

# Report to Council



**Date:** December 7, 2015  
**File:** 0610-20  
**To:** City Manager  
**From:** Kari O'Rourke, Community Engagement Consultant  
**Subject:** Engage Policy and Program

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## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Community Engagement Consultant dated December 7, with respect to the City's Engage Policy and Program.

## **Purpose:**

To provide information regarding Council's Engage Policy.

## **Background:**

The City of Kelowna recognizes that the decision-making process is improved by engaging citizens and other stakeholder when appropriate.

In January 2013, Council endorsed the public engagement guiding principles to set out what the public can expect from the City, while retaining flexibility in the way individual departments execute the implementation of policies, projects and initiatives. The endorsement of an engagement policy by Council in April 2014 provides a foundation that ensures there is a consistent and effective approach to City-led public and stakeholder engagement throughout all divisions of the organization where Council is the decision maker.

The Engage Policy achieves the following objectives:

- a) Aligns with City Council priorities and the City's corporate focus of "Engaged Communities"
- b) Supports City Council's decision making by providing information on citizens' and stakeholders' opinions
- c) Ensures consistent and clear practices for involvement and/or information sharing
- d) Ensures an appropriate level of public engagement based on assessed community impact and benefit
- e) Identifies the parameters and resources for public engagement
- f) Ensures adherence to the Public Engagement Guiding Principles

### Engage Program

The Engage Program utilizes the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) framework, an international standard, to identify the level of engagement and right-sizing resources to ensure decision makers have complete information.

Community Engagement staff review annual work plans to determine which projects can be supported internally and identify additional resources when staff is at capacity. The Engage Program equips staff with tools to deliver the appropriate process and maintain consistency and efficiencies.

Community Engagement staff have supported more than 50 projects over the past two years of varying scope. Such as CN Rail Corridor Acquisition, Bernard Avenue Revitalization, Parking Management Strategy and Downtown Plan.

### Training and Resources

Community Engagement staff has hosted IAP2 training over the past two years for 22 staff, an important objective of the program. Ongoing formal and informal staff training will be required in key positions to ensure integrity of the public process is maintained and efficiencies are gained.

All engagement activities are identified within approved project plans. Project managers are responsible for securing resources, expertise in IAP2 practices or equivalent skills and/or and funding through annual work planning and budget processes.

### RFP Processes

Earlier this year Community Engagement staff worked with the Infrastructure Division and Purchasing Department to stipulate standards for IAP2 expertise when consultants are submitting proposals that require public engagement to preserve standards.

The Engage Program is also being shared with consultants and developers to aid their efforts in proactive community engagement.

### Next Evolution

Providing options for residents to get involved without barriers is necessary to extend the City's reach beyond traditional methods. Community Engagement staff continue to monitor and evaluate engagement processes from face-to-face to online tools.

Successful engagement requires appropriate use of research, a mix of channels, targeted communications and techniques and adequate time for execution.

Our Rutland was a good example of a successful hybrid of engagement options conducted in two phases during 2014 over a six month period that saw more than 5 per cent of the neighbourhood population participate online in a meaningful way. In the future, Community Engagement staff will continue to work toward eliminating barriers for those affected or interested in a decision.

Staff will prepare a business case in 2016 to outline options and financial considerations for the next evolution of the City's online engagement platforms. At the same time, staff will enhance relationships between the City and its residents through cross-departmental

opportunities such as Strong Neighbourhoods and other community programs with timely and relevant input or inform opportunities.

### Summary

Best practices in community engagement acknowledges all involved and brings citizens' values into the process along with the technical, financial and environmental consideration to facilitate sustainable decisions.

By providing the right information, at the right time, in the right way, it reduces misinformation and arms citizens with the facts to make an informed opinion.

Efficiencies are gained and greater confidence in the City's public processes will continue to increase over time with each successful project.

### IAP2 Framework

The IAP2 Goals and contributing promise to those involved are noted in the framework below:



#### INFORM

##### GOAL

To provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner.

##### PROMISE

"We will keep you informed."



#### CONSULT

##### GOAL

To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives and decisions.

##### PROMISE

"We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and preferences, and will provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision."



#### INVOLVE

##### GOAL

To work with the public to make sure concerns and aspirations are considered and understood.

##### PROMISE

"We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations inform the outcome to the maximum extent possible."



#### COLLABORATE

##### GOAL

To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision making.

##### PROMISE

"We will look to you for advise and innovation and incorporate this in decisions as much as possible."



#### EMPOWER

##### GOAL

To place final decision making in the hands of the public.

##### PROMISE

"We will implement what you decide."

### **Existing Policy:**

Council Policy #372 - Engage Policy

### **Considerations not applicable to this report:**

**Legal/Statutory Authority:**

**Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:**

**Financial/Budgetary Considerations:**

**Personnel Implications:**

**External Agency/Public Comments:**

**Communications Comments:**  
**Alternate Recommendation:**

Submitted by:

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cc: Carla Weaden, Communications & Information Services Div. Director