

December 5, 2018

REPORT TO THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DIVISION

ON

COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

PURPOSE

To provide Council with an update on activities within the Communications and Community Engagement (CCE) Division, including details on public engagement activities in 2018 and an update on the trial of a mobile engagement platform.

COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

This report supports Council's goals and objectives regarding:

- **Environment** - implement strategies that reduce our impact on the environment by using electronic communication whenever possible
- **Governance** - be recognized for excellence in public service in local government by improving public engagement

SUMMARY

CCE supports the City's internal departments and helps ensure that communication is strategic, tied to organizational goals, and easily accessible by residents and employees. We operate on the principle that open and regular communication with residents is a priority for the City.

CCE is responsible for a wide range of communications support to internal city departments, including the following key services:

- strategic communications
 - advising on internal and external communications
 - supporting project teams with strategic communication advice, tools, planning, and measurements (e.g. currently managing strategic communications for more than 150 internal projects with the intent of sharing information and engaging with residents, businesses, and employees)
 - guiding media relations, corporate social media, and strategic communication planning
- public engagement
 - supporting project teams in planning and implementing public engagement activities (e.g. open houses, information sessions, stakeholder meetings, notices to residents, surveys, polls, etc.)
- creative solutions
 - maintaining the City's brand standards and corporate identity
 - designing and producing material to support municipal communication campaigns

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- writing and editing
 - editing, proofreading, and formatting the City's corporate documents to ensure they are clear, concise, and consistent and follow corporate standards
- emergency information
 - working with the Emergency Operations Centre as Public Information Officers in the event of a crisis, and with Kamloops Fire and Rescue in the event of a two-alarm event.

To further address CCE's public engagement key service, this report provides Council with an update on engagement activities during 2018 as well as the testing and results of Let's Talk Kamloops, a new mobile engagement platform.

RECOMMENDATION:

For Council information only.

COUNCIL POLICY

- Council Policy No. GGA-34, Public Engagement

DISCUSSION

Similar to other municipalities, the City is at a turning point in terms of a public engagement strategy. After examining the costs of hosting in-person engagement, reviewing the attendance at events, and evaluating the rising use of online platforms, CCE recognized that the City's past engagement practices were not reaching as many citizens as possible. With this information, and according to the Corporate Strategic Plan's action item to develop a mobile engagement strategy, Administration felt it was time to complement face-to-face engagement with a digital component. This report summarizes face-to-face engagement as well as the test of a mobile engagement website.

Throughout 2018, there have been dozens of face-to-face engagement opportunities throughout the city on numerous topics and with a range of engagement objectives. These are summarized in Attachments "A" and "B".

The overview in Attachment "A" provides a timeline view—a selection of engagement achieved through meetings, open houses, information sessions, planning sessions, Let's Talk projects, and the civic election. While it not an exhaustive list, it signifies the range of engagement objectives listed below as well as a range of locations where face-to-face engagement occurred throughout the city in 2018.

Attachment "B" offers a more comprehensive view of a wider range of engagement efforts, including activities to inform the community of important decisions or direction, to advise residents of a situation, or to seek comment on a proposal or process.

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According to the City's current Public Engagement Handbook, which outlines best practices and planning steps, each engagement activity is driven by an objective to empower, collaborate, involve, consult with, or inform the community. More information on public engagement objectives is provided in the table below.

Public Engagement Objectives

Engagement Objective/Level	Definition	Examples/Tactics
Inform	One-way communication providing balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen or has happened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> advising the community of a situation or proposal informing on a decision or direction providing advice on an issue <p>Methods include media relations, news releases, CityPage, letters to residents, notices to motorists, City Stories, Council Highlights, website, fact sheets, information sessions, and social media</p>
Consult	Two-way communication designed to obtain public feedback about ideas, including rationale, alternatives, and proposals, to aid in decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seeking comment on a proposal, action, or issue seeking feedback on a service or facility <p>Methods include focus groups, surveys, advisory groups, and open houses</p>
Involve	Participatory process designed to help identify issues and views to ensure concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> involving the community in discussion and debate adopting a more personal and innovative approach through personal contact and meetings/sessions that encourage participation involving stakeholders at different times in the planning process <p>Methods include stakeholder working groups, panel presentations, idea mapping, storytelling, and Public Hearings</p>
Collaborate	Working together to develop understanding of all issues and interests with the intent to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishing a structure for involvement in decision-making (e.g. committee) enabling ongoing involvement and keeping informed <p>Methods include charrettes, consensus building, expert committees, and Citizen Advisory Committees</p>
Empower	Empowering the community to develop solutions and implement them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishing a process that allows the public to make an informed decision placing the final decision-making in the hands of the public <p>Methods include ballots, referendums, etc.</p>

Excerpt from City of Kamloops Public Engagement Handbook, pages 14–15

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2018 Engagement Locations

In 2018, engagement has taken place in many locations, including the following:

- online/mobile
- elementary schools
- seniors' centres
- community centres
- churches
- arenas
- City parks
- shopping malls
- restaurants
- hotel meeting rooms
- farmers' markets
- City facility meeting rooms
- City Council Chambers
- Tournament Capital Centre
- Thompson Rivers University
- Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc lands

As shown in Attachment "C", to complement in-person engagement, CCE launched the new mobile engagement website (LetsTalk.Kamloops.ca) on a six-month trial in June 2018 with several City projects, including the Downtown Plan (design charrette stage), Victoria Street West Upgrades, and a neighbourhood topic. Over the course of the six-month period, Let's Talk was home to a wide range of City projects and employed a variety of engagement tools, including Q&As, open forums, surveys, quick polls, mapping tools, virtual post-it notes, voting, and storytelling.

Projects featured on Let's Talk include the following:

- Budget Consultation 2019
- Victoria Street West Upgrades
- Biosolids Management
- Downtown Plan
- Cannabis Retail
- Your Neighbourhood
- Recreation Master Plan
- Why Engage? (communication survey)
- Affordable Housing Strategy
- 2018 Municipal Election
- Staff Shout Outs (customer service)

The trial of the engagement website included the following objectives to support mobile engagement:

- increase accessibility
- extend reach
- create depth of conversation

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- gather insight
- create a safe and secure environment

Over the course of the six-month trial, the website received positive support from both visitors and the City teams responsible for engagement. The evaluation received 17,641 website views in six months and numerous requests by internal departments to use the website going forward. As such, the test of the software was deemed a success. At the end of November 2018, CCE reviewed and evaluated the trial based on the following criteria:

- the utility of the software for project teams
- the number of citizens reached online compared to in person
- the number of residents who became more aware, informed, and engaged on City projects through LetsTalk.Kamloops.ca

Key metrics for the Let's Talk website over the past six months include:

- 17,641 visits to the website
- 9,141 visitors who are aware of City initiatives and projects (measured by visitors who viewed multiple projects on the website)
- 3,960 visitors who are informed on City initiatives and projects (measured by the viewing and/or downloading of educational resources on the website)
- 592 visitors who are engaged in City initiatives and projects (measured by the interaction with the mobile engagement tools on the website)

As a result of this evaluation, the City will continue the use of LetsTalk.Kamloops.ca in 2019.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The ongoing cost of the Let's Talk website is \$18,000/year. This expense fits within the existing budget for engagement largely due to the significant cost savings that are realized when pairing online engagement with in-person engagement.

W. Heshka
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Approved for Council

WH/lm/kjm

Attachments