

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT TO COUNCIL  
ON  
**COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY FOR 2021**

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**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the Communication and Community Engagement (CCE) Division's activities in 2021, including an engagement road map, website statistics, social media metrics, and a summary of cyclical programs supported by the CCE Division.

**COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN**

This report supports Council's strategic priorities and areas of focus regarding:

- **Governance and Accountability**
  - Community Engagement: We are committed to engaging and connecting with Kamloops residents and stakeholders.

**SUMMARY**

The CCE Division supports the City's internal departments and helps to 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 variety of communications supports for 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. in addition to special projects each year, the CCE team also manages strategic communications for more than 90 cyclical or ongoing projects with the intent of sharing information and engaging with residents, businesses, and employees (see Attachment "C")
  - 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)
  - supporting the organization with technology and strategy to promote virtual engagement during the pandemic

- creative solutions
  - maintaining the City's brand standards and corporate identity
  - designing and producing material to support municipal communication campaigns
- 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; with Kamloops Fire and Rescue in the event of a two-alarm event; and as of 2022, with the RCMP in the event of an emergency needing support from the City's CCE team.

To further address CCE's public engagement key service, this report provides Council with an update on engagement activities during 2021, website statistics, and social media metrics.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**For Council information only.**

### **SUPPORTING COUNCIL AND CORPORATE DIRECTION**

- Council Policy No. GGA-34, Public Engagement

### **DISCUSSION**

Although 2021 did not bring about the return to in-person engagement that we had expected or hoped for, engagement did not stop at the City. Using platforms like Zoom and Let's Talk, City staff continued to reach out Kamloops residents to solicit feedback on important projects. The City even hosted one in-person engagement event in November on the 2022 Budget.

The City continued to communicate about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on operations. Many City services and departments continued to operate under COVID-related adjustments. Recreation saw the greatest impact of new and changing orders on operations, which needed to be communicated in a clear and timely manner, often while still seeking clarification from the Province and other governing bodies. Two City recreation facilities were provided to Interior Health to host immunization clinics for a large portion of the year, and recreation facilities are the only City facilities that require patrons to show proof of vaccination. These changes to operations often happened quickly and required staff to respond accordingly.

Overall, the City was able to host a wide range of engagement opportunities throughout the city on numerous topics. These activities are summarized in Attachments "A" and "B".

The overview in Attachment "A" provides a timeline view of a selection of engagement achieved through mostly virtual stakeholder meetings, information sessions, workshops, and Let's Talk projects. It also identifies some key dates of emergency events that impacted our community. While it is not an exhaustive list, it signifies the range of engagement objectives detailed on the following page.

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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. The engagement summarized in Attachment “B” covers items such as Council Highlights, news releases, social posts, notices to residents, media events, and more.

### **Emergency Operations Support**

The CCE Division spent countless hours supporting Kamloops’ residents from the Emergency Operation Centre working as Information Officers to provide timely and accurate information during the Kamloops East fire event and the subsequent wildfire season that saw Kamloops surrounded by three of the largest fires of note in the province. This was particularly challenging as 50% of the team was directly impacted by evacuation alerts and orders.

The CCE Division also had the opportunity to support the City of Merritt during the fall flooding events with team members travelling to Merritt to assist the information officers in their Emergency Operations Centre.

### **Voyent Alert!**

Following the Kamloops East fire event in July 2021, Council directed staff to secure and implement the Voyent Alert! (Voyent) emergency alert system to provide more timely notification to residents in an emergency event. The City entered into a one-year agreement with Voyent but has been unable to implement it due to a delay in Voyent’s launch of version 2.0.

In 2021, CCE staff had the opportunity to complete training and gain some hands-on experience as we piggybacked on the Thompson-Nicola Regional District’s (TNRD’s) Voyent account during the August wildfires. The City used the TNRD’s Voyent account on August 5 and 15, 2021, to notify Kamloops residents of evacuation alerts for their neighbourhoods. It was subsequently used to send the alert rescind notifications on August 7 and 17.

While the release of Voyent version 2.0 has been delayed, version 1.82 is expected to be released in February and includes a patch specific to Kamloops to address our needs. There are over 16,000 user accounts registered in the TNRD’s Voyent account with a location selected within Kamloops city boundaries. This patch will import those users to the City’s Voyent account without removing them from the TNRD’s account or requiring a second registration. It will also allow users with locations in both the City and TNRD to receive alerts from the appropriate agency. If this launch is successful, the City will begin a campaign to inform the community and encourage new registrations.

In preparation for the launch of the City’s Voyent account, CCE staff have been creating templates and processes to support Voyent’s implementation. For the first year of service, the City will use Voyent for emergency and critical event communications. At the end of the 12-month trial, Voyent will be assessed based on end user feedback/experience, technical performance, and administrator usability. If the City decides to keep using Voyent after the one-year trial, there is potential to expand the system’s use to non-critical/informational uses such as roadway advisories, development notifications, public engagement, or event promotion. Registered users would have the ability to opt in or opt out of any topic at any time.

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## Sharing Stories

While the City responds to and supports the community during challenging times, the CCE Division has been sharing stories about the good work the City does and the projects that have a positive impact on the community.

Primarily using the City's social media channels, the CCE team aims to showcase the hard work of City employees dedicated to Making Kamloops Shine, and these posts receive a strong positive response from the community. This focus will continue through 2022.

## City Websites

The City primarily uses two websites to communicate information to the public. The main website, Kamloops.ca, is for corporate information, while Let'sTalk.Kamloops.ca focuses on City engagement projects.

The current version of Kamloops.ca was launched at the end of 2017 and has been reviewed on an ongoing basis for future improvements. Currently, Kamloops.ca is undergoing design and navigation improvements and a technical upgrade that will improve the site's security, accessibility, and useability.

The design and navigation improvements include a cleaner, more modern aesthetic along with changes to the menus and site organization that will be supported by graphics, quick links, and new content tools to simplify access to information.

The technical improvements relate to the website's content management system, Drupal. After over a decade of use, the Drupal community announced that Drupal 7, the version used for our site, will not be supported after November 2022. This means that bug fixes, security advisories, and updates will be unavailable, which would open the Kamloops.ca website to security vulnerabilities.

In addition, it is expected that the Province will legislate web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 soon to make web content more accessible to a wider range of people with disabilities, including accommodations for blindness and low vision, deafness and hearing loss, limited movement, speech disabilities, photosensitivity, and combinations of these.

The website is currently being transitioned to Drupal 9 along with the new design, content, and development features to modernize the website and move us toward WCAG 2.1 AA compliance. The refreshed site will be launching to the public in 2022's first quarter.

### *Kamloops.ca - Key Website Metrics from January 1 to December 31, 2021*

Kamloops.ca includes details on Council meetings and agendas, news and events, and departmental information relevant to residents and businesses.

*Kamloops.ca Visits*

<b>Kamloops.ca</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Site visits	837,267	1,110,195	982,675*	1,469,249
Page views	1,863,511	2,199,789	1,868,759*	2,735,437

\*Some metrics are lower due to the COVID-19 pandemic when regular activities were suspended and less traffic was directed to the website. In addition, all COVID-19 information was posted to Let's Talk.

*Referral Sources*

The majority of people visited Kamloops.ca through a search engine (61.8%), followed by direct visits (19.3%), referral traffic (7.4%), and social media (5.4%).

The following is a list of the top pages over the past year, excluding the homepage (calculated as a percentage of total visits to the site):

- Traffic Data and Webcams
- Career Opportunities
- Kamloops East Fire Updates (temporary alert notice page)
- PerfectMind
- Maps & Apps
- Tournament Capital Centre
- Emergency Alerts & Orders (new page created to support the August 2021 wildfires)
- Aquatics
- Canada Games Aquatics Centre
- Landfills, Recycling & Yard Waste Depots

The following are the most popular search terms:

- jobs
- MMCD
- outdoor skating rinks
- water restrictions
- swimming
- maps
- bylaws
- MyCity

*LetsTalk.Kamloops.ca - Key Website Metrics from January 1 to December 31, 2021*

Let's Talk is an engagement platform that began to be integrated into the City's public consultation process in June 2018 to supplement face-to-face consultation and help guide City planning and decision making. This site hosts select topics that have an opportunity for public input.

The Let's Talk platform is structured to measure engagement-based on actions web visitors take and categorizes these actions in three ways: aware, informed, or engaged. To complement in-person engagement, Let's Talk employs a variety of engagement tools, including Q&As, open forums, surveys, quick polls, mapping tools, virtual post-it notes, voting, and storytelling.

There were 20 projects featured on Let's Talk in 2021, including the following:

- Rayleigh Sanitary Sewer Local Area Service
- Go Electric Kamloops: EV-Ready Homes
- Budget Consultation 2022
- Revitalization Tax Exemption Review
- Columbia Corridor Upgrades
- Curbside Organic Waste Collection
- Summit-Downtown Active Transportation Connection
- Budget Consultation 2021
- Noble Creek Irrigation System
- Zoning Bylaw Review and Update
- Riverside Park Improvements
- Community Climate Action Plan
- North Shore Neighbourhood Plan
- City Boat Launch Planning
- Parking Management Plan
- COVID-19
- North Shore Neighbourhood Plan
- Tranquille Road Sanitary Main Upgrade
- Staff Shout Outs
- Why Engage?

City divisions with projects represented on Let's Talk in 2021 included the following:

- Finance Services
- Recreation, Social Development, and Culture
- Streets and Environmental Services
- Utility Services
- Capital Projects
- Parks and Civic Facilities
- Planning and Development
- Engineering (Traffic and Transportation)
- Community Planning and Sustainability
- Communications and Community Engagement
- Administration

#### *Website Visitors*

<b>LetsTalk.Kamloops.ca</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Site visits	42,894	96,323	71,384
Page views	109,109	177,333	160,971
Aware visitors	22,371	62,143	27,509
Informed visitors	8,834	13,866	12,750
Engaged visitors	2,333	1,621*	7,289

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Key metrics are for January 1 to December 31 each year.

Aware: visitors who viewed multiple projects on the website  
Informed: visitors who viewed a video or downloaded a document or other educational resources on the website  
Engaged: visitors who interacted with the engagement tools on the website, such as those who participated in a survey or contributed an idea. For 2020 the majority of the projects didn't allow for deep engagement because of the pandemic.

\*COVID engagement was for information sharing only and was not designed for public to affect decisions/provide input into decisions.

### *Referral Sources*

The majority of people visited Let's Talk directly by typing in the URL (49.2%), followed by search (35%), social media (8.6%), and referral traffic (5.7%).

The following is a list of the top projects over the past year in relation to informed and engaged participants (calculated as a percentage of total visits to the project):

- Curbside Organic Waste Collection
- Budget Consultation 2021
- Parking Management Plan
- North Shore Neighbourhood Plan
- Go Electric Kamloops: EV-Ready Homes
- Summit-Downtown Active Transportation Connection
- COVID-19
- Residential Suites Update

The following are the most popular engagement tools:

- Forums: 269 contributions
- Surveys: 5,670 submissions
- News Feeds: 795 visits
- Quick Polls: 3,060 responses

The following are the most popular information widgets:

- Document downloads: 2,740
- Photo and video views: 2,728
- Frequently Asked Questions review: 1,290

### **Social Media Engagement**

The City continues to maintain and grow a strong social media presence through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. As a result of the Kamloops East Fire Event and the August 2021 Wildfires, the City's social media channels experienced a significant increase in followers and reach.



From January 1 through December 31, 2021:

### *Facebook*

- Facebook followers increased by 4,456 (from 7,381 to 11,837).
- Facebook reached 2,893,655 users (the number of people who had any content from the City show up in their newsfeed, including posts, check-ins, ads, and more).
- Facebook had 3,062,958 total impressions (the number of times any content from the City entered a person's screen, including posts, stories, check-ins, and ads).

### *Twitter*

- Twitter followers increased by 3,223 (from 10,030 to 13,253).
- Twitter generated 4,914,662 impressions, 129,298 engagements, and 3,312 retweets.

### *Instagram*

- Instagram followers increased by 2,369 (from 5,838 to 8,207).
- Instagram posts generated 1,018,672 impressions and 24,355 interactions.

### *LinkedIn*

- LinkedIn followers increased by 767 (from 3,269 to 4,036).
- LinkedIn posts generated 100,680 impressions and 10,963 interactions (likes, shares, video views, clicks, and comments).

## **Engagement Stats At-a-Glance**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Facebook impressions	2,528,849	1,185,972*	3,062,958
Twitter impressions	938,353	1,083,255	4,914,662
Instagram impressions	-	541,530	1,018,672
LinkedIn impressions	-	92,407	100,680
Kamloops.ca visits	1,110,195	982,675	1,469,249
Let's Talk Kamloops visits	42,894	96,323	71,384
Kamloops.ca page views	2,199,789	1,868,759	2,735,437
Let's Talk Kamloops page views	109,109	177,333	160,971
Open houses and neighbourhood meetings	50	39	1
Online engagement projects	24	19	21
News releases issued	110	149	137

\*Some metrics are lower due to the COVID-19 pandemic, when regular engagement and social sharing activities were suspended.



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Approved for Council

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Attachments