

# Community Engagement Plan (CEP)

## East Grand Forks Land Use Plan Update

Updated 12/30/20

### 1. Summary

This Community Engagement Plan (CEP) presents an overview of the tools, approaches, issues and considerations for engaging the East Grand Forks community and receiving comments and guidance for the Land Use Plan Update.

This CEP is intended to evolve through the life of the project, and to respond to guidance from City of East Grand Forks and GF-EGF MPO staff, Project Steering Committee (PSC) members, City Council, and other project partners.

### 2. Impacts from and Response to COVID-19

The State of Minnesota continues under a set of social distancing guidelines as work on this plan begins. Community engagement traditionally includes in-person and online activities. In-person activities are generally not compatible with the social distancing guidelines currently in effect. To respond, this CEP includes an enhanced set of online activities designed to engage the community and receive the guidance that is needed to develop a responsive and effective plan.

Although in-person activities are still included and described in this CEP, it is assumed that due to current conditions the great majority of this project's engagement activities will be conducted virtually using agreed upon online / internet tools.

This CEP will be updated as needed to reflect changes in engagement strategies and activities.

### 3. Audiences / Stakeholders

Two general audiences / types of stakeholders are identified as part of this project:

- » Internal stakeholders: City staff, Steering Committee members, agency and organizational partners
- » External stakeholders: Community organizations and the general public

More detailed definition and potential engagement activities for each are defined in the following sections of this document.

## 4. Engagement with Internal stakeholders

Internal stakeholders include City staff, agency partners, and members of project-related bodies who are directly involved in the steering, management, or development of the project.

### **Project Steering Committee (PSC)**

The Project Steering Committee is made up of staff and designated representatives of the Grand Forks - East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization (GF-EGF MPO) and the City of Grand Forks. The PSC:

- » Guides key decisions and the overall direction of the project
- » Offers guidance for development of project recommendations and the draft plan
- » Facilitates communication with other stakeholders
- » Provides initial review of key items prior to wider distribution
- » Provides support with gathering data
- » Ensures that the plan is compatible with the current City plans and policies

The PSC meets every month. Meetings are coordinated by GF-EGF MPO Senior Planner Teri Kouba and facilitated by the WSB team.

Members of the PSC include (affiliation provided in parenthesis):

- » Anna Pierce (MNDOT MPO Coordinator)
- » Barry Wilfahrt (The Chamber)
- » Blue Weber (Represents EGF Downtown Businesses)
- » Brandon Boesflug (EGF School Board Member and Blue Line Club Member)
- » Brian Huschle (Northland Community College)
- » Deka Ali (EGF School District and Somali Community Liason)
- » Diane Blair (EGF EDA Member)
- » Gary Christianson (EGF Planning Commission Member)
- » Jacob Snyder (Polk County Planner)
- » Jason Stordahl (EGF Public Works Director)
- » Jodi Stauss Stassen (Northland Community College)
- » Jon Mason (MnDOT District 2)
- » Kristen Sperry (FHWA North Dakota)

- » Mike Kolness (Public School District)
- » Nancy Ellis (EGF City Planner)
- » Paul Gorte (EGF Economic Development Director)
- » Reid Huttunen (EGF Parks & Rec Superintendent)
- » Steve Emery (EGF Engineering)
- » Wayne Zacher (NDDOT Local Government)
- » Vacant (EGF Economic Development Board Member)

Meetings will begin in mid-September 2020 and continue until the completion of the project in November 2021. Meetings will be used to share project updates and receive guidance at key points throughout the plan process.

### **Planning & Zoning Commission**

According to City ordinance the Planning Commission will send the Land Use Plan to the City Council. The Planning Commission will receive regular project updates from the project team. Teri Kouba will be the main point of contact with the Planning Commission, and will coordinate meetings and presentations as needed.

### **City Council and Mayor**

The East Grand Forks Mayor and City Council will be informed of project progress and consulted as needed throughout the project. Teri Kouba will be the main point of contact with the Mayor and City Council, and will coordinate meetings and presentations as needed.

### **Other City Boards and Committees**

The City of East Grand Forks includes several councils, boards and commissions. As needed, other boards may be invited to participate in project update meetings and to provide comments on project direction at major milestones. Teri Kouba will be the main point of contact with City boards and committees, and will coordinate meetings and presentations as needed.

## 5. Engagement with Community and External Stakeholders

External stakeholders include residents, business owners, other governing bodies, educational entities, and visitors.

### **Residents**

East Grand Forks residents will be consulted at the project visioning stage and at major decision points throughout the project. The goal of engaging residents is to receive their priorities and vision for the future of their City and their goals for the Plan. Potential organizations for connecting with residents include:

- » Neighborhood or Resident Organizations
- » East Grand Forks Public Schools / ISD 595 ( <https://www.egf.k12.mn.us/> )
- » Farmer’s Market and Community Events
- » Arts Centers

### **Business Community**

Members of the East Grand Forks business community will be consulted to receive their comments, priorities and guidance for the Plan. Potential organizations for connecting with the business community include:

- » GF/EGF Area Chamber of Commerce (<https://www.gochamber.org/>)

### **Schools and Education Partners**

Schools and other education partners will be consulted to receive their comments, priorities and guidance for the Plan. Potential organizations for connecting with the East Grand Forks education community include:

- » East Grand Forks Public Schools / ISD 595 ( <https://www.egf.k12.mn.us/> )
- » Northland Community and Technical College (<http://www.northlandcollege.edu/>)
- » Private K-12 schools

### **Under-Represented Populations**

Members of under-represented communities will be consulted to learn about their current experiences regarding conditions in the City, and to receive their goals and visions for its future. Potential organizations and partners for connecting with under-represented populations in East Grand Forks include:

- » Options Resource Center for Independent Living (<https://www.myoptions.info>)
- » Polk County Social Services Board (<https://www.co.polk.mn.us/284/Social-Services-Board>)
- » Food shelves
- » Non-English language groups

### **Visitors**

Visitors to the city’s many destinations and events will be included in the engagement process. Potential opportunities for connecting to visitors to the city include:

- » Table and project presence at East Grand Forks area events
- » MN Tourism / Visit East Grand Forks (<https://www.exploreminnesota.com/profile/greater-grand-forks-visitors-bureau/2018>)
- » Connecting with
  - Hotel owners
  - GF/EGF Area Chamber of Commerce (<https://www.gochamber.org/>)
  - East Grand Forks Arts organizations

### **Adjoining Jurisdictions and Other Government Partners**

The WSB team will work closely with the GF-EGF MPO to identify adjoining and related jurisdictions and other government partners for consultation about existing and upcoming projects, and opportunities to coordinate related improvements across jurisdictional boundaries.

Government partners for coordination include:

- » Northwest Regional Development Commission (<https://www.nwrdc.org/>)
- » City of Grand Forks, North Dakota
- » Nearby communities
- » Polk County (<https://www.co.polk.mn.us/>)
- » State (DNR, MnDOT, etc.)

## 6. Engagement Methods for Community and External Stakeholders

### Overview

Members of the public and other external stakeholders will be engaged through a variety of tools and approaches. The comments and data gathered through engagement will be processed and summarized in the project's Engagement Summary.

The Engagement Summary will be shared with the PSC and included as an Appendix in the plan. Progress reports will be shared with the PSC as engagement activities continue.

### Impacts from COVID-19

In-person activities are currently on-hold as Minnesota continues under a set of social distancing guidelines. An enhanced set of online engagement tools will be used to engage the community and receive the guidance that is needed to develop a responsive and effective plan. This CEP will be updated as needed to reflect changes in engagement strategies and activities.

### Engagement Methods

The following engagement tools are recommended as part of this project:

- » ONLINE Community Workshop / Open House (*implemented virtually*)
- » Focused Small Group Outreach and Engagement (*on-hold*)
- » Project Website
- » Online Interactive Map (Wikimap)
- » Community Survey
- » Social Media
- » News Releases and Media Alerts
- » Mailing List

A brief description of each tool is provided below.

### **ONLINE Open Houses / Community Workshops (implemented virtually / online)**

Open Houses / Community Workshop meetings provide an opportunity for members of the public to receive project information, express preferences, and ask questions of the project team. Early and proactive outreach using social media, press releases, and communications with community partners, will be an important contributor to higher levels of participation by members of the public. The format of these events will be decided in consultation with the PSC.

Two Open House / Community Workshop events will be provided as part of this plan (depending on guidance from the City and PSC):

### **VIRTUAL Open House / Community Workshop #1**

Open House / Community Workshop #1 will be hosted in January / February 2021. The purpose of this Open House is to gather community input on assets, challenges and opportunities for improving the built environment and quality of life East Grand Forks. This Open House will also gather ideas, input, and comments to inform plan elements.

- » (Date to be decided in consultation with PSC)
- » Location: virtual / online
- » Open House: 5:30–6:00PM
- » Presentation to be recorded and placed online, activities and results summarized
- » Community Workshop: 6:00–8:00 PM

### **VIRTUAL Open House #2**

Open House #2 will be held as the draft plan nears completion (around September 2021). Following a presentation of the draft plan, participants will be asked to comment and provide ideas related to the draft plan. Following the Open House, the draft plan will be updated in response to comments and guidance received.

- » (Date to be decided in consultation with PSC)
- » Location: virtual / online
- » Open House: 5:30–6:00PM
- » Presentation to be recorded and placed online, activities and results summarized
- » Community Workshop: 6:00–8:00 PM

### **Pop-Up Workshops (currently on-hold)**

Pop-Up workshops are mobile workshops that bring the project to the places where people are already gathering. Pop-Up workshops are friendly and casual activities that include richly-illustrated materials, provide timely information about the project and design alternatives, and offer multiple tools for direct participation and comment by participants and passersby - from games and surveys to informal discussions. Pop-Up workshops offer the opportunity to gather the opinions of people who might not otherwise attend a public meeting. Pop-Up workshops can include several types of standalone activities, each of which can be completed quickly, in five minutes or less - for example, dot map activities, paper/tablet surveys, and sharing of brief educational materials.

### **Focused Listening Sessions (currently on-hold)**

Listening sessions are engagement events hosted by an organization as part of their regular meetings or around a specific topic. They allow people to discuss their ideas in a small and relaxed environment. Listening sessions can take a variety of different formats, and can be used to exchange information, discuss assets and opportunities, and discuss innovative ideas.

Some potential partners for listening sessions include:

- » GF/EGF Area Chamber of Commerce (<https://www.gochamber.org/>)
- » East Grand Forks Arts organizations

### **Project Website**

The project website will be used to provide an overview of the project, share project progress, provide access to mapping tools and surveys, and offer a platform for commenting on the plan. The website will serve as a central online resource for the East Grand Forks Land Use Plan Update.

The WSB team will develop the website and regularly update its content. A link to the plan website will be provided by the GR-EGF MPO and the City of East Grand Forks from each organization's official website in one or several visible locations. Webcards advertising the project website can be distributed widely at community events.

URL: [www.egfplan.org](http://www.egfplan.org)

### **Interactive Online Mapping (Wikimap)**

An interactive online map (Wikimap) will be used to receive location-specific comments about community assets, locations of concern, and opportunities for improvement.

URL: <https://wikimapping.com/egfplan.html>

### **Online Community Survey**

A brief online survey will be used to gather specific information from East Grand Forks residents regarding their ideas, needs, and desires for the future of their City. Survey participants will be self-selected (not random sample).

The survey will be administered online and will be linked from the plan's website.



## **Social Media**

Coordination with the MPO and City's current Facebook and Twitter channels can be used to provide timely project announcements and share information about the online participation tools and upcoming public workshops to help increase participation. Social media can also be used to invite visitors to the project website to view project updates and plan drafts. The WSB team can provide the City with social media template messages that can be easily used. Teri Kouba will be the liaison with the MPO and City's communications department for publishing information and announcements.

## **News Releases and Media Alerts**

News releases and media alerts covering upcoming community meetings, significant findings and recommendations, and important project milestones may be authored and submitted to local and regional news outlets, websites, and public media outlets. Potential outlets for distribution include:

- » Grand Forks Herald
- » Local radio, cable access channel

All drafts of news releases and media alerts will be shared with Teri Kouba one week prior to deadlines and presentations to allow sufficient time for review. To ensure consistent messaging, Teri Kouba will be the main point of contact for any media inquiries and press releases.

## **Mailing List**

The City may already have a mailing list for interested residents. Sign-in information from participants at plan events will be processed and shared with the city for future plan communications.

## 7. Engagement Schedule

Task	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
PSC Meeting		●				●			●			●			
Open Houses (2)						●							●		
Press Releases						●							●		
Online Survey						■									
Wikimap				■											
Project Website	■														

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