

## **Policy Statement**

1. The City recognizes that engaged citizens make communities stronger, healthier and better able to meet the needs of the people who live and work in them. The City is committed to promoting active and ongoing citizen engagement to connect individuals with a shared sense of purpose, for creative problem-solving, and community building.

## **Purpose**

2. This policy provides the guidelines for the implementation of engagement processes for stakeholders, both internal and external, in order to achieve the following:
  - a. support for Council's decision-making by providing information about stakeholder's opinions and perspectives; and
  - b. consistent and clear engagement practices.

## **Scope**

3. This policy applies to:
  - a. all departments of the City;
  - b. all full-time, part-time and contract employees responsible for the design and implementation of community engagement activities; and
  - c. any community engagement activity undertaken by consultants or external organizations on behalf of the City.
4. In some matters, the City is bound by legislation to involve the public in a specific way and in accordance with dictated timelines. The City takes direction from the *Municipal Act, 2001*, the *Planning Act*, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the *Environmental Assessment Act*, among others. The City is obligated to adhere to these requirements, and if there is a conflict between legislated requirements and the provisions of this policy, legislated requirements take precedence.

## **Definitions**

5. For the purposes of this policy,

“City” means the City of Owen Sound, and a reference to the City is a reference to the geographical area or The Corporation of the City of Owen Sound as the context requires;

“community” means a group of people with shared interests or values or who share an environment;

“community engagement” means the process of involving the public in the decision-making processes of issues that affect them;

“IAP2” means the International Association of Public Participation which is an association of professionals in the field of public participation whose members seek to promote and improve the practice of public participation;

“project” means a unique, time-bound endeavour undertaken to develop, implement or modify an asset, program, service or strategy;

“stakeholders” means anyone (person or group of people) who can impact or can be impacted by the results of the decision made by the City, and may include (but not limited to) citizens, the public, customers, businesses, community organizations and partners, and other government agencies; and

## **Policy**

### **Minimum legislated requirements**

6. The City will comply with all minimum legislated requirements that dictate community engagement and exceed minimum requirements when appropriate.

### **Community engagement toolkit**

7. An internal community engagement toolkit provides staff with templates, resources and detailed information on tools and techniques. The community engagement toolkit will include:

- a. community engagement assessment tool;
- b. community engagement planning tool; and
- c. community engagement evaluation tool.

### **Community engagement assessment**

8. Community engagement will be considered for all City-led projects that directly impact the community.

9. The level of engagement for each project will be determined using the community engagement assessment tool in effect at the time of the project. It is the responsibility of the project lead, with support from the Communications Advisor, to undertake the engagement assessment.
10. The community engagement assessment tool will calculate an engagement score for each project. The engagement score will determine the following:
  - a. who is responsible for the engagement process;
  - b. who will approve the engagement plan; and
  - c. the level of engagement required.

### **Community engagement plan**

11. Once the engagement score has been determined, the project lead will draft an appropriate engagement plan with support from the Communications Advisor, using the community engagement planning tool in effect at the time of the project, and have the plan approved.
12. The community engagement plan will direct the community engagement activities for the project.

### **Community engagement evaluation**

13. At the completion of each project, the project lead, with support from the Communications Advisor, will evaluate the community engagement activities using the community engagement evaluation tool in effect at the time of the project.
14. The goal of the evaluation is to capture lessons learned to inform future community engagement activities.
15. Annually, the Communications Advisor will provide a summary of engagement for the prior year to the Strategic Leadership Team and City Council.

### **Responsibilities**

16. The role of project leads is to:
  - a. use this policy to determine the level of community engagement required;
  - b. develop community engagement plans for all projects;
  - c. ensure that community engagement activities comply with this policy and the IAP2 framework;

- d. ensure consultants or external organizations undertaking community engagement on behalf of the City comply with this policy and the IAP2 framework; and
  - e. report back to community stakeholders on the results of the community engagement and the impact on the project;
17. The role of the Communications Advisor is to:
- a. support project leads in:
    - i. determining the level of community engagement required on a project;
    - ii. developing the community engagement plan for all projects; and
    - iii. evaluating the community engagement activities of each project;
  - b. analyze the results of each project evaluation for lessons learned; and
  - c. compile a summary of engagement activities undertaken in the year.
18. The role of citizens is to:
- a. focus on the decision to be made or the question to be answered;
  - b. recognize the City must consider the needs of the whole community;
  - c. request alternative ways of participating, if required;
  - d. listen to understand the views of others;
  - e. provide input and feedback within project timelines and scope; and
  - f. encourage others to offer input.
19. The role of City Council is to:
- a. attend and participate in public meetings and events for engagement activities;
  - b. share information about community engagement activities with constituents;
  - c. have informal conversations with constituents about key issues;
  - d. review the information gathered through community engagement activities; and
  - e. use community input to inform key decisions.

### **Policy review**

20. The Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Operational Effectiveness will review this policy:

- a. every five (5) years to ensure effectiveness and compliance with current business processes; or
  - a. sooner, if required, based on legislative changes.
21. The Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Operational Effectiveness is authorized to make such administrative changes to this policy as appropriate to keep the policy current. Any revision to the policy’s intent must be presented to Council for consideration.

**Related Information and Resources**

**Internal**

22. Community Engagement Toolkit

**External**

23. [International Association of Public Participation Spectrum](#)

**Appendices**

24. N/A

**Revision History**

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Approval</b>	<b>Description of Amendment</b>
Council	2024-01-15	By-law 2024-004	new policy
Choose an item.	Click or tap to enter a date.	Choose an item.	
Choose an item.	Click or tap to enter a date.	Choose an item.	