

# Lac La Biche County *Policy*

**TITLE: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES**

**POLICY NO: PD-61-001**

**RESOLUTION: 21.994**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: January 12, 2010**

**DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE: PLANNING  
AND DEVELOPMENT**

**NEXT REVIEW DATE: December 14, 2025**

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## **POLICY STATEMENT:**

Lac La Biche County desires to improve community engagement in planning and development decisions in order to create opportunities that involve residents, stakeholders and others in providing input on these decisions in a timely matter.

This policy codifies practices that the Planning & Development Department will follow in order to involve the community as early as possible in the engagement process, so residents and stakeholders have time to learn about the issue and actively participate in the decision making process.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

“Community Engagement” means the process of informing or consulting with the public in the planning and development process. It could include one or both of the following:

- i. Informing the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives or solutions. The purpose is to keep the public informed.
- ii. Consulting the public to obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives or decisions. The purpose is to keep the public informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. The issue is defined before public input is sought.

“Community Engagement Plan” means a 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 application or project.

“Major or Specialized 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 purpose of this policy, “major development” also includes Natural Resource Extraction / Processing.

“Municipal Government Act” (“MGA”) means the Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c M-26.

“Notification Zone” means an area where planning or development applications are circulated to obtain input from landowners and stakeholders who have an interest in lands within this zone. The Land Use Bylaw, as amended, establishes the minimum Notification Zone, depending on the nature of the application.

“Open House” means a method of Community Engagement that involves a formal presentation by the organizer on the issues and options. Members of the public can ask questions and provide input in a public forum and a Record of Proceedings is kept. This form of Community Engagement is often used in the first phase, prior to or

just after an application is submitted. An Open House may be held in a virtual format should in-person format is not available or possible.

“Primary Consultation” means a specific consultation between the developer and or applicant, internal and external government agencies, stakeholders or the general public prior to initiating any statutory plan, statutory plan amendment, subdivision application, or significant development application. First Nations and Metis Settlements are also included where these lands may be affected by planning and development decisions.

“Public Hearing” means a public hearing held in accordance with section 230 of the *MGA*.

“Public Notification” means a method of informing the public of: a planning or development decision; upcoming public hearing; any proposed bylaw to adopt a statutory plan or land use bylaw; or 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 the Notification Zone.

“Record of Proceeding” means the written record from a developer and or applicant’s Open House, identifying concerns by those in attendance at the Open House about the proposed planning or development application.

“Stakeholder(s)” means a person, group or organization that has an interest or concern in the outcome of a decision by the Subdivision and or Development Authority.

“Subdivision and Development Regulations” means the Subdivision and Development Regulations, Alberta Regulations 44/2002, as amended.

“Workshop” means a discussion to explore aspects of a proposal prior to first draft being created. There are no formal minutes required during a workshop. Workshops will be typically held with Members of Council to present the proposal and not open to the public.

#### **PRINCIPLES:**

The Planning & Development Department is responsible for directing landowners and or agents to conduct a Public Notification within a Notification Zone for applications such as: an area structure plan; concept plan or area redevelopment plan; an amendment to the land use bylaw; the development of land where the land use may be contentious; or for the subdivision of land.

#### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Landowner and or agent:

- i. A Primary Consultation between the landowner and or agent and the Planning & Development Department shall be undertaken prior to initiating the types of applications that will affect other landowners. This is intended to address information requirements and discuss issues prior to the landowner and or agent undertaking works in support of the project.
- ii. A Community Engagement Plan shall be prepared by the landowner and or agent and implemented to the satisfaction of Lac La Biche County.
- iii. A minimum of one (1) Open House shall be required, to be coordinated by the landowner and or agent, for:
  - a. New or major amendments to a Statutory Plan or Concept Plan;

- b. Major amendments to the Land Use Bylaw; and
- c. Major or Specialized Development proposals.
- iv. Opportunities for Community Engagement, coordinated by the landowner and or agent may be required in accordance with Table 1 and at the discretion of Lac La Biche County.
- v. Each opportunity of Community Engagement requires that the following be provided to the County by the landowner and or agent after the event is held:
  - a. Copies and or summary of advertisement and or invitations (at the cost of the landowner and or agent);
  - b. A Record of Proceeding of the Open House (at the cost of the landowner and or agent);
  - c. Copies of all comment forms by participants in an Open House; and
  - d. A written report outlining issues raised during the consultation and how the applicant intends to address each.

Lac La Biche County:

- i. A Community Engagement Plan shall be outlined in the communication plan for any plan review undertaken by Planning and Development.
- ii. A minimum of two (2) opportunities for Community Engagement, coordinated by Planning & Development, shall be required for:
  - a. Preparation or major amendments of an Intermunicipal Development Plan or other forms of statutory plans between municipalities;
  - b. Preparation of, or major amendments to the Municipal Development Plan; and
  - c. Preparation of, or major amendments to, Area Structure Plans, Area Redevelopment Plans or Concept Plans initiated by the County;
- iii. Each opportunity for Community Engagement requires:
  - a. Copies and or a summary of advertisement or invitations;
  - b. A Record of Proceeding of the Open House; and
  - c. Copies of all comment forms by participants in an Open House.

“Original Signed”  
Chief Administrative Officer

December 17, 2021  
Date

“Original Signed”  
Mayor

December 18, 2021  
Date

**SPECIAL NOTES/CROSS REFERENCE:** Procedure PD-61-001 Community Engagement Practices and Table 1

**AMENDMENT DATE:** December 14, 2021



POLICY PI-61-001

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF MINIMUM PUBLIC CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Type of Application	Form of Public Consultation	Purpose	Responsible Party
Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) New or Major Amendments to Municipal Development Plan (MDP)	Workshop or Community Engagement prior to plan development	Gather public input and feedback on issues and options. May include input from landowners, stakeholders, agencies and affected organizations	Planning & Development
	Open House to present draft Plan	Inform public of plan and recommendations, incorporate information from public feedback from earlier public consultation. An Open House should be completed in each Municipality to which the IDP is affecting.	Planning & Development
	Open House or Community Engagement on changes	Present amended draft plan. A second Open House is only required if there are changes resulting from the presentation of the draft Plan.	Planning & Development
	Public Hearing	Inform public of formal hearing through website and advertising in accordance with the <i>Municipal Government Act</i>	Planning & Development
New or Major Amendment to Statutory Plans & Concept Plans New or Major Amendments to Land Use Bylaw	Community Engagement prior to preparation of Amendments or to introduce new Plan	Gather public input and feedback from interested parties to include in Plan	Landowner, Developer and or Agent (for projects initiated on private property) Planning & Development (for projects initiated on County owned lands)
	Public Notification of application	Inform public on application as been received and invite feedback	Landowner, Developer and or Agent (for projects initiated on private property) Planning & Development (for projects initiated on County owned lands)
	Public Hearing	Inform public of formal hearing through website and advertising in accordance with the <i>Municipal Government Act</i>	Planning & Development
Rezoning	Public Hearing notification	Inform public of formal hearing through website and advertising in accordance with the <i>Municipal Government Act</i>	Planning & Development
Major or Specialized Developments or Development Applications for a Discretionary Use	Community Engagement	Gather input from adjacent landowners within the Notification Zone on the proposal	Landowner, Developer and or Agent (for projects initiated on private property) Planning & Development (for projects initiated on County owned lands)
	Public Notification of decision	Inform public of development permit decision, as per the <i>Municipal Government Act</i>	Planning & Development
Disposition of Reserve Land	Community Engagement	Inform property owners of a proposed action related to reserve land	Planning & Development
	Public Hearing	Inform public of formal hearing through website and advertising as per the <i>Municipal Government Act</i>	Planning & Development
Subdivisions	Community Engagement	Circulate proposal to property owners within the Notification Zone, affected agencies and stakeholders as per the <i>Subdivision and Development Regulations</i>	Landowner, Developer and or Agent (for projects initiated on private property) Planning & Development (for projects initiated on County owned lands)
	Notice of Decision	Notify agencies and stakeholders of the decision, as per the <i>Subdivision and Development Regulations</i>	Planning & Development
Road Closure	Community Engagement	Inform affected agencies and stakeholders of the application and proposed plan.	Planning & Development
	Public Hearing	Inform public of formal hearing through website and advertising as per the <i>Municipal Government Act</i>	Planning & Development
Land Lease / License of Occupation Agreement	Community Engagement	Circulate proposal to property owners adjacent to the Lands. Obtain input from internal departments	Planning & Development
Encroachment on Environmental Reserve Lands	Community Engagement	Inform property owners within the Notification Zone of the proposed encroachment.	Planning & Development
	Public Hearing	Inform public of formal hearing through website and advertising as per the <i>Municipal Government Act</i>	Planning & Development

# Procedure

**TITLE:** COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES

**PROCEDURE NO:** PD-61-001

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** December 14, 2021

**DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE:** PLANNING  
AND DEVELOPMENT

**NEXT REVIEW DATE:** December 14, 2025

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## GENERAL GUIDELINES:

These procedures serve as a guide for Planning and Development in determining whether a Community Engagement Plan meets the intent of Policy PD-61-001. These procedures are reflected in the Land Use Bylaw to ensure land use applications and decisions reflect effective communication processes that obtain as much public input as possible.

## DEFINITIONS:

*See definitions listed in Community Engagement Policy.*

## PROCEDURE:

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Public input shall be received from the following:

1. Property owners and lease holders within the designated Notification Zone of the subject property boundary;
2. Stakeholders;
3. Federal or Provincial agencies and boards;
4. First Nations and or Metis Settlements; and
5. Internal departments

The notification buffer may be extended from the subject property boundary if:

- i. The application is for a major or specialized development;
- ii. The proposed use may affect the surrounding transportation network storm drainage network or result in nuisance odours, dust or noise well beyond the subject property boundaries;
- iii. The rezoning is for Industrial zonings; or
- iv. The Planning & Development Department deems that a wider circulation is needed to obtain input from a larger Notification Zone.

Input shall take the form of:

- Informing the public through the County website and an Open House(s);
- Consulting the public through surveys or public meetings;
- Involving the public and or Council through forums such as workshops;
- Circulating notification letters regarding the proposed matter;
- Collaborating with the public through citizen advisory committees or other forms of participatory decision making; and

- Empowering the public through delegated decision making.

The County, landowner and or agent is responsible for coordinating Community Engagement as per Table 1 of Policy PD-610-001.

The landowner and or agent is responsible for the advertising, presentations, displays and recording feedback designed in the Community Engagement Plan. A feedback form or survey shall be used to record public comment. A sign-in sheet for names and addresses of attendees shall be required. Planning staff are responsible for coordinating the same for County initiated projects.

Only one (1) Open House shall be required of a landowner and or agent unless:

- Additional information is required that was not obtained at the first Open House in order to make a decision on the application;
- The first Open House was improperly advertised or other landowners not properly notified of the event; and
- Attendance at the first Open House did not reflect the number of landowners deemed to be affected by a decision of a Development Authority or County Council.

An Open House does not take the place of a Public Hearing for adopting a statutory plan or making a decision on a development application for a Major or Specialized Development: It represents an additional requirement of the applicant to ensure as much public input is obtained when considering a decision affecting the future use of a property.

**STANDARDS**

The minimum notification requirements for various applications are provided in the Land Use Bylaw, as amended.

Mailed notices also refer to transmission of emails between the County and agencies if this is deemed by the Planning & Development Department to be administratively more efficient.

“Original Signed”  
Chief Administrative Officer

December 17, 2021  
Date

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