

EC2022 - 0328

Public Hearing Process Improvements – Recommended Approaches

2022 March 15





Recommendations

That the Executive Committee recommend that Council:

1. Direct Administration to continue to develop strategies and tools for a user-friendly and inclusive public hearing process; and
2. Direct Administration to report to the Executive Committee with cost estimates for the implementation of an integrated and automated registration system no later than Q4 2022.



Key Messages

The Public Hearing Process Improvements:

- Allow us to evaluate the Public Hearing process using a citizen focused lens to deliver better service for citizens;
- Allow us to improve the presence of The City's commitment to anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusivity during Council and Committee meetings through awareness, education and implementing initiatives;
- Allow us to enhance and expand the Public Hearing information, tools and resources available online to improve clarity;
- Allow us to implement an integrated and automated technology solution for the Public Hearing registration process to improve the citizen experience and create efficiency; and
- Strengthens collaboration and coordination across The City to design possible solutions to support equitable and accessible public participation.



Why is this important?

- Feedback from Members of Council, ELT, and Administration is sought in the development and implementation of improvements to ensure the improvements reflect the desired outcomes of stakeholders.
- Investing in resources to improve the overall Public Hearing process will contribute to opportunities that support equitable decision making; improve services, transparency and public confidence; and encourage a more civically engaged population.
- Directly impacts how the public participates in municipal decisions.



Goals

Motion Arising

Citizen-Friendly

Improve how we deliver service and value to Calgarians and clarity around business processes

Inclusive

Reduce barriers that the public may experience when participating in a Public Hearing

Rethink to Thrive Strategy

Protect financial sustainability and optimize investment

Increase service efficiency and effectiveness

Build strong relationships through collaboration and communication

Provide great customer service by being open and accessible and responding to requests in a timely manner

Be innovative, tech-savvy and future-focused

Leverage technology, data and analytics to make better decisions and work smarter

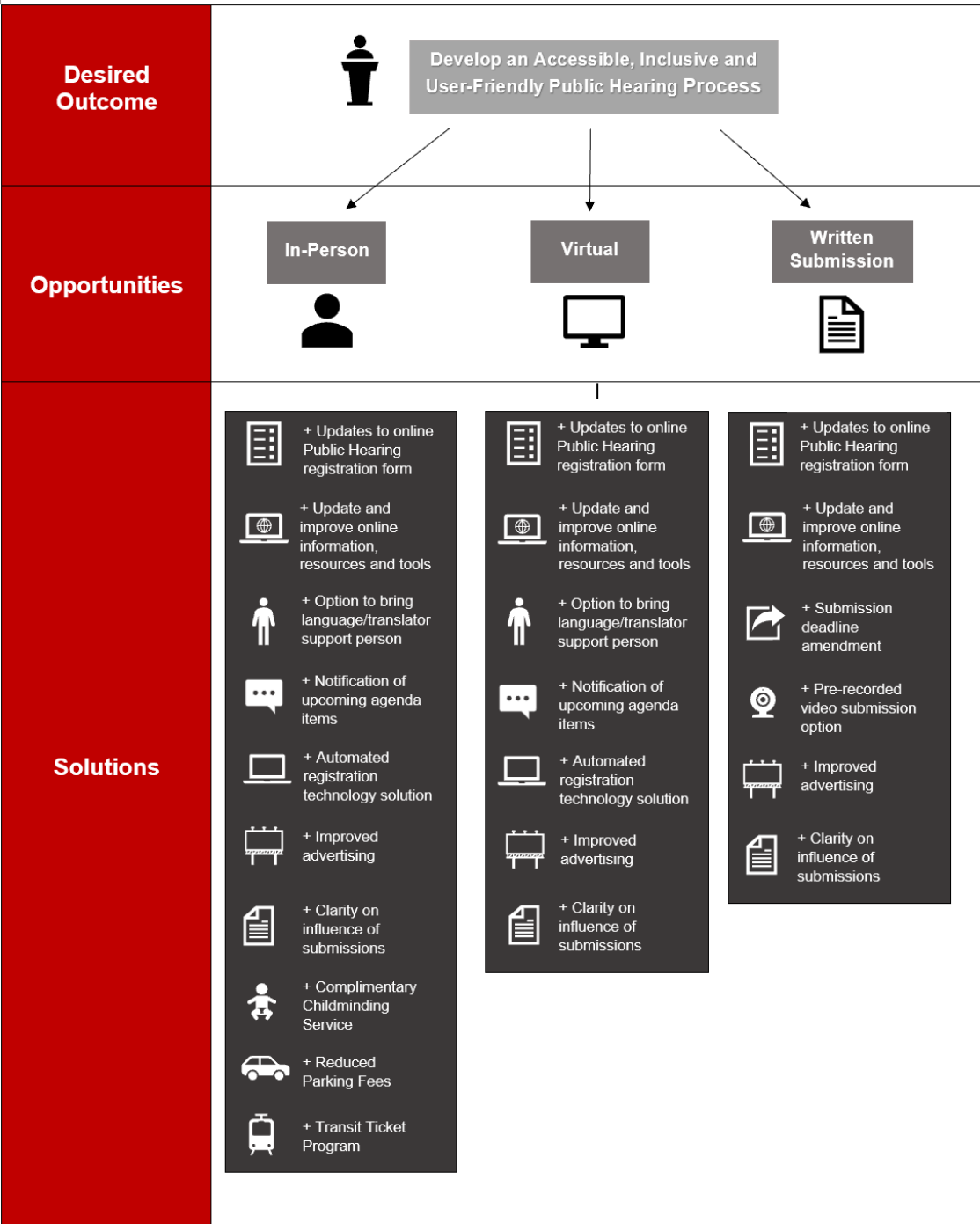


What We Heard – Public Engagement

Theme	What We Heard from Citizens* *prepared by the Corporate Research Team
Awareness and Knowledge of the Public Hearing process at The City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most respondents have some or high familiarity of the Public Hearing process. • Two thirds of respondents indicated that they have participated in a Public Hearing process in the past.
Experience with the Public Hearing process at The City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most respondents answered that their experience with the Public Hearing process is neutral, while many others shared varying levels of unsatisfied experiences. • Time concerns/Time Uncertainty was the top challenge faced by respondents (About half of the participants noted that waiting all day for their turn to speak without knowing a realistic time frame was a challenge they experienced).
Improvements to the Public Hearings process at The City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents gave many examples of how to improve the Public Hearing process. Among those, the top answers were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Clarity on influence of submission; o Respectful/Welcoming environment; and o More Times/Specific Times/Flexible Time/Time Management • The ability to pre-book a specific time to speak was the top response on how to make Public Hearings more user-friendly and accessible
Automated Public Hearing registration system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 90% of respondents indicated that they are in favour of using an automated (online) registration system to sign-up for Public Hearing opportunities. • Several respondents also indicated that it is crucial to offer options for registration to make it accessible for all Calgarians.

Opportunity Solution Tree

(Proposed Workplan outlined in Attachment 6)





Variables

Council

Council Meeting

- Number of Public Hearing speakers signed up for an item
- Number of Public Hearing items on a Council agenda
- Length of Council debate/
Questions of clarification to Administration
- Length of agenda items ahead of Public Hearing (e.g. length of confirmation of agenda, question period, recognitions, etc.)
- Recess Times (planned and unplanned)

Participants

What We Heard

- Awareness of Public Hearing item
- Formality of Council proceedings
- Perceptions, Environment or Experiences of Public Hearing
- Support and Information Access



Next Steps

1. Enhance the manual notification/communication process with Public Hearing participants, and monitor the City Clerk's Office capacity to support this operational business improvement until an automated technology solution is implemented in 2023 Q4

4. Implement an integrated and automated technology solution for the Public Hearing registration process by 2023 Q4

2. Enhance and expand the Public Hearing information, tools and resources available on calgary.ca throughout 2022 and complete by 2023 Q4

5. Collaborate with internal partners and leverage resources across The City to increase the awareness of and public participation in Public Hearings

3. Continue to promote The City's commitment to anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusivity during Council and Committee meetings through awareness and education

6. Conduct further research and engagement with non-users, diverse populations and community organizations/committees to design possible solutions to support equitable and accessible participation