

Written policies form the lifeline of any municipality. Policies are essential to good government and to an understanding of the continuity of Council decision-making. Policy development contributes to the overall separation of Council as policy makers from the staff, who are charged with carrying out Council decisions. Further, written policy statements are useful to current and successive Councils as guidelines on key municipal issues. They represent the philosophy of the current Council and at least convey a sense of the direction of decision-making of that *of* Council to the public and affected parties.

Types of Policies

Policies reflect Council's view of what is to be done in order to achieve their aims and objectives. They may be a part of a broad, long-term planning process or they may be much more specific in response to a particular circumstance. Again, using a descriptive hierarchy or framework, policies may be:

Policies of Intent

Policies of Intent are those which are broadly-based dealing with long-term issues, reflecting the intention of Council to take certain actions on the goals and priorities of the community.

Situational Policies

Situational policies refer to those which are established by Council in response to a particular circumstance or occurrence which may not have been foreseen in the course of normal decision-making.

Routine Policies

Routine policies are those which are drafted in response to ongoing issues or to issues which can be anticipated in advance (ie. a pro-active response).

Administrative Policies

Administrative policies are those which deal with day-to-day issues falling within the mandate and authority allocated to the chief Administrative Officer.

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Role of Council

The ultimate decision-makers in any municipality are those members who are elected to serve on a municipal council. Council members are elected to represent their constituents and are expected to be aware of the actions which staff are taking as a result of the directives of Council as a whole, the members of Council are not to become involved in the day to day administration of the municipality.

The development of policy statements supplemented by administrative procedures encourages the separation of responsibility between Council and its hired staff. With an appropriate system of policy development, the distinction between Council, its Boards and Commissions, and staff can be easily clarified.

Bylaws, on the other hand, are developed and adopted to cover those issues which Council feel are of a substantive nature and generally applicable to all ratepayers and which may require the power of the Courts to ensure compliance and consistence. As well, bylaws are adopted in those areas in which they are required by provincial legislation, eg. the borrowing of funds to provide a particular local improvement. Bylaws require three readings of Council to adopt and three readings of Council to amend or rescind.

In the absence of written policy, each issue becomes the requirement of in-depth investigation, research and report. Each issue becomes a separate time consuming item for Council to deal with. Policies, on the other hand, are predicated on issues which are likely to arise and, therefore, enable both Council and staff to deal with such issues in a quick and timely fashion based on existing written policy.

Continuity and Flexibility

Policies may be amended from time to time based on good evidence that the current policy does not address fully all of the issues or that current conditions have changed. As well, policies may be waived by Council from time to time depending upon the nature of the request. It is certain that your policy manual will be updated as required and be reviewed in its entirety every three years to ensure that existing policies are indeed current.

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Role of Boards/Committees/Agencies

Each municipal Council has a variety of local boards and agencies which contributes to the provision of services to the County. Some of these boards and agencies are volunteer organizations which rely upon the good will of their members and a common sense of direction in order to act as an agent for social and community development. Most boards/agencies/committees in the community are beyond the responsibility of Council and yet often have an impact on the decision-making of Council.