

## REPORT

**REPORT TO:** Mayor Bonnette & Members of Council  
**REPORT FROM:** Alex Fuller, Manager of Corporate Communications  
**DATE:** November 7, 2017  
**REPORT NO.:** CORPSERV-2017-0025  
**RE:** Mayor's Task Force on Public Engagement

### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council approve the Public Engagement Charter and Charter Appendix as drafted by the Mayor's Task Force on Public Engagement;

AND FURTHER THAT the Public Engagement Charter and Charter Appendix is reviewed each term of Council;

AND FURTHER THAT Council approve the Town's use of the proposed communications matrix to define consultations;

AND FURTHER THAT the staff report template include a section for public engagement;

AND FURTHER THAT staff develop working protocols/policies/materials as appropriate to meet the responsibilities of the Town as outlined in the Charter (and further defined in the accompanying appendix);

AND FURTHER THAT the Town Clerk review the public engagement policies and/or protocols regarding advisory committees and bring forward amendments as appropriate;

AND FURTHER THAT staff develop a campaign to promote the Town's commitment to public engagement and the responsibility of citizens to be informed and engaged and provide information for citizens' use in understanding the Town's approach to public engagement;

AND FURTHER THAT Council be kept apprised on the various components identified in this report.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Transparency and accountability are tenets that the Town of Halton Hills abides by as a local government. These tenets are realized through two of Town Councils' top eight priorities as follows:

### *Communications*

- Continue to provide timely, transparent communications with residents and business owners
- Explore and implement opportunities for improved web/social media communications

### *Municipal Service Delivery*

- Effective, efficient and economical delivery of the Town's existing services.

2017 has brought an increased focus on meeting these specific Council priorities by delivering a strategic approach to public engagement. Recognizing the organization's responsibility to meet changing needs in complex environments, staff developed a proactive, multi-faceted public engagement strategy to foster the effective exchange of information between the municipality and its' residents (and other audiences).

In June, Council approved report COMMSERV-2017-0008 that outlined several initiatives that together form the Town's public engagement strategy. One of these initiatives was the Mayor's Task Force on Public Engagement.

Mayor Bonnette invited eight (8) community members representing various geographical areas and interests, and two Councillors to participate on the Task Force, with the goal of developing a public engagement charter and facilitating discussions on how to improve and/or provide clarity around existing consultation practices.

The Task Force members were:

- Mayor Bonnette
- Councillor Jane Fogal
- Councillor Clark Somerville
- Pat Farley
- Ken Lawday
- Drew Leverette
- Glen MacDonald
- Lloyd McIntyre
- Mark Rowe
- David Venning
- Eleanor Young

## **COMMENTS:**

### *Meetings*

The Task Force held four meetings between August and October 2017. In this time, members participated in several, facilitator-led discussions, small group exercises and received three presentations from staff members:

- Alex Fuller, Manager of Corporate Communications:  
*Public Engagement and the Town of Halton Hills*
- Jeff Markowiak, Senior Planner:  
*The Planning Process and Public Engagement*
- Suzanne Jones, Town Clerk:  
*Providing Clarity – an overview of definitions and legislative responsibilities*

The Task Force reviewed several iterations of the charter and appendix, recognizing that these would be living documents and subject to updates as required. The attached documents to this report are the result of much discussion and debate, within the context of best practices and the responsibilities that fall within the municipal purview. All members of the task force support the documents and signed off on them.

Discussions at the task force meetings also included a number of suggestions for consideration by staff. Among these was the idea of including a section on public engagement in the Town's report template. This section would seek information on whether the subject had a public engagement component which would serve to reinforce the Town's commitment to this practice.

### *Next Steps*

It is suggested that staff work to develop the appropriate supporting materials, policies and/or practices to support a standard, Town-approach to public engagement which includes public education regarding citizen responsibilities.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Council has identified communications as one of its top eight priorities. This report supports the Council's strategic priorities of:

### *Communications:*

- *Continue to provide timely, transparent communications with residents and business owners*

### *Municipal Service Delivery:*

- *Effective, efficient and economical delivery of the Town's existing services.*

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

Costs will be absorbed in the current communications budget.

## **COMMUNICATIONS IMPACT:**

Pending Council approval, this report will be shared with the members of the Mayor's Task Force on Public Engagement to advise them of Council's decision and next steps.

A discussion will be held with the Senior Management Team to determine staff participation on a working team to develop the appropriate protocols and/or documents.

A media release and internal message will be issued to advise of the new public engagement protocols.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:**

*The Town is committed to implementing our Community Sustainability Strategy, Imagine Halton Hills. Doing so will lead to a higher quality of life. The relationship between this report and the Strategy is summarized below:*

*Do the report's recommendations advance the Strategy's implementation?  
(Please state Yes, No or Not Applicable)*

Yes.

*Which pillar(s) of sustainability does this report support?  
(Please state one or more of the following pillars – Cultural Vibrancy,  
Environmental Health, Economic Prosperity, Social Well-being or Not Applicable)*

Initiatives that support the Town's ability to increase communications in an impactful way and provide more opportunities for public engagement align with the pillar of Social Well-being.

## **In Summary, the Sustainability Implications of this report are as follows:**

*Overall, the alignment of this report with the Community Sustainability Strategy is:  
(State either Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair or Not Applicable)*

Excellent.

## **CONSULTATION:**

This report was developed following four meetings with the representatives of the Mayor's Task Force on Public Engagement which included Mayor Rick Bonnette, Councillors Fogal and Somerville, eight citizen-appointees and staff from the Clerks and

Planning & Sustainability Departments. Subsequent discussions ensued with the CAO, Commissioner of Corporate Services and the Senior Management Team.

Implementation of the recommendations set forth in this report will include cross-departmental collaboration, internal roll out and external promotion to the general public.

**CONCLUSION:**

The Public Engagement Charter and Charter Appendix were developed through a collaborative process involving a cross representation of citizens from across the community who had demonstrated an interest in municipal decision-making. Their collective input was used to create a document that captures the intent and spirit of the Town's public engagement direction while recognizing the role that citizens play in becoming informed on issues. The resulting document will guide the future practices of the Town, serving as the foundation on which to build standard approaches, enhanced understanding and foster positive relationships between municipal staff and the residents being served.

Respectfully submitted,

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Alex Fuller  
Manager of Corporate Communications

**Reviewed and Approved by,**

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Jane Diamanti,  
Commissioner of Corporate Services

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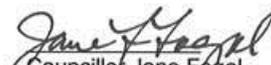
Brent Marshall  
Chief Administrative Officer

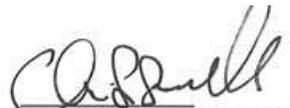
## The Mayor's Task Force on Public Engagement

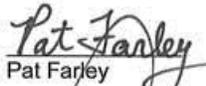


The signatures below indicate sign off on the work completed by the task force.

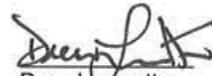
  
Mayor Bonnette

  
Councillor Jane Fogal

  
Councillor Clark Somerville

  
Pat Farley

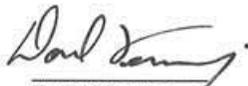
  
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## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT CHARTER

***Vision Statement:*** *Democracy makes its best decisions when the people express their will and become involved. This charter aims to strengthen democracy, improve communications and spark dialogue in Halton Hills by committing the Town and the public to fundamental principles of public engagement.*

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The Public Engagement Charter is built on three pillars:

- Transparency: the practice of being open, honest and accountable.
- Notification: the act of informing on a particular issue or project.
- Participation: the act of taking part in developing recommendations and/or alternatives for consideration.

### **The Promise of Transparency**

The Town's commitment:

- ✓ To communicate information in clear writing and plain language; recognizing that there are some legal or legislated requirements for specific wording.
- ✓ To state up front, the intent, level of consultation and process for each meeting; i.e. inform, consult or collaborate.
- ✓ To share information in a timely manner in advance of decision-making when possible.
- ✓ To communicate at established intervals about long-term projects.
- ✓ To recognize and communicate about potential issues of interest (e.g. have a bearing on finances, heritage, neighbourhood character).
- ✓ To include special interest groups as part of any public engagement.

Engaged citizens will:

- ✓ Acknowledge/recognize the engagement process for projects and staff responsibilities.
- ✓ As appropriate, declare themselves as a group and:
  - Identify the person(s) who will represent the group's interests.
  - Clearly state the role of the group, its interest(s) and position(s) and recommendations.
  - Communicate back to their membership.
  - Ensure that members who disagree with the group understand they can participate with the Town as individuals.

## **The Promise of Notification**

The Town's commitment:

- ✓ To use clear writing and plain language in notices and advertisements to advise the public as to the relevancy of a particular project, issue or opportunity.
- ✓ To always meet and exceed when possible, legislative notification guidelines.
- ✓ To ensure Members of Council are informed and able to respond to questions about emerging issues in their Wards.
- ✓ To utilize the Town's website as the key source for information.
- ✓ To utilize other communications as available and appropriate (e.g. digital and print media) to support accessibility and review for continuous improvement.
- ✓ To inform and educate active participants of results and/or decisions including the rationale and concessions (as applicable) for Council decisions including direct notification.

Engaged citizens will:

- ✓ Seek to be informed about municipal initiatives by visiting the website.
- ✓ Connect with the appropriate staff and/or their Ward Councillor about municipal initiatives.

## **The Promise of Participation:**

The Town's commitment:

- ✓ To respect, encourage and value input from citizens.
- ✓ To provide meaningful opportunities for engagement for all.
- ✓ To state the expectations as to the level of engagement at the start of a project/initiative per the Engagement Matrix.
- ✓ To strive to seek out those stakeholders most impacted and communicate with them throughout the life of a project including face-to-face meetings.
- ✓ To state (as applicable) the role of other orders of government and authoritative bodies e.g. conservation authorities, Ontario Municipal Board.

Engaged citizens will:

- ✓ Be respectful in their communications with staff and elected officials.
- ✓ Connect with the appropriate staff and/or their Ward Councillor for information.
- ✓ Actively connect with the Town by:
  - Referring to the website for topical and timely information
  - Subscribing to various Town tools (online platform, social media, e-newsletters)
  - Attending meetings (Council, Committee or project-specific public meeting)

## CHARTER APPENDIX

*This appendix has been developed for the purposes of providing clarity on words and/or roles and responsibilities as referenced in the Public Engagement Charter for the Town of Halton Hills*

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- **Accessible:** Information is made available and easily found through a number of means; such as the Town's website, mail-outs, at public information sessions, Committee and Council agendas and reports.
- **Active Participants:** People that have demonstrated their interest in the project by joining a project mailing list OR People that have demonstrated more than a passing interest and/or have joined a project mailing list.
- **Decision-making:** The democratic processes and actions undertaken by Council in order to make informed decisions based on the interests of their constituents as well as those of the broader community, and equally based on the professional advice and recommendations provided by the administration.
- **Delegated Authority:** The division of authority and powers moved downwards to staff and special committees. Delegation is about entrusting someone else to act on Council's behalf.
- **Emerging Issues:** A central point that has arisen and been identified as integral to the discussion.
- **Engagement Matrix:** This refers to the three levels of public engagement; from inform to consult to collaborate (the highest level of engagement with the Town). Projects may involve one or more levels of public engagement.
- **The Planning Act:** The Planning Act is provincial legislation that sets out the ground rules for land use planning in Ontario, describes how land uses may be controlled, and who may control them.

- **Public Information Centre (PIC):** A Public Information Centre (PIC) is a community engagement forum used by the Town to answer resident questions and receive comments and concerns from the public regarding development proposals, planning studies, public works projects or the design of community parks. PICs can occur in different forms such as a formal presentation by Town staff, open house sessions with panel display information or round-table workshop/visioning exercises. For an Environmental Assessment (EA) project at least one Public Information Centre is required to be held. For any project or study considered under the Planning Act a PIC would be held separate from the statutory Public Meeting if deemed necessary by the Town.
- **Public Meeting:** In the context of a planning application or study requiring public engagement, refers to the Statutory Public Meeting as mandated by the Planning Act; the meeting is held before Council, open to the public and residents are provided an opportunity to comment on the application or study. 'Public meeting' may also refer to non-statutory meetings that are open to the public.
- **Role of Town Council:** To represent constituents and the community, consider and make decisions on matters important to the municipality, set the direction and policies for the municipality which provide direction for the long-term health and welfare of the Town; through the role of a representative, policy-maker and steward of the municipality.
- **Role of Town Administration:** To provide objective, professional advice to Council, in accordance with all legislative requirements of various Acts and applicable laws; to implement Council's decisions according to Town policies, standards and principles of effective public service; and to manage people and resources to achieve Council's vision.
- **Secondary Plan:** Secondary plans are part of the Town's Official Plan. The Official Plan is a broad policy document that serves as the basis for making land use decisions and managing change across the Town. The purpose of any Secondary Plan is to establish a more detailed development concept for infrastructure and land use for smaller or more specific areas of the Town, such as new communities or the redevelopment of some existing communities. These plans use a combination of text, maps and graphics to provide more detail on things like land use, community design, natural heritage, roads and parks.
- **Timely:** To be consistent with legislative/mandated standards and exceed them where possible.
- **Town:** 'Town' refers to the Corporation of the Town of Halton Hills; a legal entity for which commitments are carried out by its administration (employees) and/or elected officials.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT MATRIX

A tool to support understanding of how the Town meets the principles of the Public Engagement Charter.			
Spectrum of engagement	INFORM	CONSULT	COLLABORATE
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate; share information to build awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listen and learn; test ideas and concepts and develop recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively participate; to partner to develop alternatives and/or recommendations</li> </ul>
<b>Town's responsibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information including advising on applicable legislation that dictates process.</li> <li>Share final decision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information</li> <li>Provide opportunity for public to share views, values and priorities.</li> <li>Consider how recommendations could be incorporated</li> <li>Share final decision</li> <li>Report back on final decision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information</li> <li>Provide opportunity for public to share views, values and priorities.</li> <li>Provide opportunity to influence where there are alternatives within a project that have been identified for discussion and fall within the scope of legislation.</li> <li>Consider how recommendations could be incorporated</li> <li>Share final decision</li> <li>Report back on final decision</li> </ul>
<b>Public's responsibility</b>	Learn	Participate	Partner