



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

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TO: Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets

FROM: General Manager of Corporate Services in consultation with Director of Planning and CEO Vancouver Economic Development Commission ("the VEDC")

SUBJECT: A Process for Alerting Council to Economic Impacts of Major Decisions coming before Council - Vancouver Economic Development Commission ("the VEDC") Policy Advice Pilot Process

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council authorize the VEDC and City Staff to move forward with testing the Policy Advice Pilot Process on two test cases selected, namely:

- Municipal Wireless Broadband and Digital Community; and
- False Creek Flats Planning

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

General Manager Corporate Services:

The General Manager of Corporate Services supports the recommendations made in this report. This initiative outlines a mechanism to more effectively engage VEDC and leverage its expertise in providing valuable economic input to the City.

General Manager Community Services:

The General Manager of Community Services supports the Recommendation of this report. The False Creek Flats planning program provides a good opportunity to assess the contribution

that the VEDC can make (given its current resource capacity) in adding a broader strategic economic perspective to the more focussed stakeholder interests.

COUNCIL POLICY

Council has a policy of contracting with the VEDC for the provision of economic development services through a service contract. The contract is renewable every 3 years at the discretion of Council; provided that any obligation of the City to provide funding for each year of the 3-year contract will be subject to an annual review of the operating and financial results, and audited financial statements for the preceding year; and Council approval of the business plan and operating budget for the upcoming year. Current agreement allows the City to terminate the service contract on 90-day notice.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is:

- To outline a Policy Advice Pilot Process in order for Council to obtain VEDC's input into economic impacts of major decisions coming before Council.
- To obtain approval to test the Pilot Process on two test cases selected by the VEDC and City staff.

BACKGROUND

In May 2006 Council passed a motion stating that Council values the creation of jobs, investment and economic opportunity in the City and that many Council decisions have an impact on the economic viability and health of the City. When decisions are brought before Council, social, environmental, financial and legal impacts are often briefly outlined for Council's attention.

On July 20, 2006, Council passed a motion adopting the document "Guiding Principles - Economic Development in the City of Vancouver" to give direction to the VEDC for its Economic Development (Business Climate) Strategy and to inform wider City strategies, planning, and policy development and decision making. These are statements of purpose that define how the City and its appointees will make decisions pertaining to the City's economy. Until the Economic Development (Business Climate) Strategy is developed (phase I currently underway) and more specific economic goals are articulated, these Guiding Principles will provide context for policy, resource allocation and assist in priority setting.

6 Guiding Principles for Economic Development	
1	Competitive Business Climate
Vancouver will establish a competitive business climate that puts the City ahead of competitor jurisdictions.	
2	World Class Industry Clusters
Vancouver will identify, grow and build world-class-oriented industry clusters that contribute to a diverse resilient economy.	
3	Strategic Infrastructure Investment
Vancouver will make investments in infrastructure that are strategic, sustainable and focused to deliver economic returns to the City.	
4	High Quality of Life
Vancouver will maintain a high quality of life that attracts and retains skilled and talented workers required to drive the City's economy.	
5	Regional Collaboration
Vancouver will work collaboratively towards regional economic development.	
6	Sustainability
The City of Vancouver will be a global leader in sustainability practices, balancing social, environmental and economic considerations for the benefit of both residents and business.	

Part of the VEDC's mandate is to provide policy advice and recommendations as requested by Council as a whole or as directed by the VEDC Board. Council has indicated its interest in drawing upon the opinions and perspectives of the VEDC's business-based volunteer Board to provide an economic context to policy decisions as required, taking into consideration VEDC's resource capacity, respecting the time of volunteer Board members', and taking into consideration the timing of VEDC Board meetings (3rd Wednesday of each month) and Committee meetings (1st Wednesday of each month), while meeting Council's goal of securing timely input. On May 2 2006, Council directed the City Manager and VEDC report back on a process for alerting Council to economic impacts of major decisions coming before council.

DISCUSSION

Selection Criteria:

The following selection criteria were used in order to select two test cases for the Policy Advice Pilot Process:

- Issues that have potential long-term economic impact to the City.
- Issues that are at an early enough stage where VEDC can provide thoughtful and timely input.
- Issues that VEDC's volunteer based board can provide high level analysis / input.
- Issues where VEDC's perspective adds value to Council decision making.

Sources of Requests for VEDC Input:

The sources of requests for VEDC input into City policy can come in a variety of ways. For example:

1. Initiated by VEDC Board Members.
2. VEDC receives a request from another organization.
3. Council refers an issue to VEDC.
4. City Staff refer an issue to VEDC.
5. City Staff invites VEDC as part of a larger stakeholder group.

Given the purpose of this process is to develop a mechanism in which VEDC provides Council with input on the economic impacts of major decisions coming before Council, sources 3 and 4 above will be discussed further.

Step by Step Process:

The following describes the generic process that will take place to obtain VEDC's input for sources 3 and 4 above. Note that this generic, step by step process will likely be customized to suit the specific program/project/issue referred and the consultation process involved.

1. Issue referred to VEDC by either Council or City Staff →
2. Background information is provided to VEDC by City Staff and joint briefing meeting takes place if necessary →
3. VEDC Strategic Issues Committee reviews the issue and City Staff present to VEDC if necessary →
4. VEDC Strategic Issues Committee prepares a report and or recommendations for VEDC Board discussion or VEDC Board receives report/recommendations for discussion/decision from City Staff →
5. Approved VEDC report/recommendations are provided back to Council or VEDC Reports back to City staff with recommendations/comments and City Staff report to Council on the issue, incorporating VEDC feedback →
6. Council makes a decision.

Refer to Appendix A for a generic process map.

Test Cases Selected:

In light of the selection criteria, VEDC and City Staff have selected the following two test cases:

1. Municipal Wireless Broadband and the Digital Community:

Source of Request - Council Refers Specific Issue to VEDC

Overview: A number of cities around the world have established wireless broadband infrastructure to support delivery of government services and enhance economic development. In early 2006, the City of Vancouver commissioned a study to review the benefits of wireless initiatives, the role of municipalities in providing wireless infrastructure, and provide implementation models for consideration. A white paper entitled Municipal Wireless Broadband and the Digital Community was created March 27 2006 by Civitum consulting firm, a consulting firm for municipal broadband and digital Community initiatives.

Information Technology has received the white paper and are in the process of preparing a report to Council to outline recommended next steps.

Input to be provided by VEDC: The VEDC Board received a copy of the white paper on November 15th, 2006. The paper was referred to a VEDC Strategic Issues sub-committee for review and comment on the following recommendations made in the white paper:

Conduct a Comprehensive Study to address the following:

- Political and Regulatory Compliance: Identify and consider pertinent National, Regional and Local regulations to determine legal requirements of a municipal wireless broadband initiative, including RF related issues.
- Comprehensive Community Stakeholder Analysis: Perform an extensive community needs assessment that includes a more balanced representation of all major stakeholders.
- Model Selection: Determine which municipal broadband model and associated funding strategy best meets the identified objectives for the City of Vancouver.
- RFI/RFP Development: Create and release a request for information/request for proposal outlining the requirements of building a solution that meets the needs to the City and community.

The VEDC sub-committee will meet with City Staff to obtain background, discuss the consultants report and review the consultant's recommendations. The VEDC subcommittee will then meet to discuss the issue and draft a short 2 page memo providing comments/recommendations back to Council.

2. False Creek Flats Planning:

Source of Request - City Staff refers an issue to VEDC

Overview: In 2004 Council approved a two phase planning process to create a long range land use and transportation plan for the 308 acre False Creek Flats area. The plan is to look at ways of better integrating the edges of the Flats with surrounding communities, as well as to maintain its role in port-related and city-serving industries and businesses. The work was to occur in two phases:

- Phase one: Initial scoping phase involving all stakeholders in the discussion of the appropriate range of issues and process for the plan, as well as to undertake basic research.
- Phase two: Long range planning based on the Terms of Reference developed in Phase One.

Phase one was completed in the fall of 2005. At that time the key staff on the project had to move on to the Southeast False Creek Olympic Village project to ensure its completion on a fixed timeline. A report back to Council with the Terms of Reference is anticipated in early 2007, with phase two work taking place in the 12 months thereafter.

Input to be provided by VEDC: After consulting with VEDC Staff, Planning Staff will outline VEDC participation in the Terms of Reference mentioned above. There are many stakeholders in the False Creek Flats planning process, and it is important that the VEDC's particular role is

articulated clearly. The Flats is a major project with various phases including research, development of policy options, and evaluation and selection of policy options. The work program will need to provide for the VEDC Strategic Issues Committee to be in touch at each stage of the project, not just at the end of the project.

Results of the Policy Advice Pilot Process:

At the end of each pilot project, an assessment of the process will take place. Prior to the first assessment, Corporate Services Staff, the departments involved in the pilot projects (Information Technology and Planning), and VEDC staff will develop an assessment method that will seek the insights of City Staff, VEDC staff and VEDC Board Committee members. Results of the process including lessons learned, issues identified by stakeholders and recommendations will be documented throughout the pilot process and or upon completion. Once both pilot projects are complete, the assessments and recommendations for future VEDC involvement will be reported back to Council.

Note: There are resource implications to VEDC for these pilots in terms of staff time and Board Committee meetings and VEDC is therefore not in a position to perform detailed analysis on the two test cases selected. City Staff must also take into consideration the timing of VEDC's Board and Committee meetings to ensure VEDC's input is received in a timely fashion: Board meetings occur 3rd Wednesday of each month and Committee meetings occur on the 1st Wednesday of each month.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications to the City.

CONCLUSION

This report has outlined a Policy Advice Pilot Process developed in order to obtain VEDC input into economic impacts of major decisions coming before Council. Two cases have been selected by the VEDC and City Staff to test the process. The VEDC and City staff are requesting authorization to move forward with the selected two test cases and upon completion of the Pilot Process will report back to Council on the results of the pilot process and provide a recommendation on what the process should look like in the future.

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Appendix A: Policy Advice - Generic Process

