



Town of Whitby Council Protocol

Title: Mayor and Councillors' Office Constituent Inquiry Protocol
SOP Number: CLK-MOC-012
Department/Division: Mayor and Council
Date Approved: October 11, 2024
Date Revised: n/a

1 Overview

The purpose of this protocol is to provide guidance to Council and the Mayor and Councillors' Office (the Office) on the handling of constituent inquiries made through Members of Council and routed through the Office. The protocol also establishes the process whereby Members of Council will work with Staff and one another to respond to and resolve constituent inquiries.

This Protocol is intended to address matters that require the Corporation and Staff's involvement, and the Protocol does not apply to:

- Situations where a constituent wishes to express or share their opinion with a Member of Council
- Inquiries and the processing of correspondence for matters on an upcoming Committee or Council agenda (see also the Procedure By-law and relevant Clerk's Office Standard Operating Procedures)

2 Routing of Constituent Inquiries

All constituent inquiries made to a Member of Council that require the involvement of Town Staff to review, action, and/or respond to shall be routed through the Mayor and Councillors' Office in accordance with the following process:

- The inquiry will be relayed by the Member of Council to the Office by forwarding the email to council@whitby.ca or by calling, or having the constituent call, 905.430.4300 x2203.
- Staff in the Office will acknowledge receipt of the inquiry with the resident by email, copying the relevant Member(s) of Council, within two business days.
- Staff in the Office will create a service request in the Cityworks software and route that request to the relevant department(s) for review and action as required.

- The department(s) responsible will review and action the matter in accordance with established service levels and customer service standards (see also Council-Staff Relations Policy G080).
- The department(s) will respond to the resident advising how the matter has been handled and copy the relevant Member(s) of Council and council@whitby.ca to the response.
- Staff in the Office will update and, as applicable, close the Cityworks service request for that inquiry.

When a Member of Council does not follow the above process and contacts Staff directly regarding a constituent inquiry or community concern, including situations where the same inquiry is directed to multiple Staff or departments, Staff will redirect the inquiry through the Mayor and Councillors' Office to be logged, tracked, and forwarded to the department(s) through Cityworks.

See also the Homelessness Related Inquiries Communication Protocol for further information regarding the handling of homelessness concerns, noting that the above process to direct such constituent inquiries to Council@whitby.ca and Staff's process log and track through Cityworks still applies.

3 Urgent Inquiries

Where there is a constituent inquiry that requires urgent attention, the Member of Council may:

- route the matter through the after-hours line at 905.434.2034 if it is related to Operations (e.g. road, waste, or park maintenance concern)
- contact Senior Staff to request they assess the situation, noting that Staff are not available 24/7 and there will be delays in responding. Senior Staff shall apply their discretion as to whether the matter is urgent, and applicable service levels and response times shall apply

4 Unsatisfied with Staff Action or Response

If a Member of Council is not satisfied with the action or response of Staff to address a constituent concern, or if they believe the Town has made an error in administering a Town policy or by-law, the Member shall direct their concerns to the Chief Administrative Officer and/or relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team.

5 Members of Council Involvement and Association with Service Requests

Members of Council are representatives of the communities that elect them, and members of the public have a right to address their municipal representatives on issues of concern. The Municipal Act confirms that a role of Council is "to represent the public".

It is often the case that constituents send their inquiries to multiple Members of Council at the same time. With nine Members of Council, five of which were elected at large

and four by ward, there are also overlapping representative responsibilities. The following protocol for Members involvement is necessary to ensure that constituent inquiries requiring Staff's attention are handled efficiently and effectively:

- The public has the right to contact any Member of Council with their inquiry
 - To respect ward representation, where a matter is related to a specific ward and the inquiry is sent to multiple Members of Council, Members shall defer handling of the issue to the Ward Councillor, and if applicable, the paired Regional Councillor for that ward
 - Staff in the Mayor and Councillors' Office will associate the following Members of Council with a Cityworks service request:
 - The Member(s) the inquiry was initially addressed to and those who were cc'd
 - For matters specific to a ward, the Ward Councillor, and if applicable, the paired Regional Councillor for that ward
 - For matters regarding a Regional service, the Mayor or Regional Councillor who sits on the relevant Regional Committee
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