

# **MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN REFRESH**

## **ENGAGEMENT PLAN**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Town of Westlock's Municipal Development Plan (MDP) 2015-03 was adopted on May 25, 2015. The MDP acts as the broad, conceptual framework for all of the Town's statutory and non-statutory planning documents. The MDP sets the community vision and guides the future growth and development of Westlock. Council provided direction at the February 21, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting for Administration to proceed with a refresh to the current MDP to ensure its vision, guiding principles, and policies continue to meet the changing needs of the community.

To ensure this refresh is meaningful, participation of community members, organizations and stakeholders is necessary. Inclusive and meaningful communications and engagement planning will ensure active participation.

This document outlines the engagement plan for the Municipal Development Plan Refresh project (the Project). This plan will provide clarity on:

- Why are we engaging?
- What information are we seeking?
- With whom are we engaging?
- How and when are we engaging?

This plan will be considered a living document to be reviewed and updated if the needs of the project change.

### **ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

Engagement with internal and external stakeholders and with the community in general will inform the outcomes of the project. The overall purpose of all engagement activities is to ensure those that the project impacts have an opportunity to:

- Learn about the project and the Municipal Development Plan;
- Provide input on changes and amendments to the MDP;
- Be informed of the progress of the project.

Other expected objectives of the engagement activities include:

- Providing alternative or perspectives that may have been missed;
- Filling in gaps in data; and
- Commenting on the draft document.

### **KEY MESSAGING**

The engagement process will follow the Internal Association of Public Practitioners (IAP2) Spectrum as well as be compliant with the requirements of the Town's Communication and Citizen Engagement Policy. The engagement process will be a two-way conversation that involves:

- Educating, informing and asking by Administration;
- Obtaining input and feedback from the public and stakeholders; and

# MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN REFRESH

## ENGAGEMENT PLAN

- Communicating directly with the public and stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are considered.

Planning & Development will work in tandem with the Town’s Communications Coordinator to ensure consistent and accurate messaging throughout the project. Key messaging will ensure consistency and accuracy throughout the engagement process. All messaging will involve the following elements:

- ASK:** Focus on information about the project and clearly identify what information is being sought from the public
- INPUT:** Identification of opportunities for the public to provide input and how it will be records.
- UTILIZE:** Inform the public on how the input will be utilized and documented in the reporting process.
- FINALIZE:** Share final information to “close the loop” on the public engagement, and inform how and when final approvals are anticipated.

## AUDIENCE

The project will endeavour to engage both internal and external stakeholders. Engagement opportunities will be tailored to the needs and availability of each stakeholder. Stakeholders are not limited to the list below and it is encouraged that additional stakeholders be added to the list as they are identified.

### *Internal Stakeholders*

Council

Senior Management Team

Town Staff

Westlock & District FCSS

Council Committees

- Municipal Planning Commission
- Regional Economic Development Action Committee

### *External Stakeholders*

General public including youth

Sector and industry-specific stakeholders

- Business owners
- Westlock and District Chamber of Commerce
- Westlock & District Agricultural Society

# MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN REFRESH

## ENGAGEMENT PLAN

- Westlock Community Art Club
- Westlock Cultural Arts Theatre Society
- Tawatinaw Community Futures
- Rural Connections Family Resource Network
- Westlock Independence Network
- WJS Alberta
- Westlock Golden Age Club

Legislatively required stakeholders

- Westlock County
- Pembina Hills School Division
- Evergreen Catholic Separate School Division

### ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The project’s engagement process will allow for each engagement activity to build on previous activity in the project. The engagement activities will consider the subject matter, the stakeholders whose feedback is necessary, and the level of engagement to be achieved.

The engagement activities identified will be used strategically to inform each step of the project process. Engagement activities are not limited to the list below. Additional activities or innovative solutions and approaches will be encouraged to ensure a successful project.

Activity	Timing	Activity Description	Type and Level of Engagement (P-83-2017)	IAP2 Level of Engagement
Project website	Throughout	A <i>What’s Next Westlock</i> MDP project webpage will be used as an information sharing tool and to direct public and stakeholders to engagement opportunities	Activity or Direct Decision (1)	Inform/Consult
Videos and handouts	Throughout	Videos and handouts will be created to share information or explain complicated issues. Stakeholders who cannot participate in other activities can utilize these as ways to stay informed and involved in the project	Activity or Direct Decision (1)	Inform/Consult
Survey	Phase Two	A survey will be used to obtain general input and focused responses on topics	Consultative Decision (2)	Consult/Involve

# MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN REFRESH

## ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Activity	Timing	Activity Description	Type and Level of Engagement (P-83-2017)	IAP2 Level of Engagement
	June – Aug 2023	identified previously in the project.		
Town-wide pop-ups	Phase Two June – Aug 2023	Engagement stations will be set up at strategic locations to reach larger audiences. Participants can expect to receive information and provide feedback.	Consultative Decision (2)	Inform/Consult
Open houses	Phase Four Dec 2023 – Feb 2024	Held in an informal setting with multiple displays where participants rotate through and discuss specific topics with project staff.	Consultative Decision (2)	Inform/Consult
Focused conversations	Phase Four Dec 2023 – Feb 2024	A structured approach to explain a situation or issue to a specific stakeholder group. This includes one-on-one meetings with stakeholders and Youth engagement.	Consultative Decision (2)	Consult/Involve
Public hearing	Phase Five est. June 2024	Formal presentation and opportunity to address Council prior to final approvals.	Consultative Decision (2)	Inform/Consult

### USING WHAT WE HEARD

It is important for those involved in the engagement process to know how their feedback will be used in the decision making process. Goals of the engagement process include keeping participants informed, listening to and acknowledging concerns and aspirations, working with participants to ensure that concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the project and the provision of feedback of how public input influenced the decision.

After each phase of engagement activities, a What was Said/What we Heard report will be released to ensure public input was correctly captured. An engagement summary will be presented along with the final MDP document to Council for final approval. The summary will ensure that engagement findings are directly tied to any relevant changes or inclusions in the final plan.

# MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN REFRESH

## ENGAGEMENT PLAN



developed by the international association for public participation

	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 <b>identification of the preferred solution.</b>	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.

