

CORPORATE POLICY AND PROCEDURE



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| POLICY | Accountability and Transparency Policy |
| CATEGORY | Corporate |
| AUTHORITY | Clerk's Office |
| RELATED POLICIES | Disposition of Surplus Property By-law (2008)-18515 Hiring of Employees Procurement of Goods and Services By-law (2009)18777 Notice to the Public Delegation of Authority Guiding Principles for Public Involvement Council Code of Ethics |
| REVISION DATE | Annually |

POLICY STATEMENT

Guelph City Council acknowledges that it is responsible to provide good government for its community stakeholders in an accountable and transparent manner by:

- Encouraging public access and participation to ensure that decision making is responsive to the needs of its constituents and receptive to their opinions;
- Delivering high quality services to our constituents; and
- Promoting the efficient use of public resources.

Accountability, transparency and openness are standards of good government that enhance public trust. They are achieved through the City adopting measures ensuring, to the best of its ability, that all activities and services are undertaken utilizing a process that is open and accessible to its community stakeholders. In addition, wherever possible, the City of Guelph will engage its stakeholders throughout its decision making process which will be open, visible and transparent to the public.

Guelph City Council also acknowledges that there will be matters that due to their very nature must be considered at meetings that are not open to the public, and when these occasions occur, the City of Guelph commits to compliance with the statutory requirements regarding closed meetings under S. 239 of the Municipal Act, 2001 (the Act).

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to comply with S. 270 of the Act which requires that all municipalities adopt and maintain a policy with respect to the manner in which the City of Guelph will try to ensure that it is accountable to the public for its actions, and the manner in which we will try to ensure that our actions are transparent to the public. This policy will provide guidance for the delivery of the City's activities and services in accordance with the principles as outlined herein.

DEFINITIONS

Accountability - The principle that the City of Guelph will be responsible to its stakeholders for decisions made and policies implemented, as well as its actions or inactions.

Transparency – The principle that the City of Guelph actively encourages and fosters stakeholder participation and openness in its decision making processes. Additionally, transparency means that the municipality’s decision making process is open and clear to the public.

Meeting – Any regular, or special or other meeting of council, of a local board or a committee of either of them.

The principles of accountability and transparency shall apply equally to the political process for decision making and to the administrative practices of the municipality.

POLICY REQUIREMENTS

“A” - Financial Matters

The City of Guelph will be open, accountable and transparent to its stakeholders in its financial dealings as required under the Act. Some examples of how the City of Guelph provides such accountability and transparency in its financial matters, are as follows:

- internal/external audit
- reporting/statements
- long term financial planning
- asset management
- purchasing/procurement
- disposition of surplus property
- budget process

“B” - Internal Governance

The municipality’s administrative practices ensure specific accountability on the part of its employees through the following initiatives:

- code of conduct for staff
- performance management and evaluation
- hiring policy
- orientation/continuing education
- health and safety
- work/life balance
- compensation/benefit
- commitment of senior management to ensure that administrative practices and procedures recognize Council’s commitment to accountability and transparency

“C” - Public Participation

The City of Guelph ensures that it is open and accountable to its stakeholders through implementing processes outlining how, when and under what rules meetings will take place. The City’s meetings will be open to the public when and as required under the Act, and members of the public will have an

opportunity to make delegations or submit comments in writing on specific items at these meetings. In addition, the City of Guelph has adopted guiding principles for public involvement which ensure that participation by the public can be meaningful and effective by encouraging participation that is:

- inclusive not exclusive
- voluntary
- purpose driven
- respectful of time and financial constraints
- open communication
- adaptable
- accessible to information and decision making
- respectful of for diverse interests
- regularly evaluated

These guidelines are available in the City Clerk's Office and on the [City's website](#).

“D” - Disclosure of Information

The City is committed to timely disclosure of information by various means including print media, websites, etc. Some specific examples include:

- The City's website www.guelph.ca
- The City News Page
- Use of various communication vehicles (newsletters, brochures, print and radio advertising, etc.)
- A robust media relations programme
- Direct communication with constituents (both verbal and written)
- Development of corporate communication strategies
- Public meetings and open houses on municipal initiatives
- Engagement of the public through an effective public consultation process, so as to receive and not just convey information.