## 1. GUIDELINES STATEMENT

The Township of South Stormont recognizes that public engagement is a vital part of local democracy. To this end, the Township is committed to:

- Providing honest, meaningful and accessible engagement opportunities for residents and stakeholders;
- Promoting understanding of local issues, informed decision making and best possible solutions to local issues;
- Integrating public engagement in decision-making at all levels of the organization;
- Providing sufficient timeframes and adequate resources to plan, coordinate and conduct public engagement processes.

## 2. PURPOSE

The Township of South Stormont is committed to providing an inclusive community engagement process to better inform stakeholders about decisions that reflect their interests and concerns through a collaborative approach that focuses on two-way communications. These guidelines will act as a reference for staff to inform, consult, and collaborate with stakeholders. The Township will endeavour to proactively notify South Stormont stakeholders on community engagement opportunities.

The International Association for Public Participation, the IAP2, developed the "IAP2 Core Values for 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.

There will be certain areas where collaboration will not occur - these areas include:
- Hiring staff
- Dismissal or Disciplinary action
- Operation Guidelines
- Mandates from Province

## 3. DEFINITIONS

**Stakeholders** means residents, businesses, municipal neighbours, elected officials, staff, upper tier levels of government, boards and committees, municipal authorities, agencies, associations, and anyone with an interest in the Township's municipal affairs.

**Community Engagement** means various methods of engaging the public in discussion about civic matters that impact South Stormont stakeholders. The community engagement process is transparent, responsive, inclusive and empowering. It is based on realistic expectations, mutual respect and trust.

## 4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM

|  | Inform | Consult | Collaborate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Public Participation Goal | To provide the public with the 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 partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. |

## 5. SUCCESS FACTORS

- Simple and accessible design:
    - Ensure that the design of engagement materials is simple and easily accessible to everyone. Make sure to use large, sans serif font and a contrasting colour palette.
- Have a clear message:
    - Ensure that engagement materials have a clear, obvious message and are written in simple language that anyone could understand.

- Short and simple surveys:
    - Try to keep surveys one double sided page in length or shorter, and focus on the project itself rather than a huge "laundry list" of questions. Keep questions simple and specific.
- Tangible topic that directly affects residents:
    - Residents directly affected by the projects are more likely to become involved.
- Range of feedback available:
    - Allow residents to provide feedback through other modes of communication to supplement surveys, like providing telephone or face-to-face interviews.
- Openness and responsiveness:
    - Staff should be open to residents' input, and the consultation should be genuine. Staff should not have preconceived ideas on the topics for which they are requesting input, and the results should not be predetermined.
- Do not assume that all people or areas experience the same issues:
    - Address each neighbourhood separately, and do not assume that issues will be the same in each place.
- Tailor engagement for different groups:
    - Tailor the method of engagement (open house, online survey, direct mail, etc.) for different groups for best results (seniors vs. youth, special interest groups vs. general public, etc.)

## 6. COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

Different generational groups have different communication preferences. To most effectively use public engagement tools, engagement methods must be tailored to the generational group being targeted.

### Seniors' Preferences

- Want more face to face experience with the government
- Through newspapers, Seniors Centre email blasts, Town website, and in person
- Prefer print information
- Ensure that communication materials are accessible. Use larger, 13-14 point font, ensure it is an easy-to-read sans serif font, and avoid low-contrast colour schemes.
- Avoid using dense blocks of print. Too much print can be overwhelming.
- Use bullet points for lists
- Ensure that the design of communications materials, particularly public notices and other signs, are simple and easy to read and understand.

**In Between**

- Majority wanted more services provided online while the next popular choice was to have face to face experience with the government.

**Youth Preferences**

- Prefer to see information through channels they frequently use, i.e. Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram
- Youth use almost solely digital communication channels. They may notice a poster or flyer, but they are much less likely to engage with it than with digital media.
- Peer endorsement is key. Youth are more likely to participate in an event or program if a peer had recommended it.

**Appendix A**

| QUESTIONS | Low | Moderate | High |
|---|---|---|---|
| What level of impact will the public input have on the outcome of the recommendation and/or decision? | | | |
| Potential to impact Township services (programs, policies, buildings, locations etc.)? | | | |
| What is the legally required level of public engagement? | | | |
| What level of impact or risk will the initiative/project have for a neighbourhood or the broader community? | | | |
| What is the level of controversy expected? | | | |
| How critical is public buy-in for this initiative/project? | | | |
| What are the resources required (human, financial, and time) for the public engagement process? | | | |

| IMPACT | Low | Moderate | High |
|---|---|---|---|
| Project Type | Standard/routine | Unique/pilot project | Multiple phases/ new program or initiative |
| Project Time Frame | Three months to a year | One to three years | Three or more years |
| Community Impact | Fewer than two organizations or groups of participants | Three to 10 organizations or groups of participants | 10+ organizations or groups of participants |
| Internal Impact | Within a department | Multiple divisions within a department | Multiple divisions across multiple departments |

**Low to moderate:** The level of engagement should primarily be Inform and Consult

**Moderate to high:** The level of engagement should primarily be Consult and Collaborate

**Appendix B**

| APPLICATION GUIDELINES | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Inform** | **Consult** | **Collaborate** |
| Application Guideline | <ul><li>Studies</li><li>Minor Purchases</li><li>Events</li><li>Programs</li><li>Policies</li><li>Non-Discretionary Planning Decisions</li><li>Operational Reports and Data</li><li>By-laws</li></ul> | <ul><li>Studies and Plans</li><li>Discretionary Planning Decisions</li><li>Major Purchases</li><li>By-Law Amendments</li><li>Policies</li></ul> | <ul><li>Strategic Planning</li><li>Official Plan</li><li>Studies and Plans</li><li>Budgets</li><li>Major Purchases</li><li>By-Laws</li><li>Audit committee</li></ul> |
| Engagement Methods | <ul><li>Media Releases</li><li>Newsletter</li><li>Website</li><li>School Notices</li><li>Sign Board</li><li>Email Distribution</li><li>Council Meetings</li><li>Social Media</li></ul> | <ul><li>Public Meetings</li><li>Open Houses</li><li>Surveys</li><li>Focus Groups</li><li>Tabling at events</li></ul> | <ul><li>Citizen Panels</li><li>Discussion Forums</li></ul> |

**When to decide on the level of public engagement required:**

The level of public engagement required for a project relates to the scope and impact of the project. The larger a project is, and the greater its impact, the earlier public engagement should take place. However, ensure that before collaborative or consultative methods of public engagement are implemented, both the public and project organizers have enough information regarding the project to produce meaningful results and feedback.

Larger projects requiring consultation or collaboration should be planned weeks or months in advance, while smaller projects that require the public only be informed can be planned days in advance or even after the project has been completed.

## Appendix C

(i) =          Inform          = Consult = Collaborate

| | SIGNS / NOTICES (i) |
|---|---|
| What? | These are large outdoor signs, wall posters outside or on bulletin boards, flyers, newspaper ads or any other kind of informative sign. These contain only the most important information and should have a simple, accessible design. It should not contain too many details. |
| Why? | Physical signs are focused on providing information accurate information about the initiative to the public. This should be simply notifying the public that something is happening rather than explaining the entire initiative. Provide the who, what, when and where of the project and a short 1-2 sentence description. Another source where more detailed information can be found should be included. |
| When? | These should be placed out in advance at the beginning of a project, to inform people that something is happening, and after a project has been completed, to provide information on what the project was, why it took place, who contributed, etc. |
| Who? | For public placed throughout community to inform what and when something is going to take place |

| | DIGITAL MEDIA (i) |
|---|---|
| What? (i) | Includes monthly e-newsletter, social media posts (text, pictures and videos), and website news and events calendar posts. Like a physical sign, these should contain only the most important information and should have a simple, accessible design. They should not contain too many details. |
| Why? | Can be used to target certain demographics that use these platforms to get their news, particularly young people. Digital media should be focused on providing essential information about the initiative to the public. This should be simply notifying the public that something is happening rather than explaining the entire initiative. Provide the "who," "what", "when," and "where" of the project and a short 1-2 sentence description. Another source where more detailed information can be found should be included. |
| When? | Posts should be made in advance to inform community as well as throughout project to keep residents up to date |
| Who? | For the general public, especially for younger demographics. |

| | DIRECT MAIL |
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| What? | Includes direct mail, email blasts, and door hangers |
| Why? | Can be used to target certain demographics, particularly seniors. This is the most effective way to inform regardless of demographic. To use if it is essential that the public gets this information, as direct mailing/door hangers will reach everyone. |
| When? | Posts should be made in advance to inform community of issues with a broader scope and impact |
| Who? | For the general public, especially for older demographics. |

| | OPEN HOUSE / PUBLIC OUTREACH |
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| What? | Open houses, booths at events, tables in high traffic areas, etc. These are events where information is put on public display and the general public has the opportunity to meet members of the staff team working on the initiative as well as any official public representatives. |
| Why? | Open houses are focused on providing information. While there is opportunity for some dialogue, their primary purpose is to ensure accurate information about the initiative is available to the public. |
| When? | Since the focus is on information sharing, they should be used early in the process, perhaps in conjunction with public meetings, or during later stages when important information reflecting decisions can be provided. To plan appropriately can require up to two months. |
| Who? | These sessions are open to all members of the public and are hosted by the staff team and any public representatives. They should be held in community centres or other locations that are easily accessible to ensure that all community groups and residents are provided with equal opportunities to learn about the project. |

| | PUBLIC MEETINGS / COMMUNITY MEETINGS |
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| What? | Public meetings are normally sessions at which there are both registered and unregistered presentations. This format can result in conflict if the assessment of public opinion on any given topic/issue is not accurate, and that public meetings are not appropriate if an initiative has a significant amount of tension among interests. |
| Why? | They present opportunities for the public to hear and make comment on initiatives. Public groups, municipal representatives and the general public are encouraged to attend, listen, raise questions and make presentations to the chair, panel or facilitator. |

| When? | They present opportunities for the public to hear and make comment on initiatives. Public groups, municipal representatives and the general public are encouraged to attend, listen, raise questions and make presentations to the chair, panel or facilitator. |
|---|---|
| Who? | Public meetings should be open to the general public. They should be advertised appropriately so that a broad number of people will be aware of the opportunity. Formal presentations should occupy no more than 30 minutes, followed by comments or registered presenters from the public, with a maximum of 10 minutes per presentation. The balance of the meeting should be spent hearing the comments and questions from the public.  However, the exact format will also be dependent on the project type and any legislative requirements. |

## FORUMS, SEMINARS, AND CONFERENCES

| What? | These are formal or semi-formal events. |
|---|---|
| Why? | They are held to share and learn about technical information and ideas presented by a range of experts. |
| When? | The scale and formality depend on the nature of the project. They are an effective way of ensuring that all participants obtain a common understanding of a technical issue. |
| Who? | Delegated and invited representatives of all interest group and other invited members of the public; representatives (including working level and decision level) of participating members; experts from government, academia and the private sector. |

## PUBLIC INTEREST GROUP WORKSHOPS

| What? | These are informal meetings between representatives of the municipal team and the interest group. Each group warrants a separate meeting. The intent of these sessions is to listen, document, draw information and discuss, but not to defend an initiative or potential solution. |
|---|---|
| Why? | The purpose of these meetings is to initiative direct dialogue with each major interest group. This is the first opportunity to discuss the general nature of the project and to exchange preliminary information. Substantive discussion of issues or their resolution should not occur at these meetings. |
| When? | These discussions should occur early in the process, but may also be necessary or appropriate if special interest groups come forward with specific concerns. |
| Who? | This should include representatives of the planning team as well as representatives of the public interest groups. Meetings may be preceded by a telephone discussion. These types of consultations are best held at locations chosen by each public group. |

## PUBLIC ADVISORY GROUP

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| What? | This is a formal group or committee established to provide direct comment to the municipality. It may be integrated into the process so that separate meetings of the public and municipal participants are not necessary. |
| Why? | A public advisory group is created so that there is consistent public involvement on the project or initiative. |
| When? | A group should be formed before the terms of reference for the project are developed. |
| Who? | Members are representatives of all values or interests in the project or initiative. They should have endorsement from the people and interests they represent. |

## WORKING GROUP

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| What? | Working groups bring together selected people with a range of perspectives on a topic. |
| Why? | They are established to discuss and assess general issues of importance, determine priorities and establish preferences for general procedures and terms of reference. Also, working groups are set up to address technical issues such as information gathering and analysis |
| When? | A working group should be established early in the process as part of the design stage. In the later stages, a working group consisting of public interest and municipal representatives concerned with a particular aspect of a project may also be formed. |
| Who? | A working group should be small and informal, ideally with not more than ten people. It should bring together a cross-section of perspectives. Representatives from official interest group positions are not desired at such sessions. The facilitator or chair must be perceived as neutral. |

## PLANNING WORKSHOPS

| | |
|---|---|
| What? | These are joint working sessions attended by representatives of all participant groups. |
| Why? | A workshop ensures that the parameters of the project are agreed upon by the public as well as the staff. |
| When? | They should be established early in the process and have a role to play throughout. |

| Who? | Delegated representatives of all interested groups and participating agencies. During informal, preliminary meetings, ask each group to identify a rep or alternatives to attend such subsequent meetings and workshops. Consult to determine a central location and time – decided at general meetings. Location and facility must be accessible and convenient to the majority of participants. If groups are geographically dispersed, it is important to have representatives attend a central workshop |
|------|------|