

BACKGROUND

The Town of Westlock is undertaking the preparation of a Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan (DARP) to guide the future revitalization, redevelopment, investment, and public realm improvements within the downtown area. The DARP will establish a long-term vision and framework for downtown growth and provide direction related to land use, redevelopment opportunities, urban design, mobility, public spaces, economic development, and implementation actions.

To ensure the DARP reflects community priorities and local perspectives, meaningful participation from residents, businesses, property owners, community organizations, and interest holders is necessary. Inclusive and accessible public participation activities will support informed decision-making and ensure a broad range of voices contribute to shaping the future of downtown Westlock.

This document outlines the engagement plan for the DARP 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?
- How will input be used?

This engagement plan is intended to be a living document and may be updated if project requirements evolve.

ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Engagement with internal and external interest holders and the broader community will inform the preparation of the DARP. The purpose of engagement activities is to ensure those affected by or interested in the project have opportunities to:

- Learn about the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan and project process;
- Identify issues, opportunities, and priorities related to downtown Westlock;
- Provide input on redevelopment concepts, public realm improvements, and policy directions;
- Review and comment on draft concepts and plan components;
- Share local knowledge and community perspectives; and
- Be informed of project progress and next steps.

Additional engagement objectives include:

- Identifying perspectives and considerations that may otherwise be overlooked;
- Validating and supplementing background information;
- Supporting awareness and participation throughout the project;
- Building community understanding of redevelopment opportunities; and
- Supporting informed recommendations to Council.

PARTICIPATION PRINCIPLES

Public participation activities for the DARP will align with the Town of Westlock Public Participation Policy P-116-2026 and its guiding principles. Public participation activities will be:

Purposeful

Participation activities will occur only where public input can meaningfully inform decisions.

Visible and Accessible

Information will be presented in plain language and participation opportunities will be accessible and easy to understand.

Respectful

Participation activities will foster respectful dialogue and safe, inclusive participation.

Clear in Scope

Participants will understand what aspects of the project are open for input and which are constrained by legislation, technical considerations, budget, or Council direction.

Inclusive and Representative

Participation opportunities will seek to include those most affected and diverse community perspectives.

Transparent

The Town will communicate how feedback was considered and how it influenced recommendations.

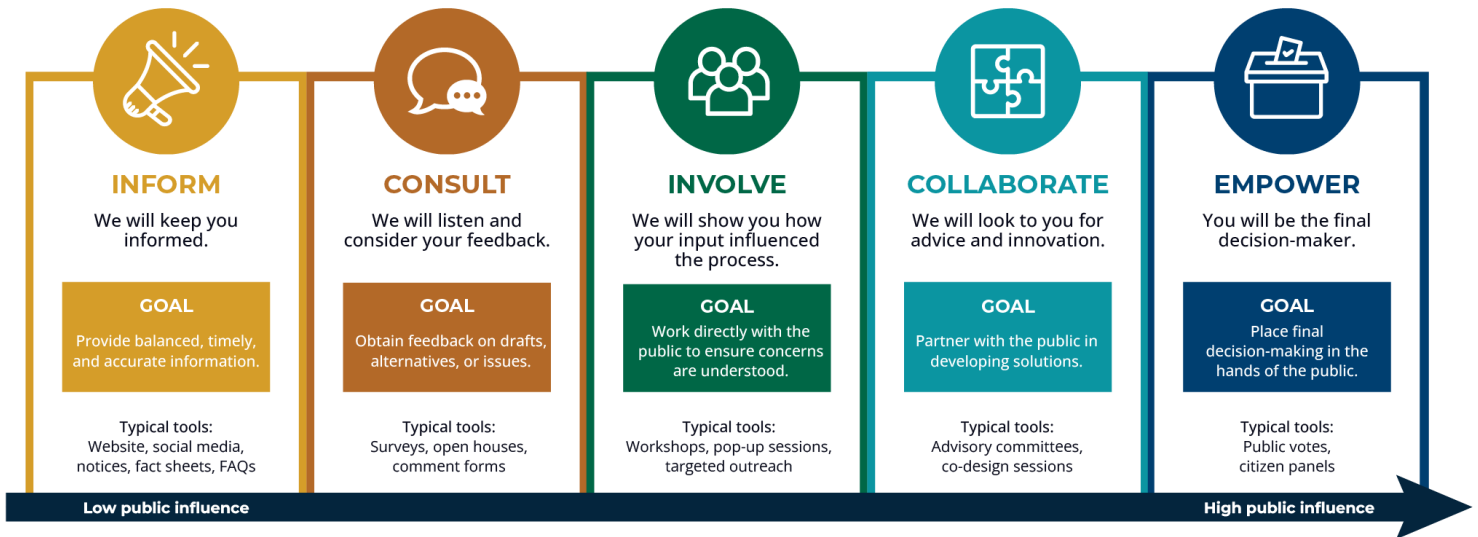
Evidence-Informed

Public input will be balanced with technical analysis, legislation, financial considerations, and municipal priorities.

PARTICIPATION APPROACH

The Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan will utilize participation methods that align with the purpose and requirements of each phase of the project. Participation activities may use different levels of participation depending on the nature of the decision, the information being sought, and the degree of influence available within the process.

Participation activities for the DARP may utilize the following participation levels from the Town's Public Participation Spectrum:



The participation level associated with each activity is identified within the Engagement Activities section of this plan.

AUDIENCE

The DARP will seek participation from both internal and external interest holders and community members. Participation opportunities may vary depending on the interests, potential impacts, and availability of participants.

Participants may include, but are not limited to:

Internal Interest Holders	External Interest Holders
Town of Westlock Council Senior Management Team Town Staff Council Committees including: - Municipal Planning Commission - Westlock Economic Region Committee - DARP Advisory Committee	General Public Residents within and adjacent to the Downtown Downtown Property Owners Downtown Businesses & Business Operators Potential Developers & Investors Regional Partners Westlock & District Chamber of Commerce Rotary Club of Westlock Community Organizations Utility Providers

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Engagement activities will build upon one another throughout the project and are intended to support two primary public participation phases.

In addition to the phase-specific engagement activities outlined below, several ongoing activities will occur throughout the project to support communication, project coordination, and continued opportunities for participation. These activities will help maintain awareness of the project, provide information and updates, support Advisory Committee involvement, and ensure findings from each stage of the project are carried forward into subsequent phases.

Phase 1 – Issues, Opportunities and Visioning (October–November 2026)

Focus on understanding existing conditions, community priorities, opportunities, and challenges related to downtown redevelopment.

Phase 2 – Draft Concepts and Plan Direction (March–April 2027)

Focus on reviewing draft concepts, visualizations, and policy directions and obtaining feedback to refine the draft DARP.

Ongoing Activities

Participation Activity	Timing	Activity Description	Participation Level	Desired Outcome/Purpose	Town Commitment
Project Page	Throughout	Central source for project information, timelines, FAQs, visuals, and participation opportunities housed on the Town's MoreConnected platform	Inform	Keep community members informed and provide ongoing access to project information and participation opportunities	We will keep you informed
Project fact sheets, FAQs, and visual materials	Throughout	Plain-language materials explaining the project, milestones, and participation opportunities	Inform	Improve understanding of the project and reduce barriers to participation	We will keep you informed
DARP Advisory Committee meetings	Throughout	Advisory Committee provides local knowledge and reviews project materials, engagement findings, and draft concepts	Collaborate	Obtain local knowledge and advice to support project development and refinement	We will look to you for advice and innovation

Phase 1 – Issues, Opportunities, and Visioning (August – November 2026)

Participation Activity	Timing	Activity Description	Participation Level	Desired Outcome/Purpose	Town Commitment
Internal project workshops and downtown review sessions	Aug – Sept 2026	Administration, Advisory Committee, and consultant review existing conditions, opportunities, constraints, and downtown characteristics to support initial project direction and public engagement activities	Collaborate	Identify opportunities, constraints, and key considerations to inform public engagement and concept development	We will look to you for advice and innovation
Community survey	Oct – Nov 2026	Gather feedback on downtown strengths, opportunities, challenges, and future priorities on the Town's MoreConnected platform	Consult	Understand community priorities and identify issues and opportunities related to downtown redevelopment	We will listen and consider your feedback
Community event pop-up sessions	Oct – Nov 2026	Engagement stations at existing community events and indoor gathering locations. Opportunities may include events such as Light Up and other community activities where participants are already present	Consult	Increase awareness and obtain broad community feedback from participants already attending community events	We will listen and consider your feedback
Interactive mapping exercise	Oct – Nov 2026	Participants identify destinations, challenges, opportunities, and areas for improvement within the downtown area on the Town's MoreConnected platform	Involve	Identify place-based opportunities and understand community experiences within the downtown area	We will show you how your input influenced the process
Business and interest-holder conversations	Oct – Nov 2026	Targeted discussions with downtown businesses, property owners, and community organizations	Involve	Obtain detailed perspectives from those directly impacted by downtown redevelopment	We will show you how your input influenced the process

Phase 2 – Draft Concepts and Plan Direction (March – April 2027)

Participation Activity	Timing	Activity Description	Participation Level	Desired Outcome/Purpose	Town Commitment
Open house and interactive concept review sessions	Mar – Apr 2027	Present draft concepts, visualizations, redevelopment opportunities, and preliminary recommendations while providing structured opportunities for participants to review, prioritize, and provide feedback on proposed concepts and improvements	Consult/Involve	Validate draft concepts, understand community preferences, and identify areas requiring refinement	We will listen and consider your feedback and show how your input influenced the process
Digital interactive concept review	Mar – Apr 2027	Online review of concepts and draft directions for those unable to attend in person on the Town’s MoreConnected platform	Consult	Provide additional opportunities for participation and obtain broader community feedback	We will listen and consider your feedback
Business and interest-holder refinement discussions	Mar – Apr 2027	Targeted discussions with downtown businesses, property owners, and community organizations regarding draft concepts and implementation considerations	Involve	Obtain detailed feedback on proposed concepts and implementation considerations from those most impacted	We will show you how your input influenced the process

USING WHAT WE HEARD

It is important that participants understand how their input contributes to decision-making and project outcomes.

Following each major engagement phase, Administration will prepare a **"What We Heard / What We Did"** summary report in accordance with Public Participation Policy P-116-2026. Reports may be provided to Council and made available to the public where appropriate.

Reports will summarize:

- Key themes and feedback patterns;
- Areas of commonality and differing perspectives;
- Feedback received from participants; and
- How feedback influenced recommendations and project direction.

An overall engagement summary will accompany the final Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan presented to Council and demonstrate how public participation informed the final plan recommendations.

REPORTING AND DECISION-MAKING

Public participation is intended to inform the development of the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan but does not replace Council's decision-making role.

Information collected through engagement activities will be reviewed and analyzed by Administration and considered alongside:

- Technical analysis and consultant recommendations;
- Existing policies and statutory requirements;
- Financial and operational considerations;
- Applicable legislation; and
- Broader municipal priorities.

Findings and recommendations developed throughout the project will be brought forward to Council at key project milestones.

EVALUATION

Following completion of the project, Administration may evaluate the effectiveness of participation activities to support continuous improvement of future engagement initiatives.

Evaluation considerations may include:

- Participation from those most affected;
- Accessibility and reach of participation opportunities;
- Quality and usefulness of input received;
- Alignment with participation objectives and levels; and
- Lessons learned and opportunities for improvement.