



STRATEGIC POLICY
MOUNT ISA CITY COUNCIL
 Community Consultation Policy

RESOLUTION NO. **OM24/07/20** VERSION **V1**

APPLIES TO STRATEGIC POLICIES ONLY

This an official copy of the **Community Consultation Policy**, made in accordance with the provisions of *Local Government Act 2009*, *Local Government Regulation 2012* and current Council policies.

Strategic policies are adopted by Council due to its desire to influence the direction of an issue or assist in the delegated decision making of Council officers. Strategic policies should follow the jurisdiction provided to Council through its Corporate Plan; the **Community Consultation Policy** is approved by the Mount Isa City Council for the operations and procedures of Council.

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 Sharon Ibardolaza
Chief Executive Officer

DOCUMENT VERSION CONTROL				
Governance/Policies/Strategic 14992			POLICY TYPE	Strategic (Council)
VERSION	DATE	RESOLUTION	DETAILS	
V1	22.07.20200	OM24/07/20	Responsible Officer – Promotion and Development Coordinator	
			REVIEW DUE	06.2022

DISTRIBUTION AND DISSEMINATION			
Internal email to all employees	X	Section meetings / Toolbox talks	X
Internal email to all councillors	X	Included in employee inductions	X
Staff noticeboards		Uploaded to Council website	X
Internal training to be provided		External training to be provided	
Registered in Magiq	X		

1. PURPOSE

Community consultation provides opportunities for people who are affected by or interested in a Council decision, plan or project to participate in the decision-making process in order to improve the outcome.

The community consultation process involves:

- a) Stakeholders representing different sectors of society;
- b) Technical specialists;
- c) Authorities; and
- d) Project proponents.

Working together in a joint effort to produce better decisions than if they acted independently.

Effective community consultation:

- a) Involves people from the beginning;
- b) Provides enough information for stakeholders to contribute meaningfully; and
- c) Provides accessible information to achieve meaningful stakeholder participation.

Effective Communication involves:

- a) Timely communication of how the community consultation affected the outcome/decision-making.

2. COMMENCEMENT

This Policy will commence on and from 22 July 2020. It replaces all other policies or arrangements governing community consultation (whether written or not).

3. APPLICATION

This policy applies to all community consultation undertaken by councillors, Council employees and contractors.

4. PLANNING

The need for community consultation and the desired level of consultation must be decided for each case. The main reason to involve the community is when you want input to positively influence Council decisions which will in turn engender community support. There is a range of 'triggers' designed to help us decide whether we should, or should not, be consulting the community.

Checklist - Triggers to determine whether the community should be involved

- a) Is there a legislative requirement for community involvement e.g. Local Government Act?
- b) Has Council asked for community input on this decision or similar ones in the past?
- c) Has the community requested the opportunity to be involved?
- d) Do we need to better understand community values and priorities in relation to this project, plan or strategy?
- e) Will our decision-making capacity be significantly improved with input from the community?
- f) Will the outcome have significant social, environmental and/or economic sustainability impacts for one or more stakeholders?
- g) Is there already – or will there be – media and/or community concerns/expectations (eg. from past experiences) about this issue?

- h) Is this a complex or difficult case with widely divergent alternatives and views to consider?
- i) Does the community need to be informed about what we're doing/planning, as part of the consultation?
- j) Is this a policy or strategy that has not previously (within 2 years) been consulted on?

If the answer to one or more of the above questions is 'yes' some form of community consultation should be considered.

5. OBJECTIVES

When establishing objectives for the community consultation process consider how they will be evaluated during, and at the completion, of the process.

Checklist – Objectives

- a) To involve and empower community in plan, design or policy making;
- b) To collect information from those most affected to inform decision making;
- c) To identify priorities and increase support for a decision;
- d) To inform community about a decision-making process;
- e) To seek community input on long term direction;
- f) To help decision makers to access or allocate resources;
- g) To improve community relationships;
- h) To identify service improvements;
- i) To give minority, excluded, or marginalised groups a say;
- j) To improve the Council's reputation or image;
- k) To meet a statutory requirement;
- l) To participate in resolving a conflict of interests;
- m) To discover the extent of an interest or demand; and
- n) To test an idea or a marketing opportunity.

When deciding the appropriate level of community consultation, it is important to determine the opportunity for influence the community is going to have – as identified through your objectives. From the outset it is therefore important to distinguish between:

- a) Providing information;
- b) Community education; and
- c) Community opportunity to influence decision making.

6. STAKEHOLDERS

When engaging the community, we will achieve the greatest success if we give everyone affected by, or interested in, our decision the chance to have a say. People who are affected by or interested in our decisions generally fall into the following categories:

- a) Their work or personal lives, or the lives of their families or friends, will be affected;
- b) They live close to the location of a proposed project or activity;
- c) Their business may be affected;
- d) Their organisations and their activities could be affected;
- e) They may have to change a regular activity, habit or route; and
- f) Their values, interests or opinions cause them to care about a decision.

Checklist - Potential stakeholder interests, concerns or positions

For the stakeholder categories you have identified you need to assess their primary interests and concerns relating to your project. These could include:

- a) Livelihood, employment or lost productivity;
- b) Property value and property rights;
- c) Inconvenience by congestion or traffic;
- d) Local economic vitality;
- e) Overpopulation;
- f) Restricted freedom of choice;
- g) Personal health and safety and the health and safety of family members and loved ones;
- h) Impact on environmental health and integrity including endangered environmental resources;
- i) Nuisance issues such as noise, odour, traffic, dust;
- j) Property access;
- k) History of neglect or mistrust;
- l) Political controversy; or
- m) Threats to community, cultural, religious, racial or gender identity.

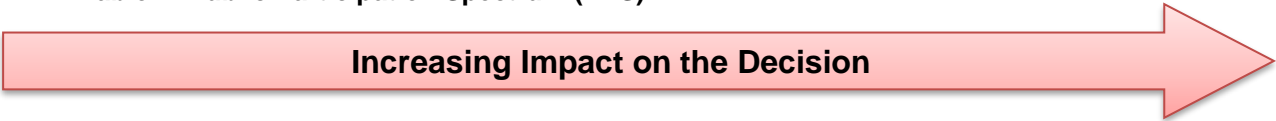
It is also important to understand and accept that some people or sectors of the community will not want to be involved for any number of reasons (limited time, competition for attention, cynicism, bad experiences, anxiety, feeling they would not be effective and, of course, not being interested in the topic). It is our responsibility to ensure all stakeholders are given the opportunity to participate (even if they've chosen not to participate in the past), and to accept the right of those members of the community who choose not to participate in our consultation process.

7. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION SPECTRUM

The following spectrum adapted from the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) summarises the various levels of community consultation. This spectrum forms the foundation for all Council community consultation activities.

Community participation could be as simple as a community information campaign right through to a more in- depth process which facilitates community consultation in the decision-making process.

Table 1: Public Participation Spectrum (PPS)



	INFORM	PARTICIPATE	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the community with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, benefits and/or solutions.	To obtain community feedback on policy, plans and/or designs. Council obtain this feedback via provision of policy, plans, and / or designs.	To work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that community concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the community 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 community, for direct conveyance to elected representatives.



	INFORM	PARTICIPATE	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
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 community 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 community input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible and provide feedback on how community input influenced the decision.	We will implement what you decide and provide feedback on how community input influenced the decision.

Table 2: Role of Community

	LISTEN	CONTRIBUTE	PARTICIPATE	PARTNER	DECIDE
TECHNIQUES	Fact sheets Facebook Post Website Displays Open Inspection	Public Comment Survey Monkey Hard-copy Survey Phone Survey In-person Survey Public Meetings / Forums	Focus Groups Workshops Deliberative polling	Community Advisory Committees Consensus building Participatory decision-making	Citizen juries Ballots Delegated decisions

It is important to note the IAP2 public participation spectrum indicates increasing levels of public impact. It is not always the case that if you select 'involve' that you would also participate and inform. It is possible to have differing guiding levels for different stakeholder groups, say involving and informing without 'participating'. This is a noted difference to IAP2 practice; however Councils are flexible about this. Also, levels of consultation change throughout the consultation – it is important to update your consultation plan for longer projects.

From your initial assessment and review of the public participation spectrum, determine what you think will be the appropriate whole of project level of community consultation. The following exercises will help you refine this assessment.

8. EXPECTATIONS REGARDING LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT:

An essential ingredient in a successful community consultation process is clearly defining and communicating, from the outset, the level of influence the community will have in your project, plan or strategy.

Community expectations regarding an appropriate level for their input may differ to Council's expectations.

Community Expectations Assessment

It is important to assess the degree to which the community considers the issue significant.



We must also consider the internal issues related to getting community input. In particular, it is important to gauge the receptiveness of Council to community input and the resource level that will be available

The following tables presents one way to think about the issue. Omit any questions that are not relevant.

Score the level 1 – 5, (1) being a low level response grading up to (5) being a high level response.

All questions in the following table should be considered from the perspective of the community:

Table 3: Community Assessment

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS	COMMENTS	SCORE
1. What is the probable level of difficulty in solving the problem?		
2. What is the level of existing controversy, conflict or outrage on this or related issues?		
3. How significant are the potential impacts to the community?		
4. How much do the major stakeholders care about this issue?		
5. What degree of involvement does the community appear to desire?		

Table 4: Council Assessment

All questions in the following table should be considered from the perspective of the Council:

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS	COMMENTS	SCORE
1. How much input do you think Council needs from the community to help with the project?		
2. To what degree does the community appear to want to be involved?		
3. What is the potential for community impact on the potential decision?		
4. How significant are the possible benefits of involving the community?		
5. How serious are the potential ramifications or not involving the community?		
6. What is the possibility that the media will become interested?		
7. What is the likelihood that decision-makers will give full considerations to public input?		
8. What is the likelihood that adequate resources will be made available to support community consultation?		
9. What is the level of political controversy on this issue?		
10. To what extent will the time required to involve the community impact on the project?		

Using the results of the Community and Council Expectations Assessments will provide a general sense of the level of community consultation Council should be undertaking.

With this level of understanding of the community's and Council's needs, use the **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION SPECTRUM** to select the level of community consultation that will best meet both the project's and stakeholder's needs.

Ensure all stakeholders are aware of and understand the implications to them of the level of consultation selected.

Table 5: Consultation Implications

STAKEHOLDER (CATEGORY, AND NAME OR ORGANISATION)	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
1. Directly affected stakeholders					
2. Indirectly affected stakeholders					
3. The community in the vicinity of the project					
4. The remaining community					
5. Representative group for all stakeholder interests e.g. Community Reference Group(s), Consultative Committee(s) (where applicable)					

9. INCLUSIVENESS

Council will achieve the greatest success if we give everyone affected by, or interested in, Council’s decision the chance to have a say. Consider the following when determining the consultation technique and your stakeholder:

- a) Timing – how much time will it take to participate, what time of day, etc...
- b) Location – is there adequate parking, space, etc...
- c) Accessibility – disability access, access to technology, access to transport, etc...
- d) Literacy and Formality – is your presentation/questionnaire appropriate for your target audience?
- e) Culture and Diversity – translation services, cultural sensitivity, inclusive language
- f) Age – what are the needs of your target age group to participate in the consultation
- g) Costs – will there be a cost to your stakeholder to participate in the consultation, what expenses can you minimise to maximise participation?

10. USING COMMUNITY INPUT, FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

Community consultation includes the commitment that the public’s contribution will be used and they will be informed on how it was used. All data must be analysed, summarised and presented in a useful way to inform decision-makers.

Checklist – Things to consider in summarising information

- a) How many people participated and from what area of interest/groups/residents/sectors
- b) Name some of the differences in views/ideas from each area of interest
- c) What degree of agreement/disagreement/tension surrounded the matter under consideration
- d) Include the community consultation findings as part of the overall project report
- e) Encourage timely and meaningful use of the community consultation information/data

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

Where Council is required to consult the community, staff must respect the intellectual property of those involved and the confidentiality of the project’s circumstances. For example, landowners always seek confidentiality when Council is considering resuming land or acquiring property. If land may be resumed the landowner must be contacted prior to informing others in the community more generally at public

displays. The specific details of a landowner’s interests in the project should not be discussed outside of the project.

For all projects, when we consult the community about potential impacts on their business or social lifestyle, we must always:

- a) treat any documentation received with due care, e.g. property plans or feedback at meetings or during workshops must be discussed only with those affected or with staff involved in the Project.
- b) endeavour to contact affected community / landowners first, prior to informing others in the community.

12. REPORT BACK TO PARTICIPANTS

The community will have more confidence in the community consultation process if it is clear that information they provide will affect the outcome and will not be used inappropriately. For these reasons it is essential to provide feedback to participants and stakeholders on any information gained through the community consultation process and how this information was used in the decision-making process.

Checklist – Providing feedback for participants

- a) Consider the Consultation Technique used and advise stakeholders as part of the consultation, the method in which the consultation results will be published/provided; for example a Facebook survey would state a summary of the results will be provided on Facebook or a Community Forum will have a future Forum where the outcomes of the consultation will be presented, or a posted out survey will publish it’s results on Council’s website are some examples.
- b) Provide contact points for further information
- c) If there is a delay in the project, notify participants

13. EVALUATE THE PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

The following questions will help evaluate the process used for designing and implementing a community consultation process:

Table 6: Process Evaluation and Outcome

STATEMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT	QUESTIONS TO HELP MEASURE
Step 1 – Planning the process	
The credibility purpose and objectives of the community consultation process were clear to all participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the community consultation legitimate? • Were the staff and participants clear about the objectives? To what extent did all parties involved have similar goals and expectations of the process? • Were roles established and communicated to all participants? • Was community consultation initiated early enough? • Was there sufficient commitment to the process by Council and decision-makers? • Are we addressing the right issues from the perspective of staff, the community and decision-makers?
Step 2 – Identifying participants	
All stakeholders affected by the decision at hand had an equal opportunity to become involved in the community consultation process and a representative proportion of them chose to do so.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent did interested parties participate in the process? What kind of opportunities did they have to do so? Was there the appropriate number? • Were there any barriers to access: physical, communication, economic, social ... and how were they overcome?



STATEMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT	QUESTIONS TO HELP MEASURE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was participation representative? Did the process encourage the participation of all stakeholders including the 'silent majority'? How was the influence of pressure groups handled in the process? • Were there other unrelated agendas handled? • Were internal stakeholders adequately involved? Was the internal commitment of all parties maintained?
Step 3 – Decide the appropriate level of involvement	
<p>The needs of all stakeholders were considered and addressed when determining the level of community involvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the community's expected level of involvement in the process? Was it appropriate? • What was Council and the decision-makers expected level of community involvement in the process? Was it appropriate? • Were the needs / expectations of the community and Council met? • Did the level of involvement selected allow for meaningful input from the community which was useful to the decision-makers?
Step 4 – Community consultation strategies and techniques	
<p>The community consultation process was transparent. It addressed imbalances of power to maximise involvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the participants and Council have a similar perception of what was being considered and did the process allow for the development of a clear understanding of the impacts of the proposed project? • Did all participants understand the community engagement process and timing? • Did the process help educate the public and build goodwill and trust? • How was dissenting opinion treated in the process? Was it necessary to mediate between groups and was this successful? • Were there different ways to participate and were they all successful?
Step 5 – Communication strategies	
<p>All communications for the community consultation process were effective, inclusive and covered all necessary issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were all participants adequately provided with timely, concise, understandable information in appropriate media and format? • Did the community get the information they needed to provide meaningful input? • Did the process adequately address situations where participants had different levels of information? • Were participants adequately advised on the consequences of actions or alternative solutions? • Was there an effective relationship with the media at each stage?
Step 6 – Using input, feedback and evaluation	
<p>All stakeholders are convinced that the community consultation process, or a phase of an ongoing process, achieved its mandate and are satisfied with the result.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was there ultimate success in achieving the goals and objectives of the process? • To what extent was evaluation built into the process? • Were stakeholders given the opportunity to be involved in determining the techniques and criteria for evaluation of the process?



STATEMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT	QUESTIONS TO HELP MEASURE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was there political and management support for the process? Do the community believe Council was sincere in its community consultation efforts? • Did participants feel their input was worthwhile? Was participant input reflected in the final decisions? • Did community consultation result in greater benefits to the community or did it lead to long term community rifts? • Was the general community good addressed in the process? How? • Did the community consultation process meet Council's needs? • To what extent did the process lead to win-win results? • How can we adapt and refine future programs to make them more effective and efficient?
Step 7 – Resourcing the process	
<p>The community consultation process had adequate resources (financial, staff, community) to achieve its stated objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the true cost of the process for Council and the participants? • Was there a more cost-effective way of achieving the same results? • Was there sufficient staff time and were staff adequately prepared? How well did the organisation and individuals perform? • Did staff have adequate training to conduct the community consultation process? • Was time (ours and the community's) and money used efficiently? Were community resources / energy used effectively? • What costs and delays could have been avoided and how? • Were lessons from other projects / best practice applied? • Was adequate administrative support committed to the process?
Step 8 – Final check	
<p>Consultation plans are adequately checked prior to implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was sufficient lead time for research and consultation provided? • Were timelines identified and clearly communicated to all participants, particularly key points or milestones, review period and when the project will be completed?

14. RESOURCING THE PROCESS

It is important for you to think through in the early stages what resources you will need to undertake community consultation. All community consultation processes require recourses of some kind and it is not feasible to consider engaging the community if there's not sufficient staff time or budget allocation.

The level of resources required will be different for each community consultation and communication strategies will need to be tailored to the level of resources available.

Developing a budget

Budgeting for community consultation is a process which often requires some juggling and adjusting. Do not begin a community consultation project with no budget or resources at all. If you do, you will not be able to meet the objective of ensuring community consultation informs decision-making processes and this will result in community dissatisfaction.

By working through the following questions you will begin to understand what you need to consider when developing your project budget.

Key questions in planning your community consultation budget

- a) What resources are available for community consultation?
- b) What are the expected costs of the proposed community consultation program?
- c) How do these costs compare with community consultation in similar projects?
- d) How do these costs compare with the overall costs of the project?
- e) Is the necessary funding currently available? If not, what steps need to be taken to get the funding needed?
- f) What internal staff will be needed at each step in the process and are they available?
- g) What outside consulting help is needed and are the resources available to contract them?
- h) What resources will the community need to participate?
- i) What resources could the community provide?
- j) Are outside organisations available that might be able to participate and contribute resources?
- k) What opportunities exist to integrate community consultation costs with other project activities?

Sample budget items to consider

Key areas of expenditure apart from staff time include:

Advertising costs	Equipment
Promotional materials (design and production)	Venue hire
Postal costs, delivery/distribution	Public address systems
Stationery	Parking, travel costs/reimbursements
Consultant costs	Refreshments
External facilitators	Child or respite care
Surveys	Translation Service

15. APPROVAL

Use the attached Community Consultation Form to manage the internal approval process prior to actioning the Community Consultation.

16. VARIATIONS

Council reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time.

17. COMMUNICATION AND DISTRIBUTION

17.1 Council will make available to the public, the Community Consultation Policy and on our website at www.mountisa.qld.gov.au.

17.2 Supervisors will ensure the policy is distributed as per the Distribution and Dissemination table on this policy.

18. DEFINITIONS

- a) **Community Member** – includes but not limited to;
- Ratepayers



- Residents
- Businesses and industry
- Community, sporting and social clubs
- Visitors
- Potential residents
- Investors
- Community leaders
- Business leaders

b) External Stakeholders – includes but not limited to;

- State and federal government agencies
- Local members of parliament
- Groups outside of Council who may be affected by Council decisions
- Media
- Contractors
- Consultants

ASSOCIATED LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Local Government Regulation 2012*
- International Association for Public Participation – IAP2 International
- Mount Isa City Council Corporate Plan 2018-2023
- Mount Isa City Council Operational Plan
- Electronic Media Usage Policy
- Media Policy

ATTACHMENTS

Community Consultation Form (Internal Process)