



LAC LA BICHE COUNTY POLICY

TITLE: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	POLICY NO: CS-15-002
RESOLUTION: 18.551	EFFECTIVE DATE: MAY 1, 2018
LEAD ROLE: COMMUNICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE: MAY 1, 2020
SPECIAL NOTES/CROSS REFERENCE:	AMENDMENT DATE:

POLICY STATEMENT:

Lac La Biche County believes in providing the public with opportunities to be engaged in important County decisions that affect the community. The County encourages public input, and uses public participation to enrich and inform the decision-making process when appropriate. The County aspires to make decisions that are informed and sustainable.

I. DEFINITIONS

1. “Municipality” means Lac La Biche County.
2. “Municipal stakeholders” means the residents of Lac La Biche County, as well as other individuals or organizations that are affected by a municipal decision.
3. “Public participation” means formalized, non-statutory opportunities where municipal stakeholders receive information and provide input to the municipality.
4. “Public participation plan” means a plan that identifies public participation tools to be used to obtain public input in a particular circumstance.
5. “Public participation tools” means the tools that may be used, alone or in combination, to create opportunities for public participation.

II. GENERAL POLICY COMMITMENTS:

1. Public participation in land use, planning and development matters will first follow the guidelines described in Bylaw 17-004 (Land Use Bylaw) and Policy PI-61-001 (Community Engagement Practices), but the County may consider and implement additional public participation tools if appropriate.
2. Lac La Biche County will identify needs for public participation and develop public participation plans, following the guidelines described in section IV (Public Participation Opportunities) and using Schedule A and Schedule B of this policy.

3. Summaries of input obtained through public participation will be shared with Council and the public, to promote accountability and transparency.

III. POLICY RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Council shall:
 - a. Promote and support public participation as a way to enrich and inform municipal decision-making, including allocating funds and resources to enable public participation
 - b. Consider input obtained through public participation
 - c. Give direction to Administration on public participation needs
 - d. Review this policy every four years, at minimum
2. Administration shall:
 - a. Develop and maintain operating procedures to implement this policy
 - b. Assess public participation needs, in accordance with Schedule A of this policy, and provide advice and recommendations to Council
 - c. Develop and implement public participation plans, in accordance with Schedule B of this policy
 - d. Prepare summaries of input obtained through public participation, in accordance with Schedule C of this policy
 - e. Assess this policy and request amendments as needed

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

1. Public participation is necessary when:
 - a. It is required by the *Municipal Government Act* and other legislation, including existing municipal legislation
 - b. Council directs Administration to seek public input for specified initiatives, projects or proposals
2. Public participation may be necessary when a subject initiative, project or proposal will:
 - a. Affect a large number of municipal stakeholders
 - b. Affect a large geographic area of the municipality
 - c. Have a large and/or adverse impact on municipal programs and services, especially public-facing programs and services
 - d. Have a large and/or adverse impact on County finances, the property tax system or other areas of County operations that have the potential to affect the public
 - e. Have a large and/or adverse impact on community appearance
 - f. Have a large and/or adverse impact on municipal stakeholders' quality of life
 - g. Have a large and/or adverse impact on the natural environment
 - h. Have, or is likely to have, strong feelings or opinions associated with it
3. Public participation may be necessary when Council or Administration feels there is a need to seek public input, outside of the circumstances described in this policy.
4. As time and circumstances allow, opportunities for public participation will be advertised online, in print and on the radio.

5. Opportunities for public participation will include descriptions of the subject initiatives, projects and proposals, and the aspect(s) thereof that are open to public input.
6. At any time, the municipality may choose not to seek public input, as long as the decision does not contravene the regulations of the *Municipal Government Act* or other legislation.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TOOLS

1. Lac La Biche County will use the following tools, alone or in combination, to create opportunities for public participation:
 - a. Electronic and printed polls and surveys
 - b. Open houses, town hall meetings and workshops
 - c. Joint committees and task forces, convened for specific purposes and active within specific timeframes, with a capacity to form official recommendations to Council
2. Council and Administration will consider the impact of the subject initiative, project or proposal, as well as available resources, timing and other factors when selecting public participation tools.

VI. REPORTING AND EVALUATION

1. The results of public participation will be compiled and reported to Council, in accordance with Schedule C of this policy. Reports will include the following information:
 - a. A summary of the public participation process, including descriptions of timelines, public participation tools used, etc.
 - b. A summary of public input that has been obtained. When appropriate, Administration will recommend next steps
2. The results of public participation will be shared with affected or concerned members of Administration, for further review and potential follow-up action.
3. After decisions regarding initiatives, projects or proposals that were the subject of public participation have been made, final reports for the public will be prepared and posted on the County’s website. Reports will include the following information:
 - a. An explanation of the decision that was made, including the rationale behind the decision
 - b. A summary of the public participation process and outcomes
 - c. An explanation of how public input was considered or factored into the decision

“Original Signed”

Chief Administrative Officer

April 27, 2018

Date

“Original Signed”

Mayor

May 3, 2018

Date

POLICY CS-15-002 - SCHEDULE A

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOOL

Use this tool to help determine the need for public participation for your initiative, project or proposal. Remember that Lac La Biche County may choose not to seek public input. The purpose of this tool is to let Administration make informed recommendations to Council about needs.

Provide a basic description of your initiative, project or proposal:

Is there a legislative requirement (in the *Municipal Government Act* or other legislation) to seek public input on this matter? If yes, proceed with applicable procedures for obtaining input. If no, continue to complete this worksheet.

Step One – Answer the following questions about the matter:

1. Will it affect a large number of municipal stakeholders?
 2. Will it affect a large geographic area of the municipality?
 3. Will it have a large and/or adverse impact on County programs and services, especially public-facing programs and services?
 4. Will it have a large and/or adverse impact on County finances, the property tax system or other areas of County operations that have the potential to affect the public?
 5. Will it have a large and/or adverse impact on community appearance?
 6. Will it have a large and/or adverse impact on municipal stakeholders' quality of life?
 7. Will it have a large and/or adverse impact on the natural environment?
 8. Are there any other reasons to seek public input? If yes, explain:
-
-

If you answered “yes” to any of the above, you should at the very least consider a communications plan to inform the public.

The following are levels of public participation with tools that can be used, alone or in combination, to obtain public input when appropriate:

- **Input (online or printed polls or surveys)**
- **Consultation (open houses, town hall meetings, workshops)**
- **Collaboration (joint committees, task forces)**

Step Two – Answer the following questions about the matter:

1. Are there, or are there likely to be, strong feelings or opinions associated with it?
2. What is its expected frequency and/or duration? Choose one:
 - a. One time, lasting six months or shorter

- b. One time, lasting longer than six months
- c. Permanent, recurring infrequently
- d. Permanent, recurring frequently
- e. Other (explain):

Step Three – Answer the following questions about the matter:

1. Do you feel public participation is necessary? If yes, to what extent should stakeholders be engaged in the decision? Use your answers in all previous steps and your knowledge of the matter to choose an appropriate level:
 - a. Input
 - b. Consultation
 - c. Collaboration

If no, why not? Explain:

2. If public participation is not appropriate for the entire matter, would it be appropriate for part of it? If yes, explain:

Step Four – Submit this completed worksheet to the Senior Management Team for review.

Assessment completed by: _____
Name, position title, date

Assessment reviewed by: _____
Name, position title, date

POLICY CS-15-002 - SCHEDULE B

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR LAC LA BICHE COUNTY

Use this template to create a public participation plan, in the event that Council has directed Administration to do so.

Project name:

Manager / Senior Manager in charge:

- 1. What will be the impact of this project on Lac La Biche County? (E.g. it will affect a large number of stakeholders, etc.)**
 - Describe...
- 2. Who needs to be engaged in the decision? Identify key stakeholders:**
 - Describe...
- 3. What public participation tools do you plan to use?**
 - Describe...
- 4. How will stakeholders be informed of public participation opportunities? (E.g. advertising, invitations to participate, etc.) Develop a Communication Plan if necessary.**
 - Describe...
- 5. What information do stakeholders need to give informed input? Frame the issue to the best of your ability, and consult with Communications if necessary.**
 - Describe...
- 6. What aspects of the project are open to public input?**
 - Describe...
- 7. How will the findings of public input be recorded?**
 - Describe...
- 8. How will public input be used? (I.e. what is the purpose of this public participation process?)**
 - Describe...
- 9. What is your expected timeline for public participation?**
 - Describe...
- 10. What resources are necessary to complete this public participation process?**
 - Describe...
- 11. What expected costs are associated with this public participation process?**
 - Describe...
- 12. List strategic considerations, current attitudes, possible risks and other factors that could affect this public participation process (e.g. holidays, communications breakdowns, etc.).**
 - Describe...
- 13. List possible options for improving or increasing stakeholder engagement (e.g. free childcare during an open house, etc.)**
 - Describe...

Using the information you have provided, create a list of steps with target dates for implementing this plan:

<i>Task</i>	<i>Target completion date</i>	<i>Staff member or department responsible</i>
Describe...	Describe...	Describe...

Submit this completed plan to the Senior Management Team to review.

POLICY CS-15-002 - SCHEDULE C

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REPORT TO LAC LA BICHE COUNTY COUNCIL

Project background:

The purpose of obtaining public input was:

Lac La Biche County used the following public participation tools:

- Describe...

The public participation process was implemented as follows:

- Describe all aspects of the process (e.g. how stakeholders were informed of public participation opportunities, when and where public participation opportunities were offered, etc.)

Participation levels:

- Describe...

What we heard:

- Summarize the key points of public input that has been obtained (e.g. this message or opinion was frequently heard, this percentage of stakeholders said this, etc.). Provide as much detail as necessary to fully capture the input that has been received.

Does Administration believe this level of input is sufficient? YES / NO

If the answer to the previous question is no, why not?

Next steps:

- Describe appropriate next steps (e.g. Council should give direction, seek additional input before proceeding, etc.)

Appendices:

- Include infographics, maps and any additional documentation needed to inform Council.

Report prepared by: _____
Name, position title, date

Report reviewed by: _____
Name, position title, date