

Community Engagement Summary 2

From second Resilient Bridgman public meeting on Thursday, August 17, 2017



Second Community Meeting draws new and returning attendees to learn more about what sets this master planning process apart, and discover what emerging ideas can help to shape a resilient Bridgman.

Date: Thursday, August 17, 2017

Public Attendance: 26

Staff Present:

Juan Ganum, Bridgman City Manager

Harry Burkholder, Executive Director of LIAA

Kendall Gilbert, Community Planner at LIAA

Zachary Rable, University of Michigan

The Resilient Bridgman Community Master Planning Process continued with a follow-up community meeting on **Thursday, August 17, 2017** at the Weko Beach House in Bridgman. Over 25 attendees gathered for presentations by project team members Harry Burkholder and Zach Rable, and participated in input opportunities following the presentations.

The second of three Resilient Bridgman Master Plan community meetings was advertised or reported on the City of Bridgman website, on Facebook, in the Harbor Country News and the Herald-Palladium, on WSJM Radio, and on flyers throughout City Hall. The event drew a mix of full-time permanent residents and part-time seasonal residents.

Following a welcome from Bridgman City Manager Juan Ganum, Land Information Access Association (LIAA) Executive Director Harry Burkholder explained that the nonprofit's role in the master planning project is to help Bridgman identify and understand its current level of community resiliency, and how residents and government leaders can develop a policy and planning framework that acts as a blueprint for guiding future growth and development decisions.

Members of the project team emphasized that it is the proximity to Lake Michigan and the influences of coastal dynamics that make planning for natural events in Bridgman an essential part of any community development plan. Bridgman, like other Michigan coastal communities, will be challenged and tasked in the coming years with managing the coastline, determining public land access rights, reinforcing and/or supporting the shoreline sustainably, and planning for possible population shifts as the state is projected to become even more attractive for people wishing to live in a mild climate close to freshwater resources and activities.

Zachary Rable, a Research Area Specialist Associate at the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan, led a presentation to help clarify what distinguishes a resilient master plan from a traditional master plan. His presentation focused on the value of added analysis when compiling data to be used in a master plan.

Mr. Rable's presentation also emphasized that Bridgman would not be the first or the last community in Michigan to undertake a master planning process that focuses on coastal resiliency. Several communities including Grand Haven, Holland, Ludington, and St. Joseph have completed Resilient Master Plans in recent years, and are in varying stages of plan implementation. In addition to gathering traditional demographic, economic, and asset data, a resilient master plan is distinguished from a traditional planning process in that there is increased focus on environmental, transportation, and land-use conditions, as well as the consideration of observed trends in coastal and climate conditions.

As part of his initial analysis of Bridgman's previous planning documents, Mr. Rable assessed both the city's 2014 master plan as well as its new zoning ordinance, updated as hybrid form-based code and zoning ordinance plan and adopted by the City Planning Commission in July 2017. Upon this initial review of the existing master plan, it was clear that public participation and input was used in the creation of the plan, and a broad regional perspective is positively discussed throughout the plan. There was no discussion of possible community vulnerabilities, land suitability, or coastal processes, and the plan lacked an assessment of economic trends and forecasts. In addition, the plan lacks any assessment of past plan implementation effectiveness. Filling these gaps will become an important part of developing the Resilient Bridgman Master Plan.

LIAA's Burkholder also gave a presentation on the value of Michigan Trail Towns, and the ability of recreational trail systems to leverage a sense of place, grow tourism, and promote economic development. This background in placemaking helped to set the stage for an engagement activity in which attendees were asked to consider various local placemaking strategies, and what they believed the positive, negative, and regulatory impacts would be in the community of Bridgman. The results of that exercise are listed below under **Engagement Activity Results**.

The Resilient Bridgman Project Team would like to thank everyone who was able to attend the second Community Meeting and share their input, experiences and questions. These meetings will continue to be held monthly through December 2017, and will be advertised on the Resilient Bridgman website at www.resilientmichigan.org/bridgman. We look forward to furthering this open dialogue and receiving valuable input on developing a resilient master plan for the community of Bridgman. For further information on these meetings please **contact Juan Ganum** at jganum@bridgman.org or by phone at **(269) 465-5144**.

Engagement Activity Results

Community Meeting Engagement (Thursday, August 17, 2017)

Attendees were asked to consider previous input that members of the community had given at the first public meeting on July 31. Drawing from a list of ideas prompted by the statement “I need more of this,” residents placed stickers next to the statements they agreed with the most. The top selected items with the most support included:

- **Designated bike lanes and trails**
- **Bakery and coffee shop**
- **Biking and hiking trails**
- **Movie theater, fine arts gallery, and arts activities**

Emerging Ideas Input Activity

Attendees were asked to consider their feelings about six “emerging ideas”/placemaking strategies for the community of Bridgman. They were asked to write down positive and negative associations with each concept, then share any regulatory concerns. And lastly, they were asked if they would support the idea in Bridgman.

1. Short-Term Rentals

Positives and Opportunities

- Creates more availability for longer tourism stays
- Helps to make Bridgman a winter destination
- Needed desperately for contractors who work for Cook Nuclear on outages
- Good idea

Negatives and Concerns

- Must have access to owners in case of problems
- Empty in winter

I’m open to this idea: 8

I’m unsure about this idea: 2

2. Food Trucks

Positives and Opportunities

- Adds variety
- Good for the beach; could rotate food truck days with events downtown
- Increases cultural experiences

- Great idea for the beach
- Beach only
- Beach use and special events
- Food trucks add variety

Negatives and Concerns

- Competition for existing restaurants
- Some USDA regulations needed for food safety
- Don't want to infringe on Bridgman's small restaurants
- They take away from paying restaurants

Possible Locations

- Weko Beach
- Along Lake Street
- City Hall Lot
- At County Fair

I'm open to this idea: 9

I'm unsure about this idea: 1

3. Community Open Spaces

Positives and Opportunities

- Super Idea
- Need central location for outdoor community activities
- This town SO needs this — a center where people naturally congregate, connect, interact
- Aesthetically pleasing spaces have great appeal
- Incorporate splash pad in town center park
- Great idea

Possible Locations

- Lake Street — tear down old empty buildings
- Town center

I'm open to this idea: 8

I'm unsure about this idea: 0

Commented [MC1]: Does this one have a number, or was it zero?

4. Small Pre-Fabricated Homes

Positives and Opportunities

- Love it
- Can be starter homes or a downsizing option
- Yes
- Good idea in zoned areas

Negatives and Concerns

- How it will fit in to new and existing zoning
- Will homes maintain their value?
- Is this a fad?
- Plenty of housing available, wouldn't fit in with current housing
- Devalue of existing homes, resale value
- Not very attractive
- You have this at Weko Estates trailer park
- What will the trend be in 30 years? Will our housing market be adaptable to future trends?

Possible Locations

- Replace some rundown buildings

I'm open to this idea: 5

I'm unsure about this idea: 3

5. Natural Lawns

Positives and Opportunities

- Good concept
- Nice choice for homeowners
- Flexibility for homeowners
- Environmentally friendly, obvious benefit
- Cared for and they add to the natural beauty

Negatives and Concerns

- Costs more for homeowners
- Should be a choice and not mandatory
- Some type of uniformity
- Need to be maintained
- Proper maintenance to be kept

I'm open to this idea: 10

I'm unsure about this idea: 0

Pop-Up Meeting: I Want to See This...In My Community

The project team hosted two pop-up style input events while in Bridgman. The first pop-up event was held at Transient Ales on Lake Street from 4-6 p.m. on Wednesday, August 16, and again at Eric's Café from 8-10 a.m. on Thursday, August 17. These pop-up workshops were designed to inform people of the Resilient Bridgman Master Plan process and to learn more about what placemaking initiatives or features residents would like to see in Bridgman. Out-of-town visitors were asked what their first impressions of Bridgman were.

From Residents: I Want to See This in Bridgman....

- Mixed-use space in the downtown area
- Live music venues
- Parking for golf carts
- Movie theater
- Better food options
- Trails connecting Lake Street to regional trails and recreation
- Safe routes to schools
- Attractive pathway and roadway from Weko Beach to town
- Hotel
- Senior housing
- WiFi in the downtown area
- Safe crosswalks on Red Arrow Highway
- Youth hostel that bikers could use too
- Coffee shop
- Options for short term rentals, Airbnb
- Improve public parks and have activities for children and youth
- Movies in the park
- Better access to beach, and more beach parking
- More industry and business for year-round residents
- Music shell for concerts
- Weekly Farmer's Market

From Visitors: My First Impressions of Bridgman are...

- Pretty streets
- Outdoor spaces are awesome
- Love the small-town atmosphere and all the local businesses
- Outdoor spaces are great
- Cute and vintage town
- Up and coming
- Looks more inviting by offering places to eat and drink
- Transient Ales is a world-class establishment — build on this
- Fantastic town, becoming a big beer destination, popular among the brewing circles