



## COUNCIL POLICY C-AD51

## Public Engagement

Prepared By: Communications

Council Approval Date:

Effective Date:

References: None

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Function: Public Relations

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**PURPOSE**

To ensure public engagement in County matters, and allow for more informed decisions, greater public understanding and acceptance, and more enduring solutions.

The intent is to standardize the process of public engagement for the County.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

Council believes that public engagement is crucial. They acknowledge that public engagement is a process that requires time and effort from all participants. Council is committed to open, accountable and responsive decision-making, which includes appropriate and timely levels of engagement with the public, as outlined in the public engagement continuum found in Attachment 1.

**SCOPE**

This Policy will apply to all County departments, consultants, applicants, and developers undertaking work in Parkland County. The policy covers all public engagement processes as part of statutory, non-statutory and other proposed applications, plans, projects and studies that may have an impact on the greater public.

**EXPECTATIONS**

**Council** is required to participate in the Public Hearing process to listen to the issues raised by members of the public, and to consider such issues to inform their decision-making process. Council members should delay involvement or engagement in discussions on County projects, initiatives or developer initiated applications until such time as the Public Hearing, report or study, or application is presented to Council for acceptance. This ensures a fair process for both citizens and the developer and or applicant.

**Developers and or Applicants** shall be required to undertake public engagement as outlined in this Policy. Resident engagement and input shall be accommodated and considered in project processes and final outcomes (i.e. final applications, proposals) brought forward to the County.

**Consultants** are expected to undertake Public Engagement as outlined in this Policy. Public Engagement should be initiated early in the process. Public engagement and input should be accommodated for and considered in the application / project process. Public input should be taken into consideration when making a final recommendation or report.

**Administration** is expected to work with developers, applicants and consultants to ensure effective and appropriate Public Engagement has been completed, and the requirements of this Policy have been met. Administration will strive to ensure the Public Engagement is appropriate for the type, scale and nature of each project, and undertake required notifications for each project.

In addition, when the County initiates a project, administration or the project consultant will develop and implement a Public Engagement Plan that is effective and appropriate to the project. Public Engagement should be initiated early in the process and Administration should listen to the public, acknowledge their concerns and take public input into consideration when making a final decision or recommendation.

**Public** are encouraged to participate in the public engagement process and to use the process to provide input.

## RESPONSIBILITY

The Chief Administrative Officer is responsible for evaluating and monitoring this Policy. General Managers and Managers are responsible for ensuring implementation of this Policy.

## DEFINITIONS

The following definitions and interpretations apply in this policy:

1. **Major Development** means any land use that increases the intensity of the land use relative to the surrounding lands and that may affect adjacent land uses by way of two or more of the following: noise, dust, odour, noxious emissions, traffic and lighting. For the purposes of this policy, "major development" also includes Natural Resource Extraction / Processing.
2. **Major Community Issue** means an issue that:
  - a. Has a high impact on the whole community including significant changes to the natural environment or general health and safety of residents, high degree of interest across the community and/or the strong possibility of conflicting perspectives on the issue. Example – elimination of a facility or service that serves whole community.
  - b. Has a high impact on a select area and/or community group including high impact on a specific neighborhood, group or community and/or strong possibility of conflicting perspectives at the neighborhood level or the need for potential trade-offs among particular groups. Example – Installation of a community wide amenity on a neighborhood subdivision reserve.
3. **Minor Community Issue** means an issue that:
  - a. Has a modest impact on the whole community including a sufficient degree of interest across the community to warrant public engagement and/or a moderate possibility of conflicting perspectives. Example – Proposed changes to a community wide service, or provision of a community wide event.
  - b. Has a modest impact on a select area and/or community group including a modest impact on a neighborhood area, community group(s) or specific facility or service and/or a modest risk of controversy or conflict at a local level. Example – local road or sidewalk improvements, changes to a local activity or service such as library hours.
4. **Non-Statutory Plan** means a plan or policy document created by administration or a consultant working for administration, or by an applicant that is not approved as a formal by-law by Council. Non-statutory plans are typically accepted by Council as information.

5. **Open House** means a method of public engagement that involves an informal session with displays or other information available for participants to review. The developer, applicant, consultant or administration, depending on who is organizing the event, are available to answer any questions the public may have. A feedback form or survey is used to record public comment, and a sign-in sheet for names and addresses of attendees is required. This form of public engagement is often used to present a draft plan or report to the public.
6. **Public** means residents, businesses, associations, and other stakeholders who may have a vested interest whether statutory, legal, or otherwise in the issue, project, policy, plan, initiative or bylaw being proposed by Parkland County.
7. **Public Engagement** means the process of informing and/or engaging with the public in the preparation of County plans, studies or reports. This also includes informing and/or engaging with the public on developer / applicant initiated projects and applications. It could include:
  - a. Informing the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and/or solutions.
  - b. Engaging the public to obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
8. **Public Engagement Plan** means a written document outlining the types of public engagement, the tools to be used, and the process to be followed in conducting public engagement on a proposed planning and/or development project.
9. **Public Hearing** a statutory requirement under Section 692 of the Municipal Government Act.
10. **Public Meeting** means a method of public engagement that involves a formal presentation by the organizer on the issues and 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.
11. **Public Notification** means a method of informing the public. Notified landowners may include, but are not limited to those located within the site for which the application has been made (not including the applicant) and other landowners within a defined area as specified in this Policy.
12. **Record means:** for all engagement formats - written report prepared by the project consultant, applicant, or administration. The record shall include:
  - a. written summary of the presentation
  - b. written summary of public concerns heard at the engagement
  - c. responses to the public concerns by the developer, applicant, consultant, or administration
  - d. summary of how the public concerns will be addressed

## STANDARDS

### 1. Public Engagement Plans

- a. The Manager of the department, or designate, is required to develop a Public Engagement plan to outline the level of public engagement that will be used to inform or address a project, issue, initiative or bylaw proposed by Parkland County.
- b. Public Engagement Plans shall be prepared by all developers, applicants, and consultants working with, and on behalf of the County and submitted to the Manager of the department for which the application or plan is being prepared. Public Engagement Plans shall be prepared to the satisfaction of the Manager of the department, and in accordance with this Policy.

- c. Public Engagement Plans for County initiated plans, studies, or reports are to be presented to Council.
- d. The table below outlines **minimum public engagement requirements** for County plans and processes.

**NOTE:** At no time shall the notification / engagement be reduced so that it no longer meets the overall intent of this policy, or the requirements for referral, notification, and consultation as defined in the Municipal Government Act, the County's Municipal Development Plan, or the Land Use Bylaw.

### Summary of minimum Public Engagement requirements

Type of Application	Form of Public Engagement	Purpose	Responsible	Notification Requirements and Distances
New Intermunicipal Development Plan, Municipal Development Plan or Land Use Bylaw  Note: the process of developing an Intermunicipal Development Plan or Municipal Development Plan will require a greater level of engagement that will occur over multiple months.	Public Meeting or Open House at project start	Inform and Engage the Public and stakeholders on the initial purpose of the project, issues and opportunities.	Planning	All Citizens, Neighbouring municipalities, school authorities, provincial agencies, and other referral agencies.  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County website Letters to referral agencies E-mail lists
	Public Meeting or Open House during plan development (see endnote # 2).	Engage the Public and stakeholders during key project milestones (i.e. may include at community vision and principle development stage, confirmation of principles etc.).	Planning	All Citizens, Neighbouring municipalities, school authorities, provincial agencies, and other referral agencies.  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County website Letters to referral agencies E-mail lists
	Public Meeting or Open House on Draft Plan	Inform the public of plan recommendations and how public feedback was incorporated from previous public engagements.	Planning	All Citizens, Neighbouring municipalities, school authorities, provincial agencies, and other referral agencies.  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County website E-mail lists
	Public Hearing (statutory requirement)	Inform public of formal hearing before Council, as per Municipal Government Act and this policy.	Planning and Legislative Services	All Citizens, Neighbouring municipalities, school authorities, provincial agencies, and other referral agencies (mailed notices)  <u>Notification method example:</u> Newspaper ads County website Letters to referral agencies E-mail lists
New Area Structure Plans, Area Redevelopment Plans	Public Meeting or Open House prior to plan development or formal application is submitted for	Engage public input/feedback on issues/options from interested parties.	Planning or Developer/ Applicant	All Citizens, Neighbouring municipalities, school authorities, provincial agencies, and other referral agencies.  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County website

Type of Application	Form of Public Engagement	Purpose	Responsible	Notification Requirements and Distances
	plan development.			E-mail lists
	Second open house on draft Plan (see endnote # 2).	Inform public of draft plan recommendations and how public feedback was incorporated from first public engagement.	Planning or Developer/ Applicant	All Citizens, Neighbouring municipalities, school authorities, provincial agencies, and referral agencies.  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County website E-mail lists
	Public Hearing	Inform public of formal hearing before Council, as per Municipal Government Act and this policy.	Planning and Legislative Services	All Citizens, Neighbouring municipalities, school authorities, provincial agencies, and referral agencies  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County website E-mail lists
Amendment to a statutory plan including: Intermunicipal Development, Municipal Development Plan Area Structure Plan, Area Redevelopment Plan or Land Use Bylaw	Public Meeting or Open House prior to plan development	Engage with the Public and stakeholders on issues and opportunities.	Planning or Developer/ Applicant	Potentially affected citizens, Neighbouring municipalities, school authorities, provincial agencies, and other referral agencies.  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County website
	Second open house on proposed amendment prior to application for plan amendment (see endnote # 2).	Inform public of amendment and how public feedback was incorporated from first public engagement.	Planning or Developer/ Applicant	Potentially affected citizens, Neighbouring municipalities, school authorities, provincial agencies, and other referral agencies.  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County website
	Public Hearing (statutory requirement)	Inform public of formal hearing before Council, as per Municipal Government Act and this policy.	Planning and Legislative Services	All Citizens, Neighbouring municipalities, school authorities, provincial agencies, and other referral agencies (mailed notices)  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County website
Outline Plan	Public Meeting or Open House on the Outline Plan	Inform the public of the proposed Outline Plan and engage on potential issues and opportunities.	Applicant	Referrals / notifications shall be sent to all landowners in the Outline Plan area and within 800 metres (1/2 mile) of the Outline Plan area. Neighbouring municipalities, school authorities, provincial agencies, and referral agencies shall also be notified.  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Letters to landowners (as per above) E-mail to referral agencies
Subdivision application	Public notification of application to adjacent landowners.	Inform public an application has been received and invite feedback.	Planning	Notifications shall be sent to "adjacent" landowners as defined in the Municipal Government Act.  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Letters to landowners E-mail to referral agencies

Type of Application	Form of Public Engagement	Purpose	Responsible	Notification Requirements and Distances
	Public notification of decision to adjacent landowners.	Inform public a decision on the application has been made.	Planning	Notifications shall be sent to "adjacent" landowners as defined in the Municipal Government Act.  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Letters to landowners
Development permit for major development project or Direct Control District permit	Public Meeting or Open House on the Major Development Project or Direct Control District permit.	Notify and provide the public and stakeholders the opportunity to engage on issues and opportunities	Applicant	Notifications shall be sent to landowners as prescribed in the Land Use Bylaw.  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads (if required by the County) Letters to landowners (if required by the County)
	Public notification of Decision	Inform the public a decision has been made by the Development Authority.	Planning	Notifications shall be sent to landowners as prescribed in the Land Use Bylaw.  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads (if required by the County) County website Letters to landowners (if required by the County) Letters to applicant
	Appeal to Subdivision Development Appeal Board (if decision is appealed by adjacent landowners or applicant).	Inform public, appellants, and applicants of the formal appeal.	Legislative Services	Notifications shall be sent to landowners as defined in the Municipal Government Act and Land Use Bylaw.  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads (if required by the County) County website Letters to landowners (if required by the County) Letters to appellants Letters to applicant
Road Closure (excluding temporary road closures as defined in Section 25 of the Municipal Government Act).	Public Hearing	Inform public of formal hearing before Council, as per Municipal Government Act and this policy.	Engineering and Legislative Services	All Citizens, Neighbouring municipalities, school authorities, provincial agencies, and referral agencies as defined in the Municipal Government Act
Disposal of Municipal Reserve and School Reserve	Public Hearing	Inform public of formal hearing before Council, as per Municipal Government Act and this policy	Planning and Legislative Services	Notifications shall be sent to "adjacent" landowners as defined in the Municipal Government Act.
Non statutory Plans	Public notification of the non-statutory plan development.	Inform the public to build awareness.	Department	Notification to the Public  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County Newsletter County website/Social Media

Type of Application	Form of Public Engagement	Purpose	Responsible	Notification Requirements and Distances
	As outlined in the project Public Engagement Plan which will include a methodology for public meeting/open house, survey, one on one interviews, focus groups, online interactive tools, advisory meetings and stakeholder meetings.	Engage with the Public on issues and opportunities.	Department	Notification to the Public  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County Newsletter County website/Social Media Letters to referral agencies E-mail lists
	As outlined in the project Public Engagement Plan which will include a methodology for public meeting/open house, survey, one on one interviews, focus groups, online interactive tools, advisory meetings and stakeholder meetings.	Inform public of plan recommendations and to validate how/why public feedback was or was not incorporated from the previous public engagement.	Department	Notification to the Public.  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County Newsletter County website/Social Media Letters to referral agencies E-mail lists
	Council Meeting	Inform Council and public of final plan recommendations	Department	Notification to the Public  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County Newsletter County website/Social Media Letters to referral agencies E-mail lists
Major Community Issues	Notification of issue	Inform stakeholders to build awareness	Department	Notification to all stakeholders in the impacted area  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County Website Direct Mailout Community meeting
	Methodology may include public meeting/open house, one on one, focus groups, advisory committee/task	Involve stakeholders in the development of solutions	Department	Notification to all stakeholders in the impacted area  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County Website Direct Mailout Community meeting

Type of Application	Form of Public Engagement	Purpose	Responsible	Notification Requirements and Distances
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Minor Community Issues	Notification of issue	Inform stakeholders to build awareness	Department	Notification to all stakeholders in the impacted area  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County Website Direct Mailout Community meeting
	Methodology may include public meeting/open house, one on one, focus groups, advisory committee/task force.	Involve stakeholders in the development of solutions	Department	Notification to all stakeholders in the impacted area  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County Website Direct Mailout Community meeting
Programs & Services	Public notification of program and services	Inform Public of available services, events and programs	Department	Notification to the Public  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County Newsletter County website/Social Media
Bylaw Development	Public notification of the Bylaw Review	Share information to build awareness with the Public	Department	Notification to the Public  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County Newsletter County website/Social Media
	Methodology may include public meeting/open house, survey, one on one interviews, focus groups, online interactive tools, advisory committee/task force.	Test ideas or concepts to build knowledge and collaborate to develop solutions	Department	All Citizens, Neighbouring municipalities, school authorities, provincial agencies, and other referral agencies.  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County Newsletter County website/Social Media Letters to referral agencies E-mail lists
		Inform public of recommendations and to validate how/why public feedback was or was not incorporated from previous public engagement		
	Public Hearing	Inform public of formal hearing before Council, as per Municipal Government Act and this policy.	Department and Legislative Services	All Citizens, Neighbouring municipalities, school authorities, provincial agencies, and referral agencies  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County website Letters to referral agencies



Type of Application	Form of Public Engagement	Purpose	Responsible	Notification Requirements and Distances
Recreation land use/ Development	Public engagement of the potential change of land use	Share information to build awareness with the Public.	Parks, Recreation and Culture	Notification to the Public  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County Newsletter County website/Social Media
	Methodology may include public meeting/open house, survey, one on one interviews, focus groups, online interactive tools, advisory committee/task force.	Engage with the Public on issues and opportunities.	Parks, Recreation and Culture	All Citizens, Neighbouring municipalities, school authorities, provincial agencies, and other referral agencies.  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County Newsletter County website/Social Media Letters to referral agencies E-mail lists
		Inform public of outcome and to validate how/why public feedback was or was not incorporated from previous public engagement.		
	Public notification of presentation of the final proposal	Inform public of formal presentation.	Parks, Recreation and Culture	Notification to the Public  <u>Notification method examples:</u> Newspaper ads County Newsletter County website/Social Media Letters to referral agencies E-mail lists
<p>End Notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Department Manager may decrease the engagement requirements if a proposed plan, amendment to a plan, report, subdivision or development has minimal or no impact to adjacent land owners or the public by way of dust, odour, noxious emissions, increased traffic or on-site lighting impacts on adjacent sites.</li> <li>2. The Manager will determine the need for a second open house as noted.</li> </ol>				

2. Public Notification

- a. Public notification of all engagements shall occur in accordance with this Policy.

3. Record

- a. For County initiatives: records of public engagement shall be submitted to the Manager of the department for which the engagement has occurred no later than fifteen (15) business days after the date of engagement.
- b. For applicants or developers: records of public engagements shall be submitted as part of the final application.