



**City of Kingston
Report to Council
Report Number 19-138**

To:	Mayor and Members of Council
From:	Peter Huigenbos, Acting Commissioner, Community Services
Resource Staff:	JC Kenny, Director, Communications & Customer Experience
Date of Meeting:	June 18, 2019
Subject:	Public Engagement Update and Online Platform Contract Renewal with Bang the Table

Executive Summary:

The Public Engagement Framework and the Public Engagement Charter were approved at Council on October 3, 2017. In addition to these two documents, the public engagement worksheets, executive summary and the implementation plan were provided for information purposes. A semi-annual status report to Council is part of the Public Engagement Implementation Plan.

The actions outlined in the Public Engagement Implementation Plan complement the Public Engagement Framework and Charter. Work continues on each of the items identified in the Public Engagement Implementation Plan. The overall evaluation of public engagement took place in April and May of 2019 and will be reported on during the third quarter.

As part of the Implementation Plan, it was identified that an online platform was needed. Get Involved Kingston, a pilot project for an online engagement platform, was implemented on October 4, 2017. The online platform allows the City to have all online engagement opportunities in one location.

To help choose the best online platform, a pilot project was established with Bang the Table, a leader in online engagement that hosts sites for cities around the world. The online platform is hosted by Engagement HQ, a product developed by Bang the Table. The pilot project was 18 months with a 5 month extension. Kingston's results have been positive, as there are 6,754 activated participants providing input and receiving emails about new projects on Get Involved Kingston after only 20 months.

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To put Kingston's activated participants into context; Halifax is the only Canadian municipality using Engagement HQ that has more activated participants than Kingston. Halifax has a population of approximately 424,000, has 8,144 activated participants and has been using Engagement HQ since 2013; Richmond, British Columbia, has a population of approximately 193,000, has 5,274 activated participants and has been using Engagement HQ since 2010; Burlington, Ontario, has a population of approximately 183,000, has 3,694 activated participants and has been using Engagement HQ since 2018.

By using the online platform, the City increases transparency and offers easy and accessible channels for residents to provide input and stay up-to-date on projects, policies and initiatives. This pilot project has given the City the channel to receive different ideas and perspectives, allowing a more informed decision making process.

The existing contract with Bang the Table ends on July 31, 2019. The cost for the pilot project and 5 month extension was \$39,500.00. The terms of the contract provided the City with unlimited use of the online platform Engagement HQ, plus support services from Bang the Table including online and over the phone support, training opportunities, webinars, in person meetings, reports and moderation. A change in supplier now, after the initial strong success of the program, would require significant staff time and resources, not to mention the risk involved in rebuilding the level of trust and engagement with the existing participants. Staff are recommending that the contract with Bang the Table be single sourced and extended for another three years with two options to renew for one year each. The cost per year will be approximately \$25,500.00 with a total of approximately \$127,500 over the five year term. Funds for this contract are included in the approved and forecasted capital budget.

Recommendation:

That Council authorize the Mayor and Clerk to execute an agreement with Bang the Table to continue to provide an online engagement platform for a period of three years commencing August 1, 2019, plus the option for two one-year extensions, in a form satisfactory to the Director of Legal Services.

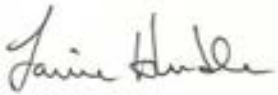
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Authorizing Signatures:



**Peter Huigenbos, Acting
Commissioner, Community
Services**



**Lanie Hurdle, Acting Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Deanne Roberge, Acting Commissioner, Corporate
Enterprise Services



Jim Keech, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston

Not required

Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer



Sheila Kidd, Commissioner, Transportation & Public Works

Not required

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Options/Discussion:

The Public Engagement Implementation Plan was provided to Council for information on October 3, 2017, with the Public Engagement Framework. Each of the items outlined in the Implementation Plan have been completed to date with work being done on the overall evaluation that will be reported on in the third quarter of 2019.

Some highlights of the Implementation Plan include:

- To date, seventy-eight City of Kingston employees have completed the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) foundations training;
- Eight tablets with stands are being used at public engagement sessions in order to receive input online and to promote Get Involved Kingston at in person sessions;
- Public engagement support resources are available for departments to borrow for use at sessions. Resources continue to be added to the toolkit;
- A pilot program has been established to have activity bags for children available at public engagement sessions. To date, approximately 50 have been given out at sessions;
- The Internal Engagement Group meets quarterly to discuss best practices, lessons learned and identify opportunities; and
- Public engagement sessions with residents to receive input on raising awareness for public engagement took place in February. Communications has been making changes based on the input that was received.

Get Involved Kingston, a pilot project for an online engagement platform, was implemented on October 4, 2017. The online platform allows the City to have all online engagement opportunities in one location.

There are eight different tools available for use that offer different types of engagement based on the project. Bang the Table continues to enhance the tools available, provides online and over the phone support, training opportunities, webinars and in-person meetings. Various reporting is available for projects and the overall platform.

Participants are able to view any external projects online. In order to provide input, a user needs to register once, activate their registration and then sign in when they want to provide input on a project. This allows the City to collect one-time information from participants. By registering for Get Involved Kingston, this allows the City to email activated participants when a new project goes online for input. Email frequency is a maximum of once a week. If multiple projects are added in the same week, they are summarized in one email.

Activated registrations have been plotted onto a map, based on postal code, to show where they are from. The registrations are spread across the City (Exhibit A).

Some highlights and numerical statistics as of May 10th from Get Involved Kingston include:

- Sixty-three external projects have utilized Get Involved Kingston for online input.
 - 4 internal projects have been added to Get Involved Kingston.

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- To date there are 6,754 activated participants to provide input on Get Involved Kingston.
- Contests have been used to encourage residents to sign up.
- Each project page includes staff contact information, key dates, a project timeline, links to reports and any additional documents.
- There have been 80,498 site visits.
- 71 projects used the online survey tool:
 - 9,377 online survey responses
- 3 projects used the poll tool:
 - 130 poll responses
- 16 projects used the Question and Answer tool:
 - 207 questions responses
- 2 projects used the Stories tool:
 - 56 comments have been received
- 7 projects used the Places tool:
 - 167 comments have been received
- 8 projects used the Ideas tool:
 - 340 ideas have been received
 - 32 comments have been received on the idea
 - 105 votes have been added
- 8 projects used the Forum tool:
 - 875 comments have been received
- 26 projects used the Newsfeed tool.

Some highlights of projects and traffic to Get Involved Kingston are outlined below.

The terms used are described in the following manner:

- Aware – received information about the project (visited a project page)
- Informed – made themselves aware of the project (clicked on something on the project page – key date, document, link, image, etc.)
- Engaged – provided input on a project, policy or initiative (engaged on a project – survey, places, ideas, etc.)

Some project highlights include:

- Retail Cannabis (7,369 aware; 5,822 informed; 2,026 engaged)
- 2018 Solid Waste Customer Satisfaction (2,365 aware; 1, 947 informed; 1,036 engaged)
- Belle Park Master Plan (3,167 aware; 1,840 informed; 811 engaged)
- Council Priorities 2018-2022 (2,289 aware; 1,500 informed; 475 engaged)

Some highlights of where traffic originates:

- Direct to Get Involved Kingston (25,219 aware; 13,962 informed; 6,978 engaged)
- Get Involved Kingston newsletter (14,116 aware; 8,310 informed; 2,200 engaged)

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- Facebook (7,750 aware; 3,422 informed; 638 engaged)
- City of Kingston website (6,013 aware; 3,109 informed; 730 engaged)
- Google search (3,703 aware; 1,285 informed; 185 engaged)
- Twitter (3,223 aware; 1,551 informed; 342 engaged)

Due to its ease of use, high engagement participation, integration into current City projects, and quality of customer service received from the provider, staff recommend that the contract with Bang the Table be continued for another three years with two options to renew for one year each. The cost per year will be approximately \$25,500.00.

Existing Policy/By-Law:

By-Law Number 2000-134 "A By-law to Establish Purchasing Policies and Procedures for the City of Kingston", as amended, under Section 4.5, a Council resolution is required to enter into single source contracts valued over \$50,000.

Notice Provisions:

Not applicable

Accessibility Considerations:

Bang the Table does a quarterly accessibility audit on Engagement HQ.

Financial Considerations:

Funding for the first year of the contract is approved in the 2019 Capital Budget for IS&T, and funding for additional years has been included in the IS&T 15 year capital plan. The cost per year for the next three years will be approximately \$25,500.

Contacts:

Debbi Miller, Manager, Communications & Public Engagement 613-546-4291 extension 1323

Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

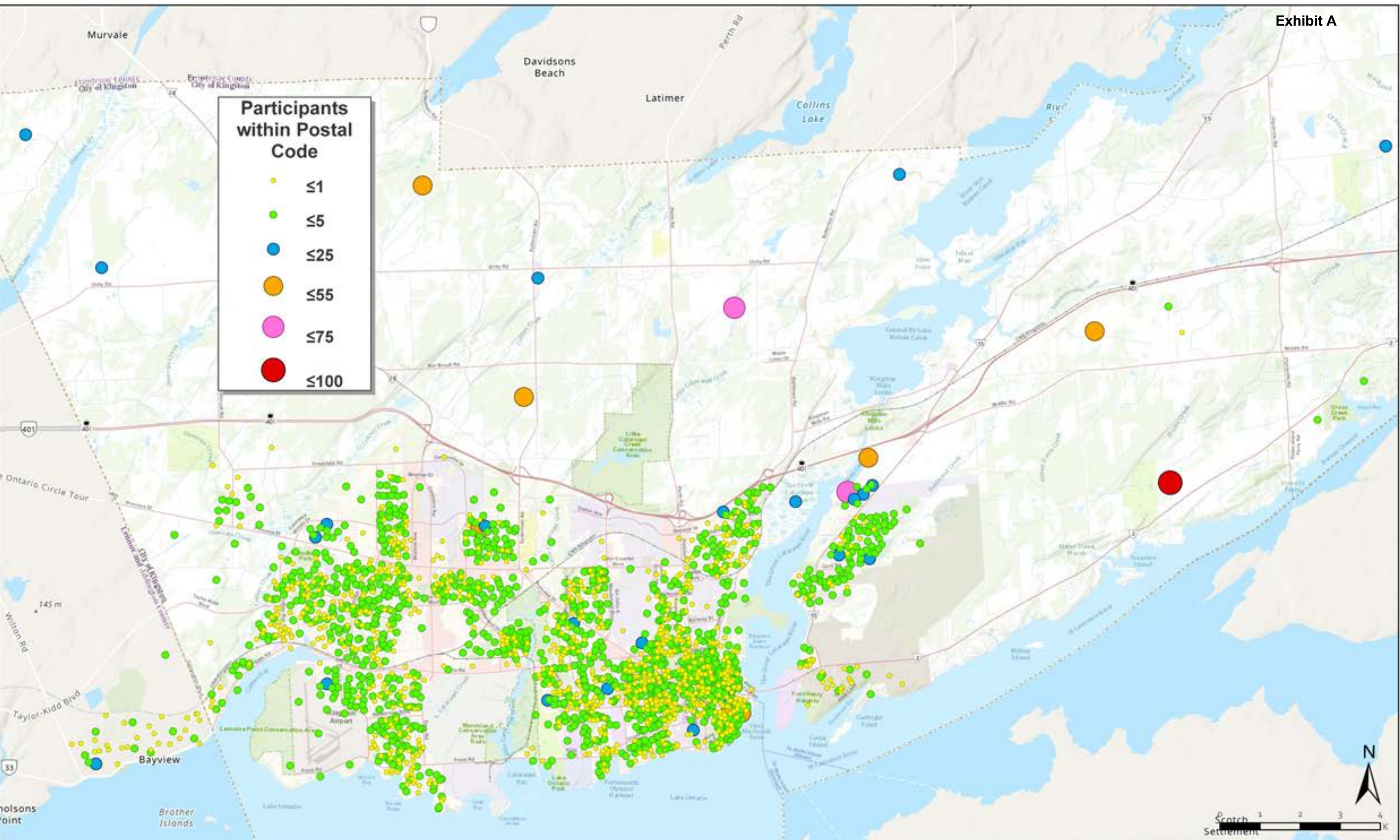
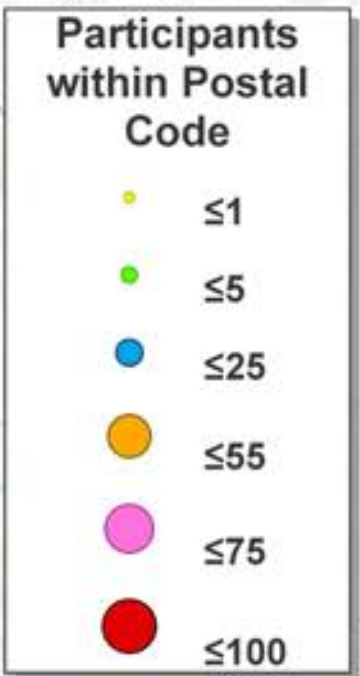
Jeff Bumstead, Chief Information Officer, Information Systems & Technology

Stephen Skinner, Manager, Systems Development, Information Systems & Technology

Ahmed Zayan, Manager, Purchasing, Financial Services

Exhibits Attached:

Exhibit A Get Involved Kingston Activated Registrations Postal Code Map



Get Involved Kingston Active Users * As of May 10, 2019 there were 6,754 active participants.

Source: GIS Enterprise Geodatabase, Canada Post
 Disclaimer: The Corporation of the City of Kingston assumes no responsibility for inaccurate or inconsistent data set out in this map product. GetInvolvedPostalCodesMap

