

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN



7/20/2016

CITY OF WYANDOTTE, MICHIGAN

## INTRODUCTION

Involvement in local affairs is essential in keeping our city and government officials aware of the needs of our citizens. The City of Wyandotte has a number of governmental boards and commissions which provide an opportunity for citizens to participate in their local government. These groups also help to ensure that Mayor and City Council receives a broad spectrum of public input. Citizens that sit on these boards are volunteers who take great pride in their civic service.



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## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OVERVIEW**

Frequent, regular and active solicitation of input from citizens and organizations that represent a diverse perspective results in the information needed to make the most successful decisions possible. As key facilitators in the City's decision-making processes, the public officials, administrators and employees of the City of Wyandotte understand the significant importance of public participation.

It is important that the City engage citizens from the very beginning. Soliciting input at all stages of the decision making process contributes to a greater public understanding of the complexities involved in many community projects and also provides transparency in government operations. The active solicitation and consideration of citizen input by City officials enhances the public understanding of their ability and responsibility to impact the future of the community. To effectively engage the public, there needs to be an explicit plan of action which outlines the purpose and process used in soliciting public input.

Our Public Participation plan emphasizes Wyandotte's commitment to a strong public participation process and effective means of communication with our stakeholders in planning and development activities. The City of Wyandotte will ensure that outreach efforts are regularly evaluated for effectiveness, thus shaping to the changing needs of our stakeholders. Our City staff also explores ways to improve communication strategies to reach the specific project stakeholders and gather community feedback. The public participation actions described throughout this Plan do not preclude additional public involvement or engagement efforts.

It is important to realize that citizen engagement is a dynamic endeavor - continually changing with each unique situation. A successful practice with one group of citizens might fail to gather the needed input for another group. To this end, this plan is intended to serve as an internal analysis and assessment, providing acknowledgment of successes, missed opportunities and a resource for ideas on how to best engage collaboration in the future. In circumstances when the City consults with a third party entity, that entity shall adhere to the provisions of this Plan, when applicable. The City will consider new methods of communication and engagement as they become available, and update this Plan as needed.

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## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOALS**

In the spirit of collaboration, the development of these goals and objectives has allowed city officials to reach a general consensus on what successful public participation looks like.

- 1. The City of Wyandotte shall conduct all aspects of citizen participation in an open manner, with freedom of access to the participation for all interested persons.**
- 2. The City of Wyandotte shall seek broad identification and representative involvement of all residents of the community.**
- 3. The City of Wyandotte shall utilize effective and equitable avenues for distributing information and receiving comments.**
- 4. The City of Wyandotte shall engage a diverse set of community stakeholders in planning, land use, and development decisions.**
- 5. The City of Wyandotte shall encourage regional collaboration with local governments and other stakeholder organizations.**
- 6. The City of Wyandotte shall maintain and develop staff expertise in all aspects of participation.**
- 7. The City of Wyandotte shall support and encourage continuous improvement in the methods used to meet the public need for information and involvement.**
- 8. The City of Wyandotte shall support and encourage effective participation.**
- 9. The City of Wyandotte shall record results of public engagement and recount these results back to the public.**
- 10. The City shall encourage sustained public participation by creating meaningful volunteer opportunities, ad-hoc committees, study groups and other roles which allow citizens greater responsibility in the decision making process.**

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## OUTREACH TO KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The City of Wyandotte understands that a successful public dialogue is essential for the development of a successful community. Without the systematic and consistent incorporation of citizens and other stakeholders in the decision-making processes of our local government, ideas and opportunities will be missed and decisions made without a complete understanding of the potential impacts on our community. Additionally, a regular dialogue between citizens and their local government enhances understanding, contributes to a transparent process. By involving our community in the decision-making processes at all stages, citizens are more likely to accept the final outcome of a project and feel that their interests were considered and the best decisions were made.

The City has a long history of collaboration with public and private sector organizations and citizens towards the goal of bettering our community. Much of the collaboration that has occurred has resulted in the high quality of life we enjoy in the City of Wyandotte.

Our stakeholders represent a diverse set of individuals, groups, and organizations that are interested or affected by the planning and land use process. A different group of stakeholders may be engaged in each of the planning and development review processes, dependent on the nature of the project or plan, the level of community interest and the community's financial involvement in the project and this list is not all-inclusive.

- Ad Hoc and Steering Committees
- Business community
- City Boards and Commissions
- City Council
- Civic and social organizations
- Commercial business owners
- Commercial brokers and real estate professionals
- Environmental groups
- Major local employers
- Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)
- Neighborhood associations
- Neighboring municipalities
- Potential investors and developers
- Public employees
- Relevant state agencies
- Residents
- Southern Wayne County Regional Chamber
- Students and student groups

- Taxing jurisdictions
- Wayne County
- Wyandotte Business Association
- Wyandotte Public Schools

The City of Wyandotte is committed to reaching out to organizations and citizens to collectively solve problems that may arise and create visions for the future. The partnership developed through collaborative efforts strengthens networks and reinforces future relationships. A continuous dialogue with organizational stakeholders should be maintained to facilitate understanding and trust. The City further understands that when efforts are combined, resources can be saved and a better outcome reached.

While it is known that the ‘usual suspects’ attend meetings, the city does not systematically analyze the data it collects on the citizens who attend public meetings or the nature of the comments that are made. Additionally, no specific demographic characteristics are known about citizen participation. Although there are numerous stakeholders currently involved in helping to develop and guide the City of Wyandotte, the likelihood of underrepresented citizens and organizations is still a reality. The City of Wyandotte needs to identify these stakeholders and make a concerted effort at bringing them into the decision making process. The most difficult demographics to reach are young families and youth. The best way to reach both of these demographic groups is for additional information sharing with the school district, website, e-newsletter and social media.

## STATE AND LOCAL REGULATIONS

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
- City Code of Ordinances
- 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)
- New Personal Property Exemption Act (PA 328 of 1998)
- Plant Rehabilitation and Industrial Development Districts Act (known as the Industrial Facilities Exemption) (PA 198 of 1974)
- Tax Increment Financing Authority (PA 450 of 1980)
- Other relevant local and State legislation

## METHODS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Both passive and active methods of public participation are used by the City of Wyandotte. A summary of these practices is listed below:

### PASSIVE PRACTICES

The following methods are passive because they are simply a way of making the public aware of what is happening. Many times, this does not result in involvement of all stakeholders, especially those with visual impairments, non-English speakers, the illiterate, youth, citizens with limited mobility and those who work during the time of the public meeting.

- **Announcements at council, commission or board meetings**
- **Cable notifications**
- **Coffee and Conversation with the Mayor**
- **Community e-newsletter**
- **Enclosures in water and municipal bills**
- **Flier/poster posting on community hall door**
- **Post card mailings**
- **Newspaper advertisements**
- **Mailings**
- **Website posting**
- **Social media sites**

### ACTIVE PRACTICES

The following are public participation methods that are less reactive and more focused on education and collaborative visioning. Many of these methods have been used by the City and would not be possible without strong partnerships.

- **Surveys:** Surveys are useful for identifying specific areas of interest or concentration from a broad scope of ideas or issues.
- **Community Workshops:** These can be as simple as a series of question and answer sessions or as creative as creating a board game. Often workshops are a great way to educate the community surrounding a specific topic and hear concerns, questions and ideas. As noted above, workshop venues need to be accessible and approachable for all attendees. If a meeting is for a neighborhood level project, all effort should be made to hold the workshop in the neighborhood and at convenient times. An experienced meeting facilitator is a must and she must understand the desired input and ultimate use of the

input and be able to relay the process. The City has used workshops for the DDA's Strategic Plan, and the City's Strategic Plan.

- **Charrettes:** A 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”.
- **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 design, problem properties or safety concerns.
- **One-on-One Interviews:** Interviews are a great way to get specifics on a topic. 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.
- **Focus Groups-** Like interviews, focus groups can help to narrow down concepts or get a specific side of the story.
- **Social Networking-** 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.

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## OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The City provides the residents of Wyandotte and stakeholders with numerous opportunities to get involved in the planning, review, and approval process for planning and zoning applications, planning documents, development projects, and economic development assistance programs.

### DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BODIES

#### **City Council**

The City Council is the legislative and policy-making body for the City government. Six Councilmembers are elected at large for overlapping four-year terms. The Council also appoints the City Administrator who is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the City government.

#### **Boards and Commissions**

The City encourages citizen participation in local government planning and policy decisions. Therefore, all citizens are invited to apply for appointments to City boards and commissions. These groups 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. Each board or commission makes recommendations to the City Council based on the scope of its particular service area. 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 additional administrative roles. This means that they are permitted or required by charter, statute or ordinance to conduct formal reviews and issue administrative decisions. These decisions are then sent to the City Council as official recommendations. The most relevant boards and commissions related to development are listed below:

- **EDC/Brownfield/Tax Increment Financing Authority (TIFA)**

The Authority is responsible for reviewing and adopting Brownfield Redevelopment Plans to promote the revitalization of properties that are functionally obsolete, blighted or environmentally distressed throughout the city.

- **Downtown Development Authority**

The Downtown Development Authority develops programs and projects which are aimed at improving downtown Wyandotte including new business development, business recruitment and retention, downtown beautification, public improvements, marketing, and promotion.

- **Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission creates a Comprehensive Plan for the physical development of the City; reviews rezoning requests, site plans, subdivisions, special use permits and other land use applications.

- **Zoning Board of Appeals**

Zoning Board of Appeals interprets and grants variances from provisions of the Zoning Code; conducts hearings and resolves disputes regarding decisions of the Zoning Official.

A comprehensive list of Boards and Commissions may be found in the City's Guide to Boards and Commissions. Visit the City's website at <http://www.wyandotte.net/Government/BoardsAndCommissions.asp> for a complete list of boards and commissions in Wyandotte, their responsibilities, meeting agendas, and minutes.

The City encourages community members interested in serving their community through active civic engagement to apply for openings on these boards and commissions. It should be noted that the City's boards and commissions meet regularly and provide additional opportunities for public participation in the planning and development review process. These are public meetings and allow for public comments from any interested stakeholder.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

All meetings of the City Council 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 Clerk's Offices of the City of Wyandotte prior to the meeting. Interested persons are encouraged to contact City Hall or check the City's website at [www.wyandotte.net](http://www.wyandotte.net) in order to be kept informed of any meeting schedule, variations, or location changes. The City of Wyandotte's Council, Zoning, DDA and Planning Commission's regular meetings are recorded, archived online, and available via an on-demand playback option on the Municipal Services website at [www.wyan.org](http://www.wyan.org). In addition, recorded meetings are televised and replayed on local cable access Channel 16.

Individual boards and commission will hold public meetings pursuant to the boards' and commissions' bylaws and State regulations. Meeting agendas of the City Council, Planning Commission, Zoning Board and DDA are made available on the City's website in advance of the meeting. Agendas and minutes of all other boards and commissions are available at the office of the City Clerk.

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## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Opportunities for public comment shall be available at any meeting of the City Council or City's boards and commissions in accordance with the provisions in the boards and commission's bylaws and other operating policies. The meeting agenda allows for public comments under the 'Public Comment' or 'Communications from Citizens' sections. The participation of interested persons and their input shall be recorded in the meeting minutes. Approved meeting minutes, which include the outcome of the public participation, are made available to the public through various methods, including being posted on the City's website.



## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

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.

### **CITY COUNCIL**

The City Council shall hold a public hearing when called for in their enabling legislation. Furthermore, the City Council shall, on receipt of the report of the Planning Commission, set a date for a public hearing for consideration of any proposed Zoning Code amendment, supplement or change (rezoning). The City Council shall hold public hearings as required for the review of business tax or financial assistance applications, following the notice requirements set in the local and state legislation

Following adoption of an ordinance to amend, supplement or change the zoning district boundaries or the district regulations, the ordinance shall be filed with the City Clerk and a notice of the ordinance adoption shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in Wyandotte within 15 days after adoption.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION**

It has been the ongoing practice of the Planning Commission to hold public hearings for all land use and development applications (site plan, special use permit, rezoning) that come before them, though not required by State law to do so for all applications. The Planning and Zoning Administrator shall schedule and publish the notification of a public hearing before the Planning Commission in a newspaper of general distribution in the City not less than 15 days prior to the hearing on a site plan application as mandated by the commission's bylaws. The applicant and the City Council shall receive written notification of the Planning Commission's recommendation.

### **OTHER BOARDS & COMMISSIONS**

Other relevant boards and commissions will hold public hearings as needed and as required by the individual boards and commissions bylaws. The public hearings will be noticed as required in advance of the meeting. All meeting agendas shall be made available at the clerk's office prior to the meeting.

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## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS**

The most basic type of facilitation of public participation is mandated by state and federal requirements. The Open Meetings Act (OMA) was developed to ensure that governments were including citizens in the decision making process. Advanced notice of public meetings and restrictions on discussions outside of a public forum serve to ensure that a level of transparency is occurring in government processes throughout the country. The OMA is fundamental to ensuring the public has a role in policy development and adhering to its mandates is legally required. The City of Wyandotte takes these requirements very seriously as legal mandates to assure that due process in decision-making process is maximized.

### **MICHIGAN OPEN MEETINGS ACT COMPLIANCE**

In accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976), the municipality will hold meetings in City Hall, 3200 Biddle Avenue, Wyandotte, Michigan 48192 or in another properly posted location as is necessary or preferable. These locations are accessible to the general public. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services in order to participate in municipal meetings may contact Wyandotte City Hall for assistance: City Clerk, 734- 334-4562, 3200 Biddle Avenue; Wyandotte, MI 48192; [clerk@wyan.org](mailto:clerk@wyan.org)

The public will be notified within ten (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 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 eighteen (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.

The OMA requires guidelines during public meetings to ensure the public has an opportunity to be included in the decision making process and to ensure that a record of decisions are kept and are accessible to the public for review.

During each public meeting there must be time allotted for the public to comment. Minutes must be kept for all open meetings, and are required to contain a record of the public comment and also the following: - the time, date and place of the meeting - the members present and absent - a record of any decisions made at the meeting and a record of all roll call votes The basic intent of the OMA is to require that public bodies conduct business at open meetings. However, there are times when a closed session is necessary and in these instances, an explanation of the purpose(s) for which a closed session is held must be in the minutes of a regular meeting and separate minutes must be taken of the closed meeting.

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## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION EVALUATION**

The City's Public Participation Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis. The City Administrator will be responsible for keeping track of this review and will be responsible for compiling public participation efforts of the various City Department Heads, Boards and Commissions. These results should identify strengths and weaknesses and give examples of how to better maximize outreach. This will create a continuous review process which enables City officials to successfully make changes through a consistently improved upon, dynamic process.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Board or Commission	Frequency of Open Meetings	Sub-committees with opportunities for public engagement	Website	Cable notifications	Flier/posters	Community newsletter	Social Media
Beatification Commission	Monthly	N/A	Webpage listing commissioners, meeting dates, dig-in dates and other volunteer opportunities	Meeting notifications, dates for dig-ins, adopt-a-spot and other volunteer opportunities	Fliers/posters for dig-ins, adopt-a-spot and other volunteer opportunities	Meeting notifications, dig-ins and community volunteer opportunities.	Promotion of dig-ins, volunteer opportunities and annual Beautification awards
Board of Examiners of Electricians	As needed	N/A	Webpage listing commissioners and meeting dates	Meeting notifications	N/A	N/A	N/A
Board of Examiners of Plumbers	As needed	N/A	Webpage listing commissioners and meeting dates	Meeting notifications	N/A	N/A	N/A
Building Authority	As needed	N/A	Webpage listing commissioners and meeting dates	Meeting notifications	N/A	N/A	N/A
Building Code Board of Appeals	As needed	N/A	Webpage listing commissioners and meeting dates	Meeting notifications	N/A	N/A	N/A
City Council & Mayor	Weekly Council Meetings & Monthly Coffee and Conversation with the Mayor meetings	N/A	Webpage listing public officials, meeting dates, meeting agendas and minutes, streaming of archived council meetings	Meeting notifications, televised meetings	Fliers and posters for City-sponsored events	Newsletter outlining meetings, city-sponsored events, emergency notifications	Promotion of meetings, city-sponsored events, emergency notifications
Cultural and Historical Commission	Monthly	N/A	Webpage listing commissioners, meeting dates, volunteer opportunities and events.	Meeting notifications	Fliers and posters for Museum sponsored events	Newsletter for volunteer opportunities and museum sponsored events	Promotion of volunteer opportunities and museum sponsored events
Design Review Committee	As needed	N/A	Webpage listing commissioners and meeting dates	Meeting notifications	N/A	N/A	N/A
Downtown Development Authority	Monthly	Design & promotions committee	Webpage listing board members, meeting dates, volunteer opportunities, agenda & meeting minutes	Meeting notifications, televised meetings	Fliers and posters for DDA sponsored events	E-newsletter for volunteer opportunities and DDA sponsored events	Promotion of new businesses, volunteer opportunities and DDA sponsored events

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Board or Commission	Frequency of Open Meetings	Sub-committees with opportunities for public engagement	Website	Cable notifications	Flier/posters	Community newsletter	Social Media
EDC - TIFA - Brownfield Redevelopment	Monthly	N/A	Webpage listing commissioners and meeting dates	Meeting notifications, televised meetings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Firefighters Civil Service	As needed	N/A	Webpage listing commissioners and meeting dates	Meeting notifications	N/A	N/A	N/A
Municipal Service Commission	Bi-monthly	N/A	Webpage listing commissioners, meeting dates, meeting agendas and minutes	Meeting notifications, televised meetings	N/A	Newsletter for cable specials, water test results and municipal service sponsored events	Promotion of cable specials and municipal service sponsored events and outages
Planning Commission	Monthly	N/A	Webpage listing commissioners, meeting dates, meeting agendas and minutes	Meeting notifications, televised meetings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Police & Fire Commission	As needed	N/A	Webpage listing commissioners and meeting dates.	Meeting notifications	N/A	N/A	N/A
Recreation Commission	Monthly	Marina Committee	Webpage listing commissioners, meeting dates, volunteer opportunities and events.	Meeting notifications	Fliers and posters for recreation department events	N/A	N/A
Retirement Commission	Monthly	N/A	Webpage listing commissioners and meeting dates.	Meeting notifications	N/A	N/A	N/A
Zoning Board of Appeals	Monthly	N/A	Webpage listing commissioners, meeting dates, meeting agendas and minutes	Meeting notifications, televised meetings	N/A	N/A	N/A