



WATER SUPPLY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, September 1, 2020
SCRD Zoom Room, 1975 Field Road, Sechelt, B.C.

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER 3:30 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Adoption of Agenda

MINUTES

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

PRESENTATIONS AND DELEGATIONS

2. General Manager, Infrastructure Services Verbal
 Regarding How to be Impactful as WASAC
3. Water and Energy Projects Coordinator Verbal
 Regarding Eastbourne Water System Overview

REPORTS

4. New Initiatives WASAC Wishes to Explore, (including Clowhom Lake, Dusty Road Well, Mahan Road Well, connecting Pender Water Systems to Chapman Water System, Chapman Lake infrastructure improvements, Greywater, Leak correlators and fixed monitoring for distribution system) Verbal
 Committee Chair
5. Public Participation at the SCRDC Annex A
 Water and Energy Projects Coordinator pp 1 - 10

COMMUNICATIONS

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

NEXT MEETING

SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT STAFF REPORT

TO: Water Supply Advisory Committee – September 1, 2020

AUTHOR: Raphael Shay, Water and Energy Projects Coordinator

SUBJECT: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT THE SCRD

RECOMMENDATION(S)

THAT the report titled Public Participation at the SCRD be received.

BACKGROUND

The Water Supply Advisory Committee Terms of Reference outlines that the Committee may provide recommendations to the Board on the subject of “public participation regarding water supply expansion and water conservation plans and policies.”

DISCUSSION

The SCRD has a framework for public participation, shared in Attachment A for the Committee’s information. The framework includes background information and questions to help establish consistent and strategically targeted processes for public participation and ensure those processes are implemented by SCRD staff and external consultants.

STRATEGIC PLAN AND RELATED POLICIES

The Water Supply Advisory Committee and activities it may undertake support the Engagement and Communications goal “to proactively engage with our residents, partners and staff in order to share information and obtain their input on issues and decisions that affect them.”

CONCLUSION

The Water Supply Advisory Committee will consider questions relating to public participation. The SCRD’s Framework is shared for the Committee’s information.

Attachment A: SCRD Public Participation Framework

Reviewed by:			
Manager		Finance	
GM	X - R. Rosenboom	Legislative	
CAO		Other	



Sunshine Coast Regional District Public Participation Framework



Overview

Over the past few years, staff from across the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) have been exploring how to improve the SCRD's engagement with and for the communities and residents we serve. Through discussions and workshops, staff identified challenges ranging from the wider community not understanding who and what the SCRD is and what services we provide, to a lack of consistent application of public participation processes among departments, and finally, a strong reliance on external consultants. There were also many common points of interest among staff, the most obvious was the agreement that the SCRD needs to do a better job engaging residents in our decision making processes – and the need to do this collectively and consistently.

There was a clear understanding and linkage that effective public participation is increasingly seen as an integral part of a strong governance framework.

This framework will help to establish consistent and strategically targeted processes for public participation and ensure those processes are implemented by SCRD staff and external consultants.

What is public participation?

In order for this framework to truly be effective, it is important to begin from a common point of understanding of exactly what public participation is. Globally, public participation is when an organization reaches outside of itself to seek the involvement of the public in its decision-making process. Generally, participants in these processes are those who are most likely to be affected by the matter under consideration. Organizations have come to embrace public participation processes as a means for strengthening trust and confidence in the decision-making process.

There is a recognized continuum of public involvement denoted within the term public participation, from simply sharing information about a pending decision (informing and educating) through to creating a partnership arrangement, one based on mutual trust, and a willingness to agree on a course of action together. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.

For elected and government officials, public participation is commonly seen as a mechanism to support transparency, accountability and improved decision making. It is more than giving information and receiving feedback — it is a deliberate commitment that government makes to its public and stakeholder groups to listen and to be influenced within expressed limits.

The SCRD's Public Participation Framework consists of the following components:

1. SCRD Board's Commitment to Public Participation
2. SCRD's Spectrum of Public Participation.
3. SCRD's 8 Principles for the Practice of Public Participation
4. Working Cooperatively with the SCRD's Municipalities and Electoral Areas
5. First Peoples Engagement and the SCRD
6. Roles and Responsibilities in the SCRD Public Participation Processes
7. SCRD Staff Public Participation Toolkit (for internal use)

This document is based on the Capital Regional District's framework and we thank them for their permission to use it.

Component 1: SCRD Board's Commitment to Public Participation

A common practice for many orders of government across Canada is to have a publicly stated overarching commitment to public participation. As the SCRD Public Participation Framework is unrolled for all, the adoption of the following statement at the SCRD Board level is recommended:

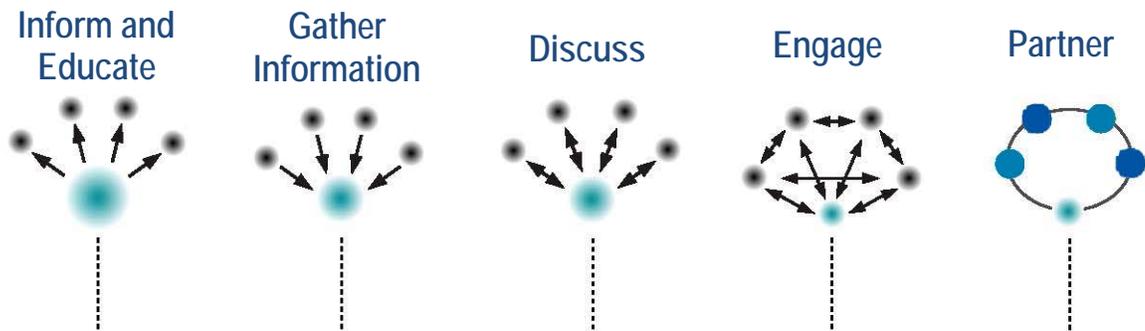
The Sunshine Coast Regional District is committed to undertaking public participation processes in the development and delivery of public policies, programs, legislation and services.

The Sunshine Coast Regional District is also committed to promoting a consultative and collaborative culture across all departments and divisions.

It should be noted that this Public Participation Framework does not supersede protocol agreements that may already exist between the SCRD and other organizations or First Nations.

Component 2: SCRD’s Spectrum of Public Participation

As with any continuum of public participation, the key goal is to align the approach to public participation with the nature, complexity, and relative impact of the decision being made. In many public participation experiences, the process may incorporate a flow within the Spectrum. The Spectrum provides a clear understanding of how the public participation process contributes to building widespread public trust.



	Inform and Educate	Gather Information	Discuss	Engage	Partner
OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	To provide balanced and objective information to support understanding by the public.	To obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work with the public to ensure concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.	To facilitate discussions and agreements between public parties to identify common ground for action and solutions.	To create governance structures to delegate decision-making and/or work directly with the public.
SCRD COMMITMENT	To inform the public.	To listen to and acknowledge the public’s concerns.	To work with the public to exchange information, ideas and concerns.	To seek advice and innovations from amongst various public parties.	To work with the public to implement agreed-upon decisions.
PARTICIPANT’S RESPONSIBILITY	To become informed and educated.	To take an active role in keeping oneself informed and up to date.	To be open to other points of view and work with staff and other members of the public.	To put aside personal agendas and participate honestly in discussions.	To work with SCRD Staff to implement agreed-upon decisions.

Source: Auditor General of British Columbia 2009 (modified)
 Report 11: Public Participation: Principles and Best Practices for British Columbia

Component 3: SCRD's 8 Guiding Principles for the Practice of Public Participation

The key underpinning concept of having a set of principles is to build a culture and value of public participation within the SCRD; principles that can qualify or characterize processes while allowing flexibility in the approaches.

1. **Active Citizenship**

The SCRD acknowledges the benefits, as an organization and in civil society, for active citizens' involvement in SCRD's public participation and decision making processes.

2. **Commitment**

Leadership and strong commitment to information, consultation and engagement in active participation is needed at all levels – from SCRD Directors, senior managers and staff.

3. **Clarity**

Objectives for, and limits to, information, consultation and active participation will be well defined from the outset. The respective roles and responsibilities of citizens (in providing input) and the SCRD (in making decisions for which we are accountable) must be clear to all.

4. **Time**

Public consultation and active participation will be undertaken as early in the decision making process as possible, to allow for a greater range of solutions to emerge and to raise the chances of successful implementation.

5. **Objectivity**

Information will be objective, complete and accessible. All citizens will have equal treatment when exercising their rights of access to information and participation.

6. **Resources**

Adequate financial, human and technical resources are required if public information, consultation and active participation in policy making are to be effective. SCRD staff will be supported through guidance and training and the provision of adequate resources.

7. **Coordination**

Initiatives will be coordinated across the SCRD to enhance knowledge management, ensure policy coherence, avoid duplication and reduce the risk of 'engagement fatigue' among staff and the public.

8. **Evaluation**

In order to increase the SCRD's organizational capacity and success; evaluations of public participation processes will be incorporated into every process.

Component 4: Working Cooperatively with the SCRD'S Municipalities and Electoral Areas

There is a strong recognition and understanding of the value of working with member municipalities and electoral areas when public participation processes occur in their communities. For staff, understanding what role and expectation there is to inform, involve or even partner with the municipality at the beginning planning stage plays an important part, if not a key element in building trust and ensuring successful results. The SCRD commits to proactively communicate with municipalities and electoral areas when processes are planned as well, assess the degree of cooperation and collaboration required based on the initiative.

Component 5: First Peoples Engagement and the SCRD

The Sunshine Coast Regional District is located within the territories of the Sechelt and Squamish Nations. An appointed representative of the Sechelt Indian Government District Council serves as a Director on the SCRD Board.

Consultation and engagement with First Peoples is different than public consultation because it is driven by the law, and a recognized imperative for reconciliation. The Canadian courts have emphasized that the federal and provincial governments must consult with First Peoples when making decisions that may affect aboriginal and treaty rights and accommodate those rights where appropriate. Aboriginal and treaty rights are also protected under the Constitution of Canada.

It is important to keep in mind that the SCRD cannot assume responsibility for the legal obligations to consult now imposed on the senior governments. It can, however, be delegated procedural steps such as gathering information on First Peoples interests. It is also important to recognize that First Peoples and the SCRD are neighbours so it makes sense to work with First Peoples in a meaningful way to seek their input, to apply their input to avoid future problems and to seek opportunities to work together and advance reconciliation whenever working on a project that may affect their interests or provide opportunities to build a stronger relationship.

Component 6: Roles and Responsibilities in SCRD Public Participation Processes

Board and Committees

The SCRD Board is ultimately responsible to all the citizens of the Sunshine Coast Regional District and therefore, acts in the best interests of the region as a whole.

During its review and decision-making process, the Board and Committees have an obligation to recognize the efforts and activities that have preceded its deliberations. Directors should have regard for the public participation processes that have been completed in support of projects.

SCRD Staff

Staff responsible for the design and implementation of public participation processes have an obligation to ensure that the Guiding Principles are the backbone of their processes. In addition to the responsibilities established by the Guiding Principles, staff have a responsibility to:

1. Pursue public participation with a spirit that recognizes the value it adds to projects;
2. In all public participation activities, work towards fostering long-term relationships based on respect and trust;
3. Encourage positive working partnerships;
4. Take-up the challenge to draw out the silent majority, the voiceless and the disempowered;
5. Ensure that decisions and recommendations reflect the needs and desires of the entire community; and
6. Ensure that no participant or group is marginalized or ignored, or conversely, given undue influence.

All Participants

The public, staff, the Board and committees are also accountable to the process and the accomplishment of the project goals. All participants have a responsibility to:

1. Focus on the real issues;
2. Balance personal concerns with the needs of the community as a whole;
3. Have realistic expectations;
4. Participate openly, honestly and constructively, offering ideas, suggestions, alternatives, etc.;
5. Listen carefully and completely;
6. Identify their concerns and issues early in the process;
7. Provide their names and contact information if they want direct feedback;
8. Make every effort to work within the project schedule; if this is not possible then this should be discussed with staff as soon as possible. Participants must also recognize that process schedules may be constrained by external factors (e.g. broader project schedules or legislative requirements);
9. Recognize that there is no single voice that is more important than all others, and that there are diverse opinions to be considered;
10. Work within the process in an integrated, respectful and cooperative manner;
11. Accept responsibility for keeping themselves aware of current issues; when possible, participants should also make others aware of project activities and solicit their input; and
12. Recognize that the measure of the success of the process is the fullness of public involvement and the quality of the outcome.

Component 7: SCRD Public Participation Toolkit (for internal use)

A public participation toolkit will assist staff who are responsible for designing and implementing public participation processes and ensure a high degree of consistency in applications across the SCRD. For example, a general public will have the same experiences when different departments conduct public participation processes. The toolkit includes:

1. Key steps required for successful public participation.
2. Techniques, methods and applications.
3. Public participation tools and explanation how to implement the tool.
4. Public participation plan template.