



Policy Number:	CO-008
Effective On:	October 24, 2022
Approval History:	June 11, 2018
Review Frequency:	Every four (4) years
Responsibility:	Communications
Cross-Reference:	Public Participation Procedures Public Engagement Toolkit

Policy Statement

The City of Wetaskiwin is committed to involving community members in local government and the decision-making process whenever appropriate. Effective public participation is an essential component of a healthy democracy, and contributes to a sense of community pride, involvement, and responsibility. Accordingly, this policy aims to 'bridge the gap' between council and local residents by ensuring an appropriate level of engagement, input, and information has been attained in advance of decision-making occurring. Doing so will assist council in making the most well informed, educated judgements on any matter, and contribute to the development of an engaged and informed populace.

Objectives

- a. To enhance quality decision-making.
Decision-making is enhanced by having the most complete information at hand - including consideration of impacts and potential impacts on citizens. Decision-makers can better make decisions by having a direct understanding of citizens' needs.
- b. To build trust, confidence, and ownership in decision-making.
A clearly defined and accessible public participation policy can help build trust, confidence, and ownership in decision-making, resulting in increased understanding among citizens, council, and city employees.
- c. To provide public participation guidelines.
This policy outlines where, when, and how public participation activities will be conducted.

Principles

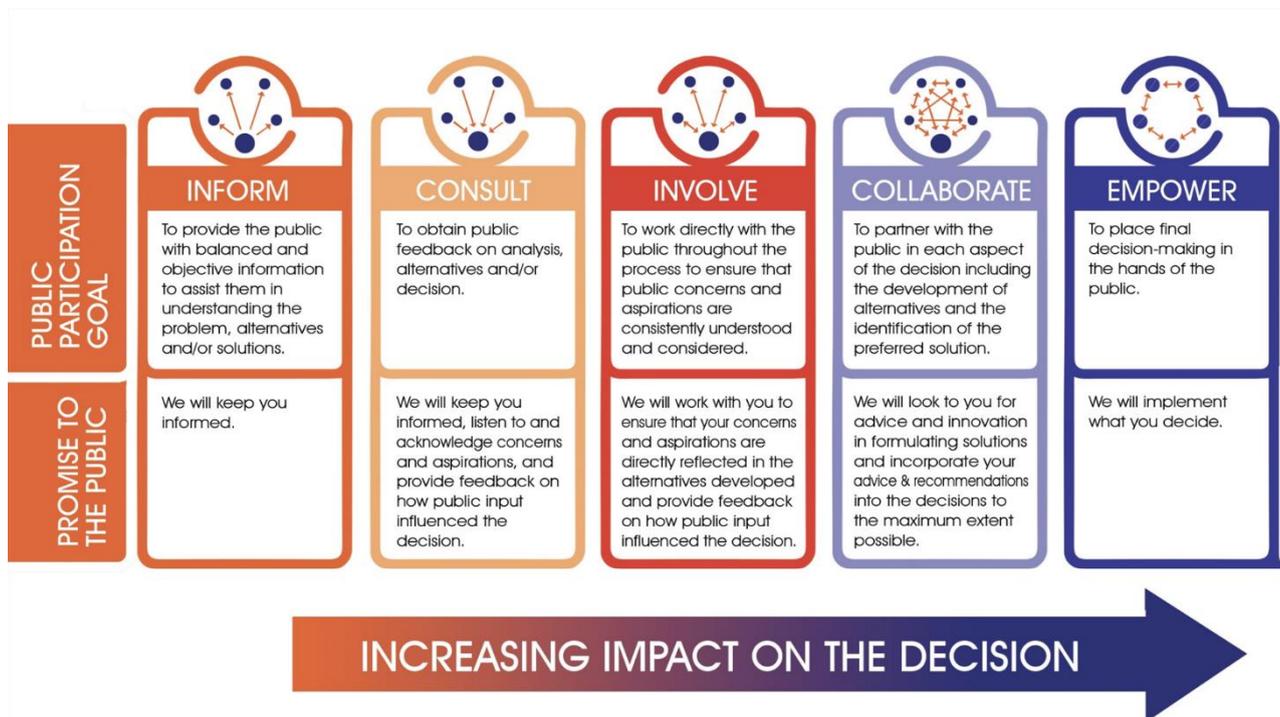
The Seven Core Principles for Public Engagement – developed by the [National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation](#) – were developed for use in general civic-engagement contexts. These seven recommendations reflect the common beliefs and understandings of those working in the fields of public engagement, conflict resolution, and collaboration.

1. Careful planning and preparation
Adequate and inclusive planning ensures the design, organization, and organizing of the engagement process serve both a clearly defined purpose and the needs of the participants.
2. Inclusion and demographic diversity
Equitably incorporate diverse peoples, voices, ideas, and information to lay the groundwork for quality outcomes and democratic legitimacy.
3. Collaboration and shared purpose
Support and encourage participants, community institutions, and others to work together to advance the common good.
4. Openness and learning
Help all involved listen to each other, explore new ideas unconstrained by predetermined outcomes, learn and apply information in ways that generate new options, and rigorously

- evaluate the process.
- 5. Transparency and trust
Be clear and open about the process, and provide a public record of the organizers, sponsors, outcomes, and range of views and ideas expressed.
- 6. Impact and action
Ensure each participatory effort has real potential to make a difference, and that participants are aware of that potential.
- 7. Sustained engagement and participatory culture
Promote a culture of participation with policies and procedures that support ongoing quality public engagement.

Public Participation Framework

The City will conduct public participation activities in accordance with the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum. The level of public participation to be employed will be determined on a case-by-case basis.



The City will, wherever possible, indicate the intended level of engagement and specify the rationale behind this level of engagement.

Public Participation Standards and Guidelines

- a. The City will engage citizens in public participation activities in advance of and/or during any project, initiative, or undertaking in which community members have a vested interest and/or are expected to be impacted by final decisions made. This includes, but is not limited to, the adoption and amendment of city bylaws and policies.
- b. The creation of a public participation plan will precede the commencement of public participation activities. The plan will be reviewed and approved by the appropriate department manager/supervisor, and its results presented to administration and council in advance of decision-making occurring.
- c. The public participation plan will reflect a level of engagement assigned from the IAP2

Spectrum of Public Participation and determined in accordance with the project, initiative, or undertaking's anticipated level of impact on community members. The higher the impact anticipated, the higher the level of public participation necessary.

- d. The public participation plan will include (but not be limited to) the following information:
 - i. An overview of the project for which public participation is being considered.
 - ii. A description of the decision to be made and by whom it will be made.
 - iii. A summary of the anticipated/potential impact(s) of the project on citizens.
 - iv. An indication of the level of public participation to be employed.
 - v. An overview of the proposed public participation process (objective(s), techniques/activities, timeline, budget, communications, proposed use of findings/results, next steps, etc.).
 - vi. A concluding summary of the public participation process and its findings/results (once the process has concluded).
- e. Following the conclusion of public participation activities, outcomes and next steps will be communicated through means deemed appropriate in accordance with the original public participation technique(s) employed. Such correspondence will include an overview of feedback/input/recommendations received, a description of how that information was or will be used, and an indication of the next steps to be taken.
- f. The communicating of public participation outcomes and next steps will occur under full disclosure, except where FOIP or other privacy legislation prohibits from doing so.
- g. Public participation demonstrating or consisting of profane, threatening, or indecent remarks, actions, or behaviour will be immediately disqualified and reported as needed.

Responsibilities

Council

- a. Adopt this policy.
- b. Serve as ambassadors for public participation.

Chief Administrative Officer

- a. Ensure this policy is implemented and adhered to.
- b. Provide direction in the planning/execution of public participation activities where necessary.

Project Managers

- a. Identify/determine projects requiring public participation.
- b. Initiate the development of a public participation plan where required.
- c. Coordinate with communications staff to facilitate the public participation activities.

Communications Staff

- a. Provide input and, where appropriate, direction in the creation of public participation plans.
- b. Coordinate with project managers to facilitate the delivery of public participation activities.
- c. Facilitate and oversee the delivery of communications pertaining to public participation.