

2019



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK





contents

The Value of Community Engagement	3
Supporting Council Decisions	4
Steps in the Plan	5
Factors Influencing Engagement	6
What is the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation?.	7
Tools and Techniques	8
Our Promise to You	10
Roles of Participants	12
Your Privacy	15

The Value of Community Engagement

In today's world, residents are more connected and educated than ever before on the issues that affect their lives. As a result, they expect opportunities to have a say on the decisions that come to City Hall. When they are engaged in a meaningful way and all perspectives are considered, Council makes more informed, trusted decisions.

This framework outlines the approach the City of Penticton has taken to shape community engagement for our municipality. As you'll learn, there is no one-size-fits-all strategy for community engagement. Nor does every initiative or project require community engagement.

We use guiding principles, best practices, and tools to steer our efforts so that when Penticton residents are consulted, they see their participation is valued and that their contributions are making a difference.

What is Community Engagement?

Community engagement describes a wide range of activities aimed at increasing citizen awareness and participation. For us, it means involving residents in the decisions that are most important to you. This ensures the best use of City resources and your time.

"Community engagement is defined as any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision-making and that uses public input to make better decisions."

– International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)

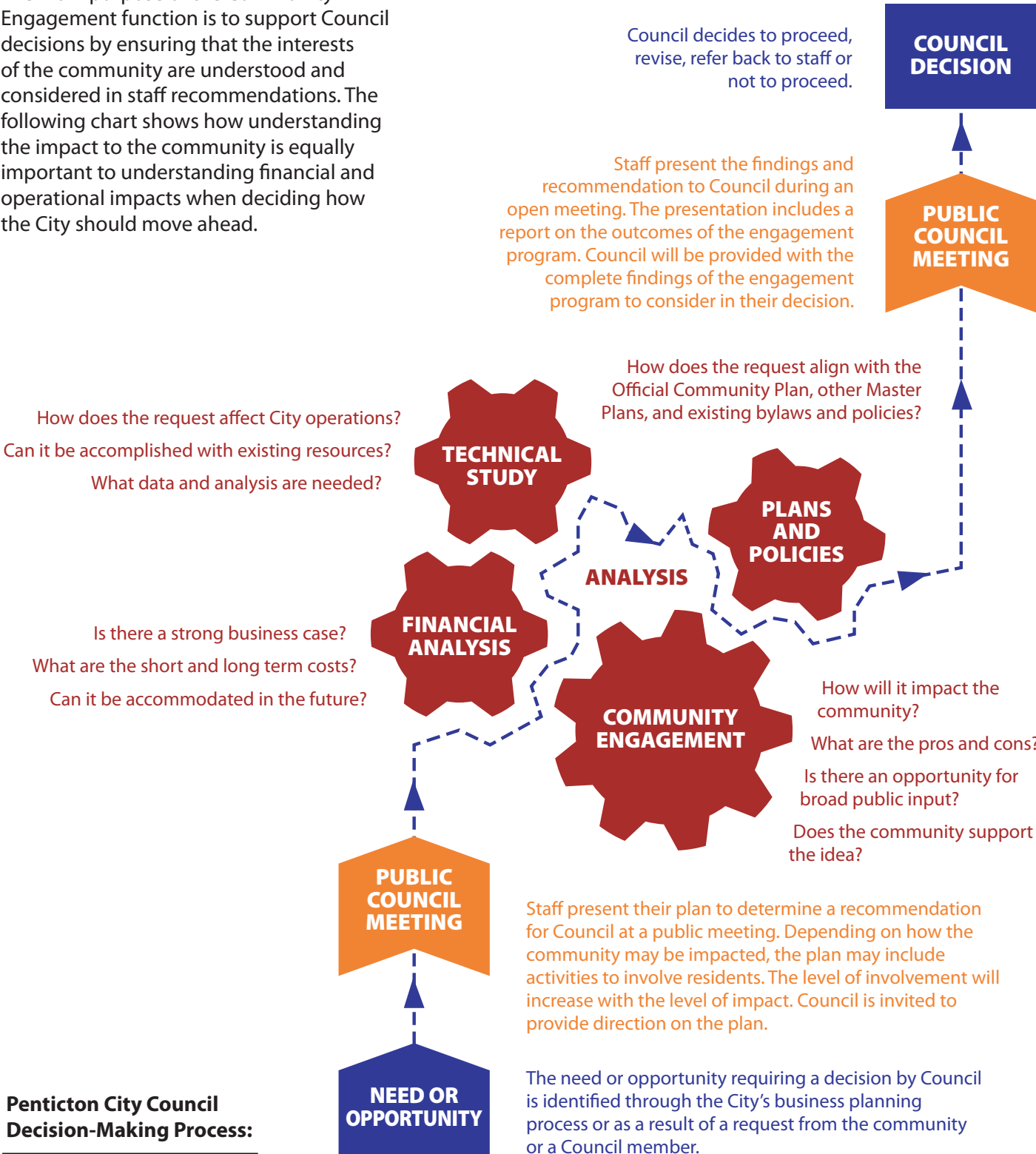
Why Engage?

- Supports better, more informed decisions
- Fosters trust between the City and citizens
- Enables more input from diverse audiences
- Increases citizens' sense of civic responsibility and understanding of issues
- Reduces conflict and looks for common ground



Supporting Council Decisions

The main purpose of the Community Engagement function is to support Council decisions by ensuring that the interests of the community are understood and considered in staff recommendations. The following chart shows how understanding the impact to the community is equally important to understanding financial and operational impacts when deciding how the City should move ahead.



Who has the final say?

Your Council is elected to represent your interests and community engagement does not replace their responsibility for decision making. The purpose of gaining input from the community is to provide Council with information about the public's opinion and interests to support their decisions.

Steps in the Plan

Once the need or opportunity is identified through the City's business planning process or as a result of a request from the community or Council member, these are the steps we follow to determine how to give residents a voice on the civic issues that matter to them.



1 Identify who is affected

Each initiative is reviewed to determine who is affected and how. In addition to identifying stakeholder groups that may have an interest, the City also anticipates the potential interest from the broader community by considering how the decision may affect the City's parks, environment, heritage, arts and culture, affordability, aesthetics, health and safety, parking and traffic, amenities, infrastructure, and the economy.

2 Determining the level of engagement

Once the impacts to the community are understood and the stakeholders are identified, the level of participation is determined. The City bases its recommendation for engagement on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation. The Spectrum provides for increasing levels of participation depending on the impact. In other words, the more you are affected by a decision, the greater your opportunity to get involved.

3 Developing the process and plan

The next step is developing the process and plan. This step aligns the engagement needs with the other types of analyses needed and the outcomes of the project. It identifies the tools and techniques that will be used to involve the public participation and determine the schedule. The process and plan are often shared with Council at a public meeting at the start of the project.

4 Implementing the plan

Once the plan is complete, it's time to execute the engagement activities. The City aims to provide at least two weeks notice of any engagement activities through advertisements in local media as well as on the City's communication channels. Where appropriate, the City will seek to use creative formats to encourage participation and make the activity rewarding and meaningful for the participants. Information about the process and the initiative, as well as all events and activities, can be found on shapeyourcitypenticton.ca.

5 Reporting and measuring

Whatever form the engagement takes, it's important to follow up with residents to share how their public input helped shaped the recommendations and decisions made. For larger programs, the City may share a summary of the findings at a Council meeting as well as through local media and the City's communication channels. The complete results will also be available on shapeyourcitypenticton.ca. One of the final steps is an evaluation of the community engagement plan and process to determine opportunities for continuous improvement.

Raising the Bar

The *Community Charter* and the *Local Government Act* define the authority of local governments and guide decision-making in British Columbia. They include requirements for public participation in several areas such as the development of a Financial Plan and Official Community Plan, boundary changes and borrowing of funds. With the creation of the Community Engagement Policy and this framework, we are choosing to involve the community in more decisions.



It's important to follow up with residents to share how their public input helped.

Factors Influencing Engagement

While this framework aims to provide more structure to how we conduct our engagement program, determining when to involve the community and to what extent is not a scientific process. The City considers how the decision affects the following values of the community to determine the need and the level of involvement.

- Appearance (i.e. aesthetics, view and heights)
- Lifestyle (i.e. nuisance factors and amenities)
- Activity (i.e. parking and traffic)
- Health and Safety (i.e. air quality and water quality)
- Environment (i.e. wildlife, natural areas, parks and ALR)
- Heritage (i.e. historic buildings and community character)
- Culture (i.e. investments in the arts)
- Affordability (i.e. taxes, utilities and fees)
- Assets (i.e. buildings and roads)
- Business (i.e. economic development and operations)
- Finances (i.e. budgets and spending)



What is the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation?

The City of Penticton recognizes the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) as the international standard for effective community engagement. The City's community engagement activities are guided by the IAP2 Public Participation Pillars including the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, the IAP2 Core Values, and the IAP2 Code of Ethics.

The IAP2 Spectrum is a continuum that helps us determine the extent to which stakeholders and the community are involved in a decision. The following chart explains the five categories of participation and provides examples of how they have been used to support City of Penticton decisions. The greater the impact, the higher the recommended level of involvement.

Increasing Level of Public Impact

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision.	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.
TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact Sheets • Websites • News releases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Houses • Feedback Forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Committees • Charrettes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referendum • Alternative Approval Process
PENTICTON EXAMPLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net Metering Returns • Bioreactor Waste Pump Replacement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility Rate Review • Wastewater Solids Handling • Triathlon Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail Cannabis Policy • Utility Rate Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official Community Plan • Parks and Recreation Master Plan • Robinson Property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOEC • Skaha Bluffs Boundary Extension

This level is often used when the interest in involvement is fairly low, such as with highly technical or routine decisions.

These levels are often used when the interest is fairly high, such as with decisions about the environment, the economy or future of the city.

This level is reserved for decisions that are regulated by legislation such as borrowing of funds or extension of City borders. This level may also be requested at the discretion of Council.



The City is always looking for new and creative ways to meaningfully involve residents.



Tools and Techniques

We are always looking for new and creative ways to meaningfully involve residents. Here is a description of some of the more common tools used by the City of Penticton to involve the community.

Advisory Committees – Council may choose to recruit a group of citizens with specialized knowledge or experience to participate in a committee to support a specific purpose such as guiding the development of the Official Community Plan or providing recommendations on Parks initiatives. Council-appointed committees are legislated by the Community Charter and have a Terms of Reference to describe their mandate.

Feedback Form – This form is used to gather comments about options or recommendations. Feedback Forms are typically open-ended and require a basic knowledge of the subject matter in order to provide feedback.

Information Session – The purpose of this type of event is to provide a presentation focused on building understanding of a topic. Participants may or may not have the opportunity to ask questions or participate in activities to share their feedback.

Shapeyourcitypenticton.ca – This website houses all information related to projects the City is seeking involvement in. The information is accessible to all interested citizens although registration may be required for participation in some online activities.

Open House – This is a central event that allows residents to drop by at their convenience to learn more about a topic and discuss it with staff. There will usually be an opportunity to complete a form to leave feedback.

Questionnaire – Interested members of the public will have the opportunity to answer questions about specific topics. Participation is voluntary and results will reflect views of participants only and not the general population. Questionnaires are often used to gather input at the onset of a project where broad community input is needed to identify options and solutions. Questionnaires are useful in assessing the level of interest in a topic within the community.

Survey – A survey is intended to measure public opinion in a scientific manner. Residents are randomly selected to participate and results are considered reflective of the general population. Surveys sometimes require support by consultants and are often used for more challenging topics. Information gathered through a survey helps Council understand public opinion when making decisions. In the City's reports on the findings of a survey or questionnaire, staff will indicate when the results are considered scientific and when they are reflective of the participants alone.

Workshop / Charrette – During these events, participants have a hands-on role in identifying and developing solutions. The workshop may involve a presentation or reading material to prepare participants. These events are very specialized and will usually involve the support of outside consultants to facilitate.

We recognize that community engagement is dynamic. We will regularly evaluate the program and continuously improve the strategies and techniques to increase participation and improve effectiveness.





Our Promise to You

In 2019, Penticton City Council approved a Community Engagement Policy that provides direction to staff on how to carry out a meaningful and trusted community engagement process. Here are the principles and commitments included in the policy:

- 1 Community engagement is guided by best practices**
 The City of Penticton recognizes the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) as the international standard for effective community engagement. The City's community engagement activities are guided by the IAP2 Public Participation Pillars including the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, the IAP2 Core Values, and the IAP2 Code of Ethics.
- 2 Community engagement is decision-oriented**
 Engagement must lead to tangible outcomes or decisions which are defined clearly, accurately, and early in the process. The City of Penticton does not undertake community engagement if the public cannot influence the decision or if there is no tangible outcome or decision to be made.
- 3 Community engagement is based on the level of public impact**
 The City of Penticton considers the potential level of public impact or interest in the decision or policy to determine the need for community engagement and the level of public involvement before initiating the work. In accordance with the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, the level of engagement increases with the level of impact to citizens.
- 4 Community engagement is planned and measured**
 All community engagement activities are supported by a plan that clearly identifies the decision, goals, and desired outcomes of the public's participation. The City of Penticton demonstrates that results and outcomes of the engagement processes are consistent with the approved plans for engagement.
- 5 Community engagement is open, transparent and balanced**
 The City of Penticton ensures the public has the information necessary to participate meaningfully in the engagement activities. The City aims to provide information that is timely, complete, balanced and easy to understand. It includes the advantages and disadvantages of the initiative as well as the financial implications and funding sources where appropriate.

6 Community engagement is inclusive and respectful

The City of Penticton works to reach, involve and hear from a representative demographic of the population and takes steps to reduce physical, social, and cultural barriers to participation. Citizens are engaged early in the decision-making process, have a variety of opportunities to be involved, and have sufficient time to review information.

7 Community engagement is a shared responsibility

Council, staff and citizens have a responsibility to participate openly, honestly, respectfully, and constructively. At each level of engagement, all participants understand their roles, responsibilities and authority and recognize that the interest of the community may be greater than the interest of individuals.

8 Community engagement is collaborative

The City of Penticton's engagement processes create opportunities for citizens, staff, and Council to talk to and learn from each other. The process allows for discussion of values, principles, choices, and trade-offs in search of common ground. Council and staff take advantage of the opportunities provided by the engagement program to hear the different perspectives of citizens.

9 Community engagement is accountable

Staff will share the complete findings of the engagement program with Council and the public and report how the results were reflected in their recommendation. The results of the community engagement program are one of several factors considered by Council when they make decisions that they believe are in the best interests of citizens and the City of Penticton.

10 Community engagement is resourced effectively

The City of Penticton aims to provide a professional level of quality in its engagement activities. Staff are trained in community engagement and employ best practice tools and templates to ensure consistent and effective planning, implementation and evaluation of the program and services. The City of Penticton leverages internal resources and tools and takes advantage of City-owned venues to minimize costs while still meeting the goals for public involvement. When required, external resources are recruited and managed by Community Engagement staff.

11 Community engagement is continuously improving

The City of Penticton recognizes that community engagement is dynamic and regularly evaluates the program and continuously improves the strategies and techniques to increase participation and improve effectiveness.



In 2019, Penticton City Council approved a Community Engagement Policy.





We can all do our part – be open to all ideas and respectful of all participants.



Roles of Participants

Council, community engagement and department staff, and citizens all have a role to play to implement the Community Engagement Policy and support the success of the program. Here are various ways we can all do our part:

Community Engagement Staff

- Identify issues that may need or benefit from public participation
- Partner with department staff to design a meaningful and trusted engagement process
- Ensure sufficient time for citizens to learn about and participate in engagement activities
- Provide quality materials and activities to support participation
- Ensure participants have the information needed to participate effectively
- Encourage discussion and understanding of all viewpoints, but not try to influence the input
- Execute as transparently and as effectively as possible
- Document and report the findings to Council and the community
- Evaluate the engagement program and activities
- Continuously build skills and tools for effectiveness
- Uphold the principles of the policy

Department Staff

- Consult community engagement staff about the need for engagement before initiating the work
- Partner with community engagement staff to design a meaningful and trusted process
- Work with community engagement staff to schedule the work and allow enough time to properly develop and implement the program
- Encourage discussion and understanding of all viewpoints but not try to influence the input
- Fully consider findings of the engagement program and report how they are reflected in the recommendation
- Uphold the principles of the policy

Council

- Help to identify the issues that would benefit from public participation
- Review and comment on public participation strategies
- Support the implementation of the policy and framework
- Promote attendance or participation in engagement activities
- Attend and observe engagement activities, but not try to influence the input
- Review the findings of the engagement program
- Consider the results in forming opinions and making decisions
- Support the increasing capacity of the organization to deliver effective engagement programs
- Uphold the principles of the policy

Citizens

- Review materials and become informed
- Be open to all ideas and respectful of all participants
- Adhere to the established process and time frame
- Understand that the outcome may not be as you hoped
- Uphold the principles of the policy



*Engagement is
all about making
better decisions on
civic issues.*



The process of community engagement gives residents a voice on the civic issues that matter to them.



About shapeyourcitypenticton.ca

One of the most important tools for engagement is the website shapeyourcitypenticton.ca. This website acts as a central hub, housing all information about each project and the opportunities for participation. On this site, you will find the schedule of activities, historical reports or studies, open surveys or forums, and more. While anyone can access the information on the site, registration is required in order to provide feedback. This helps the City minimize the risk of multiple submissions and confirms the location of the person providing feedback. Persons who register can opt in to receive an email every few weeks with an update on projects and engagement activities. Anyone not interested in registering will also have access to paper copies of relevant documents and feedback forms.

Your Privacy

One of the core values of effective engagement is openness and transparency. When you participate in forums on shapeyourcitypenticton.ca or in person at events, your contributions and identity are considered public. When you participate in surveys, questionnaires, or feedback forms, your comments will be available to the public in reports and on the website but your identity will only be known to the staff person who is managing the engagement and will not be made available to other City staff, Council, or members of the public. On occasion, staff will invite participants to provide their contact information in order to be entered into a draw for prizes. Your contact information will be used for draw purposes only and will be kept private.

thank you

We wish to express our sincere thanks to all citizens who have participated in our engagement activities to date and have helped build the engagement program.

We would also like to thank the many municipal governments whose community engagement guiding documents inspired the content of our policy and this framework.

The City of Penticton



*The greater the
level of impact
and influence, the
greater the level of
involvement.*



