

THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF MISSISSIPPI MILLS

STAFF REPORT

DATE: February 11, 2025
TO: Committee of the Whole
FROM: Casey Munro, Deputy Clerk
SUBJECT: Routine Disclosure and Active Dissemination Policy

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommends Council approve the Routine Disclosure and Active Dissemination (RD/AD) Policy

BACKGROUND:

As part of our governance review, we identified the need for a Routine Disclosure/Active Dissemination (RD/AD) policy. The Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario (IPC) best practices recommend that all municipalities have one.

Routine Disclosure (RD) is the routine or automatic release of certain administrative and operational records in response to requests made informally or under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the Acts). Active Dissemination (AD) is the periodic release of general records in the absence of a request.

This policy is an efficient and cost-effective way to provide the public with greater access to government information. When general records are classified for RD/AD and front-line staff are aware of the classification, it should result in less work when responding to requests for information and better customer service.

DISCUSSION:

The clerk's department is the delegated authority for overseeing the Freedom of Information (FOI) process through the Municipal Freedom of Information and Personal Privacy Act. (MFIPPA).

Access to information through the Freedom of Information process is exceptionally prescribed and highly administrative. Some requests can take multiple months to complete, costing the requestor thousands of dollars and even more to the municipality in terms of staff resources.

This policy allows departments to routinely review the records in their possession and decide how the information can be shared publicly. It does not replace MFIPPA but works within it. All current exemptions that protect private and personal information are still in place and can be found in Appendix A of the policy. Some information released through the RD/AD policy will be redacted if any of the MFIPPA exemptions apply.

During this policy's information-gathering process, staff reviewed a list of documents that would be in their custody and control, determining who would be the best contact and how the public would access the information. This list will become their RD/AD plan. The intent is for each department to review the list annually and sign off on any changes. Which would then be uploaded to the municipal website. Please see Appendix B of the Policy for what an RD/AD plan would look like.

OPTIONS:

There are 3 options available for this report.

- 1) Approve the policy as written
- 2) Approve the policy with amendments
- 3) Do not approve the policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications to the municipality associated with this report.

However, there may be some fees to the public associated with document retrieval (i.e, photocopying, redacting documents, and archived retrieval)

Staff will track the number of requests received for departments that do not have any fees associated with document retrieval and, if necessary, bring forward a fee for the 2026 Fees and Charges bylaw.

STRATEGIC PLAN

This policy would align with the following Council strategic initiatives

- 3) Modern, Efficient, and Effective Municipal Operations
- 6) Accountable and Transparent Governance

It reaffirms the Municipalities' commitment to transparency and accountability to the public and aligns us with other municipalities.

This policy allows us to be more efficient in our operations and leverages the use of technology.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A webpage will be created with each department's RD/AD plan outlining the information available to the public through the policy. This page will be updated as required based on any changes identified in the annual department plan review.

SUMMARY:

As outlined above, having and implementing a Routine Disclosure/ Active Dissemination Policy has multiple benefits to the municipality. Most of this information is already available to

Respectfully submitted by,

Casey Munro,
Deputy Clerk

Reviewed by:

Jeanne Harfield,
Clerk/ Deputy CAO

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Routine Disclosure & Active Dissemination Policy