

Open Government Committee

Terms of Reference

MANDATE

The mandate of the Open Government Committee is to promote a culture of collaboration and openness in government.

Open Government is about improving the delivery of services and supporting initiatives that build trust and confidence in government. It is guided by four overarching principles of **transparency, participation, accountability and accessibility**, which support open government and enhance opportunities for civic engagement.

Transparency: Making government information available to the public is a requirement for an informed citizenry and enables people to understand what their government is doing.

Participation: Democracy requires opportunities for participation and collaborative problem solving whenever possible.

Accountability: Accountable government requires high ethical standards, codes of conduct and a commitment to proactive disclosure about government activities and spending.

Accessibility: A government serving its citizens needs policies that provide maximum information accessibility and maximum inclusion in the participatory process.

Central to achieving the Open Government Committee mandate is to promote information management accountability. Staff demonstrate accountability by practicing responsible record-keeping and by sharing information in ways that balance access to information with the protection of privacy.

Information is vital as a resource for proper policy and service planning, as well as the monitoring of outcomes. It is also to ensure that technology is leveraged to ensure that information can be delivered in the most effective manner. Technology and information management are essential partners explaining how technology is changing the way public servants work and guiding a transformation from a culture of silos and mistrust into a culture of openness and transparency. Other components include developing, enhancing, and assessing relevant processes, policies, legislation, and monitoring mechanisms that support these principles.

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CHAMPIONS

The Open Government Committee is championed by the City Clerk, Ulli Watkiss.

STRATEGIC GOALS

The Open Government Committee's strategic goals are designed to further the four fundamental principles, of transparency, participation, accountability, and accessibility.

Transparency goals

- Promote a culture of openness and collaboration within the Toronto Public Service.
- Promote open standards for access and to an open information culture by managing information as a strategic corporate asset.
- Promote a balance of access to information while protecting and ensuring privacy.

Participation goals

- Provide opportunities for public participation throughout the policymaking and decision-making process.
- Promote innovative and meaningful ways to increase public involvement and civic engagement in municipal government.

Accountability goals

- Promote access to, and increasing the availability of information about public services and government activities.
- Promote monitoring mechanisms over time to ensure such practices meet intended goals and objectives.

Accessibility goals

Strategic goals furthering the principle of accessibility are:

- Promote trust and confidence in government by making meaningful, authoritative, accurate and timely information easily accessible.

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- Ensure access to information for people with diverse needs. This includes promoting and recognizing the importance of open standards, and relevant service information, in accessing public data that is easy to locate, understand, and reuse.
- Provide information proactively to the public. Information is provided in a timely manner, caters to diverse needs, is easily located, understood, and in useable formats.

OBJECTIVES

- Influence Divisional operations, projects, and initiatives to adopt information management policies, tools, and techniques.
- Coordinate Open Government initiatives with other corporate committees by aligning priorities and leveraging common requirements, interests, and objectives.
- Communicate information management considerations affecting technology plans and implementation to appropriate Steering Committees.
- Promote and develop policies for all clusters that support the collection, sharing, and dissemination of relevant and quality data.
- Work with Information Management Liaison Officers to solicit and exchange information management issues and priorities with the Open Government Committee.
- Provide strategic direction to selected information management projects.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Open Government Committee will:

- Be a collaborative body that works with other committees such as eCity to provide consultation to the City Clerk.

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- Identify an appropriate scope for information management and be mindful of emerging issues and trends.
- Recommend changes to City policies, programs, legislation and services that support Government.
- Provide corporate direction and strategic advice to Corporate Information Management Services, City Clerk's Office, to support the ongoing development of policies, guidelines, standards, and best practices that support Open Government.
- Make recommendations on strategic investments in data collection, information management/information technology initiatives and projects that contribute to the Open Government goals.
- Support the goals and objectives of the eCity program.
- Support corporate strategic direction.
- Set targets and performance measures for strategic goals.
- Promote new and innovative ways for meaningful participation and engagement in municipal government.
- Members will bring information management issues and priorities to the Open Government Committee from their clusters and program areas and communicate back to their Cluster and Divisional Senior Management Teams.

MEETINGS

Meetings are held at the call of the Chair, approximately every six weeks.

Decisions of the committee are made by consensus.
Quorum is a majority of the total number of members.

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MEMBERSHIP

Chair

City Clerk

Committee Membership

To ensure an enterprise perspective, senior membership will include representation from business, City governance and enabling technology:

Cluster A	City Manager's Office
Cluster B	Internal Audit
Cluster C	Strategic Communications
Human Resources	Legal Services
City Clerk's Office	Information & Technology

Committee Support

IM Policy (Corporate Information Management Services, City Clerk's Office)
Committee Coordination (eCity Office, Information & Technology Division)

ROLES

Chair: The Chair of the Open Government Committee is a fixed position held by the City Clerk and is responsible for setting the agenda and resolving issues.

Committee Members: The members of Open Government Committee are responsible for:

- Advancing the goals and objectives of the committee.
- Raising divisional issues to the committee and communicating back to their senior management teams.

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APPENDIX

BACKGROUND

The Open Government Committee was established by combining the former Information Management Steering Committee and the eCity Subcommittee: eGovernment Committee.

- eGovernment was the component of eCity responsible for enabling the democratic process, public involvement in civic affairs and management of the city's information assets.
- Information Management Steering Committee was responsible for providing oversight and direction to the City's information management program.

KEY CONCEPTS

Open Government

Open Government is changing the way government works. It promotes civic engagement, customer service, and the ability to manage government. The Open Government Committee is driving information management accountability by fostering a culture of information sharing that balances access to information with the protection of privacy.

Information as a Corporate Asset

Information is a key corporate asset along with people, property, and finances. Information helps keep government working well. Information about our services and corporate assets must be:

- Managed throughout its lifecycle from creation to retention to disposal.
- Open and accessible to the public while safeguarding confidential and personal information privacy.
- Managed to mitigate risk and liability.

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Information Management Accountability

Information management accountability makes it easier to access government decisions and enhances open and transparent government. Information resources include data and records, and the knowledge and experience of our employees.

Divisions must manage City records because they are essential for operational, financial, legal, audit and other requirements and because responsible record keeping demonstrates how services and programs are conducted.

The City recognizes that information policies, standards and procedures, along with appropriate technology and business processes, need to be coordinated and managed effectively. Legal and policy requirements ensure the City manages its resources effectively, ethically and efficiently.

Public Engagement and Trust

Open government leadership promotes dialogue and information sharing with the public. Trust and confidence in government is supported through the release of meaningful and useful data, and information enhanced by staff or the public.