



Public Participation Plan

MAY 1, 2022



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Introduction

Spring Lake is a Village that places an emphasis on the wants and needs of the community at large. To ensure that the people of this community have a voice in the planning and development processes of new projects, the Village of Spring Lake has implemented this Public Participation Plan, which has been approved by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities Program for future use by all staff members and public officials. The following goals have been formulated to increase the number of ways that members of the community may receive information and shape future developments.

- **The Village of Spring Lake encourages public participation in the drafting of each phase of the master plan.** Throughout the process of creating a master plan, the Village of Spring Lake will continue its current methods for fostering public participation, while actively seeking new and effective ways for more stakeholders to become involved. The master plan is an important policy that sets the course for the future of the community, so involving important stakeholders early on in the process will allow for a more satisfied populous in regard to the direction of future land-use projects.
- **The Village of Spring Lake will work to increase representation from all stakeholders and residents within the community.** Spring Lake Village is a vibrant lakeside community with residents, business owners, and visitors all contributing to the unique culture of the region. To ensure that a diverse range of perspectives are heard during each phase of the development process, the Village will continue to provide a variety of methods for community engagement while also facilitating dialogue between public officials and stakeholders.
- **The Village of Spring Lake will employ effective practices for distributing information and receiving feedback.** In order for municipal processes to remain transparent to the public, providing effective avenues for communication with members of the community is imperative. The Village understands that there is not a universal platform for communication that will translate to all situations, so it is important for Spring Lake to continue to utilize a variety of methods in order to expand their outreach to all members of the community.
- **The Village of Spring Lake will provide educational materials for decision makers and stakeholders.** In order to create useful and sustainable developments, decision makers must have a working knowledge of land-use issues and processes. Public participation also becomes more effective if residents have this same working knowledge of land-use. Spring Lake will aim to continue to provide educational resources to the public and appointed officials so that these stakeholders can have an impact on the decision making process, and have the confidence to be able to participate.



- **The Village of Spring Lake will continue to seek new methods for community engagement.** In a rapidly changing world with new advancements in technology and communication, it is important for the Village to stay up-to-date with new innovations. Spring Lake should continue to look to adopt new methods of communication in order to continue engaging the public in the future.
- **The Village of Spring Lake will maintain records of public engagement and report results back to the public in a timely manner.** To maintain transparency in each planning process, Spring Lake will work towards recording public comments, and will subsequently track the methods used to address these comments. This information will be relayed back to the public once it has been recorded. By recording and tracking the comments and methods used, the people of Spring Lake will be able to see that their ideas have been taken into account during the planning process, and the Village will be able to use the recorded information to better evaluate their own methods and processes in the future.

State Regulations on Public Participation

Along with this public participation plan, the Village of Spring Lake also follows a list of state regulations that have been implemented to help ensure government transparency, as well as opportunities for citizens to participate in governmental processes. These regulations include:

- The Spring Lake Village Charter
- The Spring Lake Village Code of Ordinances
- Home Rule Village Act (PA 278 of 1909)
- The Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976)
- The Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008)
- Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act (PA 381 of 1996)
- Downtown Development Authority Act (PA 197 of 1975)
- The Commercial Rehabilitation Districts Act (known as the Commercial Facilities Exemption) (PA 255 of 1978)
- The New Personal Property Exemption Act (PA 328 of 1998)
- Freedom of Information Act
- Other relevant local and State legislation



Stakeholders:

What is a stakeholder?

When planning to incorporate public participation into a community, it is important to identify key groups that have the power and resources to be able to reach more people than the Village's administration can on its own. These groups are an integral part of the community, and often advocate for under-represented populations in the Village. During each planning process, these groups will be notified and included in order to receive their input. Some examples of these key stakeholders include:

The following is a list of stake holders that are essential to Spring Lake

- The Grand Haven/Spring Lake/Ferrysburg Chamber of Commerce
- Local business owners
- The Spring Lake Downtown Development Authority
- Neighborhood groups and authorities
- Neighboring communities (Grand Haven, Ferrysburg, Spring Lake Township, Grand Haven Township)
- Potential investors and donors
- Public employees
- Real estate professionals
- Churches and religious groups
- Senior groups
- Schools
- Students
- Young professionals
- Social Organizations (Rotary, Lions, etc.)
- Civic boards and commissions
- Hospitals and medical clinics
- Visitors and tourists
- Local residents
- Local nonprofit groups and foundations
- Local Media Groups (WZZM-13, Grand Haven Tribune, etc.)
- Boat Slip Renters (Tanglefoot Park)
- Harbor Transit
- Local Homeowner Associations



Transparency and Accountability. How we share information:

The Village of Spring Lake practices a variety of methods in order to inform and receive feedback from the community. The Village will use more than one method for each project in order to further participation. The following are the current methods being used by the Village of Spring Lake. These methods are constantly being updated or removed if proven ineffective. New methods will be added in time as the administration finds more successful ones.

Inform

- The Grand Haven Tribune: This is the local area (daily) newspaper.
- The Village of Spring Lake Website www.springlakevillage.org: The website posts all civic meeting times and dates and meeting minutes for all civic meetings. The website also provides all public documents (Village charter, code of ordinances, master plan, etc.) and applications to join a local board or commission. Contact information for all municipal workers is also listed.
- Digital Reader Board: Located at the prime intersection of M-104 (W. Savidge) and Division Street. This board can be changed as frequently as is necessary, from the convenience of Village Hall.
- Press Releases: Spring Lake distributes short news releases to a variety of media outlets around the greater Spring Lake area. These releases are published in newspapers and websites.
- 103.5 WAWL: This radio station makes announcements on behalf of the Village.
- Printed Fliers: The Village of Spring Lake utilizes select bulletin boards located in various public buildings to post fliers announcing upcoming events and meetings.
- Social Media: Spring Lake Facebook and Instagram accounts are used to highlight upcoming events and meetings.
- Crosswinds Newsletter: This newsletter is published on the back of every water bill (quarterly) and in a longer (6-8 page) format every June.
- Bulletin Board: Located in the lobby of Village Hall, residents must walk by this board in order to enter the facility.

Receive

- Surveys: Printed and online surveys are used by the Village to collect feedback from residents through data and comments.
- Public Hearings: Meetings that give residents an opportunity to provide feedback to the Village on various events and projects.
- Open Houses: These events are held for members of the community to view and receive more information on upcoming projects, while also having opportunities to articulate their opinions to public officials.
- Council, Boards, and Commissions meetings: These civic meetings usually give at least two opportunities for members of the community to voice their concerns and bring unheard issues to the attention of these government bodies.
- Social Media: Village Facebook and Instagram pages.
- Workshops: These presentations are scheduled to help educate community members on a certain topic pertaining to Spring Lake, such as interpreting the Village's budget. These workshops also provide a great opportunity for community members to ask questions and state opinions on the processes and projects that pertain to the subject.



- Charrettes: These events are held to give community members multiple chances to give feedback and influence the direction of a project between each phase of its planning process.

Communication Toolbox (Strategies for Outreach):

Venues and Engagement Efforts						
	Master Plan	Zoning Amendments	Environmental Projects	CIP planning	Parks and Recreation Planning	Major Development
Preapplication meetings	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Required
Surveys	Optional	Optional	Recommended	Optional	Optional	Recommended
Open House meetings	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Required
Charrettes	Optional	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended
Walking Tours	Optional	Optional	Recommended	Optional	Recommended	Recommended
1:1 Interviews	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional
Focus Groups	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Recommended
Local events	Optional	Optional	Recommended	Optional	Recommended	Recommended
News, Media	Optional	Optional	Recommended	Recommended	Optional	Recommended
Public Hearing	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required	Optional

Recommended
Optional
Required

Basic Outreach

The following methods are often used to advertise public meetings. Many times, this does not result in involvement of all stakeholders, especially those with visual impairments, non-English speakers, the



illiterate, youth, citizens with limited mobility and those who work during the time of the public meeting.

- Newspaper posting
- Website posting
- Flier posting (community hall, churches, workplaces, community centers, social clubs, local coffee shops)
- Announcements at council meeting
- Post card mailings
- Attachments to water bills
- Local cable notification
- Braille postings (accommodate ADA requirements)
- Nixle (Notification System which residents voluntarily register for)
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)

Proactive Outreach

The following are some example public participation methods that are less reactive and more focused on education and collaborative visioning. *Grand Haven Staff Will consider these outreach methods on a case-by-case basis:*

Surveys:

Surveys are useful for identifying specific areas of interest or concentration from a broad scope of ideas or issues. These areas of interest can then be further explored using other methods like the ones outlined below. A community may use a survey to identify where to start in the planning process, or the general climate surrounding a topic. Surveys can be useful to get a general idea of something, but should not be used as the sole method of public input. It is helpful for a municipality to administer surveys with partners. For example, schools can send surveys home with children, churches can have them available to fill out and neighborhood groups can put them in mail boxes. As with most public input efforts, it is best to vary the delivery method (mailed, handed out, electronic) and include bilingual language if applicable in your community.

One-on-one interviews:

Interviews are a great way to get specifics on a topic. In the stakeholder section of the strategy, specific community leaders may have been identified, making them ideal candidates for an interview. Some communities have individuals that are very vocal about issues in the community. Interviewing them may give some perspective on how to address their concerns. It is important to remember that one interview reflects the opinion of one individual and should not be considered the standing of the entire community.

Standing committees:

These are focus groups that repeatedly meet and will differ depending on the needs of a community. They are perfect for concerned residents, underrepresented groups, or groups that may have specific needs in a community, such as students or seniors. This is an opportunity for a municipality to draw from the expertise of residents, perhaps organizing a standing committee of real estate professionals, business owners and brokers to offer feedback.

**Social Media Outreach:**

Social media allows the Village to communicate with the residents immediately. This is useful to get quick information out and receive instant feedback. By sharing the post in different online community groups, this will help gauge the opinion of the community and adjust as needed.

Email Outreach:

The Village of Spring Lake sends out a weekly newsletter to over 400 of our residents. This allows us to communicate a message quickly. By creating a call-to-action in the newsletter regarding public outreach, this allows the Village to receive quick feedback.

Annual review of Public Participation Strategy

This document is intended to be a living document that can adapt to changes in technology and best meet the needs of residents. Therefore, this strategy is reviewed annually, and ***public engagement activities will be reported via the annual planning commission report.*** Methods that have failed will not be removed but will be reviewed and documented so that the same mistakes will not be made in the future. The results will identify strengths and weaknesses and allow staff to maximize outreach methods. This feedback loop will create a continuous review process that enables officials to make improvements to strategy.

At each communication event, a community event satisfaction survey will be distributed to all attendees. The survey asks questions regarding the individual's reason for attending, as well as their overall satisfaction with the event. The attendee will also be asked how they were informed of the event, whether or not the location or timing of the event were convenient, and whether or not they would make any changes or improvements to the experience. These surveys will be collected after the event for review by a Village staff member. Surveys will then be taken into account when planning the next similar event.

After a civic project, meeting, or event has been completed, an internal public participation survey will be distributed to, and completed by Village staff members who were involved in the planning process. The survey asks the staff members how the event was advertised, where it took place, how the public was able to get involved, how many people were in attendance, whether or not more under-represented populations could have been included, and how the event could be improved in the future. By recording these surveys shortly after a public forum, staff members are able to reflect on the effectiveness of the meeting, and use this information as a reference for future plans.



Inclusivity:

The Village of Spring Lake is committed to being inclusive when it comes to public outreach and making sure all voices are heard. Some practices Grand Haven will continue to work on are:

Involve all generations:

Vibrant communities are places where young people and older adults are included in all aspects of community life. That includes being involved in making the changes they want to see in their community.

Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y	Millennial	Generation Z
Local radio	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook	Facebook
Local news (TV)	Instagram	Instagram	Instagram	Instagram
Facebook	YouTube	YouTube	Twitter	Twitter
Mailing	Mailing	Mailing	Email	Online news
Flyers	Email	Email	Online news	Email
	Online news	Online news	Text notifications	Text notifications

Ensure diversity

People of all income levels share the benefits of safe, affordable, accessible housing and transportation options. People of all ethnicities, races and cultures share the benefits of accessible, inviting parks and green spaces. People of all gender identifications and sexual orientations enjoy the benefits to health and well-being of having access to quality health services and community supports. When people don't know about community projects or when they don't feel welcome, they likely won't benefit. If people who are traditionally excluded from community involvement are involved with the effort—especially the implementation effort—it will encourage other members of often excluded communities to participate in the work.

In closing, the Village of Spring Lake has created this plan to emphasize the importance of involving the public during a development process, as well as outlining the best methods to engage these community members. Staff members of the Village of Spring Lake, along with elected and appointed officials, are committed to fulfilling this plan, and will continue to incorporate these methods into their ongoing and future projects. With the application of this plan, the result will consist of a model system that allows for any individual to become involved, a step towards a more efficient approval process, and a community effort that will be supported by both the public and its municipal administration.