	<h1>Town of Vegreville Policy</h1>
<b>Policy No.:</b> <b>Policy Title:</b> <b>Approval Date:</b> <b>Department:</b>	<b>GOV-1017</b> <b>Community Engagement Policy</b> <b>April 14, 2025</b> <b>Community Engagement &amp; Economic Development</b>
<b>Revisions:</b>	

## Policy Statement:

The Town of Vegreville is committed to making it easy for the public to understand, use, and access the Town's information in all forms and formats. Information about the Town of Vegreville's priorities, policies, programs, and services must be:

- accurate
- relevant
- strategic
- accessible
- clearly and consistently presented

The Town of Vegreville's communications will be in plain language, avoid jargon and use words appropriate for the intended audience and the communication medium. All materials will be developed in a coordinated and cost-effective manner.

Town communication activities will be mindful of all relevant laws and regulations and will conform to ensure the Town's compliance.

## 1.0 Reason for Policy

The intent of the policy is to ensure that Town of Vegreville communications are coordinated, effective, and give the public the information they need. Communicating with Vegreville's public is a key function of municipal government, involving elected officials and employees at all levels. This policy guides all Town departments and employees.

This policy also applies to the Town's:

- **Branding and Visual Identity**  
Communications using clear and consistent visual identity ensures that the public recognizes they are accessing Town programs, services, and any other initiatives. Branding and visual identity is a prominent cornerstone in all communication activities.
- **Internal & External Communications**  
Communications with Town of Vegreville employees, members of Council, members of the Town's external boards and committees, Media, and members of the public will respect the

integrity and impartiality of municipal bylaws and provincial legislation and uphold a high level of transparency.

- **Public Engagement**

This policy will help define the parameters when considering the use of Public Engagement in the information gathering process of decision-making regarding creation or changes to programs, services or initiatives, or when mandated by legislature.

- **Confidentiality**

In all communications, Spokespersons must comply with all legislated requirements regarding access and disclosure of information. The *Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* outlines access and privacy principles and legislated requirements.

## **2.0 Definitions**

**2.1 CAO** means Chief Administrative Officer for the Town of Vegreville.

**2.2 CEED** means Community Engagement and Economic Development.

**2.3 Community Engagement Coordinator** means employee responsible for all internal and external communications for the Town of Vegreville.

**2.4 communication(s)** means the practice of receiving, interpreting and transmitting information.

**2.5 Emergency Communications** means internal and external communication activities required as a result of an officially declared emergency or any serious and unusual activity or event involving Town facilities or personnel, i.e. fatalities, serious injury or accident, major service outages, bomb threats, major thefts or other criminal activities, tornadoes, floods, etc.

**2.6 Media** means traditional news media; print, radio and television.

**2.7 Media Relations** means press releases, public statements, news conferences and other methods and materials used to communicate with Media representatives and outlets.

**2.8 Public Engagement** means formal, defined, interactive process between the Town and Stakeholders designed to increase mutual understanding, gather information, exchange ideas, and/or solve problems with the goal of making better, more informed decisions

**2.9 Spokesperson(s)** means a Town employee who has the authority to make statements to Media on behalf of the Town.

**2.10 Stakeholder** means individual(s), organization(s) or group that has an interest in an issue, will be affected by an issue, or has the ability to affect a decision or outcome.

**2.11 Town** means Town of Vegreville.

### **3.0 Responsibilities**

#### **3.1 Town Council to:**

- 3.1.1 Approve by resolution this policy and any amendments.
- 3.1.2 Consider the allocation of resources for successful implementation of this policy in the annual budget process.

#### **3.2 Chief Administrative Officer to:**

- 3.2.1 Implement this policy and approve procedures.
- 3.2.2 Ensure policy and procedure reviews occur and verify the implementation of policies and procedures.

#### **3.3 Director/Manager of the Department to:**

- 3.3.1 Ensure implementation of this policy and procedure.
- 3.3.2 Ensure that this policy and procedure is reviewed every three years.
- 3.3.3 Make recommendations to the CAO of necessary policy or procedure amendments.
- 3.3.4 Understand, and adhere to this policy and procedure.
- 3.3.5 Ensure employees are aware of this policy and procedure.

#### **3.4 Director of Emergency Management to:**

- 3.4.1 Work with the CEED Department to ensure there are processes in place to implement Emergency Communications.

#### **3.5 Community Engagement Coordinator to:**

- 3.5.1 Provide training and ongoing guidance to Town departments related to this policy and procedure.
- 3.5.2 Approve and oversee communication tools for official corporate use.
- 3.5.3 Ensure consistent messaging and imaging for all corporate communication tools.
- 3.5.4 Ensure all account identities adhere to corporate brand standards.

#### **3.6 All Employees to:**

- 3.6.1 Understand and adhere to this policy and procedure.

## **4.0 Media Relations**

### **4.1 The Mayor is the Spokesperson for the Town.**

- 4.1.1 In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor is the Spokesperson for the Town.
- 4.1.2 The CAO is the Spokesperson for the Town, after Mayor and Council.

### **4.2 The Spokesperson will consult with the CAO and the CEED Department prior to making statements to the Media.**

### **4.3 The Community Engagement Coordinator will act as first point of contact for Media interested in acquiring information or speaking with staff.**

- 4.3.1 The Community Engagement Coordinator will consult with the appropriate department to provide information and facilitate interviews.

### **4.4 All Media inquiries received by an employee other than the Community Engagement Coordinator or CAO must be referred immediately that employee's department Manager/Director and through to the CEED Department.**

### **4.5 The CEED Department will support Mayor, Council, CAO, Managers and Directors to develop key messages to ensure a timely and accurate response on behalf of the Town.**

### **4.6 The Community Engagement Coordinator is responsible for developing and publishing press releases on behalf of the Town.**

### **4.7 Managers and Directors must advise the CAO and CEED Department of upcoming issues that could affect the positive public image of the organization as soon as practicable.**

## **5.0 Public Engagement**

### **5.1 Standards**

- 5.1.1 Public Engagement activities will be conducted in a professional and respectful manner.
- 5.1.2 Public Engagement plans should be developed and executed allowing for ongoing and diverse opportunities to provide input.
- 5.1.3 Stakeholders who participate in any manner of Public Engagement are required to be respectful and constructive in their participation.
- 5.1.4 Stakeholders who are disrespectful, inappropriate or offensive, as determined by administration, may be excluded from Public Engagement opportunities.
- 5.1.5 The results of Public Engagement will be presented to Council prior to Stakeholders or the public.

- i. Public Engagement results will be made available to Stakeholders and the public as soon as practicable.

5.1.6 Town Council will consider public input obtained through Public Engagement activities as part of their decision-making process, when applicable.

## **5.2 Principles of Public Engagement**

5.2.1 Public Engagement is **PROACTIVE**: it is initiated early enough for participants to make informed decisions and impact the outcomes.

5.2.2 Public Engagement is **RELEVANT** and **EFFECTIVE**: the process is planned, effectively communicated and implemented to encourage public participation and contribution in an appropriate manner.

5.2.3 Public Engagement is **EQUITABLE**: Members of the public are provided with a reasonable opportunity to contribute, developing a balanced perspective.

5.2.4 Public Engagement is **CLEAR** and **FOCUSED**: The Town and the public understand their respective roles in a Public Engagement process, including the level of involvement and how input will be used to inform decisions.

5.2.5 Public Engagement is **INCLUSIVE**: it uses a range of methods to engage various audiences to maximize participation and improve the quality of feedback.

5.2.6 Public Engagement **INCREASES UNDERSTANDING**: Mutual understanding is increased through two-way interaction, where the information presented is easily understood by the intended audience.

5.2.7 Public Engagement is **RESPONSIVE** and **ONGOING**: Public Engagement has an ongoing focus on relationship building, active listening, and increased understanding.

5.2.8 Public Engagement is **ACCOUNTABLE** and **TRANSPARENT**: Public Engagement outcomes are measured, evaluated and reported in a timely manner.

## **5.3 Public Engagement Circumstances**

5.3.1 Public Engagement is required when:

- i. Legislation requires it; or
- ii. Town Council or Administration requests it.

5.3.2 Public Engagement may be required when:

- i. The public or Stakeholders request it;
- ii. Quality of life may be affected;

- iii. The natural environment may be affected;
- iv. Geographical communities or communities of interest may be affected;
- v. There are already strong views on the issue; or
- vi. Many people will be affected.

#### 5.3.3 Public Engagement is not required when:

- i. The decision is already made;
- ii. The issue relates to the development of an administrative policy that does not require or involve public consultation; or
- iii. Stakeholder input will not be considered.

### 5.4 Public Engagement Processes

- 5.4.1 The Public Engagement Process (Appendix A) gives guidance to Town employees to determine the level of engagement for a particular project.

## 6.0 Video Streaming – Council Meetings

Video Streaming of Council Meetings granting accessibility of these meetings to a larger audience. The process will allow more flexible and convenient access to Council debate and decisions. Livestreaming and publishing recorded video eliminates geographic and time barriers which may prevent the public from attending Council meetings, allowing for greater transparency and public confidence in the integrity and accountability of the decision-making process.

### 6.1 Notification

- 6.1.1 Notification of video recording and livestreaming will be posted on the Town of Vegreville social media accounts.
- 6.1.2 Notices will be posted inside Council Chambers informing attendees that livestreaming and recording of the meeting will be taking place.

### 6.2 Livestreaming, Recording and Publishing

- 6.2.1 Regular and Special Council Meetings and Legislative Committee Meetings will be livestreamed, recorded and published in accordance with this Policy and will be able to be accessed from the Town of Vegreville website and related social media platforms.
- 6.2.2 Any parts of Council's Meetings that are closed to the public, in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act* and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, are regarded as confidential and will not be recorded.
- 6.2.3 The Mayor and/or the CAO have the discretion and authority at any time to direct the termination or interruption of livestreaming. Such direction will only be given in

exceptional circumstances where deemed relevant. Circumstances may include instances where the content of debate is considered misleading, defamatory or potentially inappropriate to be published.

- 6.2.4 The livestreaming will begin when the meeting is called to order and end once the meeting is adjourned. The stream may continue during the closed sessions, however both video and audio feeds will be shut off until the closed session is over.

### **6.3 Public Interaction in Council Meetings**

- 6.3.1 Town of Vegreville's Council Procedural Bylaw outlines public conduct with regards to Council Meetings.
- 6.3.2 All attendees are subject to being recorded and their voice and image will form part of the livestream, recording and publishing.
- 6.3.3 No questions from online viewers will be read during the meeting. Members of the public wishing to address Council may do so in accordance with the Council Procedural Bylaw.

### **6.4 Accessing Recordings**

- 6.4.1 All meetings that are livestreamed and recorded will be available immediately on Town of Vegreville related social media platforms and retained in accordance with the Town of Vegreville Records Management and Retention Bylaw.

### **6.5 Technical Issues**

- 6.5.1 Administration will make every effort to ensure that livestreaming is available, however, administration takes no responsibility for, and cannot be held liable for, technical issues beyond its control. Technical issues may include, but are not limited to, the availability of the internet connection, device failure or malfunction, unavailability of social media platforms or power outages.
- 6.5.2 In the event that technical issues prevent the livestreaming, recording, and publication of Council Meetings, administration will communicate the issue on the Town of Vegreville website and social media platforms.

## **7.0 Exclusions**

- 7.1 Social Media – refer to Social Media Policy GOV-1006

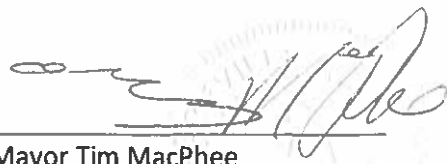
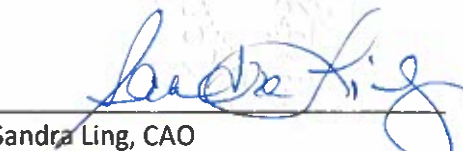
## **8.0 Special Situations**

- 8.1 During times of Emergency or Crisis refer to the Emergency Management procedures.

## 9.0 Appendix

### 9.1 Appendix A: Public Engagement Process

## 10.0 End of Policy

  
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Mayor Tim MacPhee  
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Sandra Ling, CAO

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES

The colors indicate the time required for planning, consideration, and consultation for each of the processes listed below. Processes should be selected based on the level of public impact of the decision or potential decision.

1	2	3	4	5
INFORM (LEVEL I)	INFORM (LEVEL II)	INFORM (LEVEL III)	INVOLVE, CONSULT & COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
<b>PURPOSE</b> To provide the public with clear, accurate, and timely information about a decision that has already been made.	<b>PURPOSE</b> To provide the public with clear & accurate information about a decision that has already been made.	<b>PURPOSE</b> To engage directly with a segment of the population that may be directly impacted by a decision that has already been made.	<b>PURPOSE</b> To seek public input and encourage community collaboration to inform a decision that Council has discussed but not yet made.	<b>PURPOSE</b> To give the public the authority to make the final decision or implement solutions.
<b>GOAL</b> Ensure transparency by delivering essential information to the public.	<b>GOAL</b> Ensure transparency through a more thorough delivery of essential information to the public.	<b>GOAL</b> Ensure the affected group is informed of the decision directly and before the rest of the community, with a clear understanding of its implications.	<b>GOAL</b> To ensure the public has the opportunity to voice their opinions, concerns, support, or criticism regarding a decision yet to be made.	<b>GOAL</b> Enable community-led decision-making.
<b>EXAMPLES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>News releases</li> <li>Website updates</li> <li>Social media posts</li> </ul>	<b>EXAMPLES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ads in local newspapers</li> <li>Ads and discussion on local radio's "Talk of the Town"</li> <li>Paid for Social Media</li> </ul>	<b>EXAMPLES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder/User Group Meetings</li> <li>Door Knockers/Hand Delivered Correspondence</li> </ul>	<b>EXAMPLES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surveys or polls</li> <li>Public meetings and open houses</li> <li>Citizen advisory committees (no budget)</li> </ul>	<b>EXAMPLES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Citizen advisory committees (with autonomy &amp; authority over it's own budget)</li> <li>Vote of the Electors</li> </ul>
<b>CONSIDERATIONS</b> A fast, effective, and affordable way to communicate information and decisions. While it requires very little turnaround time, it may not reach everyone, particularly those without internet or social media access	<b>CONSIDERATIONS</b> While LEVEL II provides a more thorough delivery of information, it requires additional time to coordinate a media plan -sometimes up to one full week. It also requires a budget starting at approximately \$500. LEVEL II must also include LEVEL I strategies.	<b>CONSIDERATIONS</b> Direct stakeholder engagement is time-consuming but essential if a decision directly impacts a specific group, neighborhood, or segment of the population. Depending on the decision's magnitude and it's potential community impact, LEVEL I and II strategies should follow direct engagement.	<b>CONSIDERATIONS</b> Community consultation can be arduous but is sometimes mandatory. It often requires at least one month to plan, execute, and summarize, along with a budget of thousands for advertising, events, and staffing. To maintain public trust, feedback must meaningfully inform the decision. Ultimately, the goal is to provide an opportunity for public involvement, recognizing that limited participation does not signify failure.	<b>CONSIDERATIONS</b> To ensure maximum public involvement, a detailed marketing and communications plan is essential. This plan should include robust marketing and communication strategies. At a minimum, a 6-8 week campaign is necessary to cover preliminary advertising, face-to-face public engagement, and post-decision communications. Such a campaign is estimated to cost between \$4,000 and \$8,000, excluding the potential staff time required for in-person engagement.