



Public Participation Plan

Planning and Economic Development Department

January 2020

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The City of Rochester Hills believes that public input in planning and policy development processes is crucial to building consensus and buy-in from community stakeholders. The city seeks to engage the community and allow public input to inform planning and policy outcomes in a clear and consistent manner. With the diversity of communication tools available today, the city recognizes that there is no one way of communicating, and Rochester Hills has identified methods that make sense for this community today with its eye on expanding into new venues as they become more readily available. Creating a culture of collaborative visioning enriches democracy by allowing citizens to voice their ideas, not just their complaints. Public participation, when properly executed, builds community consensus and strengthens sense of place. However, the public may become less inclined to participate if people do not believe their input is being acted upon by the city government.

The Rochester Hills Public Participation Plan is based upon a set of objectives intended to guide city staff and elected/appointed official's actions as they move through the planning and policy process:

- **Involve all residents.** The City of Rochester Hills is an increasingly more diverse community and several approaches are needed to give everyone a voice.
- **Utilize effective and equitable engagement tools.** There are many techniques and tools available to ensure that a diverse public is well-informed and able to play a role in the planning process. Recognizing that no single technique or approach will work in all cases, it is up to the city staff and officials to consider the special communication needs of the public and use the best approaches to accomplish this objective. The city is committed to seeking new and innovative ways to engage and keep the public involved throughout the process.
- **Educate the community.** Effective participation in the decision-making process requires an understanding of land-use issues and the framework for making local investment decisions. Ensure that planning-related background information is easy to find and easy to understand. Planning professionals and officials should use visualization techniques that optimize public understanding of issues and concepts as often as possible. Visualization techniques can be especially helpful with specific sites or areas of re-development.
- **Develop and maintain staff expertise to inform and support participation.** City staff understand the composition of the community and cultivate expertise within city hall that results in an open and welcoming environment. Staff is encouraged to convey issues and information in meaningful ways to various cultural groups as well as ensure equitable representation for all segments of the population and sectors of the economy.
- **Provide a transparent record of public engagement.** To properly capture the concerns, priorities and vision of the public, city staff will develop a system to track the various techniques and mechanisms of public input. To maintain transparency and consistency, Rochester Hills will share results of public participation efforts with the public.

Any third party consultants hired by the city for assistance with any of the items noted in this plan will be required to adhere to the public participation strategies identified herein.

STATE REGULATIONS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Along with the desire to include input from its diverse community, the City of Rochester Hills complies with all state statutes that guide its participation activities. All Rochester Hills boards, commissions, and the City Council adhere to all laws of the State of Michigan that outline public participation requirements. These laws set forth a minimum standard that the City seeks to exceed in each area for which they are applicable.

Michigan Open Meetings Act

In accordance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976), all meetings of those bodies that have a governmental function (e.g., City Council, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, etc.) will hold meetings in the City Hall building located at 1000 Rochester Hills Drive, Rochester Hills, MI 48309, which is accessible to the general public. The following notice requirements will apply:

Meeting Type	Notice Type/Information	Timeline for Notice
Regular council, board and commission meetings	A list stating the dates, times and places of all such regular meetings	Within 10 days after the first meeting of a public body in each calendar or fiscal year
Change in regular council, board and commission schedule		Within three days after the meeting at which the schedule was changed
Special council, board or commission meetings		At least 18 hours before the meeting
A regular meeting of a public body which is recessed for more than 36 hours		At least 18 hours before the meeting reconvenes
Emergency sessions	No notice required 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	

Any citizen can request that public bodies put them on a mailing list so that they are notified in advance of all meetings by contacting the City Clerk at (248) 656.4630 or at clerksoffice@rochesterhills.org. Additionally, citizens can stay up-to-date by subscribing to the applicable City department's 'notify me' service which can be accessed via the envelope icon  on each department's homepage.

Michigan Planning Enabling Act

In accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008) the following process applies for Master Plans and amendments:

1. **Intent to Plan.** Parties will be notified via first class mail, personal delivery or electronic mail by the Rochester Hills Planning Commission of the intent to plan and request the recipient's cooperation and comment:
 - Oakland County Planning & Economic Development Division
 - Southeast Michigan Council of Governments
 - Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART)
 - Road Commission of Oakland County
 - Cities of Auburn Hills, Troy, and Rochester
 - Townships of Shelby and Oakland
 - Macomb County Planning & Economic Development

2. **Review draft plan.** After a draft master plan has been submitted to the legislative body for review and approval for distribution, the draft plan will be submitted to the previously listed entities for review. The transmittal may be done electronically (if described as such in the notice of intent to plan). The period for review is no less than 63 days for a new master plan and no less than 42 days for an amendment to the plan.

3. **Public hearing.** The Rochester Hills Planning Commission will hold at least one public hearing on the proposed master plan.

- 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 as identified above.
- After the adoption of the master plan, a Planning Commission may publish and distribute copies of the master plan or of any report, and employ other means of publicity and education.

Michigan Zoning Enabling Act

Zoning Amendments. In accordance with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006) the following process applies for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance:

1. Planning Commission sets a public hearing
2. Notice of Public Hearing for **text amendments** must appear in paper of general circulation **not less than 15 days before the public hearing date**. Notice includes
 - a. Short summary of amendment(s)
 - b. Zoning Ordinance citation
 - c. Date and location of public hearing
 - d. Date and location for written comments
 - e. Time and location where proposed amendment(s) are available for public review
3. Notice of Public Hearing for **map amendments** that include less than 11 adjacent properties (note: notice is not required to be given to the following when the proposed map amendment includes 11 adjacent properties or more):
 - a. Notice shall be given to the following, **no less than 15 days before the public hearing** (personally delivered or deposited within normal business hours for delivery with the USPS or other delivery service):
 - i. Owners of property that is the subject of the request
 - ii. All persons to whom real property is assessed within 300 feet of the property that is the subject of the request
 - iii. Occupants of all structures within 300 feet of the subject property regardless of whether the property or structure is located in the zoning jurisdiction
 - iv. If a structure contains more than 1 dwelling unit or spatial area owned or leased by different persons, each owner and occupant shall be given notice (if name of occupant is not known, "occupant" is sufficient).
 - v. If a single structure contains more than 4 dwelling units or other distinct spatial areas owned or leased by different persons, notice may be given to the manager or owner of the structure, who shall be requested to post the notice at the primary entrance to the structure.
 - b. The notice shall:
 - i. Describe the nature of the request
 - ii. Indicate the property that is the subject of the request
 1. List all existing street addresses within the property (addresses do not need to be created and listed if they do not exist)

2. If no street addresses, other means of identification may be used.
- iii. State when and where the request will be considered
- iv. Indicate when and where written comments will be received
4. Notice of public hearings for text and map amendments shall be given, as described in 3a. above, to utilities (electric, gas, pipeline, telecommunication service providers), railroad operating within the district or zone affected, and airport manager of each airport, that registers its name and mailing address with the clerk for the purpose of receiving public hearing notices.
5. Public hearing at the Planning Commission, which will either recommend approval or denial of the proposed amendment(s) to the City Council or continue the hearing to a date certain (if public hearing is to remain open).
6. Proposed amendment(s) are presented to the City Council for their consideration.
7. If approved, a Notice of Adoption must be **published within 15 days of the adoption**. This notice contains:
 - a. Zoning Ordinance number
 - b. Short description of the amendment(s)
 - c. Effective date
 - d. Time and location where the adopted amendment(s) may be purchased and/or inspected

Conditional Uses, Planned Unit Developments, and other Development Reviews that require Public Hearings. In accordance with the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (PA 110 of 2006) the following process applies to conditional uses, PUD's, and other public hearings:

Notice of Public Hearing. The notice shall indicate that a public hearing on the conditional use request may be requested by any property owner or the occupant of any structure located within 300 feet of the property being considered for a conditional land use regardless of whether the property or occupant is located in the zoning jurisdiction. Notices shall be prepared in accordance with items 1-3, above.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The Public Participation Plan identifies important groups that can assist and enhance the public participation process, as well as identify groups that are not often at the visioning table. The City expects this list to grow as more groups and individuals are engaged in the process. The following have been identified as key stakeholders:

- City Boards and Commissions
- Residents/Homeowners Associations (current list available through the Building Department)
- Business owners
- Major local employers (current list available through the Planning and Economic Development Department)
- Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Rochester Community Schools and Avondale School District
- Oakland University and Rochester University
- Rochester Hills community groups and civic/social organizations
- Area places of worship
- Rochester Older Persons Commission (OPC)
- Rochester Hills employees
- Local real estate professionals
- Potential investors
- Adjacent municipalities
- County, Regional, and State elected officials

THE COMMUNICATION TOOLBOX

The City of Rochester Hills utilizes standard methods of announcing public meetings and other planning and community events. However, because these methods do not yield a consistent level of public participation, the city runs the risk of losing the involvement of identified key stakeholders. Therefore, the city has identified other tools that may be used to reach a broader audience. The method lists below are not meant to be exhaustive and may be updated as needed. Additionally, the methods applied from each tier will be project/situation specific.

Tier One: Basic methods for notice

Basic methods for notice will be utilized when advising the public of routine planning activities:

- Website posting at www.RochesterHills.org
- [Calendar](#) (Website)
- [Subscribe to Notifications](#)
- Newspaper posting in the [Rochester and Rochester Hills Gazette](#).
- Announcements at televised City Council meeting
- Individual Mailings (specific to radius surrounding public hearing locations)

Tier Two: Enhanced methods for notice

Enhanced methods for notice will be used when trying to reach out to the community and ask for input on a broad range of planning, ordinance, and policy issues. These methods may require additional resources compared to the Tier One approaches. Deadlines and contact information will be added as this plan is refined and updated:

- Community Workshops: Community workshops are great opportunities to present information and solicit opinions and ideas from the public at large. The nature of workshops will vary and depend on the project being proposed. Some may entail a presentation by staff, including exhibits and maps, while other staff or officials may facilitate discussion at different workstations.
- Social Networking ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#))
- [Hills Herald Newsletter](#) (produced quarterly)
- [Rochester Hills TV](#) (Wow! Channel 10; Comcast Channel 20; AT&T Channel 99)
- Media Notification/ Press Release (Print, News Radio, Television, Blogs)
- Newspaper Paid Posting
- Individual Mailings (beyond what's required)
- City operated Electronic Message Signs
- Attachments to water bills (available on bimonthly basis)
- Flier posting at City Hall

Tier Three: Active engagement methods for notice

Active methods for notice will be used when trying to engage the community and ask for input on long-range planning and land policy issues. These approaches will typically be utilized for master plans and significant land use policy issues, as well as major community events. These methods will require more resources than the first two tiers. Deadlines and contact information will be added as this plan is refined and updated. This may include one or more of the following:

- Charrettes: A charrette is an intensive collaborative planning process that typically is held over a two- to three-day period. It is used to develop and test concepts and designs in specific areas of a community. In a charrette, professionals provide design and strategic input while community members provide local information, feedback, and critique.

- **Crowdsourcing:** Crowdsourcing uses the internet and social media platforms to solicit input on specific planning concepts and approaches.
- **Focus Groups:** Focus group meetings provide opportunities for stakeholders to provide input as well as to allow ideas and concepts to be tested.
- **One-on-One Interviews:** Interviews may be conducted in a one-on-one approach to gather specific input regarding planning topics. Interviews may be useful when soliciting input from someone directly impacted by planning activities or by someone with expertise in a certain area.

STRATEGIES FOR OUTREACH

The Public Participation Plan allows Rochester Hills to encourage and plan for public input, rather than simply reacting to it. Proactively engaging stakeholders fosters a sense of ownership and prevents delays caused by unforeseen issues. When developing public policy and planning events, the sooner the public is involved, the easier it will be for new ideas to be incorporated into the planning process. Each of these below listed items occur often throughout the year without a consistent method of notifying key stakeholders through the methods outlined in the communication tool box section of the Public Participation Plan .

The following guide illustrates the level of engagement applicable for the noted planning issues or activities. The level of notice may vary from issue to issue. This list will be refined as the Public Participation Plan is updated:

Planning Issues or Community Activities	Tier One	Tier Two	Tier Three
Master Plan Update	A	A	A
Zoning Ordinance Update	A	A	A
Corridor Improvement/Subarea Plans	A	A	A
Parks and Recreation Plan	A	A	A
Development Project/Site Plans	A	S	
Public Hearings	A	S	
Regular Meetings	A	S	
City Contests	A	S	
Special Meetings	A	S	
Positive Media Mentions, Awards/Honors	S	S	
A = Always S= Sometimes			

COMMUNICATING RESULTS

It should be made clear that the intention of this plan is not simply to gather input from Rochester Hills stakeholders, but rather to engage the public in a multi-directional conversation.

The final section of the Public Participation Plan focuses on communicating how public comment has influenced its target process. This demonstrates that the responses were heard, and creates an environment of transparency. Following are examples of ways to communicate public feedback.

- **Public Meetings:** All public meeting minutes are posted online after the minutes are approved. A hard copy of the minutes will be available in the Clerk’s office.
- **Surveys:** When utilized, surveys will vary by planning project. Generally, a summary of the results will be posted online. A hard copy of the results will be available in the Planning and Economic Development

Department.

- **Social networking:** Staff in the mayor's office are responsible for monitoring the municipal Facebook page(s) and will respond to planning related public posts no later than 48 hours after the post was made, as needed. The mayor's office will tweet on behalf of City of Rochester Hills concerning planning and community events.
- **Standing committees:** Meeting minutes will be taken by a recording secretary and posted online after the standing meeting occurs. A hard copy of the minutes will be available in the Clerk's office.
- **One-on-one interviews:** General information will be shared with the public, but names and specific details of participants will be kept confidential for the comfort of the participants unless requested otherwise.
- **Focus groups:** General information will be shared with the public, but names and specific details of participants will be kept confidential for the comfort of the participants unless requested otherwise.
- **Community workshops/Informational Meetings:** Notes and photographs will be taken during community workshops. These notes will be posted on a workshop specific webpage on the City's website. In addition, the results of these events will be communicated in a wrap up community meeting.