

COUNCIL POLICY



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF WOOD BUFFALO

Policy Name: Public Engagement Policy
Department Name: Communications and Stakeholder Relations
Policy Number: COM-130
Effective Date: October 18, 2016 Next Revision Date: October 18, 2019

STRATEGIC PLANNING LINKAGE

This policy aligns with the Municipality's goal of building a responsible government by enhancing Public Engagement in all areas of Municipal activities.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Municipality is committed to fostering Public understanding of emerging opportunities, issues and decisions, while creating a trusting and transparent environment for Public dialogue to occur between residents and the Municipality.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to develop the basis for a Public Engagement framework that values meaningful input from the Public and to enhance Public Engagement in all areas of Municipal activities, most notably in project and program development led by the Municipality. All Public Engagement will be conducted in accordance with the Municipal Government Act and other applicable laws.

The objective of this policy is to:

1. Build and maintain cooperative working relationships with the Public;
2. Facilitate sharing of information, perspectives and ideas with the Public;
3. Respond to Public opinions and concerns through formal processes;
4. Actively and respectfully engage the Public in decisions about developments, and changes to, Municipal programs, services, projects and policies; and
5. Reach balanced decisions on issues of Public interest and concern.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Definitions:

- 1.1. “Public” means the residents of the Municipality, as well as stakeholders that may have an interest in, or are affected by, a decision made by the Municipality.
- 1.2. “Public Engagement” means the process of having a purposeful dialogue between the Municipality and the public to discuss and gain an understanding of emerging opportunities and issues, and to involve the public by clarifying issues, identifying alternatives or partnering in decision making.

2. Responsibilities:

2.1. Council to:

- 2.1.1. Approve this policy and all amendments as required.

2.2. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to:

- 2.2.1. Support the implementation of this policy;
- 2.2.2. Approve any related administrative directives;

2.3. Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and Executive Directors to:

- 2.3.1. Support implementation of this policy;
- 2.3.2. Recommend any amendments to this policy as required.

2.4. Directors to:

- 2.4.1. Identify opportunities where Public Engagement may benefit decision making or service delivery;
- 2.4.2. Coordinate with Communications and Stakeholder Relations to organize Public Engagement activities that are consistent with this policy;
- 2.4.3. Plan and perform Public Engagement activities based on budgetary considerations and project, program and service priorities;
- 2.4.4. Recognize that this does not replace the need for First Nation and Métis Nation consultation.

2.5. Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations to:

- 2.5.1. Ensure implementation and communication of this policy to employees and to the Public;
- 2.5.2. Develop and implement formal processes that are consistent with this policy and any related administrative directives;
- 2.5.3. Lead other departments in planning and facilitating Public Engagement activities that are consistent with this policy;
- 2.5.4. Recognize the role of Community Services (Rural Community Development branch) in implementing this policy in rural areas of the Municipality.

2.6. Employees to:

- 2.6.1. Assist in Public Engagement activity planning, development, delivery, outcome analysis and reporting as required.

3. General Principles:

- 3.1. The Municipality will endeavour to inform, educate and engage the Public about opportunities, issues and decisions that have significant impact on the Public, through appropriate Public Engagement principles and activities.
- 3.2. The Municipality will determine the level of Public Engagement proportionate to the impact of the issue or decision, and will clearly communicate the level of Public Engagement to the Public.
- 3.3. The Municipality will conduct Public Engagement in the most sustainable and inclusive way with regard to available resources and reasonable costs.
- 3.4. The Municipality will communicate decisions and results driven by Public Engagement to the Public in a timely manner and in accordance with approved communications practices.

SUPPORTING REFERENCES AND POSITION RESPONSIBLE

Legal References: Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c. M-26

Cross References: Not Applicable

Position Responsible for Policy: Director, Communications and Stakeholder Relations

APPROVAL

This Policy was approved by Council. It will be reviewed on its next Revision Date to determine its effectiveness and appropriateness. It may be assessed before that time as necessary to reflect organizational change.



David Leflar, Chief Legislative Officer

October 18, 2016.

Council Approval Date