

Public Survey and Consultation Strategy

Recommendation:

That the June 11, 2012, Office of the City Manager's report 2012CMC006, be received for information.

Report Summary

This report contains options for the Independent Council Compensation Committee to obtain public input on Council Compensation.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the April 26, 2012, Independent Council Compensation Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report outlining a strategy for public survey and consultation regarding Council compensation.

Report

There are many possibilities for soliciting public input. Choices depend on the amount of detail the committee requires, the degree of accuracy desired and the number of people invited to participate.

It is essential to clearly define the question(s) the committee would like residents to answer before embarking on public engagement.

Once citizens have provided their opinion, it is important to inform them how their input was considered and used in the decision-making process.

Generally speaking, collecting input can range from including contact information for the committee on the City's website to methodical data gathering through surveys and focus groups.

The City of Edmonton has adopted a public involvement framework, policy C513, to provide decision makers with balanced, reliable information on public opinion.

In 2006, the Independent Council Compensation Committee sought written submissions from the public on the question, "What do you think is adequate compensation from all walks of life to serve on City Council?"

The invitation for public input was published on the City's website, and newspaper ads were placed in the Edmonton Journal, Edmonton Sun and Edmonton Examiner.

By the deadline date of March 27, 2006, 12 submissions were received. In addition, three comments related to the compensation review were made directly to the Mayor's or Councillors' Offices and a number of comments were registered at the Citizens' Action Centre.

The City of Calgary engaged Ipsos to conduct a series of focus groups to provide input into City Council compensation. The Ipsos Citizen Focus Group Report was submitted to the Calgary Independent Council Compensation Committee in October 2011.

The MLA Compensation Review invited public input through both written submissions and public meetings.

Attachments

1. Independent Council Compensation Committee – Public Involvement Options
2. Advertisement for submissions from the 2006 City Council Compensation Review
3. City Policy C513 – Public Involvement

Independent Council Compensation Committee – Public Involvement Options

Option One

The Committee can invite opinions from Edmontonians who want to be involved. The committee should agree on a question and accept written submissions only.

The City can provide communication service to support this call for input with existing staff (at no cost) through:

- Issuing a media release
- Holding a media availability
- Posting an announcement on the City's website
- Announcing the call for public input on the City's CHED radio show
- Announcing the call for input via the City's social media channels, including Twitter and Facebook

Option Two

Expand the reach of the plan above with paid advertising, up to \$5,000.

Option Three

To gain more detail, a third-party research firm could set up an online survey, open to all Edmontonians. It would contain background information and questions to help in framing the responses.

This information would not be statistically significant, but would provide the Committee with more detail on what those who are interested in the issue think.

Cost is approximately \$3,000.

The communications plan in Option One would be used to raise awareness of the survey.

Option Four

Seek a statistically valid picture of what all Edmontonians think about the issue through contracting a third-party research firm to conduct a telephone survey.

Cost is approximately \$10,000.

Option Five

If the committee is interested in a detailed qualitative analysis of why Edmontonians hold their opinions about Council compensation, they could engage a third-party firm to conduct focus group research.

The cost is roughly \$9,000 for two focus groups of six to 10 persons each.

Option Six

Hold a public meeting inviting verbal presentations.

The communications plan in Option One would be used to raise awareness of the public meeting.