



TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT
Corporate Communications Plan
2024



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Corporate Communications Plan

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Introduction

The Township sets out to achieve transparent, timely and accurate communication and engagement with our audiences both internally and externally.

Care has been taken to recognize the growing demand for open and two-way communication, particularly as it pertains to listening to citizens, gathering feedback and the expanding influence of technology in accessing information.

The role of communications within the township is to:

- Foster a trusting relationship between the public and the township
- Keep our audiences informed about township projects and activities in order to remain accountable and transparent
- Share information beyond the 'need to know'
- Communicate early and often
- Create opportunities to listen to the public
- Communicate in a style that is friendly and approachable, yet professional
- Proactively communicate to help reduce public inquiries
- Improve the level of personal emergency preparedness
- Remain proactive, effective and trustworthy with our media relations to help journalists tell an accurate, balanced and fair story.

Responsibilities of Corporate Communications

Strategic communications

Using strategic communications as the lens by which content is filtered, communications must uphold the values and standards set out in council's priorities.

Similarly, advancing the township's strategic priorities and corporate messages are included in all messages, campaigns and visual communications.



Choosing graphics and content is done with the intention of reinforcing corporate branding and storytelling.

Community engagement

Also called “public participation”, communications takes an active role in community engagement.

When an engagement campaign is corporate-led, departments collaborate with communications to establish the goals, audiences and timelines for the campaign. This includes a discussion about how the results will be used i.e., the amount of influence the results will have on decision-making.

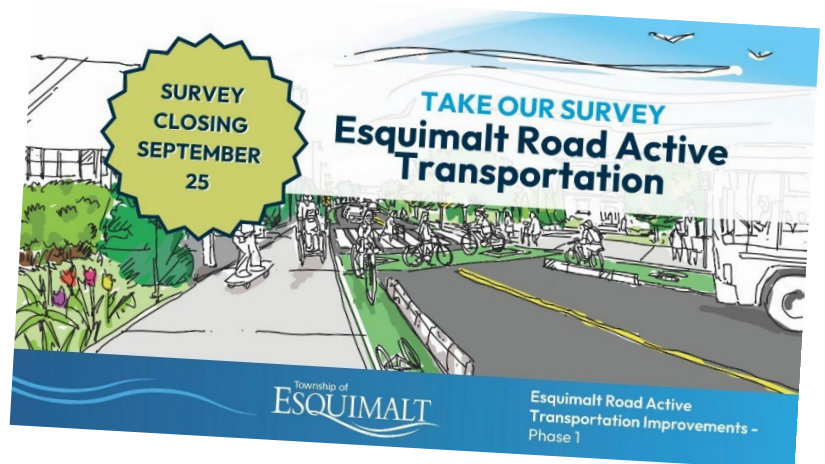
Communications will then:

- Collect relevant information on the topic
- Create any outreach materials
- Create website page(s) as needed
- Share information internally via the intranet
- Create social media graphics and associated campaign
- Arrange social media ads or paper ads if needed
- Share information via other tactics, including e-newsletter, the Current newsletter, digital signage and through stakeholders
- Write a media release announcing the project

The township uses the International Association of Public Participation spectrum as a guide to assess the various levels of public engagement.

When departments hire outside consultants to manage community engagement for a project, communications will round out the services provided by the consultants to ensure that the campaign has what's needed to be successful. This can include:

- Helping departments craft the community engagement portion of the RFP
- Creating social media graphics and managing social media messaging
- Coordinating any advertising and media releases



- Updating the corporate website
- Advising on stakeholders and audiences
- Advising on other public engagement tools as needed

Website and intranet

The corporate website is a key communications tool. It is not only used to put information forward but also used a way of taking in comments from the public via online forms.

The intranet is a repository for staff resources and important staff news, contact information and forms.

Communications manages the website and intranet’s overall look and feel as well as the sites’ administration.

Both the corporate website and intranet employ a decentralized web author model where key staff in each department have website access. These staff receive training from communications staff to ensure web standards are met. While overall site design rests with communications, selected department staff are empowered to make text and document updates pertaining to their portfolios.

Updating website/intranet with day-to-day departmental information such as:

- Updating existing documents
- Adjusting hours of service
- Updating project status

should be done by departments.

Social media

The current social media channels operated by corporate communications are:

- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Facebook
- Instagram



Questions from the public that arrive through these channels are treated with the same standards of timeliness and accuracy as by any other mode of communication.

The tone of the social media accounts is friendly and light. The approach to each is catered to the specific channel, but overall strives to create a community-minded and positive voice.

Emergency communications



Emergency management staff work closely with communications staff on annual preparedness campaigns and emergency planning. Communications is the primary contact for the Emergency Alert service and deploys alerts as needed.

When a situation happens that requires public alert, the subject matter expert (SME) or their director needs to update communications staff (CM) and the CAO; the emergency manager may also be brought in depending on the nature of the issue.

The SME gets relevant details to CM. Under instruction of the CAO, CM decides on the best methods of distribution.

The website is typically the primary location for emergency information. Social media and other links should point there.

Depending on the urgency, CM may be supported by other departments to share information faster, including Corporate Services admin staff, Parks/Rec and VicPD may be asked to repost news on their social media channels.

Branding

Maintaining brand consistency is an important part of communications. Colours, fonts and logo use are the primary elements of the township's current branding strategy.

Communications ensures that all corporate communications is appropriately branded and that partner agencies using the township logo does so in the prescribed manner.

The Township of Esquimalt has not gone through a brand update since 2015. Many elements, like the logo and primary colour palette, are in consistent use by corporate communications. A refresh should be considered in the next 1-2 years.

The broad implementation of a writing style guide is also outstanding from a fulsome branding perspective.

Media relations

Communications is the point of contact for media so that responses, be it by the mayor directly or in an emailed statement, are timely and consider corporate key messaging.

Communications also follows a proactive approach to media relations by sending out media advisories and releases to notify media about township activities of interest.

When possible, background information related to an issue or statement is made readily available to reporters.

Council communications

Outgoing council-specific communications that is not related to township business does not fall under the responsibility of corporate communications.

Internal communications

Communications supports Human Resources in communication with staff by intranet maintenance, design and administration; graphic design; the delivery of key information to staff about relevant and timely updates to aid in responding to public inquiries and messages as needed about employee engagement activities. Internal communications also includes relevant updates to all staff about pertinent information about the organization and the community as a whole.

Our audiences

- residents
- businesses
- First Nations
- other local governments
- media
- staff
- other governments
- prospective employees
- prospective businesses



Communications tools

1. website (including emergency notice banner)
2. e-newsletter (subscription)
3. social media accounts
4. digital signage (in facilities and on roadway)
5. posters
6. the Current newsletter
7. intranet
8. community partner newsletters (e.g., the chamber newsletter)
9. earned media (unpaid media coverage)
10. media release, media advisory, etc.
11. advertising
12. Esquimalt alert emergency notification tool

Messaging

Having a consistent tone to corporate messaging helps the audiences know what to expect and fosters trust when the tone is helpful and responsive. Corporate messaging helps relay the township's desired self-identity.

General themes

1. Esquimalt fosters a sense of belonging for all residents and visitors that is inclusive and accessible;
2. Esquimalt is a connected community with a friendly, neighbourhood feel and a strong culture of volunteerism;
3. Esquimalt values the historical and present relationship with the Canadian Navy;
4. Esquimalt's roots start with a rich First Nations presence that continues to this day;
5. Esquimalt fosters a vibrant and active arts scene through collaborating with community groups;
6. Esquimalt promotes varied and inclusive recreation amenities;
7. Esquimalt's coastal presence makes the natural environment an inexorable part of our identity as does stewarding that land;
8. Esquimalt boasts a diverse business landscape, from a bustling graving dock and light industrial enterprises to offices to breweries and a variety of local businesses.

Departmental and project-specific messaging

Communications serves as a gateway to support township staff with strategic communications planning, visual identity and daily communications needs.

Communications helps departments identify opportunities for public updates about projects and items of interest to the public and other staff. By sharing not only the large initiatives but also the day-to-day activities, audiences can gain a better appreciation and knowledge about the work being done.

Working with departmental project leaders, Communications support includes:

- creating a comprehensive communications strategies for projects and initiatives;
- reviewing and editing RFPs;
- liaising with other governments for multi-organizational campaigns;
- working directly with communications consultants;
- reviewing departmental plans and other materials for plain-language and copy;
- graphic design of reports, handouts, information brochures, project boards and advertisements;
- social media graphic design and advertisements;
- designing project web pages including creating surveys;
- media and issues management—writing information bulletins, key messages and arranging responses to reporters;
- overseeing publication of the annual report and council priorities report.

Methods include a mix of print, electronic and one-on-one engagement.

Reporting out

Communications staff report out publicly on activities and accomplishments via:

- Period reports (3x a year)
- Annual report
- Project reporting, where relevant

Annual communications work plan

The annual communications plan sets out a series of goals and actions rooted in council's priorities. The plan includes timelines and is updated every year.