

Best Practice

City of Saskatoon Community Engagement Process

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THE PRACTICE

The City of Saskatoon did not have a formal or consistent approach for public consultation regarding municipal development issues. In order to ensure consistency and credibility of the public consultation process, it was determined that there needed to be a formal process and documentation of public participation processes utilized by city elected officials and administrators in order to ensure accountability and transparency to the residents of Saskatoon. The Community Engagement Process also ensured that community development issues respected local culture.

THE PROCESS

The Community Engagement Process began with in house training and consultation services for civic employees whose work involves public consultation. A website was created and a brochure was distributed explaining the Community Engagement Process to the public and focused on the importance of Community Associations and the publics' input in the community development process. The adoption of the Community Engagement Process is a formal validation of the City of Saskatoon's commitment to a process which demonstrates and emphasizes openness and transparency and the necessity to communicate the results back to the community.

THE RESULTS

The success of the Community Engagement Process can be measured by the significant reduction in the number of complaints to Council that the public was not consulted. Furthermore, civic employees are better informed of the community development process and community issues in general than they were previously. The Community Engagement Process ensures public access to information and provides a consistent approach by civic departments when seeking public input. The Community Engagement Process also reinforces the view that every resident or organization has a say in the development of their community.

LESSONS LEARNED

The City of Saskatoon has learned that the Community Engagement Process is a useful process to ensure that all members of the community have an opportunity to voice their concerns on matters affecting their daily lives. Addressing citizens concerns before projects are approved is a cost and time-effective measure to ensure matters are dealt with before they are implemented.