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Policy Title Public Participation Policy	Date February 12, 2026	Resolution No.

Policy Statement

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.

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.

This 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.

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.

Purpose

The *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) and the *Public Participation Regulation* requires every municipality to have a public participation policy in place, which must identify:

- The types or categories of approaches the municipality will use to engage municipal stakeholders
- The types or categories of circumstances in which the municipality will engage municipal stakeholders

This 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.

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Policy Scope

This policy applies to:

- **Council and Administration** when developing or reviewing plans, policies, bylaws, or major projects;
- **Consultants and contractors** conducting engagement on behalf of the Municipality; and
- **Boards, committees, and commissions** established by Council.

This policy applies to the scope of services of Lacombe County, including, but not limited to:

- Planning, policy, and project initiatives;
- Mandated processes involving public participation (ie. Bylaws);
- Community development;
- Internal relations;
- Customer service;
- Emerging issues.

Definitions

The **Public** means any individual, group or organization 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.

Municipality means Lacombe County.

Lacombe County refers to all staff, representatives and consultants working for or hired by the municipality.

Public Participation includes a variety of non-statutory opportunities where the public receives information and/or an opportunity to provide input to the Municipality, designed to increase trust, mutual understanding, gather information, exchange ideas, and/or solve problems with the goal of making better, more informed decisions.

Policy Guidelines/Procedures

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.

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5. **Continuous Improvement** – engagement practices will be evaluated and refined over time.

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.

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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.

General

- All County staff responsible for projects or initiatives will be accountable for following the Public Participation Policy.
- All public participation activities will occur within approved plans and funding and any requests outside of these approved plans must be referred to Council.
- County staff will support Council, staff, partners, and the public to build public participation capacity within Lacombe County. Over time, implementation of the standards will be supported with training, tools, and templates.
- Lacombe County will promote and communicate opportunities for public participation in a matter they feel is appropriate, and in accordance with Lacombe County's Advertising/Public Notification Bylaw. 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
- This policy will be reviewed every four years, or earlier if required by legislative or organizational changes.

Approved: April 8, 2018

Revised: February 11, 2026