


# City of SeaTac

## Policies and Procedures

<b>Policy Number:</b>	CW-003
<b>Policy Name:</b>	Council Communications
<b>Department(s):</b>	Citywide
<b>Effective Date:</b>	09/20/17
<b>Supersedes:</b>	09/12/11
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<b>Approved by:</b>	Joseph Scorcio, City Manager
<b>Signature:</b>	

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear expectations to City employees regarding communications with Councilmembers.

**Policy:**

1. Should an employee be questioned by a Councilmember regarding a matter within their area of expertise, this staff member should provide clear, concise and objective information. If the employee does not have accurate information on the topic, he/she should refer the Councilmember to the department director or other appropriate employee. In fact, the "City Council Administrative Procedures" highlights the procedures prescribed for providing this information.
2. If an employee is interested in proactively providing Councilmembers with information without being solicited, this employee shall discuss this with their supervisor prior to engaging in the conversation to ensure that all within the city administration are providing uniform information to Councilmembers.
3. Subsequent to any contact with a Councilmember regarding city business, the employee should make their direct supervisor aware of this communication. Ultimately, this communication should be filtered up the organizational structure to the City Manager. The intent of sharing this information is to provide the City administration with a comprehensive picture of Councilmember interests and concerns in order to most effectively serve the Council.

## **APPENDIX**

In regards to information requests from Councilmembers, the City Council adopted "City Council Administrative Procedures" addressing agreed upon guidelines for Council relations with staff. The current (2017) procedures are highlighted below:

### **Section 10. Council Relations with Staff**

- (A) There will be mutual respect from both Councilmembers and staff of their respective roles and responsibilities when, and if expressing criticism in a public meeting. City staff acknowledges the Council as policy makers and the Councilmembers acknowledge staff as administering the Council's policies.
- (B) Neither the Mayor, any Councilmember, nor committee (standing or advisory) shall direct the City Manager or City staff to initiate any action or prepare any report that is major in nature, or initiate any major project or study without the approval/referral from a majority of the Council.
- (C) All requests for significant information, statistics, interpretations, or answers to questions from a Councilmember shall be directed to the City Manager by means of hardcopy or electronic version (e-mail) of the Council Information Request. The City Manager shall reply by acknowledging receipt and by providing an estimated time or date for substantive response. The City Manager shall forward the request to the appropriate Department Director for written or electronic response.
- (D) All written material accumulated and/or prepared in response to an individual Councilmember shall be provided by the City Manager, to all Councilmembers.
- (E) All requests for minor information, statistics, interpretations, or answers to questions may be directed to the City Manager or directly to involved staff. It is understood that staff receiving such requests are required to advise their supervisor and/or Department Director of any request for the purpose of assuring integrity of the chain of command and chain of communication to the City Manager.
- (F) Councilmembers shall not attempt to coerce or influence staff in the selection of personnel, the awarding of contracts, the selection of consultants, the processing of development applications or the granting of City licenses or permits.
- (G) The Council shall not attempt to change or interfere with the operating rules and practices of any City department.
- (H) The following definitions shall apply to this Section:
  - (1) "Major" information, statistics, interpretations, or answers to questions means any effort which is reasonably estimated to entail more than three hours of staff time.

- (2) “Significant” information, statistics, interpretations, or answers to questions means any effort which is reasonably estimated to entail one hour or more, but less than three hours, of staff time.
- (3) “Minor” information, statistics, interpretations, or answers to questions means any effort which is reasonably estimated to entail only an immediate response or less than one hour of staff time.