

Title	COUNCIL POLICY – PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT POLICY	POLICY NO:	B-38
Legislation Reference	MGA		
<b>Purpose</b> To ensure that the Village of Beiseker achieves a consistent, coordinated and outcome-driven approach to public engagement and facilitates public input to decision making through effective consultation, involvement, collaboration and empowerment processes. Also, that this policy adheres to the public engagement requirements within the <i>Municipal Government Act</i> .			

Policy Statement and Guidelines

This policy applies to the Village’s policies, programs, projects and services that have an impact on the public. There are many reasons why public engagement may be undertaken, but they should all ultimately support a decision-making process for the purposes of:

- Designing or implementing new policy, program, project or service
- Evaluating, changing or ending an existing policy, program, project or service
- Fulfilling a legislated or regulated requirement, or;
- Responding to a community-initiated request.

This policy applies to public engagement regarding the Village’s policies, programs, projects and services whether they are planned and delivered by Village staff, contractors or community volunteers.

Public engagement will be employed as dictated by the requirements outlined in the *Municipal Government Act* as a minimum. Opportunities to engage the public participation processes will be reviewed as situations arise.

**Role of Decision Makers**

The role of decisions makers – Village Council or Administration – in public engagement is to strive for the best understanding of the public’s view 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 is one factor in the decision-making process and will have more or less influence relative to other factors for every specific decision.

Public engagement offers the opportunity for Village 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, and
  - Clearly explain the rationale for decisions and how public input was used in decision making.
- Village of Beiseker – Public Participation Policy – B38

## **Respectful and Safe Discussion and Debate**

This policy also recognizes that the discussion and debate underlies public engagement activities will be conducted in a respectful and safe manner by all participants – Village staff, contractors, stakeholders and the general public.

## **Definition of Public Engagement**

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

## **Public Engagement Spectrum**

The Public Engagement Spectrum is a tool that explains the four roles that the public can play when they participate in the Village of Beiseker public engagement activities. Each level of the spectrum increase the level of public influence and commitment from the public

*Advice* – The public is consulted by the Village to share feedback and perspectives that are considered for policies, programs, projects or services.

*Refine* – The public is involved by the Village to adapt and adjust approaches to policies, programs, projects or services.

*Create* – The public collaborates with the Village to develop and build solutions regarding policies, programs, projects or services. This can include community-initiated engagement.

*Decide* – The public is empowered to make decisions directly or on behalf of the Village about policies, programs, projects or services.

## **Vision for Public Engagement**

*A 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 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 how it will be reported on afterwards.

*Inclusive and accessible* – Engagement planning and delivery is inclusive and accessible to best serve the Village of Beiseker 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 Beiseker 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.

### **Supporting Activities for Public Engagement**

The following are activities that support effective public engagement, but only doing these things is not considered public engagement. Public engagement and its activities are described above in the definition and the public engagement spectrum.

*Communications* – The Village and the public are informed about, listen and learn about Village policies, programs, projects and services through clear and transparent communications focused on plain language, active listening and responsiveness. This is a key activity underlying all four levels of the public engagement spectrum.

*Project Management* - Carrying out engagement within an effective and aligned project management process.

*Decision-Making* – Clearly identifying decisions, decision-makers, and decision-making processes for every public engagement process.

*Relationships* – Developing and enhancing relationships through meaningful dialogue that is based on respect and trust.

*Capacity-Building* – Providing the knowledge and tools to engage by building capacity internally and within communities.

*Leadership Development* – Building community and staff leadership by facilitating leadership development opportunities.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed, at minimum, every three (3) years.

Approved: February 26, 2018      Motion 2018-025  
Amended: June 28, 2021         Motion 2021-125



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Warren Wise, Mayor



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Heather Leslie, CAO