



STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE MEETINGS – NOW AVAILABLE BY WEBCAST ON CALGARY.CA

March 22, 2010

Description

Beginning March 24, Calgarians will be able to watch the proceedings of Standing Policy Committees at The City of Calgary 'live' via The City's website, calgary.ca. Citizens can visit calgary.ca and click on the "Council & Committee Meeting Webcasts" button on the website's home page. Tips and instructions on best viewing practices are also available.

The webcast is a new viewing medium for Standing Policy Committees. There was previously no other alternative to viewing a Standing Policy Committee other than attending the meeting in person.

This project is part of Council's continuing commitment to improving citizen access to government decision-making.

Background

City Council meetings can currently be viewed on the internet via The City's website, calgary.ca. This service began in October 2008. The streaming video of Standing Policy Committee meetings is the next phase of this project. Both Council and Standing Policy Committee meetings are still open to the public. Council meetings will continue to be broadcast live on Shaw TV Digital Channel 94.

The streaming video will allow citizens and those interested in municipal government to watch SPC meetings 'live' from wherever they are via the internet. The project will grant easier citizen access to the workings of municipal government and help them understand the roles and responsibilities of their Aldermen and the Administration at The City of Calgary.

Key Contacts

Public Inquiries

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Questions & Answers

1. What is a Standing Policy Committee?

Standing Policy Committees are committees of Council. They provide recommendations to Council on reports presented at the Standing Policy Committees by Administration in response to Council or other requests. The Standing Policy Committees at The City of Calgary are the Standing Policy Committees on Land Use, Planning and Transportation; Community & Protective Services; Finance & Corporate Services; and Utilities & Environment. The schedule of Council and Standing Policy Committee meetings is available online at calgary.ca.

2. Why is The City implementing the webcasting of Standing Policy Committee meetings?

In the 2006-2008 City of Calgary business and budget plans, City Council made citizen engagement, accessibility to government, and increased online services key priorities. The streaming video of City Council meetings via The City's website, calgary.ca, initiated in October 2008, was one of the projects supporting these priorities. Webcasting of the Standing Policy Committees is an extension of this project.

3. How much is it costing The City to provide webcasting of SPC meetings?

The cost of the webcasts depends upon the number of people who watch the webcast. Assuming similar viewership as has been experienced for Council, those costs would be around \$3,500 annually.

4. Will a visitor to the webcast site need to download an application/software in order to view the SPC proceedings?

The webcast runs on commonly used software that exists on most Windows-based computers. Should the user not have the appropriate software on their computer, a link is provided to a site where this software can be downloaded.

5. Will the webcast feature all SPC meetings in their entirety?

The webcast will be disabled when a committee goes "in-camera" or when the committee takes a break. (In-camera means that confidential information is discussed that is not available to the public.)

6. Will the SPC webcasts be archived?

The video streaming will only be activated in real-time for the duration of the Standing Policy Committee meeting and will not be archived. City Clerk's minutes of the proceedings, available online at calgary.ca, will continue to be the official source of meeting proceedings.

7. Will the other non-SPC Committees (i.e., Land & Asset Strategy Committee; Intergovernmental Affairs Committee; Gas, Power & Telecommunications Committee; Audit Committee) be featured on webcast? Why not?

Although at some point other committee meetings maybe broadcast via webcast, only Standing Policy Committee meetings will be broadcast at this time.

8. Will there be an online forum for citizens to contribute and/or provide input into the proceedings of SPC?

The webcasting service will not provide the ability for input.