



# COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

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## COMMITTEE REPORT

**To:** Chair and Members of the Planning Committee  
**From:** Sarah Wilhelm, Manager of Policy Planning  
**Date:** Thursday, April 16, 2020  
**Subject:** **County Official Plan Review – Communications and Engagement Guide**

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### 1.0 Background

In September 2019, we outlined the process and key phases of the Official Plan review (Planning Committee Report PD2019-17). The attached Communications and Engagement Guide is a deliverable for Phase 1 of the project. The Guide supports transparent, targeted and meaningful engagement, which takes into account the following three points of view: public and stakeholders, community leaders and specialized staff. The Planning and Development Department will satisfy and exceed legislative consultation requirements for the project.

### 2.0 Impact of COVID-19

The global spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) has had an extraordinary impact on the health and livelihood of people around the world. With each day, municipalities like Wellington County face new challenges to protect the health and well-being of its residents, businesses, clients and staff. The effects of the pandemic raise important questions for planning practitioners who highly value - and are often required by legislation - to seek public input into their work. The Planning and Development Department is using video and teleconferencing to respond to the current reality of self-isolation and social distancing. Staff will continue to explore new ways to deliver safe options for high quality engagement, but recognize that nothing can replace face-to-face contact. We will adapt as events continue to unfold and monitor the effectiveness of our engagement for this project.

### Recommendations

That the report “County Official Plan Review – Communications and Engagement Guide” be received for information and be forwarded to member municipalities.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Wilhelm, MCIP, RPP  
Manager of Policy Planning

Attachment #1: Communications and Engagement Guide



PLAN WELL

Wellington County Official Plan Review

# Communications and Engagement Guide



LIVE  
WELL



GROW  
WELL



SUSTAIN  
WELL

# Communications and Engagement Guide

## Wellington County Official Plan Review

### 1 Introduction

Effective communication and engagement is a key ingredient to the success of the Official Plan (OP) review. The purpose of the OP review is to satisfy the requirements for a municipal comprehensive review and 5-year review. This document guides - rather than prescribes - engagement activities. The County will apply this Plan with flexibility to adapt to evolving provincial direction, new issues, shifting priorities and the realities of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

### 2 Objectives

The objectives of the Communications and Engagement Guide are to:

- Provide multiple, targeted ways for the public and stakeholders to learn about land use planning in Wellington and provide feedback during key milestones of the review;
- Recognize the shared partnership between the County and our seven member municipalities to collaborate and coordinate land use planning in Wellington by providing them direct involvement in the review;
- Work cooperatively with conservation authorities, other agencies and our municipal neighbours;
- Draw on the expertise of in-house staff and university resources;
- Use available technology to extend our reach and provide new avenues for engagement;
- Document the feedback obtained through the engagement process and show how this input has contributed to the planning and decision-making process; and
- Monitor and measure the success of our engagement.

#### What is a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR)?

The term “municipal comprehensive review” comes from the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (or “A Place to Grow”). This Provincial Plan addresses growth management and environmental protection in a broad region known as the Greater Golden Horseshoe, which includes Wellington County. The Growth Plan (and related guidelines) sets out how to complete the MCR. By completing the MCR, County staff will align the Official Plan policies with the Growth Plan.

#### What is a 5-Year Review?

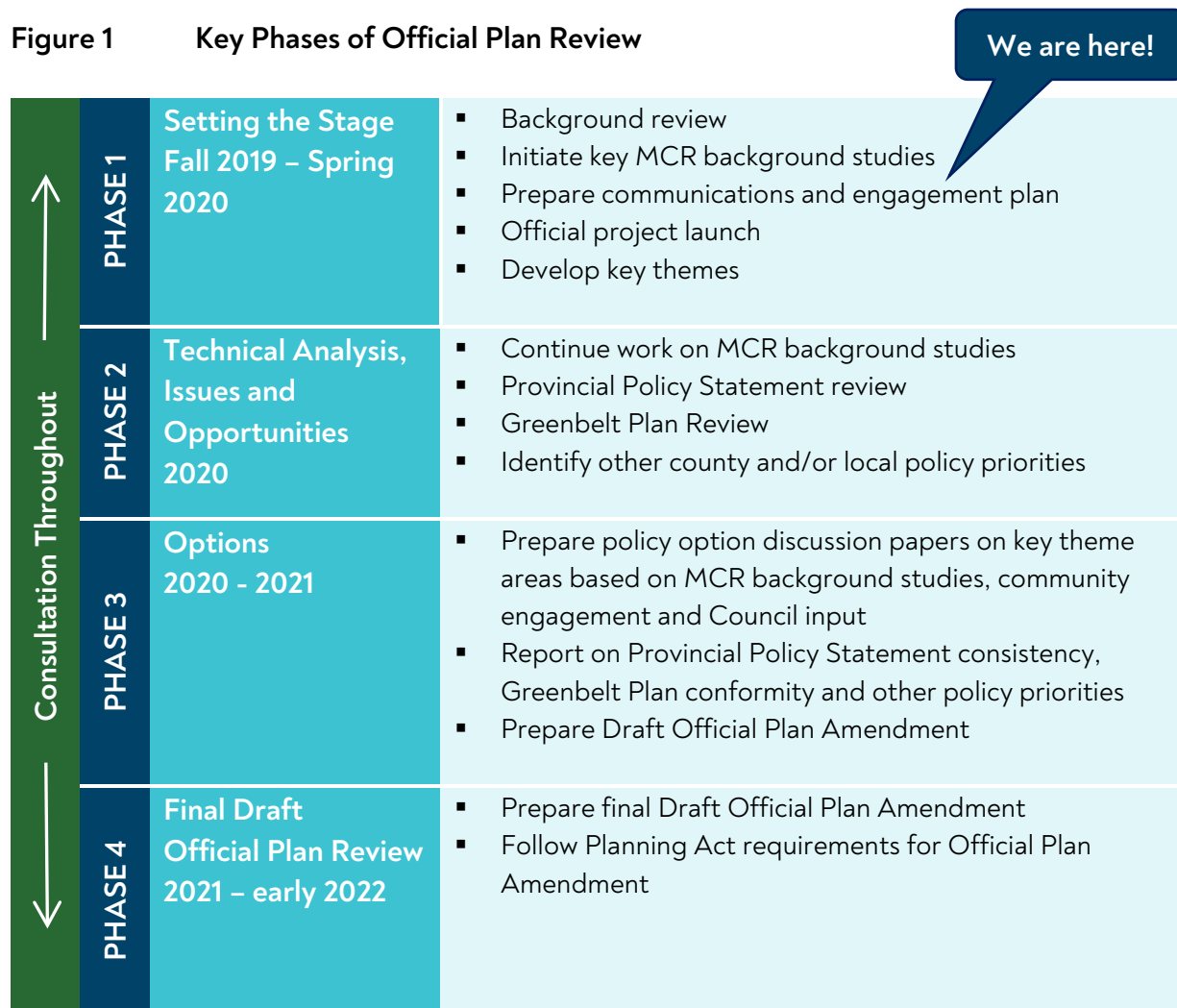
Municipalities are required to keep their Official Plans up to date every five years. The Planning Act lays out the requirements, which include that the Official Plan:

- aligns with the Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan in Wellington,
- addresses matters of provincial interest, and
- is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement.

### 3 Project Phasing and Structure

Communication and engagement efforts will align with the following project phases.

Figure 1 Key Phases of Official Plan Review



The County of Wellington is leading the project, which includes a core project team, project advisors and technical resource teams (Figure 2). Ten preliminary subject areas have been developed based on a detailed background review of changes to the Greenbelt Plan, Growth Plan, Provincial Policy Statement, and Planning Act:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Agricultural and Rural Areas<br>Climate Change<br>Complete and Healthy Communities<br>Consultation and Coordination<br>Growth Management | Housing<br>Mineral Aggregates<br>Natural Heritage and Flooding<br>Transportation<br>Water Resources |
|--|---|

**Figure 2 Project Structure**

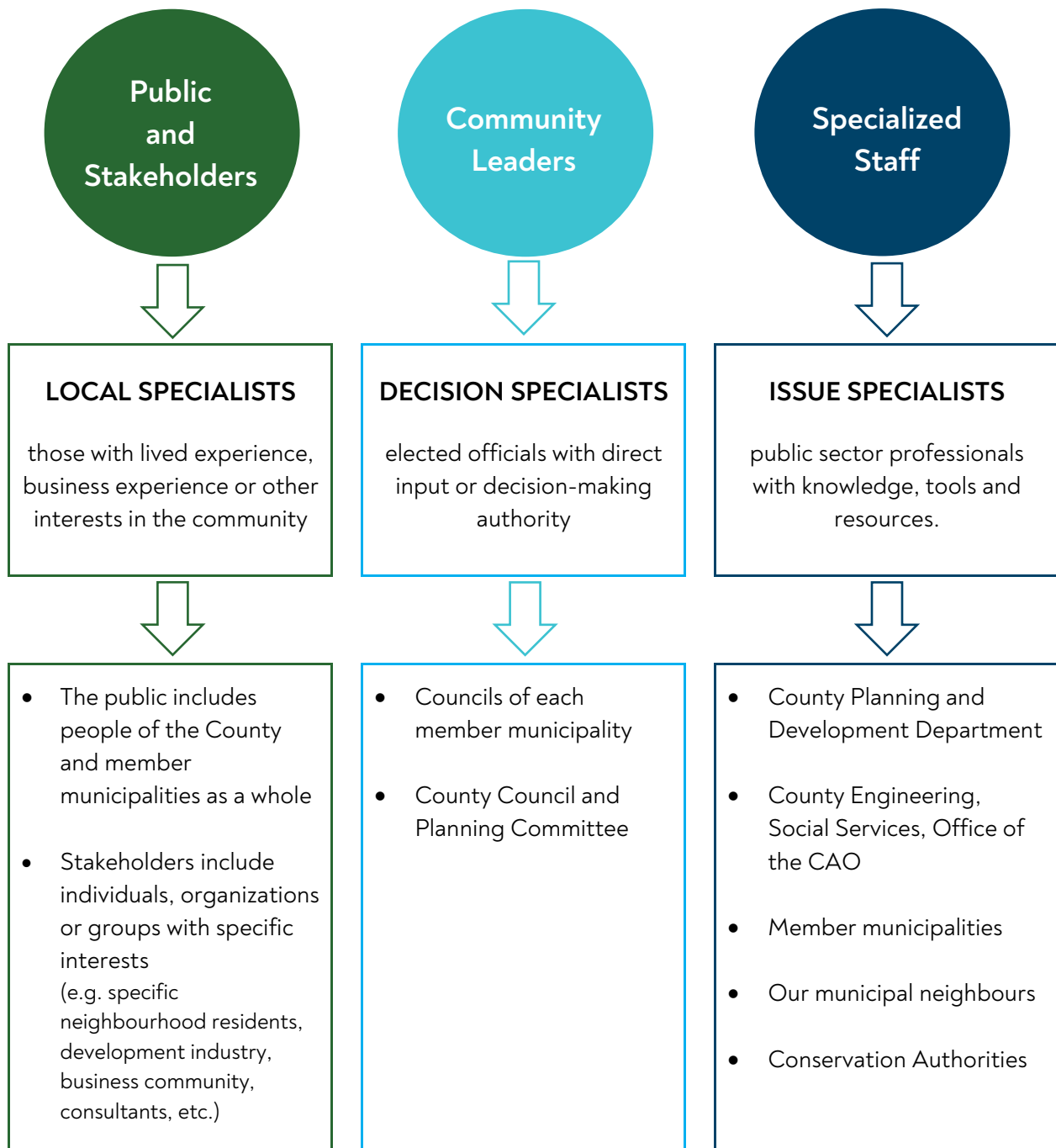


The above project structure is a guide. The Core Project Team will use a flexible approach and adapt to new needs as they may arise.

## 4 Who We Will Engage

This document supports transparent, targeted and meaningful engagement, which takes into account the following three points of view: public and stakeholders, community leaders and specialized staff.

**Figure 3 Who will be Engaged**

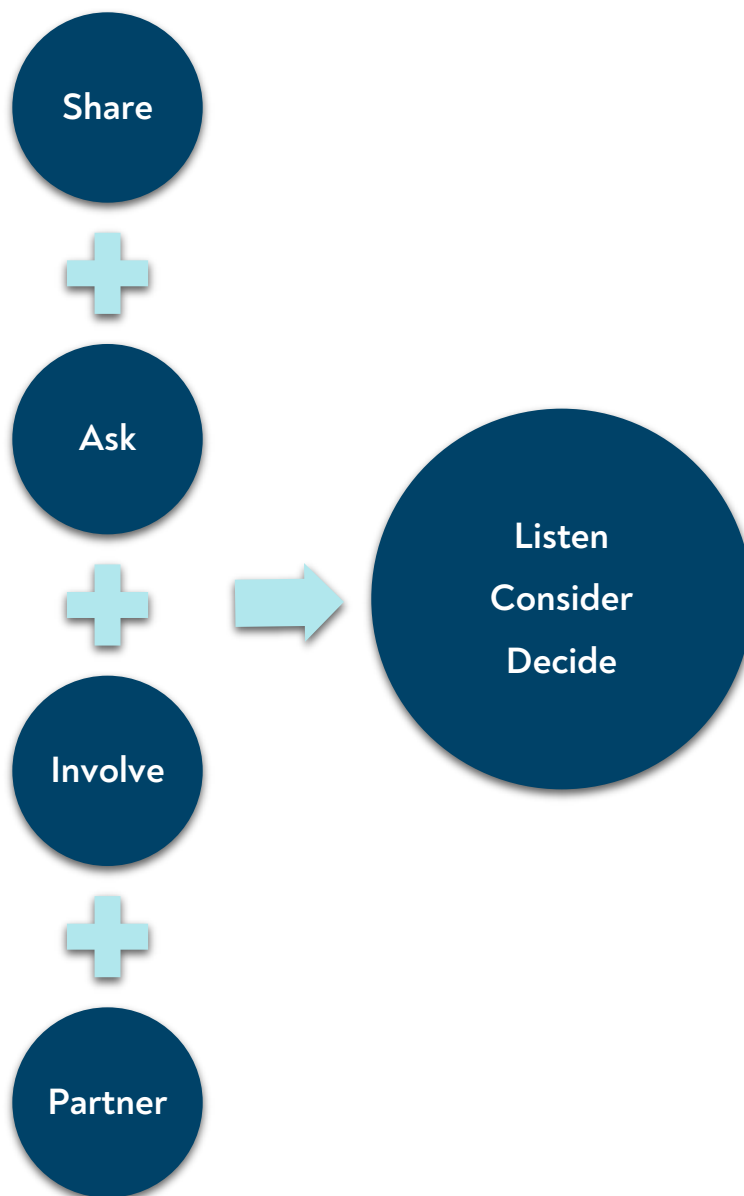


In addition to those identified above, planning staff will also work directly with Indigenous communities in Wellington to develop and implement an Indigenous consultation plan. We are working with the University of Guelph to assist us in this regard.

## 5 Our Approach

There is a considerable body of research detailing best practices for public participation and community engagement.<sup>i</sup> Planning staff has used these resources to arrive at an approach that fits the Wellington County context.

**Figure 4** Range of Engagement



**Figure 5 How We Will Approach our Engagement**

<b>APPROACH</b>	<b>Style</b>	<b>Audiences</b>	<b>Goals</b>
<b>SHARE</b>	“Here’s what’s happening.”	Public Stakeholders Staff Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To build awareness.</li> <li>• To help others understand the Official Plan review.</li> <li>• To build capacity for future consultation.</li> </ul>
<b>ASK</b>	“Here are some options what do you think?”	Public Stakeholders Staff Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To gather information and insight into concerns and preferences.</li> <li>• To give others a chance to voice their opinions and hear other opinions.</li> </ul>
<b>INVOLVE</b>	“Here’s a problem, what ideas do you have?”	Stakeholders Staff Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To focus more directly on priority issues.</li> <li>• To solicit more in depth feedback about concerns and preferences together directly to generate ideas.</li> </ul>
<b>PARTNER</b>	“Let’s work together to solve this problem.”	Staff Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To partner to develop alternatives and identify preferred solutions.</li> <li>• To build consensus.</li> </ul>
<b>LISTEN, CONSIDER AND DECIDE</b>	“These are the comments, findings, and recommendations. What does Council think?”	Leaders  (with input from the Public, Stakeholders and Staff)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support decision-making which reflects the public interest.</li> <li>• To encourage informed debate.</li> <li>• To identify recommended solutions.</li> <li>• To meet statutory notice requirements under the Planning Act.</li> </ul>

## 6 Tools

A variety of in-person and on-screen tools will help us meet our communications and engagement goals and objectives. These tools will help build familiarity with County land use and planning policies. This will increase capacity to help participants provide input during the Official Plan Review. Planning staff will tailor the type, number and format of engagement events when they are needed most. Promotional materials and other communications will be used as needed to inform participants of open houses or other events.



**Figure 6 Types of Engagement and Communication**

	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 3	PHASE 4
Types of Engagement and Communication	Official Project Launch	Research and Analysis	Discussion Papers	Draft Policies and Mapping	Final Draft Policies and Mapping
Project Webpage	X	X	X	X	X
Voluntary subscription	X	X	X	X	X
Comment forms		X	X	X	
Interactive mapping			X	X	
Education materials	X	X			
Promotional materials		X	X	X	
Online surveys	X	X			
Social media	X	X	X	X	
Library display screens	X		X		
Event ads, videos, radio		X	X		
Media / press releases			X	X	
Public notices		X	X	X	X
Mail out			X		
Pop-up information sessions (library, etc.)		X	X		
Small group meetings		X	X		
Kitchen table kits		X	X		
Stakeholder meetings		X	X		
Technical resource Teams		X	X	X	
CAO meetings	X		X	X	
Open houses		X		X	
Council presentations	X		X	X	
Special Council meeting					X

The County will develop and release information in step with key milestones within the phases of the review. This will allow staff to keep content up to date and roll it out to support each stage of the process.

With respect to the coronavirus (COVID-19), the Planning and Development Department is adapting to the current reality of self-isolation and social distancing. For this project, staff will continue to explore new ways to deliver options for high quality engagement through on-line platforms, but recognize that nothing can replace face-to-face contact. While we may need to adapt our engagement and communication methods, staff does not expect a need to host public gatherings (such as open houses or public meetings) until later in 2020.

## **7 Project Brand**

The County will use a project brand to establish a unique visual identity and continuity for this multi-year project. Communications staff have applied for an official mark trademark on the words “Plan Well” and the accompanying logo design to represent the Official Plan review. We will also use broad theme areas of “Live Well”, “Grow Well” and “Sustain Well” with associated icons to help organize the key subject areas and detailed subtopics in a more manageable way.

## **8 Key Messages**

Key messages and materials provide the basis for consistent communications and messaging from the core project team, project advisors and technical resource teams to the public. These are the key messages for Phase 1:

### **How to stay informed**

Subscribe to our webpage: [www.wellington.ca/planwell](http://www.wellington.ca/planwell) and you will be notified when the County adds new material to the page or you can call the County planning office at (519) 837-2600 x2300. Planning staff will officially launch the project in June 2020 based on finalization of this document. The official launch signals the beginning of our engagement efforts and we will provide more options for providing comments at that time.

### **Settlement area boundary expansions**

Consideration of settlement area boundary expansions (if warranted) occurs at the end of the municipal comprehensive review process and is subject to detailed policy requirements.

### **Growth forecasts**

The Provincial Growth Plan dictates that the County will apply the forecasts for planning and managing growth to the horizon of the Growth Plan (currently to 2041). The Province is conducting a forecast review. Final forecasts are currently expected to be released in the summer 2020. The County will consider what impacts this might have on the official plan review project and adjust the work plan as necessary.

The core project team in collaboration with the project advisors and technical resource teams will continue to develop key messages and materials to address topics that are likely to arise, or that begin to emerge, during the engagement process. As more information becomes available or as the Province releases new guidance material, we will update our content.

## **9 Statutory Requirements**

The Planning Act directs municipalities to hold at least one open house and at least one special meeting/public meeting for an MCR and 5-year review. The Act also sets the notification requirements and timing. These represent the minimum requirements. By following this Guide, the County will move beyond these minimums and provide more opportunities for engagement and participation in the process.

## **10 Timing of Engagement Activities**

The County will develop an engagement calendar for the project when staff begins to roll out work under the ten focus areas, establish the technical resource teams and identify stakeholders.

## **11 Monitoring and Documentation**

Planning staff will monitor and report on the implementation and uptake of communication and engagement activities during the Official Plan Review process:

- Record date of release or postings on the project webpage, social media, press releases, newspaper, radio
- Track web activity related to education materials, videos, interactive maps, surveys, event notices, email
- Record attendance and number of notification requests for public meetings, open houses, stakeholder and other group meetings
- Record number of educational and promotional documents distributed

We will report on the outcomes of engagement activities, including input and comments received throughout the project. During COVID-19 restrictions, monitoring will be even more important to measure the extent of engagement.

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<sup>i</sup> The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) developed a “public participation spectrum” which identifies different levels of engagement. The IAP2 spectrum is also a foundation for other approaches such as a “community engagement continuum” advanced by others including the Tamarack Institute (Index of Community Engagement Techniques), City of Peterborough (Community Engagement Guide), City of Ottawa (Public Engagement Strategy: Guidelines and Toolkit).



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For more information please visit:  
[www.wellington.ca/planwell](http://www.wellington.ca/planwell)

Alternate formats available upon request.

