

Municipal Policy Handbook Process Overview**Report Purpose**

To provide Council with an update on the status of the review of policies in the Municipal Policy handbook.

Council History

January 23, 2018 – Council directed Administration to provide an update on the status of the review of policies in the Municipal Policy Handbook.

April 28, 2015 – Council approved:

1. Revised policy GOV-002-021 Mandatory Review of Bylaws and Policies
2. Revised policy GOV-002-031 Municipal Policy Handbook Program

Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Economy: n/a

Governance: Ensuring that policies are updated and relevant is connected to a sound governance process. It supports effective decision-making and increases public confidence.

Social: n/a

Culture: n/a

Environment: n/a

Other Impacts

Policy: GOV-002-021 Mandatory Review of Bylaws and Policies requires that policies are reviewed on a three-year cycle.

Legislative/Legal: The *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) s. 5 sets out that a municipality has the duties that are imposed on it by enactments and those that the municipality imposes on itself as a matter of policy.

Interdepartmental: The policy review initiative involves all County departments.

Summary***Background***

In the early 2000s there was a push to have all decision-making guidance in the form of policy, even when the information contained did not meet the standard for a policy. This resulted in a proliferation of policies, many of which are primarily operational. The MGA requires a municipality to carry out the duties and responsibilities that it imposes on itself by policy. Updating policies enhances effective governance. A program to review the Municipal Policy Handbook was developed in 2014. Legislative and Legal Services began implementation of the program in 2015 with the addition of the Coordinator of Bylaws and Policy position.

What is Policy?

Policy is a principle that provides direction for management of a municipality's business and guides its decision making. Policy is Council's high-level statement that describes what the County stands for, or what our level or standard of service will be.

Administration is responsible for implementing Council's policy direction. Often this is done through the creation of a Directive, approved by the Chief Commissioner. Directives provide guidance to the organization so that policy is implemented in a consistent manner.

Frequency of Review

Policies should be reviewed regularly for relevance and applicability. Council's policy on Mandatory Review of Bylaws and Policy requires that they be reviewed at least once every three years.

Why Rescind Policy?

Policies should be rescinded when they are no longer needed, when they are covered or superseded by other legislation, or when they no longer represent what the County stands for. Policy rescission allows Council to focus on those policies that are still required and relevant.

Where are we at and where are we going?

The County currently has 178 policies, and eight new policies under development. In 2017, Council passed nine new policies (some of which were replacing outdated policies). Sixty policies have been reviewed and updated. Thirty-eight policies are currently in the review program, leaving 80 that will need to be addressed, including 12 that are due for review in 2018.

Starting today, Council will begin to see policy review reports on most of your agendas. Administration will be bringing forward any one or more of the following:

1. New policies for consideration.
2. Amendments to existing policies for consideration.
3. Recommendations to rescind and replace with updated policies.
4. Recommendations to rescind current policies that will be replaced with a Directive.
5. Recommendations to rescind policies that are no longer necessary (including five on today's agenda).

Some policy recommendations will be brought forward together when they are interconnected, for example, many of the Human Resource policies.

Policy review is a high priority. Legislative and Legal Services has been working with all Strathcona County departments to conduct a thorough review of the Municipal Policy Handbook. We anticipate that the bulk of this review will be completed over the next few months.

Communication Plan

Administration will update the Municipal Policy Handbook as Council directs changes to our policies. The updates will be reflected on the County's website.

Enclosure

- 1 Municipal Policy Handbook Process Overview presentation