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**For Information**

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**REPORT TITLE: Councillor Newsletter Distribution Process**

**FROM: Kathryn Lockyer, Interim Commissioner of Corporate Services**

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**OBJECTIVE**

To inform Regional Council of procedures which ensure consistent content and distribution of Regional Councillor newsletters to residents.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- Councillor newsletters provide an opportunity to communicate key messages and information with residents.
  - Councillor newsletters are to be comprised of at least 75 per cent of content focused on Regional programs and services, with no more than 25 per cent focused on local content. Content that is focused on externally funded agencies (i.e. police services, conservation authorities) are not considered Regional programs or services in nature. Content must be original and prepared specifically for the newsletter.
  - Councillor newsletters do not include logos belonging to externally funded agencies and all images are to be appropriately sourced, ensuring all legal requirements of the image licence(s) are adhered to.
  - After discussions with Canada Post during the distribution of 2020 Regional Councillor newsletters, it was determined that homes have the option of participating in the “Consumers Choice List” and therefore would not receive the newsletters.
  - It was also determined that, as of 2020, municipal governments have the option to override this selection and deliver to these homes regardless of their wishes to participate in the program.
  - Beginning in 2021, the Consumers Choice List will be overridden for Councillor newsletter distribution.
  - Recognizing that distribution of newsletters should be consistent across all Regional Council members, the Region has internal procedures to be followed by Regional staff.
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**DISCUSSION**

**1. Background on Councillor Newsletter Content**

Councillor newsletters are to be comprised of at least 75 per cent of content that is focused on Regional programs and services, with no more than 25 per cent of the content focused on local programs and services and/or externally funded agencies (i.e. police services, conservation authorities etc.). Any content that is focused on externally funded agencies is not considered to be a Regional program or service in this context. All content must be original and prepared specifically for the newsletter. Articles pulled directly from other

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sources that do not belong to the Region of Peel cannot be used unless permission by the author is granted.

The Region of Peel logo is to appear on the first page of a Councillor newsletter and the newsletters are not to include logos belonging to externally funded agencies or other organizations.

All images are to be high-resolution, and appropriately sourced, ensuring all legal requirements of the image licence(s) are adhered to. When using a photo that is licensed to the Region of Peel, it is licenced to the Region only to be used in the Regional Councillor newsletter and not repurposed for any other purposes. A council member or municipality may purchase a licence to use the image if they wish to do so. This would not be covered by the Regional expense policy.

### **2. Background on the Procedure for Councillor Newsletter distribution by the Region**

The Region of Peel currently completes a “Postal Walk” by ward using the Canada Post proprietary software. The Postal Walk determines distribution by address for the Councillor newsletters and is approved by the Councillor’s office prior to delivery. The postal walk outlines all routes Canada Post is to follow when delivering. Occasionally, these routes bleed in to neighbouring wards due to the fact that the Postal Walk follows an actual delivery route, not Ward boundaries; however, this is minimized as much as possible to ensure balanced delivery.

Two additional terms are important for the purpose of this report. “Total Points of Call” refers to every registered address within a ward. “Consumers Choice List” refers to the option for residents to choose ‘not’ to receive unaddressed admail at their address. “Total Points of Call” may be selected as an override of the “Consumers Choice List”.

In the past, when developing a postal walk, the Region stopped delivering to Total Points of Call due to significant complaints by residents to Canada Post. Residents who complained felt that the information was admail, and therefore should not be delivered to their homes, and that they had specified their personal choice on the matter. Canada Post advised the Region to stop selecting Total Points of Call as people on the Consumers Choice List asked to not receive unaddressed admail.

By not selecting Total Points of Call, newsletters are not distributed to homes that have selected to participate in the Canada Post Consumers Choice List to not receive unaddressed admail.

After discussions with Canada Post during the 2020 Councillor newsletter distribution, it was determined that Canada Post has updated their guidelines and the Region of Peel qualifies to override the Consumers Choice List and once again distribute to Total Points of Call.

Staff propose to use Total Points of Call for Councillor newsletter distribution on the bases that this will further the objective of enabling comprehensive Councillor/constituent communication to the greatest extent possible, coupled with the consideration that Councillor newsletter communication is qualitatively different than the commercially oriented material (ads) that residents most likely have primarily in mind when choosing to be on the Consumers Choice List.

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It is important to note that distributing to Total Points of Call significantly increases printing and delivery costs, resulting in higher costs overall. Staff estimate this increase in cost to be between 5 and 20 per cent of the current expenditure.

### **3. Background on the Canada Post Consumers Choice List**

The Canada Post Consumers Choice List provides customers with the option to refuse unaddressed admail. The decision to participate in the program is made by the resident of a household, or the Board of Directors for condominium and apartment buildings.

By participating in the program, the resident, or Point of Call, is requesting to not receive unaddressed admail however it is noted that government mail can be exempt from this and the resident would still receive it.

Reasons for residents selecting Consumers Choice List include reducing paper mail volume such as flyers, newspapers, etc. which generally are advertisements, thereby reducing a household's environmental footprint; or a personal choice to not receive messaging or marketing materials.

### **4. Next steps**

The procedures as outlined above will be followed by Regional staff when working with Councillors on newsletters. The Director of Communications will make any necessary amendments to the procedures to ensure consistent content and distribution of Councillor newsletters.

## **RISK CONSIDERATIONS**

Overriding the Consumers Choice selection may result in complaints from residents who feel that their choice is not being adhered to, resulting in increased calls to Councillor offices.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

By selecting to deliver to Total Points of Call, the cost to print and deliver a Regional newsletter would increase as quantities required would increase.

Newsletter costs currently range in the \$150-185 thousand per annum depending on the number of Councillors who choose to send newsletters. If the cost impact of this change exceeds the 2021 budget, any shortfall in 2021 will be funded from tax rate stabilization reserves, and the budget will be adjusted in 2022.

## **CONCLUSION**

The changes outlined in this report will ensure consistent content and distribution of Regional Councillor newsletters to residents.

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*For further information regarding this report, please contact Lisa Duarte, Director, Marketing and Communications, [Lisa.Duarte@peelregion.ca](mailto:Lisa.Duarte@peelregion.ca), 416-356-5803*

## **Councillor Newsletter Distribution Process**

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***Reviewed and/or approved in workflow by:***

Department Commissioner, Division Director and Legal Services.