

TO:	FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON MONDAY, JULY 16, 2012
FROM:	TIM DOBBIE INTERIM CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT	COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT FOR ADVISORY COMMITTEES
RECOMMENDATION	

That, on the recommendation of the Interim City Manager, **NO ACTION BE TAKEN** with respect to the request from Advisory Committees for communications support.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER

[Clause 8 of the 2nd Report of the Finance and Administrative Services Committee.](#)

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on March 20, 2012, Council approved a by-law to amend various Council policies related to Advisory Committees as a result of the recent review of Advisory Committees.

In the recommendations approved by Council, the Director of Corporate Communications was requested to report back at a future meeting of the Finance and Administrative Services Committee with respect to the establishment of a website for individual Advisory Committees, including details regarding responsibility for its content.

The role of the Advisory Committees is to provide recommendations, advice and information to the Municipal Council on those specialized matters which relate to the purpose of the Advisory Committee, to facilitate public input to City Council on programs and ideas and to assist in enhancing the quality of life of the community. Advisory Committees also assist with the implementation of the City's Strategic Plan principles including, Community Engagement and Good Government.

During the review of the role of Advisory Committees, the Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee (EEPAC) requested that a public website be established as a resource for Advisory Committee members.

Under previous Council resolutions, Corporate Communications has been directed to provide support to two Advisory Committees – the London Diversity and Race Relations Advisory Committee (LDRRAC) and the Accessibility Advisory Committee (ACCAC), to assist them with setting up websites and in publicizing their special events. Many of the other Advisory Committees have requested similar support for communications activities.

DISCUSSION

Website Presence

Advisory Committees have previously requested that they be given support to set up websites in order to publish their meeting agendas, minutes and membership. In the coming months, this will be done through the Clerk's Office using the electronic agenda system. This will ensure greater awareness and transparency to the work of the Advisory Committees. Citizens will be able to find information about Advisory Committees in one place on the City of London website.

During 2012, the City is also redesigning and rebuilding the City of London website. As part of that redesign, the website will be easier to use and content easier to find, through a powerful new search engine. Content will be organized according to the way that users search for information. The new website, combined with the electronic agenda system will provide more detailed, up to date and relevant information about each of the Advisory Committees.

Staff does not recommend that each Advisory Committee have its own website, set up separate and apart from the City website, as considerable work and funding has been required in the past for design, content creation, maintenance and updating of the existing LDRRAC and AACAC websites.

If the Advisory Committees have materials or electronic links to online materials that they want to share with the public, they can submit the materials for review by City staff. If the material is relevant, not contrary to City of London policies and not subject to copyright protection, the materials can be posted to City of London website on the relevant Advisory Committee page.

Other content related to the subject matter of the Advisory Committees (such as content on accessibility issues currently on the Accessibility Advisory Committee website) can be incorporated, where appropriate, into existing content pages on the City's website. This will ensure that content is consistent and not duplicated across multiple websites.

Other Communications Support

Some of the Advisory Committees have a mandate to encourage public awareness of their subject matter and may wish to create promotional and educational materials such as posters and brochures. While two of the Advisory Committees have received support for these activities through the Corporate Communications Division in the past, the division can no longer support the Advisory Committees with these activities, nor can it support all the other Advisory Committees, within the existing staff complement. The demand for support and services from Corporate Communications staff is higher than the existing staff can handle now and the Division's focus is on strategic City-wide communications, support for departmental communications, and tactical communications support for Council members.

If an Advisory Committee wishes to create communications materials, they can use money within their existing budgets or ask Council for additional money, to hire external communication and design consultants to assist them with that work. City staff would need to review any materials created for educational purposes to ensure that the content is not contrary to City of London policies.

PREPARED BY:	RECOMMENDED BY:
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