



## COUNCIL POLICY

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**Policy Title: Transparency and Accountability Policy**

**Policy Number: CC039**

**Report Number: LGT2011-09**

**Approved by: Council**

**Effective Date: 2011 October 3**

**Business Unit: City Clerk's Office**

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### **BACKGROUND**

The City of Calgary is committed to conducting business in an open and transparent manner and creating a culture wherein Council and City of Calgary employees are aware of and understand the principles of transparency and accountability articulated through this policy, and will support and contribute to the spirit and intent of the policy. This policy reflects Council and The City's ongoing effort to support open, transparent and accountable local government.

This policy is also aligned with and supports the governance system targets regarding access in imagineCALGARY: "Target 1 by 2016, 80 per cent of Calgarians report that they feel government activity is open, honest, inclusive and responsive."

### **PURPOSE**

- To provide policies and overarching guidance for The City's activities, programs and services as outlined herein and augment existing City of Calgary policies, procedures and practices; and
- Define the manner in which City Council and The City of Calgary will ensure that it is transparent and accountable to the public for its actions.

### **APPLICABILITY**

- This policy applies to City Council, and all City of Calgary employees.

### **SCOPE**

- The principles of transparency and accountability apply to the political process and decision-making, to the administrative management of The City of Calgary and in The City's interactions with the citizens of Calgary.

## **Definitions**

For the purposes of this policy, The City of Calgary adopts the following definitions:

### **Transparency:**

The principle that The City of Calgary ensures the decision-making process is open and clear and actively encourages and fosters public participation in its decision-making processes to enhance public trust.

### **Accountability:**

The principle that The City of Calgary ensures access to clear and understandable information and is responsible to the public for decisions and actions.

## **POLICY**

The City of Calgary acknowledges its responsibility to operate in a transparent and accountable manner and shall provide good governance by committing to the following:

- Ensuring transparency and accountability of municipal operations and decision making;
- Taking responsibility for decisions and actions;
- Encouraging public access and participation to ensure that decision making is responsive to the needs of citizens and receptive to their opinions;
- Responding to the needs and opinions of citizens;
- Delivering high quality services to citizens; and
- Ensuring responsible/appropriate/prudent stewardship and efficient use of public resources.

## **Transparency and Accountability and Openness**

Transparency, accountability, and openness are essential elements of good government that enhance public trust. They are achieved through adopting policies and establishing processes that are open and accountable, which will guide The City of Calgary throughout the course of carrying out its duties and responsibilities.

The City of Calgary will promote and enable transparent, accountable and open municipal government guided by the following.

The City of Calgary shall:

- Conduct its business openly, honestly, and with integrity.
- Ensure decision-making is open, clear, transparent and accountable.
- Ensure the business of Council is open and easily available to the public through a variety of media.
- Make information accessible so that it is consistent with legislative requirements under the *Municipal Government Act* and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- Use transparency and accountability mechanisms, including public engagement that helps to ensure that Council decisions reflect citizen needs and priorities.
- Encourage and enable a culture of proactive disclosure throughout the corporation. Make use of best practices and routinely release Council records and non-confidential information to the public, while also protecting privacy.

- Manage financial resources and all City assets in an efficient and effective manner.
- Foster a safe environment that allows all stakeholders of this policy to participate freely, without fear of reprisal or retribution, supported through the Whistleblower Policy and program.

### **Transparency and Accountability Mechanisms and Practices**

Transparency is the foundation of accountability. The City of Calgary ensures transparency and accountability by way of various policies, procedures and practices that have been divided into the following categories:

#### **Financial Accountability, Oversight and Reporting**

An ongoing commitment to accountability and transparency in financial management is one of The City of Calgary's most strongly held values. Top quality financial reporting is essential if The City is to be fully accountable to citizens and other parties with an interest in government finances. The City will ensure sound financial oversight, governance of financial assets, and demonstrate effective stewardship of public funds through the following practices:

- Comprehensive annual financial statements
- Implementing, reviewing and maintaining a suite of Council Policies that ensure sound financial governance and accountability
- Implementing, reviewing and maintaining a suite of financial Administration Policies that ensure sound financial governance and accountability
- Accountability reports to Council and citizens on business plans and budgets in accordance with in the Multi-Year Business Planning and Budgeting Policy (CFO004)
- The annual report to Calgarians

#### **Reporting of Council Expenses**

City Council is committed to transparency and accountability by reporting Ward expenses related to salaries of assistants, communications, business expenses, travel, courses and seminars.

- In accordance with Council direction, the Office of the Aldermen shall post updated Ward Expense Reports on a quarterly basis on The City's website.
- Publishing the Mayor's Office expenses on a quarterly basis on The City's website.

#### **Performance Measurement and Reporting**

The City of Calgary is accountable to citizens and enhances transparency throughout the corporation by implementing various results-orientated tools to measure progress on the achievement of performance measures, service standards, goals and Council's priorities. The City of Calgary is dedicated to producing performance information that measures how The City is doing in all areas over which it has responsibility, from financial reporting to service delivery, including:

- Accountability reports to Council and citizens on business plans and budgets in accordance with the Multi-Year Business Planning and Budgeting Policy (CFO004);
- Use of benchmarking, performance measures and best practices information to improve service effectiveness and efficiency and communicate to citizens the cost and value of services they receive for their tax dollars;
- Developing strategies and processes to measure and report on the Corporation's response to service requests from citizens through the 3-1-1 Customer Service Request (CSR) system; and
- Providing The City's annual report to Calgarians.

### **Open Government: Committee and Council Meetings**

The City of Calgary is accountable and transparent to taxpayers by providing governance in an open manner. The following are policies, procedures and practices that reflect The City of Calgary's ongoing effort to improve the ease-of-access and transparency of the legislative process to ensure citizens are aware of how decisions are made and carried out:

- The conduct of Council and Committee meetings shall be governed by The City of Calgary Procedure Bylaw 35M2017 - which complies with the relevant provisions of the *Municipal Government Act*.
- The Procedure Bylaw 35M2017 ensures that all meetings are open to the public, as required under the *Municipal Government Act* Section 197 (1) except where it is appropriate and permitted to consider a matter in a closed meeting as per subsection (2) or (2.1).
- Under 197, subsection 2 of the *Municipal Government Act*, Councils and Council Committees may close all or part of their meetings to the public if a matter to be discussed is within one of the exceptions to disclosure in Division 2 of Part 1 of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- A municipal planning commission, subdivision authority, development authority or subdivision and development appeal board established under Part 17 may deliberate and make its decisions in meetings closed to the public under 197 subsection 2.1 of the *Municipal Government Act*.
- Citizens shall be provided with a range of opportunities to participate in Committee meetings and Council Public Hearings.
- In accordance with Council's "Recordings of Legislative Meetings Policy," video recordings of Regular Council and Standing Policy Committee meetings shall be made available to the public on the Internet for a period of three (3) years from the date of the meeting.

### **Access to Council Records and Decisions**

One of City Council's priorities is to make it easier for citizens to get the information they need. The following policies and practices will enhance citizens' access to Council records and decisions.

- All Council, Standing Policy Committee, and Special Committee agendas shall be posted online on The City of Calgary's website for the public to access once

published and are available for citizens to access at any time by searching the Council record.

- All reports and other documents considered by Council and Committee shall be made available to the public at the meeting at which they are being considered, except where a report or document is held confidential under the FOIP Act.
- All reports and other documents not falling into the confidential category under the FOIP Act shall be released to the public.
- All Committee and Council minutes shall be made available to the public once confirmed by Council, except any specific portions that are held confidential under the FOIP Act.
- Agenda cover pages for in-camera meetings shall be made public containing as much information as possible on the items for discussion without revealing confidential or personal information.
- All Policies adopted by Council shall be posted in the Council Policy Library on The City of Calgary's website and be made available to the public.

### **Public Engagement**

The City of Calgary recognizes the value that citizens contribute to planning, delivering and evaluating City programs and services. The City of Calgary will engage the public throughout its decision making process. This process will be open, visible and transparent, while balancing the need for the decision making process to be efficient and effective by adhering to the following:

- Wherever possible, The City shall engage citizens and provide opportunities for citizens to participate in and provide feedback on City programs and services and clarify their priorities about how tax dollars should be spent.

### **Responsibilities**

City Council and City employees are responsible for:

- Building public trust and adhering to the parameters of this policy and for ensuring accountability for their actions and transparency of municipal operations.
- Promoting and maintaining a culture of transparency and accountability at The City of Calgary.

### **PROCEDURE**

Successful implementation requires the commitment of City Council and the leadership of The City Manager and senior management to ensure the policies and practices are adhered to throughout the corporation and in all interactions with the citizens of Calgary.

### **Alignment with City of Calgary Policies, Priorities and Plans**

- imagineCALGARY
- Council's Fiscal Plan for Calgary 2012-2014
- Code of Conduct for City Employees
- Whistle Blower Policy
- Access Impact Assessment Policy
- Privacy Impact Assessment Policy

- Integrated Risk Management Policy
- Suite of Council Policies that ensure sound financial governance and accountability
- Suite of Financial Administration Policies that ensure sound financial governance and accountability

**AMENDMENTS**

<b>Date of Council Decision</b>	<b>Report / Bylaw</b>	<b>Description</b>
2017 July 31	PFC2017-0433 Bylaw 35M2017	Bylaw 44M2006 is repealed and replaced with Procedure Bylaw 35M2017.
2019 April 2		Changed to refer to the Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget Policy (CFO004) for Accountability Reporting.