



THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF CENTRAL SAANICH

COUNCIL POLICY

Effective Date November 28, 2022	POLICY NO. 16.ADM
Amendment Date(s): September 23, 2024	
SUBJECT: COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE	
Category: Administration	

1. PURPOSE

This document sets out the District of Central Saanich's policy regarding the process of handling electronic and paper correspondence addressed to Mayor and/or Council.

This policy establishes guidelines to ensure that all correspondence received by the District of Central Saanich is distributed in a timely and consistent manner and that appropriate record keeping policies are applied.

2. APPLICATION

This policy is applicable to all correspondence received for members of Council whether in electronic or paper format.

3. REFERENCE: This policy makes reference to the *Community Charter*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and *Council Procedure Bylaw No. 2008, 2019*.

4. DEFINITIONS

"Correspondence" means all letters or requests sent to the District of Central Saanich from someone outside of the organization addressed to "Mayor"; "Council"; "Mayor and Council", "District Council" or individual Council members either via paper, or electronically (email).

"Meeting" means Regular Council or Committee of the Whole (COTW) meeting

"Meeting Agenda" means Regular Council or Committee of the Whole (COTW) meeting agenda.

5. POLICY

1. Section 5 (Procedures) of this policy must be followed for all correspondence addressed to Mayor and Council.
2. Correspondence addressed to individual Council members and marked "confidential" or "private" shall be considered to be private correspondence and directed unopened to that individual's mail box at municipal hall.

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3. All correspondence received by the District of Central Saanich will be filed, tracked and dispositioned in accordance with District of Central Saanich records management policies and procedures.
4. When electronic correspondence is received from members of the general public, staff will respond to senders informing them to whom their inquiry has been directed. All other electronic correspondence (ie. from an organization) will not require such a response.

6. PROCEDURES**Correspondence addressed to Mayor and Council**

1. All correspondence received by the District will be date stamped and given to the Corporate Officer. The Corporate Officer will determine whether the correspondence must be circulated to other department managers and/or whether the item is to be added to an agenda. The deadline for inclusion on the next Regular Council agenda is noon on the Wednesday prior to the scheduled meeting date.

Correspondence Received by the Mayor

2. All correspondence addressed to the Mayor shall be received by the Mayor and dealt with at the Mayor's discretion and a copy as appropriate be directed to Councillors for information.

Correspondence Received by a Member of Council

3. A Council member that has:
 - (a) received correspondence directly, or
 - (b) identified an item of correspondence from the electronic library

that they wish to bring forward for consideration by Council shall submit the correspondence to the Corporate Officer to be added to a Meeting Agenda in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

Correspondence for Council Agenda

4. Correspondence requiring an action to be taken (e.g. letter of support) by Council will be added to the agenda under Item No. 9 "*Correspondence – Action Required or Recommended*".
5. Any correspondence referred by the Corporate Officer for Council's information will be:
 - (a) itemized on Agenda Item No. 15 "*Correspondence – Receive for General Information*" and attached to the agenda package when the correspondence:
 - i. is a request for a specific action e.g. request for funds, support in principle
 - ii. is a request for signage or traffic safety improvements
 - iii. is a letter from individuals on a matter affecting the District where staff is responding and resolving the matter
 - iv. from external organizations or a member of the public not requesting action (and not related to traffic safety)

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- (b) placed in the Council Correspondence electronic library when the correspondence is:
- i. an event invitation,
 - ii. request for support of a resolution to another body e.g. AVICC, UBCM, FCM
 - iii. is related to an item already deliberated by Council except correspondence related to concluded public hearings
 - iv. newsletters, annual reports, conference information and updates
 - v. a letter of thanks, appreciation or commendation
 - vi. correspondence that is outside the scope of the District
6. All correspondence related to community issues and addressed to 'Mayor and Council' will be placed on the next available Regular Council Meeting on agenda item No. 15 "*Correspondence – Receive for General Information*", as long as the content of the correspondence meets acceptable standards and with the exception of point seven (7).
7. Correspondence addressing specific development applications, not yet received by the District, will be held and placed on the first Regular Council Meeting agenda following receipt of the application and will also be placed on all subsequent agendas on which Council considers the development application. At that time, correspondence will also be placed alongside the development application on the District's 'Development Tracker'.
8. Correspondence related to operational matters, including letters of inquiry and/or complaints from the public will first be directed to the applicable staff for resolution and response. If the matter is not resolved, it will be escalated to the Chief Administrative Officer.
9. Should a Council member wish to consider a piece of correspondence in Section 15 "*Correspondence – Received for General Information*" elsewhere on the agenda, a motion to amend the Meeting Agenda is required when the agenda of said meeting is being considered for approval.
10. Correspondence considered on a Meeting Agenda forms part of the public record and will be published. The author's name and address is relevant to Council's consideration of the matter and will be disclosed through this process, and the house number and any phone numbers or personal email addresses will be redacted pursuant to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
11. In the event that correspondence requests consideration of a particular topic, without providing any background information or additional commentary, staff shall request additional supporting information from the letter writer(s) prior to placing the correspondence on the next available Regular Council Meeting agenda.
12. Correspondence regarding signage, roads, speed, or general traffic safety issues will be forwarded to the Central Saanich Traffic Advisory Committee for consideration and follow up and placed on a Regular Council Meeting agenda under Item No. 15 "*Correspondence – Receive for General Information*" with a staff comment advising of the referral to the Traffic Safety Committee.
13. In the event Council has made a decision on a matter and/or referred the matter to a future process or meeting for further consideration, any further correspondence addressed to Council which may be received pertaining to that same matter shall be placed on the agenda of either the next Meeting when the matter is addressed.

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14. Should correspondence be received, that in the opinion of the Corporate Officer or Chief Administrative Officer in consultation with the Mayor, is deemed to constitute inappropriate remarks about an individual(s) of Council or Municipal Staff, the Corporate Officer shall be authorized to not place that correspondence on the next Regular Council Meeting agenda pending the receipt of further advice as may be deemed appropriate.
15. The Corporate Officer may redact inappropriate portions of correspondence that otherwise have a legitimate request, question, comment or suggestions and provide a redacted copy to the sender. Any exclusively inappropriate, offensive, misleading, harassing or threatening correspondence need not be acknowledged and will be filed.

Late Correspondence

16. All correspondence received after the stipulated deadline for the next Meeting Agenda shall be forwarded by the Corporate Officer to the following Meeting, with the exception of correspondence that relates to existing agenda items or is deemed by the Corporate Officer to fall within the definition of "Late Item" in *Procedure Bylaw No. 2008, 2019*.
17. The procedure for adding a late item to a Meeting agenda shall be as outlined in Section 11.4 of *Procedure Bylaw No. 2008, 2019*.

Anonymous Correspondence

18. Anonymous correspondence received will not be investigated unless potential safety, liability or health issues are raised. Determination will be made by the Bylaw Enforcement Officer and the Chief Administrative Officer, and will otherwise be investigated at the discretion of Council, if necessary.

Petitions

19. Petitions are deemed presented to Council when they are filed with the Corporate Officer. A petition to Council must include the full name and residential address of each petitioner. Petitions will be included as Correspondence in the next Regular Council Meeting agenda. (procedure bylaw, *Section 82 of Community Charter*)

Privacy

20. Correspondence submitted for consideration on a Meeting Agenda forms part of the public record and will be published. The author's name and municipality and street name of residence is relevant to Council's consideration of the matter and will be disclosed through this process.
21. Correspondence submitted relating to a matter under Section s 90 of the *Community Charter* that is not of an operational nature will be considered at a closed Council Meeting.