

Date: 14/03/2024

To: Chair and Directors, Committee of the Whole

And To: Murray Daly, Chief Administrative Officer

From: Gerald Pinchbeck, Manager of Communications

Date of Meeting: Committee of the Whole_Mar21_2024

File: 1470-01

Short Summary:

Memo – Engagement Strategy

Background:

Following preliminary consideration by the Policy Committee at its January 24, 2024 meeting, the Committee of the Whole is being presented with an opportunity to consider the contents of a draft Engagement Strategy. Background on the engagement strategy is included in the attachments.

At its meeting, the Policy Committee requested the following changes:

- Clarify roles and responsibilities, particularly for elected officials.
- Acknowledge the work the CRD has already done.
- Define existing feedback mechanisms.
- Acknowledge that this strategy serves as a foundation for future business practices.
- Acknowledge need to promote consistency through policy.
- Better illustrate the criticality of non-digital methods to successful public engagement.

The attached draft strategy addresses these requests, and is now being submitted for further consideration at the Committee of the Whole. Prior to rendering any decision, there are a few things that must be noted:

- The Strategy complements existing guidance documents, including the 2019 Crisis Communications Plan and the 2023 Communications Strategy. Having a separate Engagement Strategy acknowledges the unique requirements for a strategic commitment to greater levels of public engagement.
- Engagement, in the proper sense, excludes activities which strictly involve “informing” the public, or “telling” people information. While all engagement includes providing information and communicating with the public, communications and providing information does not always entail public engagement.
- Further, public engagement involves a spectrum of activities, ranging from collecting feedback about pre-developed options and decisions to empowering residents to

develop options and make decisions. As a result, changes to decision making processes should be considered following approval of any strategy, and are actively contemplated in this draft.

- The Strategy serves as a guiding policy document, not a comprehensive program. Further work is required once a Strategy has been approved to develop necessary policy, procedural, and operational guidance documents and practices.
- In any case, Directors collectively have a policy, governance, and oversight role for any CRD programs. The Board's best tool for communicating its vision for the CRD's public engagement activities is through its policies, strategies, and financial plans, which can then be operationalized by staff.

If the Committee of the Whole endorses this draft, the next step will be to prepare a publishable version which includes CRD branding and graphic design finishes.

Options:

1. Endorse the draft strategy as presented.
2. Provide feedback and request revisions.

Attachments:

1. AIS – Policy Committee – 2023-2027 Engagement Strategy
2. 2023 Engagement Strategy – March 14, 2023 draft for Committee of the Whole
3. 2023 Engagement Strategy – March 14, 2023 *redlined* draft for Committee of the Whole