Public Participation Plan

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I. Introduction

The Village of Northport has developed a Public Participation Plan for Planning and Development projects that contains the policies and procedures used for public involvement and outreach in the villages approval process. Engaging citizens, business owners, community leaders, and developers is crucial when navigating the planning process. Soliciting input throughout the duration of the process contributes to a greater understanding of the various complexities involved in many community projects and provides greater transparency in local government operations. Solicitation and consideration of community input by village officials enhances the public's understanding of their ability and responsibility to affect the future of the community. As key facilitators in the village decision-making process, the public officials and administrators of the Village of Northport understand the significance of public participation.

Today, the Village's public engagement process provides clear input to the Village from its' citizens and other stakeholders. This process is designed to:

- Celebrate success
- Shine light on areas in need of improvement
- Leave behind a strong culture of public involvement despite present or future municipal turnover.

II. Stakeholders:

What is a stakeholder?

Stakeholders can be internal or external to an organization. Internal stakeholders are people whose interest in a company comes through a direct relationship, such as employment, ownership, or investment. External stakeholders are those who do not directly work with a company but are affected somehow by the actions and outcomes of the business. Suppliers, creditors, and public groups are all considered external stakeholders.

Stake holders that are associated with the Village of Northport :

- Northport Village Residents
- Rent or Own Property in the Village Limits
- Veterans Administration

- Low-moderate income (LMI) persons
- Local Officials on all Boards
- Northport small business owners
- Northport 's largest Employers
- Northport Principal Shopping District
- Local brokers and Real Estate Professionals
- Neighborhood groups
- Adjacent Townships
- Potential investors
- Public employees (police, fire, health, education)
- Faith-based organizations and local churches.
- Senior groups and Care Facilities
- Healthcare Providers.
- Students and Teachers.
- Young professionals and new business owners.
- Newspapers and local online Media.

All stakeholders listed above are actively encouraged to attend Village Council and Planning meetings. Many ideas are discussed at these meetings. These ideas often include key development site strategy, parks and recreation planning, environmental projects, recommended zoning amendments, capital improvement planning, Master Plan enhancements, civic and municipal projects and updates, State/Federal funded projects, corridor improvement planning, housing needs, downtown development concepts, and more.

III. The underlying principles of Northport 's public engagement include:

Advocacy:

The Village of Northport is looking for advocacy and support on particular topics. The Village of Northport has a strong desire to hear from its stakeholders while advocating for best practices.

Inclusion:

Northport 's future needs to be designed using an intentional, inclusive process. Northport 's physical design will reflect the needs and desires of its stakeholders.

Communication and Feedback:

Through various means, our public engagement process provides clear communication and recommendations to the Village of Northport on all sides of an initiative, specific topic, or project. These recommendations are designed for inclusion in Village plans, policies, laws, and corresponding expenditures.

IV. Transparency and Accountability. How we share information:

Village activities, as well as other impactful initiatives, are placed on the Village of Northport 's web site, relevant posts made on Facebook, as well as presentations in person at Village Board meetings. If deemed appropriate, direct mailers are sometimes used to disseminate information or notified interested parties of key happenings.

Public Engagement Impact:

The Village of Northport has enjoyed active, diverse stakeholder participation since 2017, having received public feedback in a variety of stimulating and relevant venues. These venues are selected based on our desire to engage and immerse our stakeholders in the topics being discussed whenever possible.

V. Communication Toolbox:

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

Recommended Optional Required

VI. Outreach

The following methods are often used to inform the public of key happenings, resources available, public meetings, successes to celebrate, or other important information. These methods periodically result in greater involvement by stakeholders when the information is relevant and inspires their interest to attend a meeting, offer feedback, or seek more information. There are many means for individuals to connect or communicate with the Village such as email, website contact form, phone, fax, mail, in-person conversations, public comment periods at meetings, and social media.

- Website posting
- Social media posting
- Newspaper posting
- Flier posting (Village hall, churches, workplaces, community centers, social clubs, local coffee shops)
- Announcements at Village board meetings (Council, Planning, TIFA, NEDO, PSD)
- Post card or letter mailings
- Announcements on water bills
- Inserts with Village tax bills
- Local cable notification
- Braille postings (accommodate ADA requirements)

VII. Additional Outreach

The following are some example public participation methods that are more focused on education and collaborative visioning. *The Village of Northport 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.

Addressing seasonal community members.

1. **Maintain an Online Presence:**
    - Create a website or social media profiles for your community, providing information about events, news, and updates.
    - Use email newsletters to send regular updates and announcements.
2. **Event Calendars:**
    - Develop a community event calendar for the entire season, making it available both online and in print.
    - Highlight key events and activities so members can plan their visits accordingly.
3. **Welcome Packets:**
    - Create welcome packets or information brochures for new and returning seasonal members.
    - Include essential contact details, community guidelines, and a schedule of events.
4. **Online Forums and Discussion Boards:**
    - Set up online forums or discussion boards where community members can share information, experiences, and tips.
    - Appoint moderators to ensure the discussions remain constructive and respectful.
5. **Email Updates:**
    - Send regular email updates with information about upcoming events, deadlines, and community news.
    - Segment your email list to tailor messages to specific groups or interests.
6. **Interactive Maps:**

- Provide interactive maps that show key locations, amenities, and important places within the community.
- Include details on parking, restrooms, and emergency services.

7. **Community Liaisons:**
   - Appoint community liaisons or representatives who are available to answer questions and assist members with their needs.
   - These liaisons can serve as a point of contact and source of information.
8. **Feedback Mechanisms:**
   - Encourage feedback through surveys, suggestion boxes, or online forms.
   - Use the feedback to make improvements and address concerns.
9. **Social Events:**
   - Organize regular social events, such as welcome parties, potlucks, or happy hours.
   - These events foster a sense of belonging and help seasonal members get to know one another.
10. **Local Partnerships:**
    - Collaborate with local businesses to offer discounts or special deals to community members.
    - Share information about these partnerships through various communication channels.
11. **Emergency Communication Plan:**
    - Establish an emergency communication plan, including contact details and procedures for various scenarios.
    - Ensure that seasonal members are aware of the plan and know how to access it.
12. **Digital Signage:**
    - Install digital signage in key community locations to display event schedules, weather updates, and important announcements.
13. **Personalized Greetings:**
    - Greet returning seasonal members with personalized messages or welcome back signs.
    - This can help create a warm and inviting atmosphere.
14. **Text Messaging Alerts:**
    - Offer an opt-in text messaging service for urgent announcements or event reminders.
    - Keep messages concise and relevant.
15. **Multi-Channel Approach:**
    - Use a combination of communication channels, including social media, email, website updates, and print materials to reach a diverse audience.
16. **Regular Updates and Reminders:**
    - Send regular updates and reminders regarding important dates, deadlines, and community guidelines.
    - Keep seasonal members informed about any changes or developments.

VIII.Sharing Results

Municipalities have many venues of communication: television, newsletters, the municipal website, social media, news outlets, bulletin boards, etc. The appropriate venue to communicate, who is responsible for this communication, and how soon after the public participation event are all decided on a case-by-case basis. The means will vary depending on the scope and subject matter. The following are examples of ways Northport communicates results to the public:

• ***Public meetings:*** All meetings are posted on the Village's website calendar of events and other places as required by law. Depending on the circumstances of the information to share and how widely in needs to be disseminated, various outreach methods that were outlined above will be utilized. Also, minutes of meetings are posted in a timely manner as required by statute.

• ***Surveys:*** Surveys will be compiled within a reasonable amount of time. Sometimes it is possible to identify a date when data will be available and state it in the notice of survey. The results will be posted online and available as a hard copy at Village Hall.

• ***Community workshops/charrettes:*** A person is charged with taking notes during community workshops and charrettes. These notes will be posted online in a timely manner. In addition, the results of these events will be communicated in a wrap up community meeting. Additional information can be incorporated into the appendix of adopted plans.

• ***Village website/social media/hard copies:*** The Village's website acts as a clearing house of information. It is a primary place for stakeholders to seek information on important community items, events, or information. It is typically the location of the greatest depth of information regarding a topic. Social media is used to supplement or notify people of what is available in greater depth on the Village's website. If a person prefers to look at information in a hard copy format, they are often available at Village Hall.

IX. 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 significant public engagement activities will be reported via the annual planning commission report. Methods that have been ineffective will be reviewed and adjusted for greater effectiveness. 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.

X. Inclusivity:

The Village of Northport is committed to being inclusive when it comes to public outreach and making sure all voices are heard. Some practices Northport 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.

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 genders 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 to participate in the work as well.