



Public Participation Plan

THE CITY OF KALAMAZOO



imagine
kalamazoo
2025

CONTENTS

I. Goals & Objectives	3
III. Key Stakeholders.....	4
IV. Public Participation Toolkit.....	5
Overview	
Internal Tools	
Outreach Strategies	
Engagement Tools	
V. Outreach.....	9
VI. Communicating Outcomes & Social Accountability	11
VII. Evaluation & Improvement.....	11
VIII. Conclusion.....	11
II. State Regulations	12
Open Meetings Act	
Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 OF 2008)	
IX. Appendices	14

Goals & Guiding Principles

Commitment to Public Participation

"Public Participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process."

- International Association of Public Participation, Core Values

Kalamazoo is a vibrant, diverse, and active community, and its Public Participation Plan must reflect this. The City of Kalamazoo recognizes the importance of prioritizing **meaningful engagement** with citizens in all decisions that affect their lives - across all departments, and throughout the lifetime of all policies, projects, and processes. Effective public participation is a means of building and strengthening relationships; it represents a commitment to honoring the public's contributions and, to the greatest extent possible, giving citizens influence over the decision-making process.

This document aims to create a clear, streamlined, and predictable public participation process. It serves as both an overarching visioning document and a "one-stop shop" for engagement standards, tools, and graphics. Effective community engagement requires a shared understanding between citizens and City staff. This Public Participation Plan is both a resource guide for the City and an overview of the engagement process for community members. This increases accountability on both ends – City staff have an agreed-upon path to follow, and the community has a standard to expect from the City.

With this commitment, we aim to:

Create a shared vision/future direction based on authentic community engagement (2014 Strategic Priority #3).

The development of a comprehensive public participation strategy sits at the core of all of the City's visioning efforts. Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 (IK 2025) was created to meaningfully engage our community in decisions that shape our collective future. IK 2025 refers to the process to develop a new Strategic Vision and Master Plan update; however, the City also envisions utilizing Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 as an approach to guide future public participation.

Ensure that City actions align with public participation input to the greatest extent possible. Community engagement cannot exist in a vacuum – the City has a duty to ensure that outreach is followed by action. Public participation input should directly inform City actions, and citizens should have influence over decisions that impact their lives.

Recognize public participation as integral to decision-making across all City departments. Engagement in public participation cannot, and shall not, be limited to any specific department—to be effective, City projects of all types must be informed by community voice. It is our aim that this Public Participation Plan, particularly in conjunction with Imagine Kalamazoo 2025, can inform decision-making processes across departments, serving as both a record of public participation successes and a resource for further developments.

Actively engage in public participation throughout the planning process. The City of Kalamazoo views public participation as integral to each phase of a project's development, from beginning planning stages to final implementation and maintenance. Consistent public participation efforts can also help to mitigate tensions that may arise in between the various stages of project development. Our Public Participation Plan outlines a variety of engagement tools that can be used throughout the lifetime of a project.

Support innovative and continuous development of public participation tools that support our diverse community. Public participation tools shall be suited to the community and its needs. The City of Kalamazoo recognizes that no single public participation technique or tool can effectively reach all members of our community – we are committed to the consistent development and re-evaluation of our models of engagement. Our Public Participation Plan holds innovation and creativity as key to successful outreach programs that serve and support all members of the Kalamazoo community.

Report back to the community and improve upon our Public Participation Plan. Successful public participation processes are transparent and cyclical, with the City continuously seeking feedback and improving on methods and policies. The City of Kalamazoo is dedicated to developing a system of social accountability to track outcomes and report back to the community.

Key Stakeholders

In the implementation of all projects, regardless of size or scope, the City of Kalamazoo recognizes the importance of conducting a stakeholder inventory to consider the intended audience, those likely to be most impacted in positive and/or negative ways, and those who are key groups/leaders involved in a particular topic or area. The following list is meant to serve as a starting reference for City staff as they consider their points of contact for a given project. Departments shall keep community contact lists, actively populating and updating these lists as contacts are made. These key stakeholders can offer important points of view throughout the planning process, and serve as vital resources and distribution aids. Key stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Community organizations
- Economic development-oriented organizations
- Entrepreneurs
- Major employers
- Residents
- Neighborhood associations/points of contact
- Neighboring municipalities
- Potential investors
- Public employees
- Real estate professionals
- Religious groups
- Senior groups
- Social services organizations
- Students (K-12, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Western Michigan University)
- Transportation- and corridor-oriented organizations
- Young professionals

Public Participation Tools & Strategies

Overview

The City of Kalamazoo utilizes a diverse range of engagement methods and internal procedures. Though the following list is extensive, it is not exhaustive – we strive for continuous innovation, making use of tools ranging from traditional announcements to newly-developed online platforms. A separate Public Participation Toolkit (see Appendix B) provides a comprehensive "how-to" guide to the proper choice and implementation of engagement tools. Both this document and the Toolkit are designed to be used across departments and throughout the development and lifetime of projects, regardless of size or scope.

A key aim of the Public Participation Plan is to identify and engage groups that are traditionally underrepresented in community outreach efforts. We believe that effective public participation must include people of all races / ethnicities, gender identities, economic statuses, sexual orientations, and ages. Geographic diversity is equally important; each of Kalamazoo's neighborhoods has distinct characteristics and a shared sense of community. Each can contribute a unique point of view to City discussions. We believe that it is important for our Public Participation Toolkit to include methods that can reach residents from all of these neighborhoods – as well as the many non-residents who come to Kalamazoo for work, school, worship, entertainment, and socialization.

In order to accomplish these goals, our public participation strategy incorporates methods that facilitate strong relationships and honest conversations within neighborhoods and existing community spaces, as well as with traditionally underrepresented groups. This includes the utilization of existing community-organized meetings and privacy-sensitive tools like living walls, with a priority on repetitive contact and person-to-person outreach. The City has also made efforts to make materials and meetings accessible to all people; this includes producing materials/ conducting meetings in Spanish and American Sign Language.

Imagine Kalamazoo

Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 (IK 2025) is a comprehensive community visioning initiative that has informed the Strategic Vision and Master Plan update. IK 2025 served as a unifying public participation strategy to be used across City departments. From fall of 2015 through summer of 2017, IK 2025 made 3,802 points of contact through innovative and community-focused engagement methods.

There are 6 phases to IK 2025:

- Imagine It, a broad data-gathering phase to identify key strategic vision themes.
- Plan It, in which specific community desires relating to the strategic vision themes are identified.
- Design It, a phase focused on the evaluation and categorization of goals and the exploration of potential resources, partnerships, and actionable work plans.
- Discuss It, an internal evaluation of actionable items for policy, program, and project timelines.

- Draft It, the presentation of the Strategic Vision and Master Plan to the community for additional input and clarifications. IK 2025 will continue to shape plans over the next years.
- Adopt It, a phase where public meetings will be held to inform the public about the document/plan/strategy.

More information about IK 2025 can be found at www.imaginekalamazoo.com.

Procedures

The following procedures guide City of Kalamazoo staff in determining the appropriate public participation strategy for any and all initiatives. Engagement is not one-size-fits-all; careful consideration is necessary in order to achieve maximum positive impact. Illustrations of these procedures can be found in Appendix A.

Public Participation Decision Tree. The Public Participation Decision Tree is a tool designed to guide City staff towards a given project's most appropriate depth of engagement: internal, inform, consult, collaborate, or co-lead/empower. The chart allows City staff to consider both the benefits and drawbacks of various levels of engagement, encouraging transparency and collaboration while making responsible use of City resources. The City of Kalamazoo's full Public Participation Toolkit Matrix is categorized by these engagement depth markers, making it easy to identify appropriate participation strategies.

Impact Scale Grid. The Impact Scale Grid is a categorization tool that considers how the size and scope of a particular project might inform the type and depth of engagement that should be pursued. This grid is particularly important given the City's dedication to utilizing public participation tools in the implementation of projects of all types, from high-impact, large-geography efforts like Master Plan updates to low-impact, small-geography efforts like minor street improvements. These categorizations are helpful when considering the reach of a project and what public participation tools might be most effective. For example, Type I (low-impact, small-geography) and Type II (low-impact, large-geography) projects require 1-way, informative participation, while Type III (high-impact, small-geography) and Type IV (high-impact, large-geography) require 2-way consulting, collaboration, and or/co-leadership. Ultimately, a higher impact level must correspond to an increase in stakeholder involvement.

Community Engagement Spectrum. The timeline of a project's public participation strategy must be considered along with its depth and breadth. The Community Engagement Spectrum is a tool for visualizing the life cycle of a public participation plan – and the changes that must be made to that plan as a project progresses. Though it is necessary for the depth of community engagement to lessen as a project progresses, continuous public participation efforts are nonetheless vital. This chart is helpful in creating a public participation timeline for a given project.

Community-Focused Outreach

When developing public participation strategies, the **where** is just as important as the **what**. In order to achieve meaningful engagement with a broad range of the Kalamazoo community, the City of Kalamazoo must build trust and meet residents where they are. We believe in prioritizing outreach at existing community-organized meetings and events when possible. This does not mean that the bulk of event organization should be put on outside organizations, but rather that the City should make public participation easier on residents by taking advantage of

existing events and partnerships. This includes City staff attendance of a wide range of gatherings, from citywide festivals and events like Art Hop to small, issue-focused meetings hosted by community organizations. Engagement at these events can utilize a variety of other public participation tools, including living walls, surveys, and workgroup discussions.

Meetings organized by City departments also represent opportunities to thoughtfully engage community members. Town halls, neighborhood meetings, and focus groups are meeting types that can facilitate community participation by making engagement interactive, allowing activities to be better tailored to the potential attendees, and reducing travel distances. Successful meetings of any type require significant planning and outreach to ensure attendance. For this reason, community partnerships are vital – neighborhood associations, community organizations, schools, and religious institutions can all assist with outreach. Partnership within the City is also important – communication between departments is key to prevent redundancy and meeting fatigue.

If used effectively, community-focused outreach can be wide-reaching and inclusive; it presents an opportunity to connect with community members who may not be aware of City initiatives or who may not have the ability to attend City-wide meetings. Similarly, it illustrates the City's willingness to reach out and engage directly with community members. This public participation method has long-term benefits, as it encourages relationship-building between the City and the community.

Engagement Tools

Announcements. The City of Kalamazoo has experience with an extensive range of public participation tools, and is constantly seeking out new and innovative methods. The following list expands upon a selection of particularly common and/or valuable tools; for the full Public Participation Toolkit, please see Appendix B.

The City of Kalamazoo uses a variety of basic announcement formats for one-way communications and advertisement of meetings and events. This includes the use of newspaper and website postings, flyers, neighborhood newsletters, press releases, social media posts, television and radio announcements, mailings, and attachments to utility bills. When relevant, community organizations and other partners shall be utilized as a key resource for announcement distribution. Neighborhood-specific resources, such as Little Free Libraries, can also be useful points of contact.

Survey. Surveys can provide in-depth and topic-specific input from a wide range of individuals. They are particularly useful data-gathering tools during the early planning stages of a project. In addition to being delivered by mail or telephone, it is increasingly easy for surveys to be conducted using computers and online technology; this includes email surveys, social media surveys, and surveys completed in-person on a tablet or computer. The City of Kalamazoo Community Planning & Development Department successfully utilized surveys during the "Imagine It!," "Plan It!," and "Design It!" phases of Imagine Kalamazoo 2025, both as a standalone public participation tool and as a companion tool to living walls for participants who wanted to give more detailed feedback.

University Partnerships. Kalamazoo is fortunate to be home to three strong institutions of higher learning: Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo College, and Kalamazoo Valley Community College. Because of this, the City is uniquely positioned to take advantage of university partnerships as a public participation tool. Such efforts can

include City presentations at university events, joint research opportunities, and town hall meetings on university campuses.

In the winter of 2016, the Community Planning & Development Department undertook a collaborative project with the Kalamazoo College "Social Research for Social Change" class. In this, students who were studying applications of action research worked to pilot public participation models for the City and refine the language of the definitions produced by the initial Priority-Based Budgeting process. This successful undertaking expanded the network of involved participants, spawned the development of new and creative models of community engagement, such as living walls, and created an environment of mutual benefit for City staff and College students/faculty.

Living Wall. A living wall is a flexible and interactive tool, consisting of a large poster on which community participants can write or draw out their responses to a given prompt. These posters can be used as an engagement exercise during meetings or events, or displayed in public spaces for a longer period of time. This instrument can be used with or without an in-person facilitator and is intuitive, adaptable, and transparent. The City of Kalamazoo has successfully utilized living walls in a variety of settings including large events (Art Hop), small group dialogues (neighborhood meetings, workgroups), community organization buildings (YWCA, religious institutions), and public spaces (libraries, coffee shops, farmers' markets).

Living walls are useful instruments, both for gaining insight into public concerns and for creating a physical space for discussion and collaboration between community members. Unlike in a traditional survey, the data submitted to living walls is visible to other participants, creating a unique sense of transparency and increased involvement in and ownership over the process. The posters serve as a community gathering space where participants can reflect on their own experiences as well as others' responses. This instrument is best suited for the initial planning and data-gathering phase of a project, as responses are more open-ended than in other public participation tools.

Meetings on the Go. Meetings on the Go are packets of information that serve as a guide for community members who are hosting their own meetings about a City initiative. They are ideal for use with community groups, clubs, neighborhood associations, or social groups, and are easily adaptable to various group sizes and types. The City of Kalamazoo successfully utilized Meetings on the Go during the "Imagine it!" phase of Imagine Kalamazoo 2025.

Like living walls, Meetings on the Go encourage a sense of community ownership over the planning process. Because City staff members are not needed to facilitate these meetings, they present an opportunity to gain in-depth insight from key stakeholders without requiring a great deal of City resources. They are also useful for engaging groups, such as privacy-sensitive community organizations, that may be hesitant to attend City-run meetings.

Open Town Hall. Open Town Hall is an online engagement platform that is accessible through the Imagine Kalamazoo website. Open Town Hall allows community members to participate in discussions even if they cannot attend an in-person meeting. Participants can choose to share their input publicly, and can view others' feedback in a variety of formats, including word clouds and maps. Open Town Hall allows City staff to gain insight from a wide variety of community members, and allows community members to read and learn from others' comments.

Vision Alignment

The work of the past informs the vision of the future. It is important for the City to honor prior and existing plans in shaping future plans and projects – this helps to ensure follow-through and honor past community input. Public participation is not merely project-by-project; every individual comment and goal helps to build a broader vision of Kalamazoo.

In order to achieve this goal, the City must have a clear structure for evaluating the ways in which different plans speak to one another. The 10:5:1 Vision Alignment framework was established at the onset of Imagine Kalamazoo 2025 to guide the process and shape future efforts. In this strategy, 10-year visioning documents guide 5-year plans and policies, while 5-year plans and policies identify and shape the 1-year actions necessary to implement Strategic Vision goals. When a substantial portion of the 5-year plans are complete, it will be time to look at the City's Strategic Vision and Master Plan to evaluate the direction that will guide City actions and allocations for the next ten years.

The Strategic Vision and the Master Plan are updated every 10 years. Plans updated every 5 years include the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Consolidated Plan, the City Fiscal Plan, the Capital Improvement Plan, the Parks and Recreation Plan, and the Transportation Improvement Plan. 1-year plans include the City Commission strategic calendar for work sessions, all board and commission calendars, the annual budget, and departmental and operations plans. All of these directional plans are supported by the public participation and priority-based budgeting processes.

Past & Existing Plans

Many different plans inform the work of the City of Kalamazoo. Public participation timelines and procedures for these plans are dependent on size and scope; the procedural tools described previously guide the action of City staff. Across the board, however, the City is dedicated to establishing a timeline to set expectations, implementing appropriate engagement tools, reporting out on meetings, and updating the public on progress.

All development plans require review by City staff. For plans that are low in controversy, approval may be completed administratively by staff. Depending on the nature of the project, it may be reviewed by the City Site Plan Review Committee. This would provide an opportunity for the neighborhood where the project is located to review and comment on it. Even if considered low in controversy, the project may still require a public review and approval process if a rezoning, variance, or historic review is needed.

A high-controversy development plan will likely require review and input from citizens, business owners, organizational leaders, and other interested entities. Proactive citizen notification and educational efforts will be conducted to help provide an understanding of the benefits of the project, and may eliminate or reduce controversy. Mailings, web site information, community/neighborhood meetings, use of the news media, and other methods will be utilized to keep citizens informed about the project and help prevent misinformation and misunderstanding. Public meetings will be used to disseminate information, answer questions, and help work through the issues of concern along with creating solutions.

Communicating Outcomes & Social Accountability

The City of Kalamazoo is dedicated to sharing public participation outcomes with the community in a timely and thorough manner. It is essential that participants are briefed on how their input shaped the decision-making process. This promotes transparency and community ownership over a given project, and also provides valuable information for residents who may not have had the chance to participate in initial project phases. Reporting outcomes and debriefing is also greatly beneficial for the City – with the benefit of hindsight, this is an opportunity to receive meaningful feedback on public participation efforts as a whole.

Every plan, policy, and project should include a clear strategy for communicating outcomes. Though it may change somewhat over the course of action, it is critical that this strategy is established up front; community members should be able to get a sense of where their feedback will go next and how it will be implemented into the final product. While it is important for the City to continually seek feedback from community members, public participation is effective only if this feedback is used in a productive way. City staff must be intentional when implementing public participation strategies for projects that have already been set in motion.

For all Master Plan projects, a timeline and current status report will be available on the IK website. In addition to traditional announcement methods, online public participation tools such as Facebook Live will be used to share key progress benchmarks with the public. Upon completion of a project, an appropriate celebration will be held (ribbon-cutting, posting of an Imagine Kalamazoo sign, social media post, newspaper announcement, etc.).

Evaluation & Improvement

Continuous evaluation and improvement are vital to the City of Kalamazoo's Public Participation Plan. This document is designed to serve as merely a starting reference; it will be reviewed annually and updated as needed, with recommendations from across City departments being taken into consideration. Additionally, the City of Kalamazoo values community input on public participation methods themselves – insight gained through surveys, letters/emails, and verbal feedback will all be incorporated into the Public Participation Plan.

The City of Kalamazoo recognizes the importance of both positive and negative critique of various models of engagement. We consider the trial of an unsuccessful public participation method to be not a failure, but rather an opportunity for growth. As such, our Public Participation Toolkit will only grow; potential downfalls of a given tool will be listed alongside its potential merits.

Conclusion

Successful public participation efforts can open doors, fostering clear and open communication between community members and the City. In recognizing this, the City of Kalamazoo strives to create a culture that prioritizes effective and innovative public participation for all projects, across all departments. It is our hope that this Public Participation Plan can serve as a constantly-evolving collaborative tool and record of public participation efforts.

State Regulations

In accordance with State of Michigan legislation, certain minimum requirements of public participation must be met. The City of Kalamazoo's Public Participation Plan not only abides by this legislation, but also strives to go above and beyond it, incorporating community voice in all projects across all departments. State legislation regarding public participation is detailed below:

Open Meetings Act

The Michigan Open Meetings Act was created to ensure government transparency and accountability to citizens. It requires certain meetings of public bodies to be open to the public, timely public notice of these meetings, and the keeping of minutes at these meetings.

The entirety of the act can be accessed through the State Department or at the following web address: <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-act-267-of-1976.pdf>

In accordance with PA 267 of 1976, the City of Kalamazoo will hold meetings in the City Hall building located at 241 West South Street, which is accessible to the public.

The public will be notified 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.

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.

Note: A regular meeting of a public body which is recessed for more than 35 hours can only be reconvened if a notice is posted 18 hours in advance.

Public bodies will 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.

Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 OF 2008)

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act serves to codify laws regarding county, city, and village planning.

The entirety of the act can be accessed through the State Department or at the following web address:

[http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(xj3g1jal1er4tq45ve4x5vuz\)\)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-act-33-of-2008.pdf](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(xj3g1jal1er4tq45ve4x5vuz))/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-act-33-of-2008.pdf)

In accordance with PA 33 of 2008, the necessary parties will be notified via first class mail, personal delivery or electronic mail a notice explaining the Planning Commission's intent to plan and requesting the recipient's cooperation and comment.

Before approving a proposed master plan, a Planning Commission will hold not fewer than one public hearing on the proposed master plan. The hearing will be held after the expiration of the deadline for comment as outlined in the act.

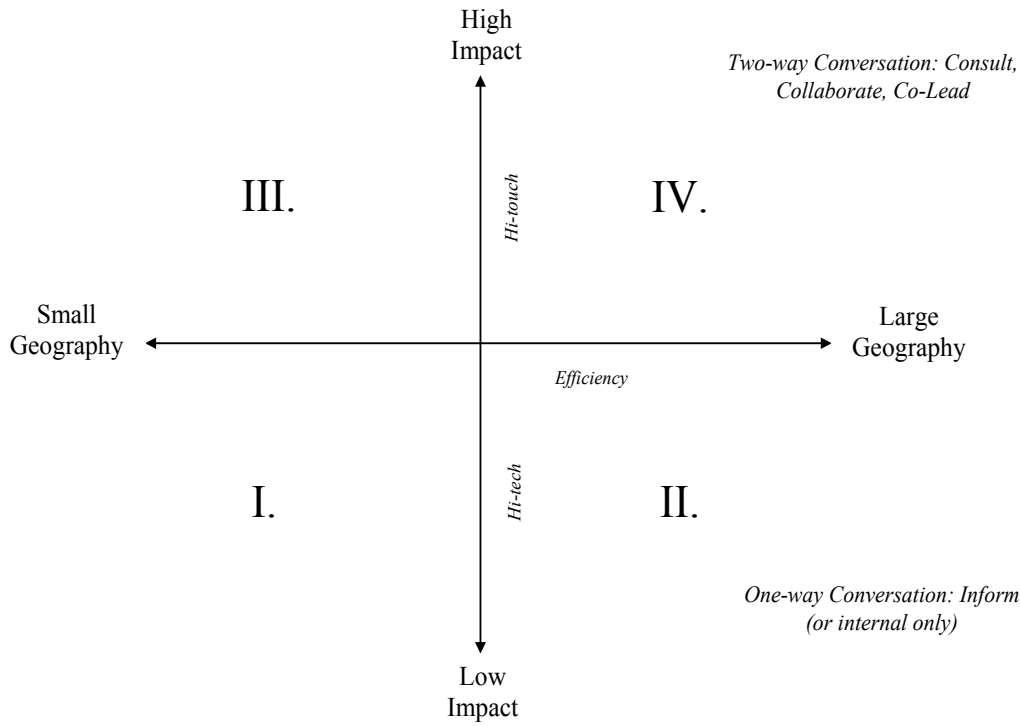
The Planning Commission will give notice of the time and place of the public hearing not less than 15 days before the hearing by publication in a newspaper of general circulation within Ferndale.

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 Planning Commission may publish and distribute copies of the master plan or of any report, and employ other means of publicity and education.

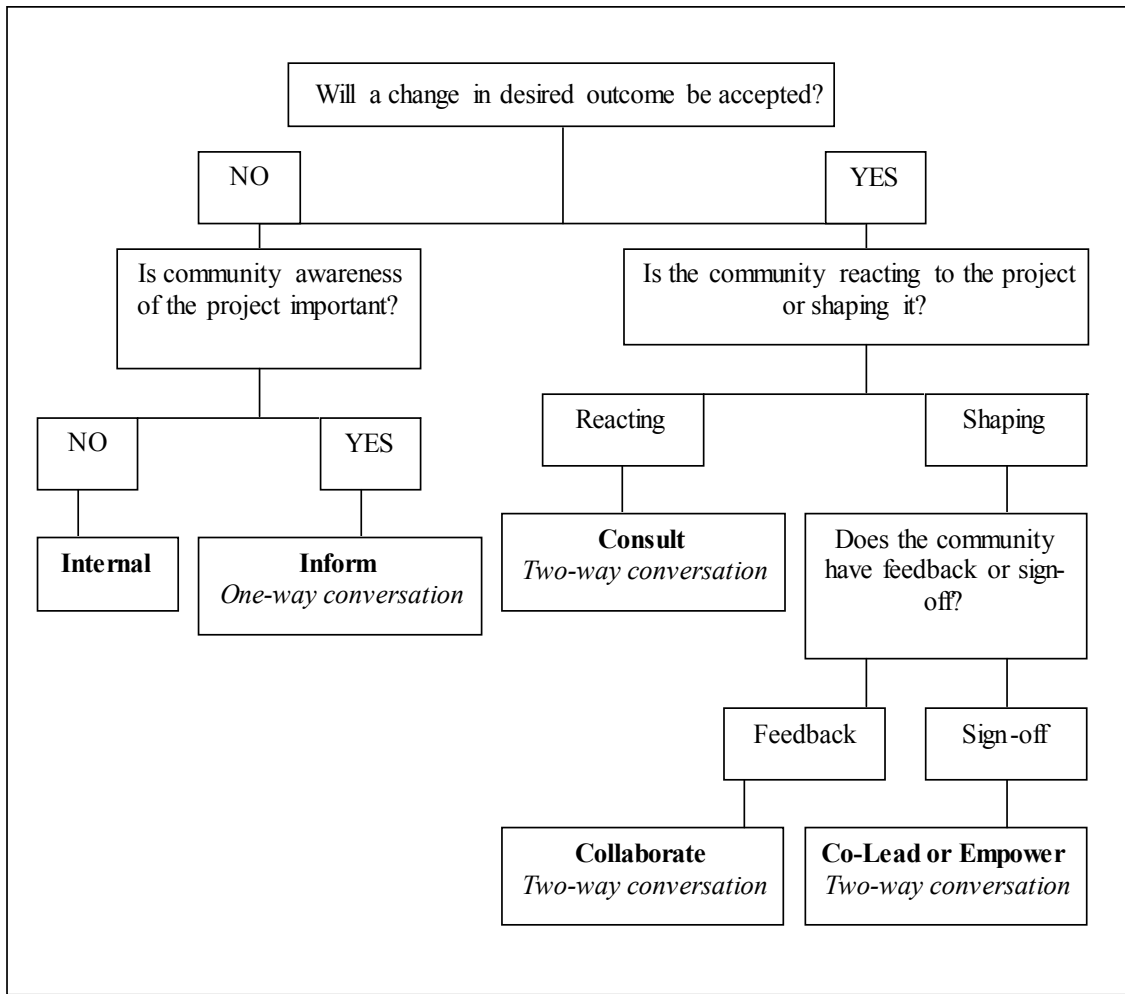
Appendix A

IMPACT SCALE GRID:

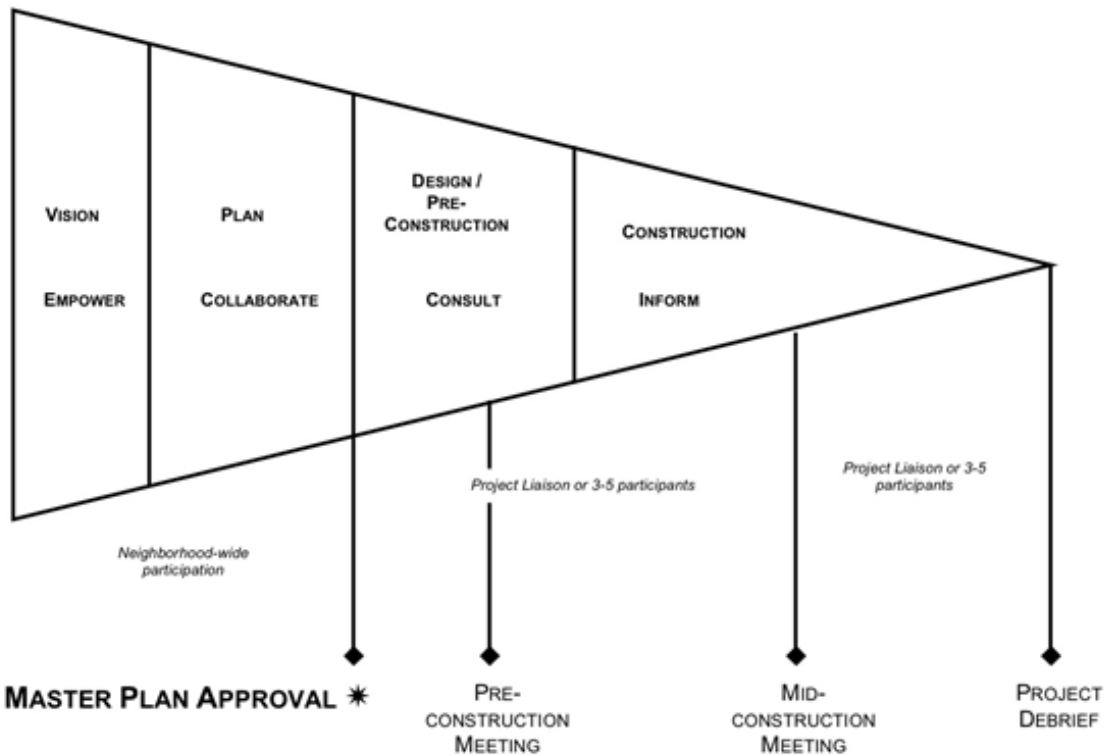


Type	Classification	Project Example	Level of Participation	Methods
I	Low impact, Small Geography	Street vacation	1 way – Inform	Nghd newsletter, nghd email blast, social media
II	Low impact, Large Geography	Citywide hydrant flushing schedule	1 way – Inform	E-blasts, website, social media
III	High impact, Small Geography	Downtown Design Guideline Expansion	2 way – Consult, Collaborate or Co-lead	Neighborhood meeting, door-to-door canvassing
IV	High impact, Large Geography	Master Plan update	2 way – Consult, Collaborate or Co-lead	Imagine Kalamazoo website, Town Hall meeting, focus groups

PPP DECISION TREE:

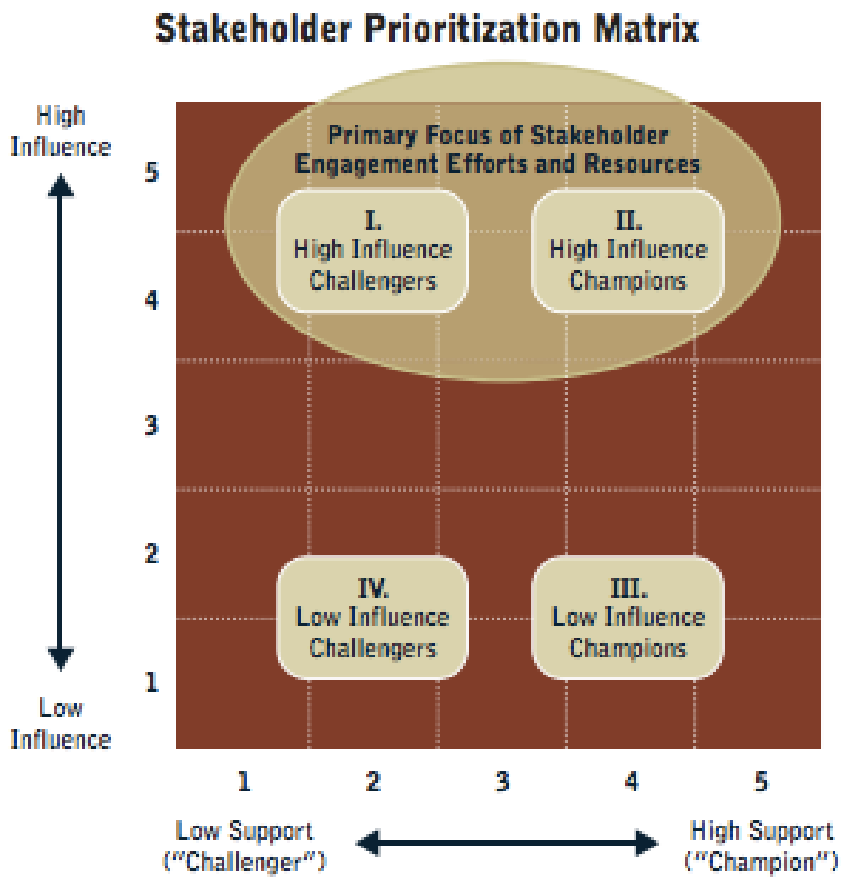


COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM:



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM:

EXHIBIT 2



LIVING WALL:



What do you hope Kalamazoo looks like in 2025?

The City of Kalamazoo, through a public participation process, has identified the areas below as essential components of a safe, well-planned, economically and environmentally sustainable city. Use the sticky notes provided to share your ideas of what a city characterized by each of these components would look like. Feel free to use comments, questions, doodles, and visions. Your input will be used to shape the priorities and desired outcomes of the City's budgets. For more information, contact the Community Planning & Development Department at (269) 337-8044.

Well-Planned Community	Economic Vitality	Environmental Sustainability	Effective Mobility & Transportation	safe Community	good Governance	Recreational, Educational, and Cultural Opportunities



Public Participation Toolkit

SECTION 1: INFORM

TECHNIQUE	THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT?	WHAT CAN GO WRONG?
<p>Bill Stuffers: Small informational flyers distributed alongside utility bills</p>	<p>Well-suited for advertising community events and meetings.</p>	<p>Widespread distribution; cost effective and makes use of existing mailing systems</p>	<p>Mailing entity may be unclear to the reader.</p>
<p>Briefings: Short, one-way City presentations at existing community meetings and events (civic clubs, nonprofit organizations, etc.)</p>	<p>It is important to consider your audience and present at a wide range of meetings.</p> <p>What groups might present an opportunity to reach out to underrepresented populations?</p>	<p>Can be an effective way to make contact in the community and build interest in City projects.</p> <p>Requires time from City staff, but similar presentations can be used for different groups.</p>	<p>Can be easy to fall into a routine of meeting with only a select few groups.</p> <p>Project stakeholders may not be target audience.</p>
<p>Flyers : Handouts announcing City meetings, events, and other initiatives.</p>	<p>Neighborhood associations, community organizations, and local businesses can be ideal distribution points.</p>	<p>Simple, cost-effective way to get your message across.</p> <p>Includes community members who may not have access to internet, television, etc.</p> <p>Distribution presents an opportunity to connect with community partners and engage them in the process.</p>	<p>Limited information can be conveyed.</p>
<p>Neighborhood Newsletters: Inclusion of City information in neighborhood newsletters (physical or online).</p>	<p>Well-suited for reaching out to particular neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Cost effective, makes use of existing mailing systems.</p> <p>Opportunity to connect with neighborhood residents in the way that they have identified as working best for them (physical mailing, social media, etc.).</p> <p>Fosters contact with active community members.</p>	<p>Mailing entity may be unclear to the reader.</p> <p>Information may only reach those who are already actively engaged with the neighborhood.</p>
<p>Press Releases:</p>	<p>Well-suited for distributing information about major project developments and milestones, technical or legal information.</p>	<p>Opportunity to distribute precise information; press release language is often used directly in articles.</p> <p>Easy to track, provides accountability.</p>	<p>Low media response rate.</p> <p>Limited readership.</p>

SECTION 1: INFORM

TECHNIQUE	THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT?	WHAT CAN GO WRONG?
<p>Printed Public Information Materials: Includes newsletters, brochures, issue papers, and fact sheets.</p>	<p>Use concise, accessible language.</p> <p>Make materials visually interesting and consistent. Uniform use of City logos and color schemes make materials recognizable to the community.</p> <p>Always include contact information for community members to give feedback.</p> <p>Consider distribution. Who might be left out?</p> <p>Include social media and website information for readers to access further information.</p>	<p>Opportunity to connect with a wide range of community members.</p> <p>Fosters accountability; documents the planning process.</p>	<p>Limited distribution networks can leave some populations out of the conversation.</p> <p>Limited information can be conveyed.</p> <p>Readership can be limited.</p>
<p>Social Media Posts: Includes Facebook & Twitter.</p>	<p>Use a variety of post formats, including text, photos, videos, polls, and events.</p> <p>Create Facebook events for all City gatherings to increase attendance.</p> <p>Reply promptly to community enquiries and comments.</p>	<p>Economical and instant method of reaching out to a broad population.</p> <p>Encourages community involvement and City accountability; allows community members to visibly comment on City posts.</p>	<p>Those without internet access are left out.</p> <p>Major community events can create a flood of comments that can be difficult to respond to.</p>
<p>Television, Radio, & Newspaper Postings:</p>	<p>Consider the best days of the week, times of day, and sections or channels to reach intended audience.</p>	<p>Widespread distribution.</p>	<p>Can be expensive.</p> <p>Limited information can be conveyed.</p> <p>Information may not always be watched/listened to/read thoroughly.</p>
<p>Website Posts:</p>	<p>Use concise, accessible language.</p> <p>Share links to social media pages.</p> <p>Make materials visually appealing and user-friendly.</p>	<p>Economical and instant.</p> <p>Encourages accountability; easy to look back on the progression of a project.</p>	<p>Community members are fairly unlikely to visit websites unless there is a particular reason to do so (this is why sharing links is vital).</p> <p>Those without internet access are left out.</p>

SECTION 2: CONSULT / COLLABORATE:

TECHNIQUE	THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT?	WHAT CAN GO WRONG?
<p>Focus Groups: In-person, small-group meetings.</p>	<p>Planning ahead is important — how will the questions that you ask now help your project moving forward?</p>	<p>Provides traceable data. Reaches broad, representative population.</p>	<p>Can be expensive and time consuming.</p>
<p>Living Walls: Interactive posters, on which community participants can write or draw out responses to a given prompt.</p>	<p>Can be used as an engagement exercise during meetings or events, or displayed in public spaces for a longer period of time.</p>	<p>Adaptable, intuitive, and transparent. Can create a space for engagement between participants and a sense of ownership over the process. Opportunity to reach individuals and groups for whom privacy is a concern; living walls can be dropped off at an organization and used internally.</p>	<p>Limited information can be conveyed. Cannot follow up with individual respondents. Prompts and responses are generally quite broad; best for initial planning and data-gathering.</p>
<p>Neighborhood Meetings: Meetings hosted in and/or about a particular neighborhood or region.</p>	<p>Reach out to churches, community organizations, neighborhood associations, and property developers (apartment buildings, etc.) to advertise meetings.</p>	<p>Shows effort on behalf of the City; opportunity to meet community members in a setting that is convenient and familiar. Helpful for gathering neighborhood-specific data.</p>	<p>Takes a great deal of outreach and planning to implement successfully.</p>
<p>Mailed Surveys: Surveys/questionnaires mailed randomly to a sample population.</p>	<p>For statistically valid results, should be developed and conducted by an outside group.</p>	<p>Opportunity for statistically valid results from a wide sample of the population.</p>	<p>Can be costly to implement, both in time and resources. Response rate often low. Can be a slow process. Once the survey has been set in motion, there is little room for change.</p>
<p>Online Surveys: Surveys/questionnaires distributed online, including through Open Town Hall.</p>	<p>It is important to be intentional with survey questions and distribution. Think about accessibility: will community members without internet access have the opportunity to give feedback on these issues? Reach out to community partners to assist in distribution. Do not make surveys too long.</p>	<p>Can be more cost-effective and reach a broader population more quickly than other types of surveys.</p>	<p>Distribution can be uneven, and results can be easily skewed. Leaves out those without internet access.</p>

SECTION 3: CO-LEAD / EMPOWER

TECHNIQUE	THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT?	WHAT CAN GO WRONG?
<p>Community-Organized Meetings: Outreach and engagement at existing community-organized meetings and events.</p>	<p>Opportunities for engagement include Art Hop, farmers’ markets, neighborhood association meetings, and community organization meetings.</p>	<p>Opportunity to meet community members in a setting that is convenient and familiar.</p> <p>Increases sense of community ownership over the planning process.</p> <p>Opportunity to connect with community members who might not attend City-organized meetings.</p>	<p>Important to be respectful of community boundaries; ensure that the City is not “stepping on toes” and barging in without invitation.</p>
<p>Meetings On the Go: Packets of information distributed to community members who are hosting their own meetings about a City initiative.</p>	<p>Ideal for use with community groups, clubs, neighborhood associations, or social groups.</p> <p>Easily adaptable to various group sizes and types.</p>	<p>Increases sense of community ownership over the planning process.</p> <p>Flexible and require minimal City resources; City staff not needed to facilitate.</p> <p>Can be useful for engaging groups, such as privacy-sensitive community organizations, that might be hesitant to attend City-led meetings.</p>	<p>Can be difficult to ensure that information from the meetings gets accurately reported back to the City.</p> <p>Conversation topics may stray from initial agenda.</p>
<p>Town Hall Meetings: Open community meeting with space for back-and-forth interaction.</p>	<p>Consider other public participation tools that might be useful as part of a town hall — living walls, surveys, etc.</p>	<p>Increases sense of community ownership over the planning process.</p> <p>Flexible and adaptable; can be used with a variety of other public participation tools depending on topic/audience.</p>	<p>A great deal of outreach and effort is required to achieve strong attendance.</p>
<p>University Partnership: Collaborative efforts between City departments and Kalamazoo colleges/universities.</p>	<p>Can include City presentations at university events, joint research opportunities, and town hall-style meetings on university campuses.</p>	<p>Collaboration can be a mutually beneficial tool.</p> <p>Universities often have access to time, resources (particularly computer programs), and skills that the City may not. For students, partnership can present a professional development/research opportunity.</p>	<p>Successful collaboration requires time and effort on behalf of all parties.</p> <p>City needs do not always align well with university calendars.</p>

SECTION 4: COMMUNICATING OUTCOMES

TECHNIQUE	THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT?	WHAT CAN GO WRONG?
<p>Post-Surveys: Surveys/questionnaires given to stakeholders after the completion of a project.</p>	<p>Consider the best way to get in touch with your stakeholders— mail, email, and in-person surveys are all options.</p> <p>Be intentional with the questions that you ask— try to focus on things that the City can have an active response to. “Would you like to see similar projects in the future?” is more productive than “Do you like this project?”</p>	<p>If well-designed, can provide incredibly valuable input on how successful a project was and ways to improve in the future.</p> <p>Can serve as a community builder by reminding community members of the work that has already been done and re-connecting them with the City.</p>	<p>Response rates can be low.</p> <p>Can be difficult to get in touch with past participants.</p> <p>If questions are not phrased well, you can get input that is impossible to act on.</p>
<p>Celebration Ceremonies: Includes ribbon-cuttings, festivals, and other special events to celebrate the completion of a project.</p>	<p>Include community partners to increase visibility, build relationships, and, in some cases, share costs.</p> <p>Consider how other public participation tools can improve your celebration. When appropriate, can include post-surveys and/or information about new and upcoming projects.</p>	<p>Opportunity to celebrate successes and increase visibility of a project.</p> <p>Often draws positive attention from the press.</p> <p>Celebration ceremonies that are open to the public are often very popular.</p>	<p>Can be costly in terms of time and resources.</p>
<p>Press Releases:</p>	<p>Well-suited for distributing information about major project developments and milestones, technical or legal information.</p>	<p>Opportunity to distribute precise information; press release language is often used directly in articles.</p> <p>Easy to track, provides accountability.</p>	<p>Low media response rate.</p> <p>Limited readership.</p>
<p>Neighborhood Newsletters: Inclusion of City information in neighborhood newsletters (physical or online).</p>	<p>Well-suited for reaching out to particular neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Cost effective, makes use of existing mailing systems.</p> <p>Opportunity to connect with neighborhood residents in the way that they have identified as working best for them (physical mailing, social media, etc.).</p> <p>Fosters contact with active community members.</p>	<p>Mailing entity may be unclear to the reader.</p> <p>Information may only reach those who are already actively engaged with the neighborhood.</p>

SECTION 4: COMMUNICATING OUTCOMES

TECHNIQUE	THINK IT THROUGH	WHAT CAN GO RIGHT?	WHAT CAN GO WRONG?
<p>Social Media Posts: Includes Facebook & Twitter.</p>	<p>Use a variety of post formats, including text, photos, videos, polls, and events.</p> <p>Reply promptly to community enquiries and comments.</p>	<p>Economical and instant method of reaching out to a broad population.</p> <p>Encourages community involvement and City accountability; allows community members to visibly comment on City posts.</p>	<p>Those without internet access are left out.</p> <p>Major community events can create a flood of comments that can be difficult to respond to.</p>
<p>Television, Radio, & Newspaper Postings:</p>	<p>Consider the best days of the week, times of day, and sections or channels to reach intended audience.</p>	<p>Widespread distribution.</p>	<p>Can be expensive.</p> <p>Limited information can be conveyed.</p> <p>Information may not always be watched/listened to/read thoroughly.</p>
<p>Website Posts:</p>	<p>Use concise, accessible language.</p> <p>Share links to social media pages.</p> <p>Make materials visually appealing and user-friendly.</p>	<p>Economical and instant.</p> <p>Encourages accountability; easy to look back on the progression of a project.</p>	<p>Community members are fairly unlikely to visit websites unless there is a particular reason to do so (this is why sharing links is vital).</p> <p>Those without internet access are left out.</p>
<p>Signage: Signs placed at a project site to indicate completion. Includes temporary wire yard signs as well as semi-permanent/permanent signs.</p>	<p>Use appropriate logos/icons and text to promote City initiatives like Imagine Kalamazoo 2025. If relevant, include community partners' logos.</p> <p>Consider the duration that the sign will be up. Make a plan about who will take down the sign.</p>	<p>A practical method for physical development projects.</p> <p>Excellent way to reach stakeholders—those who see the sign are users of the space.</p> <p>Can help community members to understand a project's connection with the City; increases transparency.</p> <p>Can be a branding/marketing opportunity in multiple ways—can show off City logos, and also can appeal to potential partners.</p>	<p>Requires design and printing by an outside company; can be expensive.</p> <p>Vandalism is a concern.</p>

