

Table 1 – Policy Number: CR-6 – Policy Name: Public Consultation

CR-6 PUBLIC CONSULTATION	
LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE / AUTHORITY	N/A
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REPORTING REQUIREMENT	Annual compliance reporting

BOARD POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The Ottawa Police Services Board recognizes the importance of well conceived external communications and consultation in promoting public understanding of Ottawa Police policies, programs and services, and providing the Board and Service with a critical insight into public attitudes and expectations. It values public consultation as a means to address the expectations of the citizens of Ottawa, and to achieve improved policies, programs and initiatives in serving the public. The Ottawa Police Services Board is committed to ensuring that administrative and policy processes are open and accessible, respectful of the public's right to be involved, and responsive to the public need for information and feedback.

This policy provides direction to the Chief of Police and a framework for a process of engagement with the public in order to solicit their views as an integrated part of the decision-making process at the Ottawa Police Service.

The Public Consultation policy supports the Police Service's vision statement and is fundamental to acquiring public trust, understanding and support for the actions of the Police Service and Police Services Board.

2. GOALS

The goals of the Board's Public Consultation policy are:

- a) To provide an opportunity to every citizen who wishes to be heard on issues

within the Board's jurisdiction.

- b) To recognize citizens as a source of information and education for decision-making.
- c) To provide the public with sufficient and comprehensible information about the Service's mandate, services and programs.
- d) To provide a timely and comprehensive response to public requests for information.
- e) To address the impacts of Police Service decisions on the community.
- f) To ensure the Police Service is kept informed about public opinion and community aspirations.
- g) To develop and maintain a trusting, positive, cooperative relationship between the Police Service and its citizens.
- h) To improve the quality of Police Service decisions and actions.

3. BENEFITS

The benefits of public consultation include:

- a) Being responsive to the community's right to know and to be involved, as well as the Police Services Board's obligation to make decisions on behalf of the community;
- b) Recognizing the value of the opinions and expertise offered by members of the public;
- c) Acknowledging public sensitivity to change in the community and its desire to participate effectively in policy and program development processes;
- d) Ensuring information and knowledge is shared with and/or received from the public;
- e) Providing opportunities to build consensus around issues or changes; and
- f) Encouraging active public promotion regarding implementation of Police Service initiatives.

4. PRINCIPLES

The Chief of Police shall ensure that the following general practices and principles are adopted throughout the organization:

- a) A climate is created in which public consultation is utilized as a management

function;

- b) Consultation and communications planning is integrated within the overall organization and strategic planning;
- c) Cooperation and liaison exists between consultation staff and communication staff both within the Service and with other partners and outside agencies;
- d) The consultation process involves the right level of accountability and participants for the consultation process;
- e) An environment is fostered that encourages and values feedback to and from individuals, the public and employees by communicating the results of consultation to interested participants.

5. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

The Chief of Police shall ensure that the following principles and practices are included in organizational activities and processes:

5.1. Values that Support Public Consultation

The following values that support public consultation are fostered and in place throughout the Police Service:

- a) *Consultation is instilled as a way of organizational life* - the Service will consult the community as a normal part of its work.
- b) *Consultation occurs early in the process* - consultation is much more fruitful and less demanding of resources when it occurs early in the process.
Two-way communication - communication with the public not only flows both ways, but also can be initiated by either side. The Service should consult the community, and the community should consult the Service.
- c) *Uniqueness is recognized* - each problem and situation is unique. The Service should be innovative, flexible, and sensitive to local conditions, all of which require close contact with both the affected community and community at large.
- d) *Multi-faceted input is sought* - by considering each problem from many points of view, the Service is more likely to achieve a preferred solution.
- e) *Community leadership is recognized as valuable* - community leaders are a valuable resource to the Service.

- f) *The Service knows the community* - be familiar with the community, their concerns, their goals, their strengths and their needs.
- g) *The importance of continuity is recognized* - the Service should recognize that change may disrupt the lives of its citizens. Change may be viewed negatively when it:
 - does not serve the needs of those experiencing the change;
 - occurs without time to adjust;
 - is not preceded by opportunities for consultation; or
 - seems to create impacts and benefits which are not fairly distributed.

5.2. Process Considerations

The process for consultation shall be undertaken as a matter of practice. In circumstances where it is not possible, a clear and justifiable reason shall be presented. The following considerations related to the process for consultation will be practiced by members of the Ottawa Police Service:

- a) The Service must routinely assess its activities, the impact of those activities on the citizens and the need for public consultation, and identify early in the process which issues require public consultation. Due to the diversity and complexity of activities undertaken by the Ottawa Police Service, the requirement for public consultation is not always clear. Not all activities in the day-to-day operation or administrative functioning of the Service require public consultation.
- b) The Service is frequently a partner or participant with other governments and agencies for joint projects. In these instances, the Service does not always have the authority to determine the process for public consultation. The Police Service will encourage and promote implementation of a public consultation process as a key component of any project/activity along with needs and approaches utilized by others, but a decision not to embrace a public consultation approach by the lead organization will not preclude the Police Service from participating in projects/activities.
- c) Consultation should be considered for every project that has a direct impact on the public and consideration given to the most effective and appropriate method of consultation. There is no single method for successful communication and consultation. Consultation may be as simple as informing people of a proposed change, or it may take the form

of an informal discussion, or a formal event such as an open house or public meeting.

5.3. Required Actions

- a) Reports to the Police Services Board must contain information on what consultation took place and how the staff recommendation reflects or does not reflect the input received;
- b) Staff required to conduct and manage effective consultation receive adequate resources, training and professional development;
- c) Consultation requirements are developed and reflected in employee assessments, and in policy, program design and service delivery;
- d) A training module is adopted by the Professional Development Centre;
- e) A process to ensure the ability to create a network to consult with potentially affected stakeholders (parties, entities). Public consultation literature is acquired and made accessible through a range of media (electronic and hard copy) and at all main police locations;
- f) Periodic evaluations of the results of the consultation process are conducted to ensure they reflect client needs;
- g) Evaluation of past consultations and establishment of best practices are done to achieve continuous service improvements; and
- h) This policy shall be communicated to all members of the Ottawa Police Service and the community regularly and in an ongoing manner through channels such as the Internet.

MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

The Police Service shall develop procedures or practices that support this policy. The monitoring shall be in accordance with the procedures and practices, and support the annual reporting to the Police Services Board.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Chief of Police shall submit an annual report to the Board.