

Changes to City Council Procedures Will Have Detrimental Effects on Edmonton Municipal Participation

Edmonton, AB – The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce strongly opposes the proposed amendments to the Council Procedures Bylaw 18155, which will reduce the distribution date for Council and Committee agendas and subsequent reports from 10 clear days to the Thursday prior to the meeting. These changes, if implemented, will leave just two working days before a City Council or Committee meeting for Edmontonians and Councillors to gather their opinions on municipal affairs.

The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce (ECC), the official voice of the Edmonton business community, urgently warns that these amendments will severely limit public participation and transparency in municipal governance.

“These proposed changes will significantly impair the ability of Edmontonians and the business community to participate effectively in municipal governance, said Doug Griffiths, President and CEO of the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, “A transparent and accessible decision-making process is essential for a thriving and resilient Edmonton, and for ensuring elected officials make informed decision on behalf of their constituents.”

For Edmontonians, the proposed bylaw changes will severely constrain their ability to be informed, engage in democracy, and participate in Council and Committee meetings. The ECC deeply values our strong working relationship with City Council and Administration, who have played a significant role in supporting the growth of our city. However, the proposed changes hinder our ability to collaborate effectively on our shared mission to make Edmonton thrive. Ultimately, these changes threaten the integrity of the democratic process.

For Councillors, the proposed bylaw changes are equally problematic. The June 11, 2024, City Council agenda package was 1,231 pages long and included almost 20 unique decision points. If the new bylaw changes were in place, Councillors would have had just two business days to review these materials, engage stakeholders, and formulate decisions on matters that significantly affect the daily lives of Edmontonians. It is unreasonable to believe that elected officials would be well-prepared or informed for these discussions with such compressed timelines.

When City Council debates these changes on August 20th, the ECC urges the Mayor and City Councilors to reconsider their previous motion and to maintain the current 10-day distribution rule to ensure that Edmonton remains a city where businesses, citizens, and Councillors alike can actively contribute to municipal decisions in an informed manner.

