

Subject:	Accountability and Transparency Policy	Policy No.:	C-01-17	
Department:	Council			
Approval Date:		Review Date:		
Associated Policies:	Public Consultation and Communications Policy Development Notices to the Public Policy			

Accountability and Transparency Policy

Purpose

The Town of Drayton Valley (hereinafter referred to as the “Town”) is committed to the fundamental principles of, and in creating, a culture where Council, staff and citizens are aware of and understand the principles of accountability and transparency, and their roles in upholding these essential standards of good government that enhance public trust.

General Policy

1. In support of open government principles of accountability and transparency, this Policy outlines the Town’s commitments which will ensure:
 - 1.1 Council decision-making is open and transparent; and
 - 1.2 the Town is accountable for the provision and performance of its services.

Responsibilities

2. The roles and responsibilities of the Town must be clearly defined. In the context of other levels of government, it should be clearly explained which level of government is responsible for each service.
3. Within the Town, the roles of Council and staff, and the responsibility for services provided, need to be easily understood.
4. Actions will be consistent with clearly understood expectations. Services offered by the Town should be:
 - 4.1 clearly explained;
 - 4.2 outlined to include what is expected from the customer; and

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- 4.3 outline what the customer can expect from the Town.
5. There must be a reasonable balance between expectations and capacities. Customer and citizen expectations may change from time to time and all expectations must be balanced against the Town's authority, available skills and the resources required to achieve the expected outcome.
6. There must be clear and timely reporting on actions.
- 6.1 Reporting must be credible;
- 6.2 The information useful, accurate, timely, and accessible; and
- 6.3 Reporting on actions taken or not taken shall be clear and easy to understand.
7. Transparency Components:
- 7.1 Town information must be fully accessible within legal limitations.
- 7.2 Providing information that citizens or others require in order to comment on the Town's services and activities, allows for dialogue and sharing of ideas on Town activities, decisions and the potential to initiate change. This results in trust, enabling the Town to manage its services and activities more effectively and efficiently.
- 7.3 The Town must balance transparency with other legal and regulatory obligations. The Town will continue to comply with legislation that protects certain information; and whenever meaningful information is withheld, an explanation will be given as to why.
- 7.4 Town information that is provided publicly should be provided in clear, plain language.
- 7.5 Information deemed to be in the public interest is to be updated regularly, consistently, and as much as possible, proactively. The Town is committed to ensuring meaningful information is provided to the public.

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8. Commitments:

8.1 The Town has, and will continue to, put in place a number of activities and actions supportive of transparency and accountability. The following is a summary of the key methods through which the principles are practiced and adhered to.

Bylaws

- a. Pursuant to its role as established under the *Municipal Government Act* (hereinafter referred to as the “MGA”) Town Council has implemented Bylaws which establish expectations and standards for transparency and accountability. These include Bylaws which establish community Boards and Committees, including the Mayor’s Advisory Council Bylaw, as well as the Bylaws such as the Council Code of Conduct Bylaw, and subsequent amendments, which govern Council’s performance.

Policies

- b. Town Council, as authorized by the MGA, has implemented Policies in support of its transparency and accountability principles. Those include, but are not limited to:
- i. Council Remuneration Policy;
 - ii. Community Organization Financial Accountability Policy;
 - iii. Council Meeting, Agenda & Public Hearing Policy;
 - iv. Governance and Priorities Committee Policy; and
 - v. Boards and Committees to Council Policy.
- c. The Chief Administrative Officer, as head of the Administrative body of the Town, ensures compliance with the Policies which govern the overall transparency and accountability of the Town in its day-to-day operations. These Policies address areas such as notices to the public, employee conduct, purchasing and tendering standards, and disposition of assets.

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Council Meetings

- d. The Town provides the public with information on the roles and responsibilities of the Mayor and Councillors. The time and dates of meetings, agendas and reports under consideration are made available to the public in advance of meetings. All meetings of Council are open to the public, with exceptions as permitted by the MGA, and members of the public are invited to be delegations to Council to make presentations.

Budget

- e. The Town publishes information on the annual Interim Budget written in plain language in both print and digital formats, which is replaced by the annual approved Budget once it has been ratified by Council.
- f. Budget discussions/deliberations will include public sessions.
- g. Audited financial statements are published annually.

Public Services and Communication

- h. The Town proactively provides information to the public on the services that are provided. The processes for providing this information are outlined in the Town's Public Consultation and Communication Policy.

Conflict of Interest

- i. Sections 169 through 173 of the MGA deal extensively with pecuniary interest of Council. This portion of the MGA is thoroughly reviewed with elected officials by legal counsel following election and is a consideration at the outset of each Council meeting.
- j. The Council Code of Conduct Bylaw 2013/17/B increases understanding of duties and responsibilities and clearly defines several areas of responsibility, to eliminate conflict of interest, including:
 - i, appropriate use of Town assets and services;

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- i. acceptance of gifts and benefits;
- ii. actions during civic election periods; and
- iii. Council, staff and public relations.

8.2 Members of Council and Administration are subject to the responsibilities and obligations as established under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* legislated by the Province.

8.3 The Town maintains sound records management practices, ensuring that accurate and reliable records are created and remain accessible, useable and authentic for as long as they are required under legislation.

8.4 The Town strives to meet these commitments within its resources – human, financial, technical allocated annually by Council.

Statement of Commitment

Progress toward ensuring active practice of accountability and transparency will be ongoing and occur through best practices of the Town.

Mayor

Approval Date