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Information Item No.2
Executive Standing Committee
September 12, 2016

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of the Executive Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: **ORIGINAL SIGNED**

John Traves, QC Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: August 8, 2016

SUBJECT: **Introduction to Open Government**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

Council Priority - Governance and Communication: Develop and support governance structures and communication approaches that provide maximum opportunity for public engagement and consultation and ensures proper management of municipal affairs. Council's priorities include; Citizen Engagement, Governance, Communications.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Executive Standing Committee Terms of Reference, s.8 General Governance of Council:

"The Executive Standing Committee shall act as a review committee for matters related to the general self-governance and administration of the Council as directed by the Council."

BACKGROUND

Open Government seeks to enhance the overall openness, transparency, accountability, and innovation within government. In addition, it also aims to improve the connection between citizens and their government, not only through increased participation, but also in working with the Municipality to find solutions, support innovation and drive economic development. Halifax Regional Municipality has been committed to forwarding the principles of Open Government, however, there has not been a corporate approach to building an overall framework for Open Government, and a way to plan and coordinate for future endeavors.

The concept of Open Government stems from the freedom of information movement of the 1990's, which resulted in the establishment of a process for the public to access information, while also protections which safeguarded against the improper collection and use of their private information. Freedom of information legislation was included as Part XX of the Municipal Government Act in 1999. At present, the Municipality has an Access and Privacy Office (part of the Municipal Clerk's Office) which assists the municipality in developing policies on the collection, use and distribution of information, and oversees Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy requests. Another driver of Open Government is the advent of technology, which has changed the way that residents interact with their government. Today residents want greater access to government, more ways to participate, and have a greater expectation for response times. In an attempt to bridge the gap, there has been a move towards enhancing web services and the Municipality's web and social media presence, and the development of civic tools.

The Municipal Clerk's Office is in the process of developing an Open Government Strategy, to enhance its services. In developing the Strategy, it will be working with several internal areas such as Corporate Communications, Government Relations and External Affairs. The Municipal Clerk's Office will also work to develop materials for corporate use that can help other business units develop their own Open Government pillars, and programming. As the Strategy grows, it may include more municipal services and business units.

The Executive Committee will be the steering committee for the Open Government Strategy. Staff anticipates returning to Committee at various project milestones with updates and to receive input and direction which was a similar approach used in the 2013-2014 for the Governance Review. This report is for information purposes and to provide a general overview of the concept of Open Government, jurisdictional and internal scans, and a look towards next steps.

DISCUSSION

Open Government consists of three guiding principles, Open Data, Open Information, and Open Engagement. These principles are fundamental and apply to all of the activities of the Corporation. These principles represent a shift in the way governments interact with its communities and aim to engage and empower residents to become stewards of the Municipality.

Open Data: is the release of government data in the form of data sets (raw data, such as transit schedules). The data is available in a format that can be used, manipulated, or analyzed by businesses, community groups, or residents. Open data can provide for a deeper understanding on an issue, or can be used in an App or other technology to provide a service to the community that currently does not exist.

Open Information: increasing accountability and transparency through making information produced and collected more readily available. It also seeks to make the information more accessible, in the use of language, formats available, and delivery.

Open Engagement: is linked to building inputs and outputs in which participation from the public or stakeholders can be used to shape and develop policy, and provide feedback, with a goal to create a framework which allows for the Municipality to facilitate open and inclusive dialogue.

Open Government Pillars of the Municipal Clerk's Office

Building from the Open Government guiding principles, the Municipal Clerk's Office has developed five pillars upon which its Open Government Strategy can support. In creating pillars, the aim is to refocus how the Municipal Clerk's Office conducts its day-to-day operations, interacts with the public and finds solutions. These pillars are a starting point, and through consultation (internal and external) may be refined. The pillars fit under the overarching Open Government principles and are specific to the business unit. If another business unit were interested in developing an Open Government Strategy, the Municipal Clerk's Office would share relative planning and project documents. In addition, an Open Government review would determine how the business unit could support the Open Government principles, and the

“how” would become their pillars. In conducting a review, there is a possibility that some pillars may be similar which may lead to an increase in collaboration and information sharing amongst groups. The Municipal Clerk’s pillars are listed below:

1. Increasing Opportunities for Participation/ Participatory Democracy
The Municipal Clerk’s Office will seek to promote the various existing inputs that members of the community can access, and to create new ways to foster open and inclusive dialogue.
2. Strengthening Partnerships/ Collaboration and Information Sharing
The creation and strengthening of partnerships with stakeholder and various community groups to help foster information sharing and cross-promotional opportunities.
3. Improving Access to Information
Understanding that information is vital to decision making, the Municipal Clerk’s Office will work to improve access to information that is made available to Regional Council and to the public.
4. Building a Policy and Procedure Framework
The Municipal Clerk’s Office will develop a policy and procedure framework, which will allow for all primary Clerk’s functions to be open, transparent, and accountable.
5. Outreach through Education/Youth Programing
The Municipal Clerk’s Office will work with internal departments to inform youth and adults about local government and the various ways to engage, contribute and participate, may also include partnerships with education institutions and organizations.

Best Practices Scan

Open Government is a relatively new concept, however, many public bodies have initiated Open Government strategies. To gain a better understanding of the process, a best practices scan consisting of 11 government institutions (federal, provincial, and municipal) was completed. The scan focused on the initial phases of building and creating a strategy. The administrators who participated provided feedback on the process and some lessons learned. Connections with key municipal administrators were made and will be used as a resource as the Open Government Strategy progresses. A summary of the findings for the survey has been attached as Attachment 1 to this report.

Municipally, the City of Guelph is a pioneer in Open Government. In 2013 Guelph was the first municipality in Canada to create an Open Government Action Plan, which was based on extensive public consultation. The plan has resulted in Guelph adopting an open by default principle, which has a lead to change in policy both internal and external and a focus on technology based tools to augment engagement and provide more convenience to residents.

Several other municipalities, most notably Edmonton, Kitchener, and Toronto have followed the path of Guelph, in reflecting on their business practices and creating an Open Government strategy. Each municipal strategy is distinct, and reflective of their core values, services, and their relationship with the community. In each strategy, the three key principles were common themes, which became the natural starting point for the Municipal Clerk’s Office Open Government Strategy.

Discussions with Open Government administrators have yielded insight into the process of consultation and the work involved in creating an Open Government strategy. The administrators noted the importance of developing a strategic approach, and advised in creating a starting point by defining principles and actions early. By providing a framework, establishes expectations, and sets the tone for all participants, to understand the common goal. The consultation will have effect on the outcome, as there is room to refine and reposition pillars. Additionally, the administrators emphasized the importance of finding the quick wins, to maintain momentum, and to demonstrate the transformative nature of Open Government. The final strategic piece of advice that all administrators conveyed, Open Government is a

process and not an end. The initiative is a starting point, and that the strategy will need to evolve to meet fill new gaps, and solve new issues that may arise.

The administrators also provided advice on consulting the community and suggested that HRM seek to engage the entire community, as it will lead to developing a comprehensive strategy. The engagement plan must be inclusive of all groups within the community, which may need to be tailored for specific audiences, as some may need to be engaged on their own terms. Always promote the Open Government benefit, as it keeps the community informed, enables participation, and will lead to innovation in service delivery. Seek community champions, they will help to open doors in engagement and to remove attitudinal barriers. Selected champions must reflect the principles and pillars, and be committed to achieving project goals.

Current Open Government Initiatives in HRM

To better understand the HRM climate and socialize the concept of Open Government, a brief scan was completed on various business units, which focused on their Open Government activities. The scan consisted of research of past reports presented to Committee and Regional Council, information posted to the website, and informational interviews with key contacts within the Corporation. The following is a highlight of some recent Open Government endeavours.

Apps4HRM and Hackathon (2013) – As a pilot project that preceded the Open Data Catalogue, this was a successful experiment into the interest of Open Data. Through three key activities – the submission of app ideas, the submission of apps, and a hackathon – the pilot project cultivated wide reaching interest and beneficial results within the community in the form of solution-oriented apps.

Open Data Catalogue – Established in 2014, the Open Data Catalogue is a vital component of the future Open Government Strategy. Although it is relatively new – by Open Data standards - there is highly valuable information on this domain for public use.

Elections Engagement and Outreach, - the HRM Election Team is making a concerted effort to engage with the entire community in the lead up to the 2016 Municipal Election. In addition, there is an added emphasis placed on inclusivity of all groups within the HRM with targeted engagement approaches to various historically distant groups. This extends to the attempts made to garner more involvement and interest from citizens to participate in the election as candidates, voting location workers, and citizen appointees to committees of Council.

Posting of minutes, agendas, and Council sessions – HRM presently displays the minutes, agendas, and live-streams the Council and Standing Committee sessions. These are very valuable for transparency as -the public can access and review all matters relating to the elected officials of HRM, as well as Standing Committees. Further, the upcoming modernization of Council Chamber is an example of an upcoming Open Government initiative as there is an opportunity for further a technological enhancements, and the potential to allow for more transparency in Council function.

Centre Plan – is an example of what an integrated engagement strategy. It is designed from to allow for everyone in the community to be involved and understand what is happening with the future of planning in HRM.

Participatory Budgeting District Capital Funds– Presently, three districts practice participatory budgeting with District Capital Funds, set aside for permanent projects in their community. This program allows for residents to determine how the money is allocated. The exercise brings residents together, provides for an opportunity to learn about the various programs and initiatives in their District, and determine how the funds are allocated.

Shape your City – This is a web consultation hub, which allows residents of Halifax various streams to provide input through an online forum. From budgets to city planning, shape your city allows citizens to participate in the development of policy and initiatives in Halifax.

These examples demonstrate that HRM, despite not having a centralized, Open Government strategy, is committed to openness, transparency, and accountability.

Internal Consultations

At present there have been two internal focus groups held with Municipal Clerk's Office staff. The feedback from these discussions has been positive and has helped to refine the Clerk's-specific pillars. Participants were provided with a survey regarding the facilitated discussion, and an Open Government ideas worksheet. The worksheet tasked participants to propose an Open Government initiative or project. Submissions were required to include a short description and to outline the connection to at least one of the five pillars. The projects will be evaluated, and may be included as an actionable in the Strategy.

Engagement will continue with other business units focusing on what is Open Government and how the Municipal Clerk's Office can collaborate to augment Open Government projects. Several business units have expressed an interest in participating, which may lead to other business units developing pillars of their own. The aim is to develop a strong Open Government Strategy before working with the public. The outreach will include; the business community, various non-profits, educational institutions, residents, and any other person or group that would like to be involved in the Open Government project.

Next Steps

Staff will be working with internal stakeholders and Corporate Communications to build an engagement strategy for the initial phase of consultation on Open Government. The strategy will include both internal and external stakeholders, and may consist of an education component and a facilitated discussion on governance. It is anticipated that a portion of the engagement may overlap with the current outreach underway for the municipal election. When appropriate Open Government questions or broader topics will be incorporated into the election engagement.

The Municipal Clerk's Office has retained an Open Government Initiatives Intern to help with coordinating Open Government outreach, which will lead to an Open Government Strategy. The intern will also be tasked with assisting the Municipal Clerk's Office in the development of materials and programming which will assist in supporting its five Open Government pillars. This position will also work with interested departments on Open Government related engagement and programming.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A broad community engagement strategy on Open Government will be developed. Feedback and input from the community will occur throughout the Open Government Strategy.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Jurisdictional Scan Matrix

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/standing.php> then choose the appropriate Standing Committee and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

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Jurisdiction Population	Process	Principles	High-level Actions	Interesting Initiatives	Lessons Learned
Guelph 153,000	Co-produced Action plan. Included: governmental institutions, private sector, and civil society. Process: 1. Survey within City to see readiness level 2. Survey of external stakeholders to see priorities and their definition of Open Government 3. Further stakeholder involvement through roundtables, online “MindMixer”, “Change Camp” to identify champions 4. Presentation of draft action plan to community champions 5. Refine draft, present to council for approval 6. Action plan’s goal is to enable open-by-default, participate-by-nature structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to Open Governance • Create an “Open-by-Default” Culture • Open up City Hall • Increase Community Engagement and Participation • Implement e-Government Services • Make Data and Information Public Assets 	3 phases: 1. Current Assessment of Context 2. Community and Stakeholder Engagement 3. Open Government Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic Solutions Accelerator: Pilot project that allows the City to engage with business, start-ups, and students to solve complex problems. Solution-oriented approach. • Interactive budget • Continuous solution-based roundtables with some Councillors, citizens, Business, and city employees • App Showcase and hack-a-thon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve the public where and when possible in a model of joint-ownership • Create easily measurable and visible targets Leadership and advocacy from the top within the city (silos and top-down approach is bad) • Clarity in definition of Open Government crucial • Make it clear why, at a micro-level, Open Government will help internal actors
Edmonton 1,363,300	1. Initial draft by senior management 2. Consultation by survey of 826 members of the public, business community, and researchers 3. Internal feedback was incorporated and later presented to external audience 4. Action Plan presented and approved by Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative • Inclusive • Innovative • Participatory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundational Supports of openness, transparency, and consistency • Open Channels • Open Engagement • Open Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Data (by Socrata) • Citizen Dashboard (performance measurement) • Edmonton Insight Community (citizen survey engagement tool) • Data analytics • Hack-a-thon • Informative budget exploration tool • Open government blog (from civil servants) • Social media presence (goal to respond within 20 minutes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of corporate culture difficult, especially for long-tenured civil servants • Consistent interaction with stakeholders important in order to ensure the Open Government process is meeting its goals

Jurisdiction Population	Process	Principles	High-level Actions	Interesting Initiatives	Lessons Learned
Greater Sudbury 164,800	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussion of greater accountability, openness, and transparency by Council 2. Direction for staff to report on findings for the above concept 3. Creation of Open government strategy 4. Endorsement of strategy by Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Data • Open Information • Open Dialogue • Open Doors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Data Policy and License • Bill 8 (Accountability and Transparency act) and Accountability Officers • Community Engagement Policy • Whistleblower Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petitions • Community delegations • Surveys • Social media • Citizen advisory panels • Open data portal • Accountability of elected, appointed officials, and staff • Proactive release of government information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impartial oversight through an Auditor General increases public trust and accountability • Create a clear and simple path for an Open Government initiative that has “easy-wins”
Kingston 169,900	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation to the Administrative Policies Committee 2. Further consultation with Committee for questions and directions related to Open Government Initiative 3. Engagement of a subject matter expert to help develop the action plan 4. Development of the 3 year action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation: Involve citizens in political process • Innovation: Improvement of service delivery and grow the economy through the use of technology • Transparency: Build confidence and trust through open processes and information • Accountability: Account for activities and disclose results of programs and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Engagement: Meaningful, productive, and open dialogue with stakeholders and the community • Open Governance: Information, education, transparency, and improved outreach for inclusion in decision making • Open Programs and Services: Simplifying service delivery and access for better efficiency and decision making • Open Data: Respecting security, privacy, and accessibility while releasing information about programs and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Beyond the classroom” • Escape City Hall • Youth Engagement Week • Open Government Week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity in definition of Open Government crucial • A “quick-wins” strategy helps mobilize support internally and externally • Figure out which data sets are high value • Educate the public and let them know that their comments might not be incorporated; they will be examined critically

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Kitchener 233,000	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2007 creation of Accountability and Transparency Policy due to Municipal Act (ON) 2013 update of above policy to include Open Government Principles Targeted consultations from 2013-2014 Development and implementation of 2014-2017 Open Government Action plan to encourage participation, transparency, and accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transparency: City information and decisions are open and freely available to the public for review and discussion Participation: Increase the amount and quality Accountability: Ensuring the City can explain its actions through adherence to the established rules and guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement Policy E-Participation Open Data Strategically Planned Community Assessment (understand priorities) City Website Improvements Accessible Reporting Citizen committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability and Transparency Policy Community Engagement Framework Social Media Strategy Web streaming for meetings Engagement on Budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small-wins are crucial to maintain public and political confidence Consult stakeholders from the start of the process
Toronto 6,129,900	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Emerged from 2013-2018 strategic plan Creation of an Open Government Committee Adoption of principles from the Open Government Partnership (international body) Creation of Open Data and information hubs and an Information Management Framework 	A connected, informed public empowered by an accountable, transparent, and collaborative City government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing transparency and accountability to an engaged public through access to information, innovation and citizen-centric services Fostering open government processes, supervised by an informed and engaged citizenry Ensuring, enhancing, and educating people about their rights and supporting their efforts to gain access to government activities, information, and services, and advocating the principles and benefits of open government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simultaneous posting of Council and Committee agendas and reports online for Councillors, staff, and the public Social media engagements Toronto Casino Consultation Expense reports regularly posted Food safety inspections available online and through mobile services Open data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop clear policy/Action Plan Development of an oversight committee ensures Open Government remains on schedule and that a concerted effort is made

Jurisdiction Population	Process	Principles	High-level Actions	Interesting Initiatives	Lessons Learned
Alberta 4,249,842	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Began with an Open Data Portal, 2013 2. Upon the success of this Portal, an action plan for more holistic Open Government was developed, 2015 3. Continued release of data sets (>2000 data sets and >5500 publications) and development of apps based on these sets 4. Some ongoing citizen-government interaction through blogging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sharing • Providing citizens with tools and opportunities to participate with their government however they see fit • Engaging citizens to help them influence and improve government policies • Open by design • Innovation from quality data • Improved governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Data portal • Open Information through an online government library with all publications • Open Engagement through the development of a new public engagement framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All government publication and laws since 1906 available through single portal • >2000 data sets in data catalogue • App directory • Data visualizations • Open Government blog (from civil servants) • Strong social media presence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Government needs more than Open Data • Consultation in planning process of the action plan • Open Data is a crucial component; it is a very visible “win” • Engage with citizens on their own terms
British Columbia 4,720,932	Development of Open Data portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability • Transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Information: Proactive release of information • Disclosure log: Public release of government’s responses to general access requests • Open data: Publication of data that is easily read, accessed, and useable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open data portal • Proactive reporting of requests for access 	<p>Not a holistic Open Government policy. Lessons learned from Open Data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make promises that are attainable • Release data proactively and in a timely manner Place all data and information in one easily accessible place • Disclose why information cannot be released • Create an external advisory board of experts to lead Open Data/Information initiatives
Nova Scotia 947,284	Internally developed Open Data policy	Increased accessibility of public data for economic and social benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational data • Geographic data • Statistical data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300-dataset open data catalogue 	Not a holistic Open Government policy.
Ontario 13,920,499	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Premier Wynne launched Open Data project for Ontario 2. 27 Ministries and a team of experts consulted to develop a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-by-default • Open data and information • Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of comprehensive Open Data portal • Greater public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Government team • Data visualizations • Open government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release datasets that are useful economically (i.e. utilization rates) and release data that supports

Jurisdiction Population	Process	Principles	High-level Actions	Interesting Initiatives	Lessons Learned
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> plan for openness and engagement 3. Open Government Team appointed 4. Consultation of public 5. Open data voting tool and subsequent release of high value datasets 6. Open Government Project tracker release 7. Public Engagement Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engagement initiatives through various consultations • Engagement Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project tracker • Open data voting tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> accountability (i.e. expense reports) • Make a clear and standardized model of data sharing • Make engagement easy (i.e. in the form of website surveys)
Canada – Federal (draft Action Plan as of June 17, 2016) 36,155,487	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultations from March 31 to May 15, 2016 2. Roundtable discussions with citizens, civil society, private sector, and various stakeholders across Canada 3. Canadian Open Government Leaders Summit (April 27th, 2016) intended to explore potential future collaboration 4. Increased Social Media presence for expansion of public outreach 5. Drafting an action plan that can be is publically reviewed (from June 17-30, 2016) 6. Revision of the action plan with a roadmap to Open Government within the next two years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Public Services • Increasing Public Integrity • More Effectively Managing Public Resources • Creating Safer Communities • Increasing Corporate Accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open by Default • Fiscal Transparency • Innovation, prosperity, and sustainable development, • Engaging Canadians and the World 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • App gallery (of apps built from released from Fed. data) • Contracts proactively disclosed (for value over \$10,000) • CODE (48 hour marathon for app development) • Open government blog (from civil servants) • Multiple consultation platforms(i.e. comments section website, Facebook, Twitter, traditional mail, email, or webinars) • Interim Directive on the Administration of the Access to Information Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple and clear websites are crucial; ensuring that all information, data, and background is accessible • Infographics help with the readability and accessibility of data • Develop an action plan in consultation with stakeholders