



THE RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER

POLICY NUMBER: A-37	DATE OF RESOLUTION: OCTOBER 6, 2020
NAME: Community Engagement Policy	

1.0 SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to the following types of community engagement:

- 1.1 Project-related engagement (all);
- 1.2 Discretionary public engagement related to planning, land use and development applications that is not required by legislation; and
- 1.3 Required public process related to the municipal budget and the annual report.

This policy *does not* apply to the types of engagement listed below as they are guided by separate bylaws, policies or procedures as noted in italics.

- 1.4 Required engagement
 - (a) Council meeting procedures, including: Council packages, public question and answer periods, public hearings, presentations and delegations, meeting minutes, and Council correspondence (letters to Council and their inclusion in Council packages and meetings).
See the Council Procedures Bylaw for direction.
 - (b) Matters subject to statutory requirements, including Council adopted bylaws, and planning, land use and development applications.
See provincial legislation, the Land Use Procedures and Fees Bylaw, and the Council Procedures Bylaw for direction.
 - (c) Committees of Council, including associated: meeting agendas, meeting minutes and reporting, terms of reference, composition, and the recruitment and the selection/appointment process.
See the Council Procedures Bylaw for direction.
- 1.5 Ongoing engagement (*See the Corporate Communications Policy and the Corporate Communications Administrative Procedure*)
 - (a) Whistler.ca, including information, some online services, reporting to/contacting the organization
 - (b) Email notices, including Whistler Today and media releases
 - (c) Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)

- (d) Access to staff in-person at various locations, including Municipal Hall (front desk and building, planning and engineering departments), Meadow Park Sports Centre, Library
- (e) Access to departments via email and phone
- (f) Access to Council via email, letters and phone
- (g) After-hours emergency channels

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- 2.1 Clarify when the RMOW should engage community members and stakeholders in the decisions that affect them.
- 2.2 Guide the organization in the design and delivery of community engagement processes;
- 2.3 Support good governance, decision-making, and improved mutual understanding and trust between the organization and the community; and
- 2.4 Support and help achieve the Official Community Plan, which includes the Community Vision, and the Corporate Plan, both of which reference the need to engage the community in decision-making.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Community member: Permanent, part-time and seasonal residents.
- 3.2 Community engagement: The activities by which community member and/or stakeholder, needs, interests, concerns, and values are incorporated into decisions and actions on public matters and issues.
- 3.3 Decision(s): The determination or conclusion arrived at through a decision-making process related to any municipal activities, including: setting general direction; taking specific action; developing plans, policies and infrastructure; budgeting; staffing; etc.
- 3.4 Decision-making process: The series of activities involved in arriving at a decision or decisions, including the information and community/stakeholder input gathered to inform the decision(s).
- 3.5 Stakeholder: Those affected by or likely to affect, or with an interest in a decision or course of action.
- 3.6 Levels of engagement: There are five levels of community engagement (or public participation) as defined by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) that should be used to design and clarify the nature of the engagement process.
- 3.7 Ongoing engagement: This covers the engagement (and communications) channels that provide community members with continual, on-demand access to municipal staff

and Council, and regarding programs, services and operations. This type of engagement is not required by the Community Charter.

3.8 Project-related engagement: This covers activities that are undertaken to inform project-related decisions, where projects include planning, capital and policy development projects. This type of engagement is not required by the Community Charter.

3.9 Required engagement: This includes the community engagement activities that are required of municipalities by the Community Charter or the Local Government Act.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Whistler has a long history of inclusive and meaningful engagement with the community.

4.2 Whistler's Community Vision and Official Community Plan (adopted in 2020) includes statements about community members being able to meaningfully participate in community decisions.

4.3 Consultation and participation are the cornerstones of modern democracy, and municipalities have a unique and critical role and responsibility in creating these opportunities.

4.4 The people who are affected by or have an interest in a decision or decisions should have the means contribute to the decision-making process.

4.5 There are many benefits to engaging community members and stakeholders in the decisions that affect them, including building mutual understanding, increasing levels of trust, and leading to better decision-making and ultimately more successful outcomes since community priorities and needs are directly embedded and community members are more committed to them.

5.0 ENGAGEMENT CRITERIA

Where municipal decisions can occur in public as per the Community Charter, staff will determine whether or not to engage community members and/or stakeholders in decision-making processes based on:

5.1 The existence of current municipal policy that can be relied upon to guide the decision;

5.2 The scale/scope/extent of the effect on community members and/or stakeholders; and

5.3 The degree to which community members and/or stakeholders might be concerned about and/or interested in the decision.

6.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We will design and deliver engagement processes according to these guiding principles:

6.1 Resourced

- (a) The financial and human resources allocated to each community engagement process are adequate and proportionate to the significance/scope of the decision-making process and the level of public engagement required, enabling the process to achieve the necessary objectives and to employ appropriate techniques.
 - (b) Key staff have the capacity and/or can access the external assistance needed to design and deliver successful engagement processes.
- 6.2 Inclusive
 - (a) The diversity of those affected by a decision are able and facilitated to engage in the decision-making process.
 - (b) Efforts are made to include under-represented and hard-to-reach groups, and barriers to access, such as physical, economic, language and logistical constraints, are mitigated as much as possible.
 - (c) Enough people are involved such that the input can be relied upon, where enough depends on the decision being made and the stakeholders impacted.
- 6.3 Respectful
 - (a) Participants are treated respectfully, their time is used efficiently and effectively, and the process builds mutual understanding and trust.
 - (b) Privacy is respected and, in cases where public feedback is received in confidence, personal information and verbatim responses are securely stored and only aggregated information is released publicly.
- 6.4 Informed
 - (a) The community receives clear and broad-reaching communications about engagement opportunities through consistent channels.
 - (b) The information provided to enable informed participation in the process is easy to access, timely, clear, concise, complete, accurate, objective and jargon-free as much as possible.
- 6.5 Transparent
 - (a) The promise to the public about the level of engagement and the roles in the process are clear from the outset, including what is open for input, how the input will be used, and who has decision-making authority.
 - (b) The decision-making process occurs through an open process whenever possible.
 - (c) Process milestones and outcomes – including what decisions were made and why, and how public input affected the decision or why it didn't – are communicated to participants and the general public.
- 6.6 Meaningful
 - (a) Engagement processes are worthwhile for participants, utilize the appropriate level of engagement for the initiative being undertaken, and use techniques that achieve the promised level of engagement.
 - (b) The results of the process represent stakeholder input as clearly and accurately as possible, are relatively easy to use in decision-making, and are carefully considered through the decision-making process.

6.7 Monitored

- (a) Project-related engagement includes opportunities for participants to not only provide input on the content of the process, but also on the process itself to help inform future improvements.
- (b) Overall community engagement performance, preferences, levels of trust in decision-making, and other indicators related to community engagement are regularly measured to inform process improvements.

7.0 OUR REQUEST OF THE PUBLIC

While we are committed to being guided by the principles above, including treating community members respectfully, we expect community members and stakeholders to participate in engagement processes civilly and to treat staff and Council with respect, even when there are disagreements.

8.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The community engagement staff guide/toolkit will provide further guidance and instruction on designing and delivering community engagement opportunities.

Several RMOW policies, administrative procedures and guidelines may also be referenced when designing and delivering community engagement that falls within the scope of this policy.

Certified Correct:

A. Banman
Municipal Clerk