



Policy Code – Version: G14 – V1	
Policy Name: Consultation	
Approved by motion of Board on	01/10/2012
Cross Reference	
Related Forms F11 – Consultation Form	

Policy Statement

1. Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (hereinafter OSTA) shall conduct appropriate consultation, including advisory bodies and the wider community, to ensure that its decisions reasonably reflect its stakeholders' opinions and needs.
2. OSTA shall consult with its stakeholders on matters material to policies and procedures pertinent to provision of transportation services, and other such matters as may be required by federal and/or provincial legislation/regulation, determined by OSTA motion and/or prompted through its stakeholders.
3. Public consultation shall be initiated on any major review and amendment significantly affecting the service level of transportation with an impact on customer satisfaction and/or the financial and operational effectiveness and efficiency of OSTA.

Procedure

1. A prior notification of a public consultation session will be announced well in advance through OSTA website, and other accessible means of communication (e.g., e-mail, school/Board websites) as defined by OSTA and deemed necessary and appropriate with the aim to maximize stakeholder participation and ensure quality input.

2. OSTA must provide all parties invited to the consultation process with appropriate, relevant and accurate information, where possible, in a useful format (e.g., electronically, printed, translated).
3. Prior to undertaking a consultation process, General Manager of OSTA or a designate will choose the type or types of consultation best suited to the specific decision-making process at issue, and complete and approve a consultation plan in accordance with Consultation Plan form. It is recommended that informal consultation has taken place with representative stakeholders to obtain their suggestions prior to finalizing Consultation Plan.
4. Public consultation in meetings (ie town halls) will be held, whenever possible or appropriate, in the community that is most affected by the change.
5. All stakeholder consultation will include a Consultation Plan detailing the following:
 - a) an outline of the purpose and reasons for the consultation process, and reference to how the initiative links to the OSTA strategic plan, improvement plan, budget, annual goals and objectives, and/or relevant Ministry/OSTA policies and procedures, if applicable;
 - b) a description of stakeholders to be consulted;
 - c) a description of consultation methodology, given the timelines available;
 - d) timelines which are respectful of and in line with OSTA operational and financial effectiveness and efficiency efforts, the public interest, and the school year calendar, including reason for these timelines and expected date for decision on the issue;
 - e) relevant communication strategies and channels so as to maximize the participation of the public;
 - f) materials to be provided in advance of and during the consultation;
 - g) a plan for providing feedback to contributing groups/individuals and the decision reached, with rationale for the decision;
 - h) subsequent to completion of the process, a plan for monitoring of implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of the consultation; and
 - i) the estimated costs associated with the consultation.
Note: The consulting body/OSTA bears responsibility for any costs of the consultation.
6. Considering the urgency and nature of the matter under review, OSTA may seek public input as described herein by holding public in-person sessions, initiating solicitation of input through electronic means of communication, other methods as deemed appropriate, or a combination of such methods.
7. Parties invited to participate in a consultation process by OSTA will be asked to respond with their views and advice within the established time frame,

using the format and in accordance with the agreed type and method for the consultation.

8. All documentation emanating from the public consultation process will contain a summary of the process and public input, with a description of any steps which have been and/or will be taken to address public concerns in arriving at any recommendation/resolution. Once available, such documentation shall be made accessible to the public through OSTA website.
9. Should OSTA conclude that consultation is not appropriate or possible, this decision and the rationale must be clearly communicated to all potentially affected by the decision. Examples of reasons for not undertaking a consultation may include:
 - a) a decision, by force of circumstances, has already been reached on the issue;
 - b) a decision is legislated by a higher authority (building code, municipal, provincial or federal act or regulation) and there is insufficient latitude for discretion to undertake a consultation on options;
 - c) the issue has been decided to be of minor to no importance or risk.