

# **NORTH BRANCH VILLAGE**

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

### **A. PURPOSE:**

This plan is a guide to gather public input during the planning and the development review and approval procedures. This plan shall serve as a guide for seeking and gathering public input, and to create a uniform understanding of all requirements and goals of the Village in utilizing public opinion.

### **B. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOALS:**

The Village will enable the public to participate in decision-making processes by providing clear information on the issues, how they can participate and how the public can contribute to the decisions made.

All meetings of the Village Council, the commissions and committees are open to the public.

The Village will inform the public how they can play a role in the decision-making process by using the best approach to accomplish this objective. Whether it is by social media, surveys, website, or postings around the Village. The municipality will continue to seek new and innovative ways to engage and keep the public involved throughout the process.

The following goals and strategies are outlined below:

- The Village shall conduct all matters of public business in an open and accessible manner.
- The Village shall seek public input in each phase of the planning and the development review and approval process.
- The Village will seek input from stakeholders within the Village.
- The Village will strive to provide information to the public about all planning and development processes.
- The Village will provide and make known the results of public input whenever possible.

### **C. KEY STAKEHOLDERS:**

As previously mentioned, the Village is committed to welcoming input of all stakeholders within the Village.

This list represents, but is not all inclusive, of interested stakeholders:

- Residents
- Village Council
- Planning Commission
- Board of Appeals
- North Branch Area Business Association
- North Branch School District
- Commercial Developers
- Potential Investors
- Senior Citizens
- Local Business Owners
- Civic and Social Groups.
- Students and Student Groups
- Neighboring Communities
- Other Pertinent Stakeholders

### **D. STATE AND LOCAL REGULATIONS:**

The Village of North Branch is subject to a number of State and local regulations pertaining to public participation. Village Council, Planning Commission, and committees follow the guidelines contained within the following acts:

- The Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976)
- The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008)
- The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006)
- The General Law Village Act
- Code of Ordinances
- Downtown Development Authority Act (PA 197 of 1975)
- Other pertinent local and/or State legislation.

### **E. REVIEW BODIES:**

The public has an opportunity to provide feedback at Village Council, Planning Commission, Board of Appeals, and Downtown Development Meetings. All meetings are open to the public and public hearings are held at such meetings. Public comment is offered at each of these meetings and interested parties who provide comments or questions to any of these public bodies are recorded in the meeting minutes.

## **F. PLANNING COMMISSION:**

The Planning Commission is responsible for preparation and adoption of the Village Master Plan that guides the physical development of the Village. In preparing a new master plan or master plan update, the village shall, at a minimum, follow the public notification provisions of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, PA 33 of 2008. In preparing a new zoning ordinance or any amendment to the zoning ordinance, the village shall, at a minimum, follow the public notification provisions of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, PA 110 of 2006. The planning commission is also the primary advisory commission to the village council on development related applications including zoning petitions, conditional use permits, site plans, subdivisions, capital improvement plans and other related land use proposals.

The planning commission follows requirements of the Zoning Enabling Act, PA 110 of 2006 for public hearings. Such notice is provided at least 15 days in advance of the public hearing to the applicant, the property owner, or all property owners within 300 feet of an affected property and by publication in the LaView Newspaper. The applicant and the village council receive written notification of the Planning Commission's recommendation.

## **G. VILLAGE COUNCIL:**

The Village announces public meetings on their website, newspapers, flier postings at the Village Hall, Newsletters, and announcements at council meetings.

## **H. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW OR PROJECTS WITH BROAD COMMUNITY INTEREST:**

The Village will follow the provisions of the local and State regulations to review development projects related to planning and zoning applications, permits, and business assistance. This applies to the review process for site plans and conditional use permits, rezoning and variance request applications or downtown redevelopment assistance and industrial facilities exemptions. In such circumstances, the village council and its boards and commissions will hold public hearings, noticed in accordance with State legislation, and allow for public comment on the proposed development project during its regular meetings. If development applications will involve matters of broad community interest or result in a need for heightened public involvement, the village may decide to engage the public through more intensive means. Such means will be tailored to each project based on interest and village capacity. Methods could include additional community meetings, focus groups, workshops, or other proactive engagement activities. The village will work with community leaders and the developer to determine the best mix of additional outreach.

The Village will track the effectiveness of outreach by:

- Asking stakeholders how they heard about the meeting or activity they are attending.  
(Word of mouth/newspaper notice/ mailing sent to their home.)
- Following up with a brief survey with stakeholders who attend major events such as a master plan community workshop. This could be done at the end of the event or with an online survey.

#### **I. METHODS OF COMMUNICATION:**

The Village recognizes that to properly utilize public input, it is necessary at times to communicate the results of these efforts back to the public. These efforts increase transparency and allow the village to gain a clearer understanding of public opinion. The village will utilize avenues of communications to present and make information easily available to the public. These methods of communication will include, but are not limited to the following:

- \*Village Website Updates
- \*Newspaper Postings
- \*Flyer postings at Village Hall
- \*Mailings and Email
- \*Community Newsletters
- \* Other methods deemed appropriate

#### **J. OTHER OUTREACH ACTIVITIES:**

The Village may hold interviews with various stakeholders to get specific information on a topic. In general, the information collected during interviews will be kept confidential unless requested otherwise. The information may be compiled and analyzed together with other information collected from stakeholders on a specific topic. The Village may form a group to gather the community's opinions on a specific issue, etc. The Village might employ surveys to identify key concerns.

#### **K. ACCESSIBILITY:**

The Village of North Branch recognizes that all information and public events must be as accessible to all members of the public as possible to gather a broad and representative body of public input. The Village therefore strives to foster an environment of accessibility. The Village hall is barrier-free and accessible to the entire community.

Approved minutes of all public meetings are maintained by the Village Clerk and are made available to the public online or at Village Hall.

**L. CONTACT INFORMATION:**

The following contact information should be utilized for questions on the public participation process for each council or commission.

Village Council – Clerk’s Office – 810.688.2620

Downtown Development Authority – Kelly Martin 810.730.2275

Planning Commission or Zoning Board – Clerk’s Office 810.688.2620

Amended 11/12/2020