



City of Houghton Public Participation Plan

Adopted _____, 2017

CITY OF HOUGHTON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Objectives

The city views the entire community as “key stakeholders” in future development.

The city 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 engages citizens in a transparent manner, making information easily accessible to all interested members of the community.

The city seeks public participation in matters involving future development of the city, such as the city’s master plan and zoning ordinance update process.

The city involves a diverse set of community stakeholders in planning, land use, and development decisions.

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

The city tracks and analyzes the results of all public participation to the extent feasible and provides summaries to the general public.

The city provides for and encourages participation by persons of Low- and- Moderate Income (LMI).

State & Local Regulations

Houghton City Charter

Houghton 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)

Tax Increment Finance Authority Act (PA 450 of 1980)

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

Other applicable local, state, and federal regulation

Key Stakeholders in the City of Houghton

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

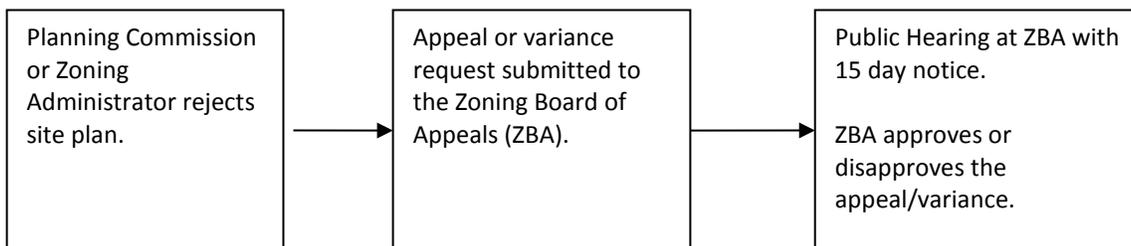
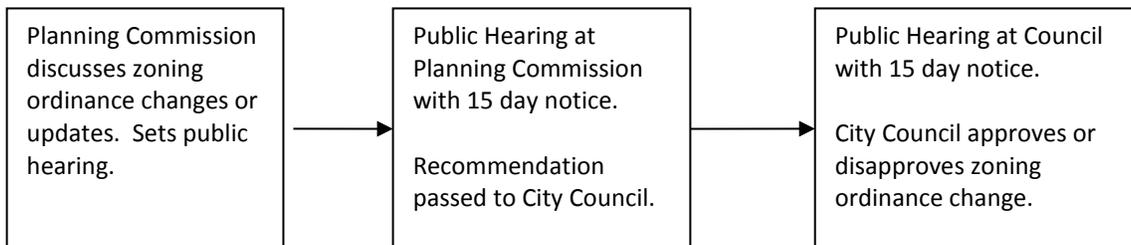
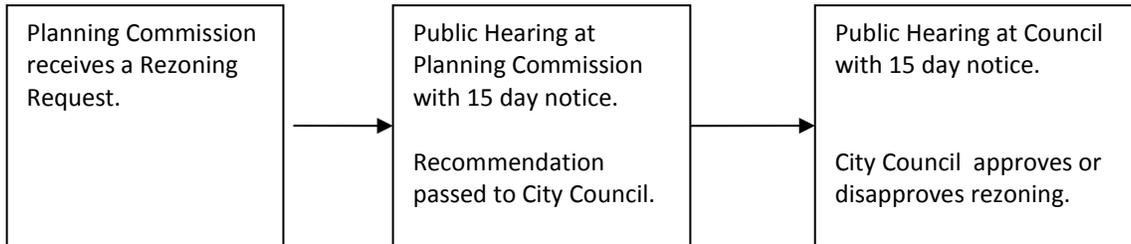
- Churches
- Citizen volunteer groups
- Commercial business owners and their employees
- Community visitors and tourists
- Downtown Business Association
- Emergency personnel
- Healthcare providers
- Keweenaw Chamber of Commerce
- Keweenaw Economic Development Association
- Landlords
- Local residents
- Michigan Department of Transportation
- Michigan Technological University
- Municipal employees
- Neighborhood groups
- Neighboring jurisdictions
- Schools
- Senior groups
- Service clubs
- Western UP Health Department
- Western UP Planning and Development Region

City's boards and commissions

	Members
City Council	7
Planning Commission	9
Board of Review	3
Zoning Board of Appeals	5
Downtown Development Authority	9
Tax Increment Finance Authority	9
Election Commission	3
Housing Commission	5
Portage Lake Water & Sewage Authority	5
Portage Lake District Library Board	8
Local Development Finance Authority	7
Carnegie Museum of the Keweenaw Board	8

Processes for Development

There are various times in the planning process when the 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 ordinance, the master plan, requested variances and special land uses. The flowcharts below outline 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 in the local newspaper and on the city's website: www.cityofhoughton.com.

City Council

The city council is composed of seven members. All council positions are at-large and are voted by the citizens of Houghton. For many processes (excluding site plan and variances) council is the final approving body.

Planning Commission

The planning commission has nine members. All members are appointed by the mayor for three-year terms. Commissioners deal with city development issues such as rezoning, special land uses, and site plans. The commission is responsible for writing the zoning ordinance and updating the city's master plan. Many of the commission's recommendations go before council for final approval and adoption.

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

The zoning board of appeals has five members comprised of council members. The mayor and mayor pro tem are alternates. When a resident or developer cannot meet the zoning ordinance requirements, an application for variance is filed with this board.

There are many other boards and committees. Agendas along with dates and times of meetings can be found on the Public Meeting Notice page of Houghton's website at www.cityofhoughton.com. Minutes for council and commission meetings 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. All open meetings provide an opportunity for the public to address the public body.

Public notices for these meetings are posted on the website www.cityofhoughton.com and posted at city hall. The following processes require that neighbors within 300 feet of a property are personally notified:

- Rezoning of property
- Variance requests
- Rental licenses
- Special Use Permits

Statutes require these processes be noticed in a newspaper of general distribution within the city as well as mailed to neighbors within 300 feet prior to the meeting.

All meetings are held in a facility accessible to persons with disabilities, and the city provides reasonable accommodations. Individuals with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodations or services should contact the city clerk's office. The city also provides for the reasonable needs of non-English speaking residents in the case of public hearings where a significant number of non-English speaking residents are expected to participate.

The city shall provide for technical assistance to groups representative of persons of low to moderate income that requests such assistance in developing proposals with the level and type of assistance to be determined by the city.

Interested persons are encouraged to contact the city clerk or to check the city's website at: www.cityofhoughton.com 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

The following are methods that may be used to reach the appropriate level of public participation when developing plans, and taking action on land use or development applications. The city always attempts 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.cityofhoughton.com announces meetings, posts packets and agendas, minutes, and sometimes will contain pages or links for topics of major interest.

Newspaper – The Daily Mining Gazette is the city's newspaper of general circulation. New editions are available Monday through Saturday. The city publishes notices of public hearings, and ordinance amendments.

Radio – Announcements of meetings and public information is provided on local radio stations.

Printed postings – Available for viewing at the City Center.

Announcements – Announcements during meetings of the city council, planning commission and other boards and commissions.

Newsletters – Twice a year a newsletter is mailed out with tax bills to provide seasonal information as well as information on upcoming events and projects.

Postal mail – Postal mailings to neighbors within 300 feet, according to statute.

Social Media – The city currently uses Facebook to make announcements and advertise events.

E-mail - The e-mail list serve notifies residents and the general public of street closures, water and sewer interruptions, changes in garbage collection services and upcoming projects.

Consult – obtain public feedback

Surveys – Online and paper surveys are utilized for the collection of large amounts of data and opinions from the public when creating and updating plans.

Public Hearings – Public attendance at meetings is strongly supported allowing 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 holds open house events for projects and when creating and updating plans.

Community workshops – The city may use a workshop for issues requiring community feedback.

Charrettes – The city may use a multiple-day design charrette to allow a larger group of people to participate in community engagement activities.

Collaborate – partner with public in each aspect of decision making

Focus Groups – The city may bring together stakeholders to discuss and brainstorm decision making options.

Communicating Results

The city 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.

Updating the Public Participation Plan

Like all documents, the city understands that the Public 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 master plan. Updates to this plan will be drafted by staff, reviewed and recommended by the planning commission, and approved through city council.