



Public Notice and Engagement

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Sub-section:	Communications
Author:	Strategy, Policy and Communications
Authority:	Council
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Policy statement

The Corporation of the Town of Oakville (the town) values and encourages public engagement and is committed to open two-way communication to develop and deliver quality programs and services that meet the needs of the community.

The town shall give public notice in accordance with the Public Notice and Engagement Procedure and as required by applicable statute or regulation.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish how the town provides public notice and engagement that promotes community belonging and accountable government.

The town will consider public engagement when:

1. Designing or implementing a new policy, program, project or service;
2. Evaluating, changing or ending an existing policy, program, project or service;
3. Fulfilling a legislated or regulated requirement; or
4. Responding to a Council initiated request (scope of request will determine level of engagement).

Staff must abide by all notice requirements set out in statutes, regulations thereunder and Town of Oakville by-laws, as well as town notice requirements outlined in this policy and related procedures.

Public Notice and Engagement Guiding Principles

The town's commitment to public notice and engagement shall be guided by the following guiding principles:

1. Inclusion and mutual respect — ensuring public notice and engagement is based on building trust and relationships that seek to involve all members of the community.
2. Indigenous engagement – ensuring substantive consultation with Indigenous peoples for matters of significant interest to them.
3. Early involvement and timely communication — communicating as early as possible in the engagement process and ensuring that the information needed to meaningfully engage and understand the issue or project is available in a timely manner, so the community has sufficient time to actively participate and Council members have time to understand the issues.
4. Options for participation – providing a variety of opportunities for interested parties and the community to participate in engagement events where appropriate, such as in person and/or virtual events, with consideration for timing (e.g. day and evenings) and at locations easily accessible by participants and close to or within the neighbourhood(s) being affected.
5. Open interactive communication — working with the community in a co-operative and collaborative way to share information and provide opportunities for open and constructive dialogue.
6. Clear and accessible communication — ensuring the use of plain language and a wide variety of formats and channels of communication.
7. Transparent and accountable — sharing information, ~~and having~~ open public engagement processes, ~~including~~ careful consideration and evaluation of all feedback received and reporting back to Council before final decisions and outcomes are reached. Public input will be seriously considered but not treated as direction to staff.

~~7.8.~~ 7.8. Fiscally sustainable — ensuring methods and resources for public notice and engagement reflect the magnitude and complexity of the initiative.

~~8.9.~~ 8.9. Environmentally sustainable — ensuring the use of environmentally friendly public notice and engagement methods.

~~9.10.~~ 9.10. Technology - using technology including the town's website, e-Alert feature, social media platforms and other mediums to ensure there are different options available for people to access town information and notices.

~~10.11.~~ 10.11. Continuous improvement — evaluating and seeking better ways of engaging the community and providing efficient and effective public notice and engagement processes.

Scope

This policy applies to all types of public notice and engagement initiated by the town, which may be influenced by legislation, cost, emergency situations, timeframes, geographic areas of impact, types of notification and the degree of potential impacts on affected parties. Persons, organizations, and companies contracted by the town to do work which fits the "Purpose" of this Policy or to develop or lead engagement on behalf of the town will abide by this Policy and related procedures.

Staff that have been delegated duties, powers, and responsibilities by Council, which trigger the "Purpose" of this Policy and/or require statutory, regulated, or by-law notice provisions or notice requirements in previous Council directives for the carrying out of such duties, powers, and responsibilities, must ensure they comply with all provisions.

This Policy shall apply except where:

- The subject matter is deemed minor or administrative in nature and/or Council has authorized that no public notice is required; or
- Council directs an alternative form of public notice as Council considers appropriate to give reasonable notice under the provision of any statute or regulation, or by-law; or
- The Mayor determines that notice should be waived due to emergency, urgency, time sensitive situations, situations which could affect the health and well-being of the residents of Oakville, or a declaration of Emergency is issued.

Council shall be informed if an exemption is applied.

References and related documents

Public Engagement Procedure

[Public Engagement Guide](#)

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Municipal Act, 2001

Accessibility Policy

Accountability and Transparency Policy

Communications Procedure

Customer Service Standards

Corporate Gifts Procedure

Translation and Interpretation Procedure

Code of Conduct for Members of Council and Local Board Members

Employee Code of Conduct

Respectful Conduct Policy

RZone Procedure

Town of Oakville Procedure By-law 2020-011, as amended

[Oakville Inclusion Lens](#)

[Municipal Powers and Duties By-law](#)

[Delegation of Municipal Powers and Duties Policy](#)

All other relevant town policies and procedures

Definitions

Community – represents the most general and inclusive term for participants in public engagement in the municipal context. This term includes but is not limited to residents, companies, individuals, businesses, not-for-profit organizations, interested parties, and Resident Associations.

Interested parties – refers to individuals, groups, or organizations that have a vested interest in a particular policy, program, project or service.

Public engagement – a process whereby the town facilitates information sharing and interactive discussion with the community and interested parties on a policy, program, project, service or legislative requirement with the aim to collect input and feedback used to inform staff recommendations and Council decision-making. The process includes various methods by which information is exchanged and collected from the community. Types of public engagement include but are not limited to online channels (e.g. websites, social media, online chats), public meetings (e.g. in-person and virtual), open houses, focus groups, and surveys.