



# **Citizen Participation Plan Planning and Development Projects**

**City of Owosso**  
301 W. Main Street  
Owosso, MI 48867

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## 1. PARTICIPATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Owosso strives to involve the community in the decision making process and recognizes its citizens as “key stakeholders” in the future development of the City. City staff draws on a variety of methods of communication and outreach in order to understand what citizens want. The goals of the Citizen Participation Plan are outlined below.

- **Solicit public participation in each phase of planning processes.**  
Throughout the planning process, the goal is to foster public participation in important policy or project decisions before they are finalized. Many opportunities exist for the public to play a role in shaping short- and long-term needs, solutions, and funding priorities. The earlier the public is involved in the process, the greater the opportunity to influence important land - use decisions.
- **Effective and attentive communication with residents.**  
Every resident has a voice and many techniques are 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 mechanism will work in all cases, it is up to the municipality to consider the communication needs of the public and use the most effective approaches to accomplish this objective.
- **Educational and participation initiatives to engage residents.**  
The City of Owosso will provide educational materials to aide in the decision-making process and help residents understand land-use issues for making local investment decisions. Planning professionals and officials will use visualization techniques that increase public understanding of issues and concepts for specific sites or areas considered for redevelopment.
- **Develop and maintain staff expertise in all aspects of participation.**  
This includes techniques for bridging language, cultural, and economic differences that affect participation; ways to convey issues and information in meaningful ways to various cultural groups; and means for ensuring equal representation for all segments of the population and sectors of the economy.
- **Provide information to the public.**  
The City of Owosso is committed to seeking new and innovative ways to engage and keep the public informed throughout the process.
- **Report results.**  
Record results of resident or citizen engagement and report these results back to the public. To properly capture the concerns, priorities, and vision of the public, the municipality tracks the various techniques and mechanisms of public input. To maintain transparency and consistency, information shall be made available in a timely manner, so as to enable citizens to be involved in important decisions at various stages of the review and approval process.

## 2. STATE & LOCAL REGULATIONS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owosso City Charter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owosso City Code of Ordinances</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michigan Open Meetings Act (PA 267 of 1976)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michigan Planning Enabling Act (PA 33 of 2008)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Rule City Act (PA 279 of 1909)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downtown Development Authority Act (PA 197 of 1975)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act (PA 381 of 1996)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax Increment Finance Authority Act (PA 450 of 1980)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (PA 146 of 2000)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 508 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Enterprise Zone (PA 147 of 1992)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other local, state and federal regulations</li> </ul>

## 3. KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE CITY OF OWOSSO

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Boards and Commissions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Owners</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighboring jurisdictions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal employees</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency personnel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michigan Department of Transportation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baker College</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial business owners and employees</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memorial Healthcare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood groups</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Realtors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Churches</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior groups</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community visitors and tourists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service clubs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen volunteer groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shiawassee County Community Foundation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shiawassee Regional Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership</li> </ul>

## 4. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BODIES

The City encourages citizen participation in local government planning and policy decisions. Therefore, all citizens are invited to apply for appointments to the various City boards and commissions. Some boards or commissions are state-mandated while others are purely a local creation; however, they all make significant contributions to the community and its betterment, providing recommendations to City Council on a variety of issues. Vacant positions are advertised on the city's Website at [www.ci.owosso.mi.us](http://www.ci.owosso.mi.us)

Several Boards and Commissions review proposed plans and land use projects. They function in two capacities: 1. the public policy process and 2. Advisory and administrative roles. They have regularly scheduled meetings in place during which they review projects, deliberate on issues, and make recommendations, which include a public comment period during each of the regularly scheduled public meetings

Listed below are the Boards and Commissions in the City of Owosso that work on the planning and development review process.

### ➤ **City Council**

Owosso's City Council is comprised of seven members, the mayor and six representatives from the City. For many processes (excluding site plan reviews and variances), Council is the final approving body. The City Council is the legislative authority and governing body for the City. It is responsible for hiring and overseeing the City Manager, setting policy and adopting ordinances and resolutions. One of the most important policies is budgetary which is carried out through reviewing and adopting the annual budget that funds the City's operations, capital projects and council's priorities. Fiscal year begins every July 1.

### ➤ **Brownfield Redevelopment Authority**

Owosso's Brownfield Redevelopment Authority was formed to facilitate the sensible redevelopment of numerous underutilized or vacant commercial and industrial properties throughout the City.

### ➤ **Historic District Commission**

Owosso's Historic District Commission is charged with overseeing the City's historic district. The establishment of the Historic District allows property owners with contributing properties the opportunity to apply for both federal and state tax credits.

### ➤ **Main Street / Downtown Development Authority**

Owosso's Main Street/Downtown Development Authority is charged with overseeing the orderly development of the downtown. It is funded by taxpayer dollars through a tax increment financing arrangement. This board also oversees the Main Street program.

### ➤ **Planning Commission**

Owosso's Planning Commission is a nine-member body, including one member of City Council. All 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/amending the Zoning Ordinance and updating the City's Master Plan. Many of their recommendations go before Council for final approval and adoption.

### ➤ **Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)**

Owosso's Zoning Board of Appeals has five members, with two alternate members, including 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 Ordinance requirements, an application for variance is filed with this body.

- There are many other boards and committees throughout the city. Agendas, minutes and meeting packets (along with dates and times of meetings) can be found on the City of Owosso’s website at [www.ci.owosso.mi.us](http://www.ci.owosso.mi.us).

<b>BOARDS/COMMISSIONS</b>	<b>MEMBERS</b>
• City Council	7
• Board of Review	5
• Building Authority	3
• Building Board of Appeals	5
• Downtown Development Authority	9
• Firemen’s Memorial Steering Committee	7
• Downtown Historic District Commission	7
• Historical Commission	7
• LDFA/Brownfield Redevelopment Authority	7
• Parks and Recreation Commission	7
• Planning Commission	9
• Zoning Board of Appeals	5
<b>COUNTY-WIDE BOARDS SUPPORTED</b>	
Joint Trail Authority	Mid-County Wastewater Treatment Plant Review Board
Owosso Community Airport – Shiawassee Airport Board of Trustees	Shiawassee Area Transportation Agency
Shiawassee Council on Aging	Shiawassee District Library

➤ **Open Meetings**

All meetings of the City Council, and its various Boards and Commissions, are 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.ci.owosso.mi.us](http://www.ci.owosso.mi.us) and at City hall, 301 West Main Street, Owosso

**5. METHODS FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

There are many situations in which the City will solicit public input for a plan or project. Public participation in the planning process not only satisfies political and public need, it also increases the likelihood of plan success by making a more durable document. When residents are involved in the planning process, they are more likely to stay involved afterwards by partaking in the action plan to better their community with a sense of ownership. Broad engagement in the planning process also helps to prevent delays caused by unforeseen issues. Engagement efforts will vary depending upon the type, intensity, and location of a project or plan.

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 Owosso 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.ci.owosso.mi.us](http://www.ci.owosso.mi.us) announces meetings, posts packets and agendas, minutes, and periodically will contain pages or links for topics of major interest.
  - ✓ **Newspaper** – The Argus Press and Owosso Independent are the City of Owosso’s

- newspaper outlets. The Argus is printed daily while the Independent is printed weekly.
- ✓ **Internet** – City Council meetings are recorded and posted on the city website.
- ✓ **Printed postings** – Available for viewing at the city hall 1<sup>st</sup> floor lobby bulletin board.
- ✓ **Announcements** – Announcements during meetings of the City Council and other boards and commissions.
- ✓ **Postal mail** – Postal mailings to neighbors within 300 feet of a given project, according to statute.

➤ **Consult – obtain public feedback**

- ✓ **Social Media** – The City utilizes Social Media to announce meetings, street closures, water main breaks, storm news, etc.
- ✓ **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.

➤ **Collaborate – partner with public in decision making**

- ✓ **Focus Groups** – Bringing together stakeholders to discuss and brainstorm decision-making options.
- ✓ **Community workshops** – Issues that require community feedback can benefit from a noticed workshop.
- ✓ **Charrettes** – Meetings in which all stakeholders in a given project gather to resolve conflicts and map solutions to issues facing the community.

Various times exist 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, amendments to the Zoning Ordinances, the Master Plan, requested variances and special land uses.

## 6. PROCESSES FOR DEVELOPMENT

The following processes require that neighbors within 300 feet of a property be personally notified:

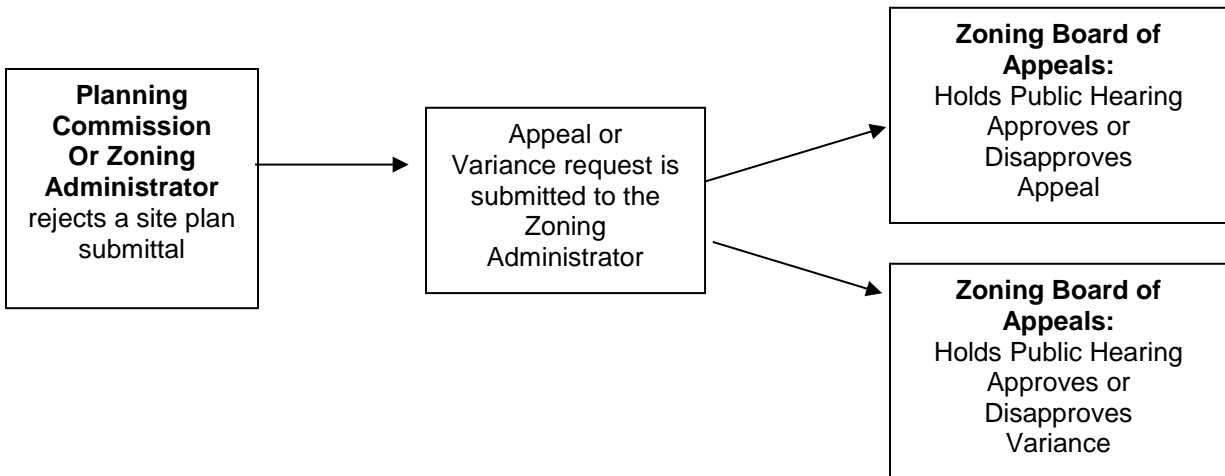
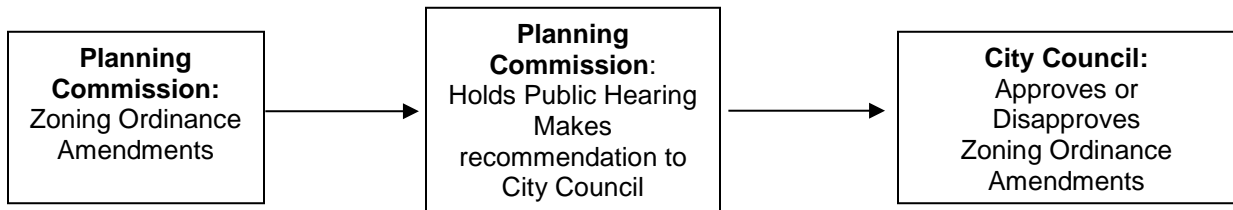
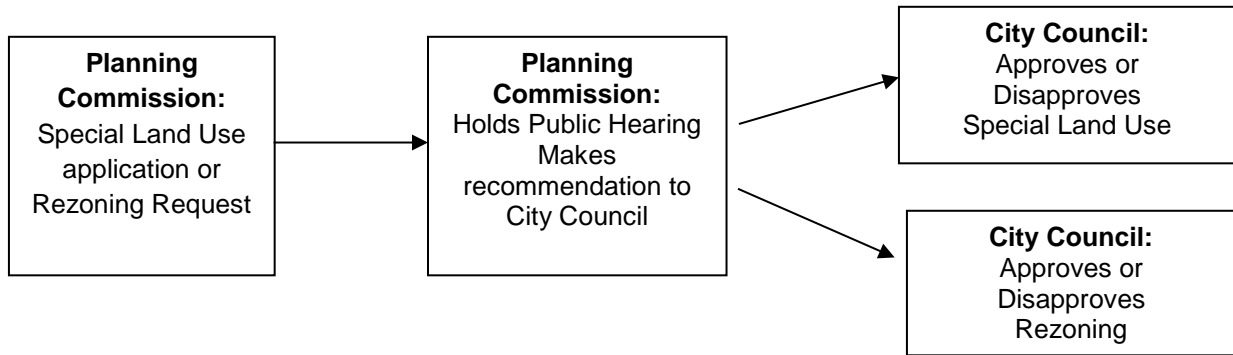
- Rezoning of property
- Special land use
- Variance requests

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 shall provide reasonable accommodations. Individuals with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodations or services should contact the City Clerk's office, 989-725-0500.

Interested persons are encouraged to contact the City Clerk or to check the city's website at [www.ci.owosso.mi.us](http://www.ci.owosso.mi.us) 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.

The flowchart below outlines the time lines for these processes:





## 7. ADDITIONAL OUTREACH STRATEGIES

### ➤ **Master Plan Update**

The Master Plan is the visioning document for the City by which future developments and policies are created from. Therefore, it is integral in the planning process to get the broadest engagement and most public input. A variety of communication tools are used with an effort to gain attention and involvement from the broadest cross section of residents, representative of the entire City.

At least two workshops or visioning forums are held. Notice is given to all residents when the planning process begins and when a draft plan has been created. A public forum is held to review the draft document. Various other input methods are used as well, including, but not limited to, web surveys, interactive mapping projects, electronic updates, focus groups and soliciting input from business leaders and neighboring community leaders.

### ➤ **Zoning Ordinance Update**

The Zoning Ordinance is the regulating document that helps forward the vision of the City as well as promote public health, safety and general welfare. Since this document establishes comprehensive zoning regulations and provides for the administration, enforcement and amendment of those regulations, it is important that the public is informed of and can give input about updates. Zoning regulations are based off the Master Plan and therefore do not need as extensive of an input process. However, informing and educating the public about updates or revisions of the ordinance is important. Traditional communications methods are utilized.

### ➤ **Downtown Development Plan**

The Downtown Development Plan is the guiding document for the vision and success of the downtown. Downtown development planning is key to the success of a city and its economic development. Public input and engagement in this process is crucial. Education on topics such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), make this process easier and visioning techniques can help the public understand various planning concepts.

Owners can be useful in bridging any misunderstandings. Public visioning sessions, websites, interactive mapping, and focus groups can all be useful in creating the Downtown Development Plan.

### ➤ **Parks and Recreation Plan**

Workshops, focus groups, surveys, websites, and/or alternative methods are useful in recreation planning. The last update of the Owosso Parks and Recreation Plan had a public input process that included a community survey and multiple public meetings.

### ➤ **Low Engagement Development Plan**

Low Engagement Development plans require review by city staff and may be approved administratively. If there are any questions, it may be forwarded to the Planning Commission for review and approval.

### ➤ **High Engagement Development Plan**

A high engagement development plan will most likely require one or more focus groups of relevant residents, business owners, and/or organization leaders. Proactive notification and timely education can prevent some controversy. Mailings, media, websites, and other methods can keep residents informed to prevent misinformation and misunderstanding. Public hearings can allow developers, residents and officials to work through development plans and solicit input.

➤ **Citizen Participation Plan Update**

Like all documents, the City of Owosso 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 the Planning Commission, and approved through the City Council.

**8. COMMUNICATING RESULTS**

The City of Owosso will:

- Publicly communicate all results of community input on planning and development issues.
- Utilize one or more of the "Inform" methods to relay results back to the public.
- Provide for a formal written procedure that will accommodate a timely written response to written complaints and grievances, within 15 days where practicable.

**9. EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT**

Continuous review of our public input processes is the only way that Owosso will remain a thriving and connected community. The residents are what make Owosso such a great community to live in; their creativity and talent are irreplaceable in the planning processes. Therefore, reflection on communication and involvement efforts is needed to verify that optimal methods are used.

A Communication Event Satisfaction Survey will be used at each event (see page 11). Results can be analyzed by keeping records of participation, including the types of communication used, the quality and quantity of comments received, and the number of participants involved. The hired consultant or staff will be in charge of recording participation.

Each plan and project shall include a Public Participation Review (see page 12). Documentation will contribute to a public participation process that is continuously evolving to efficiently obtain public input. To insure that methods are effective, the plan will be reviewed annually and updated when necessary. Methods that have failed will not be removed from the Citizen Participation Plan, but will be reviewed and documented so that the same mistakes will not be made in the future.

## 10. COMMUNITY EVENT SATISFACTION SURVEY – PUBLIC ATTENDEES

**Please take a moment before you leave to complete the following:**

Date:

What Event/Meeting did you attend today?

How did you hear about this Event/Meeting?

Was this Event/Meeting held at a convenient location and time?

What time or location would have been more ideal?

Are you glad you came to the Event/Meeting?

How would you improve it?

*The City of Owosso thanks you for your attendance. This survey will assist city personnel to learn from attendees the success of the public input process.*

## 11. INTERNAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION EVALUATION - PARTICIPANTS

<b>Please take a moment before you leave to complete the following:</b>
Type of public participation:
Date and Time:
How was the Event/Meeting advertised?
Where was the Event/Meeting held?
How many people attended?
Was there a group under-represented? Over-represented?
Who facilitated the Event/Meeting?
How could the Event/Meeting have been improved?

*Please return this form to the Planning and Zoning Department. Thank you!*