

Report to Council



Date: August 12, 2019
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Advocacy Framework
Department: Partnerships & Investments

Recommendation:

THAT Council receive for information the report from the Divisional Director, Partnerships and Investments regarding the Advocacy Framework, as outlined in the report dated August 12, 2019.

Purpose:

To provide Council with an overview of proposed principles for the creation of an Advocacy Framework when working with other levels of government and partner agencies.

Background:

Effective Intergovernmental Advocacy has the potential to yield positive benefits for the City. A strategy that focuses on long-term relationships may produce increased service provision, increased investment, increased revenue sharing, and increased influence over other levels of government policy. Conversely, an unproductive advocacy approach can be ineffective in achieving goals, not reflect priorities of Council as a whole, and undermine important relationships with partners.

Staff are recommending the City take a more purposeful approach to advocacy using both staff and political relationships. To move this forward, staff intend to create a simple framework that outlines the principles and tools that would be used in its advocacy efforts. The following are the initial concepts that will be considered in creating the framework.

Principles

- Reflects Council priorities and established decision-making process
 - The City maintains the importance of strong governance in its approach to business. Advocacy priorities will be in line with Council Priorities and will be agreed to by resolution. The Mayor will be the spokesperson for Council on advocacy issues with Council spokespersons on an issue being determined by Council.

- Identify initiatives shared between the City and its Partners
 - The City will align advocacy initiatives with priorities of our government partners to maximize success. This may require a temporary focus that is different than the City's deemed top priority but will yield greater success than trying to push for something contrary to the government mandate. This principle will require ongoing monitoring of developments at other levels of government concerning new initiatives, programs, and policies that could impact the City. It is better to be proactive than reactive to ensure success.
- Achieve desired outcomes through established roles of Council and staff
 - Effective advocacy occurs when political excitement can be achieved alongside staff having the scope to implement. City Council's focus is on advocacy between elected officials and staff focus is on relationships with staff counterparts. The City will respect the roles and authorities of other levels of government to deliver services as required by legislation.
- Maintain positive relationships with partners
 - The City will have a relationship focus with its government and institutional partners. Regardless of the difficulty of the issue, the City will seek to speak well of our government and institutional partners. Difficult issues should be addressed face-to-face and not aired in public. This long-term focus on relationships will serve the City well throughout time and will be based in a culture of appreciation for our partners. The City will regularly positively recognize our partners for work they do in our community.
- Develop initiatives using evidence-based research
 - Initiatives moved forward by the City will be well researched and consider best practices from other jurisdictions. This may require an investment from the City to ensure recommendations to our partners are sound and achievable.
- Focus efforts to achieve results
 - Given the amount of resource, the City will focus on two to three large scale advocacy initiatives that will have the most impact during each Council term. Staff will consider the ability to implement a project vs a policy initiative in a satisfactory amount of time. If a policy objective is chosen, staff will attempt to build the policy collaboratively with our government partner through a task force or similar team. Grants will be a continued focus of the City and will require smaller scale advocacy by staff and from time-to-time by the Mayor or Council.

Next Steps

This is the initial report on an Advocacy Framework and is intended to broach proposed principles with Council for discussion. Based on feedback from Council, staff will create an Advocacy Framework that will outline key principles and tools for the City to utilize. The framework will be rooted in the long-term relationship focus mandate with clearly identified roles. Upon presentation of the Advocacy Framework,

staff will provide Council with an example of future advocacy briefs for discussion to ensure it meets their needs. Staff will also identify possible advocacy priorities being brought forward for Council discussion.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Internal Circulation:

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Existing Policy:

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Communications Comments:

Submitted by: D. Edstrom, Divisional Director, Partnerships & Investments

Approved for inclusion: D. Gilchrist, City Manager

Attachments: 1. PowerPoint