



POSTPONED MOTIONS: ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUNDER

NUMBER: PM 26-2018

REQUESTED BY:	Mayor Cathy Heron
ORIGIN OF REQUEST:	Email
DATE OF REQUEST:	November 20, 2017

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DEPARTMENT:	Strategic Services
DATE RESPONSE DUE:	November 22, 2017

MOTION:

That the Operating Business Case Public Participation Program in the amount of \$81,400 be moved from funded to unfunded.

RESPONSE (one page max.):

Administration's Understanding of Intent Motion:

To move the Operating Business Case for Public Participation Program from funded to unfunded. The amount for this business case is as follows:

2018 - 81,400

2019 – 101,900

2020 – 105,900

Operational or Organizational Impacts if Motion is Approved:

Should the Public Participation Program FTE be unfunded, Administration will be at risk of not implementing the intent of the CAO-20 Council Public Participation Policy including meeting the service levels outlined in the policy. In addition, Administration will not be able to standardize and coordinate Public Participation practice at the City, to address the challenges currently experienced.

Council Policy C-CAO-20 Public Participation articulates Council's direction to Administration on how to involve stakeholders in providing input into decisions that affect the community. The policy also meets the MGA expectations of municipalities for public participation practice and policy.

Excerpt from the policy relating to this motion are provided below:

Policy Statement:

Council and Administration recognize that quality public participation is a critical component of good governance and as such, adequate resources will be allocated, and the appropriate level of public participation undertaken.

The City is committed to public participation activities that are founded on the following principles:

- *Shared Responsibility and Commitment:* Public participation leads to better decisions and is a shared responsibility of Council, Administration and the community.
- *Transparent and Accountable:* The City communicates clearly and openly about public participation opportunities, its processes and provides factual and evidence based information. It shares the outcomes of public participation, including how the information was used in the decision-making process and makes decisions in the best interest of the community as a whole.
- *Inclusive and Accessible:* The City endeavors to provide opportunities for public participation that take into account the diversity of needs, abilities and viewpoints of the members of the community.
- *Appropriate and Responsive:* Public participation activities need to be appropriate to the stated goals, and reflective of the varied preferences and needs of community members for receiving and sharing information.
- *Evaluation and Continual Improvement:* Public participation is a dynamic and evolving process that needs continual evaluation and adjustment to continuously improve and address the changing needs of the community.

Responsibility c: Establish practices, processes and timelines for statutory and non-statutory requirements for public participation.

Responsibility d: Ensure appropriate resources are available to allow for the ongoing implementation of consistent, comprehensive and representative public participation programs and services.

Service Standard 4: The City shall have the appropriate allocation of resources and governance mechanisms to build organizational and community capacity for public participation through community outreach and educational activities.

Service Standard 5: The city shall effectively communicate to the community its public participation goals, objectives and processes, including how information will be used and how decisions are made.

Service Standard 7: The City shall, where possible, use various methods and techniques for public participation that meet the varied needs of the community whether it be demographic, physical, social or cultural.

Service Standard 8: The City shall evaluate and learn from the feedback received from the community, as well as continuously look for new and better processes and tools that address the changing needs of the community.

Not having dedicated resources to steward the City's public participation process will place the City at risk of not following Council policy and meeting service levels established in the policy including those outlined above.

Providing a dedicated resource to steward the City's public participation process and collaborate with individuals involved in public participation, will enable the City to implement the intent of the Council policy throughout the organization and meet the service levels established in the policy. It will also assist staff in developing coordinated approaches, techniques and processes for public participation and consultation that will result in higher quality of public input, with insights and feedback for informed decision-making.

Without a dedicated resource Administration will continue to experience the following challenges:

- Not meeting service levels for public participation outlined in the policy;
- Inconsistent optics of public participation;
- Duplication, competing and conflicting public participation efforts;
- Higher costs to prepare activities due to a need to hire consultants;
- Overloaded and fatigued community due to high number of activities (surveys, open houses);
- Heavy reliance on traditional methods such as open house and surveys;
- Under-represented and disengaged groups that are difficult to engage using "traditional methods"; and
- Inconsistent reporting back to Council and the community including how public input was used to inform decision-making.

Financial Implications of Motions:

As this business case was proposed to be funded from assessment growth, approval of this motion will increase the transfer to the growth stabilization reserve in 2018 by \$81,400.

Stakeholder Consultations:

Council Policy C-CAO-20 was based on the Advice to Council by the Public Participation Council Committee which was reflecting the input the committee received from the community, including service levels outlined in the policy.

Background:

Public Participation Policy

On April 7, 2014, Council approved the Public Participation Spectrum as the corporate framework for Public Participation.

On October 26, 2015, Administration presented a draft policy pertaining to Public Participation for Council's consideration as well as a proposed process for community to review and provide feedback on the proposed policy. Among other things, the intent of the policy was to ensure it provides guidelines for what Administration should be seeking to accomplish through public participation activities.

In May 2016, a Council Public Participation Advisory Committee was created to obtain feedback from the community on the proposed City Council policy. The committee consisted of 5 community members and 2 Council members. The committee was responsible for reviewing the information gathered through the public participation process and presenting the results of the committee's work to Council. Committee members also participated in the public participation activities.

On December 12, 2016, the Committee provided advice to Council, including a new Public Participation Policy, amended based on the community input and in line with the Municipal Government Act Expectations. The committee's advice emphasized importance of following the leading practice for public participation and coordinated approach to public participation using appropriate methods that meet community preferences wherever possible.

On March 20, 2017, Council approved the Public Participation Policy. Upon approval of the policy, Council directed Administration to update related Council policies and practices to ensure proper alignment with the newly approved Public Participation Policy.

With the new policy, the Council provided a directive to Administration on how to involve stakeholders in providing input into decision that affect the community. In addition, the MGA requirement related to public participation was met.

Current Public Participation Practice

Currently, the City public participation and consultation process is fragmented. Individual departments are responsible for planning and coordinating participation and consultation activities, in many cases on an ad-hoc basis. As a result, often these activities are not coordinated across the organization and opportunities to ensure proper method for participation, streamline and look for synergies to combine activities and avoid duplication are missed. In addition, due to these activities being organized by subject matter experts from each department,

leading practices for public participation, including those reflected in the policy, are not implemented. The cost of these activities varies and although many are organized by City staff, departments also rely on consultants to organize and deliver public participation activities, resulting in noticeable costs to the City.

Despite high volume of public participation, perception in the community, in some cases, remains that the City is not engaging residents in the right way and that input received is not used to inform decision making.

Administration will continue to make small improvements to continuously improve public participation practice over time; however, significant improvements, standardization, coordination and communication is subject to having a dedicated resource.