

POLICY NAME:	CORPORATE PLANNING TOOLS AND AUTHORIZATION
Effective Date:	February 26, 2025
Rescinded Policies	N/A
Document Owner:	Council
Required Review Date:	February 1, 2029, or as required
References:	N/A

PURPOSE

To establish the requirements, authorities and establishment of Policy Framework Tools along with, describing process, philosophy and format. Corporate policies set out directions and intentions of Council and Administration in a manner that impacts how the County operates or guides its interactions with residents. Policies interact with many other documents, tools and guiding materials such as strategies, bylaws, and statutory and operational plans.

The *Municipal Government Act* allows County Council the authority to pass bylaws and set direction; these bylaws can be enforced with penalties, challenged in court and must comply with laws from other orders of government. Policies do not have this authority; policies and policy tools set corporate commitments and direct action, and when they do have requirements, they apply only to those that are accountable to the approver of the policy.

Policies and Procedures are to be written such that the intent of each policy may be known, understood and implemented correctly and completely.

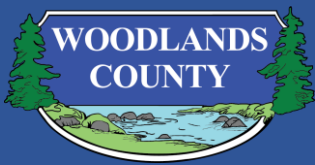
POLICY STATEMENT

Policies, Procedures, and Standards are created by Woodlands County to set out a standard of performance to address a discretionary duty the County will or will not meet. They aim to address recurrent issues to provide broad guidelines setting out the level and manner of services the County will perform to.

Woodlands County will have a system for organizing Policies, Procedures and Standards that allow for efficient approval and review and will assist residents and employees in understanding Council’s direction on recurrent matters. This system will establish municipal programs and services levels. It will also be used to establish the County’s business and strategic priorities and where appropriate to mitigate risks.

DEFINITIONS

Policy statements mean the principles and rules adopted by Council to reach its long-term goals. Policy statements are designed to provide high level direction and guidance, establish



key principles and responsibilities, set fundamental requirements, and allocate and define the limits of authority.

Policy statements differ from bylaws in that policy is intended to establish rules and guidelines for the Municipal Corporation, its council and its personnel whereas bylaws are intended to establish guidelines and rules for residents and visitors in the community.

Administrative procedures and exhibits are developed by administration and approved by the Chief Administration Officer (CAO), and are intended to operationalize policies. Together, policies and procedures ensure that a point of view held by the Council is translated into steps that result in an outcome compatible with that view. In the simplest terms, a policy defines expected outcomes, while a procedure defines the process for achieving those outcomes.

Policy Manual means a physical and/or electronic consolidation of all Woodlands County policies maintained to serve as an operational guide for staff, Council and the public.

Policy Committee means Council of Woodlands County.

MGA means the Municipal Government Act.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

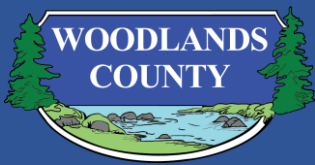
Consistent application of the Municipal Policy Structure and Authorizations Policy ensures a strategic and holistic approach is applied when developing, approving and implementing policy tools, even when the scope appears to be limited to a single business area. A number of roles and areas across the organization have responsibilities in the policy management process. What is presented here is the highest level of responsibility. Roles in departments because of structure, available resources, internal capacity, or volume of work, can be flexible in their approach to internal processes not addressed here.

Chief Administrative Officer

- Recommend the revision or development of policy in identified areas to the Council or a Committee.
- Direct the preparation of draft policies and procedures.
- Review draft policies for consistency with the Woodlands County corporate goals and objectives, and other policies.
- Approve the implementation of procedures for any approved policy, where necessary;
- A procedure is the appropriate tool of action if decision-making is required to achieve the outcomes of a policy. A procedure also creates a structure for performance monitoring and measurement because compliance is mandatory.
- Human Resource Policies, Municipal Procedures and Standards shall ultimately be a responsibility of the Chief Administrative Officer who will work in collaboration with Administration and Council to ensure the Human Resource Policies, Municipal Procedures and Standards align with Council's Strategic Objectives.

Directors or Supervisors

- Review draft policies and procedures affecting their areas of responsibility.
- Make recommendations on the proposed policy to the Chief Administrative Officer.



- Support the development of procedures to support the implementation of policies.
- Ensure appropriate department reviews are carried out when a policy is being drafted or revised.
- Annually review policies and procedures pertaining to their department and recommend revisions or amendments.
- Ensure adherence to policy within areas of responsibility.

Staff

- Adhere to policy, guidelines, and procedures when dealing with related matters.
- Recommend any need for amendments or revisions to their supervisor.

GUIDELINES

Principles of Corporate Planning Tools

The development, review and evaluation, and use of policy tools are governed by the following principles:

- **Aligned with Organization Goals:** Policy tools are designed to support and reflect the objectives and priorities of Woodlands County.
- **Effective and Sustainable:** Policy tools are practical, well-managed for risk, and long-lasting. They are designed to meet operational needs and commitments, account for potential stakeholder impacts, and remain flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances
- **Coherence and Consistency:** Policy tools are created with a comprehensive, structured approach, ensuring they are well-coordinated and formatted according to recognized standards, best practices, and templates. This approach fosters integration and consistency across policies.
- **Data-Driven:** Policy tools are grounded in thorough research and analysis, with an emphasis on outcomes that are both measurable and achievable. Ongoing analysis supports both the creation and evaluation of policies. Development and review processes are transparent and collaborative, involving key business areas while addressing broader organizational needs, including public engagement.
- **Collaborative and Accessible:** The development and implementation of policy tools are conducted through a collaborative process. Policies are written in clear, accessible language and shared promptly with relevant staff, stakeholders, and residents, as needed.

Woodlands County identifies three primary tools to aid in the process of good Governance. To effectively address a policy issue, assessing the reason for a policy will help identify the tool best suited for addressing the need. Each tool in the framework has its own purpose and addresses a different organizational need.



Tool	Purpose	Questions to Ask
Policy	Sets strategy or provides direction to implement strategy and/or corporate objectives.	Is direction provided by Council or in Legislation? What broad direction do staff need to implement strategy?
Procedure	Prescribes a process to achieve a policy direction.	Do employees need a process or behaviors to identify to carry out work? What Policy or Bylaw is the procedure connected to?
Standard	Indicates minimum level of quality for work.	What does a basic level of acceptable behavior or work from employees consist of to achieve something? What is required to achieve an outcome?

The purpose of a **policy** is to state what we intend to achieve and give high-level direction on how to achieve it.

- A policy is necessary when additional guidance is required to achieve strategic goals and direction. Policies inform decision-making, whether it is set out in a procedure or through program design.
- The key elements of a policy are the *Statement of intent* (what the policy aims to achieve) and the *Guiding Principles* (high-level descriptions of how the intention will be achieved).

The purpose of a **procedure** is Administration’s commitment to how a policy (Council or Administrative) will be activated. It sets processes, requirements or criteria that employees must follow, directing them in the actions they need to take to achieve the policy’s intentions.

The purpose of a **standard** is to ensure consistency, efficiency, safety and quality in operations. Consider using a standard if measurement and compliance and performance monitoring are necessary, a policy or strategic statement is not required.

Council policies are commitments to residents and the community, are aspirational in nature, and provide Administration with strategic direction. Council policies can set direction or can be used to provide further strategic direction. Council policies can also be used to set standards and processes for County Councillors and their staff.

Administrative policies provide direction to Woodlands County employees on strategic and organizational matters that are under the authority of the County Manager.

Standards set a minimum level of acceptable quality or actions. These can be standalone processes, requirements or criteria, but they do not activate policies and therefore a parent policy to set strategic direction is not required.

Governance

Governance in the Corporate Planning Tool that aims to address two matters:

- **Accountability** - who has the authority to approve which type of policy tool?; and
- **Responsibility** - who does which activity in the Policy Management Process?. This section sets out the essential elements of Accountabilities and Responsibilities. (see above in Administrative Responsibilities section)



Accountabilities

Clear accountabilities for approving policy tools ensures that authority is transparently identified and communicated. It is a delegated authority and enables leaders to create an environment of policy-informed decision-making.

Woodlands County Council outlines the following authorities as they relate to Policy Tools:

Delegation of Authorities for Policy Tools			
Policy Tool	County Council	CAO	Directors
County Policy	X		
HR Policy		X	
County-Wide Procedures		X	
Department Procedures			X
County Wide Standards		X	
Department Specific Standards			X

Original Signed

CAO Signature

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