



COUNCIL POLICY C-AD17

Public Consultation

Prepared By:	Communications and Strategic Planning	Council Approval Date:	Sept. 25, 2012
Effective Date:	September 25, 2012	Council Resolution No.:	N/A
References:	Public Consultation Procedures AD17-P1 Public Consultation for Planning and Development Procedures AD17-P2	Previous Revision Date:	New
		LAS Review Date:	September 4, 2012
Function:	Public Relations		

PURPOSE

This policy provides the standards to which Parkland County shall determine the appropriate levels of public consultation.

POLICY STATEMENT

Parkland County Council is committed to open, accountable and responsive decision-making, which includes appropriate levels of communication and consultation between Council and the public. Further to legislated requirements for public involvement, Parkland County shall seek feedback from the public wherever possible or reasonable to do so.

DEFINITIONS

1. *“Active Participation”* means the process of sharing information with the public and having them take an active role as part of the decision-making process.
2. *“Consultation”* means the process of providing information to the public and obtaining feedback, whether to test an idea or concept, or collaborating to develop solutions.
3. *“Information Sharing”* means the process of providing information to the public to raise awareness.
4. *“Mailed Notice”* shall always mean a letter in the mail to the address of the registered landowner as determined from the Parkland County tax roll.
5. *“Open House”* means an information session with displays and other information for public to view and includes representation from Administration, whether County staff or consultants working on behalf of the County, attending to answer questions.
6. *“Public”* means residents, businesses, community associations and all other stakeholders who may have a vested interest, whether statutory, legal or otherwise, in the issue, project, policy, initiative or bylaw proposed by Parkland County.
7. *“Public Consultation Plan”* means a written document outlining the level of public participation that will be employed to address the issue, project, initiative or bylaw proposed by Parkland County, and includes a communications plan outlining timelines, budget and strategies required to activate the plan.
8. *“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 shall be heard, and includes all statutory and non-statutory hearings as identified within the *Municipal Government Act*.

9. “*Public Meeting*” means an information session that includes a formal presentation by the organizer and includes an opportunity for attendees to ask questions and provide input.
10. “*Public Notification*” means a method of informing the public as required for proposed bylaws, land use matters, and other notifications as specified in the *Municipal Government Act*.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Parkland County employees when it is required to engage the public, whether to inform, consult, or engage the public regarding issues, projects, policies, initiatives and bylaws proposed by Parkland County.

This policy also applies to consultants working on behalf of Parkland County, as well as any boards, committees, and other quasi-judicial bodies as appointed by Parkland County Council through bylaw, policy or other legislation.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Manager of Communications and Strategic Planning is responsible for implementing, monitoring and evaluating this policy.

STANDARDS

1. This policy is not to circumvent any statutory requirements as outlined in the *Municipal Government Act* or any other legislation to which Parkland County must adhere, and is intended to provide advice and direction for projects that do not have statutory requirements, as well as enhance legislated processes.
2. Council shall follow the public hearing process as per the *Municipal Government Act* to listen to concerns and opinions raised by members of the public. Council members should defer involvement or engagement in discussions with citizens, developers, or special interest groups until the public hearing, as that is the appropriate time for all information, issues and concerns identified through the public consultation to be put forward. This ensures a fair process for all.
3. The Manager of the department, or designate, is required to develop a Public Consultation Plan to outline the level of public participation that will be employed to address the issue, project, initiative or bylaw proposed by Parkland County, including a communications plan outlining timelines, budget and strategies required to activate the plan, with assistance from the Manager of Communications and Strategic Planning.
4. Public Consultation Plans are to be presented as information to the Governance and Priorities Committee.
5. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) may adopt procedures consistent with this policy to provide a framework and consistent approach when engaging the public for operational purposes.