

2015 Annual Update Report: City of Pickering Community Engagement Strategy (Priorities for 2014-2015)

Priority	Action	Progress Update	Lead Department
Create a new learning and engagement unit to advise Council & Departments	Staff who completed the IAP2 training in 2013 and 2014 will develop a training program that will be delivered to other municipal staff. In this way, community engagement strategies will be implemented by a broader range of staff.	<p>In early 2015, City staff were informed, via email and intranet, of the purpose of the community engagement team and were provided with some broad concepts around community engagement.</p> <p>In the fall 2015, several of our IAP2 trained staff will offer workshops for staff who work in departments which employ community engagement strategies.</p> <p>Also in the fall 2014, Council and the Senior Management Team will participate in a ½ day workshop called “Public Participation for Decision Makers – What, Why and How to Involve Others in Your Decisions”.</p>	Library
	In addition, the staff that completed the IAP2 training will become a core group of community engagement specialists within the corporation that can be called up to facilitate Open Houses and other corporate consultative events.	IAP2 staff were used as facilitators for several open houses which focused on growth in South Pickering.	City Development
Propose a motion for Council consideration concerning the city’s commitment to engagement and adopt a strategy on public engagement and learning.	A statement of commitment will be drafted by the Community Engagement staff team and will be added to next year’s progress report for Council consideration and approval.	<p>Examples of how other municipalities have phrased their commitment statements were compiled.</p> <p>Draft statement for the City of Pickering has been prepared and forwarded to Council for their consideration</p>	Community Engagement Staff Team

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<p>Involve engagement specialists in the design of public consultation to support major city planning exercises</p>	<p>In undertaking major city planning exercises, the City Development Department will use the expertise of three department staff members that are scheduled to receive IAP2 training in the fall, to develop public engagement components of these exercises. In addition, with the assistance of the IAP2 trained staff, the City Development Department will explore the role of external engagement specialists when preparing work plans for major planning studies. When external specialists are identified to be required, the Department will propose an engagement program and consulting budget to engage external specialists.</p>	<p>Staff from the Office of the CAO, Library, and City Development who received IAP2 training in the fall 2014, worked with an external engagement specialist retained by the City Development Department to deliver five community roundtable discussions in January and February 2015.</p> <p>The external engagement specialist trained staff to facilitate the roundtable discussions that were designed to initiate a conversation with the community about where, and to what extent, growth should occur in Pickering.</p> <p>The findings from the roundtable discussions were used by the City Development Department to develop with the assistance of a consultant, an online engagement platform, that was launched to the public on May 6, 2015 and will be active until June 30, 2015.</p> <p>Funding from the Places to Grow Implementation Fund program was used to retain the external engagement specialists to implement the roundtable discussions and the online platform.</p>	<p>City Development</p>

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<p>Work with residents to periodically review and redesign city services and programs</p>	<p>This approach is already underway with many stakeholder groups formed by city staff and they include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Council • Pickering Recreation Complex Stakeholders Group • Library Strategic Plan • Adopt a School • Leash Free Working Group • Cultural Stakeholders Networking Group <p>Staff will seek opportunities to further expand these opportunities.</p>	<p>Library has reinstated its Teen Advisory Group to get ongoing input on its services and programs from a teen perspective.</p> <p>Library Strategic Plan employed various community engagement techniques to obtain community input into the development of the new strategic plan. This four year plan reflects the reading and learning needs and plans of the community.</p> <p>As part of the Cultural Strategic Plan task force, the Library was charged with connecting cultural stakeholders. In 2014 and 2015, there have been two meetings of Cultural Stakeholders Networking Group in which shared aspirations have been identified.</p> <p>The most important asset at the Pickering Recreation Complex is the members. Without them we wouldn't exist. Facility, staff, equipment and other amenities are critical ingredients when it comes to obtaining, engaging and retaining members. They are the factors that define their club experience. Responsive communication</p>	<p>All Departments</p>

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		<p>with members must be part of the culture and operating fabric of our facility in order to have a real impact on all member categories.</p> <p>To make this happen the Pickering Recreation Complex Stakeholders Discussion Group was formed and meets with staff seasonally. The invited members represent a cross-section of membership categories.</p> <p>Culture & Recreation staff also attend the monthly Pickering Squash Club Executive meetings and the Racquetball Committee meetings to keep communication open and stay connected to club events and participation. City staff draw on the strengths of the teams together with internal communication, mutual understanding, shared obligation, a clear sense of common purpose, and a well-informed camaraderie to ensure that Recreation Complex management identify the needs of our users and satisfy those needs. Constructive criticism always helps us improve.</p> <p>The more engaged and connected Complex Members become, the more likely they are to progress toward their goals and to keep</p>	

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		<p>coming back. The Recreation Complex has a great variety of services and programs that Members are not utilizing. By creating the monthly Recreation Complex Newsletter, Pickering Fit, we are able to promote our services and the value of an active lifestyle in an efficient and cost effective manner.</p> <p>In partnership with VIVA, the Pickering Recreation Complex hosts a monthly Coffee Chat & Cards event for Members who are 55+. Coffee Chat & Cards is a drop in lounge where members can have a coffee, enjoy some conversation and play a game of cards or board game. It is an informal opportunity for adult members to build bonds and socialize with other mature, active adults.</p> <p>The Sports Council has been meeting quarterly throughout 2014 and 2015 to share information and provide the City with valuable input as to progress within the clubs. Each meeting a guest speaker from the City staff, or from within the Community, has attended to provide information and opportunities for support. Special guests have included staff from City of Pickering By-Law Department, Youth Initiatives and Youth Friendly Application, Trillium</p>	

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		<p>Foundation, City of Pickering Fitness Staff, and Snap'd Newspaper/Marketing opportunities. Ongoing information on Provincial Grants is provided, as well as subsidy support for participants of various sports groups. Communications between sports groups as well as the City of Pickering and various groups has greatly improved. Sharing of information continues between groups between meetings. Minutes are taken and available for all meetings.</p> <p>The Adopt a School program began in the fall of 2014 and was completed in the spring of 2015. Sixteen schools and a total of 482 students, participated in the program. Adopt a School is a comprehensive fire safety curriculum program designed for grade one students. It presents six fire safety messages using classroom lessons, activities and home connections. It provides schools with maximum flexibility so that presentations can be taught as stand-alone fire safety units by fire crews and is easily integrated in language arts core curriculum lessons by teachers. Currently, Pickering firefighters teach the curriculum over four learning sessions. Teaching students how to prevent fires and how to respond properly in fire situations are skills students in adopted classes will remember and practice throughout their lives. Our goal is to teach</p>	

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		<p>students to recognize and avoid fire risks, helping them lead fuller and more productive lives and reaching beyond the classroom to families in this process.</p> <p>The Leash Free Working Group met twice last year to review concerns in the leash free area. In an attempt to find new members, staff used social media (Facebook), community page and posters at our existing leash free area. The working group gained 2 new members. Throughout the year, our members act as staff's eyes and ears at the park. They ensure the leash free areas are kept clean, holes are filled in, garbage picked up, and seeding. The working group provided valuable input on where the solar light should be placed. Light was put up and has been a huge success.</p>	

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<p>Develop a long-term strategy for providing information to residents, compensating for diminished local media</p>	<p>In May, 2014, a Communications Plan was created detailing the City’s communications goals, areas of challenge, and communication channels of focus. This plan will serve as a resource as staff move forward with our communications initiatives in 2014-2015 to support our mandate of facilitating a unified, creative and innovative approach to our corporate communications.</p> <p>With rapidly evolving technology diversifying the way people receive and share news, it is important that as a transparent and inclusive government, staff consistently strive to enhance the way we engage those who live, work, and play here in the unfolding story of Pickering. As media can pick and choose which Pickering stories they wish to share, it is critical that staff explore and utilize other ways of getting our key messages out. As such, staff launched a new community eNewsletter, titled, ‘Your City. Right Now.’ aimed at touching on the main highlights of our existing niche publications, as well as profiling news of general interest.</p>	<p>A new outreach initiative staff are introducing and building on as resources permit is a City of Pickering Street Team. Deploying our very own ‘Brand Ambassadors’ to get the word out about various key City services, promotions and special events will help strengthen City/public relationships, build trust, and help to personalize “City Hall,” providing an understanding of subject matters that may not already be well promoted, or that people do not often actively seek out information on.</p> <p>Two street team events targeting youth and seniors on Emergency Preparedness have been executed so far.</p> <p>Developing in 2015 - Pickering’s New, Free Mobile App, Pingstreet – to provide residents and visitors with convenient access to City information and tools on the go. Users who download this app have the ability to receive push notifications which would benefit the City during an emergency should we want to provide key alerts to mobile home screens.</p>	<p>All Departments</p>

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	<p>Building on initiatives like this, staff will continue to develop our communications strategy and help staff understand how to best employ the communications tools at their disposal. Some of the communication channels of focus include social media, website and eNewsletters.</p>	<p>Staff are considering a boulevard sign pilot program to promote high profile City initiatives and events in designated areas within the community. Key corporate messages would be determined and customized signage would be designed to support our community engagement initiatives.</p> <p>The Integrated Marketing Team will be reviewing a kiosk/iPad program for City facilities to provide opportunities for residents/visitors to subscribe to newsletters/like us on social media, take surveys, etc.</p>	