



Township of McNab/Braeside

Report to Council

Subject: Grant Application Authorization – Community Engagement Strategy Report Number: 2019-JAN-22-02	Author: Oliver Jacob Title: Councillor
	Date: January 22 nd , 2019

Recommendations:

That Council receive Report No. 2019-JAN-22-02 (Grant Application Authorization – Community Engagement Strategy) as information.

Further That Council authorize municipal staff to submit a grant application through the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) Seed Grants Program for the creation of a Community Engagement Strategy for the Township of McNab/Braeside.

Background

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario and provides grant funding to municipalities, community groups and individuals to build healthy and vibrant communities across Ontario. In 2017, OTF awarded more than \$120 million to some 700 projects through their five (5) investment streams: [Seed Grants](#), [Grow Grants](#), [Capital Grants](#), [Transform Grants](#) and the [Youth Opportunities Fund](#).

During budget deliberations in December 2018, a Memo to Council was brought forward with a budget line item request for between \$10,000 and \$30,000 to cover expenses incurred to formulate the Community Engagement Strategy in 2019. Given budget pressures in fiscal 2019, Council advised that it could not accommodate this request at that time; however, it further advised that it would be open to considering the project in the future, provided that it would be funded by grants. A copy of the 2018 Memo is attached as Appendix A of this Report.

This Report to Council acts as the next step in the process to authorize a grant application submission for the provision of a Community Engagement Strategy.

Discussion:

To begin, it is necessary to articulate what community engagement is and how it can be used within a municipal context as the central element of a Community Engagement Strategy.

As quoted in *Better Decisions Together: A Facilitation Guide for Community Engagement* (Caldwell, Ball and Proctor, 2015), community engagement can be defined as “the process of engaging the public in decisions that affect them, including policies, plans, strategies, programs and services, for the purpose of making decisions that are more informed and reflective of public concerns and values.” In the community engagement field, community engagement, in lay-person terms, revolves around how to meaningfully engage residents in the decision-making process.

After a community recognizes the benefit and need for community engagement as a guiding principle, there are numerous approaches which can vary based on the extent of decision-making authority given to the community by Council. Generally, there are five stages on the community engagement continuum (Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower). In each of these stages, more authority is delegated to the community to make recommendations and decisions. However, it is important to note that it is not necessary to continually progress through the continuum. It is, rather, a measure of where a municipality’s comfort level sits.

1. Inform: In this stage, the municipality simply aims to inform its residents about decisions that it has made.
2. Consult: In this stage, the municipality extends its reach to include opportunities for the public to provide feedback both before and after a decision is reached (similarly to the public meeting process for matters under the *Planning Act, 1990, R.S.O. 199, c. P 13* as amended).
3. Involve: In this stage, the municipality actively seeks to involve residents in the decision-making process and values resident feedback rather than the simple solicitation of comments.
4. Collaborate: In this stage, the municipality, its staff and Council actively works with residents to find solutions together and the comments of residents are treated as equivalent to those of Council and/or staff.
5. Empower: In this stage, the municipality typically cedes decision-making authority to community groups and organizations to make decisions on its behalf.

Presently, the Township of McNab/Braeside primarily involves its residents through elections every four years, statutory public meeting requirements and the use of public surveys on important issues or concerns for residents. Apart from the [Commemorative Naming Policy](#), there is no cohesive set of regulations that govern when and how the municipality should interact with its residents to seek feedback on decision-making.

This report does not seek to provide insight into how the municipality can move forward with community engagement as it is understood that it is irresponsible to unilaterally decide how to engage residents without providing the opportunity for residents to speak. As a result, the creation of a Community Engagement Strategy is the solution that is being proposed. A Community Engagement Strategy is a Council-adopted document that sets the tone for how and when the municipality would engage with residents. Its creation would necessarily

involve engaging with residents, staff and Council to ensure a strong understanding of the needs and desires of the community and the municipality.

As the 2019 Operating Budget has been finalized, it is recommended that Council authorize staff to pursue grant funding opportunities that would completely cover the cost of the creation of the Community Engagement Strategy. One such grant funding opportunity would be the Seed Grant investment stream of the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF). As discussed in Appendix A, this stream would mostly closely fit with the intent of the proposed project and would allow the municipality to continue to strengthen its ability to better communicate and engage with residents. The OTF Seed Grant investment stream is based around six (6) action areas and associated priority outcomes for each action area. An overview graphic has been provided on the action areas and priority outcomes as Appendix B.

It is proposed that this project would best align with the “Connected People” action area and the “People have a say shaping the services and programs that matter to them” priority outcome. A unique fact sheet for the Connected People action area is attached as Appendix C. The proposed project would utilize the in-house recommendation listed in the November 28th, 2018 Memo to Council (attached as Appendix A). This would allow for adherence to the requirements of the grant and permit us to conduct an internal process to better engage with our residents, staff and Members of Council.

In conjunction with this Report, it is recommended that an Advisory Committee be struck to lead the process with its membership being comprised of all Members of Council and up to four (4) community members, selected through a public notice process, along with staff advisers.

The grant application deadline has been set as Wednesday, February 6th, 2019 at 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST) and this would allow sufficient time for the preparation of a strong grant application for submission.

Options

- a) Authorize Grant Application Submission
- b) Not Authorize Grant Application Submission

Policy Considerations:

None

Financial Considerations:

In accordance with Council direction in December 2018, this project would only proceed in 2019 if grant funding is received.

Meeting Dates:

None

Consultation:

Lindsey Lee, CAO/Clerk

Angela Lochtie, Treasurer

Documents:

1. 2018-11-28 Memo to Council – Request for Item Inclusion in 2019 Budget Deliberations
2. Ontario Trillium Foundation – Seed Grants Investment Stream (Action areas and Priority outcomes Information Sheet)
3. Ontario Trillium Foundation – Connected People Action area Fact Sheet



Appendix A

Township of McNab/Braeside
2508 Russett Drive
McNab/Braeside, ON K7S 3G7

tel 613-623-5756
fax 613-623-9138

info@mcnabbraeside.com
www.mcnabbraeside.com

Memo

To: Angela Lochtie, Treasurer
From: Oliver Jacob, Councillor-Elect
Date: November 28th, 2018

Subject: Request for Item Inclusion in 2019 Budget Deliberations

I would like to submit a request that the following budget items be included in the 2019 Budget Deliberations for Council consideration and direction. I have broken them down

1. Community Engagement Strategy

Purpose:

To provide a strong foundation for community consultation in the decision-making process through active engagement with Members of the Public on how they wish to be involved, what topics they would like to see prior community engagement and how the township can do a better job at communicating with residents.

Goals:

- a) To create a strong Community Engagement Strategy for future use and reference;
- b) To conduct broad community consultation that engages with different segments of our population, particularly vulnerable or disengaged populations (i.e. youth, young families, persons who are differently abled, low-income residents, visible minorities, females, etc.);
- c) To demonstrate that Council values and appreciates public engagement in the decision-making process outside of election periods;
- d) To increase public awareness and interest in municipal activities.

Options:

I see that there are two viable options that could be considered by Council to fulfill the purpose and goals outlined above. They are outlined below with notes for benefits/drawbacks and estimated funding.

1. Conduct the community consultations and draft the Community Engagement Strategy in-house utilizing the expertise of staff and an ad hoc committee of Council

The benefits of this option include keeping the process local which may prove to be more comfortable for residents, the potential to engage residents in the process itself through the ad hoc committee and a large cost savings in terms of consultant fees.

The drawbacks include a draw on staff time from other projects, a larger role for Council in the entire process, and a less precise and experienced consultation approach. The ad hoc committee of Council would be the body to plan out and execute the consultations and prepare a draft strategy to Council.

Given the in-house nature of this project, it would be conceivable that the funding required could be significantly reduced compared to consultant fees. It would be conceivable that the project could be completed for around \$10,000 depending on the amount of staff time apportioned to this budget line.

2. Hire an outside consultant to conduct the consultations and draft the Strategy for Council consideration

The benefits of this option include having professional expertise and guidance throughout the process, prior experience with conducting consultations, and external review and consideration of results that would free up Council and staff time for other projects.

The major drawback is the high cost of engaging an outside consultant.

Funding for this option would likely ranged between \$20,000 and \$30,000 depending on the number of consultations and in-person meetings that would be necessary to gain valuable insight into the issue. However, this process would likely have to go to RFP, in accordance with the Procurement Policy, so it is possible that the submissions may vary from these estimates.

Grant Opportunities:

I could only find one potential grant opportunity that would fit with this project. The Ontario Trillium Fund offers [Seed Grants](#) to eligible organizations to support projects at the idea or conceptual stage. Seed grants provide between \$5,000 and \$75,000, which would cover all costs associated with either option above, if successful.

I recently participated in a webinar on the Ontario Trillium Fund's Seed Grants stream and it appears that this project would fit within their requirements. Their funding streams are based around priority outcomes and grant results. The best fit for this project would be the following:

Stream: Connected People.

Priority Outcome: Diverse groups work better together to shape community.

Grant Result: People have a say shaping the services & programs that matter to them.

Proposed Timeline:

December 2018	• Budget 2019 Deliberations (approve in principle) • Appoint Ad Hoc Committee on Community Engagement
January 2019	• Passing of Final 2019 Budget • Before January 16th, 2019 – Registration as organization to the OTF (if not already registered) • Prepare Grant Application
February 2019	• Before February 6th, 2019 – Submit Grant Application to OTF
August 2019	• Grant Results Announced (if successful, sign agreement and receipt of 90% of grant)
September 2019	• Conduct in-person Community Consultations with residents, staff and Council
October 2019	• Synthesize community contribution results into a public survey
November 2019	• Release Public Survey and solicit feedback on in-person consultations

December 2019 – February 2020	Review Public Feedback, Consolidate Knowledge and Draft Strategy
February 2020	Release draft Strategy for public feedback and conduct public information sessions on the proposal
March 2020 or April 2020	Finalize Strategy and bring forward for Council consideration

Examples of Community Engagement Plans:

- [City of Mississauga](#)
- [Town of Oakville](#)
- [Town of Stratford](#)
- [City of Brockville](#) (for Official Plan Review)
- [City of Ottawa](#)
- [Township of Manitouwadge](#)
- [Township of Huron-Kinloss](#)
- [Town of St. Mary's and Township of Perth South](#) (focus on youth)
- [Town of Port Hope](#)
- [City of Waterloo](#)
- [City of Kitchener](#)
- [Town of Halton Hills](#) (specific to Georgetown area)
- [City of Guelph](#)
- [Town of Arnprior](#) (Age-Friendly Communities Plan – note consultation elements)
- [City of Halifax](#) (Nova Scotia)
- [County of Kings](#) (Nova Scotia)

2. Community Development Officer

Over the municipal election, numerous residents shared that they felt left in the dark about what the municipality was doing and how Council made decisions. There were several complaints about there being ineffective communications from the municipality and the lack of clear guidance of how Council and committees operate. The Community Engagement Strategy would be an effective means of getting people involved in the decision-making process; however, it is important that such strategic documents are effectively implemented. Often, this task falls to staff who juggle many different projects and portfolios at any given time.

Therefore, the end goal would be to create one (1) new full-time permanent staff position that would cover community engagement, economic development and marketing/communications. This would help to relieve existing pressure on staff and enhance the ability of the Township to adapt to the changing needs and desires of the community.

However, it is understood that it would be challenging to implement this position in one fiscal year. It could be phased in over fiscal 2019 as a part-time position hired in summer 2019 (20-24 hours per week), leading to a full-time position (35 hours per week) in the 2020 fiscal year around the expected completion of the Community Engagement Strategy.

There is the potential to apply for funding under the Rural Economic Development program (RED Grants) to cover additional strategic planning on the economic development side which could help to offset any additional costs associated to this position's work, outside of the annual salary/benefits.

It would be important to look around to other municipalities for best practices in terms of job descriptions and salary grids for a Community Development Officer (sometimes called a Marketing and Economic Development Officer or Community Planning Coordinator). A preliminary sense of the position duties could include:

Community Engagement

- Implement the Community Engagement Strategy and serve as the point person for community consultations, public surveys and awareness campaigns;
- Assist the Recreation Programmer with community projects.

Economic Development

- Work to improve economic growth through the development of business and community development initiatives and programs;
- Meet with existing and potential businesses and provide guidance on municipal requirements and opportunities;
- Support business retention, development, investment and growth activities that positively influence the competitiveness of local businesses in the global marketplace;
- Coordinate and support regional initiatives, which progressively encourage sector and cluster development, community leadership and population growth.

Marketing and Communications

- Administer the municipality's website and social media accounts;

- Responsible for ensuring that these sites remain up-to-date with current events, opportunities and notices;
- Researches and prepares speeches, communications and protocol for the Mayor and Members of Council for special events, as needed;
- Prepare media releases and public notices;
- Maintain a high standard of public relations at all times, responding to, and preparing data as required for media inquiries; participate in networking and business development events where appropriate.

Please let me know if you require more information on the above items.

Sincerely,
OJ

Cc. Lindsey Lee (CAO/Clerk), Tom Peckett (Mayor)

Appendix B

Seed projects must align with one of the following Seed-specific Grant Results associated with an Action Area:



GRANT RESULTS

- Trained and certified coaches, officials and volunteers
- Programs are safe, inclusive, fair and age- and ability-appropriate
- Ontarians participate in an active lifestyle



GRANT RESULTS

- People have a say shaping the services and programs that matter to them
- People who are marginalized take on leadership roles in their communities
- Diverse groups work together to improve community life
- People who are isolated have connections in their community



GRANT RESULTS

- People participate in ecosystem, conservation and restoration efforts
- Conservation and restoration efforts are better planned and more sustainable
- People connect with the environment and understand their impact on it
- People and resource users take deliberate actions to benefit the environment
- Mechanisms are developed to promote responsible resource stewardship



GRANT RESULTS

- Skills and knowledge are transferred to the next generation of artistic leaders
- Access to arts-based learning opportunities and compelling artistic, cultural and heritage experiences
- People are engaged in community-based arts creation
- Preservation and animation of cultural heritage



GRANT RESULTS

- Parents, caregivers and adult allies have the skills to support children and youth who are facing barriers
- Children and youth who are facing barriers develop strong emotional and social skills
- Youth facing barriers volunteer and are in leadership roles
- Youth are involved in creating solutions for challenges facing their communities



GRANT RESULTS

- People who are economically vulnerable have access to community services that enhance financial stability
- People who are economically vulnerable are able to meet their basic needs
- People have the skills and knowledge to achieve greater financial independence
- People become and stay employed
- People become entrepreneurs

GRANT RESULTS & METRICS

BY ACTION AREA & STREAM



Action Area	CONNECTED PEOPLE			
Priority Outcomes	Diverse groups work better together to shape community			Reduced social isolation
Grant Results	People have a say shaping the services & programs that matter to them	People who are marginalized take on leadership roles in their communities	Diverse groups work together to improve community life	People who are isolated have connections in their community
Metrics	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A