



POLICY PD-011

Public Consultation Requirements for Planning and Development Processes

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Title of Policy: Public Consultation Requirements for Planning and Development Processes	Council Res. Number: 353-10
Prepared By: Planning and Development Services	Effective Date: October 12, 2010
References: <i>Municipal Government Act</i>	Previous Revision Date: New
	Procedures: PD-011-P1

PURPOSE

To provide a framework for a consistent approach to increase public involvement in planning and development decisions in order to result in more informed decisions, greater understanding and acceptance, and more enduring solutions. The intent is to standardize the process to inform and consult the public by both the County and a Developer/Applicant.

POLICY STATEMENT

Parkland County Council is committed to open, accountable, and responsive decision making, which is informed by effective communication and consultation between Council and the community. Council believes that land development is a two-way process, providing opportunities to clarify information, raise issues, and discuss ideas, options and views. The time invested in respectful and meaningful consultation will likely save a good deal of adversity and expense in the long run and shall lead to better land development decisions within the County.

The County shall conduct public consultation for planning and development processes as set out within the *Municipal Government Act, R.S.A. 2000, c. M-26* and for other public consultation initiatives where Council determines that it is appropriate to follow this policy.

Developer/Applicant shall pro-actively seek public input to minimize the potential impacts and opposition from the community through effective consultation. They shall conduct public consultation processes as part of their proposed applications as set out by the County.

DEFINITIONS

1. *"Mailed Notice"* to landowners shall always mean a letter in the mail to the address of the registered landowner as determined off of the County's current tax roll. *"Mailed Notice"* to neighbouring municipalities, school authorities, provincial agencies, and other referral agencies shall also mean faxed notices or e-mailed notices or any other form of notice as agreed upon by the County and the Third Party.
2. *"May"* means discretionary compliance or a choice in applying policy.
3. *"Open House"* means a method of public consultation that involves an informal session with displays or other information available for participants to review. The developer/applicant or Administration, depending on who is organizing the event, are available to answer any questions the public may have. A feedback form or survey shall be used to record public comment, and sign-in sheet for names and addresses of participants is required. This form of public consultation shall be used to present draft/pre-applications to the public.

4. *"Public Consultation"* means the process of informing and/or consulting with the public in the planning and development process. It may include:
 - a. Informing the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the potential problems, alternatives and/or solutions. The role of the developer/applicant is to keep the public informed; and
 - b. Consulting the public to obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions. The developer/applicant will keep the public informed, listen to and acknowledge their concerns, and provide feedback on how the public influenced the project. The issue(s) shall be defined before making formal application to the County where formal public input is sought through a Public Hearing.
5. *"Public Consultation Plan"* means any written document outlining the types of public consultation, the tools to be used, and the process to be followed in conducting public consultation on a proposed planning and/or development project.
6. *"Public Hearing"* means the portion of a regular or special meeting of Council during which any person, group or representative affected by a proposed bylaw as per Section 652 of the *Municipal Government Act, R.S.A. 2000, c. M-26* shall be heard.
7. *"Public Meeting"* means a method of public consultation that involves a formal presentation by the organizer, typically either the developer/applicant or Administration, on the issues and the options. Members of the public are able to ask questions and provide input in a public forum, and a Record of the Proceedings is kept. This form of public consultation is often used prior to, or just before, a planning or development application is submitted to the County.
8. *"Public Notification"* means a method of informing the public of either a subdivision or development application or decision, an upcoming public hearing, any proposed bylaw to adopt a statutory plan or land use bylaw, or any amendments to any such documents. Notified landowners include those located within the site for which the application has been made (not including the applicant) and other landowners within a defined area.
9. *"Record"* means a written transcript of a meeting or event prepared in a professional manner or, detailed minutes prepared by a staff member from Legislative and Administrative Services with the County.
10. *"Shall"* means mandatory compliance.

SCOPE

This policy will apply in those circumstances where the Act requires Council to follow the Act for planning and development processes and for other public consultation initiatives where the Council determines that it is appropriate to follow this policy.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Manager of Planning and Development Services, and Manager of Legislative and Administrative Services, are responsible for the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of this policy.

STANDARDS

1. Council is expected to use the Public Hearing process to listen to the issues raised by members of the public, and to consider such issues in making their decision along with the developer/applicant and administration. Council members should defer involvement or engagement in discussions on planning and development projects with either citizens or developers/applicants until the Public Hearing, as that is the appropriate time for all information, issues, and concerns to be put forward. This ensures a fair process for both citizens and the developer/applicant.

2. Developers/Applicants are expected to work with Administration to develop and implement a Public Consultation Plan that is effective and appropriate to the project. Public Consultation should be initiated early in the process (prior to formal application to the County) and the developer/applicant should listen to the public, acknowledge public concerns and take public input into consideration when making a final application regarding their proposed project.
3. Administration is expected to work with developers/applicants to ensure an effective and appropriate Public Consultation Plan is developed and implemented to ensure compliance with this Policy. Administration, through the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) shall adopt Administrative Procedures to ensure a standardized approach to Public Consultation with the community that meets the requirements of this Policy. Administration will strive to ensure the Public Consultation undertaken is appropriate for the type, scale and nature of each planning and development project, and undertake appropriate notifications for each project.
4. Citizens of Parkland County are expected to participate in the Public Consultation process with the Developer/Applicant and Administration, and use the Public Hearing as well as any other referral process established under the Municipal Government Act or this Policy, to provide comments, support, concerns, or suggestions to Council. They are expected to understand the nature of the consultation, whether the public is being consulted or informed, and to participate accordingly. They should learn about the issue, listen to all perspectives, and to try to understand opposing viewpoints, and provide comments at the appropriate time in the process.

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