

COUNTY OF TWO HILLS NO. 21

Policy Number

ADM-PUB-1

Title

Public Participation Policy

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Date Approved

July 18, 2018

Policy

The County is committed to open, accountable and responsive decision-making, which includes appropriate and timely levels of engagement with the public.

This policy covers public engagement processes inclusive of all external and internal public engagement opportunities such as: statutory, non-statutory and other proposed applications, plans, projects and studies that may have an impact on residents and stakeholders.

Person / Areas Affected

All County and external consultants responsible for projects and initiatives will be accountable to following this policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the Public and Stakeholders:

Are encouraged to meaningfully engage with the County so their input strengthens decisions and their involvement builds stronger communities.

Are encouraged to increase their understandings and knowledge about local issues as well as their role in the County's decision-making processes so they can participate meaningfully.

Role of the County:

Inform, consult and engage the public regarding decisions that affect the public.

Provide engagement opportunities that are open and transparent.

Consider the public's input.

Build the skills and knowledge of staff to engage the public.

Commit to continuously improve the public participation process.

Guiding Principles

Public Engagement in the County will be planned, implemented, evaluated and reported using these the following guidelines.

1. Public Engagement is **PROACTIVE**: It is initiated early enough in the decision making process for participants to become informed and contribute to the outcome.
2. Public Engagement is **CLEAR** and **FOCUSED**: The County and the public understand their respective roles in a public engagement process, including the level of involvement and how input will be used to inform decisions.
3. Public Engagement is **ACCOUNTABLE** and **TRANSPARENT**: Public engagement outcomes are measured, evaluated and reported in a timely manner.

Engagement Policy Spectrum

The engagement Policy Spectrum includes a spectrum of five strategies and associated commitments that follow the Spectrum of Engagement of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). When the County embarks on an engagement process for planning, policy or project purpose, the scope of the engagement and the commitment to stakeholders will be clarified at the beginning of the process.

Increasing Level of Public Impact				
<p>Inform To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist the public in understanding the issue, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.</p>	<p>Consult To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.</p>	<p>Involve To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns are consistently understood and considered.</p>	<p>Collaborate To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.</p>	<p>Empower To place final decision – making in the hands of the public.</p>
Commitment to Stakeholders				
<p>We will keep you informed.</p>	<p>We will keep you informed and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how input influenced the decision.</p>	<p>The County will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives and provide feedback on how your input influenced the decision.</p>	<p>We will work together, seek your advice and innovation in formulating solutions and we will incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decision to the maximum extent possible.</p>	<p>We may implement what you decide.</p>
Engagement Tools				
<p>Fact Sheets Web Sites Open Houses Media Face to Face Meetings Reports</p>	<p>Focus Groups Surveys Feedback Forms Online & Personal Comments Public Meetings</p>	<p>Workshops Deliberate Polling</p>	<p>Citizen Advisory Committees Consensus-Building Participatory Decision-Making</p>	<p>Ballots Plebiscites Delegated Decisions</p>

Responsibilities

The CAO is responsible for overseeing the public engagement processes, leading and mentoring staff who plan, implement and evaluate those processes and for providing advice to staff when difficulties arise from processes.

Purpose

To establish a framework for consistent and effective public engagement and outline the expectations for public engagement with residents and stakeholders.

Definition

External Public Engagement: a formal, defined, interactive process between the County, the public and stakeholders, designed to increase mutual understanding, gather and share information, exchange ideas and/or solve problems with the goal of making better, more informed and supported decisions.

Internal Public Engagement: a formal, defined, interactive process designed for employees to increase mutual understanding, gather and share information, exchange ideas and/or solve problems with the goal of making better, more informed and supported decisions.

The Public: anyone (including groups and individuals) who may have an interest in a specific topic or issue under discussion and who may or may not, be directly impacted by a decision on the issue.

A Stakeholder: An individual or group (residents, non-residents, groups, organizations, individuals, industry representatives and/or County Staff) who has a specific interest or is impacted by a topic or issue.

Revisions