



# Participation Policy for the Public

## Your County, Your Conversation:

How & Why You Should Get Involved  
in the Decision Making Process

February 12, 2026



## Purpose

Lacombe County believes that its success lies with the people and businesses that it serves. We see the value in engaging the public through a variety of mediums and are committed to open, accountable and responsive decision making, including different levels of engagement with the public as outlined in this policy. Lacombe County believes that meaningful public participation on different levels is crucial to communications between the municipality and the public, as well as the success of the County as a whole.

Policy AD (40) *Public Participation Policy* speaks to the level of public participation and engagement opportunities coming from Lacombe County around the issues of proposed applications, plans, bylaws, projects, studies, arising issues, and other initiatives that may have an impact on the public in the County.

This policy establishes a consistent approach for public participation in Lacombe County's municipal decision-making. The policy ensures that participation opportunities are clear, accessible, appropriate, and that feedback is considered in a transparent and accountable manner.

The following elements of the County's Strategic Plan are relevant to this policy:

### **Our Community**

Success grows here; through respectful, mindful investment in our communities.



## Principles

Lacombe County's approach to public participation will be guided by the following principles:

1. **Transparency** – processes, timelines, and decisions will be clear and open.
2. **Inclusion** – opportunities will be accessible, inclusive, and representative of the community's diversity.
3. **Accountability** – input will be genuinely considered and reported back.
4. **Respect** – all participants will be treated with courtesy and fairness.
5. **Continuous Improvement** – engagement practices will be evaluated and refined over time.

## Communication

Lacombe County will promote and communicate opportunities for public engagement in a manner they feel most appropriate to the type and level of engagement. This can include a combination of the following:

- County News
- Website
- Social Media (Facebook / Instagram / X / LinkedIn)
- Radio
- Direct Mail
- Posters / flyers
- Roadside Signage
- Local newspaper advertising
- Or other electronic notification means



## Roles and Responsibilities

Lacombe County:

- Will inform, consult, and engage the public about decisions that affect them, and will provide public participation opportunities that are open and transparent.
- Will plan communications to ensure community members are notified of engagement opportunities well in advance, and have access to the information necessary for meaningful participation
  - At least three weeks' advertising notice is required for in-person events, and at least two weeks' advertising notice is required for online engagement.
- Will inform the public about the intended outcomes of the initiative, including how their input will be used to affect decision making.
- Will select the appropriate level of engagement for each initiative, based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation (below). Not all projects require the same extensive consultation, but the appropriate approach should be selected on a project-to-project basis.



- Will mitigate barriers to participation by communicating in simple language, and choosing appropriate venues, communications channels, and formats to engage for different abilities and learning styles.
- Will give consideration to the public's input gathered.
- Commits to reporting back to the community after public consultation, summarizing feedback received, how decisions were made and what role the public's input played.
- Is committed to working together with the public to continuously improve its public participation processes.
- Will model respectful engagement with the public.
- Supports County staff to build their skills and knowledge to engage the public in a meaningful way.
- Supports the belief that involving the public in public participation leads to better, more informed decisions.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The public of Lacombe County:

- Are encouraged to meaningfully engage so their voices strengthen decisions, and their involvement helps to build a strong community.
- Have the right to be heard, but also to listen and be open to different ideas and opposing views.
- Are encouraged to increase their understanding and knowledge about local issues, as well as their role in Lacombe County's decision-making process so that they can participate in a meaningful way.
- Must participate respectfully and collaboratively.

## Legislation and Review

The *Public Participation Policy* was developed in accordance with the requirements of Section 216.1 of the *Municipal Government Act*.

The *Public Participation Policy* is also guided by the *International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values and Spectrum of Public Participation*, and the Simon Fraser University's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue *Public Engagement Toolkit*, ensuring that engagement is purposeful, proportional, and respectful.

The County will review and update its *Public Participation Policy* every four (4) years, or earlier if required by legislative or organizational changes.