



CITIZENS GUIDE to PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

**with the Municipality
of the District of Lunenburg**



Municipality of the District of Lunenburg
modl.ca



WHAT IS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT?

Public engagement is a way of gathering input from citizens about community issues. It helps the Municipality make the best decisions for the community.

Public engagement:

- Invites you to participate in decision-making
- Offers you a chance to share concerns and ideas
- Can be online, such as surveys or polls, or shared information
- Can be a face-to-face coffee chat, community meeting, open house or other event

Our community is a better place when citizens are engaged.



WE ARE LISTENING

The Municipality is a community of communities designed to serve you - the people who live and work here. Our goal is to listen, share ideas and work with you.

We strive to:

- Communicate using the right method and clear language
- Listen to everyone's issues, ideas and concerns
- Offer ways for citizens to inform public policy

Every time we ask for input we will make sure that:

- You are involved as early as possible
- Everyone has a chance to participate
- Everyone is treated with respect

*"We're
Listening"*

WHY SHOULD I PARTICIPATE?



You know your community best! Citizen participation lets Council know what matters most to your community - it helps build a better community. As a citizen, you can:

- Identify local needs, priorities and assets
- Share your personal ideas and opinions
- Give Council a deeper understanding of the issue
- Get a better idea of how decisions are made
- Understand other citizen's concerns or ideas
- Shape the future of your community

HOW DO I PARTICIPATE?

You can participate as a citizen and/or as a community group. Community groups include businesses, special interest groups and community associations. Both citizens and community groups have an important role in public engagement activities.



Citizen Roles:

- Listen to other people's ideas and information
- Understand balancing of interests and trade-offs involved in policy issues
- Share community issues, needs and priorities
- Bring a unique point of view and unique ideas
- Provide local knowledge Council may not have

Community Group Roles:

- Represent a wider range of citizens
- Advise on community priorities
- Use networks and communication tools to share public engagement information, events and results
- Help give context to some issues



Some ways you can participate include:

ONLINE

- Facebook page
- Direct email
- Online polls or surveys

IN PERSON

- Feedback forms
- Polls or surveys
- Your Government, Your Ideas meetings
- Focus groups
- Open houses or workshops
- Public hearings
- Steering Committees

THROUGH COUNCILLOR

- Elections – use your vote
- Email or call
- Council meeting presentations

COUNCIL, MUNICIPAL STAFF AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Staff and Council members work together to make public engagement meaningful. Municipal staff manages the public engagement processes and information. Council will listen to public input, and make the final decision.

Council Roles:

- Listen to concerns, ideas and issues
- Help staff identify areas for public engagement
- Encourage and support citizen participation
- Use input to make the best decision possible

Staff Roles:

- Work with Council to decide if, when and how to engage the public
- Make sure everyone's ideas and opinions are heard
- Let participants know how input was used
- Decide what is working well and what needs improvement





WHERE CAN I FIND OUT ABOUT PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES?

Sometimes the public will be directly notified and asked to respond. You may be asked to fill out a survey or attend a specific meeting. Other times, you will not be notified directly.

All public engagement opportunities are advertised, as follows.

- **ONLINE** - modl.ca/PublicEngagement
- **MEDIA** - Newspaper and radio ads
- **FACEBOOK PAGE** - facebook.com/MODLns



DON'T SEE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A TOPIC YOU'RE INTERESTED IN?



First, ask your Councillor to see if a public engagement opportunity exists. If it doesn't, you may need to bring it to Council.

You may:

- Attend the public hearing portion of an upcoming Council meeting
- Attend a Policy & Strategy Committee meeting
- Attend a Finance meeting
- Make a presentation at one of these meetings as a community group

HOW WILL MY INPUT BE USED?

Your input and feedback is always welcome!

In some cases, the Municipality is required by law to seek input. Even where input is required, the final decision will always rest with Council.

Council uses public input to make the best decision possible. That may not always be the decision that you or your community group had hoped for.

Remember that:

- Sometimes your input addresses only a part of a decision
- Sometimes other (possibly larger) parts may have already been decided
- Municipalities must consider what is good for all – the best possible decision

Information on decisions and how public input was used can be found online at modl.ca/PublicEngagement, or through your Councillor. Municipal staff may also use the Facebook page and community group contacts to let the public know when engagement reports are posted.

