

Subject: Public Engagement Policy	File code: 1470-00
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Purpose: The purpose of the public engagement policy is to establish a formal public engagement approach for Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) projects and operations.

Scope: This policy applies to all CVRD projects and operations. The policy uses the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum of public participation (<http://www.iap2.org/>) to identify the a) purpose for engagement and b) activities to achieve the engagement goals for each project. 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 outcome can be improved or public resources maximized during service delivery. Communications should be involved in the initial development and approve all engagement plans before going to senior staff.

Guiding principle: A common understanding of public engagement among CVRD elected officials, staff and members of the public is important to help ensure parties to engagement are working towards common goals. The following table from the IAP2 illustrates the goals and promises associated with different levels of engagement.

	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 seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	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 work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
INCREASING IMPACT OF THE DECISION →					

Public engagement plans will incorporate these goals and promises.

Policy statement

1. Public engagement must be done with purpose. Engagement for projects must be to inform, consult, involve, collaborate or empower. Engagement could be for more than one of these purposes through a project's lifecycle.
2. Public engagement must be organized. A public engagement plan provides order, structure and clear expectations to members of the public, elected officials and CVRD staff. The public engagement plan should be developed at an early stage in a project to capture important elements before decisions are made that rule out those opportunities.
3. Public engagement must be genuine. The members of the public, elected officials and CVRD 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. Ongoing education and skills development by all parties involved in engagement is important to advance the engagement activities and potential.
4. Communications must be involved in the initial development and approve all engagement plans before going to senior staff or the board.

Related documentation (internal resources)

- Public engagement plan template

Approval history

Policy adopted:	November 29, 2016
Policy amended:	If necessary