

Community Engagement Framework and Corporate Communications and Community Engagement Policy

Recommendation:

THAT Council approve the Community Engagement Framework and Corporate Communications and Community Engagement Policy No. 5.57.

Report Purpose and Summary Statement:

This report brings forward a final version of the Community Engagement Framework and a summary of Phase 2 engagement. The report also provides the revised Corporate Communications and Engagement Policy for Council approval.

Previous Council Action:

Council directed staff to develop a Community Engagement Framework as part of its 2023-2026 Strategic Plan priorities. During the [February 18 and 25, 2025 Council meetings](#), Council provided input on the draft Framework before it was taken out for Phase 2 engagement from February 27 to March 12, 2025.

Financial Impact:

The project required support from consultant services related to research, data analysis, and framework development.

Funding Source:

One-time project funding allocation of \$15,000 in the 2024 budget

Strategic Alignment:

Engaged, Healthy Community; Governance & Corporate Excellence

Communications:

A Communications Plan will be developed to share the final Community Engagement Framework with the community and ongoing public education on engagement opportunities with the City.

Applicable Legislation/ Bylaw/Policy:

This initiative includes updating the Corporate Communications and Community Engagement Policy to align with the new framework and best practices.

To: Mayor and Council

Community Engagement Framework and Corporate Communications and Community Engagement Policy Update

BACKGROUND:

Staff have finalized the City's first-ever Community Engagement Framework (Attachment A) following two phases of community engagement and Council input. This work supports Council's Strategic Goal of an engaged and healthy community.

This Community Engagement Framework (the 'Framework') serves as a guiding document for community input in the City's decision-making processes. It ensures that how, when, and why the City engages with the public is consistent, transparent, and accessible. It provides clear criteria for what level of public participation will be involved in the City's decision-making. This will help ensure that residents are aware of the City's community engagement processes and how they can share their feedback.

ANALYSIS:

Discussion:

The Framework provides high-level guidance and will be supported by a Community Engagement Toolkit that outlines the procedures and tactics necessary to ensure consistency across engagement initiatives. The City's Corporate Communications and Community Engagement Policy (the 'Policy') (Attachment B) has also been updated. Staff are now asking Council to approve the revised Framework and Policy.

Project Description:

The Framework has been developed based on the established practices of the [International Association for Public Participation](#) (IAP2), which includes a [spectrum of public participation](#) levels ranging from informing to empowering people in decisions.

The Framework will:

- Foster collaborative and inclusive relationships with residents, businesses, and community organizations.
- Guide when, how, and why the City engages with the community, including when it will inform versus seek input on a decision to ensure consistency, transparency, and accessibility.
- Explain how decisions are made and the factors that inform them, including engagement.
- Promote diverse and meaningful participation through clear guidelines that foster inclusivity.
- Equip staff with standardized tools, methods, and processes to deliver timely, effective, and inclusive community engagements.

The Framework project deliverables include:

- A clear and consistent City engagement process based on best practices.
- An update of the Corporate Communications and Community Engagement Policy.
- A toolkit, training and additional resources for staff.
- Public education to enhance understanding of decision-making processes and participation.

Timelines

Phase 1 Community Engagement – Summer-Fall 2024 – input from public, community groups, staff

Phase 2 Research, Data and Survey Analysis – Summer-Fall 2024

Phase 3 Draft Framework and Policy Update – Fall 2024-Winter 2025

Phase 4 Phase 2 Engagement – February to March 2025

Phase 5 Final Adoption by Council – Spring 2025

Community Engagement:

[Phase 1 Engagement](#) has been completed, with input from internal and external groups, including residents, businesses, and community organizations. Feedback was collected through an online survey, in-person event outreach, and interviews and meetings with key interest holders, businesses and community organizations. 570 people responded to the survey. Staff also reviewed results from the 2024 Citizen Satisfaction Survey, researched engagement best practices, reviewed frameworks from other municipalities, and invited external review of the draft framework. The findings from the first engagement phase were used to draft the Framework for the second engagement phase.

Phase Two Engagement ran from February 28 to March 12, 2025. It was conducted at the Consult level to ensure the draft Framework aligns with Phase 1 feedback and met Council and community needs before implementation. Engagement included an online feedback form and staff reached out to key community interest holders.

Summary of Feedback

A summary of the feedback received through the Engage Maple Ridge platform, email and mail, is summarized in the attached What We Learned Report (Attachment C). Feedback included:

- Appreciation for the City's enhanced communications and engagement efforts
- Requests for project updates and increased transparency in decisions, particularly around governance, priority setting and outcome measurement.
- Opportunity to have more say in proposing projects and issues for the City to address.
- Clarity regarding the internal project planning process.

The Framework has been updated to reflect this feedback, with refinements to pages 5 and 13.

Additionally, staff will integrate this feedback into the Engagement Toolkit and enhance communications on opportunities for public input into City Business Planning and key projects. Engagement with Katzie First Nations and Kwantlen First Nations will be undertaken through the City's Intergovernmental Relations team and the City's Indigenous Relations Strategy currently in development.

Strategic Alignment:

This work supports the Council's Strategic Priority of 'Engaged, Healthy Community' and advances the Council's Strategic Goal of improving community engagement with the City. Additionally, the Framework was identified by Council as an OKR (Objective and Key Result) – 'Establish a public participation and engagement framework.' Finally, this initiative will further enable Council's Strategic Priority of 'Governance and Corporate Excellence' by advancing the Strategic Goal of being accountable to the public through open and responsive governance.

Financial Impact:

This project draws from the \$15,000 approved in the 2024 budget for one-time project funding. The funds were used for consultant support to provide data analysis, research, expert review, and development of the Framework.

Applicable Legislation/Bylaw/Policy:

One change has been made to the Corporate Communications and Community Engagement Policy. Section 4 has been added to the Visual Identity and Brand Standards section to note that 'The City's image, logo, Coat of Arms, Crest and Flag, is trademarked and can only be used for the purposes of City business; and any request to use these for purposes outside of City business may only be approved by the City's Communications Department'.

CONCLUSION:

The final Framework, along with the updated Corporate Communications and Community Engagement Policy, will serve as a foundational tool to enhance communication between the City, residents, and businesses. It establishes a transparent, consistent, and accessible approach to engagement, ensuring that diverse perspectives contribute to decision-making processes. The Framework reflects the feedback received through two phases of engagement and provides clear guidelines on public participation. Staff are requesting Council's approval to implement the Framework and Policy to strengthen community involvement and trust in municipal decision-making.

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Attachments:

- (A) Community Engagement Framework
- (B) Corporate Communications and Community Engagement Policy
- (C) What We Learned Report

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Community Engagement Framework and Communications and Engagement Policy For Approval.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- A - Community Engagement Framework.pdf- B - Communications and Engagement Policy No. 5.57.pdf- C - What We Learned Report.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Mar 19, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Zvi Lifshiz, Director Strategic Development, Communications & Public Engagement

Corinn Howes, Deputy Corporate Officer

Scott Hartman, Chief Administrative Officer