

Our Community Engagement Strategy

July 2017
(updated June 5, 2019)





City Manager's Message

Here at the City of Mississauga, we are committed to ensuring everyone belongs. Community engagement is an important way we connect with residents and make sure their voices are heard.

As a leading municipality, we consult with thousands of community members each year to gather feedback on what the future of Mississauga can look like. Our Strategic Plan is our largest community engagement project to date. It was created through consultation with more than 100,000 residents, helping us shape a future vision for our city. As part of our Strategic Plan, we are building a world-class city where people choose to live, work and play. We are committed to continuous improvement.

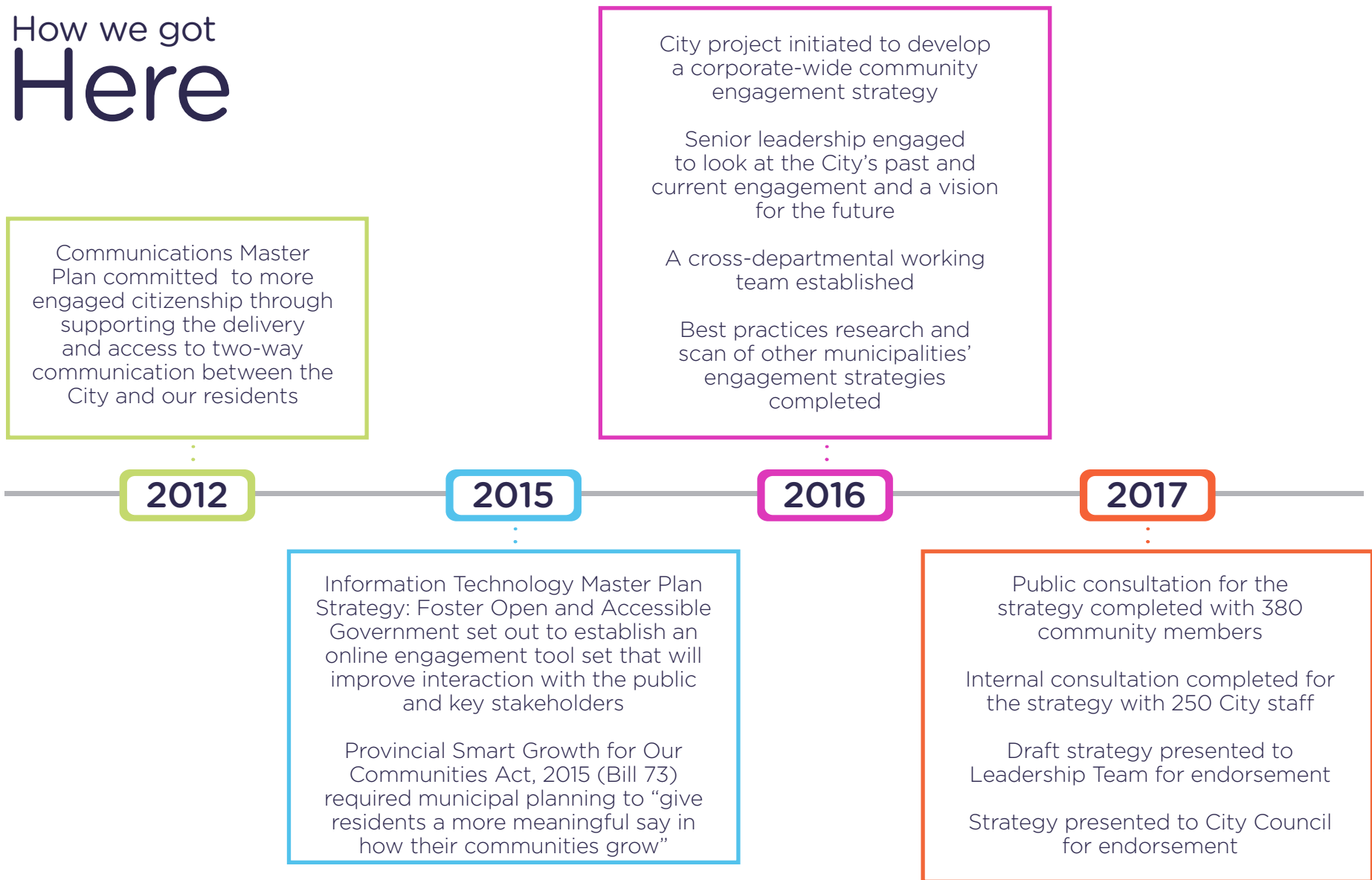
Our 2017 Citizen Satisfaction Survey told us that 55 per cent of residents who participated in a City-led engagement initiative felt it was a meaningful experience. This feedback is valuable to ensuring we continue to provide the high quality of life our residents enjoy. While this result is satisfactory, we recognize there is room to improve.

Our Community Engagement Strategy is an opportunity to build on our existing success and provide a consistent approach to delivering meaningful engagement opportunities to the community. In the development of this strategy, we reflected on our current engagement practices and invited residents to share their thoughts on what we are doing well and how we can improve.

As we build Mississauga into a world-class city where people choose to be, we encourage residents to get involved. Look for opportunities to share your thoughts and opinions on the future of Mississauga.

Janice M. Baker, FCPA, FCA
City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer

How we got Here



What we Heard

A consultation process, led by Lura Consulting, was held with the broad community and City staff from January to March, 2017, to help build our strategy.

We asked ...What do we do well? How can we do better?
What can future consultation with the City look like?

Provide multiple engagement opportunities using a variety of tools to ensure people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can participate.

Go to where people are to tap into existing social networks and leverage relationships.

Use targeted engagement tactics to ensure that fully accessible and inclusive consultation is provided.

Understand and get to know Mississauga's diverse communities, opinions and experiences. Target the engagement.

Take time to genuinely listen to the community's range of input and be open to new ideas.

Provide clear communication, advance notice and broaden communication methods to improve awareness and outreach.

Meaningful engagement is a chance for residents to communicate their concerns and recommendations with the City of Mississauga staff to ensure a better community for all those living here.

Always close the loop. Inform participants how their input was used, the status of the project or initiative, results and outcomes or decisions.

Rethink consulting when there are pre-determined outcomes or the decision has been already made.

Be clear and transparent about the purpose of the consultation.

Some of Our Successes

In 2016, we conducted...



56

Engagements



25,000

Participants



99,000

Followers



77,000

Likes

These numbers only tell part of the story. Tremendous effort and time from staff and the public are behind these numbers, resulting in exciting, transformational plans and strategies, some of which included:

MyMalton
Dundas Connects
Stormwater Program
Imagining Ward 3
Vision Cooksville

Lakeshore Connecting Communities
Making Room for the Middle -
A Housing Strategy for Mississauga
2017 Budget Allocator
MiWay 5 - Service Plan

North West Community Centre &
Sports Park P-459
Inspiration Port Credit
Inspiration Lakeview

Why is an Engagement Strategy important?

This strategy brings together the best of our current practices, research from other municipalities and public participation experts. It was further shaped by what we heard through consultation with the community and staff.

It is intended for staff who are responsible to guide consulting with the public as part of a project, program or planning process.

While engagement is not a new focus for the City, we now have new tools, research, expertise that allow us to address it in different ways and to respond to changing needs of our residents.

Engagement helps build cooperative and trusting relationships between the City and the community. It can provide us with early warning signs for a project or decision. It can serve as a sounding board for our proposed programs/initiatives, it provides the opportunity for communication between decision makers and the public, and it creates a credible channel through which accurate and timely information from the City can be disseminated. It helps increase the public's understanding and support for the City's goals and city building.

Benefits Of This Strategy:

- A corporate vision for community engagement
- A set of principles to guide our engagement
- A common framework to help decide the level of engagement required
- A standard way to plan engagement, examine key factors and think through issues to ensure the engagement is successful
- A common focus on making it easier for residents to participate
- Consistently ensuring participants are informed of the outcome
- Standardizing measurement to improve for the next time and see the City's overall success in engagement

Our Strategy

Community Engagement is...

Any process that seeks the community's input to ensure that the City's decision-making is well informed.

Meaningful community engagement is about having representation from the whole community, not just a small voice, but hearing from all people. It is about an open, two-way dialogue. It gives opportunities for the community to propose ideas and come up with collective solutions. It is about offering an effective, inclusive approach to seek diverse opinions. And, it is an ongoing conversation that allows the community to help define and shape the City's future.



Our Community Engagement
Vision

Meaningful Engagement Every Time

Our Principles

for Meaningful Engagement

Accessible & Inclusive

We will always strive to understand the needs of Mississauga's diverse communities and use a range of engagement techniques and approaches to make it easier for everyone to participate fully.

Transparent

We will be clear as to why we are seeking input, the extent to which the community can influence a process, how input will be used to inform decision-making and report back on the feedback collected.

Trust

We will establish trust with community members through meaningful engagement processes that support relationship building. When community members trust the engagement process and City staff, they are more likely to participate and provide input proactively.

Understand the Community

We will always strive to understand the community members and stakeholders. Our engagement will be well planned and use targeted approaches to ensure that those most impacted are involved and "at the table".

Informed

We will ensure that information and education is a key component of every engagement process. The more informed community members are, the better the conversation and input.

These principles were developed in collaboration with City staff and the community. They were narrowed down and prioritized at community workshops and by the project working team.

What Do We Want To Achieve?

Enhance our engagement practices

GOAL 1

Objectives

1. Utilize the City's strategic engagement process to ensure engagement is purposeful, and cost-effective
2. Conduct performance evaluation and report back regularly to ensure the continuous improvement of engagement practices
3. Innovate engagement by testing new ideas and piloting creative practices

Make it easy for the community to participate

GOAL 2

Objectives

1. Engage participants in an accessible and inclusive manner, ensuring that there are a variety of opportunities to give feedback.
2. Inform participants of engagement through awareness and education initiatives
3. Develop meaningful relationships with participants to establish trust and support community building

Ensure participation reflects the broad diversity of our City

GOAL 3

Objectives

1. Collect standard demographic information to understand who the City engages

Build staff capacity to lead community engagement processes

GOAL 4

Objectives

1. Provide staff training on engagement to increase our internal knowledge base
2. Provide engagement resources to staff to ensure high quality, standardized engagement deliverables

Measuring

Our Engagement

To standardize our measurement and monitor the overall progress of the Community Engagement Strategy's goals and objectives, we will enhance our evaluation and data collection. We will place more emphasis on qualitative data and expand our collection of demographic information to ensure we are reaching the most impacted groups. We will continue to collect the essentials, the number of engagement processes and number of people who participated.

Our Measures

GOAL 1

Measures

1. % of participants satisfied with City engagement processes
2. Cost of engagement per resident
3. Cost of engagement per engagement technique used
4. % of projects in which engagement performance was evaluated
5. # of innovative engagement initiatives undertaken

GOAL 2

Measures

1. % of engagement events that provided more than one opportunity for participation
2. # of engagement events (in-person and virtual)
3. # of engagement event participants (in-person and virtual)
4. # of hours participants spent engaging with the City
5. % of engagement events that adhered to the City's inclusivity and accessibility guidelines
6. % of participants satisfied with accessibility and inclusion accommodations made at engagement events
7. % of participants that felt they were informed about the engagement event's subject matter prior to attending
8. % of participants that felt their engagement experience was valuable

GOAL 3

Measures

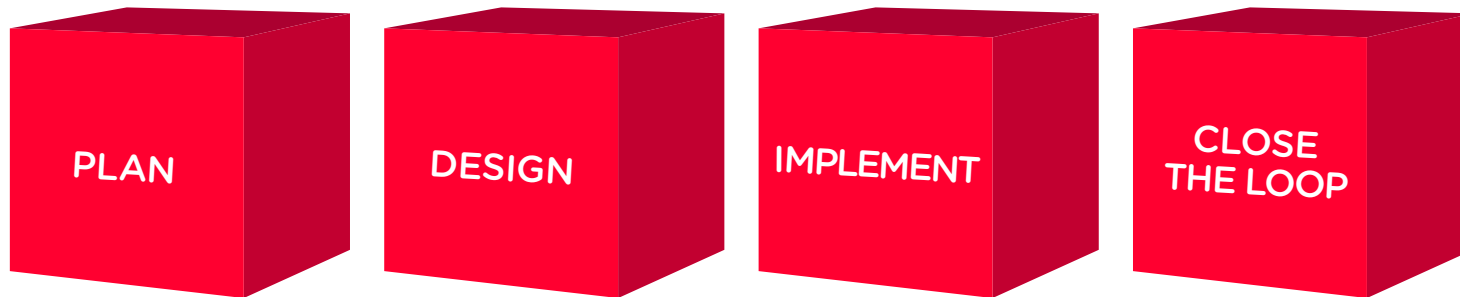
1. Participation levels by demographics (e.g. age)

GOAL 4

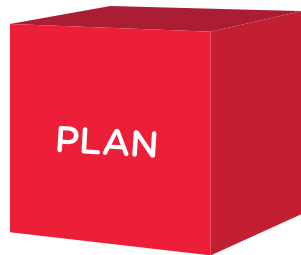
Measures

1. # of hours of staff training delivered
2. # of staff trained
3. % of satisfied trainees
4. % of internal staff-led engagement processes
5. # of resources available to staff
6. % of staff satisfied with resources

Building
Blocks
to Meaningful Community Engagement



Building Blocks to Meaningful Community Engagement



Prior to undertaking any engagement process, good planning is important. A well-developed engagement plan will ensure that our engagement is meaningful and successful.

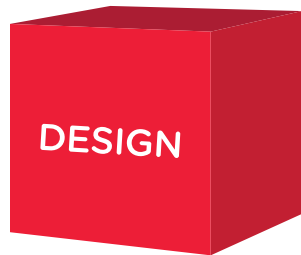
Planning involves answering the following:

- What decision needs to be made or issue to be examined by the City?
- What is the rationale for this project or decision?
- What level of community input is needed for the decision or this project?
- What can the public influence and what is not negotiable?
- Who are the most impacted community members and stakeholders?
- What is the history or context of the issue or project?
- What is the timeline and required resources?
- What is the level of engagement?

This helps to confirm the level of influence the public will have on the decision, the time needed for an effective process and the required budget and resources.

During this stage, it may become clear that engagement with the community is not necessary or that a decision is already made. In these cases, a promotional marketing campaign may be best.

Building Blocks to Meaningful Community Engagement



Once an engagement plan is developed and approved, it is time to design the engagement process. This involves developing a comprehensive stakeholder list, looking at who is most affected and who is interested.

This is where techniques are selected, meetings organized, surveys built, digital channels identified, facilitators arranged and, if required, consultants hired. This is also where we develop a communications plan to support the engagement process.

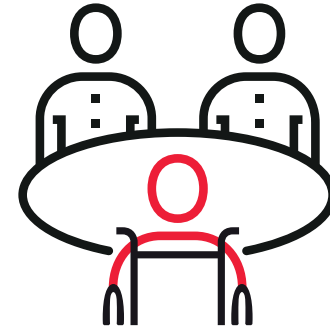
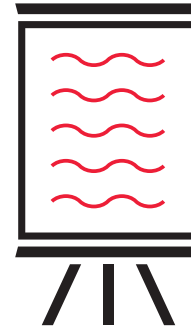
- Select the techniques that are suitable for the level of engagement on the framework
- Use a combination of digital engagement tools and face to face techniques
- Consider doing pre-consultation with some of your stakeholders to find out how they would like to be engaged and receive communications
- Pre-test materials, i.e. surveys, presentations, small group questions and communications
- Check the multi-faith calendar for potential conflict with significant religious dates
- Ensure your space and event locations are accessible
- Avoid other engagement activities or events happening at the same time
- Connect with relevant community groups to assist with outreach
- Develop fun, innovative and interactive techniques

Building Blocks to Meaningful Community Engagement

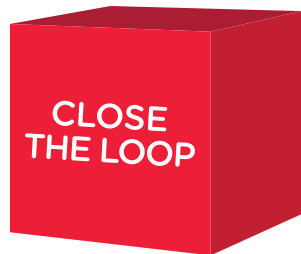


Here we roll out the engagement activities and follow through on the process that was designed. It is most important to provide a fair and objective process that is clear to all on the purpose and how to get involved.

- Go into the community where people are already meeting or gathering
- Listen openly and genuinely
- Record accurately
- Use outside or objective facilitators
- Provide clear and up-to-date project information
- Promote two-way dialogue



Building Blocks to Meaningful Community Engagement



The final step of any community engagement process is getting back to the community on what we heard and how their input was used.

Reporting to the community in a timely manner is a critical step in achieving meaningful engagement. Even when there is not full agreement by participants on a City decision, reporting is important to demonstrate to all those who participated to how public feedback and input was used, why or why not and project next steps.

For lengthy or complex projects that extend over multiple years, regular progress updates to the community will convey transparency, build trust and help ready the community for more engagement and ultimately for a final outcome.



Our Roles

ENGAGEMENT LEAD

is any staff responsible for leading the engagement

- Develops the engagement plan
- Oversees the engagement process
- Maintains ongoing and up-to-date communication or presence with community
- Manages the contract with external consultants or resources
- Completes evaluation

ENGAGEMENT TEAM

- Usually a cross-departmental team that may be part of the project charter or that comes together to work with the engagement lead on the engagement process
- Assists with the development of the engagement plan
- Assists with delivery of engagement techniques and process
- Assists with evaluation

EXTENDED ENGAGEMENT TEAM

- City staff including Information Technology, Communications, Materiel Management and others, as required

MANAGER/SUPERVISOR

- Reviews the engagement plan and gives approval to proceed
- Provides direction throughout engagement process, as required

PROJECT CONTROLLER





- Where there is an existing project charter and engagement is part of the scope, the controller reviews and signs off on the engagement plan and gives approval to proceed
- Provides strategic direction throughout the engagement process, as required

Our Engagement Framework

Not all engagement is the same. How much the community can influence the final decision is based on many factors and the decision-making process for the projects and plans. There are four levels of engagement that form our engagement framework. Moving through the spectrum from left to right, there is an increase in expectations from the public for their participation and impact on the decisions. The level of engagement is determined by understanding the needs of the project and stakeholders.

Our Engagement Framework





Level of Engagement – Increasing Level of Community Input

	 Inform	 Consult	 Involve	 Collaborate
Engagement Purpose	To share information to build awareness and understanding	To listen and learn and have a dialogue with the community To test ideas, concepts and develop solutions	To work directly with the community to develop alternatives, solutions and/or recommendations and to ensure the community's concerns and aspirations are understood and considered	To partner with the public to develop recommendations or solutions
City's Action	To provide the public with balanced and objective information in order to assist public in understanding a project, change or issue and potential solutions, any decisions that have been made or next steps	To obtain community input about options or decisions To ensure the community's concerns are understood and considered	To work directly with the community throughout the process, including developing options and identifying the preferred direction	To partner with the community in each aspect of the decision-making including development of alternatives and options, as well as, identification of the preferred options

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate
City's Promise To The Community	We will educate, clarify and keep the public informed	We will keep the public informed, listen and acknowledge the public's concerns and the impact to the public We will work to ensure that public concerns are reflected in the options we develop We will provide feedback on how input influenced the decision	We will work with the public to ensure input is understood, reflected in the options that are developed and will look to the public for advice We will include the public input and advice into the final outcome to the maximum extent possible	We will look to the public for advice in developing and forming solutions and work with the public to incorporate their advice and recommendation into the decision
Communication Style	City to community One-way	City to community community to City Two-way	City to community, back to City and then to community Two-way and interactive	City to community, community to City and back and forth multiple times
City's Responsibility	Provide information Make the final decision	Provide opportunities for the expression of views and concerns Work to incorporate solutions to concerns or mitigate concerns Make final decision Report back on final decision	Provide opportunities to influence decision-making, sharing views and setting priorities together Consider the recommendations Make final decision Report back to the community on the final decision	Provide opportunities to influence decision-making sharing views and setting priorities together In partnership with the community, make the final decision Report back on final decision

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate
Community's Responsibility	Learn	Participate	Partner	Partner
Most Appropriate When	<p>A decision has been made and needs to be shared</p> <p>Where input is not going to change the decision but information needs to be shared with community to prepare for involvement in a coming project</p> <p>To generate interest and later involvement</p> <p>When a new policy or program needs to be described the community needs to know the results of a process</p>	<p>When a new policy or project is still being shaped or under development and input and feedback is required</p> <p>When the community's ideas and concerns are needed and will be considered and reflected in final outcome</p> <p>When feedback is required or when looking to build consensus</p> <p>Project parameters and options are still being set and advice is needed on issues that impact the public</p> <p>When looking for expert advice from specific targeted groups</p>	<p>When a program is being designed and implemented that requires multiple sector buy in and participation</p> <p>Stakeholder expertise and actions form an integral part of the solution</p> <p>There is a need for early assurance that the final product has local relevance</p> <p>Long-term commitment and sustainability are key considerations</p>	<p>A program is being designed and implemented that requires multiple sector buy in and participation</p> <p>Stakeholder expertise is required to find solutions</p> <p>The solution requires changes at the system level across various institutions and organizations</p>

Our Engagement Techniques

 Inform	 Consult	 Involve	 Collaborate
<p>Social Media Posts and Tweets</p> <p>Information Booths at an Event</p> <p>Promotional Video</p> <p>Town Hall Meetings</p> <p>Project Websites</p>	<p>Surveys</p> <p>Focus Groups</p> <p>Pop Ups</p> <p>Open Houses</p> <p>Public Meetings</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews</p> <p>Coffee Klatches</p>	<p>Study Circles</p> <p>Workshops</p> <p>Site Visits and Tours</p> <p>Design Charrettes</p> <p>World Cafés</p>	<p>Advisory Committees</p> <p>Residents' Panels and Citizen Juries</p> <p>Task Forces</p> <p>Open Space Meetings</p>

Communication and Outreach

“ Provide lots of notice before consultation and very clear information about its purpose and potential outcomes.
- Community Member

Meaningful engagement planning includes a well thought-out communication plan to raise awareness about our engagement, create interest and ultimately achieve strong community participation. Recruiting large, diverse numbers of people is often the most challenging and time-consuming task. Promoting and advertising the engagement process should be targeted to those who need to be “at the table” and those who have interest in the outcome. The purpose of the engagement and level of engagement should be clear in all communications to set clear expectations right up front.

Ways to Communicate

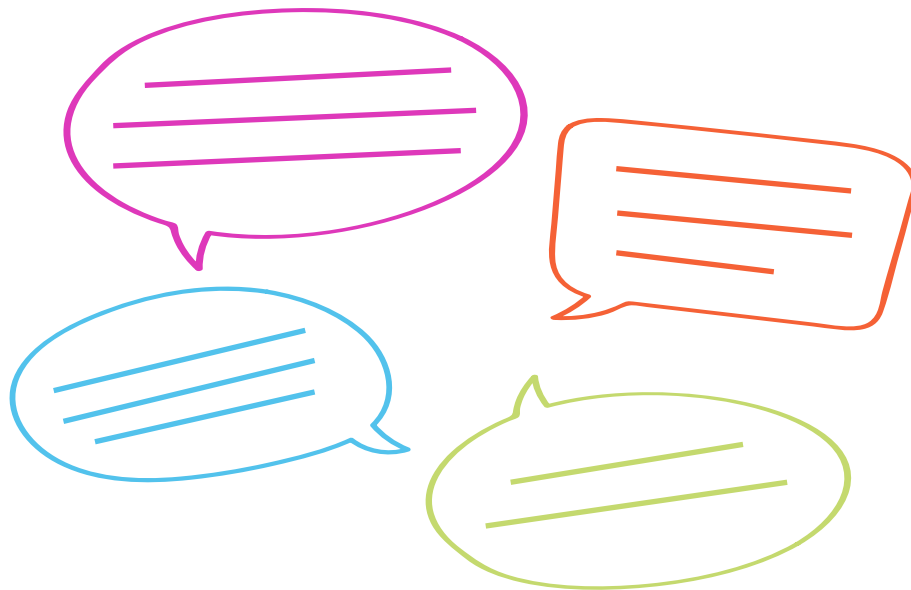
- @ Email invitations from staff and/or Ward Councillors
- City's social media channels: Twitter, Facebook and YouTube
- City's website
- Poster, flyer or electronic message display at City facilities and public places
- Mobile road signs
- Direct mail – letter or post card

Helpful Tips

- Find community champions and leaders
- Youth are more likely to participate if invited by their peers
- Use the word “we” to convey how we are going to solve an issue together
- Reach out to established community groups to help bridge language barriers
- Let people know if the decision maker will be there
- Send information and materials in advance for pre-event reading and understanding
- Eliminate jargon, acronyms and use plain language
- Use concept drawings, illustrations and short videos where possible
- Always ensure materials are available in alternative formats

Our Ongoing Conversation

Engagement can be more than a specific event or activity. It is an opportunity for an ongoing dialogue with the community about their insights on current issues that are important to them, their families and the City as a whole.



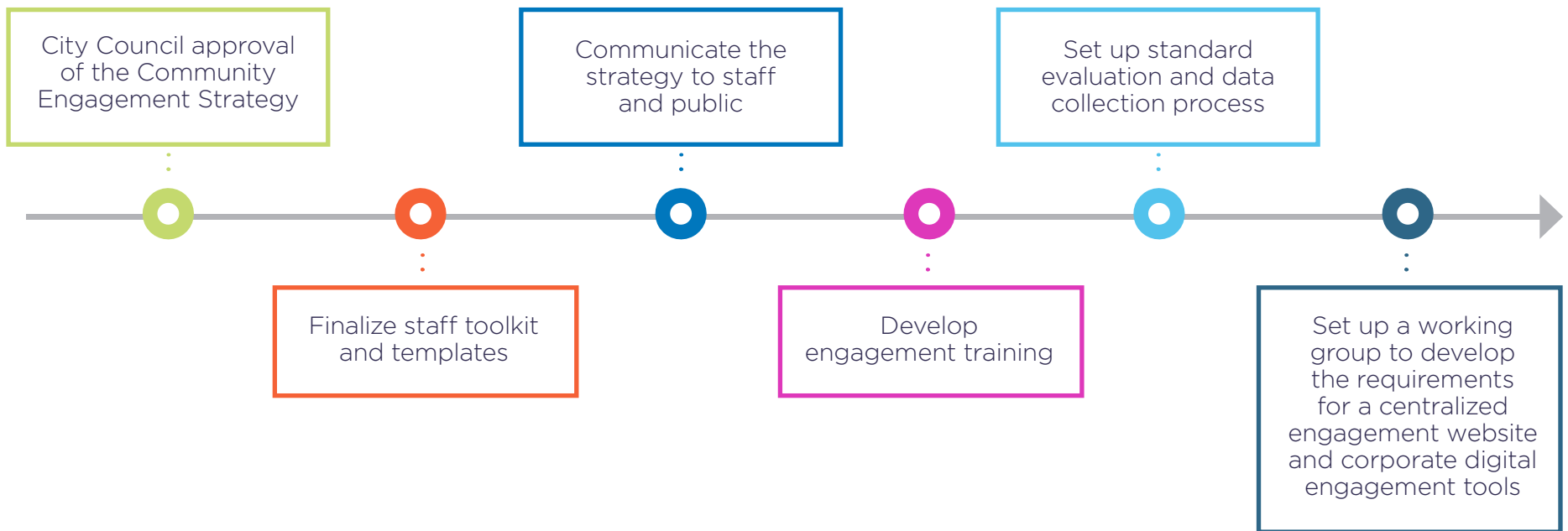
Case Example

The City of Vancouver uses an online space for civic participation. TALK VANCOUVER invites the public to be a member of the City's online community of trusted, local advisors through a safe, online space. To date, 56,000 people have signed up and provided information about who they are, where they live and what interests they have. This allows the City of Vancouver to ensure they are hearing from people with the widest possible range of ages, experiences, incomes and backgrounds.

As new initiatives unfold, Talk Vancouver allows the City to reach out to community members, share plans early on, hear ideas and talk about the community's needs. Talk Vancouver is a direct, personal connection to City Hall.

Next

Steps for 2017



Glossary

COMMUNITY

The entire city of Mississauga or anything that brings groups of people together, whether they are connected by geography, shared interests and values, cultures, languages, abilities, affiliations or identify together to address issues.

DIVERSITY

Diversity is about the individual. It is about the variety of unique dimensions, qualities and characteristics we all possess. These dimensions can include but are not limited to ethnicity, nationality, culture, ability, birth sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, age, immigration status, socioeconomic status, geographic region in which you live and many other qualities.

INCLUSION

Inclusion is about the collective. It is about creating a culture that strives for equity and embraces, respects, accepts and values difference.

RESIDENTS

All people who live in Mississauga.

STAKEHOLDER

Any organization, private or public, community groups and more formal associations that have a stake in the decision or a related interest.

Our Thanks

To all of the community members, the City's Advisory Committees and City staff who participated in the consultation and provided their valuable time and insights to help create this Community Engagement Strategy.

Andrew Whittemore, Project Controller and Director, City Planning Strategies, Planning and Building
LeeAnn Lloyd, Project Lead and Strategic Leader, City Planning Strategies, Planning and Building

PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

Ivana Di Millo, Director, Communications, Corporate Services
Rob Cummins, Manager, Corporate Marketing, Communications, Corporate Services
Shari Lichterman, Director, Recreation, Community Services
Shawn Slack, Director, Information Technology, Corporate Services

PROJECT TEAM

Andrea Oliver, Manager, Information Technology, Corporate Services
Anna Melikian, Researcher, City Planning Strategies, Planning and Building
Anthea Foyer, Digital Strategy and Community Engagement Specialist, Culture, Community Services
Beata Jones, Planner, Parks and Forestry, Community Services
David Ferreira, Brand Manager, Communications, Corporate Services
Diane Hector, Supervisor, Business Planning, Corporate Services
Erin Beaudoin, Marketing Consultant, Transit, Transportation and Works
Evie Przybyla, Planner, Transportation and Infrastructure Planning, Transportation and Works
Faye Mattachione, Project Coordinator, Transit, Transportation and Works
Ingrid Keuper-Dalton, Library Community Development Specialist, Mississauga Library System, Community Services
Joanne Foote, Youth Plan Coordinator, Recreation, Community Services
Katie Ashbourne, Researcher, City Planning Strategies, Planning and Building
Lindsay Francini, Acting Supervisor, Public Relations, Communications, Corporate Services
Mary Bracken, Environmental Specialist, Environment, Community Services
Steve Czajka, Manager, Information Planning, City Planning Strategies, Planning and Building

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Halton Region, City of Guelph, City of Toronto and other Canadian municipalities for generously sharing their materials, strategies and advice.

The **IAP2** International Association for Public Participation for providing their permission to use and adapt the Public Participation Spectrum as a guide for the engagement framework for our strategy. (www.iap2.org)



Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.

— Jane Jacobs

For further information, please contact

City Planning Strategies Division
Planning and Building Department

City of Mississauga

engage@mississauga.ca

