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Public Consultation and Support Plan

Information Report

Report Number: ES 2018-02

Department(s): Engineering Services

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In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any member of Council may make a request to the Town Clerk that this Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

Purpose

This Information Report provides an update regarding the Public Consultation and Support Plan adopted by Town Council.

Background

At its regular meeting of December 5, 2016, Town Council adopted the Public Consultation and Support Plan for transportation-related matters, with the requirement that staff monitor and review its effectiveness and report back to Town Council in 2018 with any needed changes.

The "Public Consultation and Support Plan" forms part of the "Town-wide Traffic Mitigation Strategy", which is also under review. The Plan provides processes for trackable and transparent reviews to support community requests regarding traffic matters. The intended purpose of the Plan was to confirm community support prior to undertaking traffic studies. The effect would be to improve efficiencies, reduce costs, and reduce the number of studies and reports to Town Council by eliminating those that had little or no community support. The plan is also an efficiency measure that ties into two of the five themes outlining Council's top Strategic Priorities for 2014-2018 ("Community Engagement" and "Traffic Safety and Mitigation"). Furthermore, the Plan also supports two of the Town Senior Leadership Team's vision for creating an environment for extraordinary public service, by "Matching Resources with Priorities" and improving "Communication".

Discussion

In early 2017, the Public Consultation and Support Plan was created in the format of a Town corporate policy. That format made it difficult for many to understand. As a result, Town Councillors, Customer Service, and the public requested a more understandable and simple version of the policy. In response to the request for a simpler document, Communications staff worked with Customer Service and Engineering Services staff to produce the “Road Rules” document. After some testing of the “Road Rules”, the document was revised and a second version was created which is now in permanent use (see Appendix A).

The following table shows the measured workflow before (2016) and after (2017) the implementation of the new policy.

	2016	2017
No. of traffic/parking reports to Council	10	3*
No. of reports with changes to staff recommendations by Council	5	n/a
No. of requests requiring data collection and analysis but no report**	14	0
Customer Service CRM requests (traffic-related only)	44	53

**these 3 reports came very late in 2017 and will be brought to Council in 2018.*

***typical example: a request for speed mitigation on a street that demonstrated low levels of speeding (below policy limits), resulting in deployment of a radar speed board.*

In the table above, the Customer Service CRM requests (traffic-related only) is the number of inquiries received from the community that were specifically related to traffic matters. This number is not inclusive of all traffic and parking related requests. But it does show that activity was comparable in 2016 and 2017. Therefore, the dramatic reduction in traffic/parking reports required after the implementation of the new Plan is not indicative of a reduction in requests by the community. It should be noted that the bulk of requests received through Customer Service can usually be handled without any additional study or data collection. They are very simple inquiries. However, what the table clearly shows is that, as a result of the new Plan, a single resident can no longer trigger changes in street parking or traffic calming without first having the support of the neighbourhood that will be affected by the changes. This has made the process much more efficient and clear for residents, staff and Council.

Here are some successes of the Public Consultation and Support Plan:

- a) It provides a clear, traceable, trackable and transparent process;
- b) With the creation of the Road Rules document, the instructions to residents have become very concise and easier to understand;
- c) Fewer Council reports means less time spent by Council and Staff on requests that have no community support or reports that recommend no changes;

- d) There are additional efficiencies and cost savings as a result of fewer requests that require additional work and unnecessary data collection, analysis and review.

Some of the challenges have been:

- a) Shifting the responsibility to the community in terms of now having to demonstrate community support before bringing an issue forward;
- b) At first, the Plan was complicated to follow, but the creation of the Road Rules document has greatly simplified the process.

Conclusion

The Public Consultation and Support Plan has been working as expected and no changes are required. It should be noted that Staff did not receive requests in all categories of traffic issues, so not all processes have been triggered to action as of yet. There may be future opportunities to modify the Plan to address any new challenges that do arise. Engineering staff will continue to monitor the Plan and will inform Town Council of any changes required.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

Well-planned and connected...strategically planning for the future to improve information access and enhance travel to, from and within Newmarket.

Consultation

No formal public consultation was undertaken with respect to implementing the new Plan. However, a Public Information Centre (PIC) was held in 2017, during which the Queen Street traffic-calming pinch point combined with LID pilot installation was presented. Also, Transportation Services staff sent out notices to residents who live near any traffic-calming bollard installations to inform them of the program and the purpose of the bollards. Staff also provided additional information to Ward Councillors on request.

Human Resource Considerations

No impact to Human Resources

Budget Impact

Operating Budget (Current and Future)

No impact.

Capital Budget

No impact.

Attachments

See Appendix A: Road Rules document

Contact

For more information on this report, please contact Mark Kryzanowski, Manager, Transportation Services, at 905-953-5300, press "2", then extension 2508 (or mkryzanowski@Newmarket.ca).

Approval



Mark Kryzanowski, Manager
Transportation Services



Rachel Prudhomme, Director
Engineering Services



Peter Noehammer, Commissioner
Development & Infrastructure Services

APPENDIX A

“ROAD RULES” DOCUMENT



ROAD RULES: TRANSPORTATION REQUEST PROCESS



The following describes the process for transportation related requests within the Town of Newmarket. Please see below for further details of specific requests.

LOCATION-SPECIFIC ISSUES

STREET SIGNAGE



MAKING A REQUEST:
Member(s) of Council makes a request to Director of Engineering.

AFTER THE REQUEST IS MADE:
Town staff will review Ontario Traffic Council criteria and guidelines, conduct additional studies and consult with nearby affected households (three households on either side of the sign location) and if needed, review engineering concerns or safety factors.

MAKING A DECISION:
Staff decide whether the request should be approved and report the results directly to the Councillor and any affected households.

REQUEST FOR STOP SIGNS



MAKING A REQUEST:
Requests are made to a Ward Councillor, Regional Councillor or Mayor during a Committee of the Whole meeting by members of public.

AFTER THE REQUEST IS MADE:
If directed by Council, Town staff will:

- conduct studies of the intersection
- consult with affected households nearby (three households on either side of any proposed stop-sign location)
- review engineering concerns or safety factors

MAKING A DECISION:
Staff submit recommendations at Committee of the Whole meeting. Council decides whether the request should be approved.

SCHOOL CROSSINGS



MAKING A REQUEST:
Requests are made to a Ward Councillor, Regional Councillor or Mayor at a Committee of the Whole meeting by School Board or School Councils.

AFTER THE REQUEST IS MADE:
If directed by Council, Town staff will:

- conduct studies
- consult with affected households nearby (three households on either side of the proposed location)
- review engineering concerns or safety factors

MAKING A DECISION:
Staff submit recommendations at Committee of the Whole meeting. Council decides whether the request should be approved.

COMMUNITY-WIDE ISSUES

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ROUTES (BIKE LANES, TRAILS AND ROADS)



MAKING A REQUEST:
Staff to notify Council.

AFTER THE REQUEST IS MADE:

- Notify or consult with all households fronting or flanking the street/study area.
- Communicate Public Information Centre on project through social media and Town Page ads.

MAKING A DECISION:
Staff submit recommendations at a Committee of the Whole meeting. Council decides whether the request should be approved.

Please note that decisions on transportation related issues may be re-evaluated after a two-year period.



ROAD RULES: TRANSPORTATION REQUEST PROCESS



The following describes the process for transportation related requests within the Town of Newmarket. Please see below for further details of specific requests.

STREET-SPECIFIC ISSUES

PARKING RESTRICTIONS



MAKING A REQUEST:

Residents submit a petition to their Ward Councillor, Regional Councillor or Mayor to present at a Committee of the Whole meeting. Petition must have 25% support or more of the households on that street or section of the street.

AFTER THE REQUEST IS MADE:

If directed by Council –

- A survey is distributed to the affected households (50% or more must respond to this survey for process to continue and 60% or more of responses should be positive). The process ends if there is not enough support.
- Review engineering concerns or safety factors if there is enough support for the changes.

MAKING A DECISION:

Staff submit recommendations at a Committee of the Whole meeting. Council decides whether the request should be approved.

TRAFFIC CALMING



MAKING A REQUEST:

To request a change to existing traffic-calming measures along a street, residents submit a petition to their Ward Councillor, Regional Councillor or Mayor to be presented at a Committee of the Whole meeting. Petition must have 25% support or more of the households on that street, with a minimum number of 10 households interested in considering a change to traffic-calming measures.

AFTER THE REQUEST IS MADE:

If directed by Council –

- A survey is distributed to the affected households (50% or more must respond to this survey for process to continue and 60% or more of responses should be positive). The process ends if there is not enough support.
- Review engineering concerns or safety factors if there is enough support for the changes.

MAKING A DECISION:

Staff submit recommendations at a Committee of the Whole meeting. Council decides whether the request should be approved.

OTHER ISSUES/GENERAL GUIDELINES

MAKING A REQUEST:

Requests made by Ward Councillor, Regional Councillor or Mayor at Committee of the Whole meeting.

AFTER THE REQUEST IS MADE:

If directed by Council –

- Determine if there are operational or safety issues.
- Evaluate if community decision issues meet requirement of 50% return on surveys with 60% positive support for requested change.
- Review engineering concerns or safety factors if there is enough support for the requested change.
- Notify households that are directly impacted and affected by the requested change.

MAKING A DECISION: Staff submit recommendations at a Committee of the Whole meeting. Council decides whether the request should be approved.