



Public Engagement & Communications

Survey Action Plan



Survey Overview

In 2018, Lacombe County Council approved a Public Participation Policy, which emphasizes the importance of meaningful public participation on different levels between Lacombe County and its stakeholders. In the policy, Lacombe County committed to:

- Informing, consulting, and engaging the public about decisions that affect them and providing public participation opportunities that are open and transparent.
- Considering the public's input gathered in public participation processes.
- Working together with the public to continuously improve its public participation processes.

In addition to the Public Participation Policy, Lacombe County incorporates the use of a Corporate Communications Strategy to ensure meaningful and relevant information is flowing to its stakeholders at all levels. While the County recognizes that the information generated by the municipality has differing levels of interest to the community, having effective and open channels of communication in which to offer information and to receive feedback from the residents and ratepayers of the community – regardless of demographic – is paramount.

The on-line survey ran from Nov. 15 - Dec. 5, 2019. Mail-in submissions were accepted until mid-December, with surveys distributed inside the November County News. We also ran a Facebook/social media campaign to promote the survey. In total, we received 346 survey responses (232 surveys were mailed in or dropped off, 114 were completed digitally).

This survey had several goals:

- To find out how you want to engage with Lacombe County, and how you want to get involved with public engagement and public participation opportunities.
- To find out where you want to access County content, including news releases, Council decisions, notices, project updates, funding opportunities, videos and pictures, available services, etc.
- To find out how our current information is accessed, used and understood, so that we can build on the topics and channels of communication for our ratepayers.

What we are doing right?

The survey gave us a good indication of where we should invest our time and money, with regards to radio, newspaper, social media and topics featured on-line or in the County News. It also detailed how people want to interact with the County and how they want to provide input. For the most part, the feedback we received was quite positive and indicated that we are on the right track in terms of public participation and external communications at the County.

Where are improvements needed?

There are several areas where we can make improvements to better reach and engage Lacombe County's ratepayers and stakeholders. Those are identified on the following pages, in addition to possible solutions, for Council's consideration.

Action Plan

Goal 1 | How does the public want to engage and be involved with Lacombe County, and what is preventing people from attending public events or providing input?

Challenge(s)	Possible Solution(s)	Timelines (Short, Medium, Long)*	Budget Impacts
The public has busy schedules and limited time.	Clearly explain the issue to potential attendees/target audiences (reduce jargon).	Short/Medium	None
	Consider live streaming Council meetings and other significant meetings.	Short	TBD
	Look into digital engagement platforms for larger events or topics (i.e. Bang the Table).	Medium/Long	TBD
The public find these events (including Council meetings) intimidating.	Carefully select venues and language that are welcoming and accessible.	Short	None
	Consider personal introductions at smaller events (i.e. Council, MPC, SDAB) prior to starting.	Short	None
	Make Council more personable through profiles and highlights to show who they are, what they enjoy about being on Council, etc.	Short/Medium	None

* Short = up to 6 months Medium = 6 months to 1 year Long = more than 1 year

Goal 2 | Where did the public want to access County content and how is our current information accessed, used and understood?

Challenge(s)	Possible Solution(s)	Timelines (Short, Medium, Long)*	Budget Impacts
The public would like to more easily access info from phone/tablet	Enlist IT to develop an Android-friendly version of the myLacombeCounty app.	Medium	TBD
	Redesign/Refresh website to better allow for mobile browsing.	Short/Medium	\$20,000-\$75,000 (depending on the scope).
The public would like the option of being an email subscriber or receiving digital notifications of County news and updates.	Set up an email notification system or other method to notify subscribers when new posts in certain areas are published (County News, Council Highlights, Media Releases, events etc.).	Short/Medium (could tie in with website revamp, or we could look at other options)	TBD
The public have a hard time finding information on the website.	Improve, reorganize and refresh the website to make it easy to navigate, update.	Short/Medium	\$20,000-\$75,000 (depending on the scope).
	Look at search functions for PDF files or redesign web pages so content isn't contained in PDF files as much (i.e. policies/directives/guides, etc.).	Short/Medium	TBD
More of the public are using Instagram than Twitter.	Create a social media strategy for Instagram (what will be used, templates for visual consistency, etc.).	Short	None

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Goal 3 | What can we do better in terms of communications? How should we build on the topics and channels of communication for our ratepayers?

Challenge(s)	Possible Solution(s)	Timelines (Short, Medium, Long)*	Budget Impacts
The public want increased communications regarding major project work.	Work more closely with Directors/Managers on generating timely content (articles, videos, pictures, etc.) on major projects, anticipated timelines and updates.	Short	None
The public want more information on news & activities in other divisions.	Create partnerships with communities/hamlets (similar to the Mirror Corner) to address happenings throughout the County. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Via County News and online (consider revamping the Mirror Corner for something more encompassing). 	Short/Medium	None
The public need more education on the role that County Administrative staff plays in decision making.	Encourage residents to submit questions for Council, Senior Leadership, County Manager to answer (written or via short videos).	Short	None
	Look for opportunities to work in schools to educate on municipal government.	Medium	TBD
	Provide increased Alternatives in Agenda items. Include policy-driven explanations on why decisions were made.	Short	None
The public want expanded information in Council Highlights.	Include reminders in Council Highlights for readers, referring them to the Council Minutes for full details.	Short	None
	Use simple language (not so formal) in Council Highlights.	Short	None
	Record video follow-up with Reeve after Council meetings to discuss meeting highlights.	Short/Medium	Minimal

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Thank you for your feedback!