



Council Policy

Public Engagement

Program Impacted	People, Relationships & Partnerships <i>The City of Edmonton's service delivery is informed by people and is optimized by relationships and partnerships.</i> Civic Services <i>Edmontonians contribute to civic society and are engaged in promoting the quality of the community.</i>
Number	C593A
Date of Approval	June 7, 2021
Approval History	April 11/12, 2017
Next Scheduled Review	June 7, 2024

Statement

Public Engagement is a process that creates opportunities for people to contribute to decision-making by City Council and Administration about the City's policies, programs, projects, and services, and communicates how public input is collected and used.

The City of Edmonton values public engagement processes and activities that contribute to policy, program, service and project decisions by providing City Council and Administration with the best possible information to support decision-making.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the City of Edmonton:

- Achieves a consistent, coordinated and outcomes-driven approach to public engagement;
- Facilitates public input to decision-making through effective and efficient consultation, involvement, collaboration and empowerment processes; and
- Adheres to the public engagement requirements within the Municipal Government Act and other applicable legislation.

Public engagement is one factor in the decision-making process and will have more or less influence relative to other factors for every specific decision.

Guiding Principles

Administration will use the following principles when considering and conducting Public Engagement:

- *Shared responsibility* - Engagement of people in an authentic way contributes to robust solutions to challenging issues and encourages participation that supports democratic decision-making.
- *Relationship-building and perspective-seeking* - Meaningful engagement values various and local perspectives and community experiences; it recognizes that respect and equitable processes foster trust and stronger relationships.
- *Proactive, timely, and transparent* - People have enough time and notice to engage early in the process which enables considered input and impact on decision-making, and clearly communicates how input will be assessed and used during engagement and reported on afterwards.
- *Inclusive and accessible* - Engagement planning and delivery is inclusive and accessible to best serve our City by encouraging two-way conversations and strategies that reach diverse communities and ensure people feel heard and know their input is valued.
- *Innovative and continuously improving* - As Edmonton grows and evolves, we aspire to co-create and embrace new and better engagement processes, tools and tactics based on a sound approach to evaluating success.

Outcomes

Public Engagement allows decision-makers to strive for the best understanding of the public's views and perspectives on topics and issues, consider public input in decision-making, and communicate to the public how their input was used and why decisions were made.

Public engagement offers the opportunity for City Council to:

- Deepen its role as community representatives through enhanced understanding of the interests, values and perspectives of the public.
- Work with Administration to identify areas where public engagement can and will make a meaningful difference to Council decisions.
- Promote and direct the public to public engagement activities.
- Carefully and thoughtfully consider public input as part of the decision-making process.
- Ensure public expectations for public engagement opportunities and influence are balanced with awareness of resource capacity, fiscal realities and other important context and considerations.
- Clearly explain the rationale for decisions and how public input was used in decision-making.

Requirements

Administration will consider public engagement when:

1. Designing or implementing a new policy, program, project or service that has an impact on the public;

2. Evaluating, changing or ending an existing policy, program, project or service that has an impact on the public;
3. Fulfilling a legislated or regulated requirement; or
4. Responding to a community-initiated request.

Public Engagement activities will consider:

- *Respectful and Safe Discussion and Debate* - Discussion and debate that underlies public engagement activities will be conducted in a respectful and safe manner by all participants: City staff, contractors, stakeholders and the general public.
- *Diversity and Inclusion* - The City values diversity of perspectives and lived experience. City staff will ensure efforts are made to accommodate diverse needs in order to reduce barriers and encourage participation, in alignment with the City's diversity and inclusion commitments and use of Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+).
- *Indigenous Peoples* - Engagement should be inclusive of Indigenous Peoples and honour the City of Edmonton's Indigenous memorandums of understanding and relevant guiding policies and frameworks.
- *Digital Engagement* - Digital engagement uses technologies to support, enhance, or expand public participation and civic engagement processes. The City of Edmonton's digital engagement resources and tools are intended to increase accessibility and broaden engagement.

Public Engagement activities will be approached in alignment with the Public Engagement Spectrum as described in the Public Engagement Framework.