

Passed By Council on: 10/20/2014

Purpose

The Engage! Policy outlines the City of St. John's framework for public engagement which includes goals, principles, roles and responsibilities and the continuum of engagement to be used.

Policy Statement

Background

The City of St. John's believes that public engagement is a process – one that facilitates dialogue with the right people, using the right tools, at the right time on subject areas of mutual interest. Additionally, public engagement allows the City to gather input that will be taken into consideration in decision-making processes.

Purpose

The Engage! Policy outlines the City of St. John's framework for public engagement which includes goals, principles, roles and responsibilities and the continuum of engagement to be used.

Procedure

The City of St. John's will apply the Engage! Policy to all activities and opportunities where information is shared and/or input is sought. This will include mandated and legislative processes.

City of St. John's Public Engagement Goals:

- Improve/inform decision making and programming;
- Create space for everyone to feel involved and listened to;
- Share information effectively and welcome different points of view;
- Generate new ideas and solutions;
- Build trust;
- Understand the needs and priorities of the community.

Definitions

The City of St. John's views public engagement as the process whereby the appropriate tools are used to deliver information and/or receive input from stakeholders to inform decision making.

Stakeholders: For the purposes of this policy, stakeholders refer to those citizens who are impacted by a decision directly or indirectly and may include: residents; community, business and other groups; partners; other levels of government.

Principles:

The City of St. John's recognizes that engagement between the City and its citizens is an essential component of an effective municipal government. Additionally, it values a culture of trust and respect between City Hall and

those with whom it interacts.

Using the core values set out by the International Association for Public Participation as the foundation, the City of St. John's Engagement Framework recognizes that there are key principles required to ensure successful public engagement.

The following principles will apply:

Commitment – The City of St. John's is committed to developing a culture of engagement and providing the appropriate resources to carry out effective engagement work. City projects and plans will incorporate appropriate engagement strategies that take into consideration how best to engage stakeholders in a manner that respects their time and their input.

Accountability - Engagement is built into the City's plans and strategies with the Mayor, Councillors and City Manager ultimately accountable for the development, implementation and evaluation of the engagement framework. Deputy City managers and Directors are responsible for the appropriate application of the framework using a continuum for engagement as a guide. The Office of Strategy and Engagement is responsible for the development and maintenance of the framework including building capacity internally and externally and developing tools and supports for processes.

Clear and timely communication –To ensure effective engagement processes, communication between stakeholders and the City must be accessible, timely, complete, accurate, free of jargon and make clear how stakeholders are being engaged and how the input will be used in the decision-making process. Throughout the engagement process, feedback will be provided in a timely manner on the results – what was heard and how it is being used -- and the next steps. Stakeholders will be able to see the engagement continuum in action.

Inclusiveness – The City of St. John's recognizes that stakeholders are varied. Therefore, the City will employ a variety of methods and tools to connect with those who will be directly and indirectly impacted thereby eliminating barriers to participation wherever possible.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Council

The Mayor and Councillors are *accountable* for public engagement within the City of the St. John's and ensuring that the framework is being used. They are the ambassadors for public engagement.

Role of Executives and Directors

Senior staff within the organization are *responsible* for the effective implementation of the framework with support from the Office of Strategy and Engagement.

Role of Staff

All staff are to be *informed* about the City's Public Engagement Framework and *understand* how it is being applied to the City's work. The level of understanding will be different depending on the responsibilities of the staff. This role is supported with effective internal communications strategy and capacity building.

Role of Stakeholders

Stakeholders must *understand* the City's framework and how they can use it.

Role of the Office of Strategy and Engagement

The OSE is *responsible* for developing the framework and maintaining it through effective internal and external capacity building, evaluation and support.

Process

The strategies and methods used to guide the engagement process will be informed by the internationally accepted IAP2 Spectrum of Participation. The City of St. John's Toolkit for Engagement designed around this model will support staff in determining the level of engagement required and the most effective tools to use. The OSE will

review the Toolkit on an annual basis as a “check in” to see if adjustments are required.

Spectrum of engagement and purpose of engagement guide

	Sharing Information	Consultation Involve - Collaborate		Active Participation Empower	
Description	Sharing information to build awareness	Testing ideas or concepts to build knowledge	Collaborating to build commitment	Sharing decision making to build ownership	Decision making is delegated to stakeholders to build responsibility
Purpose	To present information to the public about issues that may affect them.	To provide information and receive feedback or comment	To involve stakeholders in the development of solutions	To partner with stakeholders in the development of recommendations	To give stakeholders the responsibility for making the decision.
Sample Tools and Techniques	○ Fact sheets ○ Open house ○ Web site ○ Newsletter ○ Press release ○ Advertising	○ Focus groups ○ Surveys ○ Public Meetings ○ Field trips ○ Open house ○ Interviews ○ Small group meetings ○ Expert panels	○ Workshops ○ Deliberative polling ○ Roundtables ○ Small group processes - brainstorming	○ Citizen advisory committee ○ Consensus building ○ Participatory decision making ○ Task Force	○ Ballots ○ Citizen jury
Examples	○ Advising stakeholders of a situation or proposal ○ Informing on a decision or direction ○ Providing advice on an issue	○ Seeking comment on a proposal, action, or issue ○ Seeking feedback on a service or facility ○ Requiring a response but limited opportunity for dialogue	○ Involving stakeholders in discussion and debate ○ Involving stakeholders at different times in the planning process (e.g. keeping informed and enabling further comment)	○ Establishing a structure for involvement in decision-making (e.g. committee) ○ Enabling ongoing involvement and keeping informed. ○ Allocating responsibility in achieving initiatives	○ Establishing a process that allows the public to make an informed decision ○ Placing the final decision-making in the hands of the public

The level of engagement increases based on the level of public interest/impact. The toolkit for staff supports this spectrum.

Application

Responsibilities

Office of Strategy and Engagement

Definition

References/Appendix

Monitoring and Contravention

Approvals

Regular Meeting of Council October 20, 2014. Policy was part of the Engage! St. John's Task Force report.

Review Period

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