

## Purpose

- 1 This policy identifies:
  - (1) the approaches Rocky View County (the County) uses to engage Stakeholders; and
  - (2) the circumstances in which the County engages Stakeholders.



## Policy Statement

- 2 Council recognizes that engaging Stakeholders in meaningful ways on issues that are important to them enriches Council's and Administration's decision-making.
- 3 The County's Public Participation Policy aligns with the requirements in section 216 of the *Municipal Government Act*, RSA 2000, c M-26.



## Policy

- 4 Good governance includes engaging Stakeholders in Public Participation by:
  - (1) creating inclusive opportunities for Stakeholders to influence the decisions that affect them;
  - (2) ensuring that the range of Stakeholder perspectives is considered as part of the decision-making process;
  - (3) providing Stakeholders with the appropriate information and tools to engage in meaningful participation; and
  - (4) ensuring Public Participation activities are undertaken only when there is an opportunity for Stakeholders to shape action or policy.
- 5 The County endeavours to undertake Public Participation activities in the following circumstances:
  - (1) when new programs or services are being established;
  - (2) when existing programs and services are being reviewed or changed in significant ways;
  - (3) when the County examines services and service standards as part of budgeting, capital, or financial plans;

- (4) when gathering input or formulating recommendations with respect to the County's strategic or business plans;
  - (5) when required by legislation;
  - (6) when deemed necessary by the County Manager; or
  - (7) when directed by Council.
- 6 The County's Public Participation approach includes five possible strategies related to reaching and involving Stakeholders in any given initiative.
- (1) The nature of the decision, the time available, the resources available, and the ability of Stakeholders to influence the decision all determine which strategy is used. The range of strategies is listed below in descending order, from the most broadly applicable (Inform) to the least (Empower, which may be prohibited by legislation for many decisions).
  - (2) The five available strategies are:
    - (a) **Inform:** Communicate decisions and actions to Stakeholders.
      - (i) The County makes information available that is timely, accurate, easily understood, and accessible so that Stakeholders are aware of the activities of their municipal government.
    - (b) **Listen and Learn:** Gather and understand stakeholder feedback.
      - (i) The County listens to Stakeholders, records their input, and reports their input to decisions makers and back to Stakeholders.
    - (c) **Consult:** Work with Stakeholders to ensure their input is directly reflected in the alternatives developed.
      - (i) The County consults with Stakeholders to obtain feedback, uses their feedback to develop alternatives for decision makers, and reports to Stakeholders and decision makers how stakeholder input contributed to the recommendations made.
    - (d) **Collaborate:** Consider Stakeholders to be partners in the decision-making process.
      - (i) The County collaborates with Stakeholders on analyzing issues, building alternatives, identifying a preferred solution, and making joint recommendations to decision makers, and advises Stakeholders on how collaboration affected outcome.
    - (e) **Empower:** Aspects of the decision-making process are delegated to Stakeholders.
      - (i) The County abides with the decisions made under delegated authority.



- 7** For every County Public Participation initiative, the purpose of the engagement is clarified for all participants at the beginning of the process. The roles and responsibilities of all parties is clearly communicated and understood.
- 8** Council and Administration strive for the best understanding of stakeholder views and perspectives on topics and issues, however the input received through Public Participation is one factor in the decision-making process, and its influence varies relative to other factors (such as budgets or time frames) in any specific decision.
- 9** Public participation is an opportunity to understand all perspectives on a decision, whether those perspectives are held by one or many Stakeholders. Public participation is not a vote or plebiscite.
- 10** Public participation activities are designed in a manner that encourages inclusive participation to gain all perspectives.
- 11** All participants in Public Participation activities engage each other in a respectful, safe, and non-confrontational manner.
- 12** Council endeavours to:
  - (1)** identify any opportunities for Public Participation as early as possible in the decision-making process;
  - (2)** work with Administration to identify areas where public engagement can and will make a meaningful difference to Council decisions;
  - (3)** consider public input obtained through Public Participation activities as part of their decision-making process;
  - (4)** promote Public Participation activities and provide, where appropriate, Council representation; and
  - (5)** ensure resources are available to allow for the implementation of appropriate Public Participation programs and services.
- 13** Administration, through the County Manager, endeavours to:
  - (1)** identify any opportunities for Public Participation as early as possible in the planning process;
  - (2)** ensure a co-ordinated approach to Public Participation across the organization;
  - (3)** ensure that the resources invested in Public Participation activities are reasonable and appropriate for the impact the decision will have on Stakeholders;
  - (4)** develop all necessary processes and tools that support the implementation of this policy;
  - (5)** communicate to Council, and the community where appropriate, how public input was gathered and used in Administrative decision making or recommendations to Council; and

- (6) make recommendations to Council on the appropriate resources required for Public Participation.
- 14 The County’s Public Participation activities are undertaken in accordance with the Alberta *Municipal Government Act*, the Alberta *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, County policies and bylaws, and any other applicable legislation.
- 15 Nothing in this policy affects any right or obligation that the County or any person has under any other provision of the *Municipal Government Act*, as per section 216.1(4) of the Act.
- 16 No resolution or bylaw of Council may be challenged on the grounds it was made without complying with this policy, as per section 216.1(5) of the *Municipal Government Act*.
- 17 Where appropriate and feasible, the County encourages its Boards and Committees to create meaningful opportunities for Public Participation in their activities.

## References

Act(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Municipal Government Act</i>, RSA 2000, c M-26</li> <li>• <i>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</i>, RSA 2000, c F-25</li> </ul>
Regulation(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Public Participation Policy Regulation</i>, AR 193/2017</li> </ul>
Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• n/a</li> </ul>
Related Policies, Bylaws, Directives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• n/a</li> </ul>
Related Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• n/a</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• n/a</li> </ul>

  

Approval Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2018 July 03</li> </ul>
Replaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• n/a</li> </ul>
Lead Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication Services</li> </ul>
Administrative Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All departments</li> </ul>
Last Review Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• n/a</li> </ul>
Next Review Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2021 July 03</li> </ul>



## Definitions

**18** In this policy:

- (1)** “Administration” means the staff of Rocky View County, under the direction of the County Manager.
- (2)** “Contractors” means individuals or organizations paid to complete work on behalf of Rocky View County.
- (3)** “Council” means members of Rocky View County Council, acting independently or as a group.
- (4)** “County Manager” means the chief administrative officer as established under the *Municipal Government Act*.
- (5)** “Public Participation” means a variety of non-statutory opportunities where Stakeholders receive information and/or provide input to the municipality.
- (6)** “Stakeholder” means residents, business owners, property owners, or other individuals or groups who are impacted, directly or indirectly, by a County action or decision.
- (7)** “Business plan” means the plans developed by Administration to guide the operations of departments.