

TAWAS CITY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

for Planning and Development Projects

INTRODUCTION

The City of Tawas City has developed this Public Participation Plan for Planning and Development Projects that contains the policies and procedures used for public involvement and outreach in the City's approval process. This plan contains the following:

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The City of Tawas City is required by State laws, the City's [Code of Ordinances](#), City's [Zoning Ordinance](#), and the rules of procedure for various boards, commissions, and authorities to pursue public participation in planning and development projects. The City allows a public involvement process that provides information in a timely public notice and encourages early and continuing involvement of stakeholders in the planning and review process.

Third Party Consultants

This plan does not preclude additional public involvement and, if the circumstances arise, the City may retain a third party consultant who will adhere to the provisions of this plan as applicable.

Public Participation Goals and Objectives

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The City of Tawas City has developed the following Public Participation Goals and Objectives:

1. The City of Tawas City will conduct all aspects of citizen participation in an open manner, making the participation process accessible for all interested parties.
2. The City of Tawas City will engage a diverse set of community stakeholders in planning, land use, and development decisions.
3. The City of Tawas City will seek to identify and involve a broad and representative cross-section of the community's residents.
4. The City of Tawas City evaluates each project on an individual basis to determine project scope, stakeholders, project limitations, approving body, points of community impact during the decision making process, internal and external resources, and level of appropriate community involvement.
5. The City of Tawas City will encourage the involvement of residents most affected by the proposed planning, land use, or development project.
6. The City of Tawas City will solicit public participation in each phase of the Master Plan review or update process.
7. The City of Tawas City will make reasonable efforts to ensure continuity of involvement of citizens throughout all stages of the planning and review process.
8. The City of Tawas City will utilize effective and equitable avenues for distributing information and receiving comments that includes the City's [website](#) and email.
9. The City of Tawas City will support and encourage effective participation. Information will 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.
10. The City of Tawas City will record the results of public participation to the extent feasible and provide summaries to the public.
11. Along with the desire to engage a diversified public in its planning processes, the City of Tawas City relies on State statutes to help guide its participation activities.
12. If requested, the City of Tawas City will assist developers/applicants to solicit input from stakeholders and the public in general to help ensure understanding and acceptance, prevent obstacles from arising late in the process.

Key Stakeholders

STAKEHOLDER LIST

The following group of stakeholders represents a diverse set of individuals, groups, and organizations that are interested in or affected by Tawas City's planning and land use process. Different groups may be engaged in each of the review processes, depending on the nature of the project, the plan, the level of interest, and the City's financial involvement in the project.

- Civic and Social Organizations
- Commercial Brokers and Real Estate Professionals
- [Develop Iosco](#)
- [East Michigan Council of Governments](#)
- Emergency Personnel
- Environmental Groups
- Health Care Providers
- [Huron Shore Regional Utility Authority](#)
- Investors/Developers
- Iosco County Board of Commissioners
- [Iosco County Commission on Aging](#)
- Iosco County Economic Development Corporation
- Iosco County Planning Commission
- Iosco County Transit Corporation
- [Lake State Railway Company](#)
- Major Local Employees
- [Michigan Department of Transportation](#)
- Neighboring Jurisdictions
- [Northeast Michigan Council of Governments](#)
- Public Employees
- Relevant State Agencies
- Religious Groups
- Senior Citizens
- [Tawas Area Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Tawas Area School District](#)
- [Tawas Bay Tourist and Convention Bureau](#)
- Tawas City Council
- Tawas City Department of Public Works
- Tawas City Downtown Development Authority
- Tawas City Fire Department
- Tawas City Planning Commission
- Tawas City Residents
- Tawas Police Authority
- Tawas Utilities Authority
- Utility Service Providers

Local and State Regulations

LOCAL AND STATE REGULATIONS

The City, through the work of the City Council and individual boards, commissions, and authorities, follows the local and State regulations listed below. These regulations include provisions for the public review process, public participation, and public hearings.

City of Tawas City

- [City of Tawas City Charter](#)
- [Tawas City Code of Ordinances](#)
- [Tawas City Zoning Ordinance](#)
- Other relevant local polices or regulations as appropriate

State of Michigan

- [The Home Rule City Act](#) (PA 279 of 1909)
- [Open Meetings Act](#) (PA 267 of 1976)
- [Michigan Planning Enabling Act](#) (PA 33 of 2008)
- [Michigan Zoning Enabling Act](#) (PA 110 of 2006)
- [Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act](#) (PA 381 of 1996)
- [Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act](#) (PA 57 of 2018)
- [The New Personal Property Exemption Act](#) (PA 328 of 1998)
- Other relevant State legislation or regulations as appropriate

Public Involvement Strategies

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 issues. 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 or amendment of plans and strategies. The City will communicate the results of the public participation methods in a consistent and transparent manner. More than one method of communication may be used in order to reach a broader audience and the affected persons. 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 will support the development review process.

INFORM

Provide Information, Assist Public Understanding, and Communicate Results

Website. The City's website, tawascity.org, announces meetings, posts minutes and agendas, and sometimes will contain pages or links for topics of major interest.

Newspaper. The Iosco County News-Herald is the local newspaper used by the City of Tawas City for publications. New issues are available by Wednesday each week.

Printed Postings. Available for viewing at City Hall located at 550 West Lake Street.

Announcements. Announcements are made during meetings of the City Council, Planning Commission and other boards, commissions, or authorities.

Press Releases and Articles. At various times the City will issue press releases or information for articles to the Iosco County News-Herald as well as local radio stations.

Email or Postal Mail. Interested parties may request to the City Clerk that they be notified personally of meetings/topics for discussion through a [Freedom of Information Request](#). The City also issues postal mailings to neighbors within 300 feet of a proposed development as required by State law.

Newsletters. The City produces an annual newsletter which is used to provide information and announcements.

CONSULT

Obtain Public Feedback

Social Media. On occasion the City will use [Facebook](#) to notify the community of public input meetings and of other methods of providing input.

Surveys. The City utilizes direct-mail paper surveys for the collection of large amounts of data and opinions from the public.

Public Hearings. Public attendance at meetings is strongly supported and allows for an appropriate venue for public input.

INVOLVE

Work Directly with Public throughout the Process

Open Houses. In order to create two-way communication, the City may hold open house events for projects and initiatives as needed.

Steering or Advisory Committees. The City may organize steering/advisory committees consisting of residents, business owners, board and commission members, and other identified stakeholders. Members may be selected based on their expertise, interest, or background as they relate to the focus of the individual steering committee. This structure will allow for focused discussions related to a specific topic. Meetings will be open to the public. 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.

Community Workshops, Visioning Sessions, or Focus Groups. The City may conduct focus groups, visioning sessions, or community workshops for gathering the community's opinions 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. The results of these meetings will be included in any report or plan generated based on the community feedback collected during these meetings.

Charrettes or 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.

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 public unless requested otherwise. The information may be compiled and analyzed together with other information from stakeholders on a specific topic.

Feedback on Effectiveness of Participation Methods

External Satisfaction Survey. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the public participation method, participants may be asked to complete a survey to evaluate the following:

- How the attendee heard about the event.
- Whether the event was held at a convenient location and time.
- If the attendee was satisfied with the event.
- Suggestions for improvement.

Internal Satisfaction Survey. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the public participation method, facilitators may be asked to complete a survey to evaluate the following:

- The number of attendees.
- Whether any groups were under-represented.
- Suggestions for improvements.

Survey results will be reviewed and shared with appropriate parties to help improve participation methods.

Opportunities for Public Participation

The City of Tawas City provides its residents and stakeholders in general with numerous opportunities to get involved in the planning, review, and approval process for planning and zoning, community visioning, and development projects.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BODIES

The City encourages citizen participation in local government planning and policy decisions. All residents aged 18 years and older are invited to apply for appointments to City boards and commissions. Vacant positions are advertised on the City's website at tawascity.org.

City Council

The City Council is the governing body for the City of Tawas City. The City Council consists of six council members who serve four-year terms and one mayor who serves a two-year term. The Mayor is the City's chief executive official and presides over meetings of the Council.

The City Council is the legislative authority and governing body for the City. It is responsible for hiring and overseeing the City Manager, setting policy, and adopting ordinances and resolutions. One of the most important policies is budgetary which is carried out through reviewing and adopting the annual budget which guides the City's operations, capital projects, and priorities for each fiscal year which begins on July 1st each year.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission prepares and adopts physical plans for the City and reviews development proposals, both private and public, as set forth in the [Michigan Zoning Enabling Act](#) (PA 110 of 2006), and the [Michigan Planning Enabling Act](#) (PA 33 of 2008), and acts in an advisory capacity for matters referred by the City Council. The Planning Commission has the authority to approve site plans and Special Land Uses. In addition, the Planning Commission makes recommendations to the City Council for [Zoning Ordinance](#) text and map amendments.

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

The Zoning Board of Appeals has the power to authorize, upon an appeal, specific variances from requirements such as lot area and width regulations, building height regulations, yard and depth regulations, and off-street parking and loading space requirements. The ZBA hears appeals related to the administration of the [Zoning Ordinance](#) including the interpretation of text and the zoning map. The ZBA does not have the authority to grant use variances.

Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

Tawas City's [Downtown Development Authority](#) is designed to promote commerce in the DDA district through beautification and economic development. The DDA was originally established in October 1980 and the first plan was effective from December 1985 to December 1998. The plan was amended and restated from April 2008 to April 2038. Since the plan was amended and restated in April 2008, the DDA only captured tax dollars for one year. That money was used to fund an electronic sign in Shoreline Park in the heart of the DDA district. With the lack of funds, the DDA Board has become inactive.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Open Meetings

All meetings of the City Council and its various boards, commissions and authorities are open to the public in accordance with the [Open Meetings Act](#) (PA 267 of 1976), as amended, except closed session meetings as provided for in the Act. Notices of public hearings at these meetings are published in the [Iosco County New-Herald](#) and displayed at City Hall as required by the Act.

Universal Access

All meetings will be held in a facility accessible to persons with disabilities, and the City will provide reasonable accommodations such as interpreters for the hearing impaired and audiotapes of printed materials being considered at the meeting, upon notice to the Tawas City Clerk prior to the meeting and in accordance with City policies.

Meeting Schedule

A list of all meeting dates, times, and locations for the calendar year is published at City Hall by January 1st of each year for the City Council, and every other City board, commission, or authority, and a meeting calendar is available on the City's website at tawascity.org. If there is a change in the schedules, notification will be posted in accordance with the [Open Meetings Act](#) (PA 267 of 1976). Special meetings will also be posted in accordance with the [Open Meetings Act](#). Public bodies may hold emergency sessions without a 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.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Individual boards, commissions, and authorities will hold public meetings pursuant to their individual rules of procedure and State regulations. As required by law, the City of Tawas City will provide the public reasonable and timely access to information and records related to the [Master Plan](#), [Parks and Recreation Plan](#), Public Participation Plan, [Zoning Ordinance](#), [Downtown Development Authority Plan](#), and all other plans and ordinances and any amendments to any of the plans and ordinances.

Meeting Postings

Interested persons are encouraged to check the event calendar on the City's website at tawascity.org, or at City Hall in order to be kept informed of any meeting changes or cancellations.

Meeting Locations

Meetings and public hearings take place in the Council Chamber at Tawas City Hall located at 550 West Lake Street, which is barrier-free and accessible to the entire community. Individuals with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodations or services should contact the City Clerk in accordance with City policies.

Agendas and Public Hearing Notices

Meeting and public hearing agendas and packets are available ahead of time either on the City's website, tawascity.org, or through City Hall. Public hearing notices are sent to applicants and stakeholders. The following require that property owners and occupants of properties within 300 feet of a development are personally notified:

- Rezoning of property
- Special land use request
- Variance requests

In accordance with State law, notices of public hearings for all of those developments are published in the [Iosco County News-Herald](#) as well as mailed to all property owners and occupants of properties within 300 feet at least 15 days prior to the meeting.

Minutes

The City Clerk's office records minutes of all meetings of the City and drafts of minutes are available eight (8) business days after the meeting was held. Approved minutes are posted on the City's [website](#) following approval.

Copies of Documents

Copies of all documents are available at Tawas City Hall located at 550 West Lake Street in Tawas City.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Opportunities for public comment will be available at every meeting of the City Council or any board, commission, or authority in accordance with the provisions in their individual rules of procedure, State law, and other operating policies or procedures.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The City Council and all other boards, commissions, and authorities hold public hearings when called for in local and State enabling legislation, or when otherwise prudent, to provide the opportunity for public input on specific topics.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission holds public hearings in response to requests for special use permits, Planned Unit Developments, and zoning amendment requests. The City Clerk schedules and publishes the notifications of public hearings before the Planning Commission in the [Iosco County News-Herald](#) not less than 15 days prior to the date of the hearing. Rezoning, land use, and development application notifications are sent by mail to the applicant, the owner of the subject property, and, if the case of a special land use or rezoning, to the owners and occupants of all properties within 300 feet of the subject property. The Planning Commission meeting agendas will be made available on the City's [website](#) in advance of the meetings, and the packets will be available at City Hall. After a decision is made, the applicant will receive notification of the Planning Commission's determination.

City Council

The City Council will hold a public hearing when called for in the City Charter, Code of Ordinances, Zoning Ordinance, and other local or State enabling legislation. Notification and publication will be in accordance with State law.

Other Boards, Commissions, and Authorities

Other relevant boards, commissions, and authorities will hold public hearings as needed and as required by their individual rules of procedure, or other local or State enabling legislation. The public hearings will be noticed as required in advance of the meeting. All meeting agendas will be available on the City's [website](#) in advance of the meetings, and the packets will be available at City Hall.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW OPPORTUNITIES

Master Plan Adoption or Amendment

The City of Tawas City will follow, at a minimum, the provisions of the [Michigan Planning Enabling Act](#) (PA 33 of 2008), for the adoption of a new Master Plan or of an update to the existing [Master Plan](#).

The Planning Commission will send a notice to all stakeholders as required in State law; 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 staff will then begin work on drafting or updating the plan. They will involve the public through many of the methods listed in the section [Public Involvement Strategies](#) of this document. The City will 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 representatives of adjacent local units of government with respect to their planning so that conflicts in their 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 with these agencies.

The City will encourage and track the public participation through a variety of means, including minutes, public recording of meetings, 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 Council for review and comment. The process of adopting the Master Plan will not proceed further unless the City Council approves the distribution of the proposed plan.

The City Council will act on the proposed plan during a public meeting held in accordance with the [Open Meetings Act](#) (PA 267 of 1976). The City Council will decide on the approval of the distribution of the proposed plan to local governments and agencies for review and comments. If the City Council approves the distribution of the proposed plan, the City will transmit, in the manner provided by the State enabling law, a copy of the proposed plan to all of the units listed in the State enabling law for review and comment. 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.

Before approving the proposed Master Plan, the Planning Commission will hold not less than one public hearing on the proposed plan. The hearing will be held after the expiration of the deadline for comment. The City Clerk will give notice of the time and place of the public hearing not less than 15 days before the hearing by publication in the Iosco County News-Herald. The City Clerk will also submit notice of the public hearing to the entities that received initial communication.

The proposed plan must be approved by resolution of the Planning Commission. A statement recording the Planning Commission's approval of the plan, signed by the chairperson and/or secretary of the Planning Commission, will 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 will submit a copy of the plan to the City Council.

Approval of the proposed plan by the Planning Commission is the final step for adoption of the plan, unless the City Council 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 Council will approve or reject the proposed plan. A statement recording the City Council's approval of the Master Plan, signed by the City Clerk, will be included on the inside of the front or back cover of the Master Plan if the City Council takes action on the Plan. After the adoption of the Master Plan, the City of Tawas City will publish and distribute copies of the Master Plan to stakeholders as required by State law. In addition, the City will use public participation methods listed in [Public Involvement Strategies](#) in this document to inform the public of the availability of the Master Plan.

Zoning Ordinance Adoption or Amendment

The Planning Commission may of its own motion, or will upon petition for a Zoning Amendment, prepare an ordinance amending or changing the district boundaries or district regulations. In most cases, applications for amendment are due 45 days before the next meeting of the Planning Commission in order to meet the public hearing notice requirements. The ordinance will be noticed in the [Iosco County News-Herald](#) at least 15 days prior to the hearing.

Prior to submitting its recommendation to the City Council, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing. After the public hearing, the Planning Commission will forward its recommendation to City Council. The City Council will act to adopt or reject the amendment.

Following adoption of the ordinance to amend, supplement, or change the district boundaries or the district regulations, the ordinance will be filed with the City Clerk, and a notice of the ordinance adoption will be published in the [Iosco County News-Herald](#) within 15 days after adoption.

Site Plan Review | Special Use Review | Zoning Board of Appeals Request

The public is given the opportunity to voice their opinions, support, or concerns during the site plan review, special land use, or Zoning Board of Appeals process. Site plan review is conducted during a regular (or special) meeting of the Planning Commission without a public hearing. Special use review or Zoning Board of Appeals review is conducted during a public hearing which is noticed according to State law. Flowcharts depicting the review processes are included with this document and are available on the City's [website](#).

DDA Plan and Projects

The public is given the opportunity to review projects that are the responsibility of the DDA. The DDA uses a variety of methods discussed in the [Public Involvement Strategies](#) section of this document to inform the public and gather comments.

UPDATING THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Like all documents, the City of Tawas City understands that the Public Participation Plan will need to be reviewed and updated on a routine basis. This plan will be updated as needed, at a minimum of every five (5) 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. At least one public hearing will be held during the process to gather community input and to generate new ideas.