

COUNCIL – AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: 3 July 2018

Subject: Public Participation Policy Update

Boards Routed Through: N/A

Date: N/A

Issue:

Council is being asked to endorse the Public Participation Policy and is being provided the next steps for information.

Background:

A Public Participation Policy is necessary for a number of reasons. Firstly, changes to the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA), which took effect in the fall 2017, require municipalities to adopt public participation policies that outline their approach for engaging with stakeholders. Secondly, having a policy will help meet Council's strategic priority of expanding and diversifying citizen engagement; more specifically in SP1.1 where it will help citizens feel like their voices are being heard and SP1.2 to help citizens know how decisions are made and why. Thirdly, the Policy will solidify current practice into a formal policy providing corporate-wide direction to all staff.

The policy and procedures were developed for staff, leadership and Council to create an effective public participation strategy for the City of Airdrie. This tool will provide a single organizational vision and approach to public participation. They were developed using the Public Input Toolkit from Alberta Municipal Affairs along with the teachings from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). IAP2 is the leading association of members who promote and improve the practice of public participation in relation to individuals, governments, institutions and other entities that affect the public interest in nations throughout the world.

As part of the development of the Public Participation Policy, the public will be consulted to ensure the way the City approaches engagement is aligned with their expectations.

The next steps to finalize the Public Participation Policy are:

July 3: Attend Council to request policy endorsement and provide information on the next steps.

July 4 – August 20: Gather public input on Public Participation asking stakeholders for feedback on how they want to engage with the City of Airdrie. Example questions could include:

- What topics are most important to you?
- How do you generally want to engage with the City (open houses, workshops, online surveys, social media)?
- When do you want to participate?
- Where do you get your information?

September 4: Attend Council to share feedback received by the public.

Alignment with AirdrieONE:

This Policy aligns with the Governance principle of AirdrieONE where the focus is on how local government can, in collaboration with Airdrie citizens, embrace sustainability in their decision-making, investments and actions. One of the ways to achieve success in this area is to continually improve opportunities to engage citizens in local government initiatives and decision-making.

Boards Routed Through:

N/A

Alternatives/Implications:

1. Council could choose to endorse the Policy as presented. This would indicate Council is comfortable with the Policy as written. It would also bring the City into compliance with the MGA.
2. Council could choose to amend the Policy or ask staff for additional information. This would indicate there are components of the Policy Council would like to adjust or need additional research on. Should Council direct staff to conduct further research, staff would ask that Council be specific in what they feel is missing from the policy.
3. Council could choose not to endorse the Policy. This would indicate Council is not satisfied with the Policy in its current form. The City would also not be in compliance with the MGA.

Communications Plan:

A public participation plan will be developed for the engagement efforts which will include a communications plan.

Recommendation:

That Council endorse the Public Participation Policy.

Jill Iverson
Team Leader, Corporate Communications

Presenter:	Jill Iverson
Department:	Corporate Communications
Reviewed by:	Sharon Pollyck
Attachments:	N/A
Appointment:	N/A

CITY OF AIRDRIE
COUNCIL POLICY

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY

Effective Date: July 3, 2018

Revision Date: _____

Approved By: City Council

Approved On: July 3, 2018

Resolution #:

PURPOSE:

The City of Airdrie believes decisions are improved by engaging citizens and other stakeholder groups and is committed to undertaking public participation on issues that affect the public in accordance with this Policy. The City believes public participation will build relationships, increase public knowledge, increase transparency, and increase the quality and quantity of input received.

This Policy was developed in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*. It has been developed to recognize the value of public participation and create opportunities for meaningful public participation, where appropriate, in decisions that directly impact the public. This Policy is in addition to and does not modify or replace the statutory public hearing requirements in the *Municipal Government Act*.

SCOPE:

This Policy applies to Council and administrative staff on public participation activities.

DEFINITIONS:

1. **“Municipal Stakeholders”** means the residents of the municipality, as well as other individuals, organizations or persons that may have an interest in, or are affected by, a decision made by the City of Airdrie.
2. **“Public Participation”** includes a variety of non-statutory opportunities where Municipal Stakeholders receive information and provide input to the City of Airdrie.
3. **“Public Participation Plan”** means a plan that identifies which Public Participation tools are to be used to obtain public input in a particular circumstance.

POLICY:

The City of Airdrie believes in engaging its Municipal Stakeholders to ensure the best decisions are made by Council and staff. The City commits to the foundations and principles outlined below and ensuring citizens feel they play an effective role in decision making.

When the City of Airdrie Will Engage the Public

If the decision is consultative (rather than directive) and has one or more of the following triggers, public participation will be undertaken:

- Council has made a previous commitment for engagement, has engaged on a similar decision or requests Public Participation;
- There is a decision to be made that is going to greatly affect Municipal Stakeholders;
- The decision will create or be perceived to create winners and losers;
- The decision is a known concern for a stakeholder group;
- The decision is controversial in that it will generate significant and diverse interest and opinions among Municipal Stakeholders;
- The natural environment may be significantly affected; or
- Municipal Stakeholders perceive there are risks associated with the decision.

How the City of Airdrie Will Engage the Public

The City of Airdrie will follow best practices from the IAP2 organization on how best to engage Municipal Stakeholders based on the decision to be made and the Municipal Stakeholders involved. A Public Participation Plan will be drawn up to guide the level of Public Participation that best fits the needs of the situation based on the IAP2 spectrum.

iap2 public participation spectrum

developed by the international association for public participation

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
EXAMPLE TOOLS	• Fact sheets • Websites • Open houses	• Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings	• Workshops • Deliberate polling	• Citizen Advisory committees • Consensus-building • Participatory decision-making	• Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decisions

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The City of Airdrie's Principles of Public Engagement

Inclusive – The planning and design of a Public Participation process includes input from appropriate local officials as well as from members of intended participant communities including making efforts to reach out to members of the community who may be less engaged or less vocal in order to assess the true sentiments of a community.

Transparent – There is clarity and transparency about the Public Participation process sponsorship, purpose, design, and how decision makers will use the process results.

Authentic – A primary purpose of the Public Participation process is to generate public views and ideas to help shape local government action or policy rather than persuade residents to accept a decision that has already been made. The ideas, preferences and/or recommendations contributed by the public are documented and seriously considered by decision makers.

Broad – The Public Participation process includes people and viewpoints that are broadly reflective of the City's population of affected residents.

Informed – Participants in the Public Participation process have information and/or access to expertise consistent with the work that sponsors and conveners ask them to do.

Accessible – Public Participation processes are broadly accessible in terms of location, time, and language, and support the engagement of residents with disabilities.

Appropriate – The Public Participation process utilizes one or more discussion formats that are responsive to the needs of identified participant groups and encourages full, authentic, effective and equitable participation consistent with process purposes. This may include relationships with existing community forums.

Who is Responsible For What in Public Participation

Council is responsible to:

- Consider input obtained through Public Participation;
- Review this Policy to ensure it complies with all relevant legislation, municipal policies and the spirit and intent of the City of Airdrie's beliefs on Public Participation;
- Ensure appropriate resources are available to effectively solicit Public Participation; and
- Promote and support Public Participation.

CAO is responsible to:

- Create and implement Public Participation Plans that align with this Policy and administrative procedures;
- Report the findings of the Public Participation to Council;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Public Participation Plan and tools used in a particular circumstance;
- Ensure all Public Participation is undertaken in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and any other applicable legislation as well as being in accordance with all existing municipal policies;
- Ensure this Policy is available for public inspection and posted to the City of Airdrie's website;

- Ensure this Policy is reviewed at least once every four years.

Municipal Stakeholders are responsible to:

- Bring honest and respectful input; and
- Stay abreast of public participation opportunities through airdrie.ca, local media and other communications channels

Mayor

City Clerk