

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Council Initiatives 2013- 2017

Initiative Title:	Public Engagement – Phase 1
City Council Sponsor(s):	Councillor B. Henderson / Councillor M. Walters / Councillor A. Knack
Supporting Department and Lead Staff:	Chris Ward, Branch Manager, Drainage Services, and Rod Risling, Branch Manager Assessment and Taxation

BACKGROUND

- Following the 2013 Civic Election, City Council and Administration identified a need to review the City's public engagement activities. Many Edmontonians, stakeholders, Councilors, and members of City Administration have observed that the City faces a number of challenges and opportunities in public engagement, including changing citizen expectations, supporting growth, ensuring consistent and quality processes, and capitalizing on opportunities for innovation.
- Furthermore, public engagement is a key aspect of the Open City initiative. Therefore, the Council Initiative on Public Engagement provides an opportunity to better align the City's engagement approach with this wider, emerging initiative on open government, which has the potential to fundamentally change the relationship that Edmontonians have with their city.

Historical context:

- In the mid 2000s, the City of Edmonton identified the need to improve and clarify its approach to public involvement in a time of rapid growth and development.
- In November 2005, City Council approved City Policy and Procedure *C513 – Public Involvement*. This policy and related procedure was recognized at the time as leading-edge practice in North America.
- Policy C513 was implemented via a Public Involvement Framework called *Involving Edmonton*, which consists of Core Commitments and Standards of Practice, a Continuum of Public Involvement, the Public Involvement Roadmap, and a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) template. Updated in 2008, this is still the Public Involvement planning approach that all City staff are expected to use.
- In late 2012, Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) approved the Corporate Approach to Public Engagement, which resulted in a revamped Office of Public Engagement.
- In early 2014, City Council and CLT designated public engagement as one of the City's top three priority initiatives. City Council also established an initiative on Public Engagement. Subsequently, the two initiatives were combined under the Council Initiative on Public Engagement.
- The Office of the City Auditor completed an audit of the City's approach to public involvement in June 2014. It identified areas for improvement and potentially the need to review C513 to address misaligned expectations between Council and citizens, and Administration.

- In early 2014, the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL) also began a review of civic engagement as part of developing its next strategic plan, and the Transportation Services Department initiated a review of its public involvement approach.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

The Council Initiative on Public Engagement will strive to:

1. Identify current challenges and opportunities in public engagement and establish the culture, principles, and approaches to foster continuous improvement in how the City conducts public engagement. Ultimately, the outcomes of a strong continuous improvement program for public engagement will include:
 - Provide opportunities for citizens to engage with city government to continue building a great city
 - Increased citizen satisfaction that their insights, knowledge and opinions are considered by the City of Edmonton in decision making by elected officials and administration
 - The best decision is made at the most opportune time to limit real costs in major projects
 - Public support of civic programs and services
 - Ability to address changing citizen expectations and methods of engagement
2. Integrate opportunities developed in all recent and on-going reviews of public engagement — City Auditor Report, internal Administration reviews, EFCL review, Corporate Approach to Public Engagement – and the Open City Initiative to enhance tools, techniques and approaches for engaging with, and among, Edmontonians.
3. Identify opportunities to increase the capacity for civil society and community building as it relates to public engagement.

The Council Initiative on Public Engagement will have several streams and distinct phases towards achieving the desired outcomes. Phase 1 will engage City Council, Administration and citizens in developing a common understanding and approach to public engagement. This will lead to the development of a scope of work for future phases for this initiative.

Phase 1 Workplan Overview

A comprehensive work plan detailing specific activities to achieve Phase 1 desired outcomes has been completed. This is being pursued in two paths. Path 1 is focused on Corporate perspectives about Public Engagement to:

- Build capacity for long term culture and behaviour change. This stream is about supporting leaders (at multiple levels) in the City in a process to begin reconceptualising the value of public involvement – one which sees citizens as partners.
- Inventory of Opportunities. This stream of work will focus on developing and testing an inventory of current and planned public engagement events, activities and approaches that currently exist in the City.
- Engaging Corporate Leadership Team and Branch Managers. This stream of work is focused on engaging Administration leaders in validating the findings, approach and

preliminary conclusions of work on this initiative to include in the terms of reference for future Phases.

- Ensure that the Corporate perspectives includes external perspectives from Path 2 that may include a small focussed working group of external stakeholders.

Path 2 is focussed on on-going external approaches to Public Engagement and will include:

- Research to provide a solid, evidence-based foundation for the Initiative:
 - Current, best practice approaches to public engagement in the public sector,
 - Inventory of current and planned City public engagement activities,
 - Inventory of Edmonton's civil society, namely the organizations that participate in the City's public life and their roles and perspectives, and
- Engagement with City Council, Administration, Edmontonians, and key stakeholder groups, to identify and validate assumptions about public engagement challenges, successes, key success factors, and desired outcomes. This engagement may also include a kick-off event that brings together members of all of these groups, and may include development of a resident/stakeholder on-going advisory group. The process would include an opportunity for a reflection of perspectives between City Council, Administration and Edmontonians.
- Communication about continuous improvements that are being undertaken by Administration, which align with the Council Initiative on Public Engagement.

The merging of both the two paths will be the development of workplans for future phases identifying the future state of public engagement for the City. It is anticipated that this may involve aspects of:

- Building internal capacity for long term culture and behaviour change around how the City approaches Public Engagement (e.g. increasing Corporate facilitation skills)
- Continued engagement with City Council Administration, Edmontonians, and key City stakeholders
- Review of Policy C513 and a revised *Involving Edmonton* framework
- Pilot projects to test innovative processes and techniques
- Pilot projects to enhance community leadership, capacity building and networking
- A public engagement evaluation methodology.

It is possible that not all of these activities will be part of future phases and/or other activities will be included, depending on what is discovered during Phase 1.

Attachment 1 provides examples of engagement activities through the various stages.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Public Engagement is a fundamental component of local government. The importance of engaging Edmontonians in the good governance of their City is identified in *The Way Ahead* and the City's Strategic Plans. Public engagement is also a key tool for making the City's Leadership Principles come alive in how the City plans, implements, and evaluates its policies, programs, and services.

START-UP BUDGET REQUIREMENTS (2014)

No new budget allocation is required in 2014.

TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION OF PROJECT PLAN

The Council Initiative on Public Engagement will take place over the term of the current City Council (ending October 2017), but will be divided into phases, each with their own workplans, and with prior phases informing the development of future phases. The goal is to achieve a continuous improvement program over longer timelines, which builds on previous work and recognizes that lasting improvements are often part of a broader and sustained cultural and organizational change effort.

Key milestones in Phase 1 include:

- Phase 1 comprehensive Workplan (September 2014 - completed)
- Administration Leadership Engagement and Empowerment (June to December 2014)
- Research (July to October 2014)
- Engagement (September 2014 to February 2015)
 - Kick-Off Event (January 2015)
- Summary Report of Phase 1 Findings (February 2015)
- Future phases draft Terms of Reference (March 2015)
- Communication about continuous improvements (On-going)

It is anticipated that future phases of the Initiative will kick-off in the spring of 2015, once Terms of Reference have been finalized.

Attachment 1 - Examples of Engagement Activities through Stages

Streams	Examples of activities through stages			
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Innovation/Pilot projects/Continuous improvement	Insight Community	Mobile device engagement	Evaluation methods of engagement, performance metrics, and Auditor updates	“Default to Open” approach
	Engaging Edmonton	Social Media E-Link		Social media sentiment analysis
	Consultation portal			
	Facilitator Resource directory	Public Meeting Management	Capacity for new tools and techniques	
Engaging on Engagement	Inventory of engagement projects, business units and methodology	Consultation with residents, stakeholders, City officials on goals of engagement	Consultation with stakeholders on approaches/methods to engagement to better achieve goals of each group	
	External Advisory Committee			
	Focus group on goals of engagement and satisfaction criteria		Criteria for when and how to engage for set goals	Testing of new approaches and feedback loop
	Cataloguing of desired goals of engagement, current challenges and new opportunities			
Civil Society and Community	Inventory of non-gov’t groups/org focused on community building and engagement	Opportunity identification	Civic education programming	Organization and leadership development in communities
		Barrier identification	Pilot Group-City engagement	
	Symposium to mobilize consultation	Abundant Communities	Collaboration platform	Shared economy/ community projects
		Make Something Edmonton		
Internal Corporate Perspectives/ Culture	Capacity building and change readiness	Culture elements	Structure / Governance	Maintenance of continuous improvement program
	Inventory of opportunities	Testing of new approaches	Overcoming internal barriers	
	Leadership empowerment			
Foundational	Open City policy		Public Involvement Policy	