Commission regarding specific questions or problems areas. The pre-application conference is a vehicle intended to provide the applicant with general guidance prior to the expenditure of large amounts of time and money in the planning effort.

Surveys: Surveys are useful for identifying specific areas of interest or concentration from a broad scope of ideas or issues. These areas of interest can then be further explored using other methods like the ones outlined below. A survey may be used to identify where to start in the planning process, or the general climate surrounding a topic. Surveys can be useful to get a general idea of something, but should not be used as the sole method of public input. It is helpful for a municipality to administer surveys with partners. For example, schools can send surveys home with children, churches can have them available to fill out and neighborhood groups can put them in mail boxes.

Community Workshops: These could be as simple as a series of question and answer sessions or as creative as creating a board game. The strategy should identify potential venues, considering access for the disabled and citizens without vehicles. In addition, the strategy should identify how to reach underrepresented groups. Often workshops are a great way to educate the community surrounding a specific topic and hear concerns, questions and ideas.

Charrettes: The charrette differs from a workshop because it is a multi-day event where designers and planners work on a plan in-between what are called “feedback loops.” Usually between three and seven days, citizens can come to the “charrette studio,” which is an office on or near the location of the proposed plan or project. Citizens offer ideas while the charrette team facilitates and observes. From these suggestions, the designers and planners change the plan to suit community input and present their creation the next day where the community offers feedback again. This makes up one cycle of a “feedback loop.” There can be up to five feedback loops, resulting in a final plan shortly thereafter. This process can be completed with many different budgets, depending on the expertise of municipal staff and local residents. Charrettes take much planning beforehand.

Walking Tours: Walking tours 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. Walking tours are also useful for identifying desired design, problem properties or safety concerns.

One-on-One Interviews: Interviews are a great way to get specifics on a topic. In the stakeholder section of the strategy, specific community leaders may have been identified, making them ideal candidates for an interview. Some communities have individuals that are very vocal about issues in the community. Interviewing them may give some perspective on how to address their concerns. It is important to remember that one interview reflects the opinion of one individual and should not be considered the standing of the entire community.

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

Digital Tools of Communication: Technology offers a unique opportunity to give and receive information to a mass of 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. The strategy should identify the social media venues a community will use, the target audience of these venues and who will be responsible for making posts and monitoring the posts of others. The ability to spread misinformation or post disrespectful comments makes it important to plan for the use of social media.

It should be noted that the City of Escanaba acknowledges the usefulness of the public involvement strategies outlined above, but recognizes that the implementation of these strategies is an evolving process limited by available financial and personnel resources.

The City of Escanaba will continue to explore the increasing utilization of these strategies in its development processes as appropriate.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

The City encourages participation in local government planning and policy decisions. Therefore, all citizens are invited to apply for appointments to City Boards and Commissions. Through these opportunities, civic-minded citizens become involved in their local government groups which provide recommendations to the City Council on a variety of topics and issues. The members of the Boards and Commissions help to analyze options and influence important decisions on behalf of the community. As a result, the City benefits from the vast knowledge, experience, and expertise of its citizens.

In general, depending on the nature and location of the project, many of the Boards and Commissions may review a proposed plan or specific aspect of a land use project. These Boards and Commissions function in two distinct capacities in the public policy process in the City of Escanaba - advisory and administrative. Some will serve in both capacities.

Each advisory Board or Commission makes recommendations to the City Council based on the scope of its particular service area. Typically, advisory Boards and Commissions have a work agenda in place for a calendar year during which it undertakes projects, deliberates on issues, and hosts special events. The City Council is responsible for making the final decisions on most issues or topics, but it will look to these groups for advice, background information, and analysis. As the elected body, the City Council has discretion to accept advice in full, in part, or not at all. Certain Boards and Commissions have an additional administrative role. This means that they are permitted or required by charter, statute, or ordinance to conduct formal reviews and issue administrative decisions.

Board and Commission Member positions are all voluntary and are appointed by the Mayor, with the consensus of City Council. Once appointed, the time commitment for each Board and Commission varies. Some meet on a regular schedule, while others meet on an as-needed basis. Preparation for some meetings may require additional time obligations. Attendance at all regularly scheduled meetings is critical.

How to Apply for Boards, Committees, and Commissions

1. Review information related to Boards, Committees, and Commissions (handbook, application, etc.) to understand the preferred background experiences, time commitments, and other expectations for the desired appointment.
2. Complete a Boards and Commissions Application Form and submit it to: Office of the City Clerk, P. O. Box 948, 410 Ludington Street, Escanaba, MI 49829 or fax (906) 786-4755 or e-mail to clerk@escanaba.org. Be sure to answer all questions thoroughly. A separate application is required for each position desired.
3. As vacancies occur, applications are forwarded to all City Council members for review. Appointments are made by the Mayor with consensus of City Council.
4. Applications will remain on file for the calendar year. A new application is required each year to remain in consideration for a particular board or commission.



DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BODIES

City Council

1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month at 7:00pm

The City Council is comprised of five elected-at-large citizens to serve four-year terms. The Council constitutes the legislative and governing body of the City, possessing all powers and authority to pass ordinances and adopt resolutions as they shall deem proper in order to exercise any or all powers held by the City. For many development-related processes (excluding site plan and variances), City Council is the final approving body.

Planning Commission

2nd Thursday of the month at 6:00pm

The Planning Commission is comprised of nine appointed members who serve for three-year terms.

One of the primary tasks of the Planning Commission is the development and implementation of the Master Plan which governs the physical development of the City. Considerable public engagement is a key component in the development of the Master Plan and it is the duty of the Planning Commission to be guided by it in their deliberations and decisions in efforts to recognize the value of public participation in the planning process.

The Planning Commission holds Public Hearings on a number of land use and development issues (special use permits, rezoning, zoning ordinance amendments, etc.) as required by the Escanaba Zoning Ordinance and other applicable regulations. Notifications of Public Hearings are published in the newspaper not less than 15 days prior to the hearing.

Annually, the Planning Commission and the Administration updates the City Council on planning issues and matters brought before the Planning Commission in the previous calendar year and development –related goals for the upcoming year in the form of a Planning Commission Annual Report. This report will be made available on the City's website as well.

Zoning Board of Appeals

Meets as Needed

The ZBA has the power to hear and decide appeals on matters where the Zoning Ordinance provides for review of an administrative interpretation, exception, or special approval permit. The ZBA can also authorize a variance from the strict application of the Zoning Ordinance according to a set of criteria. Six members are appointed for three-year terms.

Historic District Commission

Meets Quarterly

The HDC was created to regulate the construction, addition, alteration, repair, moving, excavation and demolition of potentially historic resources in historic districts within city limits. Seven members are appointed for three-year terms.

OTHER BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

The Board of Equalization and Review hears appeals from property owners who feel their property has been inaccurately assessed. It has the power to make appropriate corrections in the tax roll. The membership consists of the Mayor and four members, two-thirds (2/3) whom shall be tax-paying electors of the City. Board Members have indefinite terms and are reappointed every two years. Meets annually.

The Brownfield Redevelopment Authority facilitates the implementation of brownfield plans relating to the designation and treatment of brownfield redevelopment zones and to promote the revitalization of environmentally distressed areas in the community served by the City of Escanaba pursuant to Act 381. Five members are appointed for three-year terms. Meets as needed.

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) established under P. A. 197, 1975, is made up of the Mayor and seven members to be appointed by the Mayor with Council concurrence. Not less than a majority of the members shall be persons having an interest in property located in the downtown district. Not less than one of the members shall be a resident of the downtown district, as the Escanaba area has over 100 people residing within the area. The establishment of the DDA is to correct and prevent deterioration in the business district. The Mayor and City Manager will serve for an indefinite period. The seven members meeting the criteria set forth serve for a four-year period. Meets monthly.

The Electrical Advisory Committee was created to provide continuous information and recommendations to the Escanaba City Council on current electrical trends, operations, and needs in our community. Seven members are appointed for three-year terms. Meets monthly.

The Harbor Advisory Committee was created for the purpose of advising Administration concerning the operation and development of the Municipal Marina. Five members are appointed for three-year terms. Meets monthly.

The Loan Administration Board (LAB) is the City's approval body for economic development loans. Loan requests that meet federal, state, and local requirements are presented to the Loan Administration Board for approval, modification, or denial. Five members are appointed for six-year terms. Meets quarterly.

The Recreation Advisory Board advises the City Council and Administration about all phases of recreation in the City, including current operations, long-term planning, and expenditures. Five members are appointed for three-year terms. Meets monthly.

The Traffic Safety Advisory Committee serves the City Council and Administration in an advisory capacity, particularly for concerns related to vehicular traffic in the City. This includes traffic flow, parking restrictions, street cuts, and sidewalk planning. Five members serve three-year terms. Meets bi-monthly.



CITIZEN AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

All written citizen complaints that identify deficiencies relative to the City of Escanaba's community development program merit full, prompt consideration, and will be handled with the intention of satisfactorily resolving the complaint at the local level.

- The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as name, address, phone number of complainant and location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint, will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.
- The complaint should be submitted by the grievant and/or his/her designee as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the alleged violation to:

City Manager
410 Ludington Street
Escanaba, MI 49829
(906) 786-9402
citymanager@escanaba.org

- Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, the City Manager or his designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and the possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days of the meeting, the City Manager or his designee will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in format accessible to the complainant, such as large print, Braille, or audio tape. The response will explain the position of the City of Escanaba and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.
- If the response by the City Manager or his designee does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant and/or his/her designee may appeal the decision of within 15 calendar days after receipt of the response to the City Council.
- Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the City Council will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting, the City Council will respond in writing, and, where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, with a final resolution of the complaint.
- All written complaints received by the City Manager or his designee, appeals to the City Council, and responses from these two offices will be retained by the City of Escanaba for at least three years.

All citizen complaints relative to Fair Housing/Equal Opportunity violations involving discrimination must be forwarded to the Michigan Department of Civil Rights [Michigan Department of Civil Rights, Intake Team, 3054 West Grand Blvd., Suite 3-600, Detroit, MI 48202] for disposition. The complainant must be notified in writing within 10 days that, due to the nature of the complaint, it has been forwarded to the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. Citizens must be made aware that they can forward a complaint alleging discrimination directly to the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, Intake Team, 3054 West Grand Blvd., Suite 3-600, Detroit, MI 48202. Persons wishing to object to the Michigan Strategic Fund's (MSF) approval of an application may make such objection known to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

The MSF will consider objections made only on the following grounds:

- The City of Escanaba's description of needs and objectives is plainly inconsistent with available facts and data.
- The activities to be undertaken are plainly inappropriate to meeting the needs and objectives identified by the City of Escanaba.
- The application does not comply with the requirements set forth in the final statement (consolidated plan) or other applicable laws.

Such objections should include both identification of the requirements not met and, in the case of objections relative to the first bullet above, must include the data upon which the objection is based.