

City of Parchment Public Participation Guidebook



January 15, 2024

Contents

Overview and Purpose	3
Public Participation Goals	4
Public Participation Requirements	5
Michigan Open Meetings Act.....	5
Michigan Planning Enabling Act.....	6
Michigan Zoning Enabling Act.....	7
Key Definitions	8
Key Stakeholders.....	9
Opportunities for Public Participation	10
Development Review Bodies	10
Toolbox of Strategies	13
• Basic announcement methods for public meetings	13
• Proactive practices.....	13
Outreach Strategies Update	16
Master Plan Update	16
Zoning Ordinance Updates	17
Parks and Recreation Plan	17
Capital Improvement Program Planning.....	18
Major Developments	18
Steps for Determining the Appropriate Plan	19
Communicating Results	21
Public Meetings.....	21
Surveys.....	21
Forums/Community Workshops/Charrettes/Palavers	21
Public Participation Evaluation	21

Overview and Purpose

The success of a plan is based on the ability of a community to engage its citizens through the planning process. There is a greater understanding of the various intricacies involved with the planning process when transparency is used by the local municipality. This strengthens the public's understanding of their abilities and responsibilities to impact the future of the community. The City of Parchment acknowledges the significance of the public's participation in this decision-making process.

To effectively engage the public, there needs to be a specific plan of action that explains the process and purpose used. Having a public participation plan will aid the city in planning, zoning and in the development of projects. Documenting and analyzing data from participation sessions will help the city evaluate their efforts and allow for best practices that will be used in the future.

The City of Parchment established this public participation guide to assist with the gathering of information, providing procedures and policies for public engagement, and to effectively analyze the information to plan and/or update parks and recreation plans, master plans, special land uses, and to develop new projects.

There is not a perfect way to allow for public engagement. Some strategies are more effective than others. This guide will facilitate as an internal resource for ideas on how to best engage productive collaboration with stakeholders and the public in the future.

Public Participation Goals

The City of Parchment is committed to forming a meaningful and effective way of communicating with citizens and stakeholders throughout the planning and development process of a project.

The following are the goals of this Public Participation Guidebook:

- 1. Solicit public participation in key phases of the planning process.** *Participation in the early stages and continuously throughout the process will keep the stakeholders and community members involved with a project. These participants help to form the short and long-term needs, solutions, and funding opportunities. Public input provides for important land-use and economic development decisions.*
- 2. Seek broad involvement with distributing information and receiving feedback.** *Because of the diversity in the community, many techniques will be used to connect with everyone, such as: in-person communication, online, postings on signs, and written correspondence. Meetings, door-to-door polling, surveys, palavers, and open houses will be used to provide feedback. The city will use the best approach to communicating with the public, as possible, to connect with as many people as they are able.*
- 3. Provide educational materials and design participation initiatives that will support and encourage effective participation.** *The city will provide flyers, presentations, and notes on the backs of utility bills to educate the residents and stakeholders of various planning, zoning, or development projects.*
- 4. Maintain and develop staff expertise in all aspects of participation.** *Staff will be prepared with information that will help with conveying the information in a meaningful way to the public. Every attempt to bridge any cultural or language barriers will be made by City staff.*

5. **Support and encourage continuous improvement in the methods used to meet the public need for information and involvement.** *Because public information and involvement methods are continually evolving, the City of Parchment will continue to see new and inventive ways to engage and keep the public involved with the planning process.*
6. **Record results of public engagement and recount these results back to the public.** *All input received from the public will be tracked and documented. Results of polls, surveys, etc. will be published on the City's website and the findings will be presented at various meetings.*
7. **Encourage developers to engage the community.** *The city will help to support developers by facilitating gatherings that provide for residents and stakeholders to publicly share their ideas regarding a private development project.*

Public Participation Requirements

State and Federal laws are basic requirements for public projects and development reviews. The public review process, public participation and public hearings are all provisions of these regulations. The City Commission and subsequent commissions/boards, which serve at the pleasure of the City Commission, follow the Federal and State regulations below:

Michigan Open Meetings Act

The Open Meetings Act was developed with the basic intent of requiring public bodies to conduct business at open public meetings. The Open Meetings Act is fundamental to ensuring the public has a role in policy development and adhering to its mandates is legally required.

In accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976), the City of Parchment will hold meetings at City Hall located at 650 S Riverview Drive which is accessible to the public (or in another properly posted location as is necessary or preferable), individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services in order to participate in municipal meetings may contact the City Clerk for assistance 269-492-3262. Any citizens that would be interested in having emails of upcoming

meetings sent to them may contact the Treasurer/Clerk at finance@parchment.org to get on the list for meeting notifications.

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 primary 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 meeting. Public bodies may hold emergency sessions without 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.

Michigan Planning Enabling Act

In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008), the following parties are notified via first-class mail, personal mail, or email by the City's Planning Commission of the intent to plan and request the recipient's cooperation and comment:

- Kalamazoo County Land and Development Department (county planning commission).
- Parchment Planning Commission (municipal planning commission).
- Each public utility company and public transportation agency owning or operating a public utility or public transportation system within the City of Parchment, as well as all other government entities which register its name and mailing address for the purpose with the Planning Commission.
- Road Commission of Kalamazoo County if the Master Plan include a master street plan for East G Avenue.

After the draft master plan has been submitted to the City Commission for review and approval for distribution, the draft plan is submitted to the previously listed entities for review. Before approving a proposed master plan, the City's Planning Commission will not hold less than one public hearing on the proposed master plan. The hearing will be held after the expiration of the deadline for comment as outlined in the Act.

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 Kalamazoo Gazette of general circulation within the Kalamazoo area. The Planning Commission will also submit notice of the public hearing by first class mail, personal delivery, or email to the previously listed entities for review. After adoption of the master plan, the Planning Commission may distribute copies of the master plan or of any report and employ other means of publicity and education.

Michigan Zoning Enabling Act

In accordance with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006), consideration of the following requires advertised public hearings pursuant to the Open Meetings Act:

- Zoning text amendments
- Zoning map amendments
- Variances
- Appeals
- Interpretations
- Special land uses

In the above cases, the City of Parchment will provide public notice of the hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in the area not less than 15 days before the date of the hearing and all persons to whom real property is assessed within 300 feet of the subject property and to the occupants of all structures within 300 feet of the subject property will be notified.

Key Definitions

Public body – any local governing body (including a board, commission, committee, subcommittee, or authority) which is empowered (by state constitution, statute, charter, ordinance, resolution or rule) to exercise governmental or proprietary authority or perform a governmental or proprietary function.

Meeting – the convening of a public body at which a quorum is present for the purpose of deliberating toward or rendering a decision on a public policy.

Closed session – a meeting or part of a meeting of a public body which is closed to the public.

Decision – a determination or vote of a public body to formulate public policy.

Notification of meetings – The public body must post a notice stating the dates, times, and places of all its meetings.

Closed meetings – the law provides for closed meetings in a few specified circumstances.

Minutes of a meeting – Minutes must be kept for all open meetings; they are required to contain:

- + A statement of the time, date, and place of the meeting.
- + The members present as well as absent.
- + A record of any decisions made at the meeting and a record of all roll call votes.
- + An explanation of the purpose(s) for which a closed session is held.

Separate minutes must be taken of a closed meeting.

Key Stakeholders

The stakeholders in the community are listed below. These groups are key in the decision making regarding the planning and land use development process. Their input is critical to the process because of their interest in various amenities within the community.

- City Commission
- City's Boards and Commissions
- Major Employers
- Commercial business owners
- Parchment Public Schools
- Kalamazoo County
- Neighboring Municipalities
- Religious groups
- Community organizations
- Students

The City of Parchment is dedicated to ensuring the public is notified and involved in its decision-making process. The city needs to reach beyond the public meeting as the Commission meetings are not well attended by the public.

The city uses its electronic sign, a Facebook page, bulletin board in the lobby, and its website: www.parchment.org to inform the public of upcoming events and meetings. The minutes at the Commission meetings reflect the comments of citizens. The city holds public forums when there are subject matters that need greater time for dissemination of information, public comments, and questions. The city understands that there will always be underrepresented citizens and organizations, but we will make every effort to notify them of planning opportunities.

Opportunities for Public Participation

There are many ways that the public is afforded opportunities to participate in the planning, review, and land use process.

Development Review Bodies

City Commission

The City Commission is the legislative and policy-making body for the City government. The Mayor and the Vice Mayor are appointed by the elected Commission. The Commission appoints the City Manager who is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the city government.

Boards and Commissions

The City encourages citizens to participate in local government planning and policy decisions. All citizens, 18 years and older, are welcome to apply for appointments to the City's boards and commissions. Members of boards and commissions provide recommendations, input options, and assist in decision making for the community.

There are advisory and administrative positions within city government. The advisory boards or commissions make recommendations to the City Commission based on the scope of service area. The commissions and boards have a yearly schedule of meetings where they deliberate issues, plan for special events, and/or implement project planning. The City Commission makes the final decision on most issues, after receiving input from a particular board or commission. There are particular boards and commissions that are permitted by the City Charter to conduct formal reviews and issue administrative decisions. The decisions are forwarded to the City Commission as official recommendations.

Public Meetings

Public meetings are held in conformance with the Open Meetings Act which provides for the agenda and meeting packets to be placed on the City's website before a meeting. Meeting minutes are posted on City of Parchment's website by the City Treasurer/Clerk or Deputy Clerk, after they are approved.

Public Comment

All the commission and board meetings include at least one “Public Comment” time during a public meeting where citizens are welcome to make a statement. The citizen is given five (5) minutes to make their comment. This time is only for a statement; there will be no reply during the meeting to any questions. The mayor may direct the citizen to meet with the City Manager so that questions could be answered outside of the meeting structure. The meeting minutes will reflect that a citizen has made a comment, and it will be made public on the City’s website.

Public Hearings

The City Commission and its various boards and commissions will hold public hearings when necessary to provide opportunity for public comment on specific topics.

Parchment Planning Commission

The Planning Commission will consider holding public hearings for all land use and development applications (site plan, special land use permits, or rezoning requests). It is not required by State Law for all applications. The City Treasurer/Clerk will publish the notification of a public hearing in a newspaper of general distribution in the city not less than 15 days prior to the hearing on a site plan application. Land use and development application notifications will 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. The Planning Commission meeting agenda and meeting packet will be made available on the City’s website in advance of the meeting.

Parchment City Commission

The City Commission will hold a public hearing when necessary. When a report is received from the Planning Commission, the City Commission will set a date for a public hearing to consider any proposed zoning ordinance update or rezoning. State and federal statutes require that special use permits and rezoning applications be noticed in a newspaper of general distribution in the city no less

than 15 days prior to the City Commission public hearing. Application notification will be sent to the applicant, the owner of the subject property, and the owners of property within 300 feet of the subject property.

If not present, the special use permit applicant and the Zoning Administrator are notified in writing of the City Commission's action by the City Treasurer/Clerk within five (5) days of the action. Following adoption of an ordinance to amend or update the zoning district boundaries or the district regulations, the ordinance adoption will be published in a newspaper of general circulation in Parchment within 15 days after adoption.

Other Boards and Commissions

Other relevant boards and commissions will hold public hearings as needed and as required by the individual boards and commissions. The public hearings will be noticed as required in advance of the meeting. All meeting agendas and packets will be made available before the meeting on the City's website.

Toolbox of Strategies

The City of Parchment Toolbox contains traditional methods of citizen participation but is open to more creative methods, too. There are multiple ways in which the city communicates with its citizens. Depending on the project or the need, the city will flex its methods of communication to best suit the occasion.

- **Basic announcement methods for public meetings** – *Public meetings are advertised through the following means; not all means are used for each meeting advertisement:*
 - Newspaper posting
 - Website posting
 - Social Media announcement
 - Meeting announcement on City Hall bulletin board in lobby
 - City Hall’s electronic sign
 - Announcements in Commission meetings
 - Attachments to trash bills
 - Mailings
 - Updates from City Hall through the Parchment Community Library

The city understands that not all citizens will be able to attend the meetings, especially those with various abilities, non-English speaking citizens, youth, and those that are employed during meeting hours. The City Manager is available to meet with anyone who would like to discuss a citizen’s concern.

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.

- **Proactive practices** – *The following methods have been used to both give information and to gather information by the City of Parchment:*
 - **Pre-Application Coordination** – *Prior to submitting an application, or site plan, an applicant is asked to speak with the Zoning Administrator (ZA). The review is advisory and informal in nature and does not provide approval or authorization. There is no cost for this review. After the*

Zoning Administrator has met with the applicant the application may be moved forward to the Planning Commission.

- **Administrative Authorization** – *There are times when the application may be reviewed and approved by the Zoning Administrator. A sign permit application that does not need any type of variance could be reviewed and approved by the ZA.*
- **Surveys** – *The main benefit of a survey is that it provides first-hand primary data that is collected, maintained, and analyzed by the city for our goals. The data is exclusive and original because the city has performed the survey. The data gathered from the citizens of this community is the most reliable, accurate, and applicable to the community's goals.*

Surveys may be partnered with a shareholder as in a school newsletter. They have also been attached to the back of water or trash bills. Mailings of surveys have been sent in summer and winter tax bills. Facebook has been another resource for survey dissemination.

- **Open Forums and Community Workshops** – *Open forums and community workshops have been a source of question-and-answer sessions with the public, that provide a creative and interactive opportunity for community projects. Formal presentations are coordinated in faith-based shareholder's buildings with information sharing, solution searching, and creative solution planning.*
- **Charrettes and Palavers** – *With charrettes and palavers, the citizens offer ideas and solutions to the team that is running it. This casual way of collecting ideas is based on citizens dropping by to offer their thoughts. These are most often used for specific projects such as the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.*
- **Walking Tours** – *The Parchment Community Library offers historical walking tours in Kindleberger Park and throughout the City of Parchment. These tours offer a unique opportunity for citizens to comment on various*

areas of the city and its park regarding improvements, safety, and future plans.

- **One on One Interviews** – *Meeting with stakeholders and citizens on a one-on-one basis allows a person to share their thoughts and ideas about the community. The City Manager welcomes the opportunity to speak individually with stakeholders and citizens. Although this represents only one perspective of the community, it is a great way to address any concerns individually.*
- **Social Media/Web Presence** – *The City of Parchment uses social media and our website to share upcoming projects and announcements with the community. The site provides for the asking and answering of questions. Multiple Kalamazoo County special events are also shared on our social media platforms, such as Household Hazardous Waste, Senior Citizen Forums, Special Events, etc.*

Outreach Strategies Update

The public engagement of stakeholders at the beginning of any project, policy making, or a new program is valuable in that it vests the stakeholders in the outcomes. Unexpected issues are remedied in the earliest phases and mutual agreement is nurtured as progress is made.

Master Plan Update

During the Master Plan process the public was invited to share goals and objectives with the Planning Commission as it updated the City's Master Plan. Surveys were sent out into the community to help establish what the goals and objectives would be. The Southcentral Planning Commission helped to interpret the results of the survey. This led the Planning Commission through a strategic planning process using the previous version of the master plan as a starting point.

The Planning Commission sent out invitations to the stakeholders to provide ideas/comments before the draft of the new Master Plan. The use of the Toolbox of Strategies allowed for the gathering of input from the community and the information was used to compose the draft. As updates are needed to the Master Plan, the city will reach out to the community for input.

W. E. Upjohn Foundation provided all the needed projections of growth and current data available for the plan. They looked to the State of Michigan, Kalamazoo County Administration, and neighboring communities for input and to avoid any conflicts.

The city kept track of the public participation through the minutes of meetings, survey results, verbal input, and written comments on the City's website and through the mail.

A public hearing was held by the Planning Commission before it was submitted the proposed plan to the City Commission for review and comment. The plan may not move forward without Commission approval. A public meeting, held in accordance with the Open Meetings Act was held. The City Commission then approved that the proposed Master Plan may be moved forward to distribution to neighboring local governments and agencies. A copy of the City Commission meeting minutes containing the approval is included with the Master Plan. A certification page is

included in the Master Plan, just before the appendices which was signed by the City Clerk.

Zoning Ordinance Updates

The Zoning Administrator for the City of Parchment reviewed the ordinances and listed those that needed amendments to align the ordinances with the zoning map. The discussion about revisions and amendments to the zoning ordinances is held during the Planning Commission meetings. The ordinances were updated with the new State laws, the removal of repetitive information, the addition of matrixes, and the addition of any other items that were previously missing from the original ordinances. It is common for these revisions to take multiple meetings to accomplish. Input from the public and business community is always welcome during these meetings. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing before recommending the revised ordinances to the City Commission. Additional review and discussion may be needed with multiple meetings being necessary. The City Commission will then decide to approve, deny, or table the proposed amendments.

When there is rezoning ordinance issues, notification to landowners living within 300 feet of the proposed area of change, will be notified by mail to communicate any concerns with the proposed ordinances to the City. After City Commission approval, a notice will be published within fifteen (15) days. Seven (7) days after the adoption publication of the ordinance amendment, it will go into effect.

Parks and Recreation Plan

A variety of strategies were implemented when the Planning Commission was putting together a Parks and Recreation Plan. The Planning Commission used the surveys that were sent to the citizens and held a palaver in the park to gather ideas from the community.

After the plan was put together, there was a 30-day comment period for the public to respond to the Parks and Recreation Plan. Copies of the plan were at City Hall, the Parchment Community Library, and the City's website. Comments were collected by mail, in person at the palaver, and by email.

The City Commission held an advertised public hearing in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. The minutes of the meeting reflected any comments made by the public.

Capital Improvement Program Planning

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) was planned through public meetings, surveys, emails, and mail to the city. The CIP contains the current year and a five-year plan for improvements within the City of Parchment. Some items will continue into long term programs, while others will remedy some overdue repairs/replacements that are needed to the City's infrastructure. All additions to the CIP were approved at public meetings held by the Parchment City Commission. A copy of the CIP plan is on the City's website, under the title of Economic Development.

Major Developments

With the concern for the abandoned paper mill that has caused a huge blight concern to the City, the focus of many public meetings is the mill property. The city actively looks for and applies for grant opportunities to clean up some of the blighted area. With the application for an EPA grant, the Community Library opened its doors to stakeholders and citizens of the Parchment community for an organizational meeting. This allowed the stakeholders and citizens an opportunity to share their thoughts and to receive first-hand information as to the work that will be performed on the mill property in the coming year(s). As we progress with improvements to the mill property, more meetings will be scheduled so that the City will be able to update the community.

Steps for Determining the Appropriate Plan

Before any planning can take place, information needs to be gathered regarding the size of a project, funding, work description, timeline, and advertising of the public meeting.

The process may be successfully accomplished with a 10-step formula:

Step 1 – Describe the Project

A clear description of the project should be conveyed to the participants so that they understand the limitations, timeline, funding challenges, and magnitude of the project.

Step 2 – Assessment of Public Concern/Interest

Assessing the importance of a project through the eyes of the public's opinion. If it is important to the community, the citizens will be more willing to provide input and support for the project.

Step 3 – Determine Level of Public Concern/Interest

After the level of interest is determined, the City can prioritize the plan for the necessary participation and establish goals for the project.

Step 4 – Identify Public Participation Goals

Define the goals for inviting the public to participate.

Step 5 – Identify Stakeholders

Having goals and public participation levels established will make it easier to identify stakeholders and determine the level of public outreach. Considering various stakeholders that do not take part ordinarily, to widen the input for the project.

Step 6 – Select Tools

Because of the diversity in public participation, a variety of tools will be used during projects.

Step 7 – Create a Schedule

It is important to always include a timeline for a project. This helps citizens and stakeholders to follow the progress of the project as it moves through various

stages of the work. Having information about the duration of certain tasks during the planning stages of a project will make the creation of a schedule much easier.

Step 8 – Identify Roles and Responsibilities

Describe all the participants and their roles and responsibilities throughout the project. A project manager should be identified at the beginning of the planning so that there is a person that everyone reports to with updates/concerns. Knowing who makes decisions for the project before it begins will provide for smoother implementation of the work plan. With the definition of roles and responsibilities defined well, citizens and stakeholders will know who makes the decisions during the project.

Step 9 – Gather and Disseminate Input and Results

When public participation goals include public input, involvement, collaboration, there is the necessity to disseminate this information to the decision makers and the general public. This shows that the information gathered has been considered and shared with the entire community, as much as possible.

Step 10 – Evaluate Effectiveness

There should always be an evaluation of the project design. Having the input of stakeholders for the design and implementation of the evaluation is a way for the public to be included as a partner in a transparent process. Public participation will be monitored and evaluated throughout the project. This allows for any changes in the project as it progresses.

Communicating Results

Sharing the results of the information that was gathered during the public involvement process shows that the public's opinion lends value to every project. Keeping the public involved through the process with updates and comment gathering allows for the transparency of a project from the start to the finish. The city uses the media, its website, newsletters, the reverse side of utility bills and social media to communicate to the public.

The following are ways that the city uses to communicate to the public in general:

Public Meetings: City Commission, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals, along with the Parks and Recreation Committee (minutes within the Consent Agenda of the City Commission meeting) and Kindleberger Arts Commission (minutes within the Consent Agenda of the City Commission meeting). The minutes to these meetings are posted on the City of Parchment's website.

Surveys: The creation of surveys is done through the Commission's request for information and the input of City staff to generate questions that will assist with the gathering of information from the residents and stakeholders. Results of the surveys are posted on the City's website, newsletter, shared during a public meeting and may be sent via United States Post Office upon request.

Forums/Community Workshops/Charrettes/Palavers: At the meeting, an appointed person such as the City Clerk or Deputy Clerk will take notes during the public sessions. Names, addresses and contact information are sought during these sessions to keep participants informed of the progress and any other gatherings that may be scheduled in the future. The City's electronic sign displays all public meetings scheduled. Reminders go out on utility bills, in newsletters and on the Facebook page for the city.

Public Participation Evaluation: A yearly review of this guide to update its contents, if necessary, will be overseen by a department head. Results of the review will be presented to the City Commission which will include strengths, weaknesses, changes to law requirements, and any suggestions that have been brought forth during the year. This should allow for a continuous review process that will provide for successful involvement with the community.