



Staff Report

Administration

Report To: Community Communications Advisory Committee
Meeting Date: May 27, 2019
Report Number: FAF.19.089
Subject: Key Communications Priorities
Prepared by: Tim Hendry, CEDC

A. Recommendations

THAT the Community Communications Advisory Committee receive Staff Report FAF.19.089, entitled "Key Communications Priorities" for information.

B. Overview

This report is a follow up to the April 29th, 2019 Community Communications Advisory Committee meeting where the following motion was passed:

Moved by: Peter Bordignon Seconded by: Paula Hope

THAT the Community Communications Advisory Committee direct staff to provide a follow-up staff report including estimated budget for the various communications strategies identified in C.3 Discussion of Key Communications Priorities Items a-h for Committee consideration, Carried.

C. Background

Through municipal standards, corporate communication best practices and community feedback, Town Staff have identified several key communications priorities. Although there are many areas of opportunity to improve and strengthen communication, the list of key priorities is provided as the recommended starting point. The list is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all available options.

D. Analysis

Please see the following section for details and descriptions related to each item:

Public Engagement Software

- Public Engagement Software has emerged as a municipal best practice tool to engage residents and stakeholders through a formal and open online environment. The purpose of the tool is to encourage public engagement and participation within a monitored

environment, where residents and stakeholders have access to all pertinent information related to a specific topic. All comments posted by registered users will become part of the official record.

Below are examples of municipalities that utilize public engagement software:

- <https://connectgreyhighlands.ca/>
- <https://engage.collingwood.ca/>
- <https://www.aurora.ca/eServices/Pages/PlaceSpeak.aspx>
- <https://www.heynewmarket.ca/>
- <https://www.letstalkmilton.ca/>

Newspaper Communication Review

- Currently, the Town has an advertising agreement in-place with the Collingwood Connection for a weekly section in the newspaper. In addition, the Town has a monthly agreement in-place with the Thornbury Paper. Based on community feedback, there may be an opportunity to review how the Town advertises within local newspapers.

Local Radio Advertising

- Since November 2018, the Town has tested advertising campaigns on various local radio stations. Staff have observed and received feedback from residents and stakeholders that the campaigns have resulted in greater community awareness and increased community participation. There may be an opportunity to consider how the Town can best utilize radio to communicate with residents.

TV Screens in Town Facilities

- Staff regularly posts corporate and community information on the TV Screen located in the atrium at Town Hall. To further enhance communication, staff have explored the option of installing TV Screens into municipal facilities such as the Library and the Beaver Valley Community Centre. The installation of TV Screens around the community will enhance communication outreach without any additional communications work required.

Opportunities in Social Media

- Currently the Town participates on Twitter and LinkedIn (Employment advertising purposes only). The Town Twitter account is the primary social media channel to communicate municipal news & information. Based on community feedback, there may be an opportunity to participate and advertise on other social media channels such as Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.

Community Newsletter & Community Guide Review

- The Town published the first edition of the Community Guide in Fall 2018. The original plan was to produce two editions per year. Based on community feedback, there may be an opportunity to reduce the Community Guide to one edition per year and use the remaining budget funds to develop a quarterly community newsletter, community directory or activity guide.

The following are examples of a Town Community Newsletter and Activity Guide:

- o https://www.clearview.ca/sites/default/files/docs/clearview_newsletter_7th_edition.pdf
- o https://www.collingwood.ca/sites/default/files/docs/town-services/prc_guide_springsummer2019.pdf

Information Workshops

- Based on resident feedback, staff have identified an opportunity for improved communication and community education through ‘Information Workshops’. Residents have expressed the desire to better understand certain municipal processes such as the planning process or building department process. In addition to in person facilitated information sessions, staff are exploring the possibility of developing explainer / information videos that can be posted to the Town website.

Examples of explainer videos include:

- o <https://www.forterrie.ca/pages/MinorVarianceFAQs>

Town Email Newsletter Promotional Campaign

- Currently, the Town email list consists of approximately 600 subscribers. As a key communications vehicle for the Town, there is a clear opportunity to increase the number of subscribers through a coordinated marketing campaign.

Estimated Cost / Resource Considerations

Communication Item	Estimated Cost / Resource Considerations
Public Engagement Software	\$7,000 – \$10,000 per year
Newspaper Communication Review	The Town spends an average of \$1800 – \$2200 per month on newspaper advertising. This number may increase / decreased based upon advertising frequency and ad size.
Local Radio Advertising	Each campaign/message will require a separate media buy. Estimated cost for a 2-3 week campaign is between \$400 - \$600 (dependent upon ad frequency and ad length).
TV Screens in Town Facilities	\$2,700 per screen + annual software fee of \$600 (annual fee is the total for all screens).
Opportunities in Social Media	The management of additional social media accounts will require increased staff resources. In addition, a small targeted Facebook campaign is approximately \$100 – 300 per campaign.
Community Newsletter & Community Guide Review	Printed & mailed community newsletter, community directory or Activity Guide \$4000 - \$6000 per edition.
Information 101 Workshops / Video	\$500 to advertise Information Sessions \$1500 - \$2000 to develop explainer / information video
Town Email Newsletter Promotional Campaign	Widely varies depending upon scale & scope, but approximately \$5000 for a 3 – 4 week campaign.

E. The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan

- Goal #2: Engage Our Communities & Partners
- Objective #1 Improve External Communication with our Constituents
- Objective #2 Use Technology to Advance Engagement
- Objective #3 Strengthen Partnerships
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- Goal #4: Promote a Culture of Organizational & Operational Excellence
- Objective #2 Improve Internal Communications Across our Organization
- Objective #3 To Consistently Deliver Excellent Customer Service
- Objective #5 Constantly Identify Opportunities to Improve Efficiencies and Effectiveness

F. Environmental Impacts

The environmental impact will vary depending upon the communication activity undertaken.

G. Financial Impact

Please see the 'Estimated Cost / Resource Considerations' chart above for the estimated financial impact.

H. In consultation with

N/A

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been subject to a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Tim Hendry at communications@thebluemountains.ca

J. Attached

N/A

Respectfully Submitted,

Tim Hendry
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For more information, please contact:

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