STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE

Communications – department business plan update

Report Purpose

To provide Priorities Committee with an update on the progress of the 2020-2023 department business plan for Communications. Also highlighted is the Enterprise-Wide Communications Review initiative, scheduled to begin in 2021.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Goal 7 - Provide opportunities for public engagement and communication
Continuously improving the way we work, as one organization, in an agile and sustainable manner

Report

Communications supports Strathcona County's strategic direction and business goals by advancing the reputation and positive image of the organization, through open, transparent and meaningful stakeholder communication and public engagement. The department is comprised of 15 professionals, who operate independently as a team of specialists, and in partnership with other internal and external resources in five key areas:

- Communications consultation, planning and implementation – strategic communication direction, consultation and training for client departments, executive and elected officials. Assess communications needs, develop communications plans and messaging, determine best approaches to communications challenges, and measure results of campaigns.

- Stakeholder Relations - foster positive working environments – internal and external - to meet strategic direction and business goals. Advance the organization's reputation and enhance stakeholder understanding of the organization's priorities, programs and position. Program is responsible for monitoring the environment (traditional and social media), issues management, and for preparing the organization to respond. Other areas of focus include internal communications and emergency and crisis communications.

- Digital Communications - manage development, evolution and ongoing maintenance of County websites (external and internal), and proactively monitor the industry for trends, opportunities and challenges. Develop, advise and oversee standards for corporate websites. Administer, oversee, and provide training and support for corporate communications applications (event calendar, survey and e-newsletter, Digital Asset Manager, social media tools). Provide consultation on web analytics, online marketing, web usability, accessibility, and custom website applications.

- Brand Management - oversee and preserve the integrity of the Strathcona County brand, which includes developing standards, monitoring application and evaluating results. Brand elements include the logo, typeface, messaging and overall tone of communication. Application of the brand spans all communications, from advertising, to printed and digital materials, signage and social media. Program area includes oversight and coordination of the design and placement of the organization's advertising.

- Public Engagement – guide public engagement efforts at Strathcona County, based on the Public Engagement Policy and Framework, which outline a process for planning, implementing and evaluating these activities. Provide guidance, analysis and advice on corporate and department surveys, coordinate the annual public satisfaction survey, and provide reporting and analysis for census. This program also manages the online research panel.

Over the 2019-2022 business planning cycle, corporate Communications continued to work with department partners to clarify roles, strengthen collaboration and improve overall efficiency.

Communications made progress toward addressing a long-standing gap in internal communications. Recruitment of a position dedicated exclusively to internal communications has provided much-needed focus on large and important internal-facing initiatives occurring across the organization. These include the ongoing transition to Office 365, progress on implementing our People Plan, and the Business Transformation Project.

And, we launched a new intranet in October 2019, based on employee feedback, and built the site on the Office 365 platform to ensure consistency and facilitate greater integration with internal systems.

In addition to celebrating the first full year of operation of SCOOP (Strathcona County Online Opinion Panel), the Public Engagement team implemented a survey central database to manage the growing volume of surveys. Training provided across the organization, combined with a new directive and procedures to further guide department work, is also improving the quality of surveys being developed at the County.

Council and Committee History

December 6, 2018	Council approved 2019-2022 Corporate Business Plan and 2019 Budget
January 29, 2019	Priorities Committee received update on SCOOP
September 10, 2019	Council approved revised Public Engagement Policy (GOV-002-025) to remove the word "external" in reference to public engagement
October 22, 2019	Priorities Committee received a one-year report on SCOOP

Other Impacts
Policy: Public Engagement Policy (GOV-002-025), Communications Policy (GOV-002-029), Social Media Policy (GOV-002-028), Public Sponsorship Policy (PUB-001-014), Visual Identity Guidelines, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Legislative/Legal: N/A
Interdepartmental: All departments
Master Plan/Framework: N/A

Enclosure(s)

1	Communications' department business plan update to Priorities Committe

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