



Engagement Policy

Revisions Table	
Date	Version
December 13, 2023	#1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PURPOSE
2. SCOPE
3. POLICY
4. APPLICATION
5. RESPONSIBILITIES
6. DEFINITIONS



1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the foundation for the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District's (SLRD) reasons, guidelines and procedures for conducting public engagement.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all SLRD elected officials, staff, volunteers and contractors.

3. POLICY

The SLRD recognizes the value of public engagement and is committed to building relationships and earning trust through open and meaningful interaction with the public. Effective public engagement encourages participation and promotes accountability, ultimately resulting in more informed decision-making, increasing transparency while building public trust.

A common understanding of public engagement among SLRD elected officials, staff and members of the public is important to help ensure parties to engagement are working towards common goals.

The SLRD has adopted the best practices and models of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) as the foundation for approaching public engagement.

IAP2 is an international association whose mission is to advance and extend the practice of public participation through professional development, certification, standards of practice, core values, advocacy and key initiatives with strategic partners around the world. Effective public participation is based on three guiding principles that determine the level of participation to be applied to a project or initiative:

- a.) Values-based: meaningful participation is focused on talking to people about what matters most to them and what matters most to the other affected parties.
- b.) Decision-oriented: outlining the scope of issues under discussion to purposefully come to a conclusion or decision over the course of a process.
- c.) Goal-driven: outlining the public's role and potential to influence the issues under discussion with clear objectives of what will be achieved. For example, information is communicated, input or feedback is sought, or collaborative development is desired.

Not all projects require a defined public engagement plan, however, public engagement should be considered for all projects to identify ways in which the project outcomes can be improved, or public resources maximized during service delivery. The IAP2 Spectrum will be used to identify the level of engagement, and the relevant techniques to be utilized.


Approving Authority: Board	Page 2 of 6
Policy Name: Engagement Policy	Policy No: 36-2023
Date of Approval: December 13, 2023	Dates of Amendment: n/a
Policies Superseded: n/a	

The spectrum is an internationally-recognized model used by local governments that illustrates the goals and promises associated with different levels of engagement. The five-level spectrum (inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower) was designed to assist with selecting the level of participation and defining the public's role in any public participation process. Public engagement plans will incorporate these goals and promises and outline the engagement process, consistent with where the project falls on the engagement spectrum.

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 					
	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, 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.

© IAP2 International Federation 2018. All rights reserved. 20181112_v1

© IAP2 International Federation 2018. All rights reserved. 20181112_v1

Approving Authority: Board	Page 3 of 6
Policy Name: Engagement Policy	Policy No: 36-2023
Date of Approval: December 13, 2023	Dates of Amendment: n/a
Policies Superseded: n/a	

4. APPLICATION

Implementation

Implementation of this policy will be supported by the more detailed *Engagement Framework (and supporting toolkit)*, which outlines best practice approaches to planning, delivering and evaluating meaningful and effective public engagement.

The Communications and Engagement department is responsible for developing, reviewing and maintaining the Engagement Policy, to be approved by the SLRD Board of Directors. The Communications and Engagement department develops, reviews and maintains the Engagement Framework and supporting toolkit, and provides oversight and advice for the SLRD's engagement planning, and all associated tools including templates and digital platforms.

Planning and Oversight

Public engagement must be genuine. Members of the public, elected officials and SLRD staff need to understand the value of engagement and participate in engagement activities in good faith in order to realize the full opportunities available from engagement.

Public participation is not required for every project, but it is to be considered during project planning. Where public participation is required, a public engagement plan will be developed to provide order, structure and clear expectations to members of the public, elected officials and staff. Engagement plans will identify the level of the IAP2 spectrum and the associated engagement techniques.

Staff will have the appropriate work time to effectively develop and execute all aspects of an effective engagement plan and associated activities.

Training

Ongoing education and skills developed by all parties involved in education is important to advance the engagement activities and potential.

To develop capacity, ensure consistency and strive for continuous improvement, elected officials and applicable staff will receive community engagement training and an introduction to IPA2 principles. This may be internal training led by the Communications and Engagement department, or external training delivered by public participation practitioners.

The SLRD will, when required, allocate appropriate resources and budgets to provide applicable staff with training opportunities. The SLRD is committed to providing the appropriate resources to support public engagement efforts, and the ongoing development of staff and tools in this regard.

Approving Authority: Board	Page 4 of 6
Policy Name: Engagement Policy	Policy No: 36-2023
Date of Approval: December 13, 2023	Dates of Amendment: n/a
Policies Superseded: n/a	

Budget

To ensure adequate resources to implement this policy, a Communications and Engagement line item must be included in all major projects or initiatives with appropriate funds budgeted and staff time allocated.

5. ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

SLRD Elected Officials

- Represent residents and connect with them to determine top priorities for engagement.
- Prioritize engagement efforts by working with staff to identify areas where public input can make a meaningful difference to decisions and help set public engagement priorities.
- Provide high-level guidance on decisions or issues which they would like public input, the scope of the decision or issue for which input is sought and how they would like the input conveyed back to them.
- Consider input that is received and communicate to the public their reasons for decisions.
- Help promote engagement initiatives and opportunities.
- Direct residents to the established processes for garnering, monitoring and compiling input.
- Permit staff to take the lead role in identifying best practices and methods for engaging the public on various issues.
- Ensure time and resources are allocated to support successful engagement efforts.

Staff: Communications and Engagement department

- Develop, review and maintain the Engagement Policy.
- Develop, review and maintain the public engagement framework and workbook to support this policy.
- Plan and deliver training opportunities for elected officials and staff.
- Research, implement and maintain digital engagement tools.
- Work with project teams to develop and review engagement plans.
- Provide advice and support to the organization.
- Establish channels and processes to clearly identify community priorities for engagement, then ensure that the organization responds.

All Staff:

- Consider, for all projects, whether engagement should be conducted.
- Develop engagement plans and associated budgets.

Approving Authority: Board	Page 5 of 6
Policy Name: Engagement Policy	Policy No: 36-2023
Date of Approval: December 13, 2023	Dates of Amendment: n/a
Policies Superseded: n/a	

- Allocate staff time for training.
- Ensure all projects with engagement comply with the Engagement policy and framework.
- Seek advice, support and approval from the Communications and Engagement department as required.
- Work with elected officials to identify where public input can make a meaningful difference to decisions, program development and service delivery.
- Consult with elected officials and consider previous public feedback regarding engagement priorities, process design, framing issues for productive input, effective communications and increasing engagement over time.
- Ensure timely and respectful communication with all those who engage and show how their input has been used to influence decisions programs and services.
- Engage in ongoing learning and professional development about public engagement best practices.
- Ensure that community input is documented and that communication efforts are as complete and well-timed as possible.

Staff: Department Heads

- Allocate staff time and resources for training.
- Allocate staff time and resources for engagement plans and activities.

6. DEFINITIONS

Public engagement – A formal, defined, interactive process between the SLRD, the public and all affected parties, designed to increase mutual understanding, gather information, exchange ideas, and/ or solve problems with the goal of making better, more informed decisions.

The public – Anyone, including groups and individuals, who may have an interest in a specific topic or issue under discussion. The public may, or may not, be directly impacted by a decision on the issue.

Partner – An individual or group who has a specific interest or is impacted by a topic or issue. Stakeholders may include residents, non-residents, groups, organization, individuals, representatives and or SLRD staff, depending on the issue.

Approving Authority: Board	Page 6 of 6
Policy Name: Engagement Policy	Policy No: 36-2023
Date of Approval: December 13, 2023	Dates of Amendment: n/a
Policies Superseded: n/a	