Policy

Department/Section Corporate Services	Policy # POL-ADM-025
Subject **Community Engagement Policy**	Enacted by Council: Motion #

1. Purpose

The Township of Oro-Medonte is committed to enhancing communication between the community and the Township, providing opportunities for the community to be informed, and provide valuable input to on-going and upcoming Township programs and projects. The Township believes that establishing an inclusive community engagement process to better inform stakeholders about decisions that reflect their interests and concerns through a comprehensive and consistent engagement process, is invaluable to the progression and growth of a collaborative and vibrant community.

This policy and the corresponding guidelines will act as a community engagement framework to help staff inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower stakeholders, recognizing that each engagement process carries unique considerations for its stakeholders and engagement objectives. The policy aligns with the Township's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan priority of community engagement.

The Community Engagement Policy establishes guiding principles to enable consistent and coordinated community engagement including:

- Township staff following an aligned method of community engagement through the use of numerous mediums such as in-person gatherings, social media, engagement platforms, or traditional media to enhance communication with the community and stakeholders.
- Ensuring the Oro-Medonte community understands methods and channels of engagement, as well as the opportunities for engagement pertaining to Township projects and/or programs; and
- Depending on the project/initiative, the Township will determine when it is appropriate to surpass the informing stage, and progress to the next step of the engagement process based on specific engagement objectives.

These guiding principles apply to, but are not limited to:

- Township of Oro-Medonte website
- Media releases, advisories, backgrounders, communiques, and Q&A's
- Social Media (X, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn)
- Email newsletters
- Mailouts
- Digital news media (i.e. North Simcoe Life etc.)

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- Focus Groups and Community Meetings (i.e. Strategic Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plan etc.)
- Surveys

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all departments of the Township of Oro-Medonte;
- all full-time, part-time, and casual employees responsible for the design and/or delivery of formal and informal community engagement;
- elected officials participating in engagement processes related to Township projects or programs; and
- all consultants or external organizations that undertake community engagement on behalf of the Township of Oro-Medonte.

3. Definitions

3.1 **Collaborate:** To work with the public in the decision-making process, including development of alternatives, identification of preferred solutions, and to ensure that public concerns are consistently understood and considered.

3.2 **Community:** In general, shall mean residents, businesses, and stakeholders in Oro-Medonte. It is recognized that "community" may also be used to describe smaller geographic and/or residential areas (i.e. Craighurst Community, Hawkestone Community etc.)

3.3 **Consult:** To collect public input for consideration on issues, analysis, alternatives, and decisions.

3.4 **Empower:** Provide the public the opportunity to have an impact in the decision-making process in an open and safe environment.

3.5 **Gathering:** Shall mean, a public meeting, open house, drop-in, neighbourhood gathering organized by the Township, members of Council, community members or stakeholders.

3.6 **Inform:** To provide the public with information to assist them with understanding issues, decision-making, alternatives, opportunities, and solutions.

3.7 **Involve:** To work directly and collaboratively with the public throughout the process to generate ideas and ensure that public concerns and goals are consistently understood and considered.

3.8 **Public:** Any citizen, group, community, business, non-profit, and other stakeholder who may be impacted by, or interested in Township of Oro-Medonte issues and decisions.

3.9 **Public Engagement:** Opportunities for the public to be informed, consulted, involved, or collaborate on issues and decisions that affect their lives, through a dialogue of mutual respect between government and the public.

3.10 **Stakeholder(s):** An individual, organization or group with a vested interest or stake in decision-making or activities of the Township, that may be impacted by a Township program/project and/or have the ability to influence outcomes of Township programs/

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projects. Stakeholders can be used universally, but also recognizes that stakeholders and their potential impacts may vary greatly depending on specific considerations.

4. Policy

Township staff (full-time, part-time, and casual), elected officials, consultants and/or third-party organizations conducting community engagement on behalf of, and within the Township of Oro-Medonte, must follow the guidelines applicable to this policy.

The guidelines pertaining to the Community Engagement Policy form part of the policy and are appended.

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