



THE CORPORATION OF DELTA
COUNCIL REPORT
REGULAR MEETING

To: Mayor & Council

File No.: P04-01

From: Community Planning & Development Department

Date: February 16, 2006

Public Consultation - Guiding Principles and Process

The following report has been reviewed and endorsed by the Chief Administrative Officer.

■ **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the public consultation guiding principles and process as outlined in Attachment A be adopted for community planning and development projects.

■ **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to present to Council for endorsement a set of guiding principles and an improved process for public consultation on community planning and development projects.

■ **BACKGROUND:**

A development application for the Delsom lands at Nordel Way and 84 Avenue, including an Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment, rezoning, road closure and development variance permit, was submitted by Delsom Estates Limited in April 2004. The development proposal included a maximum of 115 single family lots, 827 townhouses, 80 seniors apartment or assisted living units, and 6,039 m² (65,000 ft²) of commercial floor area. On May 30, 2005, Council granted first and second readings to the OCP amendment and rezoning bylaws and referred the bylaws to a Public Hearing. Council also gave three readings to the road closure bylaw. During the Public Hearing held on June 16, 2005, concerns and opposition were raised by many residents. At the Special Meeting following the Public Hearing, Council denied third reading of the OCP amendment and rezoning bylaws, and referred the application back to staff.

One of the messages received from the Delsom application review process was that the public consultation procedures in place were not adequate for a project of this scale, and improvements to the process were required.

■ DISCUSSION:

On July 11, 2005, Council approved a work plan presented by staff as a follow-up on the Delsom application. The first task in the work plan was that staff would meet informally with some North Delta residents in order to gather their opinions as to how the development project and public consultation programs could be improved.

Staff held three meetings with a number of North Delta residents on July 13, September 29, and November 30, 2005 respectively to receive input to improve the public consultation process. There were 13 – 18 residents participating in each meeting, with 13 of them attending two or all three of the meetings. The sincerity and dedication of these residents to contribute their time and ideas have been very encouraging.

As a result of the discussion at these meetings, the following guiding principles for public consultation were formulated:

- Public Involvement
- Inclusiveness
- Accessibility
- Open Communication
- Accountability and Responsiveness

These guiding principles and the associated actions are elaborated in Attachment A. They are consistent with and respond to the OCP policies to consult with residents, businesses, agencies and other organizations in area plan reviews, policy planning and proposed changes in neighbourhoods. Staff recommend that the public consultation guiding principles and process be adopted not only for the Delsom lands, but also for other community planning and development projects, especially the ones with wide community implications.

■ CONCLUSION:

With the valuable input from a number of North Delta residents, staff formulated a set of guiding principles and an improved process for public consultation. Staff recommend that the public consultation guiding principles and process be adopted for community planning and development projects.

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■ ATTACHMENT:

Attachment A: Public Consultation Guiding Principles and Process

THE CORPORATION OF DELTA
COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
PUBLIC CONSULTATION
POLICIES, PRINCIPLES AND PROCESS

1. Policy Framework - Official Community Plan Policies

- 1.1 Continue to provide residents with information on changes proposed for their neighbourhoods, and ways in which they can provide input into the proposed changes.
- 1.2 Continue to consult with residents and other organizations, businesses and agencies during area plan reviews or other policy planning exercises.

2. Guiding Principles for Public Consultation

2.1 Public Involvement

Public consultation is an integral part of policy formulation, area planning and development review processes.

2.2 Inclusiveness

All stakeholders are provided with consultation opportunities. A broader cross-section of public input will be obtained for projects with wider community interest and implication.

2.3 Accessibility

Easy access to information and convenient opportunities to express views and comments are provided to the public to encourage meaningful participation.

2.4 Open Communication

Respectfulness, openness and transparency in communicating information and exchanging views are emphasized.

2.5 Accountability and Responsiveness

Public input is evaluated and presented to Council for consideration. Outcomes are made readily available to the public in a timely manner.

3. Process

Guiding Principles	Actions
Public Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include public consultation early and throughout the planning policy and development review process. • Set a tone of mutual respect and collaboration.
Inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult a larger area than the 50 m bylaw requirement, as appropriate. • Identify all stakeholders, including a broad cross-section of the community and their primary contacts for projects with wide community implications. • Use multiple means of public notification, including municipal letterhead/envelope, public notice sign, community event sign, and advertisement on local papers, through schools and/or Delta Cable.
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule public meetings with consideration as to time and location, maximizing turnout and avoiding conflicts with other major events in the community. • Provide at least two weeks' advance notice of meetings. • Provide easy and timely access to information, reports, and relevant links on website and in convenient locations such as local libraries. • Provide a clear, reasonable timeframe for residents to respond.
Open Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify the scope, goals and objectives of the public consultation process from the outset. • Promote a two-way exchange of information and ideas. • Transparent conduct of meetings with host, participants, staff and consultants identified. • Provide complete information. • Cover different aspects/components of the proposal, e.g. land use, circulation, parks and amenities. • Identify plan options and potential impacts. • Consult at a smaller community group level to facilitate discussion and exchange of information. • Use neighbourhood contacts to keep the community informed, as appropriate.
Accountability and Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delta, rather than the developer, to lead the public consultation process, and consider a municipal public consultation coordinator. • Value public input and take it into consideration. • Provide answers to questions raised. • Provide inter-departmental coordination and follow up on side issues raised. • Allow for feedback on effectiveness of the public consultation process. • Keep the public consultation process current and up-to-date, changing and adapting as required to meet goals and objectives.