

# COUNCIL POLICY

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



CITY OF  
*Lethbridge*

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Policy Number:	CC-60
Approved by:	City Council
Effective Date:	
Next Revision Date:	
Policy Owner:	Communications and Engagement

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### PURPOSE

The Council of the City of Lethbridge has a broad mandate to provide good government through encouraging and enhancing Public engagement.

In accordance with Section 216.1 of the *Municipal Government Act*, this Policy has been developed to recognize the value of Public Participation and create opportunities for meaningful Public Participation.

The policy provides a foundation that ensures consistent and effective approaches to stakeholder and Public involvement across the Corporation that sets a standard of excellence for Public Participation processes in the City.

This policy is in addition to and does not modify or replace the statutory Public hearing requirements in the *Municipal Government Act*.

### DEFINITIONS

Term	Description
Stakeholders	The Public of the city of Lethbridge, as well as other individuals, organizations or persons that may have an interest in, or are affected by, a decision made by the City of Lethbridge.
Public	All people living, working and visiting the city of Lethbridge.
Public Participation	A variety of non-statutory opportunities where municipal Stakeholders receive information and/or provide input to the City.
Public Participation Plan	A plan which identifies which Public Participation tools to be used to obtain Public input in a particular circumstance.

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Public Participation Tools	<p>“The tools that may be used, alone or in combination, to create Public Participation opportunities including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• in-person participation which may include face-to-face interactions, door-knocking, interviews, meetings, round-tables, town halls, open houses and workshops;</li><li>• digital participation which may include online engagement tools, chat groups, webinars, message boards/discussion forums, and online polls or surveys;</li><li>• written participation which may include written submissions, email, and mail-in surveys, polls and workbooks; and</li><li>• representative participation which may include being appointed to a committee, commissions, or boards.</li></ul>
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### POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Lethbridge envisions a city in which the Public are informed on City activities in a timely manner and have the opportunity to share their ideas about the needs of our City.

The City of Lethbridge recognizes that outcomes are improved by engaging Stakeholders and the Public.

The City of Lethbridge is committed to inclusive, welcoming, and accessible processes that are transparent and responsive, and within the Corporation’s ability to finance and resource.

The City of Lethbridge assigns a high priority to involving the Stakeholders early on and throughout engagement processes for the purpose of good governance.

The City of Lethbridge Scale of Public engagement (Appendix A) outlines the level of information, interaction and engagement that may be used in City hosted Public processes.

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### **A. Policy Principles**

1. Council recognizes that good governance includes engaging Stakeholders in Public Participation by:
  - 1.1 Creating opportunities for Stakeholders to participate in Public conversations;
  - 1.2 Recognizing diverse stakeholder interests;
  - 1.3 Providing Stakeholders with the appropriate information and tools to engage in meaningful participation; and
  - 1.4 Recognizing that although not always statutorily required, Public Participation may enrich the decision-making process

### **B. Policy Expectations**

1. Legislative and policy implications
  - 1.1 All Public participation will be undertaken in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and any other applicable legislation.
  - 1.2 All Public Participation will be undertaken in accordance with all existing municipal policies.
  - 1.3 This Policy shall be available for Public inspection and will be posted to the City's website.

### **C. Public Participation Standards**

1. Public Participation will be conducted in an inclusive manner having regard to different levels of accessibility and mobility.
2. Public Participation Plans will consider early, ongoing and diverse opportunities to provide input.
3. Public Participation Planning activities will be conducted in a professional and respectful manner.
4. Stakeholders who participate in any manner of public participation are expected to be respectful and constructive in their participation.
5. The results of Public Participation will be made available to Council and Public in a timely manner.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **A. City Council must:**

1. consider input obtained through Public Participation; and
2. review this Policy to ensure the Policy complies with all relevant legislation, municipal policies and the spirit and intent of Public Participation.

### **B. City Manager or their designate must:**

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1. in accordance with this policy or as directed by Council, develop Public Participation Plans;
2. implement Public Participation Plans;
3. report the findings of the Public Participation to Council;
4. assess this policy and make recommendations to Council about the Public Participation and resourcing
5. Be responsible for the oversight of engagement activities with Stakeholders and the Public.

### PROCEDURES

#### **A. Public Participation Opportunities**

1. When so directed by this policy or Council, the City Manager or their designate will develop and implement related Public Participation Plans and activities in the following circumstances:
  - 1.1 when new programs or services are being established;
  - 1.2 when existing programs and services are being reviewed;
  - 1.3 when gathering input or formulating recommendations with respect to the operating or capital budgets;
  - 1.4 when directed by Council on budget amendments;
  - 1.5 when gathering input or formulating recommendations with respect to the City's master plans;
  - 1.6 when developing statutory plans; or
  - 1.7 as otherwise directed by Council.

#### **B. Public Participation Planning**

1. When so directed by this Policy or Council, the City Manager or their designate shall develop Public Participation Plans which may consider the following:
  - 1.1 the nature of the matter for which Public Participation is being sought;
  - 1.2 the impact of the matter on Stakeholders;
  - 1.3 the demographics of potential Stakeholders in respect of which Public Participation Tools to utilize, level of engagement and time for input;
  - 1.4 the timing of the decision and time required to gather input;
  - 1.5 what information is required, if any, to participate; and
  - 1.6 resources required.
2. Public Participation Planning will consider the following:
  - 2.1 a communication plan to inform the Public about the Public Participation Plan and opportunities to provide input;
  - 2.2 identification of which Public Participation tools will be used;

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- 2.3 timelines for participation;
- 2.4 information about how input will be used;
- 2.5 information that is required to provide to the Public; and
- 2.6 the location or tool required for the specific Public Participation.

### C. Reporting and Evaluation

1. Information obtained in Public Participation processes will be reviewed by Administration and Council, and made available to the Public.
2. Reports to Council shall include:
  - 2.1 a summary of the input obtained;
  - 2.2 an overview of the Public Participation Planning and how it was developed;
  - 2.3 an assessment of the effectiveness of the plan based on the level of engagement and the quality of input; and
  - 2.4 recommendations for future Public Participation Plans if identified.

### POLICY REVIEW

Council policies are to be reviewed by City Council, once per term, as per City Council Policy CC-01: Policy Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. The policy or associated procedures may be reviewed sooner if required due to changes in the business or risk environment.

### SUPPORTING REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

- *Municipal Government Act*
- *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- City Council Strategic Plan
- City of Lethbridge Scale of Public Engagement – Appendix A

### REVISION HISTORY

Review Date	Description
June 25, 2018	New Document (Public Participation)
May XX, 2025	Minor wording updates.