



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The City of Marshall Community Engagement Plan guides public participation in decision making related to land use and development actions in Marshall. The audience for this plan generally falls into three broad categories:

1. **City Staff and Public Agencies:** This plan provides public entities with **guidance on the proper methods for outreach** depending on the type of project. The plan's guidance should be followed closely, and where adherence to the plan is not possible, alternatives should be explored and rationale for not following the plan must be clearly communicated to and approved by the relevant review body or bodies.
2. **Businesses and Developers:** This plan provides private developers and businesses with a **clear set of expectations** for the type of engagement that is expected for a particular project or review under consideration.
3. **Residents:** This plan provides residents of the City of Marshall and surrounding communities with an **understanding of their opportunities for input** regarding a particular development, plan, or project. It also should serve as an **accountability tool** to ensure the City of Marshall and relevant public agencies are adhering to expectations for public participation in decision making.

APPLICABILITY

This document applies to projects, plans, and actions of the City of Marshall. This includes the following entities:

- **Board and Commissions:** Airport Board, City Council, Downtown Development Authority, Marshall Township Joint Planning Commission, Local Development Finance Authority, Neighborhood Improvement Authorities, Parks, Recreation & Cemetery Board, Planning Commission, Farmers Market, Local Advisory Committee (DART), and Zoning Board of Appeals.
- **City Departments:** City Manager, Community Services, Economic Development, Electric, Engineering, Finance, FiberNET, Fire, Police, Public Works, Parks, Recreation, and Public Services.

Other public and private entities undertaking projects within the city are strongly encouraged to follow its guidance. The City of Marshall has no ability to enforce standards of this plan on public or private entities over which it has no jurisdiction.

EXPECTATIONS

The City of Marshall has a culture of civic engagement and pride that is driven by the active role the community plays in decision making. Consequently, the City of Marshall has high expectations for public engagement for any development project, community development-related plan, infrastructure project, or other similar activity that requires formal adoption or approval by a city board or commission.

- **Each project will be evaluated on an individual basis** to determine appropriate methods of public engagement according to this plan. This includes consideration of project scope, stakeholders, project limitations, approving body, and points of community impact.
- **Information will be made available in a timely manner** that is accessible to all interested parties to be involved in decisions at various stages of the review and approval process.

- **Citizens will be engaged in a transparent manner**, making information easy to access for all interested members of the community with a clear description of how their feedback will be utilized.
- **Creativity is strongly encouraged**. Opportunities to engage people arise frequently, as do new methods and tools. Constantly exploring new ways to involve a diverse set of community stakeholders in decision-making is vital to the success of this plan.
- **Results of community engagement will be tracked and analyzed** to the extent feasible, with summaries of feedback received provided back to the public and relevant decision-making bodies.

STATE & LOCAL REGULATIONS

Several state laws and local ordinances have requirements for public engagement that are addressed by this plan. These include but are not limited to:

- Marshall City Charter
- Marshall City Code of Ordinances
- Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008)
- Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006)
- Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976)
- Home Rule City Act (PA 279 of 1909)
- Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act (PA 381 of 1996)
- Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act (PA 57 of 2018)
- Plant Rehabilitation and Industrial Development Districts Act (PA 198 of 1974)
- Personal Property Exemption Act (PA 328 of 1998)
- Corridor Improvement Act (PA 280 of 2005)
- Intergovernmental Conditional Land Transfer by Contract (PA 425 of 1984)

Key regulations and legislation that are most commonly addressed as part of community engagement for land use and development are detailed below.

MICHIGAN PLANNING ENABLING ACT

In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008) the following parties will be notified via first class mail, personal delivery or electronic mail by the planning commission of the intent to plan and request the recipient's cooperation and comment:

- Marshall, Fredonia, Eckford, and Marengo Townships.
- Calhoun County Planning Commission.
- The Southcentral Michigan Planning Council.
- Each public utility company, railroad company, and public transportation agency owning or operating a public utility, railroad, or public transportation system within the local unit of government, and any government entity that registers its name and mailing address for this purpose with the planning commission.
- If the master plan will include a master street plan, the county road commission and the state transportation department.

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (MPEA) requires that after a draft master plan has been submitted to the City Council for review and approval for distribution, the draft plan will be submitted to the previously listed entities for review. The MPEA also requires the planning commission to hold not less than one public hearing on the proposed master plan after the expiration of the deadline for comment. 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 a newspaper of general circulation within the local unit of government. The planning commission will also submit notice of the public hearing by first class mail, personal delivery or electronic mail to the previously listed entities for review. After the adoption of the master plan, the City of Marshall will publish the approved plan on its website and make physical copies available upon request.

These standards are the minimum required for adoption of a Master Plan, and this plan requires a higher level of public engagement than the MPEA.

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 and consistent with the notice requirements of the act and local ordinances:

- Zoning ordinance text amendments and adoption of a new zoning ordinance.
- Zoning ordinance map amendments (rezonings).
- Variances.
- Appeals and interpretations of administrative decisions.
- Special Land Use requests.
- Conditional Rezonings.

The City of Marshall will follow the required posting in the Ad-Visor & Chronicle, or similar publication posting at City Hall, the City's website, and by mail to property owners and tenants located within 300 feet of the subject property when the request relates to a particular address, including rezonings, special land use requests, and variance requests.

OPEN MEETINGS ACT

In accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976), the City will hold regular meetings in Marshall City Hall located at 323 W Michigan Ave, which is accessible to the general public. Within 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 City Hall and on the City's website. 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 18 hours before the meetings. Public bodies will 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.

Interested persons are encouraged to contact the City Clerk or to check the City's Website at: www.cityofmarshall.com to be kept informed of any meeting schedule, agendas, variations, or location changes. Meeting agendas and packets are available on the City's website in advance of the meeting.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE CITY OF MARSHALL

In the City of Marshall, each project will be evaluated on an individual basis to ensure inclusion for all stakeholders in the community. Each will vary according to the project being reviewed. Possible key stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- Local residents and neighborhood groups
- Neighboring jurisdictions
- City boards and commissions
- Municipal departments, including emergency personnel
- MAEDA-Marshall Area Economic Development Alliance
- Civic and social organizations active in the community (e.g., Marshall Historical Society, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Retailers Association, Manufacturers Association, Disability Network Southwest Michigan)
- Commercial business owners and their employees
- Oaklawn Hospital
- Real estate professionals
- Churches
- Calhoun County
- Regional planning agencies and other nearby units of government, including tribal governments.
- Schools & students
- Senior groups
- Community visitors and tourists
- State Agencies (e.g., Michigan Department of Transportation, Department of Natural Resources, Energy Environment and Great Lakes, Michigan Economic Development Corporation)
- Utility providers

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BODIES

The City encourages citizen participation in local government planning and policy decisions. All residents are invited to apply for appointments to the City boards and commissions.

City Council: Marshall's City Council is composed of seven members. The mayor, a representative for each of the five wards of the City and one at-large representative. All City Council positions are voted in by the citizens of Marshall. The City Council is the final approving body for Special Land Uses, Rezonings, Zoning Amendments, Master Plans, and other planning documents for local authorities.

Planning Commission: The Planning Commission is a nine-member body, plus one city council liaison. All full members are appointed by the Mayor for three-year terms. Planning Commissioners make final decisions on site plans and make recommendations to City Council on other issues. Often times, they are the recommending body to City Council. They are also responsible for writing the zoning ordinance and updating the City's Master Plan.

Joint Planning Commission: The City of Marshall and Marshall Township have a 425 Agreement which sets the rules for township property being incorporated into the City. This agreement made provisions for the Joint Planning Commission, comprised of three City Planning Commissioners, three Township Planning Commissioners, and one alternate of each. When there is a development issue with a property that has been brought into the City through the 425 agreement, the Joint Planning Commission has jurisdiction.

Neighborhood Improvement Authorities (NIA): Marshall has two NIAs: South NIA and Northeast NIA. Each NIA is made up of a board of seven members, which includes the City Manager. Members serve for a three-year term. When new projects are located within either of the NIA districts, the NIA will review plans and provide comments to the approving authority.

Downtown Development Authority: The Downtown Development Authority is a board that is established through state statute to implement development plans for downtown districts. The DDA can levy an additional millage for public improvements. The DDA is a tax increment financing authority which collects any additional taxes raised from any building improvement that occurs after its date of establishment. When new projects are located within the DDA district boundary, the DDA reviews plans and provides comments to the approving authority.

Local Development Finance Authority: The Local Development Finance Authority (LDFA) is a board that is established through state statute to implement development plans for industrial districts. The LDFA is a tax increment financing authority which collects any additional taxes raised from any building improvement that occurs after its date of establishment. When new projects are located within the LDFA district boundary, the LDFA reviews plans and provides comments to the approving authority.

Zoning Board of Appeals: The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) has five full members, two alternate members, and one city council liaison. Each member is appointed by the Mayor for a three-year term. The ZBA hears requests to deviate from the strict standards of the zoning ordinance through variances and has other review responsibilities assigned to it by the ordinance.

Zoning Administrator: The City of Marshall's zoning administrator is responsible for reviewing requests for zoning permits and develops staff reports to each of the other review bodies on any request coming before them.

There are many boards, commissions, and committees throughout the City of Marshall. Agendas and dates/times of the meetings for public bodies can be found on the front page of Marshall's website at: www.cityofmarshall.com. Minutes for these meetings can be found at Government- Agendas and Boards on the website.

ENGAGEMENT METHODS

The following are methods that may be used to reach an appropriate level of public participation when taking action on land use or development applications. This list is flexible and should evolve over time as new methods and opportunities for engagement present themselves.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The City of Marshall is home to a range of residents with different preferences for communication channel and approach. This makes any one communication strategy or approach unlikely to meet the needs of all members of a particular neighborhood or area of the City. As a result, whenever public input is sought related to a public project or planning activities that impacts a particular neighborhood or area of the City, multiple communication strategies should be employed, and among those must be collaboration with residents. This should also include posting information regarding an event, survey, or public meetings that impacts a particular area at public gathering places as well as making it available via the City's website, social media, and traditional media.

INTERVIEWS, SMALL MEETINGS & FOCUS GROUPS

One-on-one interviews and small focus group meetings allow the City to gather specific information on a topic from a single individual or small group of people. If a particular issue has a disproportionate impact on a subset of the community or if a project is being considered that engages a specific group of stakeholders, interviews and small focus group meetings are a good tool to gather detailed input. These meetings should be relatively formal and structured so that consistent questions and information regarding a topic is gathered from each interviewee or group that is a part of the process. Good notes should be taken during the interviews so that the information can be recorded, analyzed, and reported out. While interviews are a good tool for gathering in-depth information from a small subset of people, it is important to keep in mind that interview results should not be assumed to be representative of a broad segment of the population.

Small community meetings are helpful in gathering information on a particular topic or issue from a defined group of people. For example, how a proposed street improvement will impact a particular neighborhood. When conducting focus groups or small community meetings it is important to clearly define the issue and the input the City is seeking from participants, but then to be open to their feedback and let them dictate how the meeting progresses. Again, taking detailed notes or recording the meeting (if the group consents to being recorded) is important for analyzing and reporting on the results of the session later.

OPEN HOUSES & WORKSHOPS

Open house meetings and community workshops can be as simple as town hall-style meetings, or more complex planning sessions that include charrette-style feedback opportunities on potential design alternatives. Open houses and workshops generally provide a more casual and fun setting to encourage participants to think critically and creatively about important issues. They can often include neighborhood residents, youth, community leaders, and other stakeholders. The workshops or open houses may be conducted by City staff, or outside consultants or contractors working on a particular project or plan.

Open house meetings and workshops are also an opportunity to educate the community surrounding a specific topic. Open house venues need to be accessible and approachable for all attendees and notice and publication of events should be done consistent with the standards in this plan.

SURVEYS

Surveys are useful in gathering feedback on specific topics from a clearly defined audience. However, the method of sharing surveys and facilitating their completion must be tailored for the intended audience. For example, a survey directed at youth must be written at the appropriate grade level and relatively short compared to a survey directed toward local business owners or regional partners.

While surveys are useful to get a general idea of public opinion regarding specific community issues, they should not be used as the sole method of public input. At a minimum, surveys should always be paired with interviews, a focus group session, or a public meeting to gather more in-depth feedback and provide an alternative communication method.

When a survey is created, it should always provide an electronic version and paper version. Paper versions should be available at City Hall, and depending on the audience, available at key locations within the community like the library.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media provides a platform for quick and frequent communication with the public. While not universal, access to information via social media is significant, and reaches many community members that do consume traditional media. The City of Marshall maintains several social media accounts with thousands of followers. The primary focus of social media communication is to provide the public with

notice of upcoming events or opportunities for input and to raise awareness of important community issues or changes that may impact neighborhoods or businesses.

PRE-DEVELOPMENT MEETINGS

Prior to submitting any planning application, an applicant can submit a plot plan or draft plan to the Zoning Administrator for an informal advisory review. This review is typically an in-person meeting and focuses on communicating the process and anticipated timelines to the applicant, as well as reviewing the required forms and documents for submission. The informal review does not take the place of a final review of a complete application. Informal reviews may be scheduled by completing the application form on the City's website.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings are sessions held during a City Council, Planning Commission, DDA, ZBA, or other public board or commission meeting. Public hearings must include a notice published according to state statute, local ordinances, and any other relevant rules or regulations. Public hearings are formal and allow public comments to be formally received and recorded as part of the City meeting.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY AND PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

The City of Marshall will make all reasonable efforts to facilitate communications with people with limited English proficiency or people with a disability that requires an accommodation. The City's intent is to ensure that all interested people can participate in public meetings, events, and other activities. Requests to provide accommodation must be made to the City Clerk and received at least seven days prior to the meeting at which assistance is needed.

SELECTING THE APPROPRIATE METHOD

When a project, development, or other activity covered by this plan begins, City staff should generally follow the following process to determine the appropriate methods for engagement.

1. **Define the project:** Be sure the project and the purpose for public input is clearly defined. The following questions should be answered:
 - a. What is the activity being undertaken, and what is the desired end result?
 - b. What is the timeline, and is there a clearly defined budget that will impact public engagement activities?
 - c. How will public input be utilized in the decision-making process?
2. **Define the audience:** Who do you want to engage? This should be more specific than just "city residents". For example, are there residents of a particular area, or residents that share common characteristics (e.g., youth) that you are targeting?
3. **Determine the appropriate level of engagement:** How much input is the City seeking from participants? Is it feedback related to a one-time issue, or is it part of a longer project like a Master Plan update? Complete the "Level of Public Involvement Needed" worksheet to determine whether "optional" items from the Public Engagement Methods Summary Table should be included in the effort.
4. **Select the appropriate engagement method(s):** Based on items one through three, determine the appropriate method or methods to be undertaken for the project. Develop a timeline for the project and review the engagement approach with relevant city departments and boards or commissions.
5. **Promote and advertise:** Advertise and promote the event or program through a variety of channels, including neighborhood organizations and civic organizations related to the target audience. There should be at least two weeks' notice given prior to any public event.

6. **Record, evaluate and report:** Record the results of the event via meeting notes, completed surveys, recordings, and other appropriate methods. Afterwards, evaluate the overall effectiveness of the event based on how the project was defined. Did the event meet staff and stakeholders' expectations? And if not, what can be done in the future to improve? Following this evaluation, the City should make a summary of this feedback publicly available in a timely manner. This "reporting out" indicates how participant feedback was used in the decision-making process.

LEVEL OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT WORKSHEET

This worksheet is intended to help determine the appropriate amount of community engagement for a project/issue. The worksheet is a guide, and ultimately the amount of engagement should be determined by City staff, officials, and stakeholders.

Instructions: Select a single column for each statement as it pertains to the issue or project being considered. For each "strongly agree" or two "somewhat agree" responses, consider adding at least one optional means of public engagement. **A project or issue with 4 or more "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" responses should have a separate strategy for public outreach and engagement that is communicated publicly to the Planning Commission and/or City Council** depending on the issue and the final decision-making authority.

Statement	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A or Not Sure
The issue/project is complex.				
It is reasonable to expect a fair amount of conflict or controversy about the issue/project.				
The potential impacts to the community and surrounding neighbors are significant.				
The community expects a high degree of involvement.				
Final decision-makers expect a high degree of public engagement regarding the issue/project.				
Community input has potential to affect the final decision or development.				

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT METHODS SUMMARY TABLE

The following table provides a summary of whether engagement methods are required or optional for a given type of project or development in the City of Marshall.

Public Engagement Methods Summary Table

Engagement Method	Type of Project or Plan							
	Master Plan Update	Master Plan Amendment	Zoning Ordinance Amendment or Adoption	Capital Improvement Program	Parks and Recreation Master Plan	Neighborhood & Subarea Plans	Major Developments	Zoning Approvals
Community Outreach	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Required	Required	Required	Optional
Interviews, Focus Groups & Small Meetings	Required	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional
Open Houses & Workshops	Required	Required	Optional	Optional	Required	Optional	Required	Optional
Surveys	Required	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional
Social Media	Required	Required	Optional	Optional	Required	Optional	Optional	Optional
Public Hearings	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required
Pre-Development Meetings	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Required	Optional
Limited English Proficiency Residents and People with a Disability	Required When Requested							

COMMUNICATION RESOURCES

In addition to the methods for engagement listed previously, the following options also exist for the public to be informed regarding decision-making in the City of Marshall. It is especially important to communicate key concepts or issues regarding major development projects and master plan updates transparently via a variety of communication platforms.

- **Website:** www.CityofMarshall.com announces meetings, posts packets and agendas, minutes, and sometimes will contain pages or links for topics of major interest.
- **Newspaper:** The Advisor/Chronicle is the City of Marshall's newspaper. New editions are available on Fridays. The City will continue to use this resources as long as they are available, alternative methods for legally required public notice may be utilized if necessary.
- **YouTube:** Council and certain Board meetings are available on the City's YouTube Channel.
- **Printed postings:** Available for viewing at the City Hall lobby board.
- **Announcements:** Announcements during meetings of the City Council, Planning Commission and other boards and commissions.
- **Press releases and articles:** At various times, the City will issue press releases and information for articles to various newspapers, radio stations, and television stations.
- **Email or postal mail:** Interested parties may request to be notified personally by the City Clerk of meetings/topics, according to statute. Additionally, there is a "notify me" feature on the City of Marshall website that allows anyone to sign up to receive notifications.

COMMUNICATING RESULTS

The City of Marshall will publicly communicate all results of community input on planning and development issues utilizing one or more of the resources listed in the previous section.

EVALUATING RESULTS

As part of the Planning Commission's annual report delivered to City Council, the City of Marshall will summarize community engagement activities during the previous calendar year. The summary will include:

- The number and type of engagement activities conducted.
- An estimate of the number of people engaged.
- An evaluation of the overall success of community engagement efforts.
- Lessons learned and opportunities for improvement.

UPDATING THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

At a minimum, this plan will be updated every five years in conjunction with the City's Master Plan. Updates to this plan will be drafted by staff, reviewed and recommended by Planning Commission, and approved through City Council. The following engagement methods are required during the update process:

- The City will share the draft plan on its website.
- The City will distribute the plan to key stakeholder groups for comment.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST



HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

This checklist is designed for use by City of Marshall staff to ensure that the City's Community Engagement Plan is being followed for all relevant projects, plans, and activities.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Brief Project Description: Click or tap here to enter text.

Enter the project type from page 10 of the Community Engagement Plan that best describes your project: Click or tap here to enter text.

CHOOSING AN ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Instructions: Select a single column for each statement as it pertains to the issue or project being considered. For each "strongly agree" or two "somewhat agree" responses, consider adding at least one optional means of public engagement from page 10 of the Community Engagement Plan. **A project or issue with 4 or more "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" responses should have a separate strategy for public outreach and engagement that is communicated publicly to the Planning Commission and/or City Council** depending on the issue and the final decision-making authority.

Statement	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A or Not Sure
The issue/project is complex.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is reasonable to expect a fair amount of conflict or controversy about the issue/project.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The potential impacts to the community and surrounding neighbors are significant.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The community expects a high degree of involvement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final decision-makers expect a high degree of public engagement regarding the issue/project.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community input has potential to affect the final decision or development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PROPOSED ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Please list your proposed engagement activities. The result of each engagement must be sent in an email to the Director of Community Services when complete.

Required Engagement Activities : Click or tap here to enter text.

Optional Engagement Activities : Click or tap here to enter text.

Date Form Completed: Click or tap here to enter text.

Name of Person Completing Form: Click or tap here to enter text.

ENGAGEMENT DOCUMENTATION

Engagement

Date Completed

Initials of Staff Person

Engagement Activity		
Community Outreach	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Interviews, Focus Groups & Small Meetings	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Open Houses & Workshops	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Surveys	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Social Media	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Public Hearings	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Pre-Development Meetings	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Limited English Proficiency Residents and People with a Disability	Click or tap to enter a date.	
	Click or tap to enter a date.	
	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Communication Channels Utilized		
News Flash	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Website Post	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Press Release- Identify Media Sent	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Facebook	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Instagram	Click or tap to enter a date.	
Marshall Advisor Display Ad	Click or tap to enter a date.	
	Click or tap to enter a date.	