



<b>Title: Public Participation</b>		<b>Policy No.: 51-01</b>
<b>Section: 01</b>	<b>Code: P-I</b>	<b>Page No.: 1 of 17</b> <b>E</b>

<b>Legislation Reference:</b>	Alberta Provincial Statutes
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<b>Purpose:</b>	To establish a framework within which public participation can be enhanced in the decision-making process fulfills the duties and obligations set out in legislation with regard to public participation.
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**Policy Statement and Guidelines:**

**1. STATEMENT:**

- 1.1 Smoky Lake County acknowledges the fundamental right of all citizens to participate in the governance system and that the responsibility to be involved in decisions starts at the grassroots level where the public is directly involved with municipal functions.
- 1.2 This policy is a commitment from Smoky Lake County to ensure appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures enable the public and its community to participate in the affairs of the Council through effective and meaningful public engagement processes.
- 1.3 This Public Participation Policy is in addition to and does not modify or replace the statutory public hearing requirements in the *Municipal Government Act*.

**2. OBJECTIVES:**

- 2.1 Smoky Lake County's Vision is "*Leading the Way in positive growth with healthy, safe, and sustainable rural living*" and the proactive approach is to provide practical and appropriate opportunities for participation by citizens and the public regarding proposed developments, services, programs or other municipal decisions that may impact quality of life in the County.
- 2.2 To provide sufficient access to information to allow the public to become informed and have the opportunity to participate to be involved in municipal issues and provide input to the decision-making process.
- 2.3 Demonstrate consistent application of the process to the public and Council.
- 2.4 To provide effective input into Council's decision-making process deepening participatory democracy, accountability, responsiveness and a social contract with communities and citizens.
- 2.5 Establish a method to effectively report back to the community on their input and on Council's decisions and outcomes to help the community and/or citizens to understand; and encourage them to continue to contribute to the democratic participation, exchange information and participate in decision-making processes.

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### Policy Statement and Guidelines:

#### 3. DEFINITIONS:

- 3.1 **Chief Administrative Officer:** means the person, also known as the “CAO”, appointed by Council to the position of Chief Administrative Officer under the *Municipal Government Act* for Smoky Lake County.
- 3.2 **Community:** refers to the County, residents, businesses, schools, religious institutions and all other institutions and agencies that make up Smoky Lake County.
- 3.3 **Council:** means the Reeve and Councillors duly elected in the Smoky Lake County.
- 3.4 **Councillor:** is a Member duly elected as a Councillor and is a member of Council.
- 3.5 **County:** means the geographic area contained within the boundaries of the municipality of Smoky Lake County.
- 3.6 **Municipality:** means the Municipal Corporation of Smoky Lake County.
- 3.7 **Public/Citizens:** means an individual, resident, sometimes represented in an organization/group that takes 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.
- 3.8 **Public Participation:** means processes through which the County provides non-statutory opportunities for the community to have input into decision-making through public meetings, surveys, open houses, workshops, polling, resident advisory committees and other forms of engagement.
- 3.9 **Public Participation Plan:** means a plan as a course of action outline which identifies which opportunities, level of Participation and Public Participation Tools to be used to obtain public input in a particular circumstance.
- 3.10 **Public Participation Tools:** means the tools that may be used, alone or in combination, to create Public Participation opportunities.

#### 4. GUIDELINES:

- 4.1 **Conduct of Engagement:** Core principles will guide decisions about how and when to involve the public toward cooperative relationships and assist in governing a “Conduct of Engagement” by working together to build and maintain Public Participation. The following principles form the acronym “**TRUST**”:
  - 4.1.1 **T**ransparency: demonstrate accountability that the decision-making process is open, clear and accessible to all role players in the participation process where the public becomes familiar with the appropriate information and tools to engage in meaningful participation.

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### Policy Statement and Guidelines:

- 4.1.2 **Respect:** consideration of timing and style of approach strengthens legitimacy where the public is more likely to accept the decision made when they have taken part in creating the solution. Respect that is built into the participatory processes upfront benefits adequate public involvement allows for realistic management of costs and creates a better ability to manage the quality of the output.
- 4.1.3 **Unity:** embracing all views and opinions in the process of public participation strengthens participatory democracy with the community by promoting a spirit of democracy and participants become aware of other views by enabling their voice to be heard and taken into account of. Dialogue with others where views are exchanged assists in reaching solutions upon which consensus can be built.
- 4.1.4 **Social:** collectively bond to collaborate a balanced approach of engagement by listening to understand and be informed, learning to gather information to refine perspectives on issues or initiatives, and voicing points of view ensures a free flow of valuable information to all participants to be actively involved.
- 4.1.5 **Transform:** be the lead model responsible to empower participation and communicate results to the public to directly share in the decision-making process. Open public participation process can therefore result in better citizen “buy-in” as the community changes and evolves.

4.2 **Proactive Public involvement:** Public involvement is happening all the time and it is about dialogue with the appropriate people in the appropriate way at the appropriate time. The following elements can be perceived as factors that can reflect potential negative drawbacks when engaging in the public participation process:

- Time Consuming: Consultation can be time consuming, slowing down decision-making processes.
- Costs: Consultation can be resource intensive (financially and staff wise).
- Unrealistic Expectations: Can lead to citizens expecting shared decision-making power with the Council. If their solution is not adopted, these individuals may criticize the process rather than the decision.
- Fair Representation: Public who participate may not represent all relevant views to issues being discussed. The interests of a few active people can be seen as overruling the silent majority.
- Inaccurate information: Public may have strong opinions that are based on inaccurate information. All information provided by participants will be carefully assessed.

**Benefits:** It is imperative that the public understands that there not be, nor appear to be any conflict between the interests of Council and their duties of municipal functions to the Community. Effective public participation, however, considers opportunities to go beyond simply providing information; the end result is decisions reflective of the public interests and looks at how and when to best connect with the community.

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**Policy Statement and Guidelines:**

4.3 **Public Participation Plan:**

4.3.1 **Public Participation Opportunities:** Council and Administration recognize that quality public participation is a critical component of good governance. Councillors and staff of the Municipality will ensure that the **Public Participation Plan** involves the public in the following functions:

4.3.1: **Bylaws and Regulations:** New programs and Services being established and/or reviewed, upon direction to engage Public Participation through a motion of Council.

4.3.2: **Policy** formulation and review: Policies of Intent (Policy Code P-I).

4.3.3: **Budget:** Preparation for gathering input.

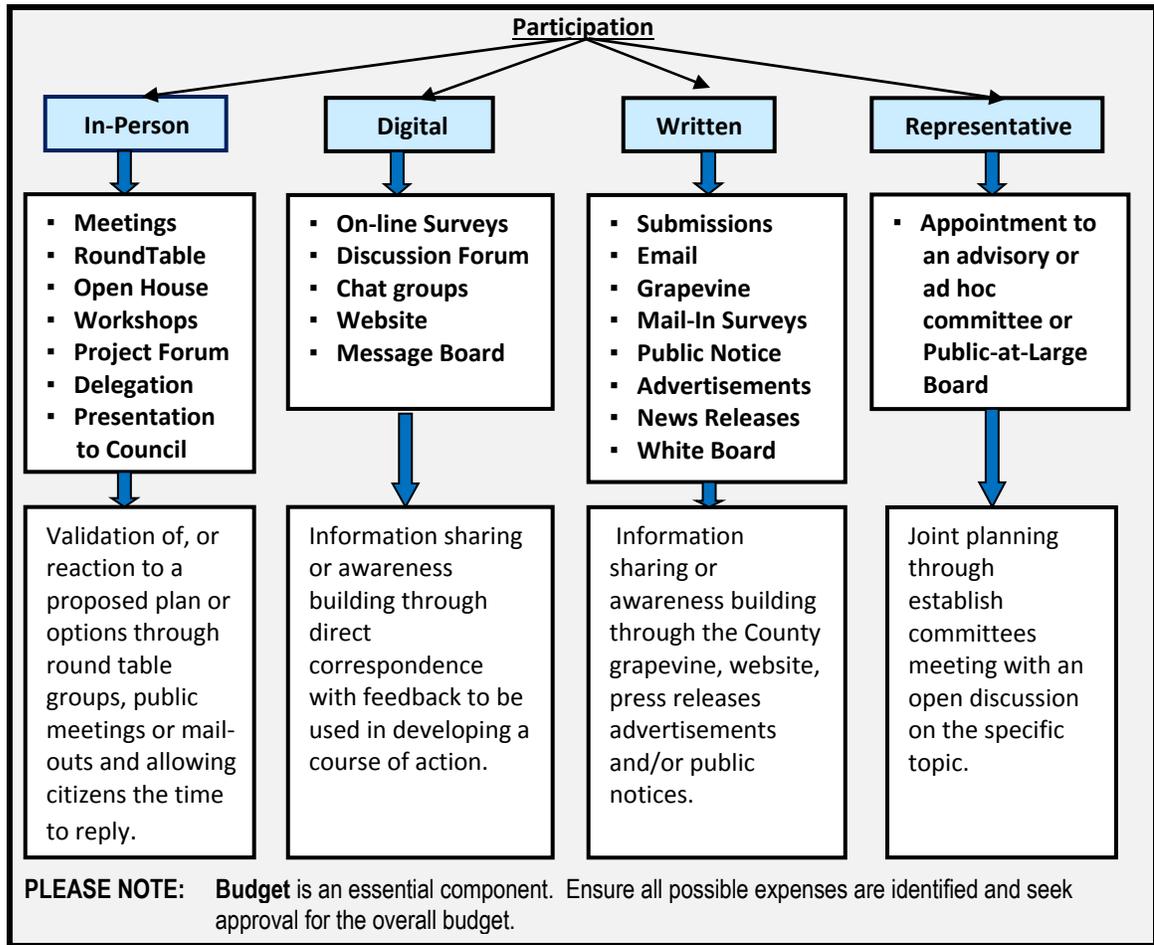
4.3.4: **Planning:** Strategic Plan and Business Plan and any implementation of projects and initiatives.

4.3.2 **Levels of Participation:** The effort to build the capacity to enable effective participation from the community and its citizens can be achieved through five (5) goals and levels of engagement for dissemination of information, mechanisms and platforms for dialogue.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
<b>G O A L</b>	When the County want to provide information on municipal functions.	When feedback/ input is required from public in a specific program area, analysis or initiative.	When the public's comments can have an impact on the design and development of a facility, structure, program or project.	When it's important to build partnerships and strengthen relationships between the community and County.	When public buy-in is of primary importance for an initiative to be successful.
<b>L E V E L</b>	Provide the public with the information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solution.	To keep the public informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations. Consult simply means to ask for the public's opinions and consider any input received.	To work directly with the public by providing opportunity for dialogue and interaction throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and interests are understood and considered.	Public is directly engaged in decision -making. Possible actions or solutions are typically generated by the public and there is an explicit attempt to find consensus.	Authority is delegated to the public to varying degrees where appropriate to improve community capacity - normally through committees created by Council that have members-at-large.

**Policy Statement and Guidelines:**

4.3.3 **Public Participation Tools:** To ensure timely and continuous involvement of the public, community and others in the public participation process, a variety of public notification and participation procedures can be used and may use any combination of the following making it easier to pick tools and activities that match public expectations to the desired level of participation.



4.4 **Encourage Public Participation:**

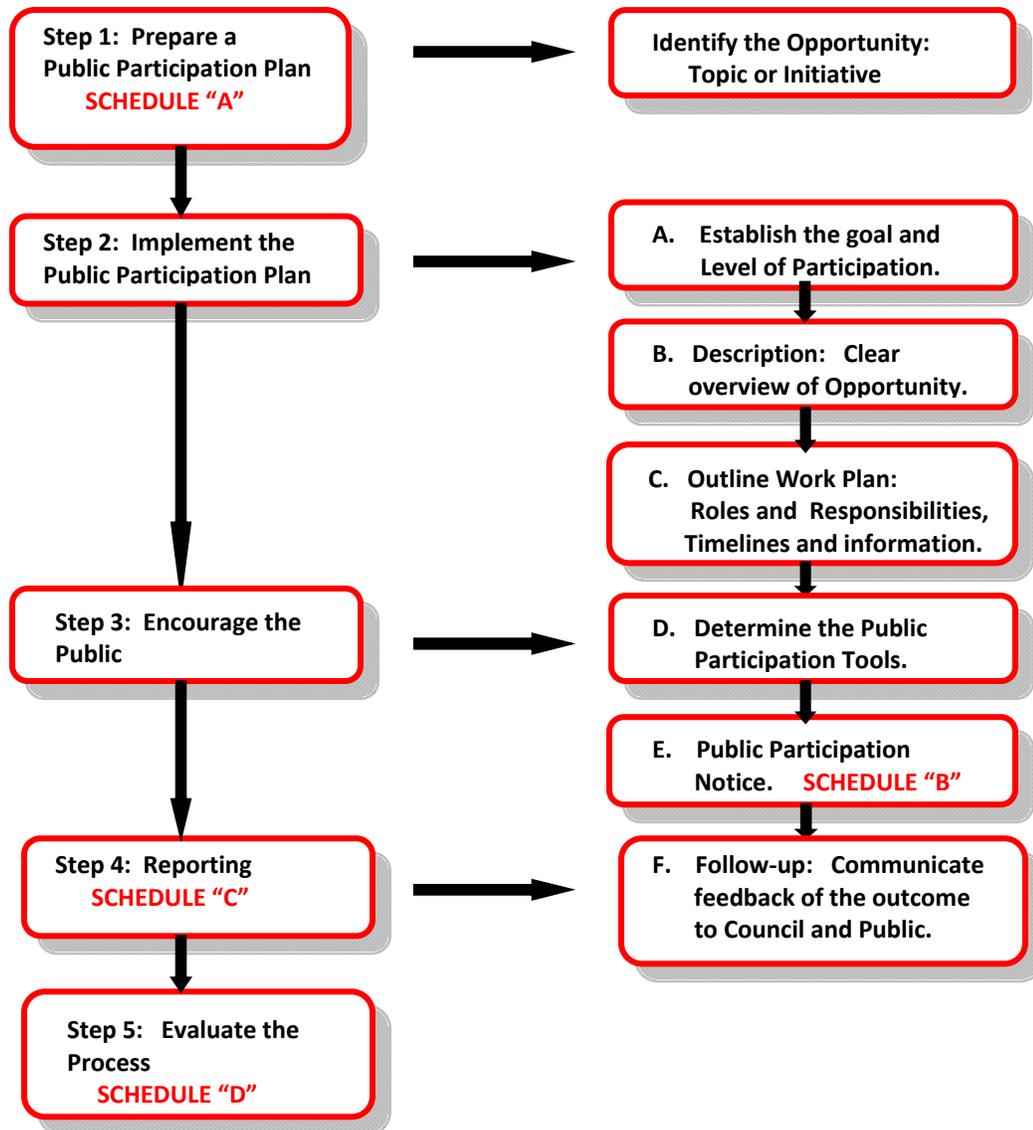
The municipality's meetings are all open to the public when and as required under the *Municipal Government Act*, and the public will have an opportunity to provide feedback or comments in writing or in persons at these meetings.

- The Public Participation Plan will outline the communication to ensure that participation by the public is meaningful and effective, through timely disclosure of information, in the best way by various means in accordance with this Policy to inform citizens to remain educated and connected about opportunities to provide formal public comments.
- Council meetings will address all Public Participation elements during Agenda – Section 4: Request For Decision. Sign in sheet, as per **Schedule "E": Public Participation Attendees** will indicate the public participation attendance for the record and assist the Reeve to acknowledge persons who wish to speak.

**Policy Statement and Guidelines:**

**4.5 Implementing a Public Participation Process:**

The next step in public participation is to implement a **Public Participation Process**. This process is designed to address the specific issue or project. The diagram presents the tasks in a series of linear steps and activities in the process:



The intensity of the public participation process varies depending on the nature of the project, characteristics of the neighborhoods, community issues and the perceived impact to the public involved. A Public Participation Plan sets a roadmap of what will be done, when, with whom, by whom and where will be outlined in accordance with **Schedule "A": Public Participation Plan**.

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### Policy Statement and Guidelines:

#### 4.6 **Public Notification and comment Process:**

4.6.1 The public notification process is a notice advertised in order to notify the public of an issue and a time frame of a 14-day public comment period will be provided prior to a decision being made. Each notice will include, as outlines in *Schedule "B": Public Participation Notice*, at a minimum, the following information:

- Name of topic/issue /activity/type of participation event.
- Municipalities' name.
- Action to be taken and by whom.
- Day, date, time and location of meeting.
- Brief summary of the proposed action or plan and geographic scope.
- Start and end dates for public comments.
- Where to obtain copies of the materials, and how to provide formal comments.
- A designated contact for more information (name, telephone, email).

4.6.2 County Council must give the public a reasonable opportunity to present their views and the requirements for advertising are stipulated in accordance with *Bylaw No. 1316-18: Public Notification*. Notice must be advertised for all citizens/public.

4.7 **Reporting:** Reporting and giving feedback to the public is a critical phase in the process – it ensures those involved see their input was received, understood and valued.

4.7.1 The County will provide a response report that demonstrates the County has received and considered input from the public about project.

4.7.2 Public Participation Report will help understand the level of achievement and demonstrate the results of the outcome by indicating satisfaction with the process, success with the conclusion of the work, approval of the recommendations and resolution of the issue.

4.7.3 Response and meeting summaries prepared will highlight key points in the public participation process that note feedback/questions received and the County's response, in accordance with *Schedule "C": Public Participation – Report*.

**Policy Statement and Guidelines:**

4.7.4 Communicating the results of the public engagement effort back to those who have participated is a fundamental principle of engaging the public and Council.

- **The designated department manager** will prepare and present the summary report following each major initiative or project participation process, and provide copies:

<b>Report - What it means:</b>	
<b>COUNCIL</b>	<b>PUBLIC</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide complete and unbiased results of the involvement.</li> <li>▪ Provide report for review – supplying background information of the involvement, and the inputs received.</li> <li>▪ Providing an outline of next steps as recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council values the efforts citizens/public make to participate in its municipal decisions.</li> <li>▪ Make report available to the public.</li> </ul>
<p>The Communication Department will publish the <b>REPORT</b> on the Council's website and distribution through the Central Office.</p>	

4.8 **Evaluation:** Evaluation measures the effectiveness of the public participation process.

4.8.1 The final stage of this process is evaluating the effectiveness of the public involvement process. Evaluation is a critical part of every engagement effort to help understand if the guiding principles have been met, and if not, why not. It also supports continuous improvement and learning. To ensure effective and meaningful public participation, an internal evaluation shall be completed after every process, in accordance with Schedule **"D": Internal Evaluation.**

**5. PROCEDURES:**

**5.1 Roles and Responsibilities:**

There are four (4) primary groups who have a stake in decisions made by Council:

**5.1.1 County Council:**

- Acknowledges the public's involvement and Council members actively engage in public participation.
- Will consider input through Public Participation.
- Review this policy every election term to ensure the Policy complies with all relevant legislation, municipal policies and the purpose of Public Participation.
- Ensure appropriate resources are available to solicit Public Participation.

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### Policy Statement and Guidelines:

5.1.2 **Administration Staff:** Administration carries out the steps of the process to ensure the proper process is established and used properly and that the guiding values are consistent.

- Chief Administrative Officer/Assistant Chief Administrative Officer:
  - Ensure that a Public Participation Plan is developed in accordance to this Policy for proper engagement.
  - Be a resource to lead the departmental team for public participation: framework, vision, guiding values, benefits and continuum of engagement for every issue in which public involvement is expected/warranted.
  - Report findings of the Public Participation to Council.
  - Ensure that policy is adhered to by all personnel, consultants and contractors hired to do public engagement on behalf of the County.
- Department Managers:
  - Coordinate the implementation of the Public Participation Plan.
  - Implement the format to facilitate public participation appropriate to the issue at hand.
  - Ensure adequate time and resources are dedicated to planning, coordinating and conducting engagement processes, whether internal or external.
  - Assign staff, as needed to implement Public Participation, ensuring adequate time and resources is available.
  - Ensure the staff understands the importance of Public Participation and this policy.
  - Report findings of the Public Participation to Chief Administrative Officer/Assistant Chief Administrative Officer.
- Communication Department:
  - Support public engagement processes with communication planning and build awareness of the opportunity to participate.
  - Assist the Departments with the Public Participation.

5.1.3 **Community associations and special interest groups:** As an important connection to communities throughout the Smoky Lake County, community associations and special interest groups play an integral role in having unique knowledge of a topic or issue, or will be impacted in a unique and specific way.

5.1.4 **General Public:** Anyone who is affected by a decision should be involved in some way in that decision. The public's main role is to actively participate in the process, keeping in mind the "greater good" while considering the current and future needs of the community.

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<b>Policy Statement and Guidelines:</b>	
<b>5.2</b>	<p><b>SUPPORTING LEGISLATION:</b></p> <p>All Public Participation will be undertaken in accordance with the following Legislative framework:</p> <p>5.2.1 The <i>Municipal Government Act</i>:</p> <p><u>Section 216.1</u>: Outlines the Public Participation requirements for all Alberta municipalities.</p> <p><u>Sections 227</u>: The general guidelines and requirements to hold a public meeting are outlined. For any public meetings called by County Council, notice must be advertised and all citizens can attend.</p> <p>5.2.2 Smoky Lake County <i>Bylaw No. 1316-18: Public Notification</i> outlines the advertising methods used to provide Notice for all citizens/public who can attend. This Bylaw stipulated the requirements to allow the public a reasonable opportunity to present their views to make suggestions and representations.</p> <p>5.2.3 This policy will adhere to the principles in accordance to the “<b>Public Question and Answer Period</b>” Sections: 5.34 to 5.37 of the Smoky Lake County <i>Procedural Bylaw No. 1303-17</i>. This applies to the process on how the Public Participation shall be conducted at County Council Meetings for public’s understanding.</p> <p>5.2.4 Smoky Lake County information and disclosure of municipal records in accordance with the <i>Municipal Government Act</i> and under the <i>Freedom of Information and Protection Privacy (FOIP)</i>, and any other applicable legislation.</p> <p>5.2.5 Smoky Lake County <i>Bylaw No. 1134-05: The Records Retention and Disposition</i> outlines when correspondence submitted to Smoky Lake County will form part of the public record and will be retained in accordance with this Bylaw.</p>
<b>5.3</b>	<p><b>LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS</b></p> <p>5.3.1 Smoky Lake County <b>Policy Statement No. 01-51: Public Participation</b> will be reviewed by County Council every four years or as required.</p> <p>5.3.2 Smoky Lake County will post this policy on the website for Public Inspection.</p>

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Resolution Number</b>
<b>Approved</b>	<b>June , 2018</b>	<b># 000-18 - Page # 00000</b>
<b>Amended</b>		
<b>Amended</b>		
<b>Amended</b>		





# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

PAGE TWO

**STEP THREE**

**ENCOURAGE THE PUBLIC**

**D**  
Determine the of Public Participation Tools

**Select Tools:** Different public participation goals typically require different tools and approaches.

**Policy Section: 4.3.3**

- In-Person     Digital     Written     Representation

**Tool Activities:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**E**  
Public Participation Notice

**Public Notification Process:** advertised in order to notify the public of an issue and with a time frame of a 30-day public comment period will be provided prior to a decision being made. **Policy Section: 4.6.1**

**Advertise: Complete *Schedule "B": Public Participation Notice.***

**Gather Inputs and Disseminate Results for Reporting:** (Concerns and Impact)

**STEP FOUR**

**REPORTING**

**F**  
Follow-up

**Communicate feedback of the outcome to Council and Public. Policy Section: 4.7**

**Complete *Schedule "C": Public Participation Report.***

**Council Meeting Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Request For Decision - Agenda Item:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STEP FIVE**

**EVALUATE THE PROCESS**

Evaluation measures the effectiveness of your public involvement process - Public Feedback and Public Participation Outcomes.

Evaluate and report to Council.

**Policy Section: 4.8**

**Complete *Schedule "D": Internal Evaluation***

Evaluation summary will be provided through the Department Manager Report after the Public Participation Engagement Meeting with Council has been completed. To the following Council Meeting for Review.

**Council Meeting Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

SMOKY LAKE COUNTY: Engagement Coordinator

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

DEPARTMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHEDULE "B"

# Invitation for Public Participation

## NOTICE



### Your relationship with your Municipal Government "It's Your County – Engage"

Pursuant to Policy Statement No. 01-51: **Public Participation**, therefore promote and encourage public participation as is stipulated and governed by legislation to obtain public input on proposed **Opportunity:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** Topic/issue /activity/type of participation event:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Brief summary description and details:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Informed the Public:** List all tools used to inform the public  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The Public Participation Reporting will be held as follows:**

- Date:** Month, Day, Year
- Time:** 9:00 a.m. - **Agenda Item: Request For Decision Number 4. \_\_\_\_.**
- Location:** Smoky Lake County Council Chambers
- Address:** 4612 McDougall Drive, Smoky Lake, Alberta  
P.O. Box 310, Smoky Lake, Alberta T0A 3C0

Anyone who is interested to provide formal **comments or feedback** on the proposed opportunity is encouraged to attend the Council Meeting, or alternatively present a written submission at the Smoky Lake County Office prior to **12:00 p.m. (noon) on Month, Day, Year.**

A copy of the information can be obtained at the Smoky Lake County Office during normal business hours: Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or on the County's website. For further information please contact Name, Department at 780-656-3730.

**Advertised:** Week of Month Day and Year in Paper(s): \_\_\_\_\_.

**Posted:** Month Day and Year on Website: \_\_\_\_\_.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**Smoky Lake County**

**SCHEDULE "C"**

	Public Participation	REPORT
The objective of this report is to provide all proceedings, findings and recommendations pertaining to the Public Participation undertaken for the following: <i>Public Participation Opportunity</i>  NAME: _____  DATE OF ACTIVITY/TIME PERIOD: _____		Contact Person: _____  Department: _____
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITY		
# of Participants: _____		Other: _____
PURPOSE OF PARTICIPATON		TOOLS
<u>Level of Participation</u>	<u>Goals #</u>	Participation Tools used:
1. _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
2. _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
3. _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
4. _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
BACKGROUND: Record of the Participation PROCESS		
Public Notice: <u>Timeline</u> Date for Public Feedback & Comment  _____	Advertised:	Background Information Provided:
SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED:		Written, Verbal or No comments
<u>Commenter Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	Date and Format of Feedback received
1. _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
2. _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
3. _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
4. _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
5. _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
6. _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
7. _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
8. _____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____



# Public Participation

**REPORT**

Public Participation Opportunity

**PAGE TWO**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

**SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

**FINDING:** Result of Involvement

**RECOMMENDATION:** Analysis of results

[Empty space for finding details]

[Empty space for recommendation details]

**COMPLETE AFTER COUNCIL DECISION**

**COUNCIL MEETING: DECISION:**

Provide an outline of decisions made

Provide a record of how the final decision was reached

Council Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Request For Decision: 4. \_\_\_\_\_

Approval: Motion Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT WORKED WELL AND WHY?** Satisfaction with the process, success with the conclusion of the work

**WHAT SHOULD BE DONE DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME?**

**HOW WAS SUCCESS MEASURED?** How do we know that the engagement as successful?

Evaluation Completed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Comments:

**COMMUNICATE DECISION:**

Advise Public of the final outcome

Report Release Date:

How was the Public advised of Decision:

**RETENTION OF RECORD:** All correspondence submitted to Smoky Lake County will form part of the public record and will be retained in accordance with Bylaw No. 1134-05: Records Retention and Disposition. File No.: \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGN-OFF:**

DEPARTMENT MANAGER NAME:	SIGNATURE	DATE
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER NAME:	SIGNATURE	DATE

**SCHEDULE "D"**

<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION Internal Evaluation</b>				
<b>Follow-Up Worksheet</b>				
<b>OPPORTUNITY:</b> _____				
<b>1 = No    2= Partially    3=Yes</b>				
<b>T</b>	<b>Transparency</b>			
1	The Public Participation Policy was followed.	1	2	3
2	Benefits of involving public were considered.	1	2	3
3	Engagement tools and approach were effective.	1	2	3
4	Information provided in timely, accurate, accessible and easily understood.	1	2	3
5	An evaluation process was developed and administered.	1	2	3
<b>R</b>	<b>Respect</b>			
6	An involvement strategy was identified – key issues addressed.	1	2	3
7	A variety of techniques was considered to reach and involve.	1	2	3
8	Support was evident throughout.	1	2	3
9	Time spent by staff in preparation, delivery and follow-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Number of hours? _____</li> <li>■ Were resources budgeted? _____</li> <li>■ Costs of Participation Process? _____</li> </ul>			
10	Staff was capable of supporting effective involvement.	1	2	3
<b>U</b>	<b>Unity</b>			
11	The issue/question was clearly defined before starting.	1	2	3
12	The levels of participation were applied effectively.	1	2	3
13	Publics' time and resources were recognized and used effectively.	1	2	3
14	The expected outcome of the process was achieved.	1	2	3
15	Was the public satisfied with the Public Participation process.	1	2	3
<b>S</b>	<b>Social</b>			
16	Appropriate citizens were identified.	1	2	3
17	Attempts were made to reach and involve those directly affected.	1	2	3
18	The participation was appropriate and added value.	1	2	3
19	Public adhered to the process.	1	2	3
20	Feedback was provided on how public participation input influenced decision.	1	2	3
<b>T</b>	<b>Transform</b>			
21	Council adhered to the process.	1	2	3
22	Results were communicated to all public.	1	2	3
23	The outcomes were achieved satisfactorily.	1	2	3
24	What can be improved for next time?			
25	What went well?			
<b>Department:</b> _____		<b>Completed by:</b> _____		
<b>Date:</b> _____		<b>Council Meeting Date:</b> _____		

