PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The *City* has identified the critical importance of public involvement. In 2013 the *City* established an Engagement Charter and a Charter Action Plan with the aim of making public involvement a part of everyday practice within the City of Burlington.

The Burlington Community Engagement Charter is an agreement between and among Burlington *City* Council and the citizens of Burlington concerning citizen engagement with *City* government that establishes the commitments, responsibilities, and fundamental concepts of this relationship.

At the core of democratic government are two pillars that also form the basis of effective citizen engagement:

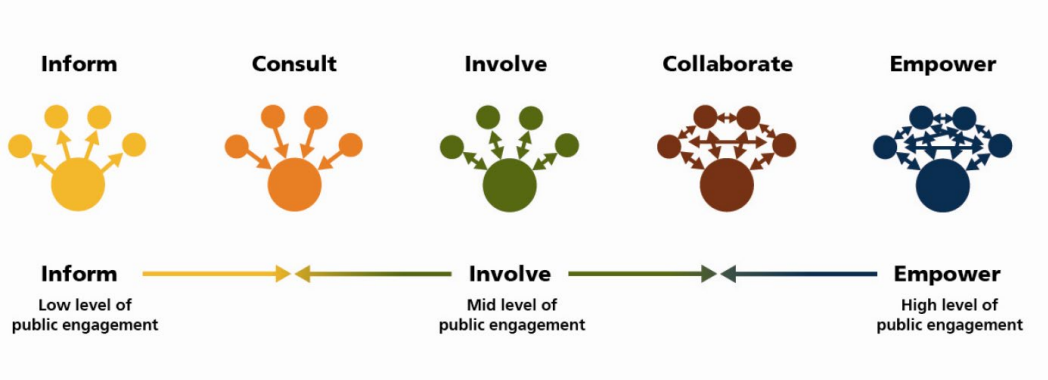
1. That government belongs to the citizens within its political boundaries; and
2. That the inhabitants of a city are citizens with the rights and responsibilities of citizenship based on justice, human rights, fundamental freedoms and rule of law.

Engaging people on issues that affect their lives and their city is a key component of democratic society. Public involvement encourages participation, actions and personal responsibility. One of the goals of community engagement is to lead to more informed and, therefore, better decision-making.

The Engagement Charter's over-arching objective is to enhance communications and access to information for citizens, and to facilitate and enable meaningful engagement.

The Strategic Plan 2015-2040 identified as one of its four strategic directions that the *City* will be an Engaging City. This means that community members are engaged, empowered, welcomed and well served by their *City*. This commitment to engagement is part of the daily activities at the *City* and in particular, is important in the planning and decision-making process.

The planning process is a cycle of policy and plan making, implementation and monitoring. Public engagement throughout this cycle is fundamental to decision making as a means of demonstrating accountability. The role of the public in any given planning process will depend upon the goals, timeframe, resources, audience, level of concern and the scale of the issue. The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Participation will be used in the *City's* community engagement activities.



Graphic 11-1. IAP2 Spectrum of Public Engagement.

The spectrum shows the increasing level of public impact progressing through the spectrum beginning with inform through to empower. The *City's* Engagement Charter makes commitments to support and provide active and meaningful engagement in the *City* using all elements of the spectrum, as appropriate. Mutual respect for citizens, staff and members of *City* Council is the basis for the development of constructive relationships and successful citizen engagement. The *City's* Engagement Charter provides more detailed information on the spectrum of public participation and a list of actions the *City* will implement to support citizen engagement.

11.1 PUBLIC AND AGENCY PARTICIPATION

The *City* will ensure that community members are engaged, welcomed and well-served by their *City*. The *City's* Strategic Plan 2015-2040 identifies actions to support sound decision-making processes. The *City* actively encourages and welcomes collaboration with residents and stakeholders in the decision-making process.

11.1.1 OBJECTIVES

a) To actively seek input of individuals, community and special interest groups, public boards, commissions and *public authorities* on planning and related matters.

b) To inform, consult, involve, collaborate, or empower, as appropriate, through effective consultation and engagement processes.

c) To ensure that the community goals are reflected in land use planning decision making, by encouraging public participation.

d) To explore, pilot and implement innovative tools and processes for engagement.

e) To demonstrate a commitment to accountable and transparent government by making data freely available to the public, helping ensure that the citizens, agencies and other stakeholders of the city are informed and engaged in an open and accessible government.

f) To commit to public consultation in keeping with the established and evolving legislative frameworks for land use decision making.

11.1.2 GENERAL POLICIES

a) The *City* will provide opportunities for public, agency and stakeholder input during:

(i) the review of this Plan, and the development of new policies;

(ii) monitoring of the effectiveness of the policies of this Plan;

(iii) the review of by-laws and the development of new regulations;

(iv) *development application* review processes, where applicable;

(v) the preparation and/or review of *area-specific planning* studies, *Community Improvement Project Plans* and other planning studies; and

(vi) any other planning or *development* situation where the *City* desires public involvement.

b) Opportunities for public, agency and stakeholder participation *shall* be in accordance with this Plan, The Planning Act, The Environmental Assessment Act, The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and other relevant legislation, policy and regulations.

c) The *City shall* engage with indigenous communities and coordinate on land use planning matters including *development applications* that may affect their interests.

d) Consultation will take place in a timely manner to ensure an accountable and transparent decision-making process on land use planning matters.

e) When preparing materials for public consumption, the *City* will ensure that graphics, legibility and presentation mediums *shall* be consistent with the *City*'s standards and the standards of The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

f) The *City* is committed to communication in plain language on land use planning matters.

g) The *City* will provide responses to feedback received, including how feedback has been incorporated into the matter being addressed.

h) The *City* will engage in and support activities to improve community awareness on various matters addressed by the Official Plan.

i) The *City* will use community based participation to identify and incorporate community values into the planning and design of the public realm to create sociable places that attract people.

j) *City* Council *shall* establish a Committee of Council to conduct statutory public meetings pursuant to The Planning Act.

k) When a community meeting is held, the *City* will carefully consider venues for these events. The locations *shall* be consistent with the standards of The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and will include places that are accessible to a broad cross section of stakeholders including, but not limited to:

(i) gathering places such as community centres, libraries, galleries or other cultural facilities and recreational facilities such as arenas, pools or parks;

(ii) places of commerce such as malls and Downtown Burlington;

(iii) special events where people congregate, such as festivals, cultural events and *farmers markets*; and

(iv) where possible, geographically appropriate and convenient to the area of the city most impacted by the land use planning matter under consideration.

l) The *City* will employ appropriate tools and techniques that are consistent with the intended consultation and engagement goals of a given land use planning matter. Where the goal of the engagement is to:

(i) **INFORM**: the *City* will provide the public with balanced and objective information. Suitable tools and techniques include, but are not limited to, fact sheets, websites and open houses;

(ii) **CONSULT:** the *City* will obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or recommendations. Suitable tools and techniques include, but are not limited to, public comment sheets, surveys, focus groups, community meetings and statutory public meetings;

(iii) **INVOLVE:** the *City* will work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. Tools and techniques suitable for

involving the public include, but are not limited to, workshops, digital engagement tools and deliberate polling;

(iv) **COLLABORATE:** the *City* will partner with the public and stakeholders in the decision making process, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. Tools and techniques suitable for collaborating with the public include, but are not limited to, citizen advisory committees, participatory decision making or consensus building processes;

(v) **EMPOWER:** the *City* will place final decision making power in the hands of the public, through utilizing tools and techniques suitable for empowering the public including, but not limited to, citizen juries, ballots, and Council delegated decisions. Decisions made under The Planning Act *shall* be made by the approval authority identified in the Act.

11.1.3 PROCEDURES

a) The procedure to inform and obtain public and agency input regarding a *development application*, where applicable, *shall* include the following steps:

(i) for a site-specific amendment to the Official Plan or Zoning By-law, a plan of subdivision or a consent, a sign *shall* be placed on the subject property by the applicant, indicating the basic details of the application. A site-specific amendment *may* involve a map designation change and/or policy change which applies to a block of land. The wording, design and placement of the sign is to be approved by the *City*;

(ii) the *City's* webpage *shall* contain details of the application, technical supporting materials, and meeting details. This page will be updated throughout the process;

(iii) the details of the *development application shall* be circulated for comments to all boards, commissions, agencies, advisory committees and associations that are considered to have an interest in the matter and a reasonable period given for comments;

(iv) a community meeting *may* be held to inform the community about a *development* proposal, the *development application* review process and a *development application*, and answer questions about the *development*;

(v) a preliminary notification of the application for amendment(s) to the Official Plan or Zoning By-law and/or a plan of subdivision, including

basic details, *may* be provided prior to the Council meeting to consider a recommendation on the proposed amendment(s) and/or subdivision. For site specific amendments and subdivisions, the preliminary notification *shall* be sent by prepaid first class mail or personal service or email to every owner of land within one hundred and twenty (120) m of the subject area within the Urban Area as outlined on Schedule C: Land Use - Urban Area, of this Plan, within three hundred (300) m of the subject area within the Rural Area as outlined on Schedule I: Land Use – Rural Area, of this Plan, and within three hundred (300) m of the subject area within North Aldershot as outlined on Schedule K: Land Use– North Aldershot, of this Plan, and *may* be sent to every tenant. For amendments that generally apply city-wide, a notice *shall* be placed in a local newspaper approved by the City Clerk, that has a general circulation in the area;

(vi) a statutory public meeting *shall* be held by the appropriate committee of *City* Council established to conduct statutory public meetings. Notice of the statutory public meeting to inform and obtain comments from the public *shall* be given at least fourteen (14) days prior to the date of the meeting, when a preliminary public notification has been given. When this preliminary public notification has not been given, notice of the public meeting *shall* be given at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the meeting. For an Official Plan or Zoning By-law amendment that applies generally city-wide, notice of the public meeting *shall* be placed in the local newspaper;

(vii) for a site specific amendment or a plan of subdivision, notice of the statutory public meeting *shall* be placed in a local newspaper and/or sent by mail or personal service to every owner of land within one hundred and twenty (120) m of the subject area within the area outlined on Schedule C: Land Use – Urban Area, of this Plan, within three hundred (300) m of the subject area within the area outlined on Schedule I: Land Use – Rural Area, of this Plan, and within three hundred (300) m of the subject area within the area outlined on Schedule K: Land Use – North Aldershot, of this Plan**,** and *may* be sent to every tenant and to any parties who have requested notification of any meetings on this particular matter, provided the request is received before notices are issued;

(viii) notice of a statutory public meeting *shall* include information regarding the power of the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal to dismiss an appeal if an appellant has not provided Council with oral

submissions or written submissions before a decision is made on the *development application*;

(ix) in the case of an Official Plan amendment, adequate time *should* be allowed after the statutory public meeting for staff to analyze all public comments before the staff report and the proposed amendment is dealt with by Council, except in the case of a housekeeping amendment or an amendment for which there is no public interest. In the case of a Zoning By-law amendment and/or plan of subdivision, or where it is determined that adequate time has been provided for analysis of the comments on an Official Plan Amendment, a decision and recommendation to Council on the application *may* be made by the Committee at the statutory public meeting, if appropriate;

(x) notification of the Council decision regarding the proposed amendment and/or the plan of subdivision *shall* be given to the applicant and persons who expressed an interest in the matter, by the *City* Clerk;

(xi) where a *development application* is deemed to have a potentially significant impact, the *City may* require an expanded public consultation process, including additional community meetings; and

(xii) when *development applications* for amendments to both the City and Regional Official Plans are made to permit *development* on the same property, *City* Council *may* hold a joint statutory public meeting with the Region of Halton to consider both applications concurrently, in order to eliminate duplication of processing and to streamline and simplify public consultation.

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