

Public Engagement Initiative

Interim Report

Recommendation:

That Executive Committee recommend to City Council:

That the Terms of Reference for the Public Engagement - Phase 2 Initiative, as set out in Attachment 2 of the October 5/6, 2015, Office of the City Manager report CR_2652, be approved.

Report Summary

This report provides information on Phase 1 of the Council Initiative on Public Engagement, and the Phase 2 Terms of Reference.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the June 23, 2015, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide an interim report on the Public Engagement Initiative, including the Phase 1 final report, and return to Executive Committee on September 15, 2015.

Report

The Council Initiative on Public Engagement was initiated in early 2014 by the newly elected City Council. It was subsequently integrated with the Corporate Leadership Team 2014 priority initiative on public engagement and other City public engagement review efforts, and positioned in Open City under the Open Engagement goal.

The Terms of Reference for Phase 1 organized the Initiative's work into four main activity streams:

1. Engaging on engagement - discussing with Edmontonians and stakeholders options to improve the City's public engagement.
2. Continuous improvement - working with branches and department teams to implement pilot projects and different approaches to make positive changes as we go.
3. Community leadership and capacity building - working in partnership with community leaders and groups to re-energize and leverage our civil society.
4. City culture and framework - examining how leadership and Administration can and should change to support improved public engagement.

Over the past year, progress has been made in all four streams.

From October 2014 to March 2015, the Initiative involved hundreds of Edmontonians, City of Edmonton staff and leadership, and the Mayor and Council in 35 workshops and

other outreach events. This included a joint City Council-Corporate Leadership Team workshop that was held on January 21, 2015.

An interim report for Phase I was issued in the Spring of 2015, which detailed the Initiative's activities to date and answered two important foundational questions: why is public engagement important? and what are the elements of effective public engagement?

In May and June a group of leaders, staff and Edmontonians met to review and discuss all the input gathered and chart a course forward. They were focused on the following questions:

- If this is what good public engagement looks like, what is standing in the way of us achieving it (the obstacles to effective public engagement)?
- If these are the obstacles to effective public engagement, what can we do to get around them (the strategies for achieving effective public engagement)?
- What are the strategic areas of focus that Phase 2 of the Initiative should focus its work on?

The Phase 1 Final Report (see Attachment 1) describes the activities undertaken and the outcomes achieved.

Phase 1 was completed by developing a Terms of Reference for Phase 2 (see attachment 2), which will begin in the fall of 2015.

In Phase 2, the Initiative's work will build on the results of Phase 1 and continue to address the four activity streams from the initial Terms of Reference. However, the Initiative will shift from being carried out by a small, internal project team to leadership provided by an internal/external Advisory Committee, and work carried out by five Working Groups. Each Working Group will be tasked with one of the following strategic areas of focus:

Strategic Area A - Community Leadership
Strategic Area B - Evaluation, Reporting and Recognition
Strategic Area C - Vision, Policy and Framework
Strategic Area D - Learning and Training
Strategic Area E - Tools, Technologies and Practices

The Working Groups will work under the Advisory Committee, which will update both Corporate Leadership Team and the City Council Public Engagement Initiative on its work. This approach broadens leadership and accountability for the Initiative. This supports organized change, and leverages the knowledge and perspective of both City staff and members of the public. Success will only be achieved if many interested and affected people, both internally and externally, come together to discuss issues and develop solutions.

The Advisory Committee will liaise with the two City Council sponsors (Councillors B. Henderson and M. Walters) and will consist of five Branch Managers and five members of the public. The Centre for Public Involvement and the Office of Public Engagement will also be adjunct members. The Advisory Committee will provide the Working Groups with suggested criteria for leadership, which will include representing the wide diversity of our city. The goal will be to have the right people working on the right issues in a way that leads to progress and positive change.

Throughout Phase 1, the Initiative worked closely with a Branch Managers' Working Group, which has been focused on the overall changing nature of public administration and evolving organizational culture, of which public engagement is a key part. The work of this Group will align directly with the new Advisory Committee.

Corporate Outcomes

This report contributes to the corporate outcome "Edmontonians are connected to the city in which they live, work and play" by providing opportunities to enhance public engagement in the City of Edmonton.

Budget/Financial Implications

In 2015, the Initiative's budget is made up of contributions from various departments and branches. Some of these areas have allocated funding for public engagement, while others do not have dedicated funds for the Initiative and have to draw funds away from other operational areas as a result.

The funding approach and annual amount is expected to be the same for 2016 and 2017. No new funding is being sought from Council at this time.

Justification of Recommendation

City Policy C518 requires Administration to develop Terms of Reference for Council Initiatives and forward to Council for Approval.

Attachments

1. Council Initiative on Public Engagement Phase 1 Final Report
2. Council Initiative on Public Engagement Phase 2 Terms of Reference

Others Reviewing this Report

D. Wandzura, General Manager, Transportation Services
R. G. Klassen, General Manager, Sustainable Development
K. Rozmahel, General Manager, Corporate Services
R. Smyth, Acting General Manager, Community Services
T. Burge, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer