

PROJECT COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

CITY OF FERNIE DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS ENHANCEMENT

To Derek Cimolini Manager of Planning, City of Fernie	From McElhanney Ltd.
Re Project Communication and Engagement Plan	Date February 6, 2023

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Fernie is undertaking a development approvals enhancement process to identify and address current gaps and concerns with the City's bylaws and approval processes and initiate the implementation of a development application and permit tracking system (the Project).

This Project Communication and Engagement Plan (Plan) was developed based on the discussions and outcomes from the project kick-off meeting with the City's planning team on September 21, 2022, and the meeting with the City's Communication Coordinator on October 31, 2022. This Plan will act as a living document to outline communication and engagement activities that will support the Project on time and within budget.

2.0 PURPOSE

This Plan aims to ensure an organized, transparent, efficient, and appropriate approach to meaningful communication and engagement with internal departments, affected interested parties and the greater community. The Plan is founded on the project team's commitment to ensuring that the interested parties have consistent access to accurate and timely project information and understand when there are opportunities to provide input. As part of this commitment, the project team will steadfastly address questions and concerns as they arise.

The Plan details how those interested in or affected by the Project will be communicated and engaged throughout the Project and how community members can participate. The Plan outlines the significant

opportunities for engagement, including in-person and online forums that directly connect participant input into possibilities for bylaw amendments in the future.

3.0 PROJECT COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT TEAM

The project communication and engagement team comprises the City of Fernie's key planning team members, the Communication Coordinator, and McElhanney's key team members. They are all managed by the City's Project Manager, Derek Cimolini.

Roles and Responsibilities

Based on discussions with the City, the following outlines the roles and responsibilities of the project communication and engagement team:

Roles: **City Project Manager** | *Personnel:* **Derek Cimolini**

Responsibilities:

- Review and approve the Project Communication and Engagement Plan.
- Oversee the public engagement process.
- Coordinate communication platforms and techniques.
- Prepare and submit a final report to the UBCM LGDA program.
- Communicate project updates with the UBCM program officer.
- Coordinate with the Communication Coordinator and McElhanney to ensure the LGDA project information on the City's website is up to date.
- Attend bi-weekly project update meetings with McElhanney.
- Communicate project updates with the City's internal project team and senior management.
- Coordinate meetings/workshops/engagement events with the City's internal departments.
- Coordinate and attend Council/COTW meetings for the Project.
- Coordinate with McElhanney on Council/COTW reports and presentations.
- Review and circulate project meeting minutes.
- Review and approve project communication and engagement materials, presentations, and reports.
- Participate and chair internal and external project engagement sessions.
- Monitor and respond to feedback from the public and other interested parties.
- Assist with managing stakeholder relations for the Project.

Roles: **City Planning Team** | *Personnel:* **Raquel Bayley; Erika Hornquist**

Responsibilities:

- Identify potentially interested parties who should be involved in the Project.
- Review engagement materials submitted by McElhanney in a timely manner to provide ongoing feedback.
- Coordinate with other City departments and ensure they are engaged as needed.
- Promote external and public engagement activities to encourage active participation from interested parties and all residents.
- Coordinate with booking facilities for engagement events.
- Review and assist in developing presentations for project engagement sessions.
- Participate in internal and external engagement sessions.

Roles: **City Communication Coordinator** | *Personnel:* **Liz Rhodes**

Responsibilities:

- Assist in reviewing the Communication and Engagement Plan and help to identify interested parties.
- Promote public engagement sessions by updating the City's website/social media as needed.
- Ensure the LGDA project on the City's website is updated.
- Coordinate with the Project Manager and McElhanney to support media-related inquiries.
- Assign McElhanney as the administrator on "Lets Talk Fernie" to set up the project webpage template and provide support as needed.
- Review and publish the project engagement webpage on "Lets Talk Fernie."
- Update the project engagement webpage on "Lets Talk Fernie" as needed.

Roles: **McElhanney Project Manager** | *Personnel:* **Brad Elenko, RPP, MCIP**

Responsibilities:

- Oversee the project communication and engagement plan.
- Allocate and assign resources for project communication and engagement events.
- Assist with project engagement sessions.



- Review project communication and engagement materials, reports, and presentations.
- Attend Council/COTW meetings and answer questions.
- Attend interviews and meetings with key interested parties.

Roles: **McElhanney Project Planner** | *Personnel:* **Ruibin Li, RPP, MCIP**

Responsibilities:

- Prepare and implement project engagement plan
- Prepare meeting agenda and minutes
- Attend bi-weekly project update meetings with the City Project Manager.
- Communicate project updates with McElhanney project team members.
- Prepare and launch a project engagement webpage on "Lets Talk Fernie."
- Assist with City Communication Coordinator in updating the project information on the City's website and the "Lets Talk Fernie" webpage.
- Prepare project communication and engagement materials, reports, and presentations.
- Work with McElhanney's graphic designer on engagement materials.
- Prepare and attend project engagement activities.
- Attend Council/COTW meetings and answer questions.
- Attend interviews and meetings with key interested parties.

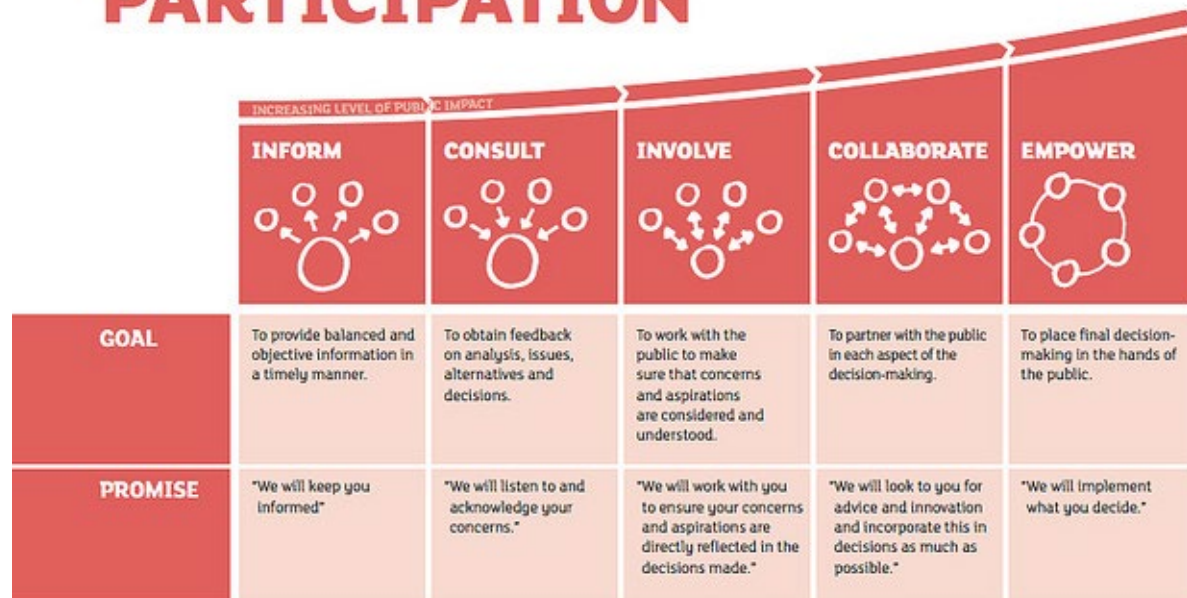
4.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND APPROACH

The following guiding principles were developed based on discussions with the City project team:

- **Multi-departmental Collaboration:** Ongoing challenges in the development approval processes require the City's departments to collaborate in new ways to develop solutions grounded in shared values.
- **Clear Communications:** Presenting clearly and straightforwardly is essential to spark interest and understanding in the Project. Messaging should be concise, clear and consistent across all communications using effective information design and plain language. All project material will be easy to understand, accessible, and engaging.
- **Always Report Back:** to build trust, it is essential to reflect on how feedback did or did not influence the recommendations and project deliverables. Engagement participants will be informed of the process and decisions by letting them know how their input has been used throughout the Project.

This Plan was developed following the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) best practices to create a cohesive engagement approach. The IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation is the preeminent international organization dedicated to advancing the practice of public participation.

IAP2 SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



There will be two levels of engagement and communication for this Project:

1. Engagement for the general public focused on outcome-based questions, i.e., 'what are we trying to achieve?' or 'what is your preference for...?'
2. Targeted stakeholders to host discussions on specific topics relevant to the development approvals enhancement.

The primary focus of the project engagement and communications will be on targeted conversations based on specific and defined topics that would contribute to enhancing the City's development approvals. To support these conversations and to inform the community of the purpose and potential impact of the Project, the online engagement platform will be used to educate and inform the general public. Workshops will provide opportunities for more direct involvement on specific topics.

5.0 COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

The following outlines the recommended engagement tools for the Project.

1. **Let's Talk Fernie Online Engagement Hub:** A City's engagement platform to Inform and consult with interested parties and the general public. Activities include but are not limited to surveys, interactive maps, Q&A, discussion forums, etc.
2. **Online Surveys:** Online surveys will allow the community to provide input at any time within the engagement period. Surveys will be facilitated through the Let's Talk Fernie website.
3. **Virtual Meeting (MS Teams):** The team will use MS Teams to host virtual meetings with stakeholders and residents. Participants will have opportunities to engage with the team directly in the virtual meetings.
4. **Interactive Presentation (Mentimeter):** Communicate, interact and engage with meeting participants using live polls, word clouds, quizzes, multiple-choice questions and more. Track learning and understanding by asking questions and downloading results.
5. **1-on-1s Stakeholder Outreach/Interview:** Engage with targeted stakeholders through virtual meetings, phone calls, and in-person conversations. The project team may leverage the advantages of online engagement to run rapid one-on-one interviews with individuals and small groups, collecting detailed and nuanced input about specific issues.
6. **Focus Group Workshop/Session:** Virtual or in-person focus group workshops/sessions will be hosted to collaborate with the City's planning team and multi-departmental members.
7. **Community Open Houses:** The project team will host virtual or in-person community open houses to discuss issues and topics with residents.
8. **Social Media/Newspaper/Signs:** This tool will be used to inform and update the public; Raise awareness, and inform engagement activities

6.0 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

To ensure engagement opportunities are provided for both the targeted stakeholders and the broader community, analysis has been undertaken better to understand the stakeholders, the appropriate engagement levels, and recommended engagement and communications tactics. This engagement and communications plan is intended to be a living strategy for the Project's duration.

The following list identifies stakeholders with a potential interest or considerable influence on the outcome of this process:



Stakeholders	Level of Engagement	Recommended Engagement Method
1) Primary Stakeholders		
<i>These stakeholders have the highest interest in the Project, including special interest groups and those likely to be most affected by its outcomes.</i>		
City Planning Team	Collaborate	Meetings
Internal City Staff/Subject matter experts	Collaborate	Focus group session
City Council	Collaborate	Council/Committee of the Whole Meetings
Local Development and Construction Communities	Consult	Online Survey; Workshop
Fernie Housing Societies	Consult	Virtual or in-person meeting
2) Secondary Stakeholders		
<i>These stakeholders primarily refer to the groups who may have a limited interest in or could contribute to the project outcomes</i>		
Local Residents	Inform/Consult (limited)	Online Survey;
Marginalized Populations/Seasonal Workers/Recreation Users/Tourists	Inform	Online Public Information Meeting;
3) Local Governments, Agencies, and Indigenous Communities		
Planning and Development Managers in other municipalities	Consult	Online Survey; Meetings
District of East Kootenay	Consult	Online Survey; Meetings
Ktunaxa First Nation	Inform	Online Survey; Meeting; Project Information Notification
External Referral Agencies	Consult	Online Survey; Meetings

7.0 ENGAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

Successful communication for this Project will rely on a solid partnership with City staff. McElhanney will develop engagement and communication content and lead the engagement plan's implementation. City staff will lead on ensuring branding is appropriate and will provide logistical support with launching communications and planning engagement events.

Based on the detailed project Work Plan, the following table outlines the engagement activities, project communications, and estimated implementation timelines.

No. Engagement Tasks		Estimated Implementation Timeline
Phase 1- Project Initiation		November 2022 – January 2023
1.	Project Communication and Engagement Plan	January 2022
2.	Project Engagement and Information Hub on “Lets Talk Fernie”	January 2023
Phase 2 - Development Approvals Process and Policies Review		February, 2023 – May, 2023
3.	In-person Council presentation	February
4.	In-person interviews with the CAO and key managers at the City	February
5.	Workshop with local development and construction communities	February
6.	Focus Group Session with City’s multi-departmental representatives	February
7.	Meeting with Fernies’s housing societies	February
8.	Meeting with Regional District of East Kootenay Planning Director	February
9.	Meeting with Ktunaxa First Nation Representative	February
10.	Report Back to Council in an informal workshop setting	April – May

Phase 3 - Process Mapping and Prepare Development Applications Handbook		April 2023 – July 2023
11.	Focus Group Meetings with City subject matter experts to define processes for development applications	April – May
12.	Informal Council session to present and discuss the new processes and the Development Applications Handbook	May - June
13.	Public Information Meeting (virtual or in-person)	June – July
Phase 4 - Planning, Initiation and Implementation of a Development Application and Permit Tracking System		June 2023 – August 2023
14.	Focus group meeting to discuss the needs assessment	June - July
15.	Informal Council session to present and discuss the needs assessment for implementing an online fast-track development permit application and permit tracking system	July – August

8.0 ENGAGEMENT RISKS

Engaging and communicating on development approvals is challenging for project engagement and communications. Efforts will be made to simplify language, focus on critical topics, and use visuals wherever possible to disseminate the information more effectively and make this project more accessible to the community. Engagement and communication risks for the Project include:

- Low participation rates. Engagement tools, language and processes will be simplified and brought to where people are to make participation as easy as possible. Various tools and opportunities will be provided so participants can choose the best option.
- Multiple projects are ongoing in the City at the same time. With multiple projects occurring at one time, community members may be unclear about how feedback will be used or what it is intended for. Additional efforts will be made to clarify how feedback was incorporated throughout the process.

9.0 MONITORING & EVALUATION

As a living Engagement and Communication Plan, measuring performance throughout the Project is important. This will help us to determine which approaches were successful and which were not and how we can improve our approach to be more effective. Input collected will lead to improved future outcomes.

We recommend asking for feedback at events through short, simple surveys available in-person at events or online. Questions may include:

- How did you hear about this event/initiative (organization member, online, Councillor's update, etc.)?



- Were there any barriers to your participation (i.e. mobility, timing, etc.)?
- How do you prefer to receive project information (i.e. mail, email, newsletter, web, in-person, etc.)?
- Do you feel you were given enough information to form an opinion?
- Would you like to receive email updates about the progress of this initiative in the future? If so, provide contact information.