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**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL**

**TO:** MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

**SUBJECT: CORRESPONDENCE POLICY FOR COUNCIL AND ADVISORY BODIES**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT** the Correspondence Policy for Council and Advisory Bodies (Policy No. LS-C-2023-001) included as Attachment #1 to the report titled “Correspondence Policy for Council and Advisory Bodies” dated December 6, 2023 be approved.

**REPORT**

The Executive Committee of Council, at its meeting held on December 6, 2023, received and adopted the attached report seeking approval for the proposed Correspondence Policy for Council and Advisory Bodies, which formalizes current procedures as well as introduces best practices for the administration of City correspondence.

On behalf of the Executive  
Committee of Council,

Councillor S. Dhaliwal  
Chair

Councillor R. Lee  
Vice Chair

**TO:** EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL (ECC)  
**FROM:** GENERAL MANAGER CORPORATE SERVICES  
**SUBJECT:** **CORRESPONDENCE POLICY FOR COUNCIL AND ADVISORY BODIES**  
**PURPOSE:** To seek approval for the proposed Correspondence Policy for Council and Advisory Bodies, which formalizes current procedures as well as introduces best practices for the administration of City correspondence.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** the Correspondence Policy for Council and Advisory Bodies (Policy No. LS-C-2023-001) included as Attachment #1 to the report titled “Correspondence Policy for Council and Advisory Bodies” dated December 6, 2023 be approved.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This proposed Correspondence Policy for Council and Advisory Bodies (Policy No. LS-C-2023-001) aims to establish clear procedures for receiving, managing, and responding to correspondence addressed to Council or Advisory Bodies. By adopting this policy, the City aims to provide objective procedures, enhance transparency, streamline communication, and ensure timely and consistent responses to community submissions.

### **1.0 POLICY SECTION**

The policy is established and enforced in accordance with the *Community Charter*, *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and the Burnaby Procedure Bylaw.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

Effective public engagement is a cornerstone of good governance. Correspondence addressed to Council or Council Advisory Groups plays a crucial role in public process, providing a direct channel for community members and interested parties to communicate their concerns, suggestions, and feedback. However, despite having robust procedures and internal best practices, the City does not currently have an active Correspondence Policy in place that provides clear direction on how to accept, process, respond and publish correspondence.

### 3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

This policy is proposed to formalize current practices and provide greater transparency to the public, Council, staff and interested parties regarding correspondence. The proposed policy contains the following guidance and procedures:

#### I. Acceptable Format and Content

Correspondence is accepted in the following formats:

- webforms on the City of Burnaby's website
- electronic mail (email)
- fax
- mail
- in person, at City Hall

To be considered acceptable correspondence, submissions must be addressed to Mayor and/or Council or an Advisory Body, and must contain:

- the full name of the author;
- the civic address of the author or third-party; and
- contact information for the author (personal emails and phone numbers will be redacted and not placed on the public record).

Submissions will not be accepted if they contain:

- video or audio files and other formats that are not accessible when the record is placed on public record and/or archived;
- external website URLs, redirects or other electronic codes or links that are not accessible when the record is placed on public record and/or archived;
- vulgar, derogatory, or defamatory language;
- confidential or personal information of third parties; or
- content that violates the City's Respectful Workplace Policy.

#### II. Submission Deadlines and Timelines

To be included on the next scheduled meeting agenda, correspondence must be received by the Corporate Officer no later than 12:00 Noon on the Tuesday preceding a Council or Advisory Body meeting.

Petitions will be included as correspondence on the next regular meeting agenda. In accordance with s.82 of the *Community Charter*, petitions are deemed to be presented to Council when filed and certified with the Corporate Officer, and must include the full name and residential address of each petitioner.

III. Classification of Correspondence:

Written submissions placed on the Council Agenda, Advisory Body Agenda or the Correspondence Package shall be classified based on the following criteria:

<b>On Agenda (Council or Advisory Body)</b>	<b>Correspondence Package Section:</b>		
Correspondence Section	1: Note from Staff	2: Referred	3: For Information
Matters that require action from Council or an Advisory Body by way of resolution and vote.	Matters that require additional data or information from staff.  These matters may include a clarification note, staff response to the author or further action taken by staff.	Matters that are referred to an Advisory Body.  These matters shall relate to the Advisory Body's purpose and scope as defined in its Terms of Reference.	Matters of routine business or general information that is received and filed.

Confidential Correspondence will not be included on a public agenda or Council Correspondence Package but will be provided to Council members through a Closed Council agenda or provided to the appropriate authority or staff member.

IV. Response and Communication:

Council members, at their own discretion, may raise any correspondence item for discussion during the "Other Business" or "Correspondence" section of the associated meeting agenda package, regardless of where it is placed in the Council Correspondence Package.

Legislative Services staff will provide all accepted electronic correspondence a confirmation receipt and provide information on when and where the correspondence shall appear for Council or Advisory Body consideration.

Additional staff responses may be provided to the author, based on the nature, scope and content of the submission. All staff responses shall be clear, concise, and respectful of the correspondent's inquiries or concerns.

Staff responses to correspondence may be shared with the public through appropriate channels, such as a Regular Council meeting, an Advisory Body meeting, or the City's website or social media accounts, when reasonable.

**4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Burnaby actively utilizes the City’s website as a primary platform for information sharing. Agenda and Correspondence Packages are published in accordance with the Burnaby Procedure Bylaw and available online at Burnaby.ca/eAgenda or made available by contacting the Legislative Services department in person, via phone or email.

**5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Not applicable.

Respectfully submitted,

Nikki Best, Director Legislative Services  
For  
Juli Halliwell, General Manager Corporate Services

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Correspondence Policy for Council and Advisory Bodies

**REPORT CONTRIBUTORS**

This report was prepared by Samantha Pellizzari, Policy and Governance Administrator and reviewed by Blanka Zeinabova, Senior Manager Legislative Services.



## **CORRESPONDENCE POLICY FOR COUNCIL AND ADVISORY BODIES**

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**Document Type:** Council Policy

**Effective Date:**

**Policy Number:** LS-C-2023-001

**Approved By:**

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### **A. POLICY STATEMENT**

The City of Burnaby values public engagement and is dedicated to delivering prompt, accurate, and thorough responses to input and information submitted via correspondence. This Correspondence Policy for Council and Advisory Bodies (the “Policy”) delineates the procedures for submitting, receiving, managing, publishing, and responding to correspondence addressed to Council and Advisory Bodies of the City of Burnaby.

### **B. SCOPE**

This Policy is applicable to all individuals and third parties desiring to submit correspondence to the Council or Advisory Bodies. The procedures contained in the Policy are in accordance with the *Community Charter*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)*, and the Burnaby Procedure Bylaw.

### **C. PURPOSE**

Providing a clear and objective policy for the handling of correspondence facilitates good governance and amplifies public engagement in relation to all City services, operations and statutory requirements.

On a routine basis, Legislative Services staff accept written submissions addressed to Council or Advisory Bodies. Submissions are reviewed, classified, and compiled into the Council Correspondence Package, which is then published and uploaded to the City's website and provided to Council in the same time period as Council Meeting agendas.

To ensure submissions are handled within a reasonable timeline, staff may publish an additional Council Correspondence Package should there be an extended period of time without a regularly scheduled Council meeting.

**D. DEFINITIONS**

<b>Advisory Bodies</b>	means Select and Standing Committees and Commissions who have been appointment by Mayor and Council.
<b>City</b>	means the City of Burnaby.
<b>Confidential Correspondence</b>	means correspondence that is determined by the Corporate Officer to not be publicly releasable based on legislative requirements and other bylaws and policies of the City.
<b>Corporate Officer</b>	is the employee appointed by Council and has the meaning included in s.148 of the <i>Community Charter</i> .
<b>Correspondence</b>	means any written communication, including letters, emails, faxes, petitions, and other forms of written expression, addressed to the Mayor and/or Council or Advisory Bodies of the City of Burnaby.
<b>Council Correspondence Package</b>	means the publication containing accepted Correspondence that is prepared by Legislative Services and distributed with the regularly scheduled Council meeting agendas.
<b>Meeting</b>	means a regularly scheduled Council or Advisory Body meetings.
<b>Meeting agenda</b>	means Regular Council or Council Advisory Body meeting agendas.
<b>Author</b>	means any person writing to the City of Burnaby Mayor and/or Council or Advisory Bodies, including but not limited to residents, non-residents, or a representative of an organization or third party.

**E. AUTHORITY**

This Policy is established and enforced in accordance with the *Community Charter*, *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and the Burnaby Procedure Bylaw.

The Legislative Services department, under the direction of the Corporate Officer, is responsible for the acceptance of documents provided to Council and

Advisory Bodies as well as the maintaining and safekeeping of public records pursuant to section 148 of the *Community Charter*.

The Corporate Officer or designate retains the authority to accept submissions of correspondence addressed to Mayor and/or Council or Advisory Bodies.

## F. PROCEDURES

### I. Acceptable Format and Content

Correspondence is accepted in the following formats:

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- mail
- in person, at City Hall

To be considered acceptable correspondence, submissions must be addressed to Mayor and/or Council or an Advisory Body, and must contain:

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IV. Response and Communication:

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Legislative Services staff will provide all accepted electronic correspondence a confirmation receipt and provide information to the Author about when and where the correspondence shall appear for Council or Advisory Body consideration.

Additional staff responses may be provided to the Author, based on the nature, scope and content of the submission. All staff responses shall be clear, concise, and respectful of the correspondent's inquiries or concerns.

Staff responses to correspondence may be shared with the public through appropriate channels, such as a Regular Council meeting, an Advisory Body meeting, or the City's website or social media accounts, when appropriate.

**G. EXEMPTIONS**

For clarity purposes, submission exemptions to this Policy include:

1. Public Notice responses (e.g. Public Hearings or other statutory notices inviting the public to provide input). Deadlines, requirements, and details for submissions for public notices are indicated on the specified notice.
2. Physical mail that is addressed to individual Council member, which will be considered private correspondence and forwarded, unopened, to the Council member’s mailbox at Burnaby City Hall. Legislative Services staff shall notify Council members of any unopened mail in their mailbox on a weekly basis.

**H. PUBLIC RECORD**

Accepted correspondence submissions that are placed in the Council Correspondence Package become part of the permanent public record and City Archives.

Correspondence that is submitted that contains personal information is collected in accordance with British Columbia’s *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Personal information other than the name and civic address will be withheld from public disclosure. The use, storage and retention of personal information in the Council Correspondence Package is under the authority of the Corporate Officer.

**I. ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMODATIONS**

Accommodation for accessibility purposes in relation to this Policy are available to individuals by contacting the Legislative Services department.

**J. POLICY ADMINISTRATION AND REVIEW**

This Policy shall be administered by the Corporate Officer and will be reviewed and amended from time to time, through Council’s approval

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**Review Date:**

**Amendment Date(s):**

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