

# Policy Paper



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| <b>Policy No.:</b>                  | <b>A03-2026</b>                                              |
| <b>Title of Policy:</b>             | <b>Public Participation</b>                                  |
| <b>Approving Motion &amp; Date:</b> | <b>Motion 2026-__-__, _____, 2026</b>                        |
| <b>Revising Motions &amp; Date:</b> | <b>Replaces A03-2018 (Motion 2018-07-173, July 12, 2018)</b> |
| <b>Department Responsible:</b>      | <b>Administration</b>                                        |

## PURPOSE AND APPLICATION

In accordance with section 216.1 of the *Municipal Government Act* and the *Public Participation Policy Regulation*, this Public Participation Policy recognizes the value of public participation and establishes how the Village of Glenwood will create opportunities for meaningful public participation in decisions that directly impact the public. It identifies the types of approaches the Municipality will use to engage Municipal Stakeholders and the circumstances in which the Municipality will seek their input.

This Public Participation Policy is in addition to and does not modify or replace any statutory public hearing, notice, petition or other public process required by the *Municipal Government Act* or any other enactment, or the procedures for delegations and presentations to Council set out in the Municipality's Council Procedure Bylaw.

This Policy replaces Policy A03-2018, Public Participation.

## 1. GENERAL POLICY PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 Council recognizes that good governance includes engaging 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;
  - (d) Being clear about what input is being sought, how it will be used, and which aspects of a decision are open to influence;
  - (e) Matching the level of Public Participation to the significance of the decision and the resources reasonably available to the Municipality; and
  - (f) Recognizing that although 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 can enrich the decision making process.

## **2. DEFINITIONS**

- 2.1 **“Act”** means the *Municipal Government Act*, RSA 2000, c M-26, and its regulations, as amended from time to time.
- 2.2 **“CAO”** means the chief administrative officer of the Municipality or their delegate.
- 2.3 **“Council”** means the council of the Municipality.
- 2.4 **“Municipal Stakeholders”** means the residents and property owners of the Municipality, as well as businesses, community organizations, neighbouring municipalities and First Nations, and other individuals, organizations or persons that may have an interest in, or are affected by, a decision made by the Municipality.
- 2.5 **“Municipality”** means the Village of Glenwood.
- 2.6 **“Public Participation”** includes a variety of non-statutory opportunities where Municipal Stakeholders receive information and/or provide input to the Municipality.
- 2.7 **“Public Participation Level”** means Level 1 (Inform), Level 2 (Consult) or Level 3 (Involve), as described in Section 5 of this Policy.
- 2.8 **“Public Participation Plan”** means a plan which identifies the purpose, Public Participation Level, Public Participation Tools and timelines to be used to obtain public input in a particular circumstance.
- 2.9 **“Public Participation Tools”** means the tools that may be used, alone or in combination, to create Public Participation opportunities including, but not limited to:
  - (a) In-person participation which may include at-the-counter interactions at the Village Office, door-knocking, interviews, meetings, round-tables, town halls, open houses and workshops;
  - (b) Printed participation which may include notices or inserts delivered with utility bills, mail-outs, and notices posted on the bulletin boards at the Village Office and Community Hall;
  - (c) Digital participation which may include information posted on the Municipality’s website, email, social media, online surveys or polls, and webinars;
  - (d) Written participation which may include written submissions, letters, email, comment forms, and mail-in surveys, polls and workbooks; and
  - (e) Representative participation which may include being appointed to an advisory committee, ad hoc committee or citizen board.

## **3. POLICY RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 Council Responsibilities:

- (a) Council shall:
  - (i) Approve Public Participation Plans for matters assigned to Level 3, and direct Public Participation on any other matter as Council considers appropriate;
  - (ii) Consider input obtained through Public Participation before making the related decision;
  - (iii) Ensure appropriate resources are available to carry out Public Participation in accordance with this Policy, including through the annual budget;
  - (iv) Review this Policy in accordance with Section 7.1(e) to ensure the Policy complies with all relevant legislation, municipal bylaws and policies, and the spirit and intent of Public Participation; and
  - (v) Promote and support Public Participation.
- 3.2 Administration Responsibilities:
  - (a) CAO shall:
    - (i) Determine the appropriate Public Participation Level for each matter in accordance with this Policy, and advise Council where a matter may warrant a higher level;
    - (ii) Develop Public Participation Plans in accordance with this Policy or as directed by Council, and bring Level 3 plans to Council for approval;
    - (iii) Implement Public Participation Plans;
    - (iv) Consider timing, resources and engagement when developing and modifying Public Participation Plans;
    - (v) Ensure that personal information collected through Public Participation is handled in accordance with Section 7.1;
    - (vi) Report the findings of Public Participation to Council in accordance with Section 8;
    - (vii) Develop the procedures, forms and templates necessary to implement this Policy; and
    - (viii) Assess this Policy and make recommendations to Council about Public Participation and resourcing.

## **4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES**

- 4.1 CAO shall develop and implement a Public Participation Plan, at the Public Participation Level determined under Section 5, in the following circumstances:
  - (a) When gathering input or formulating recommendations with respect to the Municipality's annual operating and capital budgets, in conjunction with the Municipality's Budget Process and Timeline Policy;
  - (b) When gathering input or formulating recommendations with respect to the Municipality's strategic plans, business plans, or long-term capital or financial plans;

- (c) When preparing or reviewing the Municipal Development Plan, a new Land Use Bylaw or other major planning documents, before the statutory public hearing process begins;
  - (d) When proposing changes to utility rates, or to fees and charges that would significantly affect residents;
  - (e) When a new program or service is being established, or an existing program or service is being significantly changed, reduced or discontinued;
  - (f) When planning significant capital projects, including water, wastewater, road and public facility projects;
  - (g) When proposing a new bylaw, or a significant amendment to a bylaw, that regulates the use of private property or the daily activities of residents and for which no statutory public hearing is required;
  - (h) When negotiating or reviewing intermunicipal agreements or frameworks, including an Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework, that would significantly change how services are delivered to residents;
  - (i) When the Municipality is subject to, or is considering, a viability review, amalgamation, dissolution or other restructuring; and
  - (j) As otherwise directed by Council.
- 4.2 A Public Participation Plan is not required under this Policy for:
- (a) Matters for which a statutory public hearing or other public process is required under the Act or any other enactment, except as provided in Section 4.1(c);
  - (b) Matters that may be discussed in a closed session under the Act or the *Access to Information Act*;
  - (c) Emergencies, or matters requiring an urgent decision to protect public health, safety, property or municipal assets; and
  - (d) Routine administrative and operational matters.
- 4.3 Council may, by resolution, proceed on a matter listed in Section 4.1 without Public Participation or with a reduced Public Participation Level, provided the reason is stated in the resolution.

## 5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION LEVELS

- 5.1 CAO shall assign each matter requiring Public Participation to one of the following Public Participation Levels, having regard to the impact of the matter on Municipal Stakeholders, the level of public interest, cost, and the time available before a decision is required:
- (a) **Level 1 – Inform:** providing Municipal Stakeholders with balanced and timely information about a matter or decision. At minimum, one printed and one digital Public Participation Tool shall be used. A written Public Participation Plan is not required.

- (b) **Level 2 – Consult:** obtaining feedback from Municipal Stakeholders on a proposal or options. CAO shall prepare a Public Participation Plan and provide it to Council for information before Public Participation begins.
  - (c) **Level 3 – Involve:** working with Municipal Stakeholders throughout the process so that their concerns and ideas are reflected in the options developed and considered. Council shall approve the Public Participation Plan before Public Participation begins.
- 5.2 Unless Council directs otherwise:
- (a) Matters referred to in Sections 4.1(a) to (h) shall be undertaken at Level 2 at a minimum, except that CAO may use Level 1 where the matter is minor or the change is administrative in nature; and
  - (b) Matters referred to in Section 4.1(i) shall be undertaken at Level 3.
- 5.3 Council may direct a higher Public Participation Level for any matter.

## 6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLANS

- 6.1 When a Public Participation Plan is required by this Policy or directed by Council, the CAO shall develop the plan having regard to the following:
- (a) The nature of the matter for which Public Participation is being sought;
  - (b) The impact of the matter on Municipal Stakeholders;
  - (c) The demographics of potential Municipal Stakeholders in respect of which Public Participation Tools to utilize, level of engagement and time for input;
  - (d) The timing of the decision and time required to gather input;
  - (e) What information is required, if any, to participate; and
  - (f) Available resources and reasonable costs.
- 6.2 Public Participation Plans will, at minimum, include the following:
- (a) The purpose of the Public Participation, the decision to be made, and which aspects of the decision are open to influence;
  - (b) The Public Participation Level;
  - (c) A communication plan to inform the public about the Public Participation Plan and opportunities to provide input, using methods consistent with the Municipality's Advertising Bylaw where applicable;
  - (d) Identification of which Public Participation Tools will be utilized, including at least one option that does not require internet access;
  - (e) Timelines for participation, including an input period of not less than fourteen (14) days for Level 2 and twenty-one (21) days for Level 3, unless Council approves a shorter period;
  - (f) Information about how input will be used and reported; and
  - (g) The location of information required, if any, to inform the specific Public Participation.
- 6.3 A Public Participation Plan for a Level 2 matter may be brief and in a form established by the CAO.

## 7. POLICY EXPECTATIONS

### 7.1 Legislative and Policy Implications:

- (a) All Public Participation will be undertaken in accordance with the Act, the *Access to Information Act*, the *Protection of Privacy Act* and any other applicable legislation.
- (b) Personal information collected through Public Participation shall be limited to what is necessary for the purpose, and every survey, comment form, sign-in sheet or other collection tool shall include a notice of collection as required by the *Protection of Privacy Act*.
- (c) Records created through Public Participation shall be retained and disposed of in accordance with the Municipality's Records Retention and Disposal Bylaw.
- (d) This Policy shall be available for public inspection at the Village Office and shall be posted on the Municipality's website.
- (e) This Policy will be reviewed by Council at least once every four years, and following any amendment to the Act or its regulations that affects public participation.
- (f) All Public Participation will be undertaken in accordance with all existing municipal bylaws and policies. In the event of a conflict between this Policy and a bylaw, the bylaw prevails.

### 7.2 Public Participation Standards:

- (a) Public Participation will be conducted in an inclusive and accessible manner, having regard to the age, mobility and access to technology of Municipal Stakeholders.
- (b) Public Participation will begin early enough in the decision-making process that input can reasonably influence the outcome.
- (c) Public Participation activities will be conducted in a professional and respectful manner, and information provided to Municipal Stakeholders will be accurate and balanced.
- (d) Municipal Stakeholders who participate in any manner of Public Participation are required to be respectful and constructive in their participation. Where a person's conduct is disrespectful, threatening, abusive or disruptive, the CAO or the person leading the Public Participation activity may:
  - (i) Warn the person that the conduct is not acceptable;
  - (ii) If the conduct continues, require the person to leave the in-person session or remove the person's comments or access from a digital forum; and
  - (iii) Where conduct is repeated or serious, exclude the person from further in-person or digital Public Participation on that matter.
- (e) A person excluded under Section 7.2(d) may continue to provide input on the matter in writing, and may request in writing that Council review the exclusion at its next regular meeting.

- (f) The results of Public Participation will be made available to Council and Municipal Stakeholders in a timely manner. A summary of results, with personal information removed, shall be posted on the Municipality's website within thirty (30) days after it is presented to Council.

## **8. REPORTING AND EVALUATION**

- 8.1 For Level 2 and Level 3 matters, information obtained through Public Participation will be reviewed by the CAO and a report shall be provided to Council before Council makes the related decision.
- 8.2 The report shall include, at minimum, the following:
  - (a) An overview of the Public Participation Plan, the Public Participation Level and how the plan was developed;
  - (b) A summary of the input obtained;
  - (c) An assessment of the effectiveness of the plan based on the level of engagement and the quality of input; and
  - (d) A description of how the input was considered in the recommendation to Council.
- 8.3 The report may include recommendations for future Public Participation Plans.
- 8.4 CAO shall provide Council with a brief annual summary of Public Participation activities undertaken under this Policy, which shall be considered in the review of this Policy.

## **END OF POLICY**