

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF SARNIA
People Serving People

CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

OPEN SESSION REPORT

TO: Members of Sarnia City Council
FROM: Dianne Gould-Brown, City Clerk
DATE: October 23, 2017
SUBJECT: Communications and Engagement Strategy

Recommendation:

It is recommended:

1. That Sarnia City Council give final approval to the Communications and Engagement Strategy, the Social Media Policy, the Media Relations Policy, and the Public Engagement Policy; and
2. That the reserve request for an online engagement platform pilot in the amount of \$30,000 be referred to the 2018 budget process.

Background:

At its meeting held on July 10, 2017 Council approved, in concept, the Communications and Engagement Strategy. A Social Media Policy and Media Relations Policy were also introduced on July 10, and a Public Engagement Policy was introduced to Council on July 31. These policies were developed in tandem with the strategy.

Comments:

In accordance with the City's Notice Policy, public notice of the proposed strategy was advertised in the Sarnia Observer, on the City's corporate website, and on smartsarnia.com, the City's engagement website. To date, no public input has been received via regular mail or email. Staff have fielded several inquiries about the process of developing the strategy, and the smartsarnia.com page received approximately 1,400 visits over the course of the public input period (this includes all smartsarnia.com visits between July 18 and September 31). This indicates that public has had access to the strategy.

Although much of the strategy is intended to formalize improvements that have been partially or fully implemented, a key recommendation is to adopt an online engagement platform that would be built and operated by a third party. The platform would include a number of engagement tools such as a social mapping tool, interactive polls, and discussion boards designed to facilitate a deeper level of community input and facilitation for select projects. We currently operate an internal platform, smartsarnia.com, which allows departments to conduct online surveys and make documents available to the public. The platform would allow for a greater level of public involvement to occur online for projects that require a more collaborative approach to engagement.

Should Council wish to implement a third party online engagement platform in 2018, it is recommended that the platform be piloted by the Planning and Building Department with support from the communications function in the Clerk's Department. Planning and Building has several projects scheduled for 2018 which would be appropriate for deep online engagement. These include, for example, a Zoning By-law review, a vacant property strategy, a Building By-law review, and a community improvement plan.

Although the online engagement platform would be available for use by other departments in 2018 if approved, the City would require greater internal capacity to implement the platform across all departments. The online engagement platform will require resources and staff time from the department using it. Moreover, many projects require that the public be informed or consulted—processes currently taking place online through smartsarnia.com—and deeper engagement may be unnecessary or inappropriate for these projects. Piloting the platform with the Planning and Building Department will allow the City to introduce the method to the public while the City works towards evaluating its effectiveness and whether capacity should be extended across other departments.

Online engagement tools are intended to complement existing engagement methods. Citizens and stakeholders have expressed concerns that the online engagement platform would replace print communications and in-person meetings. Rather, online tools will broaden the reach of traditional engagement efforts.

Consultation:

An external working group included members from the Age-Friendly Sarnia, local marketing businesses, Aamjiwnaang First Nation, and Young Professionals of Sarnia-Lambton. An internal working group was made up of members of each department, as well as Economic Development, Human Resources, and Clerks. A survey was also circulated and made available

online to solicit further public feedback during the development of the Strategy. The survey provided an option to meet and provide further input, and a session with staff and interested members of the public was held on September 26.

Research included compilation and analysis of previous City communications plans, a review of municipal communications strategies across Canada, and an assessment of existing communications and engagement practices.

Consultation has occurred with the Director of Planning and Building and the Director of Parks and Recreation on the implementation of an online engagement platform.

Financial Implications:

If adopted, the strategy may support budgetary allocations in new areas, such as online advertising, promotion of MyCNN, and an online engagement platform. Reserve expenditures have been requested in the amount of \$30,000 to purchase an online engagement platform for the 2018 budget year.

In conversation with other municipalities that use these services and companies that provide these services, we expect \$30,000 yearly will pay for ongoing use of a suite of tools, user authorization, training for staff, comment monitoring services, and consultation services to optimize use.

Subject to a positive one year pilot evaluation, the use of the platform can be extended on a yearly basis for approximately \$30,000 per year.

The online engagement platform is expected to be a turnkey service where staff can load projects into the system, create questions, and set parameters; the technical work of developing a system with these tools is not completed by staff. Staff can choose to utilize the platform on a project-by-project basis, although the service is charged at a yearly rate, not by number of projects.

Two examples of other municipalities using these services include Niagara Falls: Let's Talk Niagara Falls <https://letstalk.niagarafalls.ca/>, and Town of Aurora: PlaceSpeak <https://www.aurora.ca/placespeak>.

Reviewed by:



Dianne Gould-Brown
City Clerk

Approved by:



Margaret Misek-Evans
Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared by James Jenkins, Deputy City Clerk.

Attachments: Communications and Engagement Strategy
 Social Media Policy
 Media Relations Policy
 Public Engagement Policy

Contents

- Introduction3
- Corporate Strategic Plan.....3
- Previous efforts5
- Methodology6
- Survey Results6
- Public Participation Spectrum9
- Challenges and Opportunities 11
- Internal Communications 12
- Role of the Communications Coordinator 13
- Development and Implementation of Clear Procedures, Processes and Training 14
- Improved Staff Awareness..... 15
- External Communications and Engagement 17
- The Role of Department Heads 18
- Diverse Media that is Easy to Access..... 18
- Social Media Presence 19
- Celebrating Success 21
- Citizen Engagement 21
- Service disruptions/emergencies..... 21
- Individual Professional Accounts 22
- User-friendly website 22
- Citizens Receive Timely News from the City First 23
- Conversations and Collaboration 25
- The Role of Council 26
- The Role of Advisory and Ad Hoc Committees 27
- Collaboration Across Agencies and Organizations 29
- Online Engagement Platform..... 30
- Branding 31
- Works Cited 35

strategic plan resulted in four strategic priorities, which are linked to the three areas of the Communications and Engagement Strategy.

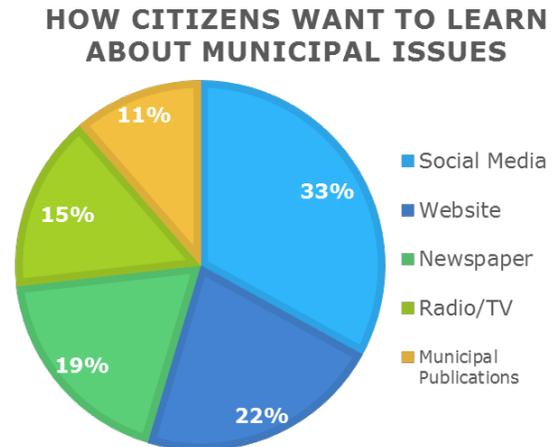
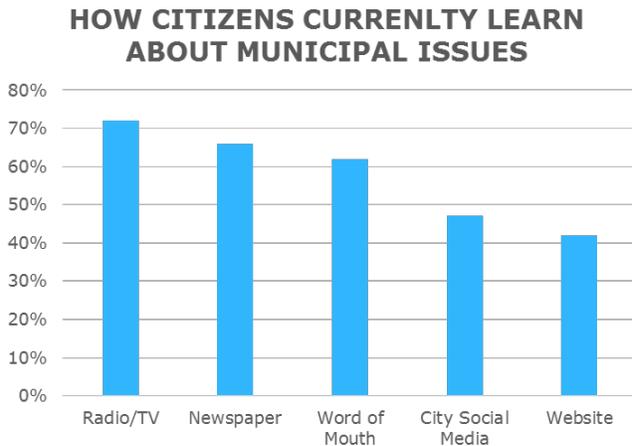
A priority action in the strategic plan is to “Modernize and provide more opportunities for employee and citizen interaction and engagement through social media and other channels.” This action is one of several initiatives intended to improve the City’s corporate excellence and leadership.

Overall improvement of the City’s communications and engagement will facilitate two other priorities of the Corporate Strategic Plan: Economic Innovation as well as High Quality of Life and Caring for All Citizens. Multiple sectors will become more engaged with the City as recommendations are implemented. Taking the success of single-sector discussions as a starting point, City initiatives will benefit from conversations between business, volunteer associations, non-profits, and those affected by City policies. These cross-sector conversations will generate creative discussions that can mobilize affective change (Born, 2008).

The Corporate Strategic Plan’s development process provided valuable insight through its engagement and prioritization activities. Survey results confirm locally what many local government leaders have assumed: citizens in Sarnia want to communicate and engage online more often and more effectively (Fruechting, 2016).

Sarnia citizens indicated that their primary means of accessing municipal information is through radio, television, newspapers, and word of mouth. By contrast, a majority of these same survey respondents reported that they preferred to learn about City issues through social media (33%) and the City website (22%). This growing demand for online communications must be balanced by the need to accommodate those who engage the City through traditional channels.

Results of 2016 Citizen and Employee Surveys



Previous efforts

The most recent effort to consolidate communications goals into a strategy occurred between 2002 and 2004. The City of Sarnia worked with a staff project team and outside consultants to develop a Corporate Communications Plan.

The 2004 Corporate Communications Plan contained 19 recommended actions and a three-year implementation plan. Many recommendations have since been implemented, although there is a need to review and refresh them. These include regular department meetings, customer service training, and enhancement of the website. Other recommendations stalled or were never implemented. A key recommendation intended to facilitate implementation was to create a Communications Officer position. This did not occur.

The 2004 Plan contains useful analysis, survey data, and recommendations, some of which are still relevant. Together with data and priorities from the Corporate Strategic Plan, this set of previous work allowed staff to expedite the formulation of a modernized strategy.

Methodology

In addition to research and analysis of previous City initiatives, the Communications and Engagement Strategy was developed with the guidance of an internal and an external working group. Each group met monthly with staff from the Clerk's office to develop goals, review draft procedures, and to monitor the overall direction of the strategy's development.

The internal working group was made up of representatives from each of the six City departments as well as Clerk's, Economic Development, and Human Resources. Departments identified staff members that play an active role in communicating with the public.

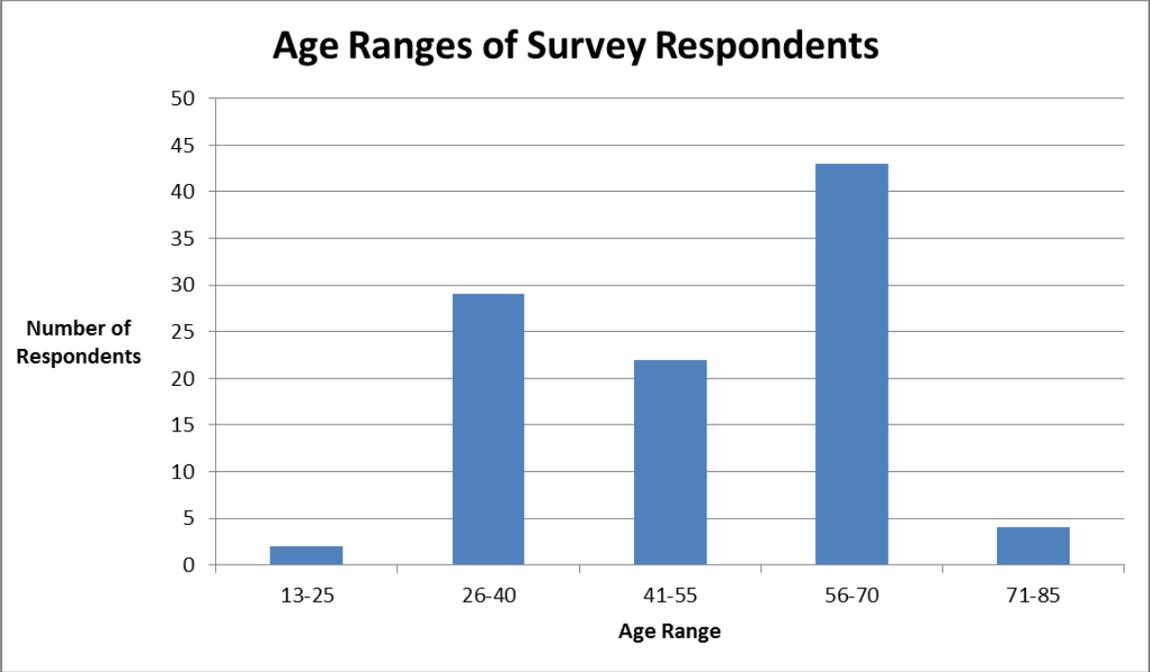
The external review committee was initially made up of the Age-Friendly Committee. The Age-Friendly Committee was identified for three reasons: first, to build on the committee's recent success; second, to take advantage of the broad cross-sections represented by Age-Friendly Committee members; and third, to collaborate with Age-Friendly Sarnia on the implementation of its communication objectives in the Community Action Plan.

Four additional members were invited to sit on the Age-friendly committee in order to bring representation from areas in the community that the external working group felt required additional representation. Members felt that although the committee represented agencies, volunteer groups, and those affected by City policies, there was little representation from businesses, First Nations, or youth. Upon recommendations from both the external and internal working groups, members were invited from two local marketing companies, Young Professionals of Sarnia-Lambton, and from Aamjiwaang First Nations.

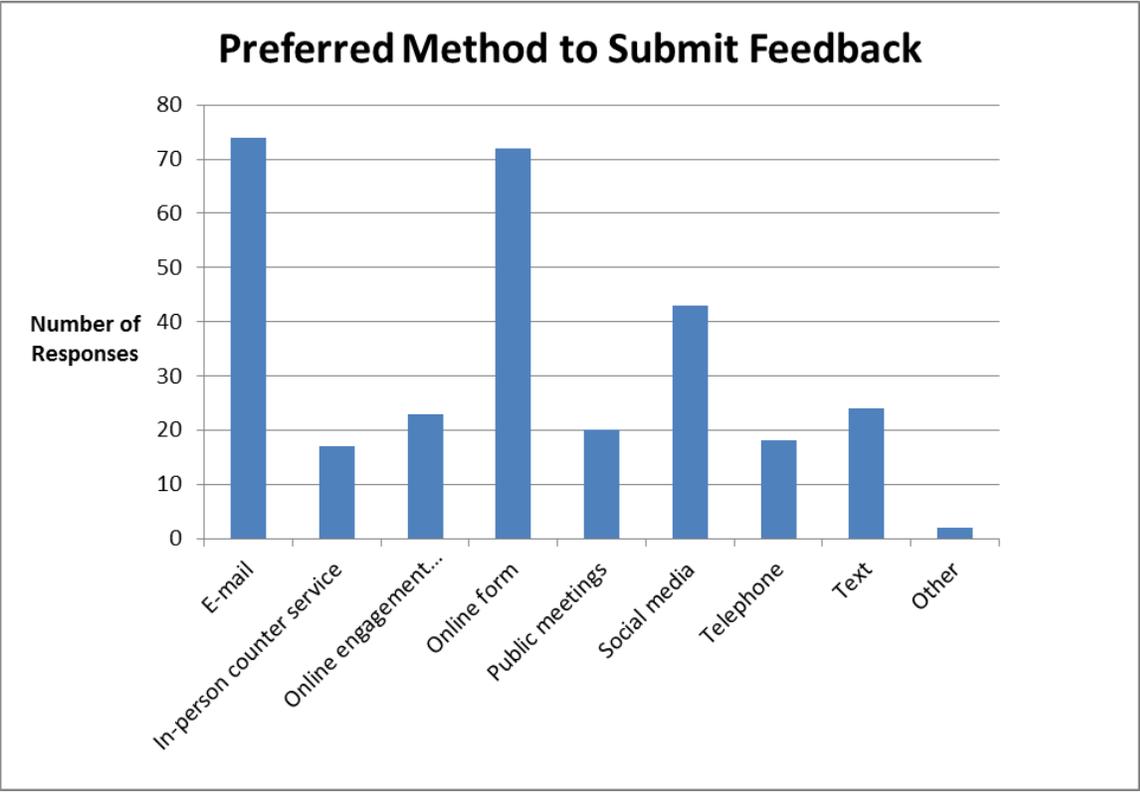
Survey Results

A survey was circulated and published online in order to solicit up-to-date data on citizen use and perceptions of City communications methods.

Slightly more than 100 members of the public responded to the survey, and respondents represented a wide demographic spectrum from ages 26 through 70. Members under the age of 25 and over the age of 71 were underrepresented in the survey—however the responses confirm several broad trends in increasing use of electronic communications.



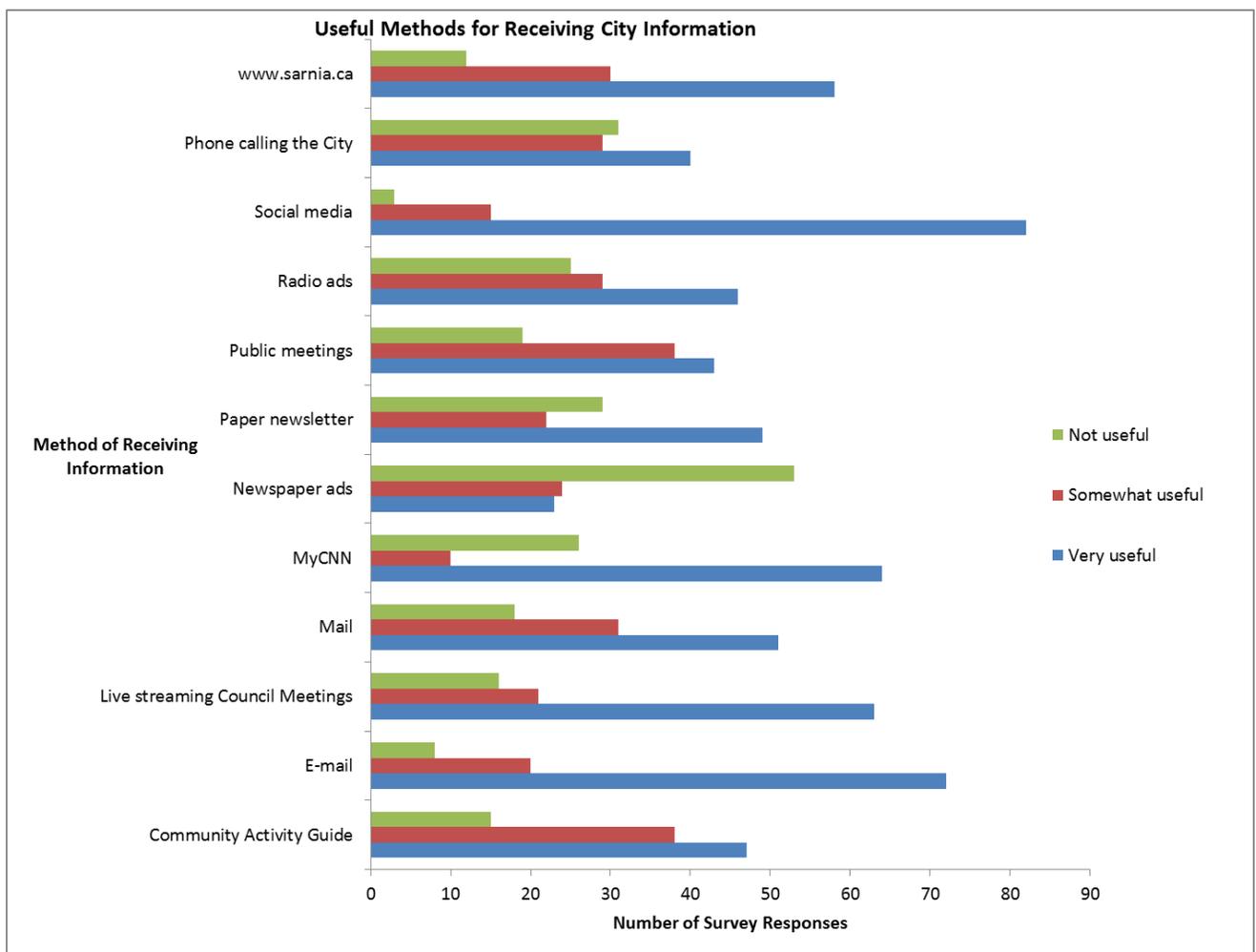
Respondents indicated a clear preference for submitting feedback to the City electronically across all age categories that were well represented. Email and online forms were the most preferred methods at over 70% of respondents, followed by social media preferred by 43% of respondents.



Non-electronic methods of submitting feedback were ranked much lower—20% or less for in-counter service, public meetings, and telephone. This doesn't necessarily suggest that citizens wish to replace in-person methods of communication, but the results indicate a desire to make electronic methods more available.

These results confirm that broader trends of increased reliance on electronic communications is present among citizens of the City of Sarnia. These results confirm that there is considerable demand to provide methods of communication using electronic formats.

The survey also asked respondents to rate the usefulness of various methods for receiving information from the City of Sarnia.



Again, respondents ranked electronic methods of communication as “very useful” more than 50% of the time for each method. Social media was rated

as “very useful” by the highest number of respondents at 82%, followed by email at 72%, MyCNN at 64%, and live streaming of Council meetings at 63%.

Although this also indicates a preference for electronic communications, the survey results confirm that citizens continue to use and appreciate non-electronic mediums. Most methods of communication were rated “very useful” by a majority of respondents. This includes paper communication such as the Community Activity Guide, and mail, as well as more traditional communications like radio ads, public meetings, and telephone.

The only method of receiving information that was rated mostly as “not useful” was newspaper ads. This is consistent with a recommendation for departments to consider online advertising as a compliment or an alternative to print advertising.

The sample size of 100 respondents is large enough to assume that the trends identified above are present across the population of Sarnia. The survey sample size of 100 provides data confidence level plus or minus 9 percentage points using confidence level of 95%. The large contrast in the responses between various methods of communication provides a high degree of confidence that the conclusions above are reasonably accurate for the majority of Sarnia residents.

Qualitative evidence from external working group representatives indicates that the demographic aged under 13-25 may have indicated a lower preference for email and a high preference for other means of electronic communications such as social media and texting. Anecdotal evidence also indicates that the demographic aged 71 and above may have a greater preference for print, telephone, and in-person means of communication.

Public Participation Spectrum

The Public Participation Spectrum is a commonly used framework for public engagement (IAP2, 2017). The spectrum suggests that each engagement effort should consider its goal and place it along the spectrum from sharing information with the public to empowering the public.

Public Participation Spectrum					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

This strategy is divided into three areas. The first area, Internal Communications, is intended to provide a foundation for effective public participation. The second area, External Communications and Engagement, will facilitate the public participation goals of informing and consulting. The third area, Conversations and Collaboration, is intended to facilitate the goals of involving and collaborating.

The final category along the spectrum, empower, is largely outside of the scope of this strategy. Other municipalities have found it difficult to fully empower community members because of the statutory role of Council as the final decision-making body (City of Victoria, 2009). At the same time, Members of Council and advisory committees can deepen their engagement with citizens as they develop a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Challenges and Opportunities

Creative solutions are often generated by building on successes and opportunities, whereas a strict focus on problem-solving can limit successful collaboration and action (Born, 2008). The following sections will provide an overview of the strategies and goals, while also identifying areas where the City has made improvements. The effort to improve communications has been ongoing and there have been a number of achievements prior to the completion of this strategy that should be recognized.

Actions in this strategy have been divided into three areas: Internal Communications, External Communications and Engagement, and Conversations and Collaboration.

Internal Communications

A well-informed staff that is equipped to communicate successfully will provide a foundation for successful relationships with partners and stakeholders.

There are two goals associated with Internal Communications: First, development and implementation of clear procedures, processes, and training; and second, improvement of staff awareness of city initiatives.

In summer 2016, the City of Sarnia hired a Communications Coordinator. The person in that position is responsible for coordinating the Communications and Engagement Strategy, providing oversight for website and social media, and overseeing live Council web streaming. The Communications Coordinator has the dual function of providing a consistent contact for external media inquiries, as well as providing broad recommendations and training to department staff in order to facilitate consistent messaging and branding.

A key function of the Communications Coordinator is to support staff as they acquire the knowledge and expertise to implement communications procedures. Staff training will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and can include one-on-one support, larger group workshops, third party modules, or third-party training sessions. Department heads will be responsible for identifying efficient and effective ways to implement training and will attempt to involve other departments when appropriate.

The development of this strategy included the drafting of a Social Media Policy and Media Relations Policy. As two core functions of the communications coordinator, staff compiled current procedures, best practices, and lessons learned from managing media relations and social media. The result was a set of procedures to provide consistency to department staff, as well as to further define the role of the Communications Coordinator. These policies were developed in consultation with the internal and external working groups.

The second goal intended to improve internal communications is to ensure that staff are aware of City initiatives. There has been considerable progress in the last year. City staff are now circulated on City Council highlights and all media releases. Further improvement will consist of a review of internal procedures, such as regular staff meetings, new staff orientation, and

improved communications between departments. Measurable indicators of success include improved employee morale, improved readiness to engage with the public, and consistent familiarity with policies and procedures.

Role of the Communications Coordinator

The addition of a Communications Coordinator has allowed administration to implement broad procedures to ensure consistency, particularly in social media and media relations.

The primary function of the Communications Coordinator is to provide broad support across departments, increasing capacity and allowing departments to respond to challenges more effectively. These might include, for example, one-on-one training with a staff designated to provide social media updates for a department; developing guidelines and procedures for a department to craft media releases; or leading a group discussion across departments on how to coordinate social media posts more effectively. These examples aren't intended to be exhaustive, but rather to illustrate that the Communications Coordinator's role is strategic and pro-active, rather than operational or reactionary.

In terms of the overall organization, the Communications Coordinator facilitates a function of the City Clerk, which is to ensure that the City's decision-making and implementation processes are transparent to the public.

Balanced Triangle



Credit:
City Clerks Association of California, 2017

This chart illustrates the City Clerk's role of ensuring transparency, which balances Council's role of establishing vision and strategy, and the CAO's role of providing services. Organizationally, the City Clerk reports to the CAO, who in turn reports to Council. Functionally, each plays a separate role when it comes to governance.

The Communications Coordinator, by extension, supports both Council and administration by ensuring that decisions and implementation are transparent. He or she accomplishes this by facilitating the flow of information in and out of the organization.

The Communications Coordinator provides support to internal staff and to external media when it comes to communications policies and procedures.

Development and Implementation of Clear Procedures, Processes and Training

Department Heads are responsible for delegating communications and engagement duties to staff members. Each Department Head should incorporate appropriate training for these individuals into their annual work plans and budgets.

Department Heads should evaluate the existing skillset, education, and experience to determine what additional training may be necessary for themselves and their staff. Training could consist of the following (this list is not intended to be exhaustive):

- Corporate Strategic Communications
- Communicating through Social Media
- Website content management
- Group Facilitation
- Writing Workshops

Training can occur in one of the following ways:

1. One-on-one coaching to staff who are utilizing new communications tools or strategies.
2. Group training sessions on a communications tool or strategy.
3. Third-party training for designated staff members within or across departments.

As this strategy is implemented, the Clerk's Office will monitor the implementation of the Media Relations, Social Media, and Public Engagement Policies to ensure consistent communications practices across the organization. The Communications Coordinator will assist in the implementation of these policies at the department level.

The Communications Coordinator is broadly responsible for strategic oversight of the City's corporate social media use and media relations. The development of this strategy provided an opportunity to develop policies to clarify procedures for social media use and media relations. These were developed by consulting the two working groups, best practices, and by evaluating current procedures that have been implemented cooperatively between departments and the Communications Coordinator.

The Social Media Policy and Media Relations Policy are included as appendixes to this strategy. They are intended to provide direction for staff and to clarify the role of Department Heads, the CAO, and the Communications Coordinator in the process. The intent behind each policy is to give Department Heads broad authority to communicate items within their area while also providing oversight to ensure consistent messaging and branding.

The Public Engagement Policy will serve as a reference to staff to ensure the City is using the appropriate tools to elicit the appropriate level of engagement depending on the varying goals and subject matters.

Improved Staff Awareness

A goal of this strategy is to increase staff awareness of city initiatives and programs.

The internal working group has identified the following methods that the City currently uses to keep staff informed of ongoing initiatives:

- Department staff meetings
- Bulletin boards
- Email notifications
- Intranet

The City should also build on and improve existing methods for staff to provide input. In addition to working directly with supervisors, staff should

have the ability to provide input using an electronic fillable form located in the Intranet.

Past practices have included a newsletter intended for staff. The internal working group discussed the benefits and feasibility of creating an e-newsletter for the purpose of keeping staff informed of ongoing initiatives. The internal working group contained members engaged in communications from all City departments, and it was evident that creating a newsletter or e-newsletter strictly for staff consumption would require a significant increase in resources while potentially providing limited benefits.

Staff have identified the Intranet as having considerable potential to keep staff members informed while requiring fewer resources than other options. The IT Department has begun working with the website committee to refresh the intranet, and multiple departments are now engaged in the active development of this resource.

The website committee will monitor the ongoing effectiveness of the intranet to provide staff with up-to-date information. Consistent use will require coordination across departments, as well as consideration for providing access to staff who do not use a computer at work.

Staff with designated communications responsibilities should continue to meet regularly to monitor the effectiveness and sustainability of other means of internal staff communication, including email, bulletin boards, and staff meetings.

External Communications and Engagement

This area of the strategy is primarily concerned with ensuring that the City is effectively informing and consulting with citizens, partners, and stakeholders. These activities address the first two levels of engagement on the IAP2 spectrum. Effective communications and engagement is a precursor and foundation for deeper collaboration.

Survey data and focus group sessions with external working group members identified a central tension within external communications: As the City seeks to adjust to an increasing reliance on online means of communications, those with a preference for traditional communications tools and those who face barriers to web access fear they will be left behind. A central goal of external communications and engagement is to maintain consistency and coordination across mediums as digital media plays a greater role.

While ensuring that the City's use of traditional media remains robust, this section outlines several key components for improvement: social media presence, user satisfaction of the City website, and timely news releases.

Social media has rapidly become a central source of information regarding municipal issues for many citizens and stakeholders. Since the hiring of a communications coordinator, the City's use of social media has become more consistent and responsive. Recommendations will follow that are intended to increase departmental responsiveness while ensuring consistency and broad oversight. The goal is to increase engagement and collaboration on social media platforms for future projects.

Survey respondents and both working groups—external and internal—frequently mentioned the website as a communications tool with great potential that should receive more attention. Several technical circumstances have hampered rapid progress on refreshing the website, and the City has allocated staff resources to moving towards an improved website. A separate website committee made up of staff (many of whom also participated on the internal communications working group) has been meeting regularly to develop a work plan and to identify “quick starts,” or short-term goals that can be easily achieved and that assist in building momentum for the long-term plan. A central goal that links this strategy with the work of the committee is to create a website that is easy to navigate and that serves as

a “one-stop shop” with all of the components for engagement easily accessible to the user.

The third component of external communications and engagement is to improve the timely release of news material. This will include monitoring and identifying areas for enhanced departmental coordination, as well as an increased focus on media releases and MyCNN notifications. Media releases now have a centralized process that is monitored by the Communications Coordinator and the CAO, which ensures accountability. MyCNN has primarily been used for items associated with service disruptions, such as road or park closures. Departments are currently using MyCNN, but citizens and partners are not always aware of the feature. This strategy will include recommendations to promote the use of MyCNN both internally and externally.

The Role of Department Heads

Although all staff play a role in effective communications and engagement, Department Heads are uniquely positioned as spokespersons for implementation and service delivery within their areas. Department Heads are ultimately responsible for relations with media within their areas, although they may delegate tasks within their departments and request that the Communications Coordinator assist with cross-departmental coordination. Department Heads are also responsible for implementation of this strategy within their staff compliments and for reporting progress to the CAO.

Diverse Media that is Easy to Access

While many of the actions of this strategy are focused on adapting to new communications technologies, external stakeholders have emphasized the need to maintain accessibility and ensure that those who rely on traditional forms of communications are not left behind.

When adopting a new form of communications, departments should choose one of the two following principles:

1. Maintain traditional communications tools and develop procedures to ensure that content is as similar as possible through both methods of communications **or**;

2. Consider ways to overcome barriers to accessing the new form of communications. For instance, if a computer is required to access a new engagement platform, consider partnering with a library or making coaching sessions available to encourage broader participation.

The Clerk's Department will collaborate with the Finance Department (IT and Customer Service) to investigate new methods to make citizen interactions with the City available through online or other means. These could include texting, online fillable forms, new online payment features, etc. The City has seen considerable progress in this area through the centralization of many customer service functions and through the development of additional online features. The IT Department has developed a fillable form template that is currently in use and that will be integrated with the City website once the website refresh is underway.

As new methods of communication are considered, tested, and implemented, it is important to monitor their effectiveness.

Social Media Presence

A second goal of Communications and Engagement is to increase the City's social media presence. Since the hiring of a Communications Coordinator in summer 2016, the City has coordinated its overall social media approach which has resulted in a considerable increase in post reach and engagement.

Social media metrics are now actively being measured and monitored. For example, in May 2017 a combined reach of 84,000 unique viewers between Facebook and Twitter was achieved. A top Facebook post reached over 30,000 people and was shared 419 times, meaning that the single post was seen by the equivalent of more than 40% of the City's population, without utilizing advertising funds. These analytics provide evidence to support the continued use and investment of staff time into social media as a valuable communications tool.

The current reach of the City's social media is impressive, and there is considerable potential to use these platforms for branding, notifications, and engagement. The Clerk's Department and Human Resources Department have collaborated to develop a work plan to more effectively post job notifications on social media. These are opportunities to reach a large

audience as well as to brand the city—an added benefit that extends beyond the job opening at hand.

Another underutilized feature of social media is paid advertising. A small investment in Facebook advertising would allow the City to extend its reach while gaining new insights into its audience’s demographics and geolocations. It is recommended that departments using Facebook for engagement should allocate funds into their advertising budget and take advantage of this feature.

Social media is a powerful tool that has the ability to improve perceptions, increase engagement, provide analytic information, and provide a foundation for further collaboration. Conversely, social media can also become a forum for argumentative conversations, anonymous profiles, and other negative experiences that can affect employee morale and affect the City’s reputation. Staff must be proactive on social media and ensure consistent practices to harness its positive potential. However, staff should also be aware of its limitations and potential for volatile interactions.

The Communications Coordinator will monitor City social media for violations of terms of use. However, it is up to all departments to help monitor use. Although it takes considerable staff time to ensure a quality experience on City social media, its widespread use and potential for reach justify this investment.

A Social Media Policy is attached as an appendix to this strategy, and it outlines three categories for social media use. Departments will consider which category their post fits into and follow the procedures accordingly.



Celebrating Success

These posts are meant to positively brand the City by showcasing partnerships, achievements, and good news stories through interviews, photos, videos, and other media. Departments should be encouraged to post material that celebrates the City's successes. Departments may either create a scheduled post of 72 hours or longer or work cooperatively with the Communications Coordinator to ensure that the post is timed correctly and fits with the overall branding and character of the City's social media. The Communications Coordinator has broad oversight over this category of posts to ensure consistent branding and to ensure that posts from different departments do not inadvertently work at cross purposes. The posts are meant to contribute positively to the City's brand, improve perceptions of the organization, improve staff morale, and increase overall engagement with the City's social media profiles.

Citizen Engagement

Social media offers a platform for generating ideas and discussion. Department Heads are ultimately responsible for posts in this category, and they should strive to ensure that posts appear consistent and seamless with those in the Celebrating Success category. Posts must either be approved by the Communications Coordinator or scheduled at least 72 hours in advance.

Service disruptions/emergencies

Department Heads or designates may make unscheduled posts about service disruptions or emergencies with care taken not to duplicate posts from other departments.

The Communications Coordinator monitors and analyzes social media metrics. These metrics and subsequent monthly reports will allow the Communications Coordinator to develop best practices to improve performance of social media posts.

The following methods will ensure continuous improvement of social media presence:

- Coaching of designated staff on social media use
- Staff meetings between social media designates to define functions for each social media tool used by the City
- Establishment of a work plan and meetings between protective services and key administrative staff

- Development and implementation of best practices based on social media metrics

Individual Professional Accounts

The City welcomes staff members to create and manage individual professional social media accounts. These accounts allow staff to promote innovation, celebrate successes, and to communicate administrative information that is factual such as upcoming events, consultation processes, deadlines, etc.

Regular use of professional staff accounts will encourage positive messaging, improve staff morale, and assist with staff recruitment.

Twitter, LinkedIn and other platforms, as approved by the Chief Administrative Officer can be used as individual professional accounts. Staff members are encouraged to retweet or share information from the City's official social media accounts.

Individual staff members are responsible for activity on their professional accounts. Activity shall adhere to the Employee Code of Conduct and any other City policy. Content shall align with the values of the Corporate Strategic Plan.

Training shall be made available for department heads, managers, and other staff who wish to use individual professional social media accounts.

User-friendly website

Internal staff and external stakeholders were consistent in stressing the need to make the City website more user-friendly.

The City website has considerable functionality and is a major avenue of communications for many stakeholders. The website incorporates consistent branding, and it is possible to access a wide range of information from the homepage.



Limitations of the present website include barriers to modifying content, lack of a search feature, and a difficult navigation bar. At present, the City has limited ability to access and make changes to the design features. A priority for the IT department has been to revise its current website hosting agreement and assume greater control over the website.

A website committee made up of staff from each department are working to ultimately provide greater cross-departmental coordination, more user-friendly navigation, and more holistic use of the website to create a “one-stop shop” for citizens to access a range of information and customer service features.

An agreed-upon goal of the website refresh is to elevate sarnia.ca as the single website portal for all web-based City functions. At present, at least five websites exist that are owned or controlled by the City of Sarnia. Departments have agreed to merge content onto sarnia.ca so that the user has the experience of accessing a full range of services through a single website.

IT has developed a fillable form that has been used extensively since January 2017 for job applications, surveys, engagement, and business applications across several departments. The City’s current hosting agreement for our website necessitated the creation of a separate website to host these fillable forms. However, the intent is to incorporate these and other features into a single website one the website refresh has begun.

It is recommended that training be provided for directors, managers, and other users of individual professional accounts.

Citizens Receive Timely News from the City First

Several procedures have been implemented that have improved the City’s timely release of information over the past year. Although there is concern about the City lagging behind media stories or social media conversations, this may be a carry-over from previous years. Nevertheless, there is a need for continuous monitoring and there are some areas that could be improved.

A Media Relations Policy forms an appendix to this strategy. This policy ensures coordination between Department Heads, the Communications Coordinator, and the CAO to ensure that media releases are drafted within

departments and reviewed centrally. The policy procedures have been adhered to over the last six months and have resulted in rapid responses to the media. The Communications Coordinator has also played a new role in managing media relations to ensure that media representatives can receive estimated wait times for a response, assistance with setting up interviews, and coordination across departments. Positive media relationships are important to ensuring that citizens receive accurate information. It is recommended that the CAO and Communications Coordinator monitor the effectiveness of the policy on a bi-annual basis.

Another set of procedures has been implemented to ensure that media releases are sent to Councillors prior to being sent to the media. This gives Councillors a chance to review information and seek any follow-up if necessary before potentially being asked to speak publically on an issue. City staff are also notified of media releases.

An opportunity for releasing news in a timely manner is to make greater use of MyCNN. Citizens and partners have asked for a means to access regular updates about areas of their choice, such as park closures, service disruptions, and road closures. Departments currently make this information available through MyCNN, but users must set up an account and subscribe to information they are interested in.

This strategy offers an opportunity to increase awareness of MyCNN, particularly for those wishing to receive updates about service disruptions. Increased use has the added benefit of growing the number of users, making the system more effective in the event of an emergency. MyCNN also has a feature that links notifications to one or more social media accounts through Everbridge. Administrative staff should continue to meet with protective services to identify where Everbrige and MyCNN might offer an efficient updating tool for social media accounts. Care must be taken to ensure that these services are consistent with the overall goals of social media presence in this strategy.

Conversations and Collaboration

The final area is concerned with deeper engagement between the City government and community, or involving and collaborating according to the IAP2 levels of engagement. An increased internal capacity and trust built through proactive communications and engagement is intended to create a foundation for conversations and collaboration.

Successful execution of the first two areas of this strategy will foster trust and set a foundation for the third area: promoting conversations and cross-sectorial collaboration.

The City of Sarnia has had success bridging collaboration between the not-for-profit sector and government. Fundraising campaigns and foundation support for City-led community projects have been and continue to be impressive. The City should build on this success as a launching point to begin conversations.

The City has taken steps to improve relationships with businesses through a number of initiatives and programs. Internal reviews of Planning and Building, Age-friendly pilot projects, and coordination to support the oversized load corridor are just some examples of how the City has worked effectively with the business community and with other levels of government.

Advisory and ad hoc committees, or committees of Council, have provided an avenue for citizens who are affected by City policies to participate in the governance structure and to deeply participate in conversations with City staff and Council. Committees of Council also allow members of the business community and not-for-profit sector to participate and potentially generate discussions and ideas. Involving multiple sectors leads to creating ideas, and when there is consensus these ideas often lead to action quickly. Cross-sectorial collaboration may also help overcome the sense of despair that can accompany problem-solving approaches of single-sector groups (Born, 2008). City Council should focus on empowering committees of Council to bring different sectors of the community together to engage in conversations that lead to positive change.

A greater emphasis on IT, virtual meetings, and digital conversations is a worldwide phenomenon. It is imperative to harness these tools in order to bring partners together that can deliver insight, influence, and change.

An online engagement platform should be utilized as a compliment to social media. Online engagement can bring individuals together that are deeply engaged and invested in the community. Social media has fostered an online community that has the potential to generate and respond to ideas. However, social media also presents a number of limitations when it comes to sustaining deep conversations. The municipality has little control the parameters of social media, making it difficult to set priorities or monitor conversations for appropriate content. Users sometimes create anonymous profiles, which can lead to “trolling,” or argumentative environments that upset users and decrease morale. Online engagement platforms attempt to harness the advantages of virtual engagement that occurs on social media while utilizing various means to authenticate user identity and/or monitor conversations. These engagement platforms also allow the municipality to set parameters for conversations, which allows for more in-depth planning.

The third area of the strategy focuses on two outcomes—to harness the potential of committees of Council to create cross-sectorial dialogue, and to create another avenue for deep conversation through the use of an online engagement platform.

The Role of Council

Council is responsible for representing the public, for developing policies and programs, for determining what services are provided, and for ensuring accountability and transparency of the operations of the municipality.

The representative role of Councillors puts them in a unique position to lead the conversational and collaborative activities of the City government. As elected officials, Councillors have the influence needed to encourage various sectors to collaborate on idea-generation and action. Councillors also have a role as a part of the collective decision-making body for the municipality.

The mayor’s role as head of council is further defined as the spokesperson, leader, and representative of the council body. The mayor usually has a high public profile, expectations for leadership among Council members, and a unique relationship with the electorate. In many circumstances, the mayor’s role includes articulating the collective vision of the municipality and helping Council to define long-term goals, whereas the CAO and other senior administrators have a greater understanding of operational activities and access to technical expertise.

The Role of Advisory and Ad Hoc Committees

Committees of Council fulfill a variety of functions. Traditionally the role of committees has been to carry out administrative functions. As municipal governance has increased in complexity over the last several decades and placed increasing demands on officials, the role of committees has transformed to that of a supportive governance body. In some cases, committees have been granted varying degrees of autonomy from Council through delegated or legislated responsibilities. However, committees generally maintain a line with Council, setting them apart from agencies, boards, and commissions.

Advisory committees without statutory decision-making authority are not lesser to boards and committees, but rather they have a stronger link to Council and the decision-making process of the elected municipal body.

Advisory committees offer an opportunity for members of the community from a variety of sectors to come together and generate ideas. The potential for diversity within these committees can lead to creative solutions, and when there is consensus, collaboration and action.

Advisory committees have accomplished many initiatives over the last several decades with varying degrees of support from Council. Some committees have functioned at times without a Council representative, and yet they have developed initiatives through strategic collaboration with other organizations and through volunteerism.

An ongoing amalgamation process between the Sarnia Environmental Advisory Committee and the Sarnia Urban Wildlife Committee has identified the need to develop and implement a governance structure that provides a clear link between the committee and Council. In recent years both committees have primarily driven initiatives through their interactions with staff who drive ideas to Council through staff reports. This has been a frustrating process for committee members in many instances. Often staff assigned as liaisons with to the committee have not been allocated sufficient resources to carry out committee initiatives. Moreover, department managers and Department Heads often prioritize Council directives with the result that committee recommendations are sometimes set aside or lost in the shuffle.

A solution is to re-establish the role of the Councillor representative as the primary link between the committee's idea-generation process and City Council's decision-making process. This allows staff to compliment

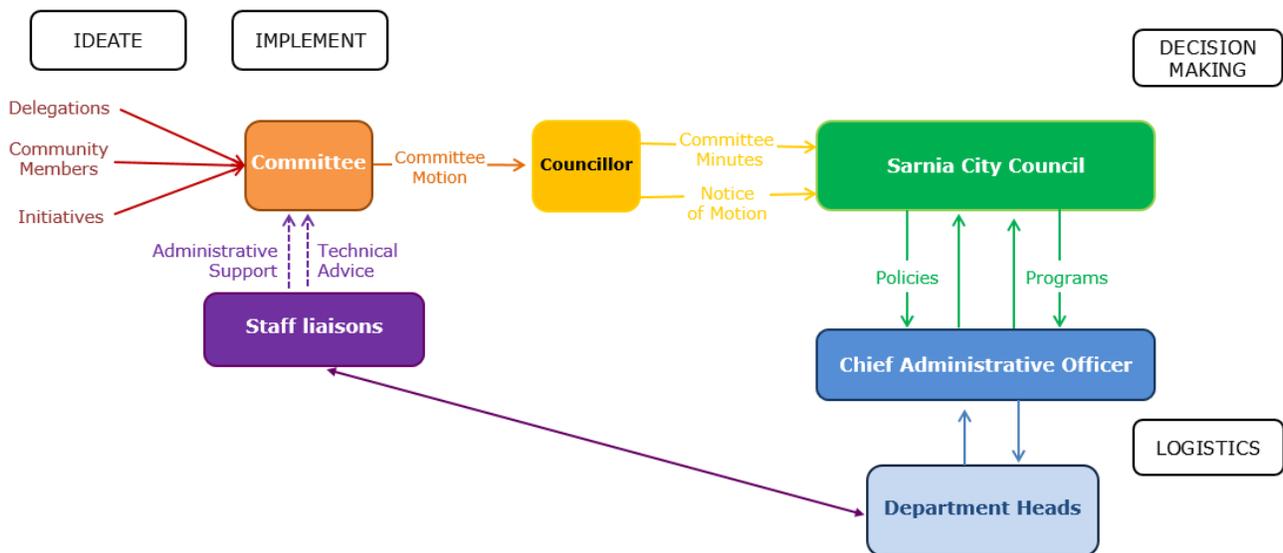
the idea generation pathway by providing logistical support—identifying resources needed, timelines, and feasibility.

This model elevates the role of committees to providing recommendations to Council by way of committee motion. It is up to the Councillor representative to advocate for the committee once a recommendation makes it to the Council table.

This model may provide Council with an already fully-functioning structure to create collaborative tables with community representatives. Council should seek to identify committee members from a range of sectors by ensuring that business, not-for-profit, government, and those affected by policies are all represented.

Ad hoc committees present another opportunity for Council to forge partnerships within the community by following the same principle of cross-sectorial collaboration.

Committee Governance Model



Collaboration Across Agencies and Organizations

Private-public partnerships are increasingly important for municipalities as they seek to increase value and efficiency for citizens. These include partnerships with charitable foundations, service delivery arrangements with the private sector, and deep engagement with community members who experience policy and programs to ensure effectiveness.

Collaborative efforts will occur when the City is operating further along the IAP2 spectrum in the levels of Involve and Collaborate. If the City is Involving, then the intent is to ensure that public is involved closely enough that concerns and ideas are both understood and considered by the City. In Collaborate, the public is involved at each stage of the decision-making process, such as in the development of alternative solutions. Department staff have identified that they should be operating at the Involve or Collaborate levels, staff should take steps to ensure that the partners who can contribute to decision-making are involved, and that members of the public who will be impacted are represented.

In most cases, a City Council motion would trigger the administration to Involve and/or Collaborate with the public. If Council determines that deep public engagement must occur, it is up to staff to interpret which level is necessary to obtain the necessary results. Council and staff should consider how developed an idea is and whether implementation requires external expertise when evaluating where to place a project on the IAP2 spectrum. The Public Engagement Policy provides guidelines to help determine which public engagement strategies are most appropriate for a given project.

If an initiative from Council involves the implementation of a previously established policy, than it may not be necessary to formally involve a committee of Council. In these cases, ideas have been generated and deliberated at the Council level, and there may have been staff research and expert recommendations that informed the original policy. As long as the parameters are established by Council and the intent is clear, departments may develop engagement plans following the guidelines of the Public Engagement Policy. Staff can lead the project as most input will be logistical dealing with *how* to implement an established Council directive.

The Public Engagement Policy is intended to provide guidance on which strategies are appropriate depending on the level of engagement. Public meetings and other strategies that are guided by staff should be

accompanied by appropriate strategies that occur online. The Public Engagement Policy provides recommendations for using appropriate tools—both in-person and on-line—that can lead to successful outcomes depending on the level of engagement and preferred types of involvement.

If Council deems it necessary to engage the public in order to generate ideas, a more appropriate step would be to assign work to an existing committee of Council or to strike a new committee. Council should take special care to ensure that members of the committee represent not just those affected by policies, but also other sectors in the community that may be able to contribute to solutions and change. For example, a committee assigned to generate ideas meant to address poverty might include social agencies, not-for-profits, employers, and those with experience living in poverty (Born, 2008). By bringing multiple sectors together, committees can operate creatively and can generate ideas that may have been less obvious within a single-sector conversation. Moreover, once consensus is generated within a multi-sector collaboration, it becomes easier to move quickly on a new initiative because critical partners already have some involvement.

Online Engagement Platform

Improvements in Information Technology have opened up new avenues for engaging the public through online software, and there are increasing expectations to make online engagement available to the public. The City has an opportunity to encourage deep conversations using online platforms as a compliment to other methods of engagement. Using online tools to deepen engagement can facilitate a more open dialogue with citizens and stakeholders that encourages creativity, boldness, and empathetic listening (Hume, 2011; Pappert, 2014).

The City has recently increased its internal capacity to develop and implement web-based fillable forms and surveys. These tools have provided City with the ability to provide information and consultation online. The City should continue to utilize this technology and strive to build cohesive subpages on the website that include survey tools alongside relevant information such as reports, maps, and option papers.

Developing an online engagement platform will involve increasing the suite of online tools that the City uses in order to encourage deeper

conversations. The focus should be on harnessing the creative energy and deep involvement that currently exists on social media platforms. Online engagement platforms provide a method for the City to promote discussions and set parameters for openness depending on what is appropriate for a particular project.

For projects that require greater involvement and collaboration, online engagement tools include forums, idea generators, interactive maps, and other features that encourage the user to become involved in idea and solution generation.

It is recommended that staff use social media as a method to push users to the website and to an online engagement platform. The City should clearly indicate that an online engagement platform is the place where deeper dialogue is to occur between citizens and the City—social media is only a method to inform the public.

City staff must clearly outline expectations and guidelines for the online engagement platform so that citizens are aware of what is acceptable behavior and what is not. The City should evaluate whether it has the capacity to effectively monitor the Terms of Use for the online engagement platform, or whether it would be better served by an authentication system or a third-party monitoring service.

Branding

Both external and internal working groups agreed that a worthwhile goal is to improve perceptions of the City of Sarnia through positive branding. This goal should form a portion of all City of Sarnia collaborative efforts that involve multiple external sectors. Successes that involve collaboration should be celebrated with both an internal and external audience in mind. It is recommended that staff and councillors who play a lead role on collaborative engagement projects should undergo training sessions to understand core concepts of branding and marketing.

Unlike many other mid-sized municipalities, the City of Sarnia does not have a standalone logo or slogan. In 2014 the “Discoveries that Matter” brand was adopted by the community of Sarnia along with other Lambton County municipalities and businesses. The branding project was funded by a dozen

groups in Lambton County and led by Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership and Community Roundtable.



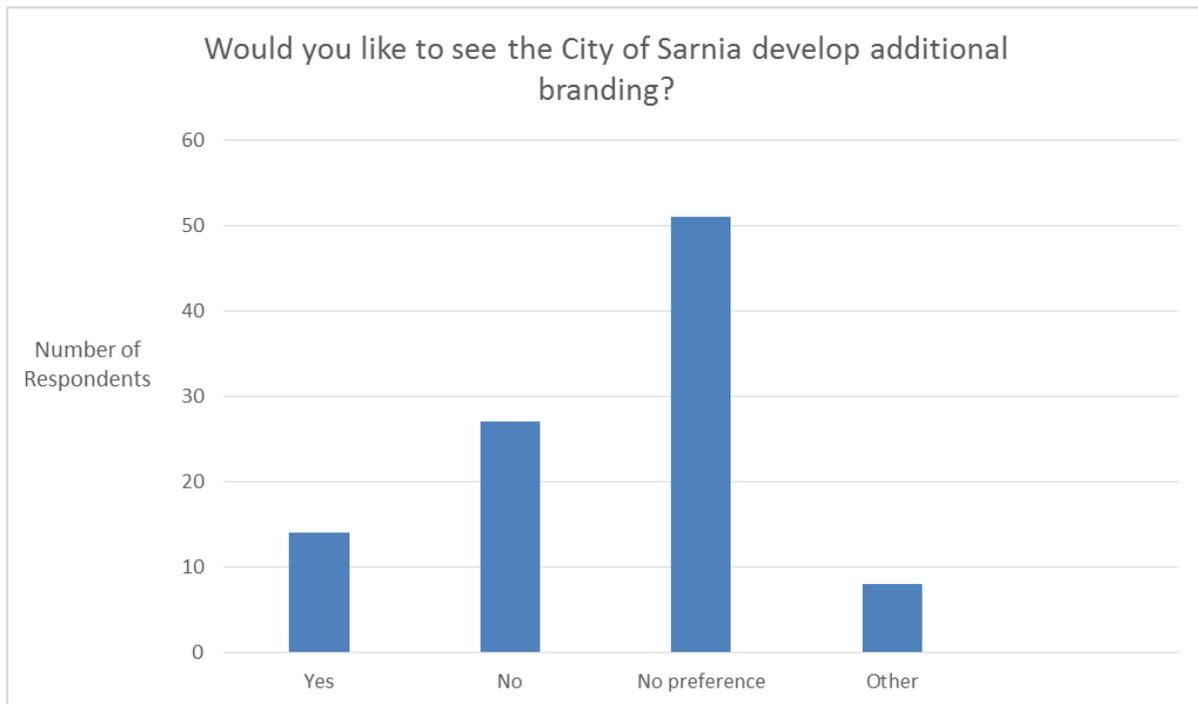
The “Discoveries that Matter” brand is intended to be used in conjunction with existing municipal and business brands in Lambton County.

The City of Sarnia utilizes the City Crest, which was granted to the City in July 1993. The Crest incorporates imagery meant to invoke the waterway, railway, the shipping heritage of Sarnia, and the agricultural heritage of the former Town of Clearwater. There is also imagery of towers and Guernsey lilies in connection to the fact that the name Sarnia derives from the Isle of Guernsey. The crest also contains a slogan in Latin: Sarnia Always. The City Crest is used extensively by the City as a logo for branding purposes.



There has been concern that the City of Sarnia Crest is difficult to distinguish from other city crests. This concern was identified in the survey results of the 2004 City of Sarnia Communications Plan.

Recent survey results indicate that citizens of Sarnia have little appetite for developing a new City Brand.



The survey question included detailed information about the Discoveries that Matter band and the City Crest. 27% of respondents clearly indicated that they had no interest in the City pursuing new branding, and 51% did not respond. Only 14% clearly indicated that they wished to see new branding.

The majority of survey respondents that answered “no” stated that they did not feel that developing a new brand was a worthwhile use of City funds. This supports the notion put forward by the external working group that the City should collaborate with partners to develop positive branding. They may be through promotion of positive news stories and successful collaboration. External stakeholders felt that this kind of brand development would be better appreciated than development of a new logo and slogan.

Councillors and staff should consider each collaborative project as an opportunity to improve perception of the City through positive branding. Care should be taken to align marketing efforts with the Corporate Strategic

Plan. Identifying shared values and goals early on will facilitate consistent messaging as collaborative efforts expand to involve more individuals and groups.

Works Cited

Born, Paul. *Community Conversations: Mobilizing the Ideas, Skills and Passion of Community Organizations, Governments, Businesses, and People*. Toronto: BPS Books, 2008.

Clerks Association of California. www.californiacityclerks.org. Accessed June 2017.

Doolaege, Shari-Anne. "Executive Regionalism." In *Municipal World*, October 2013.

Freuchting, Ashley. "The Service Imperative: New Study Reveals Local Government Leaders' Increasing Focus on Online Customer Service." *Municipal World*, June 2016.

Hume, Gord. "Trends in the Municipal Sector." In *Municipal World*, December 2011.

International Association for Public Participation. www.iap2.org. Accessed June 2017.

Jamal, Audrey and Julia Grady. "The New Economy: The Role of Coworking in Ontario's Mid-sized Cities." In *Municipal World*, June 2016.

Lucas, Jack. "Hidden in Plain View: Local Agencies, Boards, and Commissions in Canada." In *IMFG Perspectives*, No. 4, 2013.

Pappert, Ann "Transformation in Local Government." In *Municipal World*, October 2014.

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Social Media Policy	

I. Purpose

Citizens are increasingly utilizing social media as a preferred method of learning about City information. The City of Sarnia must respond to the growing demand for up-to-date information via social media by developing an online presence that is relevant, consistent, and reliable.

Social media also has the potential to deepen engagement with citizens and to allow citizens to provide the City with feedback. In turn, the City can gain invaluable information through analysis of social media data.

In order to utilize social media to its greatest potential, the City must cultivate trust with its residents.

The City's social media platforms are not intended to be a mechanism for political advocacy or the unqualified promotion of third party organizations, including other government organizations.

II. Procedures

1. Authorized Social Media Users on Behalf of City of Sarnia

The following staff persons are Authorized Users of social media accounts:

- a) CAO
- b) Communications Coordinator
- c) Executive Assistant to the CAO
- d) Corporate Services Assistant
- e) Department Heads
- f) IT Manager
- g) City Clerk
- h) HR Manager

Department heads are responsible for authorizing additional social media users on behalf of the City. These Authorized Users must obtain approval from Department Heads in order to post content for initiatives and/or

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Social Media Policy	

programs.

2. Posts

Social media posts should be made up of concise sentences and when possible should be accompanied by further information such as a photograph or link.

Posts should be media-rich; plain text posts should be avoided. Posts should incorporate photos, videos, graphic, and other techniques to make posts more engaging. The Communications Coordinator will use analytics to monitor the effectiveness of various media and will provide Department Heads with guidelines.

All content uploaded to any City social media platform shall at all times be consistent with the City's mission, values, and corporate brand identity.

3. Privacy

Staff must consider that communication on social media platforms is public and permanent. Staff shall refrain from publishing personal information on social media pertaining to themselves or others. However, it is acceptable to publish names and contact information for members of Council, senior City staff, or contact information for general administration.

4. Engaging with Partners

Authorized Users may utilize the "tagging" function on social media platforms to tag partners or events within the text of a post.

The Communications Coordinator or Departments may post content recognizing partners. This may include a project partner or an organization that regularly leases City space. The CAO must approve posts recognizing other organizations if there is no formal partnership or if it is unclear whether there is a partnership.

5. Scheduled Posts

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Social Media Policy	

Posts are to be scheduled a minimum of 3 days in advance of the publish date to allow for approval by the Communications Coordinator. Service disruption or emergency notifications may be posted immediately.

Authorized Users should avoid scheduling multiple posts on the same day. In addition, no more than three posts should be made leading up to an event.

6. No Business Transactions over Messaging Technology

Staff can post about goods and services but must be cautious when using direct messaging. Direct messages shall be compliant with Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation, and staff should consult with the Communications Coordinator or City Solicitor if in doubt about whether the legislation might apply.

7. Link Headers/Descriptions

Authorized Users should examine the Facebook link header or description when posting a link and alter the text as required. Ensure the header is a short, clear overview.

Authorized Users should check their posts regularly to monitor comments and questions related to their post. Authorized Users shall advise the Communications Coordinator if their post requires a reply, and the Authorized User can work with the Communications Coordinator to draft a reply.

Where possible posts should provide links to official City webpages or pages otherwise controlled by the City. It is the poster's responsibility to ensure that any linked external websites belong to a reputable organization in positive operational status.

8. Voice

All posts shall adhere to a consistent voice as much as possible. All posts shall be written at an accessible level using standards from Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style Fourth Edition*. Posts should avoid technical jargon.

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Social Media Policy	

III. Categories of Social Media Posts

City posts to social media will generally fall into one of three categories: Celebrating successes, citizen engagement, and service disruptions/emergencies

9. Celebrating Successes

The goal of celebrating successes is to build interest in the City's social media pages so that they can more effectively reach citizens. Staff across the organization should be encouraged to notify the Communications Coordinator of successes that can be showcased on social media. Staff should be encouraged to document successes using interviews, photography, video, and sound when possible. Staff shall notify the Communications Coordinator of events that showcase success prior to event so that the Communications Coordinator can attend.

The Communications Coordinator will use media tools at his or her disposal, including photography and video, in order to compile content for social media.

The Communications Coordinator will monitor analytics to analyze the effectiveness of various forms of communication. This will be combined with industry best practices to provide guidance on the most effective forms of communication, and issues such as frequency, timing, format of photo uploads, number of text characters, etc.

The Communications Coordinator will also, from time to time, browse mentions and hashtags of Sarnia and ongoing Sarnia initiatives. The Communications Coordinator may occasionally share or respond to public posts that mention Sarnia when there is an opportunity to increase the page's audience and engagement. The City's response must avoid the perception of endorsing a business or political campaign.

Departments can post scheduled Celebrating Successes posts without the approval of the Communications Coordinator or City Clerk as long as the post is scheduled to appear after at least 72 hours.

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Social Media Policy	

The Communications Coordinator will produce a set of guidelines for Celebrating Successes based on research and best practices.

10. Citizen Engagement

Department Heads are responsible for identifying initiatives that could benefit from exposure and discussion on social media.

Department Heads will have access to City of Sarnia social media platforms, and can designate access to staff.

Departments will utilize best practices for Celebrating Successes as much as possible so that Citizen Engagement posts appear seamless with general content. This may include posting photos, videos, links, etc., with the aim of generating response.

Departments can post scheduled Citizen Engagement posts without the approval of the Communications Coordinator or the City Clerk as long as the post is scheduled to appear after 72 hours or longer. The Communications Coordinator, or staff designate, will monitor scheduled posts on a daily basis and screen them based on content and guidelines.

Citizen Engagement posts should be limited to, at most, three posts per initiative per month. Citizen Engagement posts should, whenever possible, refer the user to information and engagement tools found on the website.

11. Service Disruptions/Emergencies/Time-sensitive Events

Departments will be responsible for posting information about service disruptions, emergencies, and time-sensitive events.

Department Heads or designates can make unscheduled posts about service disruptions when the service disruption is unplanned or is the result of an emergency.

Department Heads should take care to ensure that they are do not duplicate

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Social Media Policy	

information being shared by other departments.

If multiple inquiries are made through social media about a perceived emergency, than the Communications Coordinator or appropriate Department Head may respond as information becomes available. The staff responding should be careful to verify their response with the appropriate department, ministry, etc., and should cite the source of their information in their post.

The Emergency Management Plan supersedes this policy in the event that either the Emergency Control Group is called or an Emergency is declared.

12. Other Social Media Posts

Social media posts falling outside of the above three categories should be used sparingly.

The HR Department may wish to schedule general posts about job postings with links to the City webpage. These posts should include positive marketing consistent with the City's brand image with the aim of recruitment and resourcing.

The Communications Coordinator and HR Department shall collaborate on other posts with the aim of recruitment and resourcing. These may include notices of new hires in management positions, news of an external award provided to a City department or more than one City employee, or other news stories that the Communications Coordinator and HR Manager deem appropriate for the purposes of the City's recruitment and resourcing strategy.

IV. Managing and Responding to Public Comments

13. Monitoring

The Communications Coordinator will monitor new posts, messages, and comments on all social media pages at least once per business day. On days that the Communications Coordinator is unavailable, Corporate Services

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Social Media Policy	

Assistant and/or the Executive Assistant to the CAO will monitor social media pages.

14. Responding to Questions

Responses to all inquiries that are administrative in nature should be made within 24 hours (one business day).

Department staff may respond to questions inquiring about basic information that is readily available elsewhere (staff point of contact, hours of operation, event date, etc). Responses should be brief and courteous.

Questions requiring more detail shall be the responsibility of the Communications Coordinator or designate. The Communications Coordinator or staff person monitoring the page shall respond to administrative questions using the following procedures:

- a) Contact the responsible department and ask that a brief response be made in writing (memo, email, or text);
- b) Edit the response to conform to general guidelines;
- c) Seek review and approval from the following departments if the response is sensitive in the following areas:

Issue is:	Requires review by:
Personnel-related	Human Resources
Legal, legislative, or procedural	Clerk's and/or Legal
Technical or security	IT

- d) Evaluate the audience for the response
 - a. If the response is general in nature and may answer several social media users' questions, than the response should appear in the main thread of the post.
 - b. If the response is more specific to the social media user, than the answer should appear in a reply or a private message.

A response should include the following components:

- a) Thank the person for their question;
- b) One to three sentences summarizing the response; and

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Social Media Policy	

c) A link to a City webpage with more information.

The response should use plain language, avoid jargon, and avoid lengthy sentences.

15. Frequently Asked Questions (internal)

The Communications Coordinator will compile a list of questions that have been asked on social media multiple times along with approved responses. These questions and responses will be archived in a word-searchable document accessible by the Communications Coordinator, Executive Assistant to the CAO, and Corporate Services Assistant.

16. Frequently Asked Questions (external)

The Communications Coordinator will compile and analyze questions in order to identify frequent inquiries.

The City website will contain one or more pages with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). This may include more general FAQs for items like Council procedures, or more specific FAQs for various City initiatives.

When a topic is receiving notable attention, measured by three or more individuals asking at least three distinct questions on social media, the Communications Coordinator will collaborate with a Department Head or designate to draft a FAQ.

The Communications Coordinator will respond to questions addressed in an FAQ with a message such as the following:

"Thank you for your question. We have created an FAQ to answer questions you may have regarding _____. [provide link]"

17. Profanity

Comments with profanity should be removed immediately. Authorized Users other than the Communications Coordinator shall take a screenshot or otherwise record the profane comment and send it to the Communications

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Social Media Policy	

Coordinator before deleting the comment.

18. Terms of Use Violations

Comments or posts that violate the City's posted social media Terms of Use shall be hidden or removed by the Communications Coordinator or hidden by another Authorized User. Any staff observing a violation should report it to their Department Head and/or the Communications Coordinator. The Communications Coordinator will keep a record of deleted comments. If the user asks why their comment has been hidden or deleted, an Authorized User should respond, in a private message when possible, by outlining how their post violated the Terms of Use.

19. Repeat Violations

The Communications Coordinator, after consulting with the City Clerk or a Department Head involved in the matter, may report or ban a profile that repeatedly violated the Terms of Use.

20. Negative Comments

Negative comments will be ignored, and not deleted, unless they violate the Terms of Use.

21. Arguments

The Communications Coordinator and other Authorized Users shall avoid the perception of engaging in arguments.

If a social media user challenges a response by the City, an Authorized User may respond again with a short and as simple of a reply as possible. Answers shall be brief, informative, friendly, and firm. Authorized Users shall refrain from making more than two replies to a question.

22. Complaints

If a social media user makes a statement implying that a complaint has been

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Social Media Policy	

ignored, the City should reply by referencing the Complaint Policy in the following way:

"I apologize that your issue has not yet been resolved. Please contact us directly and provide your contact information so that we can work towards a resolution."

Automatic Reply

Direct and/or private messages received by social media accounts should be set up to automatically reply with the following message:

"This account is not monitored 24/7, if your request is urgent, please call 519-332-0330. In the event of an emergency please call 911."

V. Roles and Responsibilities

23. Department Heads

- a) Designate staff within their departments as Authorized Users.
- b) Responsible for ensuring that all scheduled posts from department staff are accurate and appropriate.
- c) Responsible for implementing this policy within their department.

24. Clerk's Department

- a) Reviews policy on an annual basis at the direction of the CAO.
- b) Approves and oversees social media sites and tools for official corporate use.
- c) Provides access to Authorized Social Media Users on behalf of the City of Sarnia.

25. Communications Coordinator

- a) Monitors policy compliance, provides training and ongoing guidance to City departments.

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Social Media Policy	

- b) Approves social media posts curated by other departments prior to publishing to ensure consistent messaging and imaging.
- c) Responds to requests for new social media platforms and/or administrative changes to existing platforms.
- d) Generates, monitors, updates, edits, responds to and/or removes content within corporate social media platforms to ensure accuracy and adherence to this policy.
- e) Oversees all City social media accounts including their creation and termination.
- f) Maintains a list of website domain names and social media accounts, including login and password information.
- g) Ensures corporate social media platforms comply with applicable policies.
- h) When the Communications Coordinator is not available, the Corporate Services Assistant or the Executive Assistant to the CAO shall assume these duties.

VI. Employee Use of Social Media

26. Individual Professional Accounts

The City welcomes staff members to create and manage individual professional social media accounts. These accounts are intended to promote innovation, celebrate successes, and to communicate administrative information that is factual such as upcoming events, consultation processes, deadlines, etc.

Twitter, LinkedIn and other platforms, as approved by the Chief Administrative Officer can be used as individual professional accounts. Staff members are encouraged to retweet or share information from the City's official social media accounts.

Individual staff members are responsible for activity on their professional accounts. Activity shall adhere to the Employee Code of Conduct and any other City policy. Activity shall align with the values of the Corporate Strategic Plan.

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Social Media Policy	

Training should be made available for department heads, managers, and other staff who wish to use individual professional social media accounts.

Online resources are not private; information posted on such resources is public. Accordingly, employees with individual professional accounts shall not at any time:

- a) reveal any sensitive, confidential or unauthorized content;
- b) reveal personal information;
- c) reveal any matters concerning employees, employee relations or labour relations;
- d) use profane language;
- e) enter into an argumentative dialogue with any member of the public;
- f) post content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination, stereotypes or prejudice on the basis of race, creed, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- g) post sexual content or links to sexual content;
- h) post comments or updates not topically related to the site or topic currently being discussed on the site;
- i) conduct or encourage illegal activity;
- j) promote a candidate for municipal, provincial or federal election or make otherwise blatantly political remarks;
- k) violate copyright, trademarks or other legal ownerships of intellectual property;
- l) make commentary that they know or ought to know will damage the reputation of the City;
- m) post information that they know or ought to know will compromise the safety or security of the City, themselves or any member of the public;
- n) advertise or promote any private, for-profit enterprise;
- o) modify or delete authorized approved posted content; or
- p) comment on behalf of the Corporation or its elected officials unless designated by the CAO to do so.

27. Personal Use of Social Media

When commenting on City-related matters using personal social media

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Social Media Policy	

accounts, identifiable City of Sarnia employees must clarify that they are voicing only their personal opinion and not an official position. Employees should avoid the appearance of officially representing the City by refraining from the use of City logos, photographs, graphics, or other official media without the City's approval.

Employees are prohibited from disseminating any private City information on social media platforms, such as internal deliberations regarding how policies or decisions are made, or any negative comments about the City of Sarnia. Posts involving, but not limited to the following will not be tolerated and will be subject to discipline:

- a) Content which violates the *Criminal Code of Canada* or the *Ontario Human Rights Code*;
- b) Discriminatory statements or sexual innuendos involving City of Sarnia or any of its employees, managers, customers, or vendors;
- c) Threatening, derogatory, or defamatory statements regarding the City, its employees customers, competitors, or vendors;
- d) Identify or make commentary upon other City employees without the consent of that other City employee;
- e) Content which violates any of the City's policies.

VII. City of Sarnia Facebook Terms of Use

The following text will be posted in the City of Sarnia Facebook page's "About" section:

The City welcomes citizens to engage with its Facebook page.

To ensure that the conversation remains in good taste and a positive experience for everyone involved, comments, replies and all other content posted should be clean and respectful, in addition to being relevant and related to the posted topic on the City's Facebook page.

By posting on the City of Sarnia's Facebook page, you agree to comply with these Terms of Use.

Any content including but not limited to the following nature may be deleted and/or result in a ban of the account which posted:

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Social Media Policy	

- a) *Offensive, profane, hateful, insulting, rude, abusive, aggressive, violent, obscene, explicit, pornographic or sexual content;*
- b) *Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, age, creed, gender, marital status, socio-economic status, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation;*
- c) *Provides the personal information of individuals;*
- d) *Is for the purposes of promoting a candidate for municipal, provincial or federal election;*
- e) *Personal attacks and/or defamatory statements;*
- f) *Inflammatory statements;*
- g) *Serious, unproven, unsupported, or inaccurate accusations;*
- h) *Content for advertising/marketing purposes;*
- i) *Content that conducts or encourages illegal activity;*
- j) *Content that could compromise public safety, security or operations;*
- k) *Content that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;*
- l) *Content that impersonates or misrepresents someone else;*
- m) *Content containing spam or posted by anonymous or robot accounts;*
and,
- n) *Unintelligible messages.*

The City of Sarnia reserves the right to remove all comments, including comments that violate these Terms of Use.

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Media Relations Policy	

I. Definitions

1. The Media

For the purposes of this policy, "the Media" and "members of the Media" are used interchangeably to mean journalists, columnists, editors, and other contributors to one or more of the following mediums: newspaper, radio, and television.

2. Private News Outlets

For private news outlets, such as blogs and inter-organizational newsletters, the Communications Coordinator is primarily responsible for fielding inquiries and directing inquiries to the most appropriate staff member.

3. Non-News Media

For non-news Media inquiries; such as film, video games, and books; the CAO is primarily responsible for fielding inquiries and for establishing and implementing policies and procedures to handle requests.

II. Roles and Responsibilities

4. Designated Media Relations Staff Members

The following staff persons shall be called "Designated Staff Members" and are authorized to speak to members of the Media on topics that fall primarily under their supervision:

- a) Members of the Senior Management Team
- b) Managers, supervisors
- c) Superintendents
- d) Staff liaisons for committees

5. Communications Coordinator

The Communications Coordinator is the primary contact with the Media for all new or general inquiries. The Communications Coordinator shall introduce his or herself to local members of the Media by way of email, letter, or phone call. The Communications Coordinator shall stay abreast of which members of the Media are responsible for covering the City. Members of the Media shall be made aware that the Communications Coordinator can direct their

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Media Relations Policy	

inquiries to a Designated Staff Member who can provide an official response.

The Communications Coordinator may provide general information or information in news releases to the Media and will refer members of the Media to the most appropriate Designated Staff Member.

6. Additional Media designates

Senior Management Team, managers, and superintendents may designate additional staff members to respond to the Media in their absence, for specified projects, or from time-to-time.

III. Responding to the Media

7. Response time

Staff shall respond to Media inquiries within a minimum of 24 hours, and before the end of the day if possible. Staff who are not authorized to speak to the Media shall refer members of the Media to either their Department Head or to the Communications Coordinator who shall coordinate a response.

8. Minimum reply

At minimum the Communications Coordinator or Designated Staff Member shall reply within 24 hours with the following information:

- a) A brief explanation for the delay
- b) An estimate of when a reply can be provided

9. Directing inquiries

Inquires received by the Communications Coordinator shall be directed to the most appropriate Designated Staff Member. The Communications Coordinator may help arrange interviews or otherwise facilitate the request.

10. Fair treatment

Staff will refrain from giving preference to any specific Media organization when responding to inquiries.

11. Media response log

Designated Staff Members shall keep records of all their communications with the Media. The Communications Coordinator shall keep a log of Media responses that shall include the responding staff person, the topic, and the

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Media Relations Policy	

date.

IV. Stakeholder Distribution Lists

12. Contact list

The Communications Coordinator shall develop a contact list of stakeholders to facilitate the distribution of information relating to significant, ongoing projects.

13. Emails to stakeholders

The Communications Coordinator is responsible for selecting and issuing media releases by email to stakeholders related to projects.

14. Permission

The Communications Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that stakeholders provide permission to be added to the stakeholder distribution email list.

V. Sarnia-Lambton Media

15. Press release distribution

The Communications Coordinator shall maintain a list of Sarnia-Lambton members of the media. This list shall be used by all staff members when disseminating media releases

16. Media list maintenance

The Communications Coordinator updates the Media list as required and informs other staff members who disseminate media releases. Media contacts can be added to the list by the Communications Coordinator.

17. No requirement to add contacts

City of Sarnia reserves the right to refuse to add contacts to its Media list for any reason.

VI. Media Advisories

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Media Relations Policy	

18. Purpose

Media advisories are intended to provide the public with notifications of an upcoming event, service disruption, public meeting, or other brief time-sensitive notification.

19. Template

The Communications Coordinator will maintain and provide a template for staff to develop media advisories.

20. Publish

Media advisories will generally be published no more than 3 days before an event. The Communications Coordinator shall approve all media advisories.

VII. Media Releases

21. Purpose

Media releases are intended to provide members of the Media with sufficient detail to produce an article or news brief of a project, story, or event.

22. Template

The Communications Coordinator will maintain and provide a template for staff to develop media releases. Staff shall refer to the Canadian Press Stylebook for writing guidelines.

23. Photographs

Media releases should include photographs when appropriate.

24. Website

All media releases shall be published on the News Centre of the City of Sarnia website.

VIII. Media Release Procedure

25. Drafting the release

The staff member responsible for a project shall draft a media release using the media release template. The Communications Coordinator may assist with general guidelines if available.

City of Sarnia

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Media Relations Policy	

26. Senior management approval

The draft media release shall be forwarded to the corresponding Department Head or designate for approval.

27. Revisions

Department staff shall revise and resubmit the draft media release to the CAO or designate for approval if required.

28. Internal Distribution

Once the CAO or designate has approved a final version, the department staff shall email a Word and PDF version of the document to all members of City Council with carbon copies sent to: CAO, CAO's Assistant, City Clerk, City Clerk's Assistant, Mayor's assistant, Communications Coordinator, staff member who drafted the media release, and Department Head who approved the media release.

29. External Distribution

The Communications Coordinator shall distribute the press release in the following sequence:

- a) Upload to "News Centre" on the City website
- b) Send to City staff
- c) Send to Sarnia-Lambton Media
- d) Sent to corresponding stakeholder distribution list if applicable.

IX. Committees of Council

30. Committee media release

Committees of Council may utilize the City of Sarnia media release template to draft a media release. The staff person responsible for attending committee meetings shall coordinate the media release procedures on behalf of the committee.

31. Communications Coordinator

The Communications Coordinator shall assist by providing editing and review, and providing to the CAO or designate for approval, then publishing.

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Public Engagement Policy	

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to identify consistent practices for the City of Sarnia to better engage with citizens to improve decision-making and service delivery.

The City of Sarnia recognizes that engagement with ratepayers is a necessity to a healthy municipal government.

The City of Sarnia acknowledges that citizens and stakeholders possess passion, energy, ideas, and a vast amount of knowledge. The City aims to harness these qualities to create meaningful civic engagement which helps to form decision-making and service delivery.

The City of Sarnia subscribes to the Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation, which are appended to this policy.

II. Definitions

1. Stakeholders

Organizations, community groups, and more formal associations that are representative of the wider community and have related interests.

2. Citizens

The wider community and the general public, including people who are not officially voters.

3. IAP2

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is made up of a diverse and growing group of people who design, implement, use, and participate in public participation processes.

III. IAP2

4. Public Engagement Process

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Public Engagement Policy	

The public engagement process will follow the following procedures which are outlined in five categories—inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower—based on the Public Participation Spectrum designed by IAP2. (See IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum appended to this policy.)

5. Engagement Plan

Before initiating public engagement, the lead staff person shall draft an Engagement Plan specific to the project and circulate it among all staff who have a role within the Plan. At minimum this shall include the Communications Coordinator and the Department Head most directly involved.

IV. INFORM

Goal: To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

Promise to the public: We will keep you informed.

Staff shall use an Inform approach in the public engagement process when there is no expectation, legislative or policy requirement, or direction from Council to seek public input.

6. General procedures

The following procedures shall be used when the public engagement goal is to Inform citizens.

- a. Staff shall generate and distribute media releases in accordance with the Media Relations Policy.
- b. Staff shall broadcast information using one or more social media platforms in accordance with the Social Media Policy.
- c. Staff may use online advertising when there is an indication that the method will result in reaching a larger portion of the targeted audience.

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Public Engagement Policy	

7. News Bulletins

Staff shall use the website and newspaper publications to Inform staff of initiatives or events with a broad impact. Items shall be posted online and, when appropriate, in a circulated print medium in accordance with the Notice Policy.

8. Long-range initiatives or recurring events

For long-range initiatives or recurring events staff should include information in the Community Activity Guide. Departments should plan in advance to ensure that material is included.

9. Direct Mail

Where direct impact is limited, or as required under provincial legislation, direct mail may be utilized.

10. Staff-led Public Meeting/Open House

For new initiatives with broad impact staff shall organize a public information meeting and/or an open house. Cross-departmental collaboration is encouraged to inform citizens of multiple items.

11. Neighbourhood Meeting

Staff shall hold a neighbourhood meeting when impact is limited, but there is a need to educate those impacted.

12. Website

The City's website shall be used in accordance with the Website Policy.

The website should be the primary location for citizens to access City information online. Techniques shall be utilized to improve navigation and ensure timely information is updated.

V. CONSULT

Goal: To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Public Engagement Policy	

Promise to the public: We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

Staff shall use a Consult approach in the public engagement process when Council and/or staff have developed a proposed project with options ready to present to the public for input.

13. Procedures

One or more of the following tools shall be used when the public engagement goal is to Consult citizens: online geo-spatial tool, online polls, surveys, and online question/answer tools.

Staff shall consult the City of Sarnia Notice Policy to ensure that they meet minimum timelines for notification as set out in the Notice Policy.

14. Email

Staff shall create or identify a dedicated email account to receive written public input and shall include the email address in paper and electronic communications about the project. Staff shall observe the Policy for Anonymous Mail, Telephone Calls and E-Mail Correspondence, which requires a name and telephone number when any correspondence is received.

15. Public Meeting

Sarnia City Council may determine that a public meeting shall take place with a quorum of Council. Staff shall be available to answer technical questions. Typically members of the public shall be asked through electronic and print communication to register as speakers, although unregistered speakers may be permitted. Staff may recommend a public meeting when staff believe it would benefit the public engagement process.

The Procedural By-Law sets out procedures for public meetings.

Public meetings required under the Planning Act or other legislation may be called without a recommendation from Council.

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Public Engagement Policy	

Staff may initiate a public meeting for the purposes of collecting public comments. Members of Council do not need to be present for a staff-led public meeting to take place. Staff shall present comments to Council by way of report at the time that the issue is presented to Council.

16. Survey

Staff shall develop a public survey or other appropriate engagement tool to receive public input. Surveys shall be posted online on a City website and be made available at City Hall in hard copy.

17. Online Consultation Tools

When Consulting, staff shall use available technology such as geo-spatial social tools, online polls, and question and answer tools to solicit public feedback in addition to traditional means.

Online consultation tools shall be integrated with the City's website. Social media platforms shall be used to inform citizens that consultation tools are available.

18. Expert Panel

An expert panel, when requested by Council, will follow the same procedures as a public meeting, except that individuals with recognized expertise and those who recognize various perspectives on an issue will be allotted extra time to speak and permitted to field questions from Council.

VI. INVOLVE

Goal: To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

The City will use Involving methods when the objective is to clarify to the public that their feedback has been incorporated into decisions.

Promise to the public: We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Public Engagement Policy	

Staff shall use an Involve approach in the public engagement process when a proposed project meets any of the following conditions:

- The idea is partially generated and options are not yet ready to present to the public.
- Council has indicated that the implementation strategy would benefit from expertise located within the community.
- Council is seeking public input for a new idea that the City will develop internally.

Examples of projects for which it may be appropriate to use an Involving approach include repurposing public land and major assets, as well as long-term planning for items like service delivery changes, City-wide infrastructure, and the budgetary process.

19. Facilitated Public Meeting

A trained facilitator shall lead meetings using consensus-building techniques when the objective is to Involve citizens. When possible, Department Heads shall allocate resources to train staff to lead facilitation. Staff members should utilize consensus-building techniques to generate feedback that can be used by Council. Various formats may be utilized, such as world café, charrette, or visual poster board depending on the group size and meeting objectives.

20. Online Engagement as Alternative Method

In-person techniques to Involve shall be complemented by using online engagement tools such as visual poster boards, discussion forums, and other techniques where applicable.

Department Heads shall assign a staff member to respond to questions on online engagement platforms. Staff should aim to respond within one business day, and shall respond within three businesses days.

Staff must participate in discussions on online engagement platforms for engagement to be effective. Staff shall utilize the same principles and techniques used in a facilitated public meeting.

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Public Engagement Policy	

21. Focus Groups

When the objective is to draw on expertise within the community, staff and/or Council may identify representatives from various sectors. Staff may lead multiple meetings with focus groups with the aim of generating supporting information and recommendations for Council. Staff shall inform Council of new focus groups and provide Council with a list of members.

VII. COLLABORATE

Goal: To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

Promise to the public: We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

Staff shall use a Collaborate approach when multiple partners are necessary to generate and carry out an initiative. Councillors must play a leadership role on initiatives when the goal is to Collaborate and are expected to participate actively.

22. Committees

Council can make use of ad hoc committees and appointed advisory committees as ways for members of the public to participate in the Council decision-making process. Committees are expected to formulate recommendations for Council's consideration.

Committees shall inform Council of ongoing projects, objectives, and recommendations by way of report to Council, either non-agenda or agenda.

23. Public Forums and Round Tables

Council may initiate a public forum or round table when it is appropriate to involve members of the public to generate solutions and/or alternatives. Staff may provide support for logistics and resourcing.

24. Working Groups

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Public Engagement Policy	

Staff may initiate a working group for the purpose of soliciting expertise and knowledge of issues. Working groups should aim to involve multiple sectors, demographics, as well as citizens who will be impacted by the proposed project. Staff shall inform Council of new focus groups and provide Council with a list of members.

25. Informal Discussions

Council may direct staff to facilitate more informal discussions when Collaborating, such as kitchen table discussions. Online resources shall be utilized to provide an avenue for informal, collaborative discussions using online engagement tools.

VIII. EMPOWER

Goal: To place final decision making in the hands of the public.

Promise to the public: We will implement what you decide.

26. Council as Decision-Making Body

As the elected governing body of the City, Council will rarely relinquish its decision-making authority. A referendum is an example of Empowering the public.

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Public Engagement Policy	

APPENDIX

IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum

						
		Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Public		We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

© IAP2 International Federation 2014. All rights reserved

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Public Engagement Policy	

Recommended Tools for Each Level of Engagement

Engagement Level	Tools
Inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising • Civic Corner or equivalent • Community Activity Guide • Council Meetings • Mail • Media releases • Neighbourhood meeting • Public information meeting/open house • Social media • Website
Consult	<p><i>All of the above and:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email • Geo-spatial social tool • Polls • Public meeting • Survey • Expert panel • Question and answer
Involve	<p><i>All of the above and:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charrette • Discussion forum • Facilitated public meeting • Focus Group • Geo-spatial social tool • Visual poster board • World café
Collaborate	<p><i>All of the above and:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee (Ad hoc committee, advisory committee) • Discussion forum • Kitchen Table Conversations • Public forum/roundtable • Working group • Key informant interviews
Empower	<p><i>All of the above and:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referendum

Department: City Clerk	Effective Date:
Section: Clerk's	Revision Date:
Subject: Public Engagement Policy	

IAP2 Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Credit: International Association for Public Participation