



TOWN OF HIGH RIVER POLICY

Policy Number: LEGSERV-POL-102-00
Policy Name: Community Engagement

Related Procedure Number:
Related Procedure Name:

Approval Date: July 16, 2018
Revision Date:
Responsible Department: Corporate Services (Legislative Services & Communications)

Policy Statement:

The Town of High River is rooted in its people and, therefore, is committed to creating meaningful opportunities for Community Engagement. Both Council and Administration recognize that decisions are improved when citizens and other Key Stakeholders are included in the local decision making process. The Town strives to conduct transparent and inclusive engagement that are both responsive to the community's needs and accountable to the public.

Purpose Statement:

The purpose of the Community Engagement Policy is to ensure that the Town of High River:

1. Achieves a clear, consistent and coordinated approach to Community Engagement;
2. Supports Town Council's decision making process by gathering and providing information about Key Stakeholder opinions and perspectives;
3. Promotes the openness, transparency and accountability of the Town;
4. Creates inclusive opportunities for meaningful Community Engagement in the decision making process through sharing, involving, consulting, collaborating and empowering processes;
5. Adheres to the legislative requirements for a Public Participation Policy in accordance with Section 216.1 of the *Municipal Government Act*.

This Council Policy is intended to supplement and shall not replace the statutory public hearing requirements that are established in the *Municipal Government Act*.

This Policy applies to Council, Administration and Key Stakeholders who partner with the Town on projects that will significantly impacts the Community.

Guiding Principles:

The Town's Community Engagement activities are founded on the following principles:

Clear Intention & Proactive Communication: As a people first community, the Town strives to communicate clearly and openly about the purpose of Community Engagement opportunities, its processes, how the information gathered will be used in the decision making process, who the decision makers are and the level of engagement that the Town will utilize in order to collect feedback, insight and experiences from Key Stakeholders.

Collaboration: The Town recognizes that Community Engagement is a partnership between Council, Administration and the Community which requires the meaningful exchange of ideas, experiences and perspectives for the purposes of working towards the greater good of the Community as a whole.

Inclusive Participation: As an inclusive Community, the Town strives to utilize various methods and opportunities that provide an equal opportunity for Key Stakeholders to participate in Community Engagement activities.

Innovative & Continuous Improvement: The Town embraces a learning culture and, therefore, recognizes that Community Engagement is a dynamic and evolving process that requires ongoing evaluation and modification in order to continuously improve and address the diverse needs of the Community.

Open Evaluation of Feedback: In order to enhance the openness, transparency and accountability of local government, the Town endeavours to disclose, in writing, all relevant information upon the conclusion of a Community Engagement process to enhance the public's understanding of how the feedback gathered was utilized in the decision making process.

Definitions:

Administration: means any individual who holds the position of either a Manager or Director with the Town of High River.

Community: means the residents of the Town, as well as Key Stakeholders that may have an interest in, or are affected by decisions made by the Town.

Community Engagement: means the process of having a purposeful dialogue between the Town and the Community to discuss and gain an understanding of emerging opportunities and challenges while also working with the Community to clarify matters, identify alternatives or partner in the decision making process.

Community Engagement Tools: means the tools that may be used alone or together to create Community Engagement opportunities, which include but are not limited to:

- a) In person engagement, which may include face to face interactions, door knocking, interviews, meetings, town halls, open houses, focus groups and workshops;
- b) Digital engagement, which may include online workbooks, discussion forums, online polls or surveys and videos;
- c) Written engagement, which may include written submissions, e-mail, mail in surveys and workbooks;
- d) Representative engagement, which may include being appointed to a Town Board or Committee.

Community Plans: means any comprehensive and far reaching plan of action regarding various aspects of the Town, which include but are not limited to: the Municipal Development Plan, Master Recreation Plans, Master Infrastructure Plans, Open Space Plans and the like.

Council: means the municipal Council for the Town of High River that has been established in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*.

Employee: means any individual who is employed by the Town of High River.

Key Stakeholders: means individuals, groups or organizations that may have an interest in, or are affected by decisions made by the Town.

Manager of Legislative Services: means the individual employed as the Leader of the Legislative Services division or his or her designate.

Quality of Life: means an individual's perception of their experiences, goals, expectations and standards of living in High River which include:

- **Connection:** The connections citizens make with one another, agencies, and businesses.
- **Environment:** The exploration and enjoyment of natural environment such as our parks, green spaces, and pathways.
- **Expression:** The opportunity to experience or express themselves through music, visual arts, performance arts, and culture.
- **Health and Well-being:** The accessibility of physical and emotional health supports and resources.
- **Life-long Learning:** The chance to learn and share knowledge gifts and talents, through post-secondary education, volunteering, and service opportunities.
- **Livability:** The ease of fulfilling their own basic needs such as housing, food security, employment and transportation.
- **Safety:** The comfort and security related to personal and environmental protection.
- **Thriving populations:** The opportunities available for every citizen related to their age and diverse backgrounds.

Term: means the amount of time that Council shall hold office, pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act*.

Town: means the Town of High River.

Town Manager: means the individual appointed to the position of Chief Administrative Officer for the Town in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*.

Responsibilities:

Council is responsible for:

- a) Approving the Community Engagement Policy;
- b) Reviewing the Community Engagement Policy at least once per Term;
- c) Considering input obtained through Community Engagement;
- d) Ensuring appropriate resources are allocated for Community Engagement in accordance with this Policy;
- e) Promoting and encouraging Community Engagement within the Town; and
- f) Obtaining information from the Town Manager relating to the scope, timing, appropriate methods and resources relating to Community Engagement prior to directing Administration to undertake a Community Engagement activity on a specific issue or item.

The Town Manager or his or her designate is responsible for:

- a) Ensuring the successful implementation of this Policy;
- b) Developing and approving any related Procedures that:
 - a. Ensures a clear, consistent and coordinated approach to Community Engagement across the organization;
 - b. Provides opportunities for early and ongoing Community Engagement; and
 - c. Aligns resources, types and methods of Community Engagement with the impact of the decision to the Community and/or Key Stakeholders.

Administration is responsible for:

- a) Supporting the successful implementation of this Policy;
- b) Identifying opportunities where Community Engagement may benefit decision making or service delivery;

- c) Providing recommendations to Council regarding practices, processes and timelines for both statutory and non-statutory requirements for Community Engagement activities;
- d) Coordinating with Communications and Legislative Services to organize Community Engagement activities that are consistent with this Policy;
- e) Planning and performing Community Engagement activities based on budgetary considerations and project, program and service priorities;
- f) Communicating to Council and the Community how Community Engagement input was gathered and used in recommendations provided to Council.

The Manager of Legislative Services or his or her designate is responsible for:

- a) Recommending any amendments to this Policy;
- b) Providing training to employees regarding this Policy and associated Procedures;
- c) Supporting other departments in planning and facilitating Community Engagement activities that are consistent with this Policy and associated Procedures.

Employees are responsible for:

- a) Planning and facilitating Community Engagement activities that are consistent with this Policy and associated Procedures.

Circumstances:

The Town will endeavour, in accordance with its Procedures, to conduct Community Engagement in the following circumstances:

1. Complying with legislation that requires Community Engagement;
2. Gathering Community input into the development of Community Plans;
3. Community Quality of Life may be impacted; and
4. As otherwise deemed necessary by Council.

Approaches:

In accordance with the circumstances noted above as well as Town related Procedures, the Town shall conduct Community Engagement utilizing one or more the following approaches, depending on the circumstance:



Note: The Town's spectrum has been modified based on the International Association of Public Participation's spectrum.

Related Information:

- Municipal Government Act*
- Public Participation Policy Regulation*
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Regulation*
- Town of High River Strategic Plan
- Communications Policy
- Community Volunteer, Committee & Board Member Management Policy
- Service Excellence Policy

Approval

This Policy shall come into force and effect upon adoption by Council at the Regular Meeting on 16 of July, 2018.

MAYOR/DEPUTY MAYOR

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TOWN MANAGER

July 20, 2018

DATE