

Training Strategy (Council/PC/DDA/ZBA)

Training Framework

Why: Continued training is important, especially in this era of unprecedented change. Local government is more important now than ever before. The public rightly expects responsiveness and accountability from their elected officials, and the local level is where citizens can directly experience the difference that good decision-making and ethical standards can make in a community. Elected and appointed officials, mindful of the liability exposures to the municipality, should be aware of established best practices and their relevance to the city of Gaylord.

Funding: The city has allocated funding in its annual budget for the training of elected officials and appointed boards and commissions. Outside funding may also be available from outside sources such as the Michigan Municipal League, Michigan Association of Planning, or our insurance provider. Members of the city council (in its capacity as zoning board of appeals and otherwise), planning commission, and downtown development authority, as well as city staff make more informed decisions based upon the latest information when they receive adequate training on land use and development issues. Turnover in officials and staff can create gaps in knowledge, which makes ongoing training essential to efficient functioning of the City's development processes.

Consistent Encouragement: The city should incorporate the discussion for training within an existing agenda item. This offers a chance to remind members of upcoming training opportunities, allow time for at-meeting training, and encourage report outs from trainings attended. The staff liaison for each board should inform the board monthly via email of training opportunities.

Sharing Outcomes: City officials (elected or appointed) will be encouraged to provide a short verbal report at the next meeting following any training event and share any materials gathered.

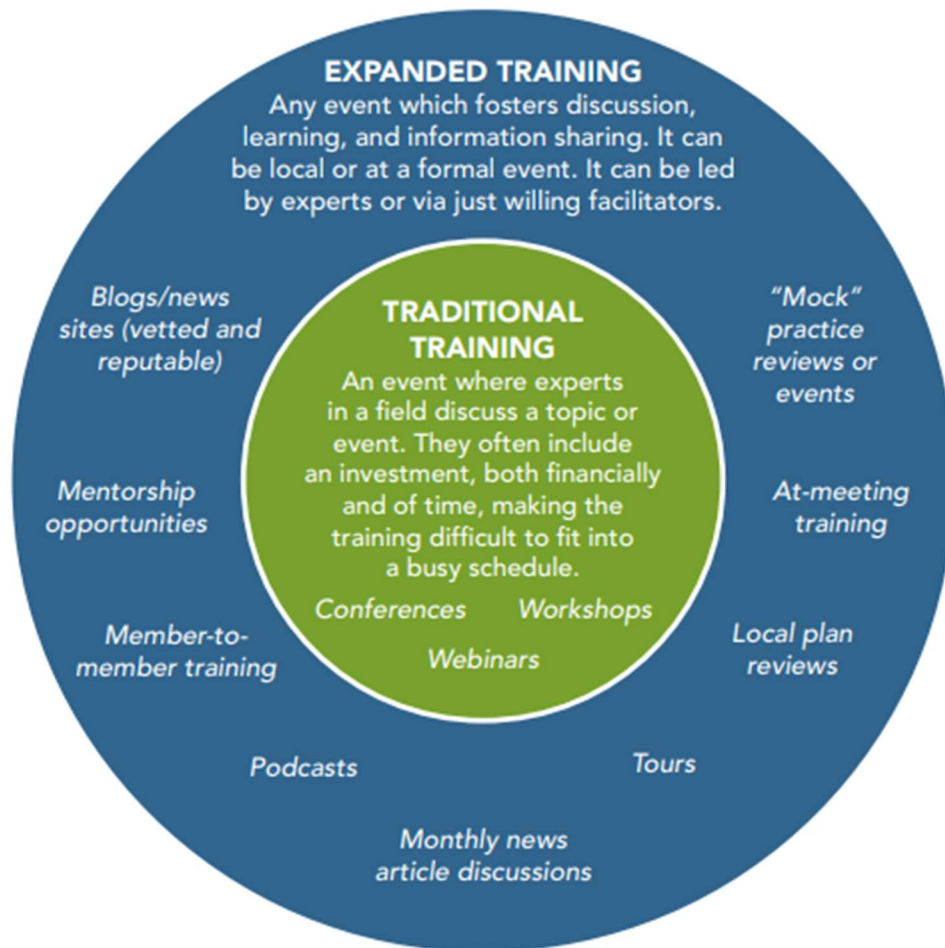
Primary goals: The city should establish the following goals for training:

1. Provide at meeting training opportunities for each board.
2. Every board member should complete at least 1 outside training opportunity per year.

3. Tie training opportunities to established goals from the City plans.

Training Methods: City staff will plan at-meeting training events for each board. These could be short presentations, watching a video together, attending a webinar, discussing an article, etc. The City encourages officials to pursue training methods which work best for them individually outside of meetings such as conferences, webinars, podcasts, or videos. Training should be a combination of new information and the basics to help officials stay up to date on existing documents and responsibilities.

Community Partnerships: Possible partnerships for training are with the Otsego Community Foundation, Otsego County Economic Alliance, National League of Cities, etc. (more examples on resource page).



Priority Topics/Events by Board

City Council

The City Council is responsible for key aspects of the City’s development efforts including adoption of zoning amendments, budgets, approving economic development incentives, and more. Council meets twice a month.

Topic	Identified Via	Resources
Municipal Fiscal Responsibility	Council’s Role	Fiscally Ready Communities (State Treasury)
Economic Development	Council’s Role	Michigan Economic Developers Association, Michigan Downtown Association
Parliamentary Procedure	Council’s Role	MSU Extension, MML, Robert’s Rule of Order
Housing Incentives (need housing stock, new funding capabilities)	Council’s Role, Master Plan	Michigan Municipal League, Missing Middle Housing

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is tasked with developing and implementing the master plan, developing and maintaining the zoning ordinance, and reviewing site plans. The Commission meets monthly.

Topic	Identified Via	Resources
Affordable Housing	All Plans	Missing Middle Housing, Strong Towns, Michigan Municipal League
Annual Plan Progress Reviews	All Plans	Annual Report, Village Staff
Planning Commissioners Handbook	Commission’s Role	Michigan Municipal League
Economic Development	Commission’s Role	MEDC, Michigan Economic Developers Association

Zoning Board of Appeals

The ZBA meets as needed throughout the year and is charged with reviewing variance requests and appeals. The Gaylord City Council currently serves as the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Topic	Identified Via	Resources
Zoning Court Decisions	Board’s Role	MSU Extension Annual Recap

Variances	Board's Role	Zoning Administrator, MEDC Training Module, MSU Extension Resources
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Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

The DDA meets monthly and is in charge of implementing the DDA TIF plan. Training priority topics are tied to the applicable goals in that plan.

Topic	Identified Via	Resources
Placemaking	DDA Plan	Project for Public Spaces, Michigan Municipal League
Economic Development	DDA Plan	Main Street America
Affordable Housing	Master Plan	Main Street Housing
Main Street Process	Board Priorities	Engaged Community Handbook Available through the City office.

Resources

- Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) – check out available trainings via the events webpage. <https://www.miplace.org/events/>
- MSU extension Citizen Planner Program: Citizen Planner Program offers land use education for locally appointed and elected planning officials and interested residents throughout Michigan. This non-credit course leads to a certificate of completion awarded by MSU Extension. https://www.canr.msu.edu/michigan_citizen_planner/
- Michigan Association of Planning: MAP training is available to your community year-round through our on-site workshop program. At an on-site workshop an instructor comes to your location, at a time and date convenient for your participants, and presents a comprehensive educational program addressing the specific needs. <https://www.planningmi.org/aws/MAP/pt/sp/workshops>
- National League of Cities: Offers courses and webinars on various aspects of local governance. https://www.nlc.org/resources-training/resourcelibrary/?orderby=date&resource_type%5B%5D=toolkit
- Institute for Local Government Handbook: Offers important information for a planning commissioners role – and planning basics. <https://www.ilgplanninghandbook.org/>
- Handbook for Municipal Officials (Michigan Municipal League): practice guide covering key aspect of municipal governance. <https://mml.org/education-events/elected-officials-academy/elected-officials-training-programs/>
- Missing Middle Housing: House-scale buildings with multiple units in walkable neighborhoods. missingmiddlehousing.com

- Main Street America: Main Street America leads a collaborative movement with partners and grassroots leaders that advances shared prosperity, creates resilient economies, and improves quality of life through place-based economic development and community preservation in downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts across the country. [Main Street America : Home](#)
- Project for Public Spaces: We bring public spaces to life by planning and designing them with the people who use them every day. Our knowledge, skills, and strategies equip people to fuel lasting change. Together, we create community-powered public spaces around the world. [Home — Project for Public Spaces \(pps.org\)](#)
- Strong Towns: We seek to replace America’s post-war pattern of development, the Suburban Experiment, with a pattern of development that is financially strong and resilient. We advocate for cities of all sizes to be safe, livable, and inviting. We work to elevate local government to be the highest level of collaboration for people working together in a place, not merely the lowest level in a hierarchy of governments. [Strong Towns](#)