

Mackenzie County

Title	Public Participation Policy	Policy No:	ADM056
--------------	------------------------------------	-------------------	---------------

Legislation Reference	Municipal Government Act Section 216.1 Public Participation Policy Regulation
------------------------------	--

Purpose

Public participation is essential to the municipal decision making process. 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.

This Public Participation Policy does not modify or replace the statutory public hearing requirements in the *Municipal Government Act*.

General Principles

Council recognizes that good governance includes engaging Municipal Stakeholders in Public Participation by:

1. Creating opportunities for Municipal Stakeholders who are affected by a decision to influence the decision;
2. Promoting sustainable decisions by recognizing various Municipal Stakeholder interests;
3. Providing Municipal Stakeholders with the appropriate information and tools to engage in meaningful participations; and
4. Recognizing that although councillors are elected to consider and promote the welfare and interest of the Municipality as a whole and are generally required to vote on matters brought before Council, facilitating Public Participation for matters beyond those where public input is statutorily required can enrich the decision making process.

Definitions

“CAO” means the Chief Administrative Officer of the Municipality or their delegate.

“Consensus Building” means an agreement reached by Council and all interested stakeholders when all parties agree that they can live with the matter being proposed after every effort has been made to meet all relevant interests.

“Council” means the elected governing body of a municipality.

“Delegated decision” means the assignment of decision making authority to public members.

“Municipal Stakeholders” means the residents of the Municipality, as well as other individuals, organizations or persons that may have an interest in, or are affected by, a decision made by the Municipality.

“Participatory decision making” means involving public members in the decision making process through shared leadership and the exchange of information, ideas and perceptions.

“Public Advisory Committee” means a Council appointed ad hoc committee on which public members observe, advise and liaise on behalf of all citizens for consideration by Council and Administration. Committee terms of reference are to be developed as required for individual Council decisions.

“Public Participation” includes a variety of non-statutory opportunities where Municipal Stakeholders receive information and/or provide input to the Municipality.

“Public Participation Plan” means a plan in which identifies which Public Participation Tools to be used to obtain public input in a particular circumstance.

“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.

Council Responsibilities

5. Council shall:
 - a. Review and approve Public Participation Plans developed by the CAO in accordance with this Policy or as directed by Council;
 - b. Consider input obtained through Public Participation;
 - c. Review this Policy to ensure the Policy complies with all relevant legislation, municipal policies and the spirit and intent of Public Participation;
 - d. Ensure appropriate resources are available to solicit Public Participation in accordance with this Policy;

Administration Responsibilities

6. The CAO shall:
 - a. In accordance with this Policy or as directed by Council, develop Public Participation Plans, for Council approval;
 - b. Implement approved Public Participation Plans;
 - c. Report the findings of the Public Participation to Council;
7. Administration will assess and identify when public participation is necessary and which type of participation should be used. When there is no legislative requirement for public consultation, administration will recommend to Council the level of participation required as per this policy.

Policy Expectations

Legislative & Policy Implications

8. All Public Participation will be undertaken in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and any other applicable legislation.
9. All Public Participation will be undertaken in accordance with all existing municipal policies.

10. This Policy shall be available for public inspection and may be posted to the Municipality's website.

11. This Policy will be reviewed at least once every four years.

Public Participation Standards:

12. Public Participation will be conducted in a sustainable and inclusive manner having regard to different levels of accessibility.

13. Public Participation activities will be conducted in a professional and respectful manner.

14. Public Participation Plans will consider early, ongoing and diverse opportunities to provide input.

15. Municipal Stakeholders who participate in any manner of Public Participation are required to be respectful and constructive in their participation. Municipal Stakeholders who are disrespectful, inappropriate or offensive, as determined by Administration, may be excluded from Public Participation opportunities.

Public Participation Plans

16. When so directed by this Policy or Council, the CAO shall develop a Public Participation Plan for approval by council which shall consider the following:

- a. the nature of the matter for which Public Participation is being sought;
- b. the impact of the matter on Municipal Stakeholders;
- c. the demographics of potential Municipal Stakeholders in respect of which Public Participation Tools to utilize, levels of engagement and time for input;
- d. the timing of the decision and time required to gather input;
- e. what information is required, if any, to participate; and
- f. available resources and reasonable costs.

17. "Schedule A" identifies various events which Public Participation is required and what type of participation will be used.

18. "Schedule B" identifies the Public Participation Tools that may be used.

19. The CAO or designate is responsible for ensuring that this policy is enforced.

	Date	Resolution Number
Approved	2015-09-30	15-09-669
Amended	2018-07-25	18-07-522
Amended		

**SCHEDULE “A”
Public Participation Plans**

Category	Event	Type of Participation
Council	Annual Budget	Inform
	Annual Report	Inform
	Strategic Plan	Inform
	Bylaw Review and Development	Inform or Consult
	Policy Review and Development	Inform
Planning and Development	New or Amended Municipal Development Plan, Area Structure Plans, Land Use Bylaw	Consult
	New or Amended Area Redevelopment Plans	Consult
	Planning Documents (ie. engineering standards, information management plans, etc.)	Consult or Collaborate
	New or Amended Community Sustainability Plan	Consult or Collaborate
Protective Services	Change in Service Level for Fire Department or Bylaw Enforcement	Inform
	Municipal Emergency Plan	Inform
Operations	Public Works Affecting Adjacent Landowners	Inform
	Construction of Infrastructure	Inform
	Traffic Management and Studies	Inform or Consult
Community Services	New Development Plans of Trail, Park or Green Space	Consult or Collaborate
	Public Access Buildings New Development or Closure	Consult or Collaborate
	Master Plans	Consult or Collaborate
Utilities	Construction of Infrastructure	Inform
	Studies	Inform or Consult

**SCHEDULE “B”
Public Participation Tools**

Type of Participation	Inform	Consult	Collaborate
Goal	Provide public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding decisions.	Obtain public feedback throughout the decision making process, listen and respond to concerns.	Partner with the public during the decision making process by obtaining direct advice and using it to implement a decision.
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision is routine and part of the operations • Disclosure is required by law • There is an urgent need to respond to the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public notification and input is required by law • The decision is a known concern to other parties • The decision will affect the lifestyle or habits of citizens • There is perceived risk associated with the decision • Council or Administration requests public input prior to making a decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing the decision making process • Incorporating recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible • Decision directly affects a large amount of the population
Process/Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspaper • Website • Social Media • Radio • Letters • Flyers • Notices to adjacent landowners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey • Polls • Open House • Public Hearing • Council Meeting Delegation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Advisory Committee • Consensus Building • Participatory Decision Making • Delegated decisions • Plebiscite