

Policy 7.4.9 Receiving and Responding to Community Member Inquiries and Concerns

POLICY PURPOSE:

It is the purpose of this policy to establish guidelines and standards regarding City resources and support for Councilmembers. This policy is supplementary to and in no way intended to conflict with the City Charter. For further information on this subject, see:

- City Charter, Section 807
- Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected Officials (available on the City's internal Web site or in the Office of the City Clerk)

POLICY STATEMENT:

I. Inquires Relating to Administrative or Operational Issues.

All non-emergency community member inquiries and concerns *dealing with the administrative or operational affairs of the City* which are received by Council (whether at home or at the City) shall be routed to the City Manager and appropriate Department Head(s) for information and follow-up. Staff shall respond to the inquiry or complaint, most often in the same form it was received (i.e., letter, email, phone). Any community concern initially directed to Council shall be tracked by staff with resolution copied to the City Manager and copied to Council Files by the Executive Assistant to Council, thereby ensuring that the same information is made available for review by all members of Council.

II. Inquiries Relating to Council Policy.

All community member concerns or inquiries *dealing with Council policy* should be routed to the Mayor and Council for consideration and follow up, with a copy to the City Manager, City Attorney, and affected Department Heads. Copies of communications related to items on Council's upcoming agenda shall be included whenever possible in the agenda packets prepared for Council prior to the public hearing.

Inquiries concerning any City incident or operation shall not be answered until it is safe and practical to do so, and at such time as it will not jeopardize staff response to the incident or operation.

Staff shall make every effort to acknowledge (simply confirm receipt of) customer contacts the same day they are received. Acknowledgement of concerns received by letter shall be mailed within 3 business days.

If staff cannot respond (provide an answer) to a customer within five working days of initial contact, an interim reply shall be provided which:

- Acknowledges receipt;
- Briefly explains the reason a complete response cannot be provided at this time; and

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- Identifies a reasonable time frame when a response will be sent.

A complete follow-up response should not exceed ten working days from the date of initial contact.

If responding to a customer will exceed ten working days, staff shall continue to communicate with the customer, and shall continue to identify reasonable time frames when follow-up responses will be provided.

(For more detail, see Administrative Policy Manual, Chapter 1, Article 17: “Customer Inquiries and Concerns.”)

III. Implementation.

The City Manager shall monitor those provisions of this policy within the City Manager’s Charter responsibilities. Disagreement in interpretation shall be resolved by the City Council. The City Manager shall institute administrative policy to implement this policy. At the time a new Councilmember is seated, the Mayor and City Manager should review this policy with him/her.

Annually, the City Manager shall review the resource requirements necessary to support the level of service specified in this policy, and recommend as a part of the proposed budget necessary changes of budget resources.

(Adopted: Council Policy Update, RTC #14-0061 (November 25, 2014))

Lead Department: Office of the City Manager

For reference, see also: