

PURPOSE

This report presents feedback received from engagement in late June along with the Engagement Framework and 2017 - 2018 Public Engagement Road Map for Council adoption.

BACKGROUND

At the June 8, 2016 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council was presented with two guiding documents that redefined how the City informs and engages business and residents in City decision-making. Council passed the following motion at the June 8 Council meeting:

"That Council endorse the Public Engagement Roadmap and direct staff to report back for final consideration after consultation".

The Engagement Framework outlines the City's approach to engagement and will be used for all City projects where engagement is required moving forward. The Public Engagement Road Map, outlines when the community can anticipate to provide feedback on decisions planned for 2017 and 2018. The purpose of both plans is to make public participation more convenient, transparent and meaningful by outlining how and when the community can participate in City decision-making.

Upon receiving the report on June 22, Council requested the role of First Nations in City decision-making be included in the Engagement Framework. The Framework has been updated to reflect the City's evolving approach, which will be guided by the Witness Reconciliation Program and informed through a deepened understanding and strengthened relationships with the City's Indigenous partners.

Both the Framework and the Road Map will be updated annually to ensure they remain relevant and reflect evolving City practices, lessons learned, community needs and feedback.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

In late June, the City reconvened those community members who helped shape the 2017-2018 Public Engagement Road Map and Engagement Framework. Attendees discussed how the community informed the City's revised approach to engagement and if anything was missing based on feedback previously provided.

Approximately 15 individuals attended. The majority of attendees actively participate in City-led engagement events. Some were members of Neighbourhood Associations, CALUCs and neighbourhood working groups supporting neighbourhood planning.

Much of the discussion related to implementation of these documents and will be incorporated into the application of the Framework.

WHAT WE HEARD

Outlined below is the feedback received and how it will be implemented.

- **Ensure clarity around decision-making**
For all engagement initiatives, clearly state:
 - Who is making the decision (staff or Mayor and Council)
 - What the decision is based on (science, political, best practice, etc.)

- When and how will the decision be made
- If, when and how the community can provide input into decisions

Next steps: The City will ensure that when it tells the story the questions above are clearly answered at the launch of engagement, as well when closing the loop through engagement summaries.

- **Involve the Community and Land Use Committee (CALUC) and Neighbourhood Association early on in the process**
 - Bring the Neighbourhood Associations and CALUCs into the engagement process early and throughout the process
 - Engagement with CALUCs should be clearly defined. Ensure they are included in all land use decisions including land, air, public spaces, etc.
 - Neighbourhood Associations and CALUCs provide valuable community knowledge and history to the process
 - The process will help reconnect the City with local neighbourhoods

Next steps: The expertise, time and connection to residents that Neighbourhood Associations and CALUCs provide is important and highly valued. The City will strive to connect earlier with the community to involve them in the planning of engagement initiatives as well as the debriefings at the end of the project.

The definition of the CALUCs was taken from the "Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC) Terms of Reference" developed in December 2016. The role of the CALUCs as outlined in the framework will be maintained for consistency with other City initiatives.

- **Reflect neighbourhood capacity in engagement planning**
 - The increased volume of projects over the last few years makes it difficult for members of the community to participate in all of the various City-led initiatives. In 2014, the City hosted 25 engagement events. In 2015 and 2016 there were 82.
 - Having a minimum of four to six weeks' notice of projects and upcoming engagement opportunities is important to allow the community to prepare and provide input.

Next steps: A text version of the 2017 – 2018 Public Engagement Road Map is located on Victoria.ca/haveyoursay. This living document is intended to help keep people informed on when they can expect to participate in important decisions. It is also intended to help reduce engagement fatigue by providing ample notice of upcoming opportunities for input.

Future projects will be flagged for Neighbourhood Associations to ensure sufficient notification and to better align with the distribution of community newsletters.

- **Improvements to communication tools / information**
 - The website needs to ensure engagement information is easy to locate and that short links and links to documents are up-to-date
 - Documents should be dated
 - Consider using fewer graphics and colour in documents as they are difficult to print
 - Use more image files on social media to generate more easily shareable content
 - Continue to use the neighbourhood hot sheets as a tool to inform communities about upcoming engagement opportunities and projects
 - For each engagement map out the process, input to be sought and timeline through to decision and place on a calendar for everyone to see

- Consider including a graphic around the various levels of technical information available for each project and which level the info is at or available (such as a series of rings)
- The design, use and promotion of surveys should try to reach the broadest audience and be transparent. An example of a well done survey was the recent VicPD survey. If the results don't represent the entire community than the results are often one sided and inaccurate.

Next steps: To make it easier to find project and engagement information online, the City is introducing an online engagement portal later this year. The portal will provide clear information on the project, engagement opportunities as well as share summaries of what was heard and Council decisions. It will also help to better communicate past decisions, what is beginning considered today and how the community can participate in shaping the decisions.

Community members are encouraged to request documents in formats which are most convenient for them to meet accessibility needs facilitate easier sharing.

Staff have reached out to VicPD to collect more information on how their survey was completed as well as the cost.

- **Recent engagement successes**

- The 2016 budget survey was done very well, with clear links to the detailed information for those that wanted it. When budget items affect a community partner, the City should let them know at the outset of engagement.
- 2017 Topaz Park Improvements engagement began with meetings with the community to ensure the right stakeholders were reached and timing worked – process and design worked well

Next steps: The City will continue to seek feedback from Neighbourhood Associations early on to help inform the engagement planning process. Moving forward, both high-level summaries and more detailed information will be provided to accommodate varying preferences for information.

- **Weighting Input**

- Feedback should be weighted to ensure it is clear that a single tweet may not carry as much weight as a detailed letter from a citizen when staff and decision makers are looking and input received.

Next steps: All input is valued and equally important in the decision-making process. The role of the engagement team is to seek feedback from the community and share that feedback, without prioritizing certain groups or perspectives over others, with decision makers for their consideration.

- **Neighbourhood Planning**

- The launch of the James Bay, Hillside Quadra and Oaklands neighbourhood plans are missing from the Road Map.
- Any information that can be shared in advance with upcoming communities from the neighbourhood plans under development would be appreciated. It will help neighbourhoods to understand the process and help plan, look for volunteers and build capacity.

Next steps: The launch of the James Bay, Hillside Quadra and Oaklands neighbourhood plans were left off the most recent Road Map in error. The dates have been corrected and added.

The City will provide the working group documents and terms of reference from a current neighbourhood plan process as a reference for those interested.

To ensure the adoption and successful application of the Engagement Framework and Road Map throughout the organization, an implementation plan is being developed. Short staff training sessions supported by the International Association of Public Participation will ensure staff have the skills and knowledge to apply the Framework.

CONCLUSIONS

In close collaboration with the community, staff have developed two important innovative plans that will guide City-led engagement initiatives. The Framework and Road Map will make engagement more predictable, convenient and support robust decision-making. Feedback on the plans are welcome throughout the year to ensure continuous improvement and incorporation of lessons learned. Staff recommend reporting back to Council annually with an updated Public Engagement Road Map and any proposed changes to the Engagement Framework after each annual Public Engagement Summit.

Respectfully submitted,



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Deputy City Manager

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:



Date: July 21, 2017

List of Attachments

- Appendix A: Engagement Framework
- Appendix B: 2017 – 2018 Public Engagement Road Map