

Approved: June 11, 2018

PUBLIC PARTICIPATON POLICY

BACKGROUND

1. PURPOSE AND APPLICATION

In accordance with Section 216.1 of the *Municipal Government Act*, this Public Participation Policy has been developed to recognize the value of public participation and create opportunities for meaningful public participation in decisions that directly impact the public.

This Public Participation Policy is in addition to and does not modify or replace the statutory public hearing requirements in the *Municipal Government Act*.

POLICY

2. GENERAL POLICY PRINCIPLES

Council recognizes that good governance includes engaging various Municipal Stakeholders in Public Participation by:

- A) Creating opportunities for Municipal Stakeholders who are affected by a decision to influence the decision;
- B) Promoting sustainable decisions by recognizing various Municipal Stakeholder interests;
- C) Providing Municipal Stakeholders with the appropriate information and tools to engage in meaningful participation; and
- D) Recognizing that Councillors are elected to consider and promote the welfare and interest of the Municipality as a whole and are generally required to vote on matters brought before Council, facilitating Public Participation for matters beyond those where public input is statutorily required may enhance the decision making process.

3. DEFINITIONS

- A) **“Municipal Manager”** means the chief administrative officer of the Municipality or their delegate.
- B) **“Municipal Stakeholders”** means the residents of the Municipality, as well as other individuals, organizations or persons that may have an interest in, or are affected by, a decision made by the Municipality.
- C) **“Municipality”** means the Town of Redcliff.

- D) **“Public Participation”** includes a variety of non-statutory opportunities where Municipal Stakeholders receive information and/or provide input to the Municipality.
- E) **“Public Participation Plan”** means a plan which identifies which Public Participation Tools to be used to obtain public input in a particular circumstance.
- F) **“Public Participation Tools”** means the tools that may be used, alone or in combination, to create Public Participation opportunities including, but not limited to:
- (i) in-person participation which may include at-the-counter interactions, door- knocking, interviews, meetings, round-tables, open houses, and workshops;
 - (ii) digital participation which may include online workbooks, website based engagement initiatives, message boards/discussion forums, and online polls or surveys;
 - (iii) written participation which may include written submissions, email, and mail- in surveys, polls and workbooks; and
 - (iv) representative participation which may include being appointed to an advisory committee, ad hoc committee or citizen board.

4. POLICY RESPONSIBILITIES

- A) **Council Responsibilities**
- (i) Council shall:
 - a. review and approve Public Participation Plans developed by the Municipal Manager in accordance with this Policy or as directed by Council;
 - b. consider input obtained through Public Participation; and
 - c. review this Policy to ensure the Policy complies with all relevant legislation, municipal policies and the spirit and intent of Public Participation.
 - d. ensure appropriate resources are available to solicit Public Participation in accordance with this Policy;
 - e. review information from the Municipal Manager on the scope, timing, appropriate methods and resources required for Public Participation prior to directing the development of a Public Participation Plan.

B) Administration Responsibilities

- (i) The Municipal Manager shall:
 - a. in accordance with this Policy or as directed by Council, develop Public Participation Plans, for Council approval;
 - b. implement approved Public Participation Plans; and
 - c. report the findings of the Public Participation to Council.
 - d. consider timing, resources and engagement when developing and modifying Public Participation Plans;
 - e. communicate to Council and the public, when appropriate, the effectiveness of a Public Participation Plan and the Public Participation Tools used;
 - f. develop the necessary procedures to implement this Policy;

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

- A) The Municipal Manager shall develop and implement a Public Participation Plan in the following circumstances:
 - (i) when new programs or services are being established;
 - (ii) when existing programs and services are being reviewed;
 - (iii) when gathering input or formulating recommendations with respect to budget priorities and budget planning priorities;
 - (iv) when developing community wide plans (even though these scenarios may be statutorily compelled, supplementary public participation opportunities can be considered); and,
 - (v) as otherwise directed by Council.

6. POLICY EXPECTATIONS

A) Legislative and Policy Implications

- (i) All Public Participation will be undertaken in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and any other applicable legislation.
- (ii) All Public Participation will be undertaken in accordance with all existing municipal policies.

- (iii) This Policy shall be available for public inspection and may be posted to the Municipality's website.
- (iv) This Policy will be reviewed regularly as per Town of Redcliff Policy No. 115 (Policy and Bylaw Development Review) or as per legislated requirements.

B) Public Participation Standards

- (i) Public Participation activities will be conducted in a professional and respectful manner.
- (ii) Municipal Stakeholders who participate in any manner of Public Participation are required to be respectful and constructive in their participation. Municipal Stakeholders who are disrespectful, inappropriate or offensive will be excluded from Public Participation opportunities. Further, such participation will not be considered for inclusion in reports outlining public participation results/findings.
- (iii) The results of Public Participation will be made available to Council and Municipal Stakeholders in accordance with municipal policies.

7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLANS

- A) When so directed by this Policy or Council, the Municipal Manager shall develop a Public Participation Plan for approval by Council which shall consider the following:
 - (i) the nature of the matter for which Public Participation is being sought;
 - (ii) the impact of the matter on Municipal Stakeholders;
 - (iii) the demographics of potential Municipal Stakeholders in respect of which Public Participation Tools to utilize, level of engagement and time for input;
 - (iv) the timing of the decision and time required to gather input;
 - (v) what information is required, if any, to participate; and
 - (vi) available resources and reasonable costs.
- B) Public Participation Plans will, at minimum, include the following:
 - (i) information to the public, as per the Public Participation plan, regarding the opportunities to provide input;
 - (ii) identification of which Public Participation Tools will be utilized;
 - (iii) timelines for participation;
 - (iv) information about how input will be used;

8. REPORTING AND EVALUATION

- A) Information obtained in Public Participation will be reviewed by the Municipal Manager and a report shall be provided to Council.
- B) The report shall include, at minimum, the following:
 - (i) an assessment of the effectiveness of the plan based on the level of engagement and the quality of input;
 - (ii) a summary of the input obtained; and,
 - (iii) may include recommendations for future Public Participation Plans.
- C) Reports shall be provided to Council for their review and information.