



Office of the City Clerk  
Kitchener City Hall  
200 King St.W. - 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Kitchener ON N2G 4G7

# Finance & Corporate Services Committee Agenda

Monday, February 8, 2016  
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m  
Council Chamber

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Chair - Councillor S. Davey

Vice-Chair - Councillor S. Marsh

## Consent Items

*The following matters are considered not to require debate and should be approved by one motion in accordance with the recommendation contained in each staff report. A majority vote is required to discuss any report listed as under this section.*

1. FCS-16-015 - Corporate Integrated Communications Network Upgrade

## Delegations

*Pursuant to Council's Procedural By-law, delegations are permitted to address the Committee for a maximum of 5 minutes.*

- *None at this time.*

## Discussion Items

2. FCS-16-009 - Comprehensive Business Licensing Review - Scope of Project (30 min)

## Information Items

- CAO-16-006 - Update on Community Engagement Initiatives

**Colin Goodeve**  
**Committee Administrator**



**REPORT TO:** Finance and Corporate Services Committee

**DATE OF MEETING:** February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**SUBMITTED BY:** Dan Murray, Director of Technology Innovation and Services,  
519-741-2200 x7825

**PREPARED BY:** Chetan Hassarajani, Manager of Client Services

**WARD(S) INVOLVED:** None

**DATE OF REPORT:** January 20, 2016

**REPORT NO.:** FCS-16-015

**SUBJECT:** Corporate Integrated Communication Network – 2016 Core Network Upgrade

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the purchase order to the City's Vendor of Record for network hardware and professional services (Softchoice LP) be extended by \$575,140 plus HST to facilitate the 2016 Core Network Upgrade; and,**

**That delegated authority to the Director of Technology Innovation and Services be increased to an annual upset limit of \$275,000 plus HST for the purpose of determining maintenance and support requirements with Softchoice LP.**

**BACKGROUND:**

In 2010, the City awarded a proposal to Softchoice LP to upgrade the telecommunications and data network to establish a fully integrated single platform communications network. Softchoice LP was also made the Vendor of Record for an initial 10 year term, with an option to renew for an additional five year term. From 2010 – 2013, the City worked with Softchoice LP to implement a converged network platform that supports the City's Cisco Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone system and also the City's data networking needs. The network has been a great success and has enabled the provision of new services such as free public Wi-Fi.

Components of the network have been in place since 2010 and have surpassed their 5 year expected lifecycle. Network traffic has increased substantially over that time, putting pressure on the core network switches. In order for the network to keep up with the increasing traffic and advances in technology, it is time to replace and upgrade components of network from one (1) gigabit to ten (10) gigabit speed.

\*\*\* This information is available in accessible formats upon request. \*\*\*  
Please call 519-741-2345 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.

## **REPORT:**

### 2016 Upgrade of Corporate Integrated Communications Network

The two locations that will be addressed in this network upgrade are City Hall and the Kitchener Operations Facility. These two facilities are the City's largest sites that generate the most network traffic. The network upgrade will prepare and enhance the City's network for:

- Server systems failover to enable seamless business continuity in the event of a loss of our City hall systems through a flood, fire, power outage or major hardware failure.
- Increased WREPNet and core network speed (tenfold) and reliability that will support cloud computing and shared services models.
- Better overall network performance and capacity for City Hall, KOF and all remote site networks.
- Improved Wi-Fi network reliability and increased Wi-Fi throughput to allow further expansion of the free public Wi-Fi to more sites.
- Increased growth of virtual server environments resulting in higher network traffic density between the network and virtualized servers. High performance network connections are critical to the effective use of virtual server technology.
- Continued high performance and reliability of the City's telecommunications systems.

Staff have worked closely with Softchoice LP as the City's established Vendor of Record to review the upgrade options and have developed a detailed component parts list and scope of work for professional services.

### Increased Annual Amount for Delegated Authority for Annual Maintenance and Support

The City reviews support and maintenance contracts with Softchoice LP on an annual basis to ensure that it represents the appropriate, cost-effective support level. Using various strategies such as spare parts stocking and training staff in specific support procedures, the City has adapted the support requirements as needs change.

Authority was delegated in May 2012 to the Director of Information Technology to determine what level of maintenance the City should purchase pursuant to the contract provided those expenditures did not exceed \$223,000 plus HST annually. As there will be an increased hardware investment resulting from this upgrade, the City's annual maintenance costs will increase. Staff are recommending a corresponding increase in the delegated authority to \$275,000 plus HST annually to meet the increased requirement. This represents an upset limit and staff will endeavour to limit future costs as has been done in the past.

## **ALIGNMENT WITH CITY OF KITCHENER STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Strategic Priority: Effective and Efficient City Services

Strategy: 5.1 - Enhance and roll out plans for managing emergencies and business disruptions to protect lives and continue to deliver critical services to the community.

Strategic Action: #121 Server Systems Failover Capability 2016-2018

Strategic Priority: Strong and Resilient Economy

Strategy: 2.4 – Develop and nurture a high quality of life and a powerful identity for the City of Kitchener to attract investment and a talented creative workforce.

Strategic Action: #18 Canada 150 Wi-Fi Expansion

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The total cost of the work as outlined above is \$575,140 plus HST. The costs for this project are allocated across multiple budget lines in relation to the specific work being completed. The estimated costs for each aspect of the network upgrade are summarized below with the associated funding source:

Component	Cost	Funding Source - Allocation
Core network upgrade for City Hall and KOF	\$281,000	Telephone Reserve Fund - \$171,000 Computer Reserve Fund - \$110,000
WREPNET fibre network upgrade at City Hall and KOF	\$120,000	WREPNET capital account - \$120,000
Additional network equipment for failover of network services	\$110,000	Computer Reserve Fund - \$110,000
Additional Wi-Fi controller for City Hall	\$75,000	Canada 150 Wi-Fi Expansion - \$75,000
Total (with payable HST)	\$586,000	

The costs of annual maintenance is funded from the Telephone Reserve Fund.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City’s website with the agenda in advance of the council / committee meeting.

**ACKNOWLEDGED BY:** Dan Chapman, Deputy CAO



**REPORT TO:** Finance and Corporate Services

**DATE OF MEETING:** February 8, 2016

**SUBMITTED BY:** Christine Tarling, Director of Legislated Services & City Clerk,  
519-741-2200, ext. 7809

**PREPARED BY:** Tanya Daniels, Manager of Licensing, 519-741-2200, ext. 7854

**WARD(S) INVOLVED:** All

**DATE OF REPORT:** January 18, 2016

**REPORT NO.:** FCS-16-009

**SUBJECT:** Comprehensive Business Licensing Review – Scope of Review

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the project scope of the Comprehensive Business Licensing Review, as outlined in staff report FCS-16-009, be approved.**

**BACKGROUND:**

The *Municipal Act*, 2001 provides municipal councils with the authority to license, regulate and govern any business, wholly or partly carried out within its boundaries. Business licensing has been a municipal mandate in the Province of Ontario for over 20 years and is practiced by many Municipalities.

The public interest associated with licensing and regulating businesses within a municipality relates to the following three major areas:

1. Health and safety of the municipality, which includes workers, customers, and visitors;
2. Consumer protection; and,
3. Nuisance Control.

In other words, by licensing and regulating businesses, the City endeavours to reasonably ensure, on behalf of the community, that businesses are safe, free from criminal influence, and integrated properly into the community. A licensing program allows the Municipality to regulate business activities within its boundaries with respect to where they can operate and also by requiring certain inspections, standards, conditions and supporting documentation (e.g., Valid Insurance coverage) to ensure businesses are operating responsibly and in the best interest of the community.

\*\*\* This information is available in accessible formats upon request. \*\*\*  
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The City of Kitchener's current licensing program is comprehensive, comprised of 36 Municipal Code Chapters and the annual administration of over 2500 licences across nearly 100 different categories.

In 2005 the Business Licensing fees were reviewed and a fee calculation was implemented for all types of businesses. While some of the licensing chapters have had small updates within those years, the program itself has not been reviewed in over 10 years. During this time the needs of the community have changed, internal processes have improved, and legislation changes have occurred.

As part of the 2016 Council-approved business plan, Licensing staff have committed to completing a comprehensive review of the Business Licensing Program. As directed by Council, Licensing staff is submitting for review and approval, a scope of project report.

## **REPORT:**

The following 8 areas represent the scope of the planned review of the City's business licensing program:

### **1. Purpose of the Business Licensing Review**

To undertake a full review of business licensing processes to ensure a customer-focused approach, to make better use of existing technologies and to implement industry best practices. This will include a review and update to the licensing by-law to provide greater clarity, along with a review and update of relevant fees as appropriate.

### **2. Study Area**

- Technologies available to business licensing to improve customer service,;
- Council Policies related to business licensing;
- 36 Municipal Code Chapters related to business licensing;
- 2 Business licensing bylaws;
- Municipal Code Chapters and Bylaws impacting business licensing (e.g., Zoning By Law);
- Standard Operating Practices within the Licensing section;
- Review of cost-recover and fee model options;
- Relevant regulatory changes impacting business licensing; and
- Comparator municipality research.

### **3. Guiding Principles**

- Design a sustainable business licensing program that meets the needs of the community while drawing on principles of customer service, efficient city services, and meets the guiding ideals of health and safety protection of the city, consumer protection and nuisance control;

- Ensure a customer-focused approach which results in reduced “red tape” and increased value to the customer;
- Exploit the use of technology to improve the customer experience and increase operating efficiency;
- Promote collaboration among all sectors (Government, Private, non-profit, residents) as a key to success;
- Create bylaws that are clear, understandable, enforceable, and meet legislative requirements; and,
- Establish a Business Licence fee structure for all categories that will reflect an appropriate level of cost-recovery along with the enhanced service levels and efficient processes established within the new licencing program.

#### **4. Project Lead**

The review is to be led by the Manager of Licensing.

#### **5. Stakeholder Consultation**

The following stakeholder groups or individuals will be consulted as part of the review:

- Current business licence holders;
- External partners including Kitchener Downtown Business Improvement Area and Belmont Business Improvement Area;
- The Economic Development Advisory Committee;
- The City’s Joint Enforcement Review Team comprising internal members of Bylaw Enforcement, Fire, Building, Planning, Licensing, Security, and external members at Waterloo Regional Police Services, Waterloo Regional Public Health, and K-W Humane Society;
- Other internal partners including: Legal Services, Finance, Operations, Information Technology; and,
- Comparator municipality research to include: Waterloo, London, Barrie, Cambridge, Guelph, and Brantford based on their similar size and/or proximity to Kitchener.

#### **6. Review Engagement Tactics**

Consultation and information sharing for the business licensing review will use the following methods:

- Survey to current licensees and stakeholders;
- Public notices;
- Information circulations to Kitchener Downtown BIA and Belmont BIA;
- Website updates and bulletins on a dedicated Business Licensing review webpage;
- Social Media updates including Facebook, Twitter; and
- Information sharing and collaboration meetings with internal and external partners as outlined above.

## 7. Items to Address in Review

For greater clarity, the following will be addressed in the review:

- Review the overall layout of all Business Licensing bylaws looking to incorporate best practices, improve accessibility and create a more customer-friendly model;
- Address housekeeping changes to improve language consistency, avoid unnecessary duplication, improved readability and reflect current administrative practices;
- Review fees for market comparison, structure, appropriate level of cost-recovery and implementation across the licensing types;
- Review available technology resources and future technology implementations – optimize the use of existing technology where possible;
- Look to remove redundant practices, inspections, and processes within the Licensing program;
- Review and improve inter-departmental customer service and communication processes where necessary; and,
- Review access to information supported within the business licensing process including public notices, website information and updates, and currently licensed listings.

### Overview of Review Timeline and Deliverables

Phase	Item	Timeline	Deliverables
1	Scoping	January – February 2016	Comprehensive Business Licensing Review – Scope of Review report presented to Council
2	Research This will include background research on legislation, practices, policies, fees, and stakeholder engagement	February to April 2016	Draft bylaw and municipal code amendments  Draft recommendations for improvements to practices and policies
3	Stakeholder Engagement	March to June 2016	Consultation materials provided to stakeholders  Stakeholder input is summarized and incorporated into recommendations
4	Development of revised bylaws, practices, and policies	August 2016	Presentation to August Strategic Session of Council  Comprehensive Business Licensing Review report including proposed bylaws, fees, policies and practice details



5	Implementation of new licensing program and legislation	September 2016 to January 2017	Updated public information, implementation of new technology,, approaches and fee schedule
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**ALIGNMENT WITH CITY OF KITCHENER STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Strategic Priority: Effective and Efficient City Services

Strategy:

5.2 Improve the design and delivery of city services so that they provide what citizens want in the most reliable, convenient and cost-effective way.

Strategic Action:

- # 116 Comprehensive Review of Business Licensing; and
- # 122 Online Business Licensing

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

None – This review will be completed by City staff. Any disbursements associated with the review (e.g., public notices, etc.) will be minor and will be funded within the approved operating budget.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City’s website with the agenda in advance of the council / committee meeting.

CONSULT – There will be extensive stakeholder consultation associated with this review as outlined in sections 5 and 6 above.

**CONCLUSION:**

The Licensing team is dedicated to providing a business licensing program that meets the needs of the community as well as provides efficient, reliable and understandable service to licensees. This comprehensive review will be the starting point for a renewed Business Licensing program that achieves the strategic goals supported within the review and where stakeholders have had an opportunity to provide input into the program that directly affects them.

**ACKNOWLEDGED BY:** Dan Chapman, Deputy CAO



**REPORT TO:** Finance and Corporate Services Committee  
**DATE OF MEETING:** February 8, 2016  
**SUBMITTED BY:** Jana Miller, Executive Director of the CAO's Office, 519-741-2200 x7231  
**PREPARED BY:** Josh Joseph, Community Engagement Consultant, 519-741-2200 x7221  
**WARD (S) INVOLVED:** All  
**DATE OF REPORT:** January 15, 2016  
**REPORT NO.:** CAO-16-006  
**SUBJECT:** Update on Community Engagement initiatives

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## RECOMMENDATION:

For information only.

## BACKGROUND:

The City of Kitchener has a strong tradition as a municipal leader in community engagement. In February 2014, Council approved the Open Government Action Plan which included recommendations for open data and e-participation as key components of the City's 2014 work. The Action Plan outlined Kitchener's vision for open government and defined the three key principles that now govern Kitchener's open government initiatives, including: Participation, Transparency and Accountability.

The Participation principle focuses on improving public participation, mobilizing citizens to engage in public debate and provide input and contributions that lead to more responsive, innovative and effective governance. To achieve a greater degree of public participation, the Action Plan identified that, between 2014 and 2017, Kitchener would undertake key initiatives including:

- Developing a Community Engagement Policy that will formalize the City's previous work on a framework and toolkit for community engagement.
- E-Participation – researching approaches to online participation which will enhance public engagement; enhancing participation via the City's website and implementing new online participation approaches.

Further to this work in September 2014, Council approved the E-Participation Executive Summary, which provided direction on the establishment of an e-participation platform for the City of Kitchener and identified technological and staff resourcing considerations that required funding if the report recommendations were to be achieved. During the 2015 budget process, Council approved a strategic initiative to fund a new e-participation/community engagement position and the purchase of an e-participation platform to launch to the public.

During subsequent discussions about priorities for the 2016 business plan, Council highlighted a desire for a comprehensive engagement review to look at where in the organization public engagement is occurring, current practices and policies, consistencies, gaps, challenges and potential improvements.

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Please call 519-741-2345 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.

This project is now included as a priority within the 2016 business plan, as is the plan to acquire and implement an e-Participation platform.

As per the recommendation within the E-Participation Executive Summary, a Community Engagement Consultant has now been hired (November 2014), a permanent position approved through budget and filled through an internal hire. This report is intended to update Council on the current status and timing of the organization's work on community engagement, including:

- Preliminary planning for the comprehensive Community Engagement Review
- Future development of Community Engagement Policy
- Acquisition and implementation of an E-participation platform

## **REPORT:**

### **Community Engagement Review:**

A comprehensive review of the city's public engagement practices, processes and policies is necessary to assess their current status, gaps, challenges and how they can be improved. Additionally, the comprehensive review will inform the development of a formalized community engagement policy for the City.

It is anticipated that the comprehensive review may also lead to other future potential actions, including:

- Updating the Community Engagement Framework and Toolkit
- Providing training to staff on how to effectively plan and deliver community engagement activities
- Encouraging the preparation of Community Engagement Plans for all major projects and initiatives that will involve the community
- Improving coordination and communication for engagement events
- Enhancing communication with citizens acknowledging input received and action taken
- Utilizing additional methods for seeking input

Consultation with internal and external stakeholders will play an important role in the community engagement review. To make it as easy as possible for anyone to participate, consultation activities will include:

- Individual and group interviews with internal and external stakeholders
- Online survey
- Ability to provide feedback through email, by telephone and via regular mail

The City will promote its efforts through a social media campaign, advertising and posters/flyers in City facilities.

Tables 1 and 2 on the following pages include a list of internal and external stakeholders to be consulted. The Mayor and Councillors will also be consulted as part of the Community Engagement Review.

**Table 1: External Community Stakeholders**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts and Culture Advisory Committee</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compass Kitchener Advisory Committee</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cycling and Trails Advisory Committee</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downtown Action Advisory Committee</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Development Advisory Committee</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Committee Advisory Committee</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage Kitchener Advisory Committee</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Action Council</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor's Advisory Council for Kitchener's Seniors</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe and Healthy Community Advisory Committee</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Working Centre</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional stakeholders and members of the public will be able to provide input through the online survey, social media campaign and hard copies of surveys in City facilities and community centres.</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Internal Stakeholders (City of Kitchener)**

Department	Division	Interview Group
CAO	CAO & Administration	Group 1: Corporate Customer Service
		Group 2: Corporate Communications and Marketing
		Group 3: Strategy & Business Planning
		Group 4: Chief of Staff/Office of Mayor
	Economic Development	Group 5: Special Events
		Group 6: Business Development
		Group 7: Kitchener Market
		Group 8: Downtown Community Development
		Group 9: Arts and Culture
CSD	Building	Group 10: Building & Permits
	Bylaw	Group 11: Bylaw Enforcement
	Community Programs and Services	Group 12: Program and Resource Services
		Group 13: Older Adult Services
		Group 14: Children's and Youth Services
		Group 15: Volunteer Resources
		Group 16: Community Resource Centres
	DCAO & Administration	Group 17: Aquatics and Athletics
	DCAO & Administration	Group 18: Neighbourhood Strategy
	Enterprise	Group 19: Aud & Arenas
	Planning	Group 20: Development Review
Group 21: Long Range and Policy Planning		

		Group 22: Site Development and Customer Service
<b>INS</b>	Engineering	Group 23: Engineering Design and Approvals
		Group 24: Development Engineering
		Group 25: Engineering Construction
		Group 26: Stormwater Utility
	Operations	Group 27: Operations (Roads)
		Group 28: Operations (Parks, Fields, Trees)
		Group 29: Operations (Sewers & Traffic Operations)
		Group 30: Design and Development
	Transportation Services	Group 31: Transportation Planning
		Group 32: Parking Enterprise
Utilities	Group 33: Utilities Management	
<b>FCS</b>	Financial Planning	Group 34: Financial Planning
	DCAO & Administration	Group 35: Service Coordination and Improvement
	Human Resources	Group 36: Employee Strategies and Recruitment

**Community Engagement Policy:**

In 2008, the City of Kitchener adopted a framework and toolkit to help Council, staff and the community understand the various methods and purposes of community engagement. The framework includes four different ways that the public can be involved, participate in or influence the decisions taken at the municipal level. While City staff continues to consult this framework and toolkit to inform its public engagement activities, to date, no formalized Community Engagement Policy exists.

**Table 3: City of Kitchener Community Engagement Framework**

<b>INFORM</b>	<b>CONSULT</b>	<b>COLLABORATE</b>	<b>ENTRUST</b>
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternative, or solutions.	To obtain public input into priorities or decisions, usually at one point in the project planning or implementation process.	To partner with the public in various aspects of the planning and decision-making process usually including the development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution.	To address the needs of the public and place the final decision in their hands.

Through completing a comprehensive community engagement review, the City of Kitchener can develop a formal Council policy that:

- Upholds the view that involvement of the community and key stakeholders in planning and decision making for the city is fundamental to effective governance
- Provides direction and guidance to ensure that the City’s responsibility to effectively, and consistently, communicate consult and engage the community is fulfilled.
- Addresses key existing gaps.

The objectives of a formalized community engagement policy will include:

- Building on the work that has already been completed with the City’s Community Engagement Framework and the Community Engagement Tool Kit.

- Identifying clear consistent guidelines for City Staff, Council and the public to facilitate a coordinated approach to community engagement.
- Informing the Kitchener community about the City's approach to consultation and engagement activities so that citizens know what to expect.
- Facilitating Council decision-making that is open, transparent, responsive and accountable to the community.

### **e-Participation:**

Expectations of government are changing. In a world where individuals can earn a degree online, bank at home, share pictures and talk to family and friends in real-time, we expect government to be just as accessible. Citizens also expect to be able to actively – and easily – participate and contribute ideas that make our communities better.

E-participation, a rapidly-growing element in local government communications and engagement, essentially refers to use of online technology tools to strengthen citizen participation in democratic decision-making processes. E-participation platforms – centralized online forums that house all of a municipality's engagement opportunities in a single place – enable citizens to participate in various ways online, including:

- Develop new solutions
- Provide input on new and redesigned services
- Provide input on city priorities
- Provide input on services and the decisions that impact them most
- Review and edit key documents, policies and strategies

Implementing electronic means to engage with citizens is a recognized priority of Council and has a strong base of community support evidenced by the findings of the City's Open Government consultation and the 2014 Environics citizen survey. For example, the Environics Survey found that residents are satisfied with the City's efforts to ensure residents are engaged and active in decision-making, but they expect the City to come up with new ways of doing this, particularly online. Research into approaches in this area was a key first priority within Kitchener's Open Government Action Plan.

In recent months, the City of Kitchener and Region of Waterloo have spearheaded the formation of a region-wide e-Services collaboration group, which looks at how local municipalities can partner to provide or improve on the delivery of online services to citizens. The group, which includes representation from all local municipalities, has spent several months exploring the potential for a single e-Participation platform to be used across Waterloo Region. All municipalities agreed that there would be substantial benefits, including cost savings and ease of use for citizens, if this partnership could be achieved.

After considerable discussion, negotiation and research, Kitchener, Cambridge and Waterloo Region have recently jointly signed a two-year agreement to acquire the Peak Democracy Open Town Hall online civic engagement platform – which has been in use by the City of Waterloo for the past several months. The City of Kitchener's Supply Services Division provided guidance on the agreement and confirmed that given the dollar amount, a formal request for proposals submission was not required. The municipalities based their collective decision on factors including:

- **Ease of use for citizens:** Because the single tool pulls from the same population database, citizens will be able to use a single log-in to access consultations occurring across Waterloo Region municipalities.

- **Efficiency:** In 2014, the City of Waterloo conducted substantial research and an RFP process for an e-Participation platform, and found that Peak Democracy was one of the most robust in terms of capabilities, flexibility, training, support, customer service, and cost. The City of Waterloo shared these findings with the all municipalities resulting in efficiencies in researching and evaluating e-Participation platforms.
- **Cost Benefit:** The e-Services collaboration group was able to realize a cost savings for each municipality by partnering with the other municipalities.
- **References:** The City of Kitchener participated in reference calls with other Canadian municipalities currently using Peak Democracy, including the cities of Edmonton and West Vancouver. They reported a similar positive experience to the City of Waterloo. Specifically, the cities found the tool robust enough to meet the various needs of their organizations and the platform has been well received by the public.
- **Flexible and responsive to change:** e-Participation platforms are new and evolving, and the strength of Peak Democracy is the ability to be flexible in responding to municipalities' suggestions on how to improve the platform.

Some of the benefits of the new e-Participation platform for citizens include:

- Single log-on that enables citizens to access consultations at municipal or regional level
- Easy to use functionality and mobile access is available
- Ability to add comments to posted topics that can be viewed by all users
- Ability to view and edit City documents – within the document itself
- Ability to drag and drop pre-determined items on a map for geospatial purposes
- Easy to use budget visioning and priority tools
- Use of video and other graphics to simplify difficult concepts
- Dashboard and search tools to look up specific topics and projects
- Subscription options so citizens can receive notifications as new information is posted
- Citizens automatically receive a message about how their feedback will be used and next steps

With the platform acquired, key additional initiatives to be undertaken prior to the public launch of the program include:

- Development of a training plan for appropriate internal staff
- Development and implementation of a project launch plan – including an inventory of corporate community engagement initiatives that will populate the platform at launch and beyond.
- Development of additional policies and criteria that will govern internal and external use of the tool, including:
  - Criteria that describe what City projects are eligible and appropriate for e-Participation and what topic type is most appropriate for a given project.
  - User guidelines to address comment monitoring, issue reconciliation, records retention and privacy concerns.
  - Governance protocol that describe the roles and responsibilities of the Community Engagement Consultant, City staff and Peak Democracy staff in delivering e-Participation initiatives.

### **Timelines:**

Below is the timeline for engagement activities related to the launch of the e-Participation platform (April 2016), the Comprehensive Community Engagement Review (August 2016) and the development and delivery of the Community Engagement Policy (October 2016).



## **ALIGNMENT WITH CITY OF KITCHENER STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Strategic Priority: Open Government

Strategy: 1.3 – Create more opportunities for citizen dialogue on community issues and introduce new ways for people to get involved in decisions that affect them.

Strategic Action: Community Engagement Review, Implement E-Participation Platform

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

A comprehensive communications plan for the Community Engagement Review is not yet complete but it is anticipated that there will be a minimal cost for some advertising related to the public promotion of the review. The cost for the two-year agreement for the Peak Democracy e-participation platform is \$30,728.66. All costs are allocated within existing budgets.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

**INFORM** – The community will be informed of the City's e-Participation platform, and its comprehensive community engagement review, through a comprehensive public awareness plans that will involve information on the City's website, social media and posters at community centres and city facilities.

**CONSULT** – Internal and external stakeholders will be consulted as part of the Community Engagement Review, to provide an opportunity to submit feedback on the City's engagement practices, processes and policies.

Additionally, both the review and the launch of an e-participation platform are intended to create more opportunities for citizens to participate in civic decisions and see their opinions shape positive change in the community.

## **CONCLUSION:**

There are a number of potential benefits associated with community engagement – supported by research and experience – including enhanced quality of decisions, greater understanding and consensus built among stakeholders, increased ease of implementation, intentional anticipation of public concerns and an increase in civic capacity.

By enhancing opportunities for involvement, engagement and dialogue, the City can strengthen the connection and understanding among citizens in our community, between our community and city government, and between the City and other orders of government.

**ACKNOWLEDGED BY:** Jeff Willmer, CAO