



Council approves groundbreaking direction for public engagement

New policy heralds pivotal cultural shift in municipal decision making

April 11, 2017

Edmonton City Council has approved a new policy that improves the City's public engagement practices in the following key areas: diversity and inclusion, communications and process. It also reinforces the City's commitment to providing more and better opportunities for public engagement (e.g., engaging citizens earlier in the process, where possible), as well as greater consistency in reporting back to citizens on how their input has influenced City decisions.

The public engagement policy and accompanying framework include a new vision and definition for public engagement, guiding principles, goals and outcomes, along with strategies for planning, reporting, community learning and training, as well as evaluation. In addition, a revised spectrum for public engagement has been created, which stipulates that simply "informing" the public about decisions is not true "public engagement."

"It was clear when we started that, to be successful, we needed Council, community and City staff all involved, telling each other what is needed for effective public engagement," said Councillor Ben Henderson. "It was equally clear that we would need all three parties working together to help renew our City's approach to public engagement, ensuring that we can once again be at the forefront in the practise of good public engagement."

Launched in 2014 and sponsored by Councillors Ben Henderson, Michael Walters and Andrew Knack, the work of the [Council Initiative on Public Engagement](#) led to the development of this new policy and the co-creation of a public engagement framework by City staff and community members working together.

"The work of the Council Initiative demonstrated a collaborative, consensus-based approach for developing strategies and solutions for bringing good public engagement practices to life at the City, said Councillor Michael Walters. "This includes having a strong focus on leadership development, where we build capacity at the community level for engaging with the City more meaningfully and deeply on an ongoing basis."

"Although we have a new public engagement policy and framework, we need to continue to adapt as new ways to engage become available," said Councillor Andrew Knack. "And to do that effectively, we need to involve all three pillars in the process – Council, City administration and, most importantly, the community."

"Through this new policy and framework, we have laid the groundwork for more robust public engagement planning, implementation and reporting processes, now and into the future," said Rob Klatchuk, Branch Manager, Engagement.

Public engagement is also a key aspect of the City's Open City policy and its approach to overall open government.

For more information:

edmonton.ca/publicengagement

Media contact:

[Kerry Bezzanno](#)
Communications Advisor
780-508-9164