



# CITY OF ST. ALBERT CITY COUNCIL POLICY

NUMBER	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	APPROVAL DATE	REVISION DATE
C-CAO-20	Public Participation Policy	Strategic Services and Environment Corporate Planning and Communications		

## Purpose

To provide direction to Administration on how to involve stakeholders in providing input into decisions that affect the community.

## Policy Statement

Council and Administration recognize that quality public participation is a critical component of good governance and as such, adequate resources will be allocated and the appropriate level of public participation undertaken. The City is committed to public participation activities that are founded on the following principles:

**Shared Responsibility and Commitment:** Public participation leads to better decisions and is a shared responsibility of Council, Administration and the community.

**Transparent and Accountable:** The City communicates clearly and openly about public participation opportunities, its processes and provides factual and evidence-based information. It shares the outcomes of public participation, including how the information was used in the decision-making process and makes decisions in the best interest of the community as a whole.

**Inclusive and Accessible:** The City endeavours to provide opportunities for public participation that take into account the diversity of needs, abilities and viewpoints of the members of the community.

**Appropriate and Responsive:** Public participation activities need to be appropriate to the stated goals, and reflective of the varied preferences and needs of community members for receiving and sharing information.

**Evaluation and Continual Improvement:** Public participation is a dynamic and evolving process that needs continual evaluation and adjustment to improve and address the changing needs of the community.

## Definitions

“City” means the municipal corporation of the City of St. Albert.

“Community” refers to the City, residents, businesses, schools and all other institutions and agencies that make up St. Albert.

“Public participation” means processes through which the City provides opportunities for the community to have input into decision-making through public meetings, surveys, open houses, workshops, polling, citizen’s advisory committees and other forms of engagement.

“Stakeholder” means an individual, organization or group that has an interest in an issue, will be or is likely to be affected by an issue, or has the ability to affect a decision or outcome.

“Statutory Requirement” means a requirement written into a law passed by the provincial or federal government.

“Non-Statutory Requirement” means a rule based on customs, precedents or court decisions.

## Responsibilities

1. City Council shall:
  - a. Consider public input obtained through public participation activities as part of their decision-making process;
  - b. Promote public participation activities and provide, where appropriate, Council member representation;
  - c. Establish consistent practices, processes and timelines for statutory and non-statutory **requirements for Public Participation requirements**;
  - d. Ensure appropriate resources are available to allow for the ongoing implementation of consistent, comprehensive and representative public participation programs and services;
  - e. Request for information from the City Manager on the scope, timing, appropriate methods and resources required for public participation, prior to directing Administration to undertake a public participation activity on a specific issue or item.

2. The City Manager shall:
  - a. Maintain public participation processes that:
    - i. Ensure a coordinated and standardized approach to public participation across the organization;
    - ii. When determining the appropriate level of public participation that the City:
      - Provides opportunities for early and ongoing participation.
      - Aligns resources, types and methods of public participation with the impact of the decision to the community and/or key stakeholder groups.
      - Provides opportunities for ongoing engagement as well as for emerging issues.
  - b. Recommend to Council practices, processes and timelines for statutory and non-statutory **requirements for** public participation activities.
  - c. Develop all necessary processes and tools that support the implementation of this policy.
  - d. Communicate to Council and community, where appropriate, how public input was gathered and used in Administrative recommendations to Council.
  - e. Bring forward resourcing requirements to ensure public participation programs and services are run effectively and consistently.
  - f. Make recommendations to Council on the appropriate resources required for public participation, when Council directs public input on a specific issue or item.

### **Service Standards / Expectations**

1. The City shall comply with all provincial and federal statutory requirements for public participation.
2. The City shall offer public participation opportunities when:
  - a. Identifying Council priorities;
  - b. Formulating recommendations to Council ~~in regards to~~ **regarding the** proposed business plans and budgets;
  - c. Gathering community input following the presentation of proposed business plan and budgets;
  - d. Reviewing existing programs, services, and associated service levels;
  - e. Establishing of new programs, services and service levels; or
  - f. When **otherwise** deemed necessary by Council or the City Manager.

3. The City shall organize at least one statistically representative public participation activity, at least every two years, to obtain the community's overall perceptions of quality of life and satisfaction with programs and services.
4. The City shall have the appropriate allocation of resources and governance mechanisms to build organizational and community capacity for public participation through community outreach and educational activities.
5. The City shall effectively communicate to the community its public participation goals, objectives and processes, including how information will be used and how decisions are made.
6. The City will ensure the results of the public participation activities are publicly available, which includes posting them on the City's website.
7. The City shall, where possible, use various methods and techniques for public participation that meet the varied needs of the community whether it be demographic, physical, social or cultural.
8. The City shall evaluate and learn from the feedback received from the community, as well as continuously look for new and better processes and tools that address the changing needs of the community.
9. The Policy shall be updated at a minimum, every four years or as required by Provincial legislation.

## **Legal References**

*Municipal Government Act*

## **Cross References**

Policy C-CG-06, Strategic Framework

Policy C-CG-02 City of St. Albert Strategic Plan

Policy C-CC-11, Public Hearing Process

Policy C-PE-01, Public Consultation requirements for Planning and Development Processes

Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA)

International Association for Public Participation

## **Attachments**

1. Spectrum of Public Participation

<b>SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DATE</b>

DRAFT