

Township of Brock Corporate Policy



Policy Name: Public Engagement Charter

Policy Type: Administration

Policy Number: AP-42

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Date Revised:

Approval By: Committee of the Whole

Point of Contact: Clerk's Department

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Corporation of the Township of Brock is committed to communicating effectively and efficiently with its residents and stakeholders. This charter reinforces the role of two-way dialogue in ensuring democratic decision making.

Understanding that there is not one single method of communication that will meet the needs of all, The Township of Brock endeavours to communicate across a multitude of platforms, including but not limited to the Corporate website, social media channels, monthly e-newsletter, and advertisements in local newspapers.

2. BACKGROUND

Principles of Engagement

Community engagement in in the Township of Brock is rooted in the following principles:

Accountable and Transparent - We communicate with the Township of Brock about engagement opportunities. We will make the most of participants' time and effort by looking at ways to document and share feedback collected across the organization. We commit to sharing what we hear from participants. We explain our decisions including how input was used.

Adaptable – We will work to understand the needs of our diverse community and use a range of techniques to encourage participation. We build on our successes, learn from our failures and share our experiences.

Accessible and Inclusive - We will aim to remove barriers to participation, whether physical, cultural, geographical, linguistic, digital or other. We offer a variety of channels and methods through which to engage and create plans that meet our requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

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Relevant – We listen and talk to interested and affected residents about issues that matter to them. When we convene participants, we are clear about what is up for discussion and the scope of change possible.

This Policy is part of a broader framework of policies that ensures an informed and engaged public. These policies include the:

- Accountability and Transparency Policy;
- Social Media Policy;
- Code of Conduct Policy,
- Public Notice Policy
- Respect in the Workplace – Harassment and Violence Policy;
- Procedure By-law;
- Customer Service Policy;
- Council – Staff Relations Policy.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure meaningful interaction between all parties, seeking proactive input from the public.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to Members of Council and all Town Staff and is intended to acknowledge that the involvement of The Township of Brock's residents in the Township's decision-making process is vital to democracy.

Effective Public Engagement can help you:

- a. Better understand the community's needs and preferences,
- b. Gather advice, creative ideas and knowledge to improve your outcomes,
- c. Foster support for projects, initiatives and decisions,
- d. Improve resident satisfaction with Township services,
- e. Build the community by bringing people together to make things better, and
- f. Reinforce trust and confidence in the Township's choices.

Public engagement encourages participation, actions and personal responsibility. The goal of public engagement is more informed and, therefore better, Municipal decision-making. Trust and confidence in The Township of Brock increases when residents are engaged in decision-making that impacts them. Opportunities need to be created for discussions, problem-solving and planning for The Township of Brock's growth.

Successful public engagement requires meaningful interaction and dialogue between all participants. Securing the mutual respect of all participants, including residents, Township employees and Members of Council will ensure the success of public engagement.

Respect is exemplified by:

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- Listening with an open mind;
- Showing consideration for another point of view;
- Valuing the role each person plays in the public engagement process.

To ensure clarity, understanding and respect in all communications, plain and inclusive language will be used.

- By writing plainly and simply, you:
 - Increase the chances that people will find, read and understand your information from any device
 - Make your information more accessible
 - Allow people who are reading your information on a small screen to see essential information first
 - Save resources when editing and translating your text
 - Improve task completion and cut costs by, for example, reducing enquiries
- Inclusive language is a means of communication used to treat people with respect, and that involves using words and expressions that are not considered discriminatory or offensive, and that do not imply the exclusion or stereotyping of particular groups of people.

The Township will utilize technology to play a crucial role in the techniques used to engage. There is no single form of engagement that will meet the needs of all. As technology changes, adjustment will be made to ensure the Township is providing residents with a variety of platforms to have a voice and bring new ideas forward.

Together, the Township of Brock's residents, Council and Township employees will improve public engagement, building trust and a stronger relationship.