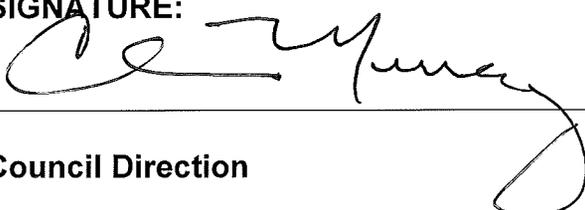


Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO: Mayor and Members General Issues Committee	WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: April 17, 2013	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Re-Launch of the Citizen Engagement Project Regarding City Services (CM13008) (City Wide)	
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Council Direction

At a special meeting of Council on February 4, 2013 the contract for the Our Voice, Our Hamilton project was brought to an end. At that time staff informed Council that information would be brought to a future General Issues Committee meeting with details about how the citizen engagement work related to City services would move forward.

Information

The purpose of this Information Report is to provide an update on the City's plan to engage with citizens and the expected timelines for completion.

Public engagement is a two-way process that enables local governments and citizens to interact, listen and learn from each other. It is a valuable means of determining the public's experience of municipal services, how well services are meeting the diverse needs of citizens and what changes should be made or considered to improve and inform future growth and sustainability.

While the relationship with Dialogue Partners ended, the need for City engagement with Hamiltonians is absolutely vital. In order to continue this important work, a team, comprised of staff from the City Manager's Office, Community Services, Public Health, Public Works and Finance and Corporate Services has been assembled.

The inter-departmental team first undertook a review of the information and the work done by Dialogue Partners in order to determine what should be used for a future engagement exercise. Staff have also revised the previous engagement and communication strategy and developed a new planning and implementation framework.

Key Components of the City of Hamilton's Public Engagement Plan:

Overall Planning Direction

- Build on the work initiated by Dialogue Partners and revise activities to ensure alignment with project objectives within budget to year end (2013)
- Incorporate a strong focus on education and learning for the public and staff
- Create a mix of opportunities for participation on-line, in print and in-person that will expand the City's engagement potential and capacity with all citizens and staff
- Demonstrate alignment with strategic priorities and other corporate initiatives already underway to ensure efficient use of available resources.

Audience

Hamiltonians are the key audience. The proposed engagement plan provides opportunities for all citizens to participate, including individuals and groups who are not traditionally involved in civic activities. Engagement with community stakeholders, the private sector and staff are also included.

Approach

This Engagement Plan is an opportunity to reinforce the City's Strategic Plan and set the stage for a Citizen Engagement Strategy. Through this exercise, we will learn the most effective ways of connecting with our citizens. This will help us determine if we are meeting their needs and expectations now and into the future.

The approach is built upon three key components: education, engagement and service rating:

- Education will take place through a variety of communication vehicles which will explain what it takes to run the city and provide services to a unique and diverse community.
- The focus will be on face-to-face sessions with residents throughout the City, to engage in conversations with citizens about their experiences with the programs and services they and their neighbors value most. These sessions will be facilitated by an external resource to ensure citizen viewpoints are captured objectively.
- Citizens will complete a survey that includes rating the quality of all City Services (how are we doing, how can we do it better).
- Media in all forms, (e.g. on-line, in-print, in-person and social media) will be used to appropriately bring information to the attention of all stakeholders. Efforts will be made to reach groups and individuals who do not traditionally engage in civic activities or are not as familiar with using social media.

- Feedback from citizens will be reviewed by staff, and used to inform City planning, including the budget, service improvements and sustainability.

Pre-Launch Engagement

In advance of the official project launch, staff will engage local leaders, key partners and the media in our plans to raise awareness about the goals of this initiative and encourage feedback and input on the approach.

Members of Council as Project Ambassadors

Members of Council will also have opportunities to participate as 'Project Ambassadors'. Throughout the project, Council will receive resources and tools to help them connect with their constituents, encourage participation and demonstrate the important role citizens play in shaping the City's overall agenda and how their tax dollars are spent.

Engagement Project Actions:

Internally Delivered Actions

City staff will be responsible for:

- Communication: on-line, in-print and in-person, including media relations activities, monitoring and responding to inquiries
- Engagement planning and event logistics
- Web page development
- Data management
- Accountability for the management all resources
- Report writing
- Evaluation

Externally Delivered Actions

Financial investments will be made to implement the following engagement activities:

- International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Training: Staff who started the five day training under Dialogue Partners will complete their certificate training, and in so doing, increase the City's engagement capacity.
- The Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion will be utilized to strengthen inclusive engagement.
- Through a Request for Quotations (RFQ) process local firm will be invited to submit ideas for how they can assist with conducting and facilitating face-to-face engagement sessions.
- Students (five teams of two) will be utilized to build awareness of engagement events and to provide community education (through the summer months).
- Advertising – where required.
- Analyze and measure public responses: feedback from residents will be used to measure public response and report cards will be developed with external resources.

Key Engagement Outcomes

- Report cards/ ratings of all city services
- Greater public awareness about City Services
- Qualitative and quantitative data to inform City planning (strengths, service gaps, public values)
- Demographic and geographic data (including Ward mapping of responses)
- First steps in developing a long term citizen engagement strategy (citizen-staff committee, charter, action plan)
- Increased staff capacity to engage the public

Evaluation

The proposed engagement plan includes an evaluation component to:

- Demonstrate project accountability
- Assess whether the project has achieved its intended goals
- Determine what worked well and did not work well
- Document lessons learned and identify areas for improvement
- Examine the use of social media and its effectiveness
- Inform decision making and future program planning

Timelines:

April-May-June 2013:

- RFQ for Face-to-Face engagement and IAP2 training
- Complete Engagement and Communications Plans, including revisions to engagement materials, development of reporting and measuring tools
- Complete IAP2 Training
- Build/complete the web-page and data tools
- Conduct a pre-launch facilitated session with local influencers and stakeholders
- Official Launch (June)
- Go Live Web-page (June)
- Interview/screen and hire external support(s)

July-August 2013:

- Implement staff engagement on-line
- Complete logistical plans for in-person engagement events
- Complete orientation for targeted staff (e.g. Call Centre) and Councillors (and their staff)
- Student orientation and deployment

September-October-November 2013:

- Implement face to face engagement with the public plus targeted populations
- Manage and analyse data
- Report themes and complete report cards

December 2013:

- SMT and Council Presentation