



City of Port Moody

Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: May 4, 2023
Submitted by: General Manager of Corporate Services
Subject: Public Engagement Policy

Purpose

To seek Council approval of the proposed Corporate Policy on Public Engagement in support of the new Administrative Policy on Public Engagement Process.

Recommended Resolution(s)

THAT Corporate Policy – 19-1490-2023-01 – Public Engagement be adopted as recommended in the report dated May 4, 2023 from the General Manager of Corporate Services regarding Public Engagement Policy.

Background

Public engagement is a phased process to bring those who are interested and affected by a decision into the process of making that decision. The process happens across a spectrum of increasing public impact on the decision and includes a promise to the public that their input will be considered in the decision. Engaging with the public helps the City to learn more about community needs and views by bringing multiple perspectives, local knowledge and lived experience to the table. This provides an enriched understanding of the problem or decision to be made and can help identify issues early in the process. Information shared through the public engagement process also builds community understanding of the topic so they may provide informed feedback. Council considers this feedback as one factor within their decision-making process.

At present, a brief 'Public Consultation' section within the Communications Procedures & Guidelines document attached to Administrative Policy-19-1360-02-Communications Procedures and Guidelines provides the only city-wide guidance on public engagement. This content was last updated in 2015 and no longer reflects current best practices in public engagement. It also does not meet the need for guidance on strategic oversight, processes, principles, and roles and responsibilities to successfully fulfill the City's commitment to public engagement.

In October 2021, staff initiated a project charter to develop a comprehensive public engagement framework to guide and improve the City's public engagement process.

In alignment with the Sustainable Core Services priority, the proposed Corporate Policy and public engagement framework support Council's objectives to strategically focus public

engagement opportunities and ensure public information is accessible; to ensure effective Council and organizational governance; and to maintain and improve the efficiency of City processes.

Discussion

Engage Port Moody, the City's online public engagement portal, was launched in October 2020 to provide increased access for the community to learn more about current projects and plans and share their ideas and feedback. In implementing and growing this key public engagement resource, staff noted a lack of established process, policy, and procedures to plan public engagement effectively and responsibly.

An assessment of the resulting challenges that were being experienced revealed there was an opportunity to develop a comprehensive public engagement framework to achieve the following objectives:

- apply a corporate strategic lens on public engagement to ensure that the City follows established professional best practices;
- clearly define staff and Council roles;
- provide staff education;
- standardize and increase efficiencies in organizational processes; and
- integrate staff capacity and public engagement fatigue considerations into the public engagement planning process.

Research

Municipal comparison:

In support of developing the public engagement framework staff conducted a comparison of five nearby municipalities (Maple Ridge, New Westminster, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, City of North Vancouver) to assess standard practices and procedures, scale and type of engagements, use of online platforms, and staffing and governance structures. All municipalities expressed a desire to, or were in the process of, establishing strategies, policies, and procedures for public engagement, with New Westminster recently completing theirs. Other key findings included: though Port Moody has the smallest population, we had the second highest number of active public engagements; some municipalities have staff dedicated to public engagement; most municipalities plan public engagement based on annual department work plans; and that public engagement planning and execution is typically staff-led with limited Council involvement.

Best practice:

When reviewing best practices for public engagement, staff considered those established by international and local industry leaders, including the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), Simon Fraser University Strategic Framework, Bang the Table, International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), and the LGMA.

Framework

Over the last year and a half, staff have worked to develop a comprehensive public engagement framework that includes two policies supported by operational guidelines, tools, and processes.

- 1) Draft Corporate Policy – 19-1490-2023-01– Public Engagement (**Attachment 1**) provides staff with the authority to manage the public engagement process as described in Administrative Policy – A19-1490-2023-01– Public Engagement Process.
- 2) Administrative Policy – A19-1490-2023-01– Public Engagement Process (**Attachment 2**) sets out the guiding principles and procedures for ensuring that all Public Engagement initiatives are carried out in a meaningful, consistent, and responsible manner, as well as provides clarity on standards and expectations for the City’s Public Engagement process.
- 3) A new suite of corporate tools including guidelines, templates, and procedures are being rolled out to staff. These tools provide strategic oversight of public engagement, and increase standardization and efficiencies in planning, approving, executing, and reporting on public engagement.

Other Option(s)

THAT staff report back with additional information.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications with the resolution recommended in this report. The public engagement framework has been developed in-house. Each project has its own budget, with allocations made for public engagement where appropriate.

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

Educational sessions on the public engagement framework will be provided for staff involved in public engagement initiatives. If approved, the new Corporate Policy will be publicly available on the City’s website.

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

The “Public Engagement Policy and Toolkit” is a project in the Corporate Project Plan, in support of the goal “Lead with Good Governance” and the objective “Strategically focus public engagement opportunities and ensure public information is accessible” within the Sustainable Core Services strategic priority area.

Attachment(s)

1. Draft Corporate Policy – 19-1490-2023-01– Public Engagement.
2. Administrative Policy – A19-1490-2023-01– Public Engagement Process.

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Report Approval Details

Document Title: Public Engagement Policy.docx

Attachments: - Attachment 1 Draft Corporate Policy-19-1490-2023-01-Public Engagement.pdf
- Attachment 2 Administrative Policy - A19-1490-2023-01 - Public Engagement Process.pdf

Final Approval Date: May 8, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Angie Parnell, General Manager of Corporate Services - May 4, 2023 - 11:25 PM

Stephanie Lam, City Clerk and Manager of Legislative Services - May 5, 2023 - 9:31 AM

Paul Rockwood, General Manager of Finance and Technology - May 5, 2023 - 1:38 PM

Tim Savoie, City Manager - May 8, 2023 - 10:04 AM