

CITY OF CHESTERMERE

POLICY HANDBOOK

EFFECTIVE DATE: TBA		SECTION: 100	POLICY: 127
APPROVED BY: City Council	APPROVED DATE: TBA	TITLE OF POLICY: Public Participation and Engagement Policy	
REVIEW DATE: Every 4 years as per MGA	AMENDMENT DATE:	PAGE NO.: 1 of 5	
POLICIES AMENDED / RESCINDED:		POLICY TYPE: Council	

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to recognize the value of public participation and create opportunities for meaningful public participation in decisions that directly impact the public in accordance with Section 216.1 of the Municipal Government Act.

This Public Participation Policy is in addition to and does not modify or replace the statutory public hearing requirements in the Municipal Government Act.

DEFINITIONS

- 1) **“CAO”** means the Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Chestermere or their delegate.
- 2) **“Public Engagement”** means intentional collaboration or connection with stakeholders to involve them in the decision making process. For the City of Chestermere, it means efforts to consult, involve, collaborate or empower as described by the International Association of Public Participation spectrum of public participation.
- 3) **“IAP2”** The International Association of Public Participation is the professional body that supports the profession and implementation of public participation.
- 4) **“Public Participation”** includes a variety opportunities where municipal stakeholders receive information and/or provide input to the municipality.
- 5) **“Public Participation Plan”** means a plan which identifies which Public Participation Tools to be used to obtain public input in a particular circumstance.
- 6) **“Public Participation Tools”** means the tools that may be used, alone or in combination, to create Public Participation opportunities including, but



not limited to:

- (a) in-person participation which may include at-the-counter interactions, door-knocking, interviews, meetings, round-tables, town halls, open houses and workshops;
 - (b) digital participation which may include online workbooks, chat groups, webinars, message boards/discussion forums, and online polls or surveys;
 - (c) written participation which may include written submissions, email, and mail- in surveys, polls and workbooks; and
 - (d) representative participation which may include being appointed to an advisory committee, ad hoc committee or citizen board.
- 7) **“Stakeholders”** means the residents of the City of Chestermere, as well as other individuals, organizations or persons that may have an interest in, or are affected by, a decision made by the City.
- 8) **“The City”** means the City of Chestermere.

POLICY STATEMENT

Chestermere describes its mission as “creating an amazing place to call home through innovation and community collaboration.” Collaboration with the community includes public engagement activities.

The City recognizes that pursuing meaningful engagement on items of direct or significant impact on the public improves decisions, increases feelings of community ownership and pride, and builds trust.

The City will pursue public engagement based on the principles that engagement will be:

- **Meaningful:** The City will seek out public engagement when there is an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to influence a decision. Participants will have access to information that helps them participate in a meaningful way.
- **Appropriate:** The City will choose a level of engagement (as defined below) that is appropriate to the amount of influence stakeholders can have on the process, appropriate to the scope of the project and within the municipality’s capacity to achieve. The City will also provide an appropriate level of time to advertise the opportunity or accept public input.
- **Transparent:** The City will clearly communicate why engagement is being sought, what the engagement will impact, and the results of the engagement.
- **Inclusive:** Whenever possible, the City will seek a range of views to ensure that the engagement is generally representative of affected residents. The City will hear and consider all views equally. The City will also seek to conduct engagement activities that meet the needs of the stakeholders most impacted.



These guiding principles are aligned with and support the City's values as identified in Council's Strategic Plan which are

- Accountable
- Connected
- Transparent
- Inclusive
- Viable
- Ethical

Note: Public engagement, while very valuable, does not replace formal decision making. The engagement process is one tool, along with many others (including research, policies, legislation, expert advice and partner input) that aid in decision making.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Public engagement is required when:
 - It is legislated
 - City Council or the CAO request it

2. Public engagement may be required when:
 - Many people will be affected
 - Residents or stakeholders request it
 - Residents' quality of life may be affected
 - It may have a significant financial impact on the community
 - The natural environment may be affected
 - Geographical communities or communities of interest may be affected
 - There are already strong views on an issue

3. Public engagement will not be pursued when:
 - A decision has already been made
 - Stakeholder input will not be considered
 - It relates to internal-only items

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION APPROACHES

The City will follow the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum of participation as described below. As the City seeks to continually inform residents, it will use 'consult, involve, collaborate or empower' as its official forms of public engagement.

Administration or Council will identify the appropriate level of engagement based on the City's engagement principles, scope of the project and public need. Whenever the City pursues public engagement activities, it will choose and communicate its public participation goal and promise to stakeholders. The City will endeavor, where possible, to provide public engagement in various accessible locations or formats, provide multiple options for input and additional resources as necessary to encourage broad spectrum engagement.

Spectrum of Public Participation

The City of Chestermere's Public Participation
The City of Chestermere's Public Engagement

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Source: IAP2 Canada

RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy applies to all external public engagement whether conducted by City staff, committees, consultants or developers. When work is being conducted by third parties, the City should be informed of the intended public engagement activities.

When public participation is required by Council or the CAO, they may direct the level of public participation.

In all other circumstances, the project lead will determine the level to which public participation is warranted and develop a public participation plan. The project lead will inform Corporate Communications, the CAO and/or Council (depending on the circumstances) of the overall scope of planned engagement.

Corporate Communications will support the project lead in the development and/or implementation of public engagement activities.

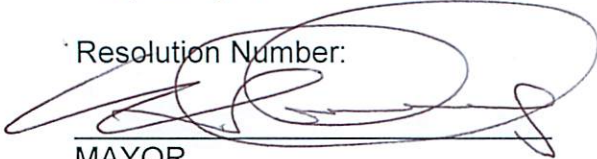
The role of decision makers in public engagement is to strive for the best understanding of the public's views and perspectives and consider the input during decision making.

REFERENCES

Municipal Government Amendment Act
Public Participation Policy Regulation
Municipal Affairs' Public Input Toolkit
Citizen Engagement Toolkit and Social Media Resource
International Association of Public Participation (www.iap2.org)

Adopted by Council:

Resolution Number:



MAYOR



CAO

For Administrative Policies:

Approved by CAO:



CAO