



Making a difference...together

## CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT CORPORATE POLICY

|              |  |               |       |
|--------------|--|---------------|-------|
| Policy Type  | <i>Board</i>   |               |       |
| Section      | <i>Executive Services, Corporate Communications &amp; Engagement</i> |               |       |
| Title        | PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT POLICY   |               |       |
| Adopted Date |  | Policy Number | BRD09 |
| Last Amended |  |               |       |
| Policy Owner | Corporate Communications & Engagement (CCE)                          |               |       |

### 1. POLICY:

Public engagement, also referred to as public participation, provides opportunities for the public to engage in problem-solving and processes that support decision-making at the Capital Regional District (CRD). The CRD is committed to fostering public engagement that is inclusive, equitable, and reflective of the region's diversity.

### 2. PURPOSE:

To establish roles, principles, and process for delivering public engagement initiatives.

This policy:

- (a) creates a consistent, transparent, coordinated, and outcomes-driven approach to public engagement;
- (b) recognizes that people want to participate in the processes that lead to decision-making on issues that affect them and creates an appropriate level of engagement based on assessed community impact and benefit; and
- (c) facilitates meaningful and effective consultation, information sharing, involvement, collaboration, and empowerment processes in compliance with legislative requirements.

### 3. SCOPE:

This policy applies to all formal public engagement undertaken for CRD, Capital Region Housing Corporation (CRHC), and Capital Regional Hospital District (CRHD) programs, policies, plans and projects and delivered by CRD staff, elected officials, commissioners, contractors, volunteers, or partner organizations working on behalf of the CRD.

This policy does not apply to First Nations engagement. Engagement with First Nations follows a separate process with support from the First Nations Relations division.

### 4. DEFINITIONS:

**“Public Participation or Engagement”**: refers to any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision-making. It is premised on the belief that community members should have meaningful opportunities to engage in the decisions that affect their communities.

**“Community Member”**: means residents living within the boundaries of the CRD, or service area directly affected by the initiative.

**“International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)”**: refers to the association of professionals in the field of public participation who seek to advance and extend the practice of public participation through training, certification, standards, values, and advocacy throughout Canada and around the world.

**“IAP2 Spectrum of Participation”**: IAP2’s Spectrum of Public Participation is a tool designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public’s role in any public participation process.

## **5. PROCEDURES:**

In British Columbia, the *Community Charter (CC)* and *Local Government Act (LGA)* outline the minimum requirements for when local governments must engage with the public. Generally, these are considered to be the ‘minimum’ requirements which may be exceeded, as needed.

The CRD commits to utilizing the IAP2 Core Values (Schedule A), Spectrum of Public Participation (Schedule B) and Code of Ethics (Schedule C) in developing public engagement initiatives.

This policy will be implemented through the Public Engagement Framework and Toolkit, which outlines best practices and steps for planning, implementing, and evaluating effective and meaningful engagement, in a detailed manner.

### **5.1 Public Participation Goals**

The CRD is committed to improving engagement with diverse community members using a collaborative, transparent, and authentic approach that is developed on a case-by-case basis for a variety of plans, projects, and initiatives.

The CRD’s public engagement goals are to be:

- a) **Inclusive and Equitable**: Creating open and accessible opportunities for everyone affected by a decision to participate, actively removing barriers and seeking out diverse voices, including equity-deserving groups;
- b) **Impactful**: The public’s contributions are considered and can have a real impact on the decision-making process;
- c) **Relevant**: Providing clear and accessible information about the engagement process, the decisions being made, and how input will be used;
- d) **Timely and Accessible**: Considering public engagement as early in the process as possible, in accessible formats and locations, giving participants enough time to participate and allowing for a greater range of solutions to emerge;
- e) **Reliable**: Information will be factual, complete and accessible. Questions will be answered, and input will be considered fairly;
- f) **Coordinated**: Initiatives will be coordinated corporately to enhance knowledge management, support consistency, avoid duplication and reduce the risk of ‘consultation fatigue’ among staff and community members;
- g) **Evaluated**: To increase the CRD’s organizational capacity and success; evaluations will be incorporated into every public engagement process; and

- h) **Transparent and Accountable:** Clearly communicate how public input will be used and report back on outcomes.

## **5.2 Public Engagement Requirements**

Public engagement is appropriate when:

- a) there is a legal or statutory requirement for public consultation;
- b) the public has been told there would be opportunity to provide input into a project which will affect them; and/or
- c) the project will impact people and groups, key decisions about the project have not yet been made, and opinions or advice offered by the public may influence the outcome.

Engagement plans provide order, structure and clear expectations to participants, elected officials and staff. Public engagement plans must be developed in consultation with the CRD Corporate Communications & Engagement (CCE) Division and approved by the CAO or an individual with delegated authority prior to the engagement starting.

The CRD has corporate online engagement channels that meet privacy requirements and are required to be used for all public engagement activities. Using these channels ensures participants recognize them as CRD initiatives and builds an ongoing relationship. CRD CCE staff can provide direction on the appropriate use of the channels.

## **5.3 Roles & Responsibilities**

### ***5.3.1 Elected Officials:***

Board members, and appointed commissioners are responsible for making decisions that represent the interests and values of the community.

They have an important role as decision-makers and advocates for public engagement, and can contribute in the following ways:

- a) represent residents and connect with them to determine top priorities for engagement;
- b) prioritize engagement efforts by working with staff to identify areas where public input can make a meaningful difference in decisions and help set public engagement priorities;
- c) support and promote inclusive and transparent engagement initiatives and opportunities to ensure a high rate of participation by a wide range of residents;
- d) direct community members to the established processes for garnering, monitoring and compiling input, and avoid circumventing these;
- e) allow staff to take the lead role in identifying best practices and methods for engaging the public on various issues;
- f) consider input gathered from community members and interested groups when making decisions and clarify the rationale for decisions reached;
- g) listen and observe during public engagement events and processes; and
- h) avoid making public commitments or statements that could pre-empt decisions or misrepresent the scope of consultation.

### **5.3.2 CRD Staff & Officers:**

Staff lead the planning, implementation, and reporting from public engagement initiatives.

Staff are responsible for developing and applying professional expertise to public engagement processes, as well as being technical experts who provide background and advice on decisions being made.

Project leads are responsible for liaising with the CCE Division to plan each initiative with clear roles and responsibilities between staff as outlined in the *Public Engagement Guidelines - Staff Roles & Responsibilities*.

Staff responsibilities include the following:

- a) work with elected officials to identify where public input can make a meaningful difference in decisions, program development, and service delivery;
- b) use engagement tools and outreach strategies to identify community priorities and what barriers may prevent residents from participating. Ensure this input is used to inform service planning, improve accessibility and strengthen future engagement processes;
- c) establish, and communicate engagement priorities, then apply a consistent set of policies and procedures in designing and implementing engagement activities;
- d) keep elected officials informed of engagement activities, outcomes, process design, framing issues for productive input, effective communications, and increasing engagement over time;
- e) ensure timely and respectful communication with all those who engage and show how their input has been used to influence decisions, programs and services;
- f) engage in ongoing learning and professional development about public engagement best practices; and
- g) ensure that community input is well documented, transparent and that communication efforts are as complete and well-timed as possible.

### **5.3.3 Commissioners, Contractors, Volunteers, Partners:**

CRD Commissioners, contractors, volunteers, and partners support staff in public participation efforts and provide specialized expertise, community connections, or additional capacity.

Their contributions may include the following:

- a) work with staff to ensure public engagement is considered for all policies, programs, projects, or services;
- b) seek advice, support and approval from staff as required to plan, deliver, and evaluate public participation initiatives;
- c) utilize the Public Engagement Policy, Framework, and Toolkit to ensure engagement activities are consistent throughout the organization;
- d) deliver engagement activities in accordance with the scope of work and engagement objectives; and
- e) promote engagement opportunities.

### 5.3.4 Residents:

Residents contribute to informed decision-making and the quality of life in their community by sharing their ideas, experiences, and concerns constructively and respectfully.

Their contributions can include the following:

- a) help identify community needs and priorities;
- b) identify barriers to participation and opportunities for improvement;
- c) make efforts to stay current and learn more about issues within the community;
- d) participate in engagement initiatives and encourage others to participate;
- e) express their point of view and contribute ideas while respecting opposing perspectives;
- f) be willing to listen to and learn from other community members; and
- g) vote in local government elections.

### 5.4 Privacy

All public engagement initiatives, including initiatives conducted by vendors or consultants, must have a designated CRD staff person responsible for ensuring:

- a) the Manager, FOI and Privacy, or their delegate, has provided advice respecting whether personal information is likely to be collected, used, disclosed, stored, or accessed, and whether a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) is required to be completed; and
- b) any recorded information resulting from public engagement activities that is required as evidence or to support CRD business activities is managed in accordance with the CRD's records management policies and stored in appropriate CRD recordkeeping systems.

## 6. SCHEDULE:

- A. IAP2 CORE VALUES
- B. IAP2 SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
- C. IAP2 CODE OF ETHICS

## 7. AMENDMENTS:

| <b>Adoption Date</b> | <b>Description:</b>   |
|----------------------|---|
| October, 2021        | <i>Approved by CAO. Adopted by ELT.</i>   |
| XXXX, 2026           | <i>Revision of content to align with new Public Engagement Framework. Rescinded ADM97 and turned into Board Policy.</i> |

## 8. REVIEWS:

| <b>Review Date</b> | <b>Description:</b> |
|--------------------|---------------------|
|--------------------|---------------------|

|      |                |
|------|----------------|
| 2029 | 3-year review. |
|------|----------------|


**9. RELATED POLICY, PROCEDURE OR GUIDELINE:**

- *CRD Public Engagement Framework*
- *CRD Public Engagement Toolkit*
- *Public Engagement Guidelines: - Staff Roles & Responsibilities*

# SCHEDULE A

## IAP2 CORE VALUES

### CORE VALUES



IAP2 Federation's Core Values for Public Participation define the expectations and aspirations of the public participation process. Processes based on the Core Values have been shown to be the most successful and respected.

|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.</p> <p><b>1</b></p> | <p>Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.</p> <p><b>2</b></p> | <p>Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.</p> <p><b>3</b></p> |   |
| <p>Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.</p> <p><b>4</b></p>                      | <p>Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.</p> <p><b>5</b></p>                 | <p>Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.</p> <p><b>6</b></p>  | <p>Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.</p> <p><b>7</b></p> |

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## SCHEDULE B

### IAP2 SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

#### IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

| INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION |  |  |   |   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|---|--|
|                                   | <b>INFORM</b>  | <b>CONSULT</b>   | <b>INVOLVE</b>  | <b>COLLABORATE</b>  | <b>EMPOWER</b>   |
| PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL         | To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions. | To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.  | To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.  | To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.                     | To place final decision making in the hands of the public. |
| PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC             | We will keep you informed.   | We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible. | We will implement what you decide.                         |


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# SCHEDULE C

## IAP2 CODE OF ETHICS

### CODE OF ETHICS



IAP2 Federation's Code of Ethics is a set of principles that guides us in our practice of enhancing the integrity of the public participation process. As practitioners, we hold ourselves accountable to these principles and strive to hold all participants to the same standards.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>1 Purpose</b><br>We support public participation as a process to make better decisions that incorporate the interests and concerns of all affected stakeholders and meet the needs of the decision-making body. | <b>6 Access to the Process</b><br>We will ensure that stakeholders have fair and equal access to the public participation process and the opportunity to influence decisions.  |
| <b>2 Role of Practitioner</b><br>We will enhance the public's participation in the decision-making process and assist decision makers in being responsive to the public's concerns and suggestions.                | <b>7 Respect for Communities</b><br>We will avoid strategies that risk polarising community interests or that appear to "divide and conquer."                                  |
| <b>3 Trust</b><br>We will undertake and encourage actions that build trust and credibility for the process among all the participants.   | <b>8 Advocacy</b><br>We will advocate for the public participation process and will not advocate for a particular interest, party, or project outcome.                         |
| <b>4 Defining the Public's Role</b><br>We will carefully consider and accurately portray the public's role in the decision-making process.   | <b>9 Commitments</b><br>We will ensure that all commitments made to the public, including those made by the decision maker, are made in good faith.                            |
| <b>5 Openness</b><br>We will encourage the disclosure of all information relevant to the public's understanding and evaluation of a decision.  | <b>10 Support of the Practice</b><br>We will mentor new practitioners in the field and educate decision makers and the public about the value and use of public participation. |

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