



Town of Erin Citizen Engagement Charter

Introduction

The Town of Erin is committed to creating a vibrant and future-ready community. Meaningful citizen engagement is critical to the process. Members of the public must feel they have been included and have the opportunity to voice their thoughts and ideas on programs and services that directly affect them. Following the Town's Citizen Engagement Survey, it was identified that surveys are the most preferred means by which residents would like to provide information and stay involved in Town initiatives, surveys give staff the opportunity to track and receive information from residents. The Citizen Engagement Charter is a commitment between Town staff, elected representatives and the public to engage in an effective and positive manner to guide growth for the Town in the years to come.

This Citizen Engagement Charter outlines the importance of local government and Town staff working and communicating with the public to create a fully democratic and participative environment.

This Engagement Charter is the first step in providing residents with access to resources and information that allows for open discussion and meaningful two-way communication.

The goals of the Citizen Engagement Charter are to:

- Improve public participation in Town initiatives and decisions;
- Create an open dialogue in which the public can voice their thoughts and concerns in a constructive manner; and
- Improve how easily the public can access Town information

Charter Vision and Mission Statement and Core Values

Vision

To establish a level of enhanced engagement that fosters creativity and innovation.

Mission Statement

The Town of Erin strives to achieve meaningful engagement with residents that's driven by collaboration between community members, Town staff and elected representatives.

Core Values

These Core Values were established by the public, through a Citizen Engagement Survey, and outlines the principles of public engagement for the Town:

Transparent

The Town of Erin commits to communicate with the public in clear writing and plain language, in a timely manner and in advance of decision-making, when applicable. We will establish appropriate levels of consultation for each process and strive to communicate out on all updates as they pertain to the public.

Trust

By developing two-way communication and providing ways for effective idea sharing we allow residents to feel confident with our decision-making process. The Town will share relevant updates in the form of print, digital and face-to-face communication to provide residents fair opportunities for consultation and discussion.

Co-operation

The Town of Erin will make decisions in collaboration with stakeholders and citizens. Every person has the right to participate in community initiatives, as it pertains to them. The Town will provide notice and information to allow for effective engagement from the citizens of the Town.

Accountability

The Town will remain accountable for all decisions made and policies implemented. We understand our duty to deliver value to our residents, and spend tax dollars effectively and efficiently for the betterment of the town.

Responsive

The Town will provide the public with accurate updates and information in a timely manner. Summarized feedback will be provided to residents and stakeholders after each public engagement session. We will be responsive to requests from our residents and provide insight on how and why decisions were made.

Efficiency

We will engage in an efficient way that will allow Town staff to make informed decisions regarding matters that directly affect residents.

Town Commitments

Engaging the Public

Working with residents and stakeholders as part of the decision-making process allows the Town to make informed decisions with the full understanding of how it may shape the lives of the individuals or businesses that are in direct correlation with the matter. By making an engagement commitment to our residents, we invite creativity and strengthen the civic pride to build a place we all want to live and work in.

Engaging with the Community:

- Open lines of communication between elected representatives, Town staff and residents;
- Report updates directly to the public;
- Provide accurate information and updates in a timely manner, in as many places as possible;
- Develop new platforms to engage with stakeholders and residents (e.g., an engagement website);
- Host Public Engagement Sessions to deliver information and receive feedback on Town initiatives;
- Empower and actively invite the community to participate;
- Ensure open access to information; and
- Share how feedback was used and how decisions and actions were made.

The Global Standard for Public Participation

The International Association for Public Participation’s (IAP2) spectrum of public participation is a resource used globally to define the levels of public engagement. The Town of Erin will use IAP2’s five levels of participation as a guide for our communication with citizens on potential initiatives and new developments.



IAP2’s PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM

The IAP2 Federation has developed the Spectrum to help groups define the public’s role in any public participation process. The IAP2 Spectrum is quickly becoming an international standard.

| | | INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION  | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| | | INFORM | CONSULT | INVOLVE | COLLABORATE | EMPOWER |
| PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL | | To provide the public with 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 work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. | To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. | To place final decision making in the hands of the public. |
| | PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC | We will keep you informed. | We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. | We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible. | We will implement what you decide. |

Roles of the Residents

Citizen Engagement provides a sense of belonging and civic pride. When local governments use the public as resources and a source of information it allows for responsible decisions leading to a higher participation rate within the community, hence allowing the community to grow and prosper.

As a resident you have the right to participate in civic activities that directly affect your quality of life and connection to the place you live.

Along with your right to participate and engage with the Town, you as a resident have a responsibility to your Town to provide:

- Honest feedback;
- A positive mind-set when addressing municipal issues;
- Mutual respect by showing consideration and value for another person's point of view;
- Value the role of each person in the engagement process; and
- Take steps to be informed on the issues that impact the growth and sustainability of municipal programs and services.

Common Terms

Citizen: The terms citizen and resident can be used interchangeably in this charter. Citizen refers to individuals who reside in the Town of Erin.

Stakeholder: Individuals, local organizations or groups that have interest in Town matters or will be directly affected by the outcome of the decision.

Decision-making: The process of how municipal matters are decided or implemented. Including the communications and audiences involved in the decision.

Meaningful Engagement: The opportunity that citizens or stakeholders have access to information and the level of participation from the public.

References

City of Burlington – Burlington Community Engagement Charter, April 8, 2013

City of Mississauga – Our Community Engagement Strategy, July 2017

Town of Mono - Our Mono Town of Mono Engagement Charter, December 2016

City of Hamilton – Public Engagement Charter, Spring 2014

International Association for Public Participation

Engagement Plan

| Action Item | Description | Timeframe |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| Erin Connection: (monthly e-newsletter) | The monthly electronic newsletter will be circulated through a subscription base. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide information and updates on key projects, events, and important reminders. | Monthly, starting July 2018 |
| Public Engagement Session | Sessions will be held at the start of each large project or initiative that will affect a group of residents. The sessions will provide the public with information and resources and allow staff and Council to receive feedback directly from residents. | Sessions will be scheduled as needed |
| Information Review | Town staff will be reaching out to residents to find out how they receive information and where they would like to see the information. Face-to-face sessions will occur at various places around Town and an online survey has been circulated. | Summer 2018 |
| Engagement Webpage | A page dedicated to community engagement will be added to our website for the sole purpose of engaging with residents. The page will contain updates regarding projects and ways to reach out and get involved in projects. | Fall 2018 |
| Public Information Survey | The Town will implement the use of online and hard-copy surveys to better connect with the public on projects and to get a full understanding on how residents feel. | Surveys will be created as needed |