



## **COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICIES**

### **Council / Governance Issue**

Council's Community Engagement draft Policy GP-D-2.6 and draft Community Engagement Policy EL-B-2.6 are provided to the Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) for review and consideration.

### **Recommendation**

That a recommendation be forwarded to Council that draft Council's Community Engagement Policy GP-D-2.6 and draft Community Engagement Policy EL-B-2.6 be approved as presented; and

That a recommendation be forwarded to Council that Community Engagement Policy CMD-R-4.6 and Council Community Connector Policy and Plan GP-D-2.3 be rescinded.

### **Background and Considerations**

The Town of Okotoks provides community engagement because, although there are skilled technical experts working across the organization, no one knows the community and its nuances better than the people living and doing business in it every day. Through engagement, their input becomes part of the decision-making process, helping elected officials, residents, and staff create communities that are responsive to what the community has indicated as important to them.

When community engagement is meaningful, everyone gains something valuable. Governments benefit from hearing diverse perspectives and understanding the public's interests, concerns, and priorities, and the public gains a greater understanding of roles, responsibilities and requirements. With community engagement, the Town's accountability to residents is enhanced. The 2 recommended policies are drafted based on those principles.

Community Engagement phase 1 CMD-R-4.6 was approved by Council at the October 23, 2023 Regular Council Meeting, at which time Administration indicated phase 2 would follow. Draft Council's Community Engagement Policy GP-D-2.6 is the second phase of community engagement recommended in order to define the role of Council in Community Engagement and replaces the Council Community Connector Policy and Plan GP-D-2.3.

The draft Community Engagement EL-D-2.6 is provided to Council to support the role of the CAO and Administration outside of Council's identified role under draft Council's Community Engagement Policy GP-D-2.6. Once the phase 2 Council Engagement policy was drafted, an executive limitation policy was better aligned for the CAO/Administration's rules for engagement than the existing phase 1 Community Engagement CMD-R-4.6. Therefore, the repeal of Community Engagement Policy CMD-R-4.6 is required.

Recently the International Association of Public Participation updated some definitions. Across Canada, many municipalities are removing the colonial term of “stakeholder” and replacing it with alternate language, such as “interested parties”. We have done the same to align with best practices and as one more step in our journey of Truth and Reconciliation.

### **Current Policy or Bylaw Analysis**

Community Engagement Phase 1 CMD-R-4.6

Council Community Connector Policy and Plan GP-D-2.3

Decision Making GP-A-2.1

### **Municipal Comparisons**

The *Municipal Government Act* requires municipalities to adopt a community engagement policy that identifies the types or categories of approaches and circumstances that will be used to engage the community, and requires that the policy be reviewed periodically.

### **CAO Comments**

Committee direction is requested.

### **Attachment(s)**

1. Draft Council’s Community Engagement Policy GP-D-2.6
2. Draft Community Engagement Policy EL-B-2.6
3. Community Engagement Policy CMD-R-4.6
4. Council Community Connector Policy and Plan GP-D-2.3

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