



TOWN OF HIGH RIVER POLICY

Policy Number: CAO-POL-101-00
Policy Name: Decision Making Guidelines

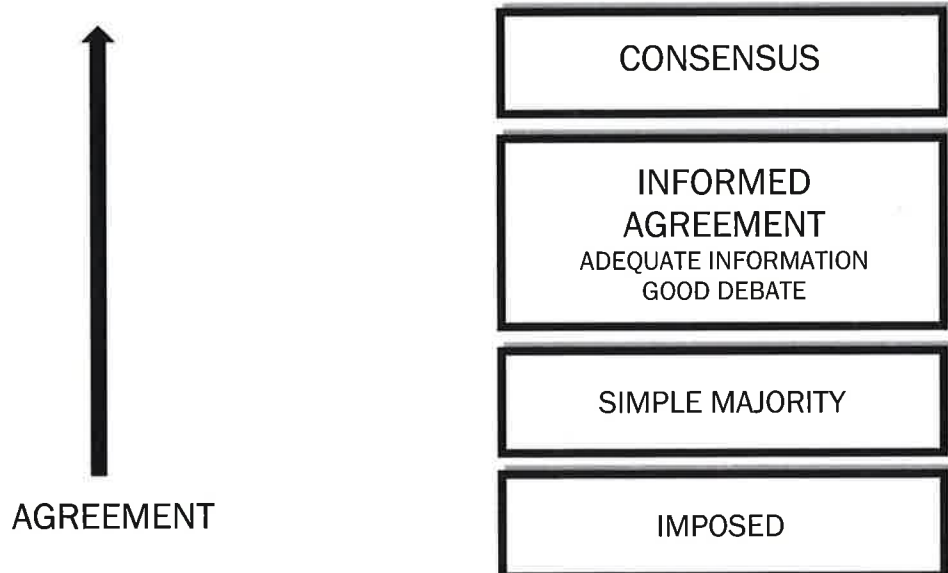
Related Procedure Number:
Related Procedure Name:

Approval Date: February 10, 2020
Revision Date:
Responsible Department: Chief Administrative Officer

Purpose

The guidelines are premised on an 'informed agreement' decision making model (see below). This approach acknowledges the time constraints associated with consensus or 'unanimous agreement' while rejecting the potential conflictual nature of a 'simple majority'. It provides a transparent process to achieve 'informed agreement' in that everyone can support implementation of the decision even if they didn't vote for it because there was:

1. Adequate information available for decision makers; and
2. Good debate to ensure views are heard and examined.



These guidelines include the following:

Information	Tools
1. The decision- making process	1. Decision-making Flow Chart
2. Decision-making information	2. Follow-up Action List (FUAL)
3. Business meetings of Council	3. Request for Decision (RFD)
4. Criteria for strategic decision-making	4. Council Direction Request (CDR)

1. THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

To clarify the steps of decision-making process (see attachment 1) – the submission, initial referrals, resolution and follow-up

The Submission

All agenda items should have sufficient information, staff advice and clarity for the Council to debate the matter and make a decision – yes, no or refer/defer. It is the right of any Councilor to request that more information be available before a decision is made. It is the responsibility of Council to determine if there is adequate information to achieve informed agreement; and if not, to refer the item for further information.

Regular agenda items are usually brought forward from a previous meeting or they are standing items that occur frequently. These items should have a verbal or written staff report as required with adequate information to make a decision. If there is insufficient information the item should be referred to staff for further analysis.

New business items that arise between meetings should be brought to Council through the following process:

- All new agenda items be submitted through the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or designate. Items submitted to the Mayor will be forwarded to the CAO.
- If an item is submitted by a Council member, the item goes on the agenda. The Mayor and CAO may review the draft agenda with the elected official submitting the item to maximize the success of the item. It is Council that will determine whether the item is to remain on the agenda discussion.
- All staff submissions are subject to the discretion of the CAO.

Matters arising at the meeting may be introduced by the CAO or Council member for inclusion on the agenda at the discretion of Council.

New items and matters arising should be introduced and then **referred** for further analysis if there is any question as to whether the item requires more information.

Responsibilities for agenda items are:

- Council – approval of all agenda items
- Mayor – review agenda with CAO and advise Councillors on their submissions
- CAO – review draft agenda with the Mayor and consult with staff

Initial Referrals

The four choices for Council on **agenda items** are:

- Accept as information – no decision is required;
- Make a decision – yes or no (see ‘the resolution’);
- Refer the item – more information is required to achieve an informed agreement; or
- Defer the item – more time is required to ensure a good debate

Referrals to staff – occur when more information is required regarding legislative, financial and staff workload implications.

- The referral resolution should state what further information is required; and
- All staff referrals must go through the CAO

Referrals to a Committee occurs when more information is required regarding policy, public interest and strategic direction implications.

- The referral resolution should state what further information is required;
- The CAO assigns staff to prepare the necessary information for the committee;
- All committee responses must be reviewed for comment by the CAO.

A **Deferral** or tabling motions are used when discussion is moving away from the topic and becoming personal or there is some distraction preventing ‘good debate’.

Responsibilities for referrals and deferrals are:

- Council – state expectations within the resolution;
- Mayor – ensure clear directions and responsibilities; and
- CAO – seek clarity regarding expectations at the time of the resolution.

The Resolution

All **Council direction** to staff should be given by way of resolution or ‘by consent’ and noted in the meeting minutes. This ensures clarity in the intent of the Council, documentation of the direction and accountability on the part of the staff for follow-up.

The key elements of an effective resolution (or notation for minor items) include:

- Why – the key results or outcomes that Council is looking for;
- Who – who will take the lead responsibility for actioning the resolution;
- When – targets for involvement of Council in the future; and
- What – the preferred response option to achieve the desired outcome.

Responsibilities for resolution clarity are:

- Council – wording for the self-initiated resolutions prior to or during the meeting;
- Mayor – facilitate clarity, closure or deferral of resolutions during the meeting; and
- CAO – advise Council on resolutions.

Follow-up

All **Council directions** can be itemized on a Follow-up Action List (see tool #2) to ensure clear expectations regarding action, monitor progress, results, and the volume of Council directives. Monitoring the requests of Council is useful to:

- Think about their impact on strategic priorities and day-to-day activities;
- Avoid expectations of staff that encroach on their personal time;

- Celebrate achievement and results; and
- Give Council confidence that its directions are being acted upon.

The **key features** of a Follow-up Action List (FUAL) include:

- A cumulative list of action items from the meetings (identify source meeting date);
- Indicates *What, Who, and When* for each item;
- Each action item should have no more than five words;
- FUAL items should be the result of Council consent or resolution;
- Items can be ordered by the date of origin, person responsible or target date.

The **management** of the Follow-up Action List (FUAL) requires:

- The development of the list of date by the CAO with staff;
- The distribution of the list to staff and Council within three days of the meeting
- Updating of FUAL at each Regular Council Meeting
- Delete items or change targets only with Council's agreement
- Review of the list on a quarterly basis to assess the continued relevance of items
- Review the list when the CAO thinks it is beyond staff's capacity

Responsibilities for the FUAL are:

- Council – review and disposition of FUAL items;
- Mayor – facilitate review at each business meeting or strategic session; and
- CAO – preparation and updating with staff.

2. DECISION-MAKING INFORMATION

To clarify and provide the appropriate information required for decision makers to debate and decide on an item

Request for Decision

The Request for Decision (see tool #3 RFD) is intended to serve as an **executive summary** of the key information required for decision makers. It is a useful format to:

- Ensure Council is clear what the parameters it expects for 'adequate information';
- Establish what is required of staff in preparing staff reports;
- Provide a one-page summary so there is a quick reference for decision makers;
- Ensure that CAO has oversight over all items going to Council;

The key aspects of **the issue** include:

- The key problem – how has the issue been defined?;
- The desired outcome – if the issue was resolved, what would the result(s) be?;
- The preferred option – the best alternative to achieve the desired outcome; and
- Action Plan – key steps to implement the preferred option.

The key implications for **the recommendation** should include:

- Background information – reports & data;
- Financial implications – current or future budget;
- Organizational implications – Council and staff time;
- Strategic implications – consistency with strategic directions and priorities; and
- Policy implications – legislation, previous resolution or policies.

Responsibilities for the direction request are:

- Council – approval of standard format;
- Mayor – facilitate reference to the RFD; and
- CAO – acquire complete information from staff.

3. MEETINGS

To describe the key types of meeting of Council

The Business Meeting

The Business Meeting (including closed session or in-camera) is guided by the Council Procedure Bylaw. Its primary purpose is to make a decision.

The Strategy Session

The intent of the Strategy Session is to provide a venue for more *informal discussion* of matters that are *not decision items*. Its primary purpose to develop a strategic direction so that:

- Council reaches an agreement on its expectations for a strategic topic; and
- Staff are clear on Council' expectations to guide its work in advising Council.

The Strategy Session should be a regularly scheduled event with the expectation that all members of Council will be present. It may also be referred to as (and is) the Committee of the Whole meeting.

The intent of agenda items for the Strategy Session agenda include:

- To enhance understanding of an issue by meeting with relevant stakeholders;
- To clarify expectations and improve the Council/staff working relationship;
- To explore options to deal with and issue and provide direction to staff;
- To undertake training to improve organization and individual effectiveness; and
- To review and update the strategic plan and priority work programs.

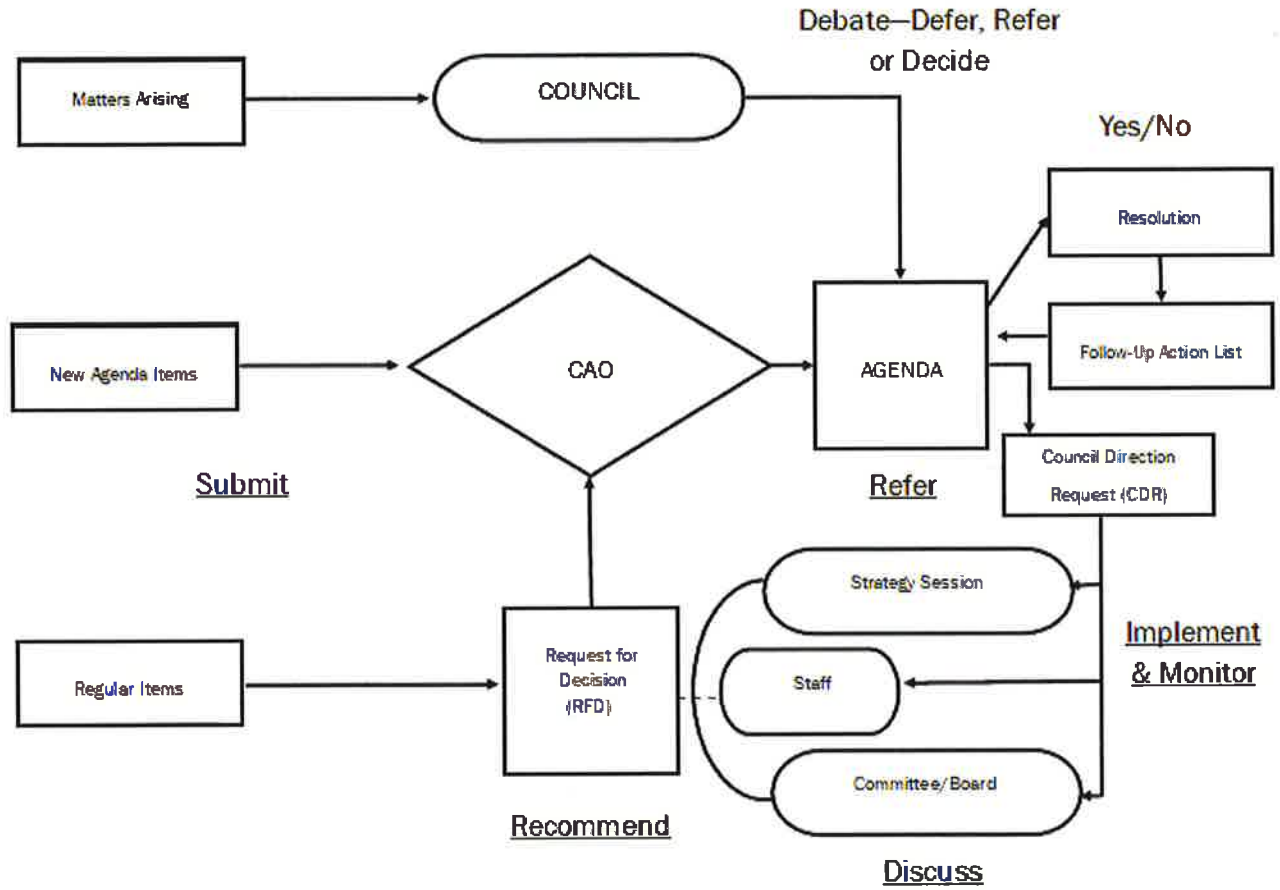
The **Council Direction Request (CDR)** form can be used help Council to articulate:

- The key problem – how has the issue been defined?
- The desired outcome – if the issue was resolved, what would the result(s) be?
- The possible preferred options to be pursued

Responsibilities for Strategy Sessions are:

- Council – target dates and outcomes for strategic direction discussions;
- Mayor – facilitate expectations regarding target dates; and
- CAO – prepare necessary information and maintain schedule

Decision Making Flow Chart



FOLLOW-UP ACTION LIST (FUAL)

Date: _____

MEETING (Date)/Item/Notes	WHO (Lead)	ACTION (to/via)	Target (Status)



REQUEST FOR DECISION

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Staff Name & Title

Date: Date Prepared

Meeting Date: Meeting Date

SUBJECT: Decision-making topic title

RECOMMENDATION: Resolution proposed for Council's consideration

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS: Any additional comments from the Chief Administrative Officer regarding the reason for the recommendation

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION:

GENERAL: Consequences to community, overall organization and/or other agencies

ORGANIZATIONAL: Policy change or staff work load requirements

FINANCIAL: Current and/or future budgetary impacts

POLICY: Cite existing policies, practises and/or legislation

IMPLEMENTATION: The next steps that will be taken on this item

BACKGROUND:

Report / Document:

Attached:

Available:

KEY ISSUE(S)/CONCEPT(S): Define the topic, reference background material and state questions to answered

DESIRED OUTCOMES: Main result along with – highlighted requisites & benefits

COUNCIL'S OPTIONS: Possible ways to achieve the main result with analysis highlights

RECOMMENDED: Action proposed to be taken by Administration

COMMUNICATIONS: Strategy to inform, consult or involve stakeholders

Reviewed by:

Other review:

Other review:



COUNCIL DIRECTION REQUEST

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Staff Name & Title

Date: Date Prepared

Meeting Date: Meeting Date

SUBJECT: Topic title

SUGGESTED FOLLOW UP ACTION: Next steps to develop the topic for further discussion or decision

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS: Any additional comments from the Chief Administrative Officer regarding the suggestion

THE TOPIC:

KEY INFORMATION: Key summary of existing information to understand the nature of the topic

RELEVANT OBSERVATIONS: Note issues or opportunities related to the complexity of the topic

STRATEGIC QUESTIONS: What needs to be known before recommendations can be developed?

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: The key question to guide the information and recommendation activities

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

KEY RESULT: The tangible outcome the organization can achieve to address the essential question

DESIRED BENEFITS OF KEY RESULT: What positive conclusions are expected?

REQUISITES: What must happen before the key result can be achieved?

UNINTENDED OUTCOMES: Are there possible undesirable effects that could occur?

RESPONSE OPTIONS: To achieve the key result (pros and cons)

1.

Pro	Con

2.

Pro	Con

3.

Pro	Con

Report / Document:

Attached:

Available:

Reviewed by:

Other review:

Other review:

URGENCY CRITERIA
(Priority Setting Criteria)

CRITERIA	INDICATORS	
	Council	Operational
IMPERATIVE Requirement to Act	Legislation	Civic Policy
LIABILITY Risk Exposure	Legal	Inconvenience
SAFETY Direct vs. Potential Threat	Life	Property Damage
FINANCIAL Magnitude of Cost	Significant	Operational
VISIBILITY Implications to Organization	Negatively Charged	Neutral
PUBLIC BENEFIT Who will receive outcomes?	Most	Few
COMMUNITY NEED Who's asking?	At Large	Minority Interest
TIMELINESS Resource/opportunity alignment	Unique	Frequent
STRATEGIC Linkage to goals/priorities	Critical	Useful
OBLIGATION Commitment to others	Contractual	Casual
LEADERSHIP Political Requirement	High	Low
TIMELINE Imposed Timeframe	Deadline	None

'POLITICAL/ADMINISTRATIVE' CRITERIA
(Priority Setting Criteria)


CRITERIA	INDICATORS	
	Political	Administrative
POLICY	New or Change	Procedure or Implementation
FINANCIAL	New or Change	Approved in Budget
EXTERNAL LINKAGE	Political Level	Staff Level
CORPORATE IMAGE	Agency Integrity	Service Quality
SERVICE LEVELS	New or Terminate	Service Standards
STRATEGIC DIRECTION	New or Change	Implementation
PERSONNEL	CAO Performance	Staff Performance
LEGISLATION	Ignore or Seek to Change	Interpretation
SENSITIVITY	High Visibility	Low Visibility
OBLIGATION	New or Change in Contract	Permissible
LIASON	Elected Official	Staff

'REALITY CHECK' CRITERIA
(Priority Setting Criteria)

CRITERIA	INDICATORS (score)		
	Likely (3)	(2)	Unlikely (1)
1. Legislative Ease	Yes	Maybe	No
2. Policy Consistency	Yes	Maybe	No
3. Contractual Ease	Yes	Maybe	No
4. Political Will	High	Neutral	Uncertain
5. Organizational	High	Medium	Low
6. Savings Realized	High	Medium	None
7. Time Efficiency Realized	Likely	Maybe	Not Likely
8. Timeframe for Results	Reasonable	Challenging	Unrealistic
9. Success Likelihood	High	Medium	Uncertain
10. Community Support	High	Average	Low
11. Fiscal Resources	Confirmed	Available	Difficult
12. Partnership Potential	Ready	Maybe	Uncertain/No
13. Leverage Other Resources	Yes	Maybe	Uncertain/No
14. Ongoing Sustainability	Likely	Maybe	Uncertain/No
15. Human Resources	Yes	Somewhat	No
16. Expertise	In-house	Available	Uncertain/No
17. Consequences/Risk	None	Uncertain	Negative
18. Affordability	Yes	Average	No

Approval

This policy shall come into force and effect upon adoption by Council at the Regular Meeting of Council on February 10, 2020.



 MAYOR/DEPUTY MAYOR


 CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

February 12, 2020

 DATE