

Request for Recommendation

Public Participation Policy

Presented To:	Priorities Committee
Presented:	Wednesday, May 07, 2008
Report Date	Friday, Apr 25, 2008
Type:	Policy Discussion Papers - Decision Requested

Recommendations

Whereas the value of civic engagement is recognized as a valuable means of encouraging public participation and involvement in municipal affairs,

And whereas the City of Greater Sudbury supports public participation through Advisory Boards and Panels, Committees, Community Action Networks, Neighbourhood Associations, public meetings/community consultations and other means of civic engagement,

Therefore let it be resolved that the City of Greater Sudbury adopt the proposed Public Participation Policy to help guide and implement current and future civic engagement opportunities for the citizens of our community.

Signed By

Report Prepared By

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Digitally Signed May 2, 08

Division Review

Real Carre
Director of Leisure , Community and Volunteer Services
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Recommended by the Department

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Recommended by the C.A.O.

Mark Mieto
Chief Administrative Officer
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Background

In the winter of 2007 the Social Planning Council of Sudbury conducted a survey of Civic Engagement Experiences within our community at the request of the City of Greater Sudbury for the purpose of providing feedback that could be used to develop a Public Participation Policy. Respondents to the survey had participated in a variety of engagement activities including Committees and Roundtables, Advisory Boards and Panels, public meetings/community consultation, Community Action Networks, Community Solutions Team and others. The results of the survey identified that respondents consider civic engagement to be extremely important. The report also identified concerns including the need to more specifically define the role which residents play within various methods of civic engagement. The need to be inclusive and to provide equal opportunities for all citizens to participate in community process was also identified as very significant.

Following the compilation of the data received and the review of the responses a draft Public Participation Policy was prepared and presented by the Social Planning Council of Sudbury and circulated to City staff. The framework of the policy was reviewed by staff and presented to the Healthy Community Cabinet in October of 2007. A summary of the proposed Public Participation Policy was presented to City Council in January of 2008 as a component of background information at the Council Retreat. The attached document outlines the framework and the key components of this policy including the core values of public participation for staff to follow in order plan appropriately for successful civic engagement. Reference materials including guides for citizen and government use as well as an inclusion lens to help facilitate the application of the policy.

The City of Greater Sudbury through Council and staff have always endeavoured to communicate effectively with citizens and to encourage their participation in municipal planning and direction. The Public Participation Policy attached to this report has been developed in response to the experiences of our citizens and with the objective of creating a corporate policy. A subsequent report which will be prepared for City Council in June of this year will outline the Terms of Engagement for Community Action Networks in consideration of the policy provided for public participation proposed in this report.

Public Participation Policy

Background

The City of Greater Sudbury recognizes that political decision-making is most effective when it includes public input from an active, engaged and educated public. The City of Greater Sudbury has been proactive in involving citizens in community decision-making: participatory budget processes, various planning and development initiatives, the Healthy Community Cabinet, numerous Advisory Committees and Panels as well as neighbourhood level involvement through the Community Action Networks (CANs). A policy will formalize and guide future citizen engagement activities across the corporation toward standardized, consistent and sustainable civic engagement for all citizens.

Purpose

The Public Participation Policy is intended to provide a framework for the City of Greater Sudbury to engage its citizens in local decision-making. One of the main goals of this policy is to ensure that civic engagement activities are given consideration throughout the corporation as well as ensure that citizens can initiate civic engagement activities through a number of available entry points. This policy recognizes, unless otherwise stated by law or regulations, that it is the responsibility of the City of Greater Sudbury (Council and Administration) to assess opportunities for public engagement.

Policy Statement

The City of Greater Sudbury (Council and Administration) recognizes that decisions are improved by engaging citizens and diverse stakeholder groups where appropriate and are committed to upholding engagement processes that are inclusive, transparent and standardized within the Corporation's ability to finance and resource them.

The City of Greater Sudbury assigns high priority to the factors impacting the challenge of civic engagement, specifically the diverse needs and backgrounds of citizens and the large geographic spread of citizens across communities.

The City of Greater Sudbury will work to build capacity within the Corporation, equipping staff and Council with the tools necessary to play a vital role in fostering a greater sense of belonging among all citizens within the community.

Recognizing the value of ongoing input from citizens and diverse stakeholder groups throughout the community, the City of Greater Sudbury commits to work closely with these groups through various venues to ensure the policy remains relevant and successful.

Guiding Principles

A growing consensus concerning what Greater Sudburians value has evolved over time and is reflected in the City of Greater Sudbury Official Plan, the Healthy Community By-Law implemented by City Council in 2001 and more recently the healthy Community Charter in 2007. In keeping with this, the Charter embraces civic engagement and social capital as one of its four main priority areas forming an integral part of the overall Healthy Community strategy.

Principles of Healthy Communities:

- Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being
- Social, environmental and economic factors are important determinants of human health and are inter-related
- People cannot achieve their fullest potential unless they are able to take control of those things which determine their well-being
- All sectors of the community are inter-related and share their knowledge, expertise and perspectives, working together to create a healthy community.

*Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, 2004

Core Values

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) offers the following core values of public participation to help guide the application of this policy.

1. The public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decisions.
3. The public participation process communicates the interests and meets the process needs of participants.
4. The public participation process actively seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected.
5. The public participation process involves participants in defining how they participate.
6. The public participation process provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.

*International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

Public Participation Spectrum

Different issues require different levels of public engagement. The following Public Participation Spectrum can be used as a guideline for action. The Public Participation Spectrum is a tool to assist with the planning of specific civic engagement activities. The pillars of this spectrum are; **inform**, **consult**, **involve**, **collaborate**, and **empower**, providing a mechanism to clarify complex issues, and to ensure that decision-making processes are transparent.

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

Developed by the International Association for Public Participation

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT

INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Public Participation Goal: To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	Public Participation Goal: To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	Public Participation Goal: To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	Public Participation Goal: To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	Public Participation Goal: To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to The Public: We will keep you informed.	Promise to The Public: We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	Promise to The Public: We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	Promise to The Public: We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	Promise to The Public: We will implement what you decide.
Example Techniques to Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheets • Web sites • Open houses 	Example Techniques to Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings 	Example Techniques to Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Deliberate polling 	Example Techniques to Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen Advisory Committees • Consensus-building 	Example Techniques to Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decisions