

# CITY OF OTSEGO



## ***PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS***

***ADOPTED BY THE CITY OF OTSEGO CITY COMMISSION  
SEPTEMBER 16, 2019***

## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

The City of Otsego Public Participation Plan (hereafter called the “Plan”) contains the policies and procedures for public involvement and outreach in the City’s planning and development review and approval processes. The Plan addresses the following, but is not limited to:

1. Planning and Zoning Applications
2. Comprehensive and Master Planning
3. Zoning Ordinance Amendments
4. Financial and/or Tax Assistance Requests for Private Redevelopment Projects

The City of Otsego is required by State law, the City’s Charter and the bylaws of the individual authorities and commissions to pursue public participation in planning and development projects. The City follows a comprehensive public involvement process, providing timely information through public notice and supports early and continuing involvement of stakeholders in the planning and review process. The City Commission and the City Boards and Commissions hold public meetings at generally convenient and accessible locations and times, make information publicly available in accessible formats on the City’s website and social media sites and employ various methods to target larger audiences when needed. In addition to those required measures, whenever needed or feasible, the City implements additional measures to engage the community and a diverse set of stakeholders in the review process.

This Plan emphasizes the City of Otsego’s commitment to a robust public participation process and an effective means of communication with stakeholders in the planning and development activities. The City respects the importance of public input in all aspects of these processes. Therefore, the City encourages citizen participation with engagement of diverse groups of stakeholders in the planning and development review process. To ensure that outreach efforts are effective, the City will regularly evaluate outcomes versus the anticipated goals.

The City reviews the effectiveness of the specific public participation activities listed in this Plan and adjusts them accordingly in order to maximize their success. The City staff also explores ways to improve communication strategies to reach the specific project stakeholders and gather community feedback.

The City will consider new methods of communication and engagement as they become available, and update this Plan as needed. The public participation actions described throughout this Plan do not preclude additional public involvement or engagement efforts. In circumstances when the City consults with a third party entity, that entity shall adhere to the provisions of this Plan, if applicable.

## ***1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES***

- The City shall conduct proactive and inclusionary public participation techniques during all phases of the master planning or comprehensive planning process.
- The City shall foster a cycle of seeking public input and public review of results.
- The City shall conduct all aspects of citizen participation in an open manner, with freedom of access to the participation process for all interested persons.
- The City shall engage a diverse set of community stakeholders in planning, land use and development decisions.
- The City shall encourage the involvement of residents most affected by the proposed planning, land use or development project.
- The City shall seek to identify and involve a broad and representative cross-section of the community's residents.
- The City shall make reasonable efforts to ensure continuity of involvement of citizens and community groups throughout all stages of the planning and review process.
- The City shall utilize effective and equitable avenues for distributing information and receiving comments.
- The City shall support and encourage effective participation. Information shall be made available in a timely manner, so as to enable citizens to be involved in important decisions at various stages of the review and approval process.
- The City shall record the results of public engagement to the extent feasible and provide summaries back to the public.





## 2. KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The 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. These stakeholders could include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Commission</li> <li>• Downtown Development Authority</li> <li>• Otsego Public Schools</li> <li>• Otsego District Library</li> <li>• The Local Business Community</li> <li>• Potential Investors and Developers</li> <li>• Neighborhood Associations</li> <li>• Non-profit Groups</li> <li>• Regional Planning Commissions</li> <li>• Otsego-Plainwell Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Otsego Township</li> <li>• Allegan County Government</li> <li>• Allegan County Road Commission</li> <li>• Senior Citizens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Commission</li> <li>• Residents</li> <li>• City Employees</li> <li>• Local Church Groups</li> <li>• Taxing Jurisdictions</li> <li>• Federal Government Agencies</li> <li>• State Government Agencies</li> <li>• Michigan Municipal League</li> <li>• Civic and Social Organizations</li> <li>• Students and Student Groups</li> <li>• Otsego Area Historical Society</li> <li>• Environmental Groups</li> <li>• Commercial Real Estate Brokers/Agents</li> <li>• Local Media Sources</li> <li>• Other Relevant Stakeholders</li> </ul>
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### ***3. STATE AND LOCAL REGULATIONS***

The City, through the work of the City Commission and individual Boards and Commissions and subsequent city employees 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 Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006)
- 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)
- Other relevant local and State legislation

### ***4. OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION***

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

The flowchart in Appendix A outlines the development approval process followed in the City of Otsego for planning and zoning applications. The diagram includes the required and recommended meetings and outlines the multiple boards and commissions required to review development applications.

#### ***4.1 Development Review Bodies***

**City Commission.** The City Commission is the legislative and policy-making body for the City government. Five Commissioners are elected at large for overlapping two and four-year terms and the Mayor is appointed by the Commission to a two-year term. The Commission also appoints the City Manager, who is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the City government.

**Authorities 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 Authorities and Commissions. These groups make recommendations to the City Commission on a variety of topics and issues. The members of the Authorities and Commissions help to analyze options and influence important decisions on behalf of the community. More than 39 residents, business owners and City stakeholders currently serve on Otsego's Authorities and Commissions. The City Commission strives to gather a diverse collection of appointed members in hopes of gathering the most participation from across the city as possible in relation to neighborhoods and occupations.

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

Each advisory Authority or Commission makes recommendations to the City Commission based on the scope of its particular service area. Typically, advisory Authorities and Commissions have a work agenda in place for a calendar year during which it undertakes projects, deliberates on issues and host special events. The City Commission 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 Commission has discretion to accept advice in full, in part or not at all. Certain Authorities and Commissions have an additional administrative role. This means 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 Commission as official recommendations.

The most relevant authorities and commissions in Otsego for the planning and development review process are as follows:

- Brownfield Redevelopment Authority assists development projects that face economic challenges due to environmental constraints or the existing conditions on the site.
- Downtown Development Authority develops programs and projects which are aimed at improving downtown Otsego, including new business development, business recruitment and retention, downtown beautification, public improvements, marketing and promotion.
- Planning Commission creates a Master Plan for the physical development of the City; reviews rezoning requests, site plans, subdivisions, special land uses and other land use applications.
- Zoning Board of Appeals interprets and grants variances from provisions of the Zoning Ordinance; conducts hearings and resolves disputes regarding interpretations of the Zoning Ordinance.
- City Commission must approve all ordinances that may affect planning and development within the City.

The City encourages community members interested in serving their community through active civic engagement to apply for openings on these boards and commissions. The City regularly informs the community of the existing vacancies on the boards and commissions. In this regard, the City's avenues of communication include website postings, announcements at City Council meetings, newsletters and other methods. Visit [www.cityofotsego.org](http://www.cityofotsego.org) for a complete list of boards and commissions in Otsego and their responsibilities.

It should be noted that the City's authorities 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 or resident.

## ***4.2 Public Meetings***

All meetings of the City Commission and its various authorities 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 within the Act. Public notice of meetings shall be given in accord with the Act. Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are held at the following location:

City Hall is 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 the meeting, upon notice to the City of Otsego prior to the meeting. Individuals with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodations or services should contact the City Clerk's office.

Interested persons are encouraged to contact City Hall, view posted meeting notices at City Hall, check the City's website at [www.cityofotsego.org](http://www.cityofotsego.org), and watch for postings within the *Union Enterprise* in order to be kept informed of any meeting schedule, variations, or location changes.

Individual authorities and commissions will hold public meetings pursuant to the authorities' and commissions' bylaws and State regulations. City Commission, Planning Commission and DDA meeting agendas and minutes are made available on the City's website.

#### ***4.3 Public Comments***

Opportunities for public comment shall be available at any meeting of the City Commission or City's authorities and commissions in accordance with the provisions in the authorities' and commissions' bylaws and other operating policies. The meeting agenda allows for public comments under the 'Public Comment' sections with a three-minute time limit for a speaker or a group. The participation of interested persons and their input shall be documented by the City Clerk, they must include their name and address. 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.

#### ***4.4 Public Hearings***

The City Commission 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.

**Otsego Planning Commission.** The Planning Commission holds public hearings for all special land use and rezoning applications.

The City Clerk 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 rezoning or special land use application as mandated by state legislation. Public hearing notifications are also sent by mail to the applicant, the owner of the subject property and the owners and occupants of property within 300 feet of the subject property. The applicant receives a copy of the Zoning Administrator's report with recommendations in relation to other city departments such as Water and Sewer or Fire Department prior to the meeting date.

**Otsego City Commission.** The City Commission shall hold a public hearing when called for in their enabling legislation. After receiving a recommendation by the Planning Commission, the City Charter requires that an application for rezoning and Zoning Ordinance text amendment



change be forwarded to the City Commission at the next regular meeting to be introduced and set for adoption.

State and federal statutes require that special land uses and rezoning applications be noticed in a newspaper of general distribution in the City no less than 15 days prior to the Planning Commission public hearing. Application notifications shall also be sent by mail to the applicant, the owner of the subject property and the owners of property within 300 feet of the subject property.

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 the *Union Enterprise* within 15 days after adoption.

**Other Authorities and Commissions.** Other relevant boards and commissions will hold public hearings as needed and as required by the individual board and commission bylaws. The public hearings will be noticed as required in advance of the meeting.



## ***5. STRATEGIES FOR THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS***

### ***5.1 Adoption of the Master Plan (or update)***

The City of Otsego shall follow at a minimum the provisions of Michigan Public Act 33 of 2008, as amended (the Michigan Planning Enabling Act, MCL 125.3801 et. seq.) for the adoption of a new Master Plan or of an update to the Master Plan.



The Planning Commission shall send a notice to all stakeholders as listed in the State enabling legislation; the notice will explain that the Planning Commission intends to prepare a plan and request cooperation and comment on the plan now and when the plan is drafted.

The Planning Commission and the City will then begin work on drafting or updating the plan. They shall involve the public through many of the methods listed in the section ‘Community Engagement and Outreach Activities’, including but not limited to steering committees, open houses, community meetings, community walks and tours, website updates, social media and surveys. The City shall encourage the involvement and participation of all stakeholders, including any marginalized groups that may be typically less involved in the planning process. Stakeholder involvement is encouraged from the beginning and the results of such public participation are made available to the community and participants and incorporated as much as is reasonably possible in the drafted plan or plan amendment.

In preparation, studies of existing conditions and probable growth should be done for the basis of the plan. The Planning Commission may make use of expert advice and information from Federal, State, County and municipal officials, departments and agencies having information, maps and data pertinent to the City. The City may consult with adjacent local units of government with respect to their planning so that conflicts in master plans and zoning may be avoided. The City may cooperate with all departments of the State and Federal governments, public transportation agencies and other public agencies concerned with programs for economic, social and physical development within the planning jurisdiction and seek the maximum coordination of the local unit of government’s programs with these agencies.

The City shall encourage and track the public participation through a variety of means, including minutes, comment cards, sign-up sheets and input received verbally through written correspondence or through website comments and other means as appropriate.

The Planning Commission will act to submit the proposed plan to the City Commission for review and comment. The process of adopting the Master Plan shall not proceed further unless the City Commission approves the distribution of the proposed plan and make it readily available to the public.

The City Commission shall act on the proposed plan during a public meeting held in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. The City Commission shall decide on the approval of the distribution of the proposed plan to local governments and agencies for review and comments.

If the City Commission approves the distribution of the proposed plan, it shall notify the Planning Commission and the Planning Commission shall submit in the manner provided by the State enabling law a copy of the proposed plan for review and comment to all of the units listed in the State enabling law. These entities may submit comments on the proposed plan to the Planning Commission within 63 days after the proposed plan was submitted to that entity, or 42 days for amendments.

Before approving the proposed Master Plan, the Planning Commission shall hold not less than one public hearing on the proposed plan. The hearing shall be held after the expiration of the deadline for comment. The Planning Commission shall give notice of the time and place of the public hearing not less than 15 days before the hearing by publication in the *Union Enterprise*. The Planning Commission shall also submit notice of the public hearing to the entities that received initial communication.



The proposed plan shall be approved by resolution of the Planning Commission carried by the affirmative votes of not less than 2/3 of the members. A statement recording the Planning Commission's approval of the plan signed by the chairperson, shall be included on the inside of the front or back cover of the Master Plan. Following approval of the proposed Master Plan, the City Clerk on behalf of the Planning Commission shall submit a copy of the plan to the City Commission.

Approval of the proposed plan by the Planning Commission is the final step for adoption of the plan, unless the City Commission by resolution has asserted the right to approve or reject the plan. In that case, after approval of the proposed plan by the Planning Commission, the City Commission shall approve or reject the proposed plan. A statement recording the City Commission's approval of the Master Plan, signed by the City Clerk shall be included on the inside of the front or back cover of the Master Plan if the City Commission takes action on the Plan.

## ***5.2 Adoption/Update to the Zoning Ordinance***

The City Commission may from time to time, amend, modify, supplement or revise the zoning

district boundaries shown on the Official Zoning Map or the provisions of this Ordinance. Amendments to the provisions of this Ordinance may be initiated by the City Commission, the Planning Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Zoning Administrator or by petition of one or more residents or land owners. Amendments to the Official Zoning Map may be initiated by the City Commission, the Planning Commission, or by the owner or owners of the subject site. All proposed amendments to the provisions of this Ordinance or the Official Zoning Map shall be referred to the Planning Commission for public hearing and recommendation to the City Commission prior to action by the City Commission.

An amendment to this Ordinance or the Official Zoning Map, except those initiated by the City, shall be initiated by submission of a completed application form and fee. The following information shall accompany the application form:

- a) A legal description and street address of the subject property, together with a map identifying the subject property in relation to surrounding properties.
- b) The name and address of the owner of the subject site and a statement of the applicant's interest in the site if not the owner in fee simple title.
- c) The existing and proposed zoning district designation of the subject property.
- d) The land use classification for the subject site as illustrated on the City's Master Plan.
- e) In the case of an amendment to this Ordinance, other than an amendment to the Official Zoning Map, a general description of the proposed amendment and rationale for the change shall accompany the application form.
- f) A written description of how the requested rezoning meets Sec. 2804 "Criteria for Amendment of the Official Zoning map", or Sec. 2805 "Criteria for Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance Text".

Upon initiation of an amendment, a meeting and public hearing to consider the proposed amendment shall be scheduled before the Planning Commission. Notice of the hearing shall be given as required by the City or Village Zoning Act (Public Act 207 of 1921, as amended). Following the public hearing, the Planning Commission shall identify and evaluate all factors relevant to the petition and shall report its findings and recommendation to the City Commission. The Planning Commission shall consider the criteria listed in Section 2804 for a requested amendment to the Official Zoning Map and the criteria listed in Section 2805 for requested amendments to the standards and regulations in the text. Following receipt of the findings and recommendation of the Planning Commission, the City Commission shall act on the proposed amendment. In the case of an amendment to the text of this Ordinance, the City Commission may modify or revise the proposed amendment recommended by the Planning Commission prior to the enactment. In the case of an amendment to the Official Zoning Map, the City Commission shall approve or deny the amendment, based on its consideration of the criteria in Section 2804.

### ***5.3 Other Documents***

The City shall follow at a minimum, the provisions of the State legislation for the adoption of several planning documents. The Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act (PA 381 of 1996) and the Downtown Development Authority Act (PA 197 of 1975) describe the steps for the adoption of Brownfield redevelopment plans or downtown development plans. Additional methods of communication and public outreach may be used in the review and adoption process of all these plans.

#### ***5.4 The Development of Publicly-Owned Properties***

In several occasions, the City Commission or the Otsego Downtown Development Authority (DDA) may find it beneficial to seek development partners in order to pursue redevelopment of parcels owned by the City or DDA. The development review process may vary based upon the scale and scope of the intended project, the significance of the parcel(s) and the stage in the development process in which the City sought such a partner. The following describes several common steps in the review process; public participation is encouraged in all of the following steps.

In general, the City or DDA will issue the Request for Qualifications and/or Proposals (RFQ/P) with the intent to initiate and implement a redevelopment project affecting one or more publicly-owned parcels in the City or downtown. For projects of great significance, the City or DDA may wish to gather the opinion of the community with regard to the vision, redevelopment scale and character and uses of the parcels under consideration.

The appropriate board may organize a review team representing a variety of stakeholders to evaluate the received proposals in response to the RFQ/P. The review team meetings may be open to the public. The review team will recommend a certain number of firms to the appropriate board for further consideration. The board may hold a public hearing to select a development firm to further pursue the proposed project for the sites under consideration. The appropriate board will act upon the resolution selecting a firm as a posted agenda item during a public meeting.

Pursuant to the selection of a development partner, the appropriate board will review and enter into a pre-development agreement. The pre-development agreement outlines the terms of the due diligence phase of the project, which may include public charrettes, market analysis, design work, financial structure development, detailed financial pro-forma development, boards and commissions review, etc. At the end of the due diligence period, if a project is deemed feasible, a full development agreement would be negotiated. The development agreement will be approved during a City Commission and/or authority's public meeting.

#### ***5.5 Development Projects***

The City shall follow at a minimum, the provisions of the local and State regulations as listed in this Plan to review development projects that involve the approval of planning and zoning applications, permits and business assistance. This applies to the review process for site plans and special land uses, rezoning and variance request applications, Brownfield or downtown redevelopment assistance personal property tax exemptions and industrial facilities exemptions. In many circumstances, the City Commission and its authorities and commissions will hold public hearings, noticed in accordance with the State legislation and allow for public comment on the proposed development project during its regular meetings. Depending on the nature of the project, the community interest and community's financial involvement, additional methods of engagement may be used to gather community feedback.

### ***6. ADVERTISING REGULAR MEETINGS***

The following methods are used to advertise the public meetings of the City Commission, Planning Commission and other boards and commissions acting as advisory bodies to the City



Commission when taking action on land use or development applications. The City will strive to ensure that more than one notification and communication method will be used depending on the specific project and target audience. This list is flexible and can change based on needs and circumstances.

### ***6.1 Accessibility***

The public meetings of the City Commission and the authorities and commissions shall take place in a central location (Otsego City Hall) that is barrier-free and accessible to the entire community. In case of the anticipation of a large audience that requires a larger venue, meetings may also take place at other locations such as the Otsego District Library or Otsego Public Schools, which are also barrier-free and accessible.

Meetings are always recorded with minutes taken by the City Clerk, or a substitute if needed. The City shall communicate the community's input through published approved minutes, direct correspondence to interested stakeholders, website postings and other methods of communication.

### ***6.2 Opportunities for Communication***

The City of Otsego strives to employ diverse methods of communication in order to reach all affected stakeholders. The City shall use various forms of print and electronic media to support early and often public participation opportunities. The City may use the following avenues of communication:

- City website posting of agendas and minutes of meetings
- Newspaper posting of meeting agendas and public hearing notices
- Community newsletter sent to residents and posted on City website
- Flyer postings at City Hall
- Announcements during the meetings of the City Commission and the City's authorities and commissions
- Press releases and communications to media. Press releases are typically distributed to a media list containing local or statewide print and broadcast organizations.
- Notification of the applicant through mail or email
- Mailings
- Attachment to water bills
- Emails to community stakeholder groups
- Other methods as deemed appropriate

### ***6.3 Information Available to the Public***

The City of Otsego strives to follow a transparent planning and development review process and share relevant information with community members and any other stakeholders, including the following:

- City Commission published meeting schedules, minutes and agendas are posted on the City's website.
- Published meeting schedules for all other boards and commissions are posted to the City's website.
- Public hearing notices are sent to applicants and affected stakeholders.

- The City's website includes a variety of topics and information pertaining to the development review process, including the City Charter, the City Code of Ordinances, strategies and planning documents, application and fee information, maps and much more.

## ***7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES***

The following methods may be used to gather the community's input on specific development proposals or the community vision for the Master Plan and other planning and zoning documents. The City may use these various activities to provide additional opportunities for citizens, public interest groups or other stakeholders to directly participate in the development review process or the creation/amendment of plans and strategies.

The City shall communicate the results of the public participation methods in a consistent and transparent manner through the appropriate avenues of communication listed previously. More than one method of communication may be used in order to reach a broader audience and the affected persons. Those responsible for organizing the specific community engagement activity may also coordinate the communication of public participation outcomes. The results of any of the methods of engagement and outreach will be included in the report or plan generated based on the information collected during these meetings and support the development review process.

### ***7.1 Community Stakeholder Group Communications***

The City may maintain and enhance the communication with City stakeholders through community groups' leadership. Pertinent information about proposed projects, public hearings or planned initiatives can be shared with the stakeholder groups through direct email correspondence with association officers. In addition, developers are encouraged to hold presentations at meetings of the stakeholder groups affected by the proposed project. Community stakeholder groups could include neighborhood associations, civic or service organizations, church organizations, advocacy groups, etc.

### ***7.2 Digital Tools of Communication***

The City may use various digital tools of communication, as needed and appropriate. Individual webpages may be created for specific development or planning projects as appropriate. The City may provide an online form for stakeholders to register for project updates, notifications and provide comments or suggestions for specific development proposals. The City currently uses several online tools of community engagement and shall continue to explore the use of new tools. For projects of great importance to the community, the City may employ social networking (e.g., facebook, twitter) to share notices about upcoming development related meetings or Master Plan updates. Facebook pages on specific projects, such as the Master Plan update may also be used. The City may develop a social media policy to govern these tools of communication.

### ***7.3 Steering Committees***

The City may organize steering committees consisting of residents, business owners, board and commission members and other stakeholders. Members may be selected based on their expertise, interest and background as they relate to the focus of the individual steering committee. This structure will allow for focused discussions related to a specific topic (e.g.,

economic development topic). The results of the meetings and discussions of the steering committees will be incorporated into the plan generated based on the information collected during these meetings.

#### ***7.4 Focus Groups and Community Workshops/Meetings***

The City may conduct groups for gathering the community's opinion on specific issues, development proposals, development sites of major importance, or the community vision as needed. A variety of groups may be invited to attend the focus groups depending on the location and nature of the development site or project, including Commission members, affected neighborhood associations, community members, business leaders, students, board and commission members, developers and relevant stakeholders. Typical locations for focus group meetings include: City Hall, Otsego District Library, Otsego Public Schools and other public spaces. The City will choose sites that are accessible and barrier-free to accommodate all persons. The minutes from the focus groups or workshops may be shared with the participants (that chose to share their contact information) and the community. The results of these meetings will be included in any report or plan generated based on the community feedback collected during these meetings.

#### ***7.5 Surveys***

The City may employ surveys whenever possible, beneficial and feasible to identify key citizen concerns. The City may design and implement through a third-party partner or City staff, surveys to gather the community's opinion with regard to specific topics (e.g., general City services, housing needs, amenities, the downtown). The surveys may be distributed through various methods of delivery to ensure the broadest reach, based on the nature of the target group (e.g., mail, e-mail, website access, copies available at City facilities). The responsible party will compile the survey results following the closing of the survey. The survey results may be posted online, published in the City's newsletter and communicated to the City Council, residents, survey participants, investors, developers and other stakeholders.

#### ***7.6 Charrettes/Design Workshops***

The City may engage the community through charrettes or design workshops. This tool may most often be used for specific development projects that involve significant changes to the urban form and require public input on the design layout. The City may encourage developers to hold charrettes for specific proposed projects with significant community interest.

#### ***7.7 One-on-One Interviews***

The City 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.

### ***7.8 Bus or Walking Tours***

Tours offer an opportunity for City staff, residents and other stakeholders to identify and discuss specific development areas or topics. City staff or consultants will facilitate tours, depending of the nature of the development or planning project. The facilitator(s) may take notes during the tour and share them with the participants and the community. The results of these events will be included in any report or plan generated based on the community feedback collected during these tours.



## ***8. MONITORING AND EVALUATING OUTREACH EFFORTS***

The purpose of this section is to ensure the City is maintaining a presence within the general community and providing stakeholders many and different methods to participate in City decision-making. Additionally, to ensure the methods of outreach are relevant and being utilized on a regular basis.

### ***8.1 Tracking Success of Outreach Efforts***

The City should take steps to track and record the participation of the public. In regards to open meetings, the participation of interested persons and their input shall be recorded in the 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. The success of public participation during public meetings can be measured by counting the number of general public members who attend the meeting, the number of public comments received at each meeting and the number of comments received by the City Clerk outside of meetings times. The City will develop goals for participation rates and track the rates of participation over time.

Public participation during City events, special planning meetings and general outreach can also be tracked. For group meetings such as steering committees, focus groups and community



workshops, attendance and number of comments may be tracked. Surveys distributed via paper form, mail or electronically may be tracked by their response rate. The City may conduct regular surveys that allow response rates to be compared from year to year in addition to survey results. Social media allows the City to track “likes” on Facebook, “followers” on Twitter and Instagram and connections on LinkedIn. Each of these, as well as their messaging capabilities, is a way to track participation and interest from the general public.

### ***8.2 Communicating Outreach Efforts Results***

The City strives to be consistent and transparent with information. The City’s website is the primary source of information including meeting schedules, agendas and minutes. Additionally, the City may periodically report a summary of special meetings, social media usage or other related planning and development efforts.

### ***8.3 Evaluation***

The City of Otsego will review this Public Participation Plan periodically in order to monitor the effectiveness of the procedures outlined in this document. All public participation efforts will be recorded by the various City departments and reviewed on a routine basis. Following evaluation of the outputs and outcomes of the Public Participation Plan, the City may revise these methods to incorporate new and innovative ways to involve the public in the planning decision-making process.



## ***9. ACTION ITEMS***

The following suggestions are “action items” the City may pursue to further enhance communication and public participation.

- Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals agenda and minutes should be posted to the City website.
- A sign-in sheet should be provided for all members of the public that attend meetings, allowing an opportunity to give their name, address and other contact information. The sign-in sheet should be included as part of the meeting minutes.
- Meeting minutes should contain the name, address and general comments of members of the public who speak during public comment and/or public hearings.
- Public participation data should be included in the Planning Commission annual report and included on the City website.

- The City may consider holding public hearings for Site Plan Review requests.
- City staff or a selected representative may use social media as described in Section 7.2 to advertise meeting announcements, projects or other general information.

All suggestions will be taken into consideration and this list will grow and change as suggestions are discussed.



**APPENDIX A**  
***Otsego Development Review Process***

	<i>Discussion Item</i>
	<i>Action Item From Applicant</i>
	<i>City Action Item</i>



