Public Engagement

Policy Statement

1. The public and stakeholders of Strathcona County:
   a) Have the right to be informed, consulted, and engaged in decisions that affect them.
   b) Are encouraged to meaningfully engage so their voices strengthen decisions and their involvement helps build a stronger community.
   c) Are encouraged to increase their understanding and knowledge about local issues as well as their role in Strathcona County's decision-making process so they can participate meaningfully.

2. Strathcona County:
   a) Will provide public engagement opportunities that are open and transparent.
   b) Will give serious consideration to the public's input gathered in public engagement processes.
   c) Is committed to working together with the public to continuously improve its public engagement processes.
   d) Supports County staff to build their skills and knowledge to engage the public in a meaningful way.
   e) Believes that involving the public and stakeholders in public engagement leads to better, more informed decisions.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the foundation for the County's reasons, guidelines and procedures for conducting public engagement. This policy applies to both staff and external consultants.

Definitions

External Public Engagement - A formal, defined, interactive process between the County, the public and stakeholders, designed to increase mutual understanding, gather information, exchange ideas, and/or solve problems with the goal of making better, more informed decisions.

Internal Public Engagement - A formal, defined, interactive process between the County and its employees designed to increase mutual understanding, gather information, exchange ideas, and/or solve problems with the goal of making better, more informed decisions.

The Public - Anyone (including groups and individuals) 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.

A Stakeholder - An individual or group who has a specific interest or is impacted by a topic or issue. Stakeholders may include residents, non-residents, groups, organizations, individuals, representatives and/or County staff, depending on the issue.

Guidelines

Public Engagement in Strathcona County will be planned, implemented, evaluated and reported using these nine guidelines.

1. Public Engagement is PROACTIVE: it is initiated early enough for participants to make informed decisions and impact the outcomes.
2. Public Engagement is RELEVANT and EFFECTIVE: the process is planned, effectively communicated and implemented to encourage public participation and contribution in an appropriate manner.
3. Public Engagement is EQUITABLE: Members of the public are provided with a reasonable opportunity to contribute, developing a balanced perspective.
4. Public Engagement is CLEAR and FOCUSED: The County and the public understand their respective roles in a public engagement process, including the level of involvement and how input will be used to inform decisions.
5. Public Engagement is INCLUSIVE: It uses a range of methods to engage various audiences to maximize participation and improve the quality of feedback.
6. Public Engagement INCREASES UNDERSTANDING: Mutual understanding is increased through two-way interaction, where the information presented is easily understood by the intended audience.
7. Public Engagement is RESPONSIVE and ONGOING: Public engagement has an ongoing focus on relationship building, active listening, and increased understanding.
8. Public Engagement BUILDS CAPACITY: Staff, public and stakeholders are better equipped for future engagement opportunities.
9. Public Engagement is ACCOUNTABLE and TRANSPARENT: public engagement outcomes are measured, evaluated and reported in a timely manner.

Policy Record

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