



POLICY

Policy No. 12 – 226 – 25/11/03
Department: Administration

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY

PURPOSE AND SCOPE:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Town of Nanton's commitment to meaningful, transparent, and inclusive public participation. Public participation strengthens decision-making by providing residents and stakeholders with opportunities to engage in matters that affect them.

This policy is guided by Section 216.1 of the Municipal Government Act and is in addition to statutory public hearings and notification requirements.

This policy applies to:

- Council and Committees of Council
- Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and Administration
- Advisory Committees and contracted service providers
- Residents, organizations, and stakeholders engaging with the Town.

Public participation may occur during:

- New or revised programs, services, and projects
- Strategic and capital planning
- Bylaw or policy development
- Budget processes
- Major community initiatives

DEFINITIONS:

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) means the person appointed to the position by the Council of the Town of Nanton or that person's delegate.

Municipal Stakeholders means the residents of the Municipality, as well as other individuals, organizations or person that may have an interest in, or are affected by, a decision made by the Municipality.

Municipality means the Town of Nanton.

Public means those stakeholders who are not typically part of the decision-making entity or entities.

Public Participation includes a variety of non-statutory opportunities where Municipal Stakeholders receive information and/or provide input to the Municipality.

Public Participation Plan means a plan which identifies which Public Participation Tools are to be used to obtain public input in a particular circumstance.

Public Participation Tools mean the tools that may be used, alone or in combination, to create Public Participation opportunities including, but not limited to:

- **Participation, digital** which may include online workbooks, chat groups, webinars, message boards/discussion forms, and online polls or surveys;
- **Participation, In-person** which may include at-the-counter interactions, door-knocking, interviews, meetings, round-tables, town halls, open houses and workshops;
- **Participation, representative** may include being appointed to an advisory committee, ad hoc committee or citizen board; and
- **Participation, written** may include written submissions, email, and mail-in surveys, polls and workbooks.

Stakeholders means any individual, group of individuals, organizations or political entity with an interest or stake in the outcome of a decision.

PROCEDURE

1. GENERAL POLICY PRINCIPLES:

- 1.1. Council recognizes the good governance includes engaging Municipal Stakeholders in Public Participation by:
 - 1.1.1. Creating opportunities for Municipal Stakeholders who are affected by a decision to influence the decision;
 - 1.1.2. Promoting sustainable decisions by recognizing various Municipal Stakeholder interests.
 - 1.1.3. Providing Municipal Stakeholders with the appropriate information and tools to engage in meaningful participation; and
 - 1.1.4. Recognizing that although Councillors are elected to consider and promote the welfare and interest of the Municipality as a whole and are generally required to vote on matters brought before Council, facilitating Public Participation for matters beyond those where public input is statutorily required can enrich the decision-making process.
- 1.2 The Town will conduct Public Participation activities in accordance with the guidelines of the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum, as indicated in the chart outlined in Section 9 of this policy.
- 1.3 The Town of Nanton recognizes that good governance includes engaging municipal stakeholders in meaningful ways. The principles guiding public participation can be summarized as **STAIRS**:
 - S** – Stakeholder Influence: Create opportunities for stakeholders affected by a decision to help shape it.
 - T** – Transparency: Provide clear and timely information to support meaningful participation.
 - A** – Access: Ensure tools, opportunities, and formats are accessible to a broad range of participants.
 - I** – Inclusivity: Promote sustainable decisions by recognizing diverse interests and voices.
 - R** – Respect: Uphold civility and accountability in engagement.
 - S** – Strategic Engagement: Go beyond statutory requirements to enrich decision-making.



The level of Public Participation to be employed in a Public Participation Plan will be determined on a case-by-case and/or as-needed basis, depending on the issue, impact and stakeholder needs.

2. POLICY RESPONSIBILITIES:

2.1. Council Responsibilities:

Council shall:

- 2.1.1. Promote and support Public Participation.
- 2.1.2. Review and approve Public Participation Plans developed by the Chief Administrative Officer in accordance with this Policy, or as directed by Council.
- 2.1.3. Consider input obtained through Public Participation; and
- 2.1.4. Review this Policy to coincide with each General Municipal Election year to ensure the Policy complies with all relevant legislation, municipal policies and the spirit and intent of Public Participation.

2.2. Administration Responsibilities:

The Chief Administrative Officer shall:

- 2.2.1. In accordance with this Policy, develop Public Participation Plans, for Council approval;
- 2.2.2. Ensure that all Requests for Council consideration include a section identifying whether Public Participation has occurred or is recommended, in accordance with this Policy;
- 2.2.3. Implement approved Public Participation Plans;
- 2.2.4. Report the findings of the Public Participation to Council;
- 2.2.5. Consider timing, resources and engagement when developing and modifying Public Participation Plans;
- 2.2.6. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Public Participation Plan and the Public Participation Tools used in a particular circumstance
- 2.2.7. Communicate to Council and the public, when appropriate and in accordance the Protection of Privacy Act, the effectiveness of a Public Participation Plan and the Public Participation Tools used;
- 2.2.8. Develop the necessary procedures to implement this Policy; and
- 2.2.9. Assess this Policy and make recommendations to Council about the Public Participation and resourcing.

3. POLICY EXPECTATIONS:

3.1. Legislative and Policy Implications



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- 3.1.1. All Public Participation will be undertaken in accordance with the Municipal Government Act, the Access to Information Act and the Protection of Privacy Act, and any other applicable legislation.
- 3.1.2. All Public Participation will be undertaken in accordance with all municipal policies.
- 3.1.3. This Policy shall be available for public inspection and may be posted to the Municipality's website.
- 3.1.4. This policy will be reviewed at least once every four years. At Council's discretion, the policy may remain unchanged if no amendments are deemed necessary

3.2. Public Participation Standards

- 3.2.1. Public Participation will be conducted in a sustainable and inclusive manner having regard to different levels of accessibility.
- 3.2.2. Public Participation activities will be conducted in a professional and respectful manner.
- 3.2.3. Public Participation plans will consider early, ongoing and diverse opportunities to provide input.
- 3.2.4. Municipal Stakeholders who participate in any manner of Public Participation are required to be respectful and constructive in their participation. Municipal Stakeholders who are disrespectful, inappropriate or offensive, as determined by Administration, may be excluded from Public Participation opportunities.
- 3.2.5. The results of Public Participation will be made available to Council and Municipal Stakeholders in a timely manner in accordance with municipal policies.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES:

- 4.1. The Chief Administrative Officer may develop and implement a Public Participation Plan in the following circumstances:
 - 4.1.1. When new programs or services are being established;
 - 4.1.2. When existing programs and services are being reviewed;
 - 4.1.3. When identifying Council priorities;
 - 4.1.4. When gathering input or formulating recommendations with respect to budget;
 - 4.1.5. When gathering input or formulating recommendations with respect to the Town of Nanton's strategic plans or business plans;
 - 4.1.6. When gathering input or formulating recommendations with respect to the Town of Nanton's capital plan and/or financial plan; or
 - 4.1.7. As otherwise directed by Council.



5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLANS:

5.1. When so directed by this Policy or Council, the CAO shall develop a Public Participation Plan for approval by Council which shall consider the following:

- The nature of the matter for which Public Participation is being sought;
- The impact of the matter on Municipal Stakeholders;
- The demographics of potential Municipal Stakeholders in respect of which Public Participation Tools to utilize, level of engagement and time for input;
- The timing of the decision and time required to gather input;
- What information is required, if any, to participate; and
- Available resources and reasonable costs.

5.2. Public Participation Plans will, at minimum, include the following:

- A communication plan to inform the public about the Public Participation plan and opportunities to provide input;
- Identification of which Public Participation Tools will be utilized;
- Timelines for participation;
- Information about how input will be used;
- The location of information required, if any, to inform the specific Public Participation.

6. REPORTING AND EVALUATION:

6.1. Information obtained in Public Participation will be reviewed by the CAO and a report shall be provided to Council.

6.2. The report shall include, at minimum, the following:

- An overview of the Public Participation Plan and how it was developed;
- An assessment of the effectiveness of the plan based on the level of engagement and the quality of input;
- A summary of the input obtained; and
- May include recommendations for future Public Participation Plans

REVIEW:

This policy should be reviewed at least once during every term of Council for prospective update, revision or renewal.

THIS POLICY WAS CONSIDERED AND ADOPTED BY COUNCIL ON _____

SUPERCEDES: Policy 12 212 18/06/18 Public Participation Policy


MAYOR

Date


CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Date

