

City of Mississauga Corporate Report



Date: May 20, 2020

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Andrew Whittemore, M.U.R.P., Commissioner of
Planning & Building

Originator's files:
CD.21.COM

Meeting date:
May 27, 2020

Subject

Community Engagement for City Led Projects During COVID-19 Pandemic

Recommendation

That the report titled "Community Engagement for City Led Projects During COVID-19 Pandemic" and dated May 20, 2020, from the Commissioner of Planning and Building, outlining the principles for community engagement during the COVID-19 Pandemic, be endorsed.

Background

Many City services rely on community engagement as part of a legislative process or as best practice. This could include some combination of: direct mail letters and/or emails, direct calls (targeted audience), information booths, town hall meetings, engagement websites, surveys, pop up displays, open houses, workshops, and community meetings. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, formal community engagement associated with City projects was halted with the closure of City facilities and restrictions on in-person gatherings.

On April 22, 2020 Council postponed future Planning & Development Committee and Committee of Adjustment meetings, which effectively stopped any statutory public meetings for land use planning matters pursuant to the Planning Act. For other statutory public consultation under the Environmental Assessment Act, public meetings at Council are not required.

Presently there are approximately 49 projects with some form of planned community engagement for 2020 (see Appendix 1). The projects can be generally bundled into the following four categories:

- Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) / Master Plans pursuant to the Environmental Assessment Act (EA Act)
- City Led Capital Construction Projects
- City Operations e.g. Enforcement, Eplans
- Long Range Planning Strategies/Implementation Plans

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Appendix 1 illustrates a tentative schedule for projects identified at this time and may not be a complete listing of all projects.

Comments

Since the City's State of Emergency declaration on March 23, 2020, the financial and city building implications of delaying engagement for certain projects has increased. Staff have analysed the projects to identify those:

- with statutory engagement requirements
- deemed as "essential" projects under Ontario Regulation 82/20 – Closure of Non-Essential Businesses
- having a level of risk with further delay associated with project timing, cost, resources, development dependencies and quality of engagement

Using this analysis, projects were identified where proceeding with engagement is recommended (see Appendix 1). The table also identifies projects where postponing engagement is recommended due to lower operational and financial impacts.

Proposed Community Engagement Principles

If community engagement is to proceed, staff would consult in a consistent and well-considered manner respectful of the shared global pandemic experience. All engagement during the pandemic should apply the following principles:

- No in-person engagement until further notice
- Project Leads should work with the local Councillor on appropriate timing and engagement methods
- Virtual engagement sessions will be conducted through City supported technology tools (such as WebEx) and paired with universally accessible methods (e.g. individual telephone calls, direct mail notification, e-mails, online surveys)
- Engagement during popular vacation weeks and dates of significance should be avoided in keeping with regular practices
- It is assumed that the projects' individual engagement plans would identify the appropriate approach. Engagement outreach must not interfere with the City's COVID-19 related messaging
- For projects where postponing engagement is recommended, targeted engagement could still proceed with audiences currently operating "business as usual." This would include agencies, boards, other municipalities, utilities, consultants, major businesses etc. Broader community engagement would not occur until there is a change in Provincial direction enabling the larger

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population to achieve “business as usual” and Council has set direction regarding the recovery plan and approach.

Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan’s Connect Pillar speaks to building socially and physically connected communities. Community engagement fosters this objective.

Financial Impact

Project budgets include costs associated with community engagement and have approved Capital or Operational Budgets in place, no additional budget is required.

Conclusion

Staff recommend that City led community engagement resume and follow the principles set out in this report and generally aligned with the schedule in Appendix 1. Proceeding with community engagement for essential and priority projects fits with the City’s COVID-19 Recovery Framework.

Attachments

Appendix 1: COVID-19 Pandemic Transition Plan for City Community Engagement



Andrew Whitemore, M.U.R.P., Commissioner of Planning & Building

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