

### 3.1 Scoping Document -- A Framework for Public Engagement in the City of St. John's

The City of St. John's is interested in building a new approach to public engagement – *one that facilitates dialogue with the right people, using the right tools, at the right time* on subject areas of mutual interest.

“One size fits all” does not apply to public engagement. Instead, public engagement is a systemic process, guided by agreed upon principles, and a continuum of decision making. To achieve success, the City must apply an agreed upon engagement framework consistently and employees using the framework must have a shared understanding of how it is applied. Engagement impacts the whole of the organization and the entire organization must be involved in establishing and using the framework. As well, it must have built in to its application, a means by which to measure success and learn from mistakes. There is a role for everyone in public engagement, from front-line service to Mayor.

The ultimate **goals** of any effective public engagement program include:

- Improving/informing decision making and programming;
- Creating space for ALL citizens to feel involved and listened to;
- Sharing information and welcoming different points of view;
- Generating new ideas and solutions that can be owned by the City and/or stakeholders;
- Building trust;
- Understanding the needs and priorities of the community.

Achieving these goals through public engagement can help the City:

- save time and effort on the back end of projects;
- avoid delays;
- manage expectations;
- inform spending in program areas.

#### Continuum of Engagement

Sharing Information	Consultation Involve - Collaborate		Active Participation Empower	
<i>Public engagement Building Blocks</i>				
Sharing information to build awareness	Testing ideas or concepts to build knowledge	Collaborating to build commitment	Sharing decision making to build ownership	Delegating decision making to build responsibility
<i>The purpose of this level of involvement is</i>				
To present information to the public about issues that may affect them.	To provide information and receive feedback or comment	To involve stakeholders in the development of solutions	To partner with stakeholders in the development of recommendations	To give stakeholders the responsibility for making the decision.

The Office of Strategy and Engagement is proposing that the City of St. John's develop a toolbox to guide the engagement process based on the continuum above. There are many best practices to draw from which will be explored.

## Next Steps

### First three months

#### **Create a public forum and “buzz”**

- Determine how to engage the public right from the start. Create a Public Engagement Facebook Forum and create a Public Engagement Task Force comprised of elected officials, city officials, members of the public and key stakeholder groups to help inform the framework. This starts the dialogue in a positive and relevant manner and creates ownership.

#### **Conduct an Internal inventory**

- Complete an internal inventory of what the City currently does around public engagement – public meetings/hearings, consultations, surveys, and others. How do we measure success? What does success look like? What’s missing?
- Identify key stakeholder groups – by department -Who are we engaging with and why? Are these the right groups? Subgroups/ Who’s missing?
- Determine corporate-wide engagement strategy and determine fit with the Public Engagement Framework, i.e. internal engagement, intranet, service excellence, etc..

#### **Develop Framework**

- Develop the framework based on input and best practices; develop policy and guiding principles to be approved by appropriate City committees/officials.
- Develop a theme/tagline

## Winter 2014

- Develop appropriate Public Engagement Tools and Guidelines for use –online and paper-based in partnership with other departments
- Train internal resources in the use of these tools
- Keep the dialogue going with the Task Force and the Facebook Forum
  - Keep them informed of the progress
  - Ask for feedback
- Develop communications strategy for launch and roll out.

## Spring 2014

- Launch ‘St. John’s speaks...’ Framework to the public based on communication strategy
- Continued communication with Task Force and Facebook Forum – continue to build the momentum and determine how we are doing...
- Ongoing evaluations and regular check ins
  - Adjustments where required
  - Updates to Council
  - Celebrate successes

The City of St. John’s, like many other municipalities throughout the world, is interested in applying public engagement as an effective tool for dialogue and strategic direction. The key to success is doing it right. Many of the City’s strategies, including Roadmap 2021, the Municipal Plan, Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan, among others, are utilizing engagement tools and making note of the City’s intentions to do more in this area.