

The Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy

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Michigan Public
Policy Survey

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Citizen engagement in the view of Michigan's local government leaders

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This report presents the opinions of Michigan's local government leaders regarding their governments' engagement with citizens and how citizens are involved in the policymaking process. These findings are based on statewide surveys of local government leaders in the Fall 2012 wave of the Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS).

>> The **Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS)** is conducted by the **Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP)** at the University of Michigan in partnership with the **Michigan Association of Counties, Michigan Municipal League, and Michigan Townships Association**. The MPPS takes place twice each year and investigates local officials' opinions and perspectives on a variety of important public policy issues. Respondents for the MPPS this wave include county administrators and board chairs, city mayors and managers, village presidents and managers, and township supervisors, clerks, and managers from over 1,300 jurisdictions across the state.

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Key Findings

- Most local leaders in Michigan believe citizens should provide input to the policymaking process, though relatively few think citizens should be deeply involved. Overall, 17% of local leaders say citizens should simply stay informed about policy issues, while 64% say citizens should provide some input. Few see deeper roles for citizens, whether by identifying policy options from which officials would choose (7%), by recommending specific policy choices (9%), or actually making decisions on behalf of the local government (1%).
 - » When it comes to particularly controversial local issues, however, the percentage of local leaders who believe citizens should make the final decision for the government increases markedly to 24%.
- Most local leaders (53%) believe their jurisdictions offer “a great deal” of opportunities for their citizens to engage in local governance activities, while just 3% believe they offer few, if any, such opportunities. Forty-four percent say their jurisdictions fall somewhere in between.
- While most jurisdictions report providing numerous opportunities for citizen involvement, just 10% say their citizens are very engaged, although 55% say their citizens are somewhat engaged. Meanwhile, 34% say their citizens are not very, or not at all, engaged.
- The most common engagement opportunities provided generally offer limited roles for citizen engagement, including through informational notices in newspapers (87%), public comment opportunities at government meetings (83%), and provision of information via local government websites (68%).
 - » However, the most effective approaches, according to local leaders, are often ones that foster deeper citizen involvement, such as focus groups, membership on formal government boards or commissions, and neighborhood-specific committees.
- Local officials have a largely positive view about the outcomes of their citizen engagement efforts. Overall, 64% say their understanding of citizens' views has increased, and 61% believe the quality of local leaders' decisions has increased as a result of fostering citizen engagement.
 - » On the other hand, local leaders also identify “costs” from fostering more engagement, such as increased demands on local budgets (57%) and staff workloads (68%).

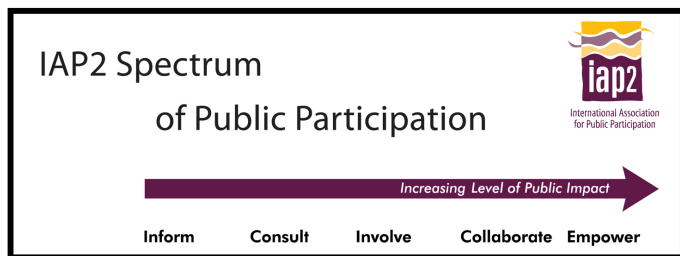
Background

The idea that elected officials and public administrators have both an obligation and a self-interest to engage the citizens in their communities is a staple of democratic theory¹ and is routinely promoted by good governance efforts nationwide.² Studies find positive benefits resulting from citizen engagement, including increased trust in government³ and a greater willingness to pay taxes when citizens think their preferences have been taken into account in the policymaking process.⁴ However, while many analysts tout the goal of citizens as “co-producers” of local government services, some have wondered whether the benefits of citizen engagement may be outweighed by its challenges and unintended effects, such as potential budgetary costs and instances of misaligned goals between citizens and local leaders.⁵

To get a better understanding of citizen engagement in Michigan, the Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS) went directly to local officials themselves, asking what roles they believe citizens should play in their governments’ policymaking, and how their jurisdictions’ attempt to engage citizens. This MPPS survey focused specifically on citizens’ place in local governance, not wider issues of civic participation such as volunteering in community non-profits.

Although there are a wide variety of definitions and models of citizen engagement and collaborative public management,⁶ one popular model, developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), identifies a spectrum with very limited engagement opportunities on one end, spanning to very deep engagement opportunities on the other.⁷ The MPPS used this model to explore Michigan local leaders’ views.

Figure 1
A model of citizen engagement in policymaking, based on the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum*



*© 2007 International Association for Public Participation; www.iap2.org.

As shown in *Figure 1* and described by IAP2, on the low end of the engagement scale is the goal to primarily just keep citizens informed: to provide the public with information on the

jurisdiction’s policy issues, alternative policy options, and/or potential solutions to problems. This kind of simple information provision might include, for example, use of government websites and distributing fact sheets or newsletters to citizens.

A somewhat deeper level of citizen engagement focuses on consulting with citizens to obtain their feedback on issues facing the government and on the government’s decisions. Consulting activities might include focus groups, citizen surveys, public comment periods at council meetings, and so on.

Even deeper levels of engagement involve citizens directly “throughout the policymaking process to make sure that citizens’ concerns and preferences are consistently considered when making decisions.”⁸ According to IAP2, approaches such as workshops and deliberative polling might be used to involve citizens in these ways.

Still deeper citizen engagement uses collaborative efforts “to partner with the public in each aspect of a policy decision, including the development of alternatives and preferred outcomes.”⁹ Jurisdictional efforts here might include citizen advisory committees or participatory decision-making processes.

Finally, full engagement empowers citizens themselves to make decisions on behalf of the jurisdiction. This could include, for example, delegating particular decisions to citizen groups, such as budget decisions impacting specific neighborhoods, or putting policy questions on the jurisdiction-wide ballot.

Some researchers have argued that these kinds of deeper public involvement opportunities are critical to a variety of local government activities, such as successful performance management¹⁰ or budgeting decisions.¹¹ Meanwhile, a recent study by the National Conference on Citizenship on citizen participation found mixed outcomes in Michigan; namely, that the state ranks near the bottom among the fifty when it comes to citizens expressing political views (43rd for talking with friends and 47th for expressing opinions online); however, Michiganders are more involved and on par with citizens from other states in other aspects of the policymaking process, such as contacting public officials and attending public meetings.¹²

Given this, what roles do Michigan’s local leaders think are most appropriate for citizens in terms of the IAP2 spectrum of engagement? What are Michigan’s local governments doing to engage their citizens? And, what types of engagement opportunities do local leaders believe are most effective? The Fall 2012 MPPS addresses these questions, and more.



Most local leaders believe jurisdictions should inform and seek feedback from citizens, but not much more, in normal circumstances

The Fall 2012 MPPS asked Michigan’s local leaders how they view the proper role for citizen engagement in their jurisdictions’ policymaking efforts in general. Overall, 17% of local leaders say the citizens’ role is mainly to stay informed, while the majority (64%) view the “Consulting” level as most appropriate, saying citizens should provide at least some input into local policymaking (see *Figure 2*). Relatively few local officials believe citizens should have deeper roles corresponding to the IAP2 Spectrum levels of “Involvement” (7%), “Collaboration” (9%), or “Empowerment” (1%).

When asked what they think the majority of their jurisdictions’ councils or boards believes the citizens’ role should be, officials are slightly more likely (22%) to say their board believes citizens should simply be kept informed.

On the other hand, local leaders are slightly more likely to think that citizens themselves want a deeper role. Only 13% of local officials think their citizens believe their proper role is to just stay informed, while 45% think it is to provide limited input. By comparison, 7% believe their citizens think that they should identify policy options, 14% think their citizens believe their proper role is to make recommendations for policy choices, and 6% believe their citizens want to make decisions for the jurisdiction.

The growing complexity of issues and regulations facing local governments could be one reason some leaders are skeptical of empowering their citizens to make decisions under normal circumstances; in fact, the MPPS finds that 67% of Michigan’s local leaders believe most of their citizens generally aren’t willing to take the time to become well-informed on issues facing the jurisdiction. Representative democracy, after all, is designed in part to free ordinary citizens from needing to be fully informed on all policy issues.

But beyond the normal role for citizens in local governance, the MPPS also asked local leaders the following question: “Thinking about controversial issues in your community, in general, who do you think should have the final say on your jurisdiction’s most controversial decisions – citizens or public officials?”

Interestingly, when it comes to these controversial issues, local leaders are somewhat more willing to cede decision-making authority to their citizens. Whereas just 1% of local leaders believe citizens should be empowered to make decisions for the jurisdiction under normal circumstances, nearly one quarter (24%) say citizens should have the final say on the most controversial questions facing their local communities (see *Figure 3*).

Figure 2
Local leaders’ views on the role of citizen engagement in local governance

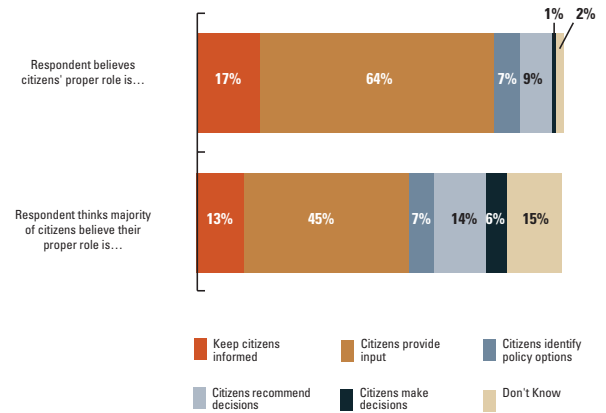
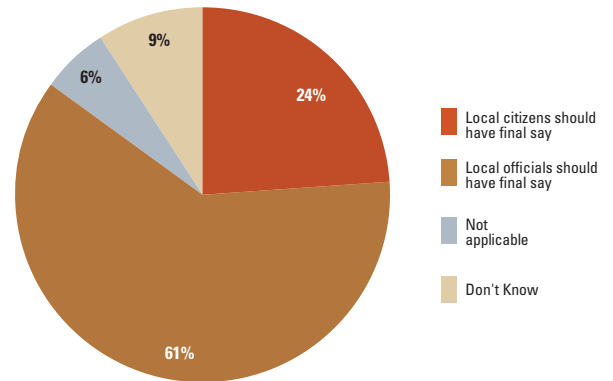


Figure 3
Local leaders’ views on their citizens’ role on most controversial issues



Opportunities for engagement, and whether citizens take advantage of them

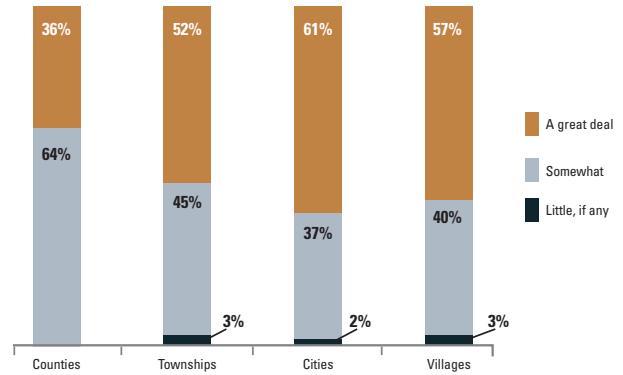
Although most officials generally believe the role of citizens in local governance should not go so far as to have citizens routinely making decisions for the jurisdiction, they do want citizen input and they believe their jurisdictions offer ample opportunities for citizens to engage in the policymaking process. Overall, a slight majority (53%) of Michigan’s local leaders believe their jurisdictions offer “a great deal” of opportunities for citizens to engage, while just 3% say they offer few, if any, such opportunities. Forty-four percent say they fall somewhere in-between, offering a moderate amount of opportunities for engagement.

While there is no obvious pattern based on community size in terms of the amount of engagement opportunities provided, there are some differences by jurisdiction type and by region. Looking at different types of jurisdictions, county officials (36%) are less likely to say they provide “a great deal” of opportunities for citizen engagement, compared with townships (52%), villages (57%), and cities (61%), as shown in *Figure 4*. This may reflect the fact that, compared to other types of jurisdictions, county governments perform more of a regional governance role and may be somewhat more distant from their citizens.

By region, officials from the Upper Peninsula (60%) and Northern Lower Peninsula (58%) are somewhat more likely to report offering “a great deal” of opportunities, compared to officials from the West Central (55%), Southeast (51%), Southwest (50%), or East Central (48%) regions.

Meanwhile, almost a quarter (24%) of local jurisdictions statewide report that they take extra steps to try to engage groups of citizens that otherwise typically might not be engaged in local governance activities. Among larger jurisdictions – those with more than 10,000 residents – this grows to 41%. Examples of such outreach actions include officials’ attendance at neighborhood meetings or other group events, targeted mailings, personal contacts via phone or mail, and collaboration with other neighboring municipalities to reach under-represented groups.

Figure 4
Local leaders’ assessments of the amount of citizen engagement opportunities offered in their jurisdictions, by jurisdiction type





While most local officials report offering ample opportunities for citizen engagement, just 10% say their citizens are very engaged with their local government, although 55% say their citizens are somewhat engaged. Meanwhile, 34% of local leaders say their citizens are not very, or not at all, engaged. While regional differences are minimal, officials from jurisdictions with larger populations are more likely to report their citizens are engaged with their local government. For instance, just 8% of officials from the smallest jurisdictions – those with fewer than 1,500 residents – say their citizens are very engaged, compared to 18% of officials in jurisdictions with more than 10,000 residents. And by jurisdiction type (see *Figure 5*), city officials are the most likely to report that their citizens are very (16%) or somewhat (62%) engaged, while village officials are the least likely to say the same (6% and 49%, respectively).

Not surprisingly, there is a relationship between how many opportunities jurisdictions provide, and how engaged local officials believe their citizens are. Among jurisdictions that offer a great deal of opportunities for citizens to engage, 18% of local leaders say their citizens are very engaged. By comparison, just 3% say this in jurisdictions that offer a moderate number of opportunities, and none of the officials in jurisdictions that offer few, if any, such opportunities say their citizens are very engaged (see *Figure 6*). However, there is still a range of experiences within these groupings. For instance, even in those jurisdictions that report offering a great deal of engagement opportunities, one in four (24%) local officials say their citizens are not very engaged.

Figure 5
Local leaders' assessments of the levels of citizen engagement in their jurisdictions, by jurisdiction type

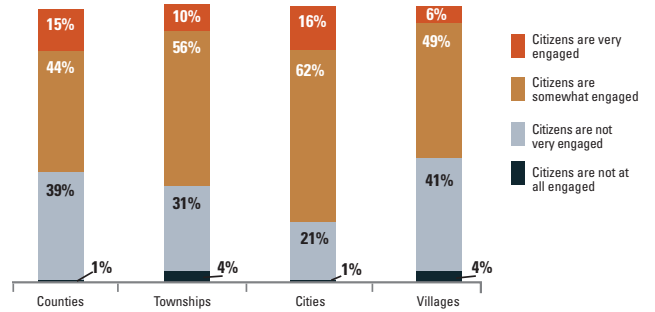
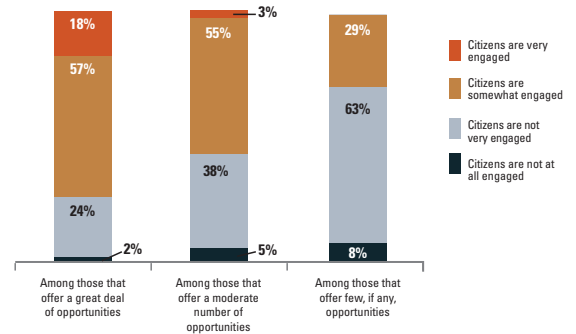


Figure 6
Local leaders' assessments of the levels of citizen engagement in their jurisdictions, by amount of engagement opportunities offered



How jurisdictions try to engage their citizens, and what works

The MPPS also asked local officials how they try to engage their citizens, whether by traditional approaches focused on providing information on a one-way basis, such as newsletters and public notices in newspapers, or by a range of more participatory practices including focus groups, strategic “visioning” sessions, giving citizens formal seats on boards or committees, and more. The most common practices identified by local leaders include placing notices in newspapers, providing public comment opportunities at meetings, and providing information through a local government website (see Figure 7).

Many of the commonly used approaches – especially the one-way information provision strategies such as notices in newspapers, newsletters, and websites – fall on the “lower” end of the IAP2 engagement spectrum presented earlier. These strategies tend to focus on keeping citizens informed or providing them with opportunities to give some limited feedback, for instance, in public comment periods at council meetings. Meanwhile, opportunities that fall on the more deeply engaged end of the spectrum, which may allow citizens to help identify policy options and/or to make recommendations or even decisions, are less common. For example, only 21% of officials statewide say their jurisdictions use strategic-planning or “visioning” sessions to engage citizens in deeper ways, and just 9% engage citizens through neighborhood-specific committees.

On the other hand, there are a few examples of efforts that can foster deeper engagement that are relatively common across Michigan. For instance, 60% of jurisdictions foster engagement through informal one-on-one discussion between policymakers and citizens, allowing open-ended discussion that could help identify citizen preferences for policy options. In fact, 65% of Michigan local officials agree with the statement, “Some of our best engagement with citizens happens informally around the community.” In addition, 50% of jurisdictions report using participation on formal boards or commissions to engage their citizens, allowing a direct and fairly deep role in the decision-making process, although this likely engages relatively few citizens overall.

Local officials were also asked to rate the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the various techniques for citizen engagement used by their jurisdictions. Interestingly, while most approaches to engagement are given high effectiveness ratings, the techniques judged most effective tend toward the “higher,” or more inclusive, end of the IAP2 spectrum where citizens are more engaged than just “staying informed” (see Figure 8). For example, 94% of local leaders who engage in one-on-one discussions with citizens rate that approach as effective, including 50% who say it is very effective for engagement. In addition, 90% of those whose jurisdictions give citizens seats on formal boards or committees rate that practice as effective, including 36% who say it is very effective.

Figure 7
Percentage of Michigan jurisdictions reporting use of most common approaches for engaging citizens

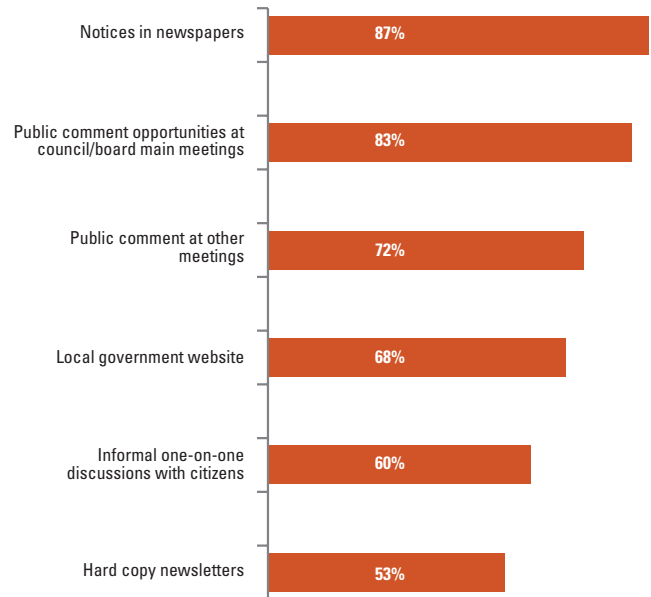
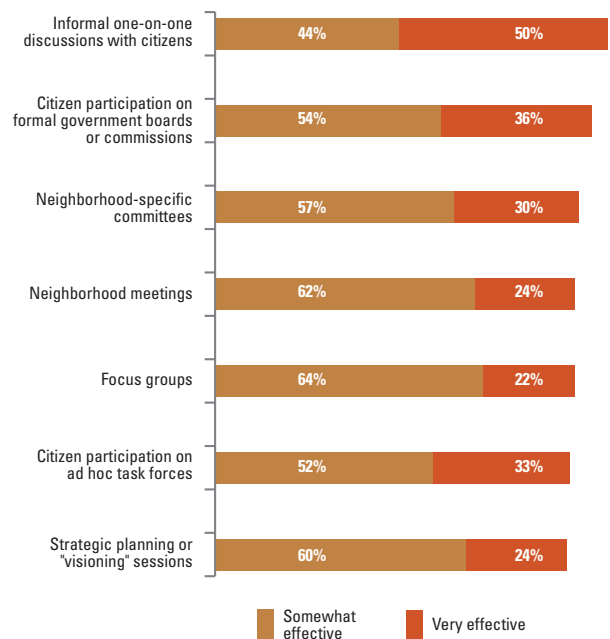


Figure 8
Local officials’ assessments of the effectiveness of various citizen engagement approaches, among those who use the approaches



[Note: please consult Appendix A for a full list of questionnaire items on the use and effectiveness of various citizen engagement practices.]



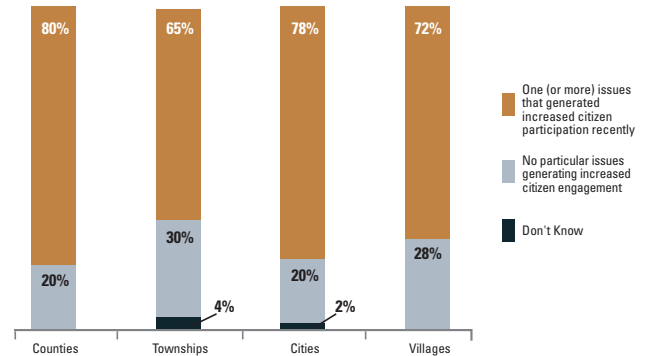
Citizen engagement often driven by specific issues in the community

It is also worth noting that, looking beyond proactive approaches by local governments, citizen engagement can also be driven by the emergence of particular issues in a community that may pique citizen interest in public affairs. Overall, 69% of Michigan officials say their jurisdictions have recently experienced a significant increase in citizen engagement driven by a particular local issue or set of issues, including 47% who say they've faced such an issue-driven increase in just the past year. Local leaders cite a wide range of such issues, as described below. Counties (80%) and cities (78%) are slightly more likely than villages (72%) or townships (65%) to report this phenomenon, but it is quite common in all types of jurisdictions (see *Figure 9*). While some local leaders describe negative outcomes that result from these kinds of special issues facing their jurisdictions, including misunderstandings among citizens or increased demands on public employees, many more report that the increased engagement among citizens generates positive outcomes, such as new group formation, increased awareness, and generally improved citizen engagement overall.

Over 900 local leaders provided examples of issues in their communities that have resulted in significantly increased citizen engagement in the last few years. The issues cover a very wide range of policy topics, but the following types of issues are among the most common:

- Infrastructure issues, including roads (funding and maintenance); water, sewer, and septic issues (costs, maintenance, installation, regulation, etc.); new public buildings (town halls, fire halls, libraries, etc.);
- Governance issues, including intergovernmental cooperation, consolidation and service sharing; incorporation and disincorporation; annexation;
- Budgets, finances, and services, including service cuts; millages and special assessments; public safety needs, costs, and contracting; trash collection and recycling;
- Personnel issues, including recalls of elected officials and turnover among appointed officials;
- Economic development issues, such as DDAs, brownfields, placemaking, etc.;
- Land use and related issues, including zoning, master planning, and specific development controversies; wind turbines; “fracking” issues; parks (including dog parks) and trails; lakes (including access, weed control, docks, and oversight); cell phone towers; sign ordinances; FEMA flood plain definitions;
- Miscellaneous controversies, including fireworks, noise, blight, animal control, etc.

Figure 9
Local leaders' reports of particular recent issue(s) that generated a significant increase in citizen engagement, by jurisdiction type



Leaders believe citizen engagement efforts help, but also see costs

One of the theoretical arguments for increasing citizen engagement is the belief that it improves a variety of outcomes in the policymaking process. To get a sense of whether officials feel the impact of engagement is generally positive or negative, the MPPS asked local leaders across Michigan about a number of factors that might be affected by their jurisdictions' engagement efforts.

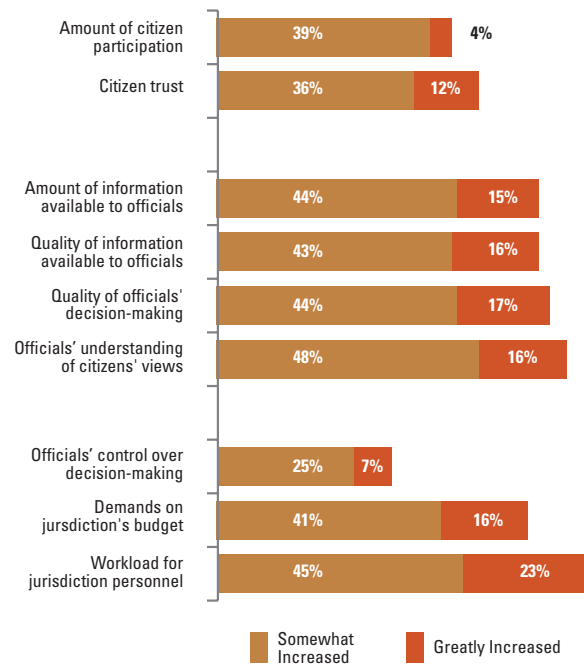
First, officials evaluated the impact of engagement efforts on citizens themselves. Overall, 43% of local leaders say that the amount of citizen participation in their jurisdiction has increased, and 48% believe that their citizens' trust in the government has also increased, due to their jurisdictions' engagement efforts (see *Figure 10*).

When asked about policymaking outcomes, 59% say the amount of information available to leaders has increased and 59% say the quality of that information has increased. Similarly, 61% of local leaders feel that the quality of officials' decisions has improved because of their citizen engagement efforts, while 64% believe they have a better understanding of their citizens' views.

Whereas leaders who think the proper role for citizens is to just "stay informed" might worry about losing control if citizens become more empowered through engagement efforts, the MPPS finds only 2% of leaders say their control over decision-making has decreased, while 32% say it has actually increased due to their engagement efforts.

Yet while leaders see many positive outcomes from more highly engaged citizens, they also identify "costs" resulting from their efforts to foster more citizen engagement: 57% say demands on their budget have increased, and 68% say workload and time demands on the jurisdictions' personnel have increased.

Figure 10
Local officials' assessments of the effects of citizen engagement efforts in their jurisdictions

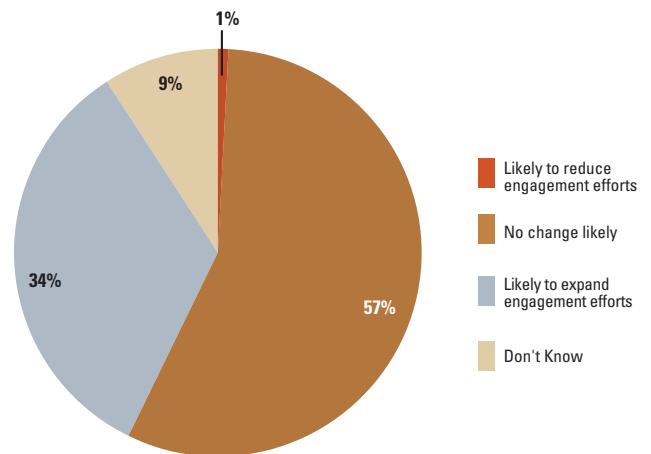




Plans to expand citizen engagement efforts

Looking ahead, more than a third (34%) of local leaders expect their jurisdictions to increase their citizen engagement efforts in the coming year, while the majority (57%) say they don't foresee significant changes in this time frame (see *Figure 11*). Only 1% say they will be reducing their efforts. There is a strong correlation between community population size, and plans to increase engagement efforts. Among the state's smallest jurisdictions, 29% expect to boost efforts to engage their citizens in the next 12 months, while this increases to 50% among the state's largest jurisdictions, which tend to have more staff capacity to take on such endeavors.

Figure 11
Jurisdictions' plans to increase or decrease engagement efforts in their jurisdictions



Voices Across Michigan

Quotes from local leaders describing how their jurisdictions will expand citizen engagement efforts

"With the advent of the Mail Chimp program, we can very easily contact the group that provided their e-mail address with ongoing info or requests."

"I am hoping to begin formal neighborhood groups encouraging neighborhoods to communicate within their own boundaries and have a method to then transfer that communication on a regular basis to the elected officials."

"Changing web page to allow for more input. Also, setting up listserv or some similar internet features to allow easier access."

"Conducting a community survey. We will be conducting meetings and written surveys that will complement each other."

"We are currently in the process of updating our Master Plan. We are likely going to use a website connection program ... to engage our residents in the process of finalizing the draft and helping to craft and frame what we do in the future."

Officials want training and more information on best practices

There is widespread interest among local officials in obtaining external assistance or resources to help foster citizen engagement with their jurisdictions. Overall, only 17% of local officials say they don't need outside assistance, while 44% would welcome information about best practices for cultivating higher levels of citizen engagement. At the same time, 40% of local leaders also say they would like help with training programs for jurisdiction personnel (only 15% report that staff members have had such training recently). Interest in training opportunities for jurisdiction personnel increases to 54% among counties and 51% among cities (which, again, are likely to have more staff members available to work on citizen engagement efforts, compared to typical township and village jurisdictions).

Local officials are generally satisfied with citizen engagement in their jurisdictions, and think their citizens are, too

A majority of Michigan’s local officials say they are satisfied overall with citizen engagement in their jurisdictions’ policymaking and/or operations. Statewide, 58% say they are either very (16%) or somewhat (42%) satisfied with levels of citizen engagement, while only 18% say they are dissatisfied (see *Figure 12*). Officials from mid-sized jurisdictions – those with between 10,001-30,000 residents – are somewhat more likely than officials from other jurisdiction sizes to say they are satisfied with their citizens’ engagement (65%).

Finally, local officials were also asked how satisfied they believe their citizens are with their engagement in the jurisdiction’s governance. As shown in *Figure 13*, most local leaders (56%) think their citizens are either somewhat (44%) or very satisfied (12%) overall. By comparison, a relatively small percentage (9%) believes their residents are either somewhat or very dissatisfied. However, in the state’s largest jurisdictions, officials are less likely to say their citizens are satisfied with their engagement, with only 46% of stating their citizens are satisfied, while 14% believe their citizens are dissatisfied.

Figure 12
Local leaders’ satisfaction with levels of citizen engagement in their jurisdictions

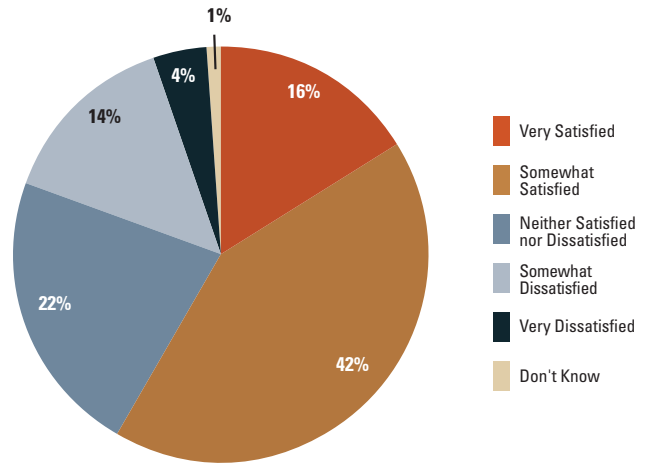
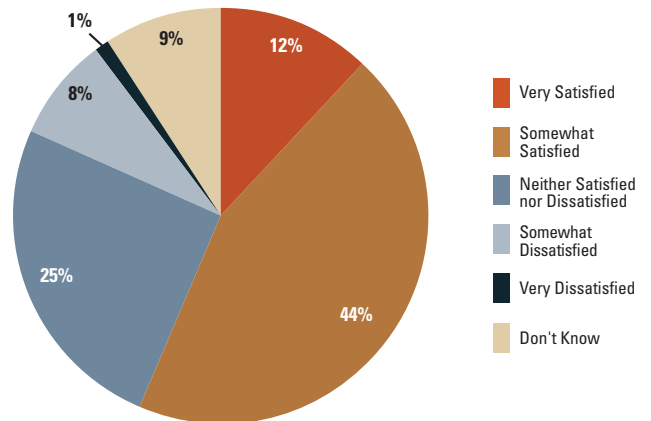


Figure 13
Local leaders’ assessments of citizen satisfaction with levels of citizen engagement





Conclusion

Proponents of citizen engagement point to numerous benefits achieved by involving the public in the policymaking process, such as higher levels of trust in government, outcomes more consistent with citizens' priorities, and greater willingness among citizens to pay taxes if they think their preferences have been taken into account in the decision-making process. However, there are also potential disadvantages associated with fostering citizen engagement, including increased budget costs and personnel time commitments, the possibility that increased engagement can backfire to create misunderstandings among citizens, and hostility toward government if citizen-preferred options aren't feasible.

Meanwhile, a recent study of Michigan residents conducted by the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) provides data suggesting that Michigan citizens may be receptive to local government outreach to encourage greater levels of engagement.¹³ In a nationwide comparison of rates of political involvement, the NCoC found that Michigan ranks near the bottom among states when it comes to citizens expressing political views (43rd for talking with friends and 47th for expressing opinions online); however, Michiganians are on par with citizens from other states in frequency of contacting public officials or attending public meetings. This suggests that not only is there room for improvement in bringing citizens into the local government policymaking process, but there is also interest among citizens to participate.

Fortunately, the MPPS finds that most local leaders want their citizens to provide input (though in somewhat limited ways), and most view the outcomes of their citizen engagement efforts in generally positive terms. While most officials indicate they are at least somewhat satisfied with the levels of citizen engagement with their jurisdictions, many are considering efforts in the next year to increase their engagement efforts and would welcome assistance and resources in the form of staff training and information on best practices.

Notes

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Survey background and methodology

The MPPS is a biannual survey of each of Michigan's 1,856 units of general purpose local government, conducted once each spring and fall. While the spring surveys consist of multiple batteries of the same "core" fiscal, budgetary and operational policy questions and are designed to build-up a multi-year time-series of data, the fall surveys focus on various other topics.

In the Fall 2012 iteration, surveys were sent by the Center for Local, State and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) via the internet and hardcopy to top elected and appointed officials (including county administrators and board chairs, city mayors and managers, village presidents and managers, and township supervisors, clerks, and managers) from all 83 counties, 277 cities, 256 villages, and 1,240 townships in the state of Michigan.

The Fall 2012 wave was conducted from October 8-December 11, 2012. A total of 1,328 jurisdictions in the Fall 2012 wave returned valid surveys, resulting in a 72% response rate by unit. The margin of error for the survey as a whole is +/- 1.43%. However, the margin of error may differ for analyses that include only a subset of respondents. The key relationships discussed in the above report are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level or below, unless otherwise specified. Missing responses are not included in the tabulations, unless otherwise specified. Data are weighted to account for non-response. Contact CLOSUP staff for more information.

Detailed tables of the data analyzed in this report are available online, broken down three ways: by jurisdiction type (county, city, township, or village); by population size of the respondent's community; and by the region of the respondent's jurisdiction. See the MPPS homepage: <http://closup.umich.edu/mpps.php>.

The survey responses presented here are those of local Michigan officials, while further analysis represents the views of the authors. Neither necessarily reflects the views of the University of Michigan, or of other partners in the MPPS.



Appendix A

Strategies employed by Michigan local governments to foster citizen engagement in governance activities (by jurisdiction population size)

	Population <1,500		Population 1,500-5,000		Population 5,001-10,000		Population 10,001-30,000		Population >30,000		Total	
	Percent reporting use	Percent reporting somewhat/very effective	Percent reporting use	Percent reporting somewhat/very effective	Percent reporting use	Percent reporting somewhat/very effective	Percent reporting use	Percent reporting somewhat/very effective	Percent reporting use	Percent reporting somewhat/very effective	Percent reporting use	Percent reporting somewhat/very effective
Notices in newspapers	81%	70%	90%	75%	89%	69%	91%	56%	94%	64%	87%	70%
Public comment opportunities at jurisdiction's main governing Council/Board Meetings	78%	79%	82%	85%	90%	83%	96%	84%	97%	80%	83%	82%
Public comment at other jurisdictional meetings	62%	74%	72%	79%	84%	82%	93%	82%	94%	80%	72%	78%
Local government websites	47%	67%	71%	76%	92%	79%	99%	85%	97%	83%	68%	76%
Informal one-on-one discussions with citizens	53%	94%	58%	93%	66%	95%	83%	96%	67%	93%	60%	94%
Hard copy newsletters or notices	49%	81%	52%	85%	64%	90%	60%	84%	54%	84%	53%	84%
Citizen participation on formal government boards or commissions	34%	82%	52%	92%	61%	91%	76%	94%	88%	95%	50%	90%
Citizen surveys	24%	77%	33%	78%	42%	79%	37%	86%	46%	77%	32%	78%
Citizen participation on ad-hoc task forces or planning teams	19%	77%	27%	86%	46%	91%	60%	90%	61%	91%	30%	85%
Electronic/email newsletters or notices	16%	64%	28%	89%	44%	77%	48%	90%	60%	84%	29%	82%
Local government performance dashboards or reports	18%	33%	24%	34%	35%	39%	59%	45%	73%	50%	29%	39%
Strategic-planning or "visioning" sessions	10%	86%	21%	79%	30%	93%	45%	87%	43%	84%	21%	84%
Social media accounts	8%	66%	16%	66%	30%	67%	35%	77%	48%	65%	18%	68%
Community wide "Town Hall" meetings"	14%	77%	15%	82%	18%	94%	31%	84%	31%	69%	17%	81%
Cable TV broadcasts and/or online streaming of government meetings	4%	77%	8%	77%	25%	87%	43%	83%	64%	81%	15%	81%
Neighborhood meetings	6%	79%	7%	82%	16%	83%	31%	96%	32%	87%	11%	86%
Focus groups	5%	84%	10%	81%	13%	100%	20%	90%	19%	89%	10%	86%
Open houses or "coffee with officials"	7%	86%	9%	86%	9%	91%	23%	75%	21%	71%	10%	83%
Neighborhood-specific committees/teams	7%	88%	8%	89%	10%	86%	18%	91%	22%	82%	9%	87%
Internet discussion forums or online input/feedback forms	1%	46%	2%	64%	4%	42%	8%	40%	13%	63%	3%	54%

University of Michigan

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The **Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP)**, housed at the University of Michigan's Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, conducts and supports applied policy research designed to inform state, local, and urban policy issues. Through integrated research, teaching, and outreach involving academic researchers, students, policymakers and practitioners, CLOSUP seeks to foster understanding of today's state and local policy problems, and to find effective solutions to those problems.

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