

Stanton Public Participation Plan

Participation Goals and Objectives

Stanton is a City that places an emphasis on the wants and needs of the community at-large. To ensure that the people of this community are able to have a voice in the planning and development processes of new projects, the City of Stanton has implemented this Public Participation Plan, which has been approved by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities Program for future use by all staff members and public officials. The following goals have been formulated to increase the number of ways that members of the community may receive information and shape future developments.

- **The City of Stanton encourages public participation in the drafting of each phase of the master plan.** Throughout the process of creating a master plan, the City of Stanton will continue its current methods for fostering public participation, while actively seeking new and effective ways for more stakeholders to become involved. The master plan is an important policy that sets the course for the future of the community, so involving important stakeholders early on in the process will allow for a more satisfied populous in regard to the direction of future land-use projects.
- **The City of Stanton will work to increase representation from all stakeholders and residents within the community.** Stanton is a diverse community with residents, business owners, and visitors from various walks of life. To ensure that a broad range of thoughts are heard during each development process, the City will continue to provide a variety of methods for reaching out to all populations with information, while also finding ways to receiving their input.
- **The City of Stanton will employ effective practices for distributing information and receiving feedback.** In order for municipal processes to remain transparent to the public, providing effective avenues for communication with members of the community is imperative. The City understands that there is not a universal platform for communication that will translate to all situations, so it is important for Stanton to continue to utilize a variety of methods in order to expand their outreach to all members of the community.
- **The City of Stanton will provide educational materials for decision makers and stakeholders.** In order to create useful and sustainable developments, decision makers must have a working knowledge of land-use issues and processes. Public participation also becomes more effective if residents have this same working knowledge of land-use. Stanton will aim to continue to provide educational resources to the public and appointed officials so that these stakeholders can have an impact on the decision-making process, and have the confidence to be able to participate.

- **The City of Stanton will continue to seek new methods for community engagement.** In a rapidly changing world with new advancements in technology and communication, it is important for the City to stay up-to-date with new innovations. Stanton should continue to look to adopt new methods of communication in order to continue engaging the public in the future.
- **The City of Stanton will maintain records of public engagement and report results back to the public in a timely manner.** To maintain transparency in each planning process, Stanton will work towards recording public comments, and will subsequently track the methods used to address these comments. This information will be relayed back to the public once it has been recorded. By recording and tracking the comments and methods used, the people of Stanton will be able to see that their ideas have been taken into account during the planning process, and the City will be able to use the recorded information to better evaluate their own methods and processes in the future.

State Regulations on Public Participation

Along with this public participation plan, the City of Stanton also follows a list of state regulations that have been implemented to help ensure government transparency, as well as opportunities for citizens to participate in governmental processes. These regulations include:

- *The Stanton City Charter*
- *The Stanton City Code of Ordinances*
- *Home Rule City Act (PA 279 of 1909)*
- *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 New Personal Property Exemption Act (PA 328 of 1998)*
- *Other relevant local and State legislation*

Key Stakeholders

When planning to incorporate public participation into a community, it is important to identify key groups that have the power and resources to be able to reach more people than the City's administration can on its own. These groups are an integral part of the community, and often advocate for under-represented populations in the City. During each planning process, these groups will be notified and included in order to receive their input. Some examples of these key stakeholders include:

- The Montcalm Economic Alliance
- Local business owners
- The Stanton Main Street Downtown Development Authority

- Neighborhood groups
- Regional communities (Lakeview, Greenville, Sheridan)
- Potential investors and donors
- Public employees
- Real estate professionals
- Churches and religious groups
- Senior groups
- Schools
- Students
- Social Organizations (the American Legion, Lions Club, Rotary, etc.)
- Stanton Old Fashioned Days committee
- Civic boards and commissions
- Hospitals and medical clinics
- Visitors and tourists
- Local residents
- Local nonprofit groups and foundations

Methods of Communication

The City of Stanton practices a variety of methods in order to inform and receive feedback from the community. The City will use more than one method for each project in order to further participation. The following are the current methods being used by the City of Stanton. These methods are constantly being updated or removed if proven ineffective. New methods will be added in time as the administration finds more successful ones.

Inform

- *The Greenville Daily News* - This is the local area newspaper. New copies are printed daily.
- *The City of Stanton Website* – www.stantononline.com. The website posts all civic meeting times and dates, meeting minutes for all civic meetings, and a video recording of the latest City Commission meeting for those who could not attend in person. The website also provides all public documents (city charter, code of ordinances, master plan, etc.) and applications to join a local board or commission. Contact information for all municipal workers is also listed.
- *City of Stanton Newsletter* – An annual newsletter that announces city news and upcoming meetings.
- *Press Releases* - Stanton distributes short news releases to a variety of media outlets around the greater Stanton area. These releases are published in newspapers and websites, and are also broadcasted on television and the radio.
- *Printed Fliers* - The City of Stanton utilizes bulletin boards located at city hall and post office to post fliers announcing upcoming events and meetings.
- *Social Media* - Stanton Facebook account is used to highlight upcoming events and meetings.

Receive

- *Surveys* - Printed surveys are often used by the City to collect feedback from residents through data and comments.
- *Public Hearings* - Meetings that give residents an opportunity to provide feedback to the City on various events and projects.
- *Open Houses* - These events are held for members of the community to view and receive more information on upcoming projects, while also having opportunities to articulate their opinions to public officials.
- *Boards, and Commissions meetings* - These civic meetings usually give at least two opportunities for members of the community to voice their concerns and bring unheard issues to the attention of these government bodies.
- *Social Media* – City of Stanton Facebook page
- *Workshops* - These presentations are scheduled to help educate community members on a certain topic pertaining to Stanton, such as interpreting the City’s budget or learning how to become a registered voter. These workshops also provide a great opportunity for community members to ask questions and state opinions on the processes and projects that pertain to the subject.
- *Charrettes* - These events are held to give community members multiple chances to give feedback and influence the direction of a project between each phase of its planning process.

Strategies for Outreach

The City of Stanton looks to proactively seek new input from the public through distinguishing specific times for when feedback will be solicited. By doing this, members of the community will begin to feel a sense of ownership in the project, and unforeseen issues in the planning process will be identified earlier. This section will state which methods of communication will be used during each type of public forum.

- *Planning Updates* - This includes the Master Plan, DDA Plan, and the Parks and Recreation Plan. To help cultivate public input during the formation of these written documents, all municipal boards and commissions will open the floor for members of the community to opine upon the new plans. Additional open houses or public hearings may also be scheduled for supplementary feedback on these plans. Announcements for these extra public forums will take shape as postings in the Greenville Daily News, online, and bulletin board fliers.
- *Zoning Ordinance Updates* - These updates will be decided upon during Planning Commission meetings. Like the above plans, the Planning Commission will allow time at each meeting for members of the public to address the board with comments and concerns about new ordinances. These comments will help the volunteer board make a final decision. Announcements for the time and location of planning commission meetings are listed on the Stanton Calendar and on fliers located on bulletin boards.
- *Development Projects* - Regardless if a project is of high or low controversy, the City of Stanton will continue to use its established best practices to help boost participation. This will be done through open houses, public hearings, charrettes, surveys, workshops, and social media. Through these mediums, the public will have an opportunity to not only learn more about current and upcoming projects, but they will also have the

opportunity to directly influence the project during the beginning, middle, and finishing stages. To stay proactive, Stanton will post information regarding these meetings and events on social media, through mass mailings, the Greenville Daily News, fliers, the City's website, and possibly radio. Formal meeting minutes or notes will be taken at the event and will be posted on social media and the City's website after their adjournment.

Communicating Results

If an individual is unable to attend one of the listed meetings or feedback sessions, the City of Stanton will work to highlight major pieces of information and themes from these events through a myriad of public postings.

- *Public Meetings* - All city commission meetings will be recorded with printed meeting minutes and video recordings will also be posted on the City's website and on YouTube.
- *Surveys* - Survey results will be published in our quarterly newsletter, the Harbor Lights. This newsletter will be posted on the City's website, and will be distributed to all Stanton residents by mail.
- *Community Workshops and Charrettes* - A city staff member will be responsible for attending and taking notes at one of these events.
- *Social Media Posts* - A member of the City's staff will reply to all posts within 48 hours of their posting.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Public Participation Efforts

In order for public meetings and forums to remain effective in the future, the City of Stanton will continue to evaluate and improve their methods of fostering public participation. To guarantee future success, the City will use the following plan to ensure that an evaluation process is executed after each public event or meeting.

At each communication event, a community event satisfaction survey will be distributed to all attendees. The survey asks questions regarding the individual's reason for attending, as well as their overall satisfaction with the event. The attendee will also be asked how they were informed of the event, whether or not the location or timing of the event were convenient, and whether or not they would make any changes or improvements to the experience. A city staff member will collect these surveys after the event for review. Surveys will then be taken into account when planning the next similar event.

After a civic project, meeting, or event has been completed; an internal public participation survey will be distributed to, and completed by city staff members who were involved in the planning process. The survey asks the staff members how the event was advertised, where it took place, how the public was able to get involved, how many people were in attendance, whether or not more under-represented populations could have been included, and how the event could be improved in the future. By recording these surveys shortly after a public forum, staff members are able to reflect on the effectiveness of the meeting, and use this information as a reference for future plans.

The results of these surveys will not be made public; for their sole purpose is to help internal staff members improve the overall quality and effectiveness of future events. Examples of these surveys will be listed in Appendix A.

Closing

In closing, the City of Stanton has created this plan to emphasize the importance of involving the public during a development process, as well as outlining the best methods to engage these community members. Staff members of the City of Stanton, along with elected and appointed officials, are committed to fulfilling this plan, and will continue to incorporate these methods into their ongoing and future projects. With the application of this plan, the result will consist of a model system that allows for any individual to become involved, a step towards a more efficient approval process, and a community effort that will be supported by both the public and its municipal administration.

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Appendix A

COMMUNITY EVENT SATISFACTION SURVEY
What event did you attend today?
How did you hear about this event?
Was this event held at a convenient location and time?
Are you glad you came to this event? Would you improve it in any way?
date_____

INTERNAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION EVALUATION	
Type of public participation:	Date
How was the event advertised?	
Where was the event held?	
How many people attended? Was there a group that was under-represented?	
Who facilitated/completed the event?	
Are there ways this could be improved for future events?	