



Policy Title: Public Participation Policy Policy No.: 127

Date Approved: 2018-07-03 Policy Type: Administration

1. Policy Statement

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* (the Act).

This policy is in addition to and does not modify or replace the statutory public hearing requirements established by the Act.

2. Definitions

- (a) **CAO** means the Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Chestermere who is appointed by City Council;
- (b) **IAP2** means the International Association of Public Participation which is the professional body that supports the profession and implementation of public participation;
- (c) **City** means the City of Chestermere;
- (d) **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;
- (e) **Public Participation** includes a variety of opportunities where municipal stakeholders receive information and/or provide input to the municipality;
- (f) **Public Participation Plan** means a plan which identifies which Public Participation Tools will be used to obtain public input in a particular circumstance;
- (g) **Public Participation Tools** means the tools that may be used, alone or in combination, to Create Public Participation opportunities including but not limited to:
 - (i) in-person participation which may include at-the-counter interactions, door-knocking, interviews, meetings, round-tables, town halls, open houses, and workshops;
 - (ii) digital participation which may include online workbooks, chat groups, webinars, message boards/discussion forums, and online polls or surveys;

- (iii) written participation which may include written submissions, e-mail, and mail-in surveys, polls, and workbooks; and
 - (iv) representative participation which may include being appointed to an advisory committee, ad hoc committee, or citizen board; and
- (h) **Stakeholders** means the residents of the City of Chestermere as well as any other individuals, organizations, or persons that may have an interest in or are affected by a decision made by the City.

3. Policy

- (a) Chestermere describes its mission as “creating an amazing place to call home through innovation and community collaboration”. Collaboration with the community includes Public

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.

- (b) The City will pursue Public Engagement based on the principles that engagement will be:
- (i) **Meaningful:** The City will seek out Public Engagement when there is an opportunity for Stakeholders to influence a decision. Participants will have access to information that helps them participate in a meaningful way.
 - (ii) **Appropriate:** The City will choose a level of engagement that is appropriate to the amount of influence Stakeholders can have on the process, appropriate to the scope of the project, and within the City’s capacity to achieve. The City will also provide an appropriate level of time to advertise the opportunity or accept public input.
 - (iii) **Transparent:** The City will clearly communicate why engagement is being sought, what the engagement will impact, and the results of the engagement.
 - (iv) **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

- (c) While very valuable, Public Engagement 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.

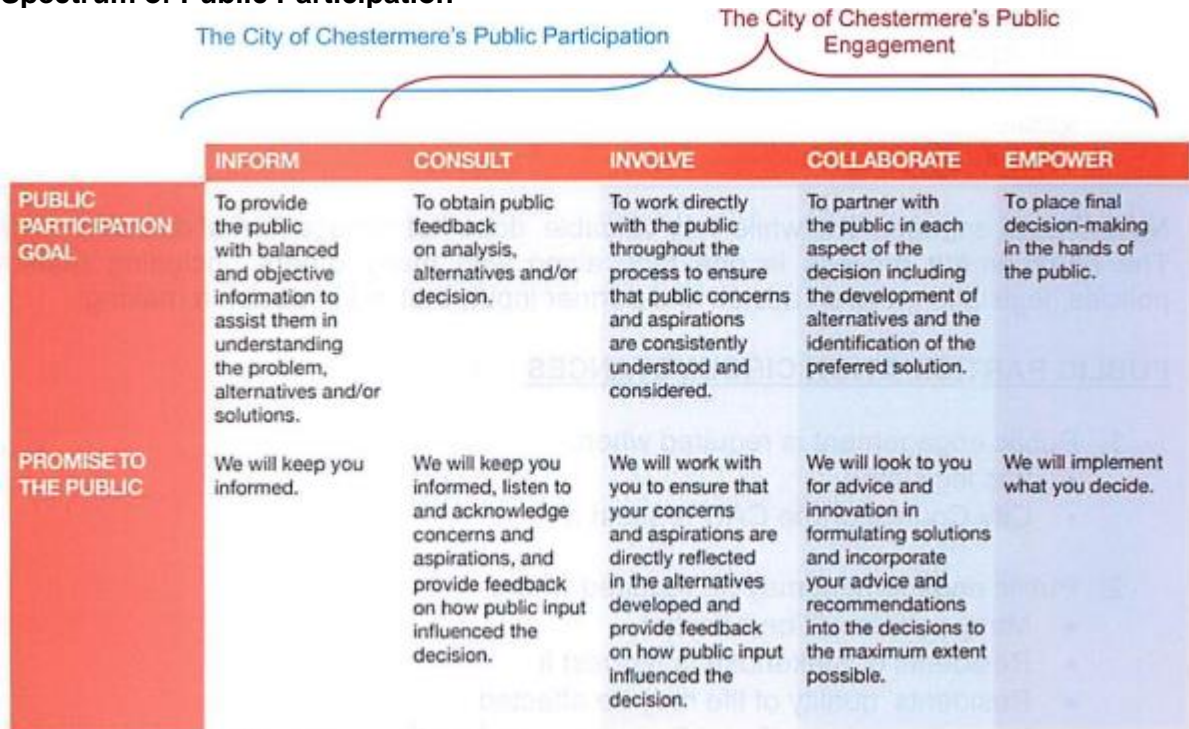
4. Public Participation Circumstances

- (a) Public Engagement is required when:
 - (i) it is legislated; and
 - (ii) Council or the CAO request it.
- (b) Public Engagement may be required when:
 - (i) many people will be affected;
 - (ii) residents or Stakeholders request it;
 - (iii) residents' quality of life may be affected;
 - (iv) it may have a significant financial impact on the community;
 - (v) the natural environment may be affected;
 - (vi) geographical communities or communities of interest may be affected; and
 - (vii) there are already strong views on an issue.
- (c) Public Engagement will not be pursued when:
 - (i) a decision has already been made;
 - (ii) Stakeholder input will not be considered; and
 - (iii) It related to internal-only items.

5. Public Participation Approaches

- (a) The City will follow the IAP2 spectrum of participation as described below. As the City seeks to continually inform stakeholders, it will use “consult, involved, collaborate, or empower” as its official forms of Public Engagement.
- (b) 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 endeavour, where possible, to provide Public Engagement in various accessible locations and/or formats, provide multiple options for input and additional resources as necessary to encourage broad spectrum engagement.

Spectrum of Public Participation



Source: IAP2 Canada

6. Responsibilities

- (a) 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.
- (b) When Public Participation is required by Council or the CAO, they may direct the level of Public Participation.
- (c) 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.
- (d) Corporate Communications will support the project lead in the development and/or implementation of Public Engagement activities.
- (e) 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.

7. References

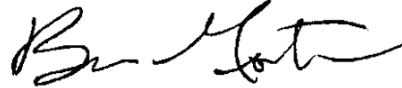
- *Municipal Government Act*
- Public Participation Policy Regulation

- Municipal Affairs' Public Input Toolkit
- Citizen Engagement Toolkit and Social Media Resources
- International Association of Public Participation

Approved by:



Mayor



CAO

Revision History *(completed by Legislative Services)*

Policy Title	Date Approved	Resolution No.
	Click or tap to enter a date.	