



Village of Ellsworth

# Public Participation Plan

## OVERVIEW

The Village of Ellsworth recognizes the important role that the public plays in guiding Village decisions and priorities. In an effort to ensure government transparency and the best possible outcomes for the planning and development process, Ellsworth has developed a comprehensive plan for engaging the public. This Public Participation Plan (“P3”) has been developed to provide future outreach and communications with residents and stakeholders. Whether planning for sanitary sewer, parks facilities, or economic development, this plan will set the foundation for how residents are engaged in an open and transparent visioning process.

Moving forward, this P3 plan will be used when updating future Master Plans, the Parks and Recreation Plan, the E+A Strategic Plan, and the DDA Development Plan. Consultants will be given this strategy and asked to adhere to its principles. Public participation is a two-way proposed development. conversation. This plan is a "living document" and details strategies for effective communication with residents as well as a process for listening and learning from the community.

## P3 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives will serve to guide public participation and outreach undertaken by the Village:

Goal: Ensure transparency and a clear planning and development process.

- Use the Ellsworth E-Newsletter as a vehicle for introducing the community to a potential investor and the vision of the
- Invite members of the public to comment on preliminary plan goals and objectives prior to holding a public hearing.
- Advertise the Master Plan public hearing widely.

Goal: Seek to engage a diversity of residents.

- Hold meetings outside of the Village Hall to engage with individuals who do not traditionally attend public meetings. For example, setting up a booth at the Pig Roast or Paddle Antrim or placing comment boards at the Front Porch.
- Use the Village website, the Chamber newsletter, the Village e-newsletter, and other innovative outreach techniques to engage a broad variety of people.

Goal: Provide educational materials to communicate and update the public on new programs and initiatives.

- Update the Village website regularly with updated meeting minutes and agendas.

- Actively seek to get a diverse representation of backgrounds on Village boards and commissions.

## **MICHIGAN ACTS**

In addition to seeking innovative opportunities for engagement, the Village of Ellsworth relies on state statutes to help guide public participation activities.

Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976, as amended):

In accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act, Ellsworth will continue to hold public meetings at the Village Hall, which is accessible to all members of the community. The public will be notified within 10 days of the first meeting of a public body in each calendar or fiscal year and details of each regular meeting will continue to be posted at the Village Hall.

Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008, as amended):

In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling, surrounding communities, Village residents, and the public will be notified by the Village Planning Commission of the intent to amend or adopt a revised Village Master Plan. After a draft master plan has been submitted to the Village Council for review and approval, surrounding communities, Village residents, and the public will be notified again. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on any revised Master Plan and ensure the plan is readily available on the Village website and at the Village Hall.

Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006, as amended):

For public hearings required by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, the Village of Ellsworth will continue to provide public notice as described in the Village Zoning Ordinance.

## **KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

The Village of Ellsworth is committed to engaging a wide variety and diversity of community stakeholders to ensure the highest quality of public input. Although not a comprehensive list, the following stakeholders and entities will be engaged during public processes as applicable:

- East Jordan Area Chamber of Commerce
- Ellsworth Downtown Development Authority
- Ellsworth Public School
- Banks Township
- Antrim County
- Public employees (police, fire, health, water)
- Business owners
- Young professionals
- Seniors
- Families
- Potential investors

## COMMUNICATION METHODS

The following are the methods that Ellsworth currently uses to engage with and communicate with the public as well as ideas for future engagement.

- Village Website: Ellsworth has a Village website and is in the process of modernizing it to ensure information is posted regularly and easily accessible to the public. In the future, the Village plans to post information on meetings, committee members, community events, and opportunities to get involved. The Village website can be found at [villageofellsworth.com](http://villageofellsworth.com).
- Village E-newsletter: The Village of Ellsworth sends regular updates on community planning, community events, and civic opportunities through their E+A (Ellsworth and Atwood) Community E-newsletter. This newsletter is distributed on a bi monthly basis as events come up.
- Antrim Review: The Antrim Review is the primarily local newspaper that Ellsworth uses to announce public meetings and promote engagement opportunities. The Review has a wide circulation that includes Ellsworth residents.
- Surveys: The Village administers public opinion surveys to help make more informed policy decisions and gauge public priorities for a variety of Village-related activities and services.
- State of the Community meeting: For the past few years, Ellsworth has partnered with Banks Township to host a State of the Community meeting. Each year, approximately 40 residents attend to hear updates from the Village President, Township Supervisor, School Superintendent, and the Chamber Director. After a short presentation, meeting attendees are invited to provide input on a variety of different planning related efforts ongoing in the community. In 2019, attendees provided feedback on the sanitary sewer system and the Downtown Development Authority Plan.

## ANNUAL REVIEW

This Public Participation Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the goals and strategies are still relevant and that they are being adhered to. Success of outreach will be estimated by tracking total participants in various outreach methods. These numbers will be compared and reviewed on an annual basis to ensure optimal participation from diverse members of the community.