

Public Participation Plan



WATERFORD
TOWNSHIP



The Charter Township of Waterford upholds the needs of the community as the guiding principal for planning and policy development. Establishing a collaborative culture that is consistent and reliable is essential for building a consensus from the various stakeholders in the Township.

To work towards building a cohesive system that establishes “buy-in” within the community, the Township has adopted a Public Participation Plan that lays out these efforts in writing. The goals of this plan is outlined below.

Guide the Charter Township of Waterford

Establish a method to build a consensus that will drive any given development or policy into a direction that is fundamentally supported by its residents, business owners, and visitors.

Improve Information Distribution and Gathering

To better supplement the traditional Town Hall format and make documents from events virtually accessible. In a changing world where a communities needs are a constant moving target, it is important that Townships provide multiple forms of feedback beyond having its patrons attend the public “in person” meetings. This requires us to seek innovative ways to keep the public involved and engaged throughout planning and development process. One that seeks various avenues for community input and provides a transparent record of this public engagement afterwards.

Educate the Community

The Township seeks to provide educational materials and facilitate public initiatives that will support and encourage effective participation. Effective participation in the decision making process requires an understanding of land use issues and the framework for making local investment decisions. Planning professionals and officials need to be well versed in, and employ, multiple techniques that optimize the public’s understanding of countless development, planning, and policy concepts that may otherwise be difficult to grasp.

Educate Township Staff and Officials

This document is meant to develop and maintain staff expertise. It will operate as a guide that can inform and support participation, as well as educate new staff on the basics. This guide also lays out state regulations that Township staff must follow in the public participation process.

In addition to seeking innovative methods to achieve participation from a cross-section of residents, visitors, and business owners, Waterford Township takes great strides to ensure that all state statutes aimed to guide participation activities are satisfactorily met. Michigan State requires minimum standards and practices of public participation throughout the planning and development process.

Michigan Open Meetings Act

The following are requirements that are to be followed at all meetings held by public bodies that have governmental functions at the municipal level.

1. Waterford Township holds all will hold meetings in the Waterford Township Civic Center located at:

Charter Township of Waterford
5200 Civic Center Drive
Waterford, MI 48329

The Waterford Township Civic Center is accessible to the public. However, in the case of an epidemic declared by the State of Michigan, these meetings will be held by electronic remote access that provides 2-way telephone or video conferencing as permitted by and in accordance with the Open Meetings Act as amended by Public Act No. 228 of 2020. To access a link or additional information for a virtual public meeting, please access:

<https://waterfordmi.gov/AgendaCenter>

2. The public will be notified within 10 days of the first meeting of a public body in each calendar year; the Township Clerk 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 Township Clerk will post a notice stating the new dates, times and places of regular meetings.
3. 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.
4. For special and irregular meetings, public bodies will post a notice indicating the date, time and place at least 18 hours before the meetings.
5. Public bodies may 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.
6. Members of the Public who wish to receive email updates to public meetings, as well as other Township related events, can do so by registering through the following link:

<https://waterfordmi.gov/list.aspx>

Michigan Planning Enabling Act

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act legislates requirements regarding the Master Plan and any subsequent amendments.

1. The Following Parties will be notified via first class mail by the Planning Commission of the intent to plan and request the recipient's cooperation and comment:
 - a. Oakland County
 - b. South Eastern Michigan Council of Governments
 - c. Planning Commission for each of the following local governments:
 - d. City of Auburn Hills
 - e. City of Lake Angelus
 - f. City of Pontiac
 - g. City of Sylvan Lake
 - h. City of Keego Harbor
 - i. City of Orchard Lake
 - j. Charter Township of Bloomfield Township
 - k. Charter Township of Commerce
 - l. White Lake Charter Township
 - m. Springfield Charter Township
 - n. Charter Township of Independence
 - o. Orion Charter Township
 - p. Oakland County Planning & Economic Development Division
 - q. Road Commission of Oakland County
 - r. DTE Energy
 - s. Consumers Energy
 - t. Canadian National Railway
 - u. Oakland County International Airport
2. After the draft Master Plan has been submitted to the Planning Commission for review and approval for distribution, the draft plan will be submitted to the above entities for review. The Planning Commission will hold at least one public hearing on the proposed Master Plan after the expiration of the deadline for comment. The deadline for public comment is 42 days for an amendment to the Master Plan and 63 days for a new Master Plan.
3. 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 the Oakland Press. The Planning Commission will also submit notice of the public hearing by first class mail, personal delivery, or email to the above entities for review.
4. Upon adoption by the Planning Commission, the Township Board may adopt the same version of the plan and may distribute copies and any related reports for publicity, education, and research.

Michigan Zoning Enabling Act

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act legislates the following requirements with respect to the Zoning Ordinance and any subsequent amendments:

1. Actions requiring public notice
 - a. Zoning ordinance text, map amendments, and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)
 - i. Planning commission shall hold at least one public hearing prior to submitting its recommendations to the Township Board for a proposed zoning ordinance or map amendment.
 - ii. Rezoning for 11 or more adjacent properties do not require the 300-foot notice to neighboring properties.
 - b. Special Use Approvals
 - i. A public hearing shall be held by the Planning Commission prior to issuing an approval or denial.
2. Public notice distribution
 - a. Public notice must be published in the Oakland Press no less than 15 days before the date of the hearing.
 - b. Public Notice must be given to all persons whose real property is assessed within 300 feet of the property that is the subject of the request and to the occupants of all structures within 300 feet of the property.
 - c. Notice of time and place of public hearing shall also be given by mail to the following:
 - i. DTE Energy
 - ii. Consumers Energy
 - iii. Canadian National Railway
 - iv. Oakland County International Airport
3. Public notices shall
 - a. Describe the nature of the request.
 - b. Indicate the property that is the subject of the request.
 - c. List street addresses.
 - d. Indicate the time and location when the request will be considered.
 - e. Indicate the time and location where comments will be received concerning the request.
 - f. Planning commission shall hold at least one public hearing prior to submitting its recommendations to the Township Board for a proposed zoning ordinance or map amendment.

The Public Participation process adopted by the Charter Township of Waterford strives to identify important groups that can assist and enhance community feedback and engagement, as well as identify groups that are not often represented in the planning and long-term development.

1. Board of Trustees
2. Planning Commission
3. Zoning Board of Appeals
4. Lake Improvement Boards and Lake Associations (current list on Township website)
5. Residents & homeowners associations (current list on Township website)
6. Business Owners
7. Waterford Area Chamber of Commerce
8. Waterford School District
9. Oakland County International Airport
10. Michigan Department of Transportation
11. Oakland County Road Commission
12. Department of Natural Resources
13. Oakland County Board of Realtors
14. Clinton River Watershed Council
15. SEMCOG
16. Michigan Township Association
17. County Regional and State Elected Officials
18. Religious Organizations
19. Neighboring municipalities
 - a. City of Auburn Hills
 - b. City of Lake Angelus
 - c. City of Pontiac
 - d. City of Sylvan Lake
 - e. City of Keego Harbor
 - f. City of Orchard Lake
 - g. Charter Township of Bloomfield Township
 - h. Charter Township of Commerce
 - i. White Lake Charter Township
 - j. Springfield Charter Township
 - k. Charter Township of Independence
 - l. Orion Charter Township
20. Western Oakland Transportation Authority (WOTA)

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and the Charter Township of Waterford intends to assess each scenario independently to determine which stakeholders should be included at each step of the planning and development process. The specific planning and development process may require the engagement of additional stakeholders, or different stakeholders, as the process progresses or even changes direction.

The Charter Township of Waterford utilizes various methods to solicit public participation that can be broken down into three categories: Traditional Notifications, Technology Based Notifications, and Active Engagement Strategies. Although the Township has a standard method of announcing public meetings and distributing information related to planning and development, these methods do not often yield a consistent level of public engagement. The Township has worked to develop these various methods to increase and maintain involvement with the public, attract and hold key stakeholders, and reach a broader audience. Due to the uniqueness of every situation and ever-changing times in an unforeseeable future, the methods listed within all three categories are project specific and not intended for every situation.

Traditional Notifications

These tried and true methods are utilized to notify the public of a meeting in the near future. Their intention is to reach out to the community so that they may be able to participate in a more engaging form of communication where they will be able to receive more information on provide feedback .

1. Posting in the Oakland Press
2. [Waterford Insider monthly newsletter](#)
3. Flyer postings
4. Post card mailings to specifically targeted areas
5. Postcard mailings Township-wide
6. Attachment to water bills
7. Announcements at Board of Trustee Meetings
8. Flyer Posting at Township Hall

Technology Based Notifications

Sweeping ordinance amendments, long term planning, policy issues, and major developments require input methods beyond Traditional Notices. With these larger, sometimes controversial projects, it is important to reach out far beyond those in the community who regularly check their mailbox. The following are moderately more active methods to notify the community that take advantage of digital communication.

1. [Email notification signups for specific topics](#)
2. [Social Media](#)
3. Paper and digital surveys
4. [General Newsflash page on Township website](#)
5. [Waterford Channel 20](#)
6. [CivicReady Notifications](#)

Active Engagement Strategies

These methods are to be used when asking for in-depth input from the community on various projects. These methods will be employed when reviewing major community developments, establishing a new master plan, and when making long-term land use and policy decisions. In these events, the Township will require staff, consultants, and developers to engage with the community for feedback. Visualization techniques can be especially helpful with specific sites or areas of redevelopment. Some or all of the following strategies are to be utilized.

1. Work Session

Public meeting where elected and appointed officials meet with township staff, consultants, and the community about one or several specific topics. The intention is to learn more about these subjects as well as ask questions and solicit ideas from the community.

2. Town Hall Forums

These are meetings held in an auditorium and is focused on the public comments and questions related to a specific topic. There are little to no presentations at these forums. This is an event that takes place after the community has been informed on the details of a specific topic through Traditional & Technology Based Notifications and is now seeking additional information or would like to provide input. These forums are facilitated in a way that gives the most voice to the community.

3. Workshops

Beginning with short, easy to digest presentations from Township staff or hired consultants that transition into well-facilitated question and answer sessions. Focusing on a specific topic, these are intended to be approachable and informal conversations between the Township and those who choose to live, work, and play within Waterford.

4. One-on-One Interviews

These are held with one individual member of the community and one member of Township Staff. Although the opinions expressed are that of one person, the community member is often someone who has been identified during the Traditional Notification and Technology Based Notifications stages.

5. Focus Groups

These are utilized in projects where it is imperative that specific perspectives must be understood before moving forward in a plan or development. These perspectives can range from highly skilled technical members of a specific industry, to members of a minority or subculture.

Strategies for Outreach

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WATERFORD

With the adoption of this plan, it is the goal of the Township to be proactive in receiving input from the public with respect to long term planning and development. The matrix below is to visualize when these methods to solicit public participation are to be employed.

	Traditional	Technology Based	Active Engagement Strategies				
			Work Sessions	Town Hall Forums	Workshops	One-On-One Interviews	Focus Groups
Board and Commission Meetings	Required	Required	Sometimes	Rare Situations	Rare Situations	Rare Situations	Rare Situations
Master Plan	Required	Required	Always	Sometimes	Always	Always	Always
Minor Zoning Ordinance Amendments	Required	Required	Sometimes	Rare Situations	Rare Situations	Rare Situations	Rare Situations
Major Zoning Ordinance Amendments	Required	Required	Always	Sometimes	Rare Situations	Sometimes	Rare Situations
Environmental Projects	Required	Always	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Always
Public Infrastructure	Required	Always	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Transportation Planning	Required	Always	Sometimes	Sometimes	Always	Always	Always
Corridor Improvements	Required	Always	Sometimes	Sometimes	Always	Always	Always
Sub Area Plans	Required	Always	Sometimes	Sometimes	Always	Always	Always
Township Assistance Programs	Always	Always	Sometimes	Rare Situations	Sometimes	Sometimes	Rare Situations
Township Related Media and Awards	Always	Always	Sometimes	Rare Situations	Rare Situations	Rare Situations	Rare Situations

Rare Situations

Sometimes

Always

Required

It is expected that the strategies for outreach would vary based on issue; however, there is an expected level of consistency based on the reoccurrence of these topics every year. The Planning and Zoning

Division is expecting to update and expand upon these frequencies when the Public Participation Plan is to be updated.

Beyond gathering input, this plan works to establish a systematic method to process this information and convey results to the public. The following are strategies used to communicate public participation results back to the community:

Traditional Notifications

1. Waterford Insider monthly newsletter
All previous newsletters are archived [online](#).
2. Announcements at Board of Trustee Meetings
Announcements at the start of all Board of Trustee meetings will be posted in both the agenda prior to all meetings and the minutes after all meetings.

Technology Based Notifications

1. Paper and digital surveys
Results of surveys will be tabulated and posted on the appropriate departments page on the Township website.
2. Social Media
Township wide social media is managed and monitored by the Township Supervisor's Office and will respond to planning and development related posts as needed.

Active Engagement Strategies

1. Work Session
Agendas, minutes, as well as recordings from all Work Sessions are posted on the [Township website](#).
2. Town Hall Forums
All comments, questions, and answers produced from the Town Hall Form will be posted on the Township Website.
3. Workshops
A summary of the questions, answers, and general discussions will be posted on the Township website. Notes, photographs, and results of the meeting will be publicized throughout various Township Platforms.
4. One-On-One Interviews
Findings will be available at the Planning and Zoning Division upon request. Names and specific details will be kept confidential for the comfort and safety of the participant unless otherwise noted.
5. Focus Groups
A summary of each different focus group for a specific subject will be grouped together and

posted on the Township website. Names and specific details will be kept confidential for the comfort and safety of the participant unless otherwise noted.

This Public Participation Plan has been designed to be regularly evaluated and updated to serve the needs of the community. Future endeavors have been identified to improve the public input from the Community

1. *Increased Training*

The Township is working to expand consistent training opportunities for Board of Trustees members, Planning Commissioners, those that serve the Zoning Board of Appeals, as well as general members of Township Staff. With supplemental training, Township staff and elected/appointed officials would be able to better understand the composition of the community and cultivate expertise within the Civic Center and beyond. This results in an open and welcome environment for all.

2. *An updated website*

Waterford Township will be working with our website provider on a redesign of all 493 pages of the Township website beginning in May 2021. A website Redesign Advisory Team has been selected based on their roles with the Township, use of the website, and backgrounds. The team will be asked to weigh in design elements and features to provide a more accessible digital platform to facilitate the public participation process.

3. *Implementing lessons learned in a post COVID-19 world*

The COVID-19 global pandemic raised questions at the local level. These were questions of accessibility, computer literacy, and maintaining lines of connection with the community during difficult and unforeseeable times.

It is imperative that the Township continue to make documents from events accessible virtually. Allow access to public meetings easily accessible. Provide multiple forms of feedback beyond attending public “in person” meetings. Seek innovative ways to keep public involved and engaged throughout planning process. Seek various methods of communication for community input and provide a transparent record of public engagement

The Charter Township of Waterford will work to employ public participation techniques in its planning efforts in order to guide the Township in a direction supported by community members. This plan will serve as a road map to create a better community for all who chose to live, recreate, and do business in the Township.

For any questions or comments, please reach out to:

Charter Township of Waterford

Development Services Department

5200 Civic Center Drive

Waterford, MI 48329

Phone: 248-674-6238

Fax: 248-674-4097