



CORPORATE POLICY

Topic: Community Engagement Policy

Policy No.: COMM.2-02

Section: Corporate Communications

Applies to: All Employees and Stakeholders

Council Adoption Date: October 2, 2017

Effective Date: October 2, 2017

Revision No:

Date:

Policy Statement & Strategic Plan Linkages

This policy supports Newmarket's Strategic Plan directions of being 'Well-Equipped & Managed', 'Well-Planned & Connected' and 'Well-Respected', as well as Council's Strategic Priorities of Community Engagement – to align the Town with communication best practices by engaging our changing resident demographics.

Purpose

The Town of Newmarket is committed to providing an inclusive community engagement process to better inform stakeholders about decisions that reflect their interests and concerns through a collaborative approach that focuses on two-way communications.

This policy will act as a guide internally to inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower stakeholders. The policy Aligns with Newmarket's corporate mission of making Newmarket *even* better, with Council's Strategic Priorities and with the principles of the International Association for Public Participation.

The Town is also committed to notifying Newmarket stakeholders on community engagement opportunities. Comprehensive communication plan/strategies will be developed with the leading department and include, goals, objectives, desired outcomes and list of tactics for community engagement. These tools and tactics include, but are not limited to:

- Newmarket Website

- Media Releases/Advisories
- Newmarket Town Page in the local newspaper
- Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram)
- Email Newsletters
- Household Mail-outs
- Council Meetings
- Special Community Events (Farmers' Market etc.)
- Citizen juries, roundtables, focus groups, workshops, open houses
- Surveys and more.

Please note that communication tactics for community engagement will be determined by the organizing department to ensure best practices are aligned with stakeholders.

Definitions

Stakeholders means residents, businesses, municipal neighbours, elected officials, staff, upper tier levels of government, boards and committees, municipal authorities, agencies, associations, and anyone with an interest in the Town's municipal affairs.

Community Engagement means various methods of engaging the public in discussion about civic matters that impact Newmarket stakeholders. The community engagement process is transparent, responsive, inclusive and empowering. It is based on realistic expectations, mutual respect and trust.

Procedures

Organizing departments/commissions will work with their Communications Department liaison to develop a strategic community engagement plan and/or a plan to inform stakeholders about public engagement opportunities through various communication tools and tactics. The communication tools and tactics used may be subject to other statutory, regulatory or municipal standard requirements and will be identified on a case-by-case basis. The Town of Newmarket will:

- Identify the purpose of informing stakeholders
- Determine the best targeted communication tactics for involving stakeholders
- Inform stakeholders of the opportunities for involvement in a timely manner
- Obtain feedback from participating stakeholders
- Report and provide feedback to the appropriate stakeholders
- Provide Council with the results of stakeholder input and feedback for decision making purposes, if requested and as appropriate

- Ensure processes are open, clear, transparent, accountable and operate in a positive atmosphere of good faith and collaboration
- Provide information in an accessible format, using simple, plain language and graphics
- Ensure translation or interpretation services are provided when required
- Ensure facility locations of community engagement events are accessible to all
- Adhere to public notice guidelines set out by legislation, such as the Planning Act.

Following the International Association for Public Participation's values, the Town will also:

- **Inform:** Provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
- **Consult:** Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions
- **Involve:** Work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
- **Collaborate:** Partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
- **Empower:** Provide the public the opportunity to have an impact in the decision making process.

Cross References

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#)

[Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#)

[Planning Act](#)

[Municipal Act](#)

[Town of Newmarket Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy \(CAO.2.02\)](#)

[Town of Newmarket Notice Policy \(Corp. 1-02\)](#)

[Procedure By-Law 2007-46](#)

[International Association for Public Participation](#)

[Newmarket's Public Information Centre Checklist](#)

[Notice Policy \(to be completed the end of 2017\)](#)