

COMMUNICATION 130194

Received from Amanda Charania, Communications Coordinator
Addressed to Committee of the Whole
Date October 22nd, 2019
Topic Communications Survey Summary

SUMMARY:

The development of a comprehensive communications plan was identified as a priority in the recent Strategic Planning Process. A communications survey was developed in order to identify the most effective means of communicating with Carleton Place residents and businesses and gaps that could be improved upon. The survey was advertised on September 6th and closed on September 24th, 2019. At survey closing, 201 responses were received. Highlights from the survey include:

- 59.71% of respondents were over the age of 55
- 94% of respondents live in Carleton Place
- 40% of respondents have lived in Carleton Place 21+ years
- 66% felt they had a good understanding of all the services offered by the Municipality
- 45% felt they had a good understanding of the issues and challenges facing the Municipality
- 44% felt they did not have a good understanding of the priorities of the Municipality
- 54% felt they did not have a good understanding of the long-term vision for Carleton Place
- When asked to describe Carleton Place's long-term vision, the word growth was mentioned in almost every answer. Also frequently mentioned was the idea of finding balance between growth and maintaining small town charm, heritage and attitude.
- 47% felt that Carleton Place does a good job of communicating with residents
- When asked if respondents thought Carleton Place does a good job of listening and seeking public input on issues, 43% said not sure, 35% said no, 22% yes.
- The most effective and frequently used forms of communication were CP Scoop, Facebook and Local Newspaper
- Respondents identified the Carleton Place website, email and social media as their preferred forms of receiving information
- 58% of respondents would prefer to receive information from the Town on a weekly basis, 29% monthly
- When asked whether they considered the option to live stream Council meetings to be a valuable service, 42% said somewhat valuable, 26% valuable
- When rating information on its level of importance, high level rankings included Snow Removal, Fire & Police, Garbage & Recycling, Community Events and the Environment. This is consistent with the most popular information sought from the Town's website (Google Analytics)

COMMENTS:

Based on comments received, areas for improvements include:

- Develop a plan that would address ways to effectively communicate the long-term vision and priorities of the municipality as this was identified as a weakness.
- Scheduling compelling content that would interest and encourage engagement with the 15-35 age group (examples could include recreation opportunities, family-focused events and activities, social opportunities).
- 40% of respondents answered 'How long have you lived in Carleton Place' in the 21+ years category. In order to encourage newcomers to participate more, the Town could build on its marketing strategy and create content that helps newcomers identify with the community and build a sense of 'home'.
- Survey respondents felt that Carleton Place could improve when seeking input and listening to residents on issues. In order to address this, a strategy could be developed which would encourage dialogue and two-way information sharing with residents and businesses.
- Consideration could be given towards issuing a quarterly newsletter mailout as a way to reach residents who don't use social media.
- Include more detailed information in communication efforts related to planned and current planning and building developments in Town.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive the Community Survey Summary report prepared by Communications Coordinator as information; and

THAT Staff develop a plan to address the areas for improvement identified by the survey.