

Toward Greater Transparency through Routine Disclosure

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Good Morning...

Coffee? What you mean coffee wuz in cup?

**Inot know what you talkin' bout. That wuz watter. Yeah, watter.
Mmm watter. Watter watter watter.**

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RD, FOIP and Openness

- One of the main purposes of the FOIP Act is to encourage open and accountable government by ensuring that individuals have the ability to access records in the custody or under the control of a public body.
- FOIP requests are one way to allow access to information but Routine Disclosure of information can achieve the same purpose

Some Benefits of RD

- Reduces administrative time and costs
- Reduces response times
- Customer Friendly – RD increases the ease in which people can access information
- Opportunities for cost recovery
- Branches can exercise greater control over the timing and the format of information release
- Allows Branches to use proactive messaging and explain the content of records where appropriate
- Lessens exposure to review by OIPC

RD and the City of Edmonton

- The City of Edmonton makes many types of records available through Routine Disclosure
- We recognize that Routine Disclosure is a process, and we encourage staff to question “why isn’t this type of record publicly available?”
- We encourage Branches to consider Routine Disclosure for records that do not contain any sensitive or 3rd party personal information.

RD and the City of Edmonton

- Some examples of Routine Disclosure by the City of Edmonton include:
 - Building Permit information
 - Waste Management Information
 - Information relevant to Graffiti concerns
 - Subdivision Development Appeal Board files
 - Personnel Files (excluding active Grievance files, and Disability Management files)
 - Approved Lot Grading Plans
 - Minutes of Council and Committees
 - Client files maintained by Social Workers
 - Land Lease information
 - Lists of companies that submitted bids to the City
 - PCR information
 - Environmental Site Assessment certificates
 - And more...

Routine Disclosure & FOIP

- Most RD happens without the involvement of the FOIP Office
- Every FOIP request is an opportunity to encourage innovative RD – particularly when an applicant is requesting information (rather than records) or asking questions

Tracks for RD

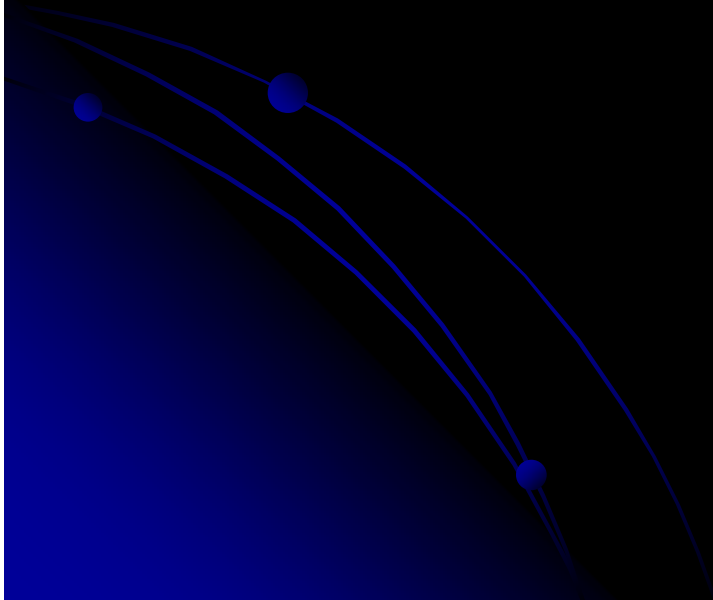
- There are two options in front of a FOIP Officer when an FOIP request with RD potential is identified:
 - Speak with the applicant – many times people will agree not to proceed with a FOIP request if the public body is willing to provide the information informally
 - Refuse access pursuant to section 29 and ensure that the requested information is made public within the appropriate time frame

Separation of FOIP and RD

- In the City, the FOIP Office does not process RD requests
- The FOIP Office may identify FOIP requests that would be better handled through Routine Disclosure and will facilitate communication between staff who are best able to make the Routine Disclosure and assist in determining the completion date for the Routine Disclosure.

Some Recent Examples of Innovative RD

- Elephant Health Records
- Travel expenses of Elected Officials
- Bottled Water purchases
- CCTV information



Encouraging New/Innovative RD within Public Bodies

- The success of innovative Routine Disclosure, is largely dependent on building relationships
- Encouraging Routine Disclosure in response to FOIP request(s) requires the FOIP Officer to be able to clearly articulate the benefits of RD to the areas involved
- The FOIP Officer should have some knowledge of what is going on in the Branch – RD may be embraced more readily if it ties into a current project or area of focus

Challenges to RD

- Areas may be resistant to innovative RD if they feel that it is something that they “don’t have time/resources” to do
- Innovative RD means change, and resistance to change is part of the human condition
- Proprietary feelings toward information
- Failure to fully embrace openness and transparency as part of Branch-culture
- Perception of “they are out to get us”

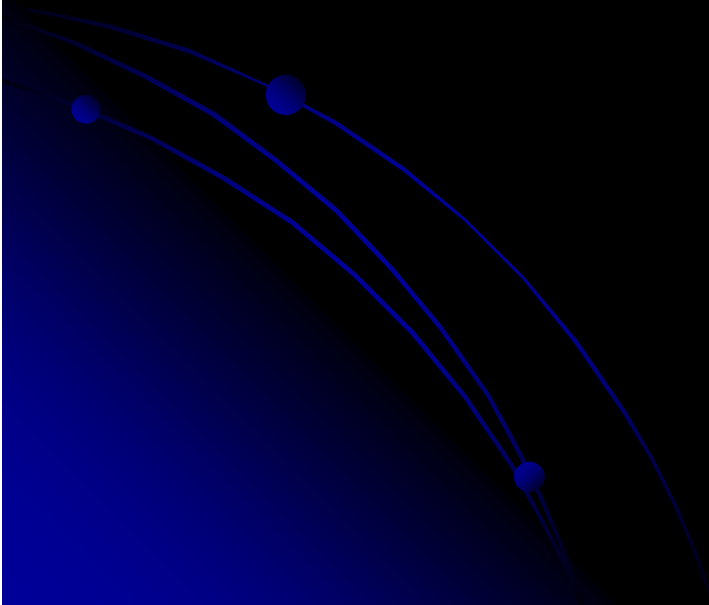
Overcoming Challenges to Innovative RD

- FOIP Officers need to recognize that sometimes innovative RD is a process – full success may not happen at once
- Keep the lines of communication open - some areas need more encouragement/motivation to embrace innovative RD than others
- Sometimes the best motivation for accepting innovative RD is for the Branch to experience disclosure through a FOIP request.

Overcoming Challenges to Innovative RD

- Wherever possible identify areas or programs that may be subject to increased public/media interest and encourage RD prior to that interest becoming intense or a siege mentality being developed by program staff
- Consider communicating the benefits of RD to management teams

Thank-you!



Questions?

