A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to capture the essence of discussions that will inform development of the City of Vaughan Community and Stakeholder Engagement Policy and Procedure. Typically these two instruments are referred to collectively as an "engagement framework" and henceforth in this report as simply "the framework". This paper also proposes next steps as a point of departure for discussions and decisions that will guide development of these instruments.

B. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Pre-summit interviews and discussions during the summit identified a range of issues and opportunities facing the City as it establishes a more rigorous and transparent methodology to planning and designing engagements. These considerations and Corporate Management Team (CMT) comments about them (in response to the report) should be considered when developing the framework.

1. Types of Engagement

Vaughan is a large and complex organization servicing the needs of a growing and diverse community. The rationale for engagement is as varied as the community served. In general, the City has used two basic types of engagement: **rapport building** and decision s**upport**. It is understood widely by engagement practitioners that engagement always should be tied to a pending decision. Where staff resources are to be used for engagement, it is suggested they should be used to support the decision-making process. If there is no decision to be made by the City, then there is no possibility for engagement, in the classically sense of the word; hence, those activities are outside the scope of this framework.

2. Support to Engagement

Community and stakeholder engagement is fundamental to a healthy democracy, prosperity and, ultimately, a high quality of life in Vaughan. Capacity to conduct this type of engagement in an ongoing way requires a long-term financial and cultural commitment. City resources used to support engagement activities are decision-focused, stakeholder & community-centric, and values-driven (see Engagement Values and Principles, below). These values and guiding principles assure constituents / rate-payers that resources are being used wisely, in a frugal and non-partisan way.

3. Engagement Champion

As a service-based organization seeking excellence, the CMT recognizes, and is committed to, engaging the community and stakeholders in an on-going way, as a means of city building and improvement; as such, Vaughan will create internal capacity to undertake and support engagement. Part of this includes a centralized business function to coordinate, report, evaluate, foster, promote, and guide the function, as well as to manage common engagement infrastructure.

4. Engagement Infrastructure

To engage community and stakeholders in an appropriate, on-going and cost-effective way the City will require: a common commitment and understanding toward engagement, guidelines, appropriate skills, online capability, and planning and design tools.

5. Models of Engagement

There are common best practices that Canadian municipalities use to guide engagement. These provide a starting place for development of the Vaughan framework.

6. Horizontality

Engagement is not "extra work". It is the work of achieving service excellence and building an exceptional city; as such, it is a business function relevant to most Vaughan organizations. Customer-facing organizations and some managerial functions, such as budgeting, are responsible for reaching out to include community and stakeholder concerns and aspirations during decision making.

7. Engagement ROI

As a responsible steward of public resources, the City will track and report the effectiveness of engagement investment against specified goals and objectives.

C. DECISIONS REQUIRED

Some of the above issues / aspirations and elements of the CMT discussion from 9 September frame the decisions that are needed to drive development and implementation of the framework.

1. Moving forward: There is a clear consensus within the CMT that a more deliberate and rigorous approach to engagement is required. A date to announce the policy and procedure should be set, in order that an action plan can be finalized.

2. Policy elements: There are three important policy elements: engagement values, guiding principles, and roles and responsibilities. These should be refined and approved in order to initiate work on the engagement framework. Preliminary suggestions for each of these are provided below as a starting place for policy development.

3. Engagement champion: There is consensus that an engagement champion is required to establish and sustain the function. CMT needs to decide how (i.e. PMO[i]) and where the champion will reside.

4. Collaborative development: CMT agrees that engagements should be undertaken by those business units that "own" each decision (i.e. planning, capital development, budgeting, etc.) to be supported by an engagement initiative. The framework, therefore, should be developed by the champion with the support of an internal advisory committee. Membership should be reflective of the depth of interest each business unit holds in the engagement function.

5. Action plan: The engagement champion will require a *budget and access* to internal and likely external stakeholders as they develop the framework. A preliminary action plan is shown below as a starting point.

D. ENGAGEMENT VALUES

The City of Vaughan uses public resources in the best interests of the community it serves. The City will use some of these resources to engage community and stakeholders in shared decision making, in order to build and maintain trust-based relationships, when the impacts of decision making warrant it. The character of engagement is a demonstration of how the City values its relationship with the community and stakeholders.

In any engagement we pursue, we strive to build and live the following values:

Community Cohesion: A high quality of community life is based upon mutual understanding and respect among residents. This, in part, is achieved through dialogue to understand differing values and perspectives.

Healthy Democracy: Staff and Council work together respectfully and effectively to engage the community and stakeholders, in order to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of democratic processes.

Shared Meaning: Time will be taken to inform and educate stakeholders on the background – why an engagement is important and how the City will engage stakeholders and make decisions.

Mutual respect builds relationships: We respect perspectives and opinions as legitimate considerations in decision making without agreeing to them. This applies internally as well as with our external stakeholders.

Transparency: Building trust-based relations derives from open communication and sharing of information.

Honesty: Candid communication of the facts and decision intent creates substance for meaningful dialogue.

Accountability: The City is accountable for communicating factually what was heard and how this influences decision making.

E. ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The City engages with integrity. The values above show what is important to us. Engagement operating principles reflect the way we will engage – they govern the behaviour we seek to uphold. Our engagement always is guided by the following principles:

Impact sparks influence: What 'triggers' an engagement will be based upon the nature and significance of impacts the decision will have and the extent to which community and stakeholder input can influence the ultimate decision.

Purpose defines process: The process by which the pending decision will be made defines the engagement purpose and design.

Listening yields understanding: The City is committed to hearing the voices of those impacted by decision making and expects the community and stakeholders to listen for understanding as a basis to meaningful engagement.

Balanced views inspire confidence: We appreciate that many interests, aspirations and concerns attend all decisions and will help balance decision making based upon impacts.

Inclusivity drives quality deliberation: Engagement improves decision making when all the people and organizations impacted by the decision are at the table.

Meaningful process builds legitimacy: Those impacted by a decision have a legitimate opportunity to influence it.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Council

Council is the elected representative of the community and as such have latitude to engage their constituents as they see fit. Councilors are also seen as decision makers in most City decisions. It is important, therefore, to include Council and Councilors in the engagement process. (In most Canadian municipalities), the role of Council is to:

   a. review and approve the engagement framework to ensure it supports peace, order and good governance;
   b. oversee engagement activities to be sure they are adequate in consideration of the forecasted decision impacts;
   c. take measures to ensure constituents and other stakeholders are aware of pending decisions that might impact them and to ensure access to the engagement process;
   d. provide background information to their constituents and stakeholders so they can be engaged at a meaningful level;
   e. facilitate the involvement of constituents and stakeholders in the engagement process;
   f. encourage and support staff to plan and deliver engagements and participate in staff-led engagements with the City brand in mind;
   g. communicate the results of engagement, including the process by which the engagement was undertaken; and,
   h. consider the results of engagement activities in making decisions on behalf of the City

Staff

Staff is responsible for initiating and structuring engagements in a way that best serves the pending decision, the decision maker, and those impacted by the decision. The role of staff is to:

    a. identify the need for engagement as early as possible in the decision-making process;
    b. develop and facilitate engagement plans, using City of Vaughan engagement procedures and in conformance to the engagement policy;
    c. communicate and promote engagement opportunities, including to make meaningful background information available in advance of engagement;
    d. facilitate genuine, non-partisan dialogue;
    e. document the input gathered and confirm its accuracy;
    f. tabulate, analyze and report input in a factual way that directly supports of decision making;
    g. represent community and stakeholder input to the decision maker;
    h. conduct evaluation of engagement activities in order to:
        a. confirm process integrity,
        b. understand the extent to which objectives were reached,
        c. determine how the decision was influenced, and
        d. support of continuous improvement; and,
    i. follow up with engagement participants to communicate how their input has influenced the ultimate decision.

Engagement Champion

A centralized engagement champion (position or organization) will serve as a focal point for building engagement capacity and competency at the City. The role of the engagement champion is to:

    a. act as a single point of contact for community members or stakeholders wishing to engage the City;
    b. oversee on-going engagement to ensure consistent use of the framework;
    c. create competency development opportunities;
    d. establish, maintain and ensure engagement infrastructure is appropriate for the needs of Council and staff;
    e. oversee evaluation of engagements and collect evaluation results for reporting;
    f. coordinate engagements to guard against confusion or engagement fatigue during periods of multiple engagements;
    g. support staff by providing coaching and mentoring; and,
    h. empower teams to collaborate for cross-jurisdictional decisions / engagements.

Community and Stakeholders

In an engagement context, the term "public" refers to all those who are impacted by, or can impact, the decision-making process. In a municipal context, this means residents, people who work, go to school, recreate or travel through the City, people and organizations that own property or do business in Vaughan as well as internal stakeholders and other decision authorities who can impact the decision process. There is a clear role for community members and stakeholders to contribute their passion, innovative thinking, and personal and organizational resources to the process of engagement in Vaughan. The role for community members and stakeholders is to:

    a. be attentive to opportunities to become engaged with the City and the broader community;
    b. take the time to become aware of background information, prior to becoming engaged;

c.   request further information to enhance their contributions;
d.   participate so as to improve the quality of decision making in the public good;
e.   participate with good intent, honestly and in a manner that respects community members, stakeholders, Council and staff; and,
f.   offer suggestions that will improve the quality of future engagements.

G.   NEXT STEPS

A collaborative approach to development of both policy and procedures is proposed. The engagement champion will lead development based upon a CMT-approved action plan. A preliminary action plan is outlined below.

1. Review and comment on this report on discussions	23 Sep
2. Appoint engagement champion	
3. Establish internal advisory committee or virtual panel	
4. Develop draft policy and circulate for internal review (see #3)	
5. Finalize draft policy	
6. External engagement on draft policy	
7. Review and approval of policy by Council	
8. Establish external engagement advisory committee / baseline expectations	
9. Research to identify appropriate procedural elements	
10. Develop preliminary procedural guidance	
11. Seek internal feedback on preliminary draft	
12. Consolidate revisions into draft procedures	
13. Seek external feedback on draft procedures	
14. Consolidate external input and revise	
15. Present to CMT for approval	
16. Present to Council for approval	

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[i] Explore and decide:
- o   Is the corporate engagement function located in the PMO or elsewhere?
- o   If elsewhere, then where?
- o   If a PMO function, is it centralized with one or more people, or is it distributed across different organizations with the different functions allocated to separate individuals or organizations?

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