

Big Lakes County Policy

Public Participation Policy

Policy Number: Admin-57
Legal Authority:
Approved by Council: June 13, 2018
Effective Date: June 13, 2018
Revised Date: April 26, 2023

Policy Statement

Big Lakes County values public participation for the information that it provides our decision-makers to make well informed and well supported decisions. The county will consider public participation when it comes to our bylaws, policies, programs, and services.

This policy will ensure that our public participation is consistent, outcome driven, adherent to the Section 216.1(1) of the *Municipal Government Act*, efficient, and effective.

Definitions

- a. **“CAO”** means the Chief Administrative Officer of the county or their delegate.
- b. **“Stakeholder”** means an individual or group who has a specific interest or are affected by, a decision made by the county. Stakeholders may include residents, non-residents, groups, organizations, individuals, representatives and/or county staff, depending on the issue.
- c. **“County”** means Big Lakes County, Alberta.
- d. **“Public Participation”** means creating opportunities for people to be involved in a decision-making process and help inform decision-making.

Policy Responsibilities

- 1. Council Responsibilities
Council shall:
 - i. Approve this policy and all amendments as required;
 - ii. Review this policy every four years to ensure that it complies with all relevant legislation, county policies, and the spirit and intent of public participation;

- iii. Be guided by the policy when determining the level of public participation required prior to making a decision; and
 - iv. Promote and support public participation.
- 2. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to:
 - i. Support the implementation of this policy;
 - ii. Implement approved public participation plans; and
 - iii. Report findings from the public participation to council;

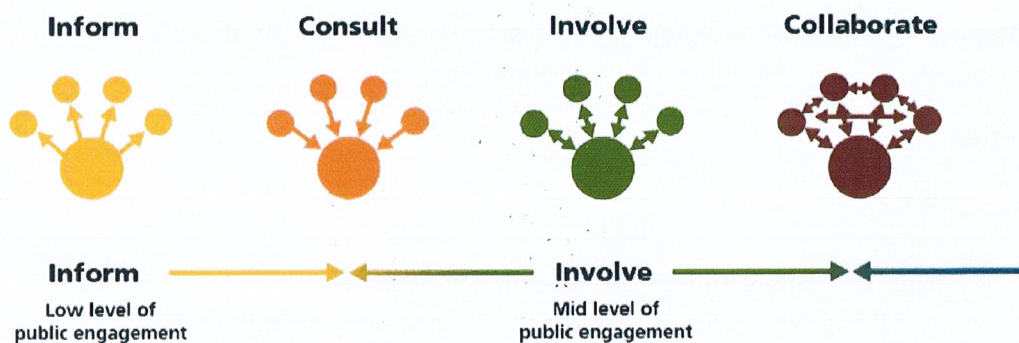
Public Participation Circumstances

This policy applies when public participation supports decision-making for the purpose of:

- 1. When new programs or services are being established;
- 2. When existing programs and services are being reviewed;
- 3. When identifying council priorities;
- 4. When gathering input or formulating recommendations with respect to budget;
- 5. When gathering input or formulating recommendations with respect to the county's strategic plans or business plans;
- 6. When gathering input or formulating recommendations with respect to the county's capital plan and/or financial plan; or
- 7. As otherwise directed by council.

Approaches

Public participation approaches to support decision-making will include:



Adapted from Alberta Municipal Affairs, 2011; International Association of Public Participation ©2006; and the Praxis Group, 2012.

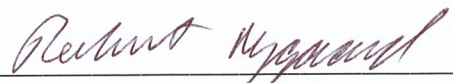
1. **“Inform”** means informing the public of issues/initiatives to make them aware of decisions already made (for example: a press release to inform the public of a new service);
2. **“Consult”** means consultations to inform the public and collect opinions, which may influence decision making and recommendations (for example: public hearings and delegations to council);
3. **“Involve”** means involving the public through workshops or open houses to clarify issues, values, and to gather information which will shape the alternatives developed and conclusions reached (for example: seeking input from local stakeholder group prior to the new bylaw that will effect the group);
4. **“Collaborate”** means collaborating and working with the public directly to identify alternatives and outcomes (for example: Agricultural Advisory Committee);

Reporting & Evaluation

1. Information obtained in public participation will be reviewed by the CAO and a report shall be provided to council.
2. The report shall include, at minimum, the following:
 - i. An overview of the public participation plan and how it was developed;
 - ii. An assessment of the effectiveness of the plan based on the level of participation and the quality of input;
 - iii. A summary of the input obtained; and
 - iv. May include recommendations for future public participation plans.
3. Reports shall be provided to council for review.

References

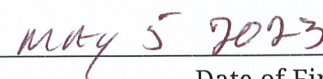
Public Participation Policies and Public Notification – A guide for Municipalities Citizen Participation Toolkit and Social Media Resource



Reeve



Chief Administrative Officer



Date of Final Signature