



Citizen Participation Plan

Adopted 2015
Updated 2023

Objectives

The City of Hillsdale will continue to involve the entire community as “key stakeholders” in the future development of our City.

The City of Hillsdale evaluates each project on an individual basis to determine project scope, stakeholders, project limitations, approving body, points of community impact during the decision making process, internal and external resources, and level of appropriate community involvement.

The City of Hillsdale makes information available in a timely manner to enable interested parties to be involved in decisions at various stages of the review and approval process.

The City of Hillsdale engages citizens in a transparent manner, making information easy to access for all interested members of the community.

The City of Hillsdale seeks public participation for matters involving future development of the City, such as the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance update process.

The City of Hillsdale seeks creative ways to involve a diverse set of community stakeholders in planning, land use, and development decisions.

The City of Hillsdale uses comments and information received from interested members of the community to make decisions regarding planning, land use, and future development.

The City of Hillsdale tracks and analyzes the results of all public participation to the extent feasible and provide summaries back to the public.

The City of Hillsdale will provide for and encourage participation by persons of Low and Moderate Income (LMI) who are residents of slum or blighted areas and of areas in which funds are proposed to be used.

State & Local Regulations

- Hillsdale City Charter
- Hillsdale City Code of Ordinances
- Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976)
- Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008)
- Home Rule City Act (PA 279 of 1909)
- Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act (PA 381 of 1996)
- Tax Increment Finance Authority Act (PA 450 of 1980)
- Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (PA 146 of 2000)
- Section 508 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended
- Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended
- Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (PA 147 of 1992)
- Other applicable local, state, and federal regulation

Key Stakeholders in the City of Hillsdale

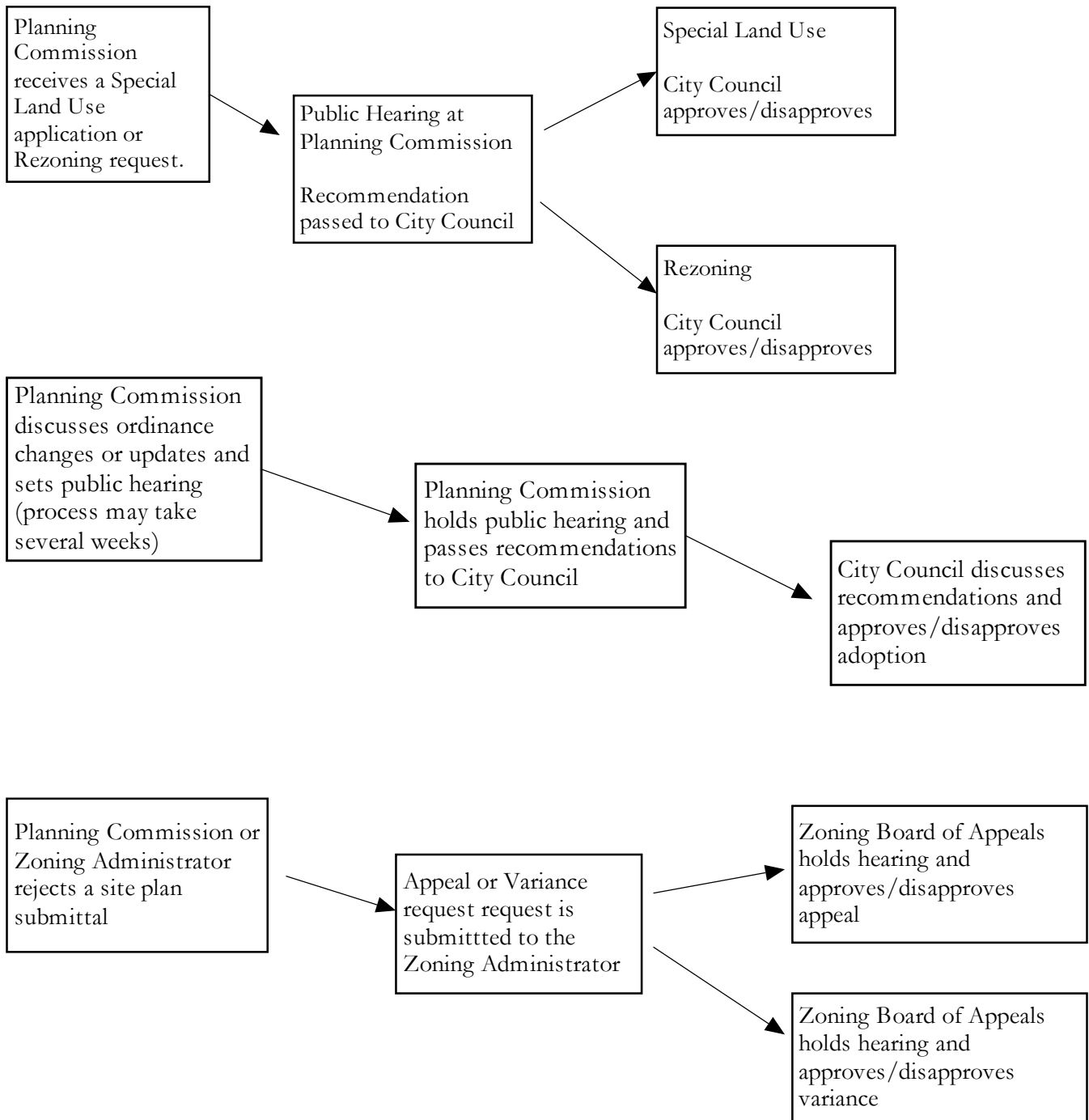
In the City of Hillsdale, each project will be evaluated on an individual basis to ensure inclusion for all stakeholders in the community. Each will vary according to the project being reviewed. Possible key stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- Local residents
- Neighboring jurisdictions
- Michigan Department of Transportation
- Municipal employees
- Emergency personnel
- Hillsdale College
- Jackson College
- Commercial business owners and their employees
- Hillsdale Community Health Center
- Industrial facilities located in the City
- Neighborhood groups
- Board of Realtors
- Churches
- Schools
- Senior groups
- Community visitors and tourists
- Service Clubs
- Citizen Volunteer Groups
- Hillsdale County Community Foundation
- Chamber of Commerce
- Hillsdale Business Association
- City’s boards and commissions

Boards/Commissions	Members
○ City Council	9
○ Airport Advisory Committee	7
○ Board of Public Utilities	5
○ Board of Review	3
○ Brownfield Redevelopment Authority	6
○ Cemetery Board	5
○ Dial-a-Ride Advisory Committee	3
○ Election Commission	3
○ Economic Development Corporation	10
○ Hospital Finance Authority	3
○ Housing Commission	5
○ International Property Maintenance Code Board	3
○ Officers Compensation	5
○ Planning Commission	7
○ Shade Tree Commission	5
○ Tax Increment Finance Authority	11
○ Zoning Board of Appeals	7
○ Library Board	5

Processes for Development

There are various times in the planning process when the City Council, the Planning Commission, and/or the Zoning Board of Appeals request public input. These processes include public hearings for rezoning of land, development of the Zoning or Sign Ordinances, the Master Plan, requested variances and Special Land Uses. The flowchart below outlines the time limits for these processes:



Development Review Bodies

The City encourages citizen participation in local government planning and policy decisions. All residents are invited to apply for appointments to City boards and commissions. Vacant positions are advertised on the City's Website at www.cityofhillsdale.org

City Council

Hillsdale's City Council is composed of nine members. The mayor and two representative from each of the four wards of the City. All City Council positions are voted in by the citizens of Hillsdale. For many processes (excluding site plan and variances) council is the final approving body.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is a six member body, plus one ex facto member. All full members are appointed by the Mayor for three year terms. Planning Commissioners deal with development issues in the City such as rezoning, special land uses, and site plans. They are responsible for writing the zoning and sign ordinances and updating the City's Master Plan. Many of their recommendations go before Council for final approval and adoption.

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

The Zoning Board of Appeals has five full members plus one member of Planning Commission and one member of City Council. Each member is appointed by the Mayor for a three year term. When a resident of the City cannot meet the zoning or sign ordinance requirements, an application for variance is filed with this body.

There are many other boards and committee's throughout the City. Agendas along with dates and times of meetings can be found on the Public Meeting Notice page of Hillsdale's website at www.cityofhillsdale.org. Minutes for City Council and the Planning Commission can also be found on the City website.

Open Meetings

All meetings of the City Council, and its various boards and commissions, shall be open to the public in accordance with the “Open Meetings Act,” PA 267 of 1976 as amended, except closed session meetings as provided for in the Act. Public notices for these meetings are posted on the website at www.cityofhillsdale.org and hung at City Hall (as required by the Act). The following processes require that neighbors within 300 feet of a property are personally notified:

- Rezoning of property
- Special Land Use
- Variance requests

Statutes require these processes be noticed in a newspaper of general distribution in the City as well as mailed to neighbors within 300 feet at least 15 days prior to the meeting. All meetings are held in a facility accessible to persons with disabilities, and the City provides and will provide reasonable accommodations. Individuals with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodations or services should contact the City Clerk’s Office. The City shall also provide for the reasonable needs of non-English speaking residents in the case of public hearings where a significant number of non-English speaking residents can be expected to participate.

The City shall provide for technical assistance to groups representative of persons of LMI that requests such assistance in developing proposals with the level and type of assistance to be determined by the Unit of General Local Government (UGLG).

Interested persons are encouraged to contact the City Clerk or to check the City’s Website at: www.cityofhillsdale.org in order to be kept informed of any meeting schedule, agendas, variations, or location changes. Meeting agendas and packets are available on the City’s website in advance of the meeting.

Methods for Community Participation

Each project's initial evaluation will determine the necessary level of involvement for the project. The following are methods that may be used to reach the appropriate level of public participation when taking action on land use or development applications. The City of Hillsdale will always attempt to use more than one tool or method, depending on the specific project and target audience. This list is flexible and can change based on each project's needs and circumstance.

Inform – provide information and assist public understanding

- **Website** – www.cityofhillsdale.org announces meetings, posts packets and agendas, minutes, and sometimes will contain pages or links for topics of major interest.
- **Newspaper** – The Hillsdale Daily News is the City of Hillsdale's newspaper. New editions are available Tuesday through Saturday.
- **Internet** – City Council meetings are podcast on the local City website via Livestream
- **Printed postings** – Available for viewing at the City Hall lobby board.
- **Announcements** – Announcements during meetings of the City Council, Planning Commission and other boards and commissions.
- **Postal mail** – Postal mailings to neighbors within 300 feet, according to statute.

Consult – obtain public feedback

- **Social Media** – The City currently uses Facebook to announce street closures, storm news, etc. and may also use Facebook to notify the community of meetings.
- **Surveys** – Utilizing online and paper surveys allows for the collection of large amounts of data and opinions from the public.
- **Public Hearings** – Public attendance at meetings is strongly supported and allows for an appropriate venue for public input.

Involve – work directly with public throughout the process

- **Open Houses** – In order to create two-way communication, the City will hold open house events for projects and initiatives as needed.
- **Community workshops** – Issues that require community feedback can benefit from a noticed workshop.
- **Charrettes** – Multiple day design charrettes and information gathering sessions allow a larger group of people to participate in the community engagement activity.

Collaborate – partner with public in each aspect of decision making

- **Focus Groups** – Bringing together stakeholders to discuss and brainstorm decision making options.

Communicating Results

The City of Hillsdale will publicly communicate all results of community input on planning and development issues. The City will utilize one or more of the "Inform" methods to relay results back to the public. The City shall follow the Fair Housing policy adopted by Council on March 3, 2014.

Provide for a formal written procedure that will accommodate a timely written response to written complaints and grievances, within 15 days where practicable.

Updating the Citizen Participation Plan

Like all documents, the City of Hillsdale understands that the Citizen Participation Plan will need to be reviewed and updated on a routine basis. This plan will be updated as needed, at a minimum of every five years, in conjunction with the City's Master Plan. Updates to this plan will be drafted by staff, reviewed and recommended by Planning Commission, and approved through City Council. At least one public hearing will be held during the process to gather community input and to generate new ideas.