



Public Participation Policy

Policy Number: COM-001

Date in Effect: May 27, 2025

POLICY STATEMENT

- 1 Public input is one of the factors council considers when making decisions. This Public Participation Policy recognizes the value of public participation and provides a framework for opportunities for the community to be informed of, and/or involved in meaningful public participation regarding decisions that directly affect the public. This policy is in addition to, and does not modify or replace, the statutory public hearing requirements in the *Municipal Government Act*.

PURPOSE

- 2 It is the Town's intent to provide opportunities for the community to be informed of, and where appropriate be involved in, decision-making including:
 - a) Creation opportunities for Interest Holders who are affected by a decision to provide input into the decision. 153-2025
 - b) Promoting sustainable, balanced decisions by recognizing various Interest Holder interests. 153-2025
 - c) Providing Interest Holders with the appropriate information and tools to engage in meaningful participation. 153-2025
 - d) Enriching the decision-making process leading to better, more informed decisions.
- 3 Community Engagement is one of three key pillars of good governance which form the foundation of Council's strategic plan. We meaningfully engage with citizens for effective decision-making. 153-2025

DEFINITIONS

- 4 In this policy:
 - a) "Interest Holders" means the Canmore individuals, organizations, or persons that may have an interest in, or are affected by, a decision made by the Town. 153-2025
 - b) "Public Participation" means includes a variety of non-statutory opportunities where Municipal Interest Holders receive information and/or provide input to the Town. 153-2025
 - c) "Public Participation Plan" means an internal plan that identifies the Public Participation Tools to be used to obtain public input in a particular circumstance.

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- d) “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) statutory public hearing requirements in the *Municipal Government Act* ;
 - ii) in-person participation which may include meetings, round-table discussions, town halls, open houses, and workshops;
 - iii) digital participation which may include online workbooks, chat groups, webinars, message boards/discussion forums, and online polls or surveys;
 - iv) written participation which may include written submissions, email feedback, and mail- in surveys, polls and workbooks;
 - v) representative participation which may include being appointed to a committee or citizen board; and
 - vi) providing information through the media, websites, social media, and other channels.

RESPONSIBILITIES

5 Council’s responsibilities are to:

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- a) Consider input obtained through Public Participation when making decisions.
- b) Review this Policy once per term to ensure the Policy is in the spirit and intent of Public Participation.
- c) Ensure appropriate resources are available to solicit Public Participation in accordance with this Policy.
- d) Promote and support Public Participation.

6 The CAO’s responsibilities are to:

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- a) Ensure the Policy complies with all relevant legislation and municipal policies.
- b) In accordance with this Policy or as directed by Council, seek Public Participation when appropriate (see section 6).
- c) Develop the necessary procedures to implement this Policy.
- d) Make recommendations to Council regarding the resources required to undertake Public Participation.

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7 Public Participation Opportunities

- a) Town may use the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation, as amended, to determine the types or categories of approaches the Town will use to engage municipal Interest Holders, and the types or categories of circumstances in which the Town will engage municipal Interest Holders. (See Attachment 1)

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8 Public Participation Standards

- a) Public Participation activities shall be conducted in a professional and respectful manner.
- b) Municipal Interest Holders who participate in any manner of Public Participation are required to comply with the Town's Respectful Workplace Policy.

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9 Reporting and Evaluation

- a) Information obtained in Public Participation shall be reviewed by the CAO and a report shall be provided to Council as part of the project briefing or request for decision.
- b) This report shall include, at minimum, the following:
- i) an overview of the Public Participation Plan (if any);
 - ii) a summary of the input obtained; and
 - iii) recommendations for future Public Participation (if any).

POLICY REVIEW

- 10 This policy will be reviewed at least once in every term of Council.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Section 216.1 of the *Municipal Government Act*

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation

REPEALS POLICY: Community Engagement and Information Policy 576-2007

AUTHORIZATION:



Sean Krausert
Mayor



Cheryl Hyde
Manager, Municipal Clerk's Office

Policy approved by:



REVISION HISTORY

Action	Date	Council Motion	Notes
Approved	2007-12-04	576-2007	Community Engagement and Information
Repealed	2019-02-05	46-2019	
Approved	2019-02-05	46-2019	Public Participation COM-001
Amended	2025-05-27	153-2025	Change from Stakeholder to Interest Holder, formatting revisions, and added information on IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum.

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Attachment 1:

International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation

Increasing impact on the decision

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how the public input influenced the decision	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives and developed, and provide feedback on how the public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions, and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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The IAP2 Spectrum depicts five levels of increasing influence that the public can have on an outcome or decision. From the first, low intensity level (Inform) to the highest level of engagement (‘Empower,’ the spectrum proposes goals and deliverables for each level. Its language helps discern the level of influence that the public may have on a project or decision; however, it does not define the nature of the relationship between the organization and the public. The level of public influence increases steadily as you move from left to right. Notably, there is no one ‘right’ level, and no level is ‘better’ than another. The correct level is selected based on the needs of the project, Interest Holders, participants, and the organization, and needs are predetermined by identifying a clear purpose and intention. The levels are not a progression—you do not start at Inform, move to Consult, work up to Involve, etc. The level that is chosen is the level that is right for the project and one where the promises are those that the organization can remain committed to.

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