
Public Engagement

Date of Approval by Council: 06/22/2010

Resolution No: 375/2010

Lead Role: Chief Commissioner

Last Review Date: June 22, 2010

Next Review Date: 06/2013

Administrative Responsibility: Corporate Planning and Intergovernmental Affairs

Special Notes: The policy applies to public engagement conducted by County staff and to all consultants and contractors hired to conduct public engagement on behalf of the County.

Policy Statement

The citizens of Strathcona County have both the right and the responsibility to be involved in decisions that affect them.

Strathcona County citizens of all ages are meaningfully engaged in civic life where their voices strengthen decisions and their involvement helps build community where they live, work, learn and play.

The County clearly defines involvement opportunities that are honest, transparent and accessible to all, and that value the input in decision making.

Definitions

Continuum of Engagement: identifies four different degrees of public involvement - Input, Listen & Learn, Collaborate, and Empower. The requirement to inform is important throughout the public engagement process.

Public: refers to both citizens (who currently reside in Strathcona County) and stakeholders who have an interest in, or are affected by, a County outcome or decision.

Public engagement: any Strathcona County process that has as its purpose engaging Strathcona County citizens and other stakeholders to develop an understanding of local issues or providing input and decisions or involves them in clarifying issues, identifying alternatives, or partnering in decision making.

Guidelines

Public engagement in Strathcona County will reflect the following eight principles of engagement:

1. **Involving the public leads to better decisions:** decisions that impact the future of the community are better when those who are affected have been involved.
2. **Public engagement processes are equitable:** they allow all members of the public a reasonable opportunity to contribute, developing a balanced perspective.
3. **Public engagement is inclusive:** it uses a range of tools to engage varied audiences and obtain different levels of participation.
4. **The public understands its role in the process:** the public's role and level of involvement will be defined and clearly communicated.

5. **The public is informed:** the information required to understand all relevant aspects of the issue is provided to the public throughout the process. The impact of any public engagement is reported and explained.
6. **Communication with the public is effective:** it is clear, concise, objective, understandable and accessible.
7. **Public engagement is proactive:** it is initiated early enough for participants to make informed judgments and impact the outcomes.
8. **Public engagement is transparent and accountable:** the process is clear and open and provides a public record of the range of views and ideas expressed.

Roles and Responsibilities

Corporate Planning and Intergovernmental Affairs is responsible to:

Develop and lead the interdepartmental team for public engagement.

Communications is responsible to:

Support public engagement processes with communications planning and implementation to build awareness of the opportunity to participate.

Help facilitate interactive public engagement activities on the web.

Help build a resource bank and training relating to clear language use.

Public Engagement Interdepartmental Team is responsible to:

Coordinate the implementation of the Public Engagement Policy and Framework.

Recommend and coordinate training opportunities, develop a public engagement toolkit, and be a resource for use by departments.

Department Directors are responsible to:

Ensure staff implements the Public Engagement Policy.

Ensure adequate time and resources are dedicated to planning, coordinating and conducting engagement processes, whether internal or external.

Assign staff to participate on the interdepartmental team for public engagement as needed ensuring adequate time and resources are available.

Ensure staff participation in recommended training.

Ensure that policy is adhered to by all consultants and contractors hired to do public engagement on behalf of the County.

All Strathcona County employees are responsible to:

Use the public engagement policy, framework, vision, guiding principles and continuum of engagement for every project in which public involvement is expected/warranted.

Procedures

A Public Engagement Framework has been developed to support this policy. (Corp PInG.12681) Administration will develop procedures over time to ensure effective implementation of the policy.