

# Council Policy



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## Public Engagement Policy

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**Policy Number:** CA196/2018  
**Approval Date:** May 22, 2018  
**Supersedes Policy:** N/A

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### SECTION A

#### Policy Statement:

- 1. The public and stakeholders of the Town of Morinville:**
  - a. Have the right to be informed, consulted, and engaged in decisions that affect them.
  - b. Are encouraged to meaningfully engage so their voices strengthen decisions and their involvement helps build a stronger community.
  - c. Are encouraged to increase their understanding and knowledge about local issues as well as their role in Morinville's decision-making process so they can participate in a meaningful way.
  
- 2. The Town of Morinville:**
  - a. Will provide public engagement opportunities that are open and transparent.
  - b. Will give serious consideration to the public's input gathered in public engagement processes.
  - c. Is committed to working together with the public to continuously improve its public engagement processes.
  - d. Supports Town staff to build their skills and knowledge to engage the public in a meaningful way.
  - e. Believes that involving the public and stakeholders in public engagement leads to better, more informed decisions.

#### Policy Statement:

The purpose of this policy is to establish the foundation for the Town's reasons, guidelines and procedures for conducting public engagement. This policy applies to both staff and external consultants/contractors.

  
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Mayor

  
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CAO

### **Definitions:**

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

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

**A Stakeholder:** An individual or group who has a specific interest or is impacted by a topic or issue. Stakeholders may include, but are not limited to: residents, non-residents, businesses, groups, organizations, individuals, representative and/or Town staff, depending on the issue.


### **Guidelines:**

#### **Principles of Public Engagement**

Public Engagement in the Town of Morinville will be planned, implemented, evaluated and reported using these nine guidelines:

1. Public Engagement is **PROACTIVE**: It is initiated early enough for participants to make informed decisions and impact the outcomes.
2. Public Engagement is **RELEVANT** and **EFFECTIVE**: the process is planned, effectively communicated and implemented to encourage public participation and contribution in an appropriate manner.
3. Public Engagement is **EQUITABLE**: Members of the public are provided with a reasonable opportunity to contribute, developing a balanced perspective.
4. Public Engagement is **CLEAR** and **FOCUSED**: The Town 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.
5. Public Engagement is **INCLUSIVE**: It uses a range of methods to engage various audiences to maximize participation and improve the quality of feedback.
6. Public Engagement **INCREASES UNDERSTANDING**: Mutual understanding is increased through two-way interaction, where the information presented is easily understood by the intended audience(s).
7. Public Engagement is **RESPONSIVE** and **ONGOING**. Public engagement has an ongoing focus on relationship building, active listening, and increased understanding.
8. Public Engagement **BUILDS CAPACITY**; Staff, public and stakeholders are better equipped for future engagement opportunities.
9. Public Engagement is **ACCOUNTABLE** and **TRANSPARENT**: public engagement outcomes are measured, evaluated and reported in a timely manner.

  
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Mayor

  
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## Public Engagement Circumstances

Public engagement is required when:

- Legislation requires it
- Council or Town Administration requests it

Public engagement may be required when:

- Citizens or stakeholders request it
- Citizens' quality of life may be affected
- The natural environment may be affected
- Geographical communities or communities of interest may be affected
- There are already strong views on the issue
- Many people will be affected

Public engagement is not required when:

- The decision has already been made
- The issue is related to the development of an administrative policy that doesn't require or involve public consultation
- Public/Stakeholder input will not be considered

## Public Engagement Approaches

The public engagement continuum gives guidance to Town staff to determine the level of engagement for a particular project. The levels represent increasing degrees to which the public can impact the decision or outcome.

*Inform* – To provide the public/stakeholders with objective information and advise them of issues/initiatives.

*Consult* – To educate and collect public/stakeholder opinion to improve decisions.

*Involve* – To stimulate public/stakeholder dialogue, clarify values and broaden the information base to improve decisions.

*Collaborate* – Partner with citizens and stakeholders in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives, recommendations and preferred solutions.

*Empower* – Delegate the authority for some or all aspects of decision making and implementation to the public/stakeholders to improve community capacity.

## Expiry Date

This policy expires June 30, 2021; however, shall remain in effect if the review date passes prior to Council review.

  
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Mayor

  
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## **SECTION B**

### **References to other Policy and Legislation**

*Municipal Government Act*

Morinville 2035: Growing Together, Municipal Sustainability Plan (MSP)

Strategic Plan 2018-20

Council Policy 196/2008 Strategic Planning and Management

Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA)

### **Persons Affected**

Council, Administration, Employees, Consultants/Contractors, Public, Stakeholders

### **Review/Revision History and Author**



Barry Turner  
Mayor



Stephane Labonne  
Chief Administrative Officer