



**City of Kingston
Information Report to Council
Report Number 19-242**

To:	Mayor and Members of Council
From:	Lanie Hurdle, Interim Chief Administrative Officer
Resource Staff:	JC Kenny, Director of Communications and Customer Experience
Date of Meeting:	September 17, 2019
Subject:	Public Engagement National Award

Executive Summary:

On Thursday, September 5, 2019 the Communications and Public Engagement Division accepted the Organization of the Year Award from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Canada at the IAP2 North American conference in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The City of Kingston submission has been forwarded to the IAP2 Federation to compete against winners of other IAP2 Affiliates from around the world. Winners will be announced in October 2019.

Earlier this year Communications and Public Engagement submitted an application to the Core Values Awards, *Engaging on engagement to develop and implement a culture of P2*. The submission was about the development of the Public Engagement Framework and then embedding a consistent, transparent approach to public consultations to improve the City's decision-making process.

The areas of focus for the submission reflected how the City's Public Engagement Framework and Implementation Plan aligns with the IAP2 Core Values.

- 1) Development of Public Engagement Framework and Charter with input from residents, Council and City employees.
- 2) Establishing an online engagement platform – a place where residents and staff can get involved in City efforts.
- 3) IAP2 training for City employees and Council.

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The submission was evaluated on how well the City addressed organizational change, commitment to public participation, the alignment with the seven core values and the judges overall impression of the entry.

Written feedback from the IAP2 judging panel included:

- The creation of a Public Engagement Framework and Charter demonstrate a strong commitment to a culture of public participation.
- The submission describes the pervasiveness of the Public Engagement Framework and implementation plan rather than specific project examples.
- Linking the Core Values to the Charter statements shows strong evidence of the criteria. "Together, the City of Kingston's residents, council and City employees will improve public engagement and enhance the City."
- Organizational changes to create the Communications and Public Engagement Division and additional staff resources demonstrate that corporate leadership understood the value in resourcing the implementation of the Public Engagement Framework.
- Use of the online platform Get Involved Kingston for internal engagement demonstrates the commitment.
- Quantitative evidence provided in this submission is compelling, especially considering that the submission shows less than 18 months of implementation. The City was clearly committed to putting the framework into practice.

The feedback received from the IAP2 judges and being awarded such a prestigious award is reinforcement that the City is moving in the right direction of public engagement.

Recommendation:

This report is for information only.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Lanie Hurdle, Interim Chief Administrative Officer**Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:**

Peter Huigenbos, Acting Commissioner, Community Services	Not required
Jim Keech, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required
Sheila Kidd, Commissioner, Transportation & Public Works	Not required
Deanne Roberge, Acting Commissioner, Corporate and Emergency Services	Not required

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Purpose

This report provides information to Council with respect to the process and follow up for the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Organization of the Year Award and draws awareness to the IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation. It highlights the importance of networking with other municipalities to increase the awareness of trends ensuring we continue to move public engagement forward, learning from best practices and engaging meaningfully with residents and stakeholders.

Background

International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Canada is an association of professionals in the field of public participation (P2), who seek to promote and improve the practice in relation to individuals, governments, institutions and other entities affecting public interest in Canada and around the world.

IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation were developed with international input. The purpose of the core values is to help make better decisions which reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities.

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.

IAP2 hosts a conference each year on a rotating basis between Canada and the United States. At this conference they present Core Values Awards recognizing excellence in public engagement. The awards recognize projects and organizations demonstrating alignment to IAP2's Core Values. This allows public engagement professionals to learn from one another and continue to elevate their own standards.

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The conference provides learning and networking opportunities for staff to bring lessons learned and best practices back to their organization. Public engagement is a growing field and the expectation from participants is to try new approaches to ensure their input is received. Ensuring the City is connected to other public participation practitioners from across the country is a critical and very beneficial outcome of the conference.

Staff have worked to ensure a consistent approach to public engagement since the Implementation Plan was provided to Council for information on October 3, 2017 with the Public Engagement Framework.

Highlights of the Implementation Plan include;

- To date there are over 7,000 activated participants on the Get Involved Kingston online platform. The Get Involved Kingston email newsletter is distributed weekly to all activated participants and includes current online engagement opportunities, upcoming in-person sessions and engagement reporting back.
- To date seventy-eight City of Kingston employees have completed the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) foundations training. Twenty-five employees are scheduled for training in the fall of 2019.
- 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 was established to provide 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 for learning and improvement.

An updated implementation plan will be brought to Council in a report in Q4, 2019. Building on the Corporation's momentum and success the plan will cover the next three years for public engagement. The implementation plan will incorporate input received from residents, Council and staff over the past 2 years since the adoption of the public engagement framework on October 3, 2017.

Existing Policy/By-Law:

Public Engagement Framework

Notice Provisions:

Not applicable

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Accessibility Considerations:

Not applicable

Financial Considerations:

Not applicable

Contacts:

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

Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Jen Pinarski, Communications Officer

Exhibits Attached:

Exhibit A: [IAP2 News Release](#)