

2021-2025  
STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATIONS  
PLAN



*County of Paintearth*  
No. 18

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Strategic Communications Plan serves as a guide for the County of Paintearth to be consistent in its approach to both internal and external communications,

from tactical to strategic. The purpose of making this shift is to enable the County to efficiently and effectively deliver on its business goals and activities while considering its current resourcing capacity and the strengths it has built to date.

The development of this plan leveraged data from ratepayers during public engagement sessions, online and hand delivered surveys, and feedback on social media.

The knowledge gained through the research combined with the expertise of the project team creates a plan that is well-informed and well-supported. This plan identifies four goals for the County of Paintearth to focus on over the next four and a half years with the associated initiatives to support advancement for each area, several of which are already in place.

## Goals and Initiatives

### GOALS:

 <b>01</b> <b>Strategy &amp; Alignment</b>	 <b>02</b> <b>Compelling Content</b>	 <b>03</b> <b>Feedback and Engagement</b>	 <b>04</b> <b>Effective Communications Technologies</b>
Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the County of Paintearth's communications by aligning messaging with the right storytelling tools for the audience.	Conversations based around topics that have an impact to the ratepayer, and questions put to the audience that garner a response	Seek out opportunities for feedback from the public and engage with them upfront for input in policymaking, including being able to demonstrate how their input was utilized in the final policy product	Use multiple media streams reaching maximum audiences over a broad spectrum demographic. Adequate funding of modern technologies and software is crucial to relevant storytelling

### INITIATIVES:

- |   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain a communications, social media and media relations policy</li><li>• Develop and implement a communications plan template</li><li>• Maintain an advocacy tool for Council</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Align content with communications planning</li><li>• Adopt the journalistic model of communicating (e.g., emphasis on ledes and storytelling)</li><li>• Offer content development capacity building tools and activities</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Utilize adopted formal feedback channels for the public</li><li>• Strive for genuine feedback, not public-education on County positions</li><li>• Maintain a public engagement policy to ensure consistency</li><li>• Advocate for ratepayers</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain and update the County website</li><li>• Effective use of social media to keep a consistent audience</li><li>• Run a County and area-specific app with important updates for ratepayers</li></ul> |
|---|--|---|---|

An implementation plan is provided to support the County in upholding these four goals over the course of four years. The implementation plan identifies timelines for each activity to ensure clarity of sequence as the County advances its communications efforts.



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# 1.0 PURPOSE

**The County of Paintearth** operates with a staff of 36 regular and 9 part time employees who provide services and programs to just over 2,100 residents. Communication plays a critical role in positioning the County as a credible source for information, a transparent steward of tax dollars, and an organization that is committed to working with its public to identify and achieve priorities.

Communication can include one-way communication, or sharing of information, but more and more it is focused on two-way communication, or finding ways for both the County and its key audiences to share thoughts, ideas, perceptions, and beliefs to build community. In addition to communication, there is also engagement, which is a deliberate effort to involve internal and external stakeholders as well as members of the public in the County's decision-making processes in meaningful ways.

The two words information and communication are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out; communication is getting through.

—Sydney Harris

The purpose of this Strategic Communications Plan is to ensure that the County of Paintearth has a clear idea of how its communications efforts can most efficiently and effectively support its organizational goals and activities. The plan supports both internal and external communications, as both are necessary in the County of Paintearth's role as a municipal corporation. It also considers the County's current strengths, including the philosophy of using a variety of communications channels to communicate with key audiences, while identifying how to further the dialogue within the community. Implementing this recommended approach will enable the County to position its communications to align with how residents have asked to be informed, how best practices are carried out, and in ways that are retainable and meaningful.

## Public descriptors of the County's communications future state:

- Helpful
- Engaging
- Relevant
- Current
- Proactive
- Public-informed
- Streamlined
- Efficient
- Dynamic

The plan presents a core model that identifies the current and future functions of the County of Paintearth's Strategic Communications. It identifies four goals intended to advance each area of the core model over the next four and a half years. It is supplemented by an implementation plan that considers the County's current capacity while identifying specific actions and timelines to advance the County's dialogue with its audience.

# 2.0 BACKGROUND

The communications functions of the County of Paintearth were, up until recently, considered more of an informal part of various departments rather than its own planned, funded function. IT Services was responsible for ensuring the County had access and the ability to use a variety of internal and external communications media (e.g., a website, email, telephone, social media). The County's leadership and various departments took a decentralized approach to both internal and external communications, with a strong emphasis on being responsive to public inquiries, and sharing limited information.

## Current Communications Functions:

- Sharing information internally with staff/council
- Communicating Council decisions, including the decision, impacts, and next steps, internally and externally
- Sharing information about County bylaws and policies, programs, services, and initiatives/events
- Responding to public requests for information or inquiries
- Managing issues
- Media relations
- Managing the County of Paintearth's official communications channels (e.g., website, social media channels)
- Advertising
- Branding and visual identity

In 2019, the County invested in greater strategic communication as a function. Given the amount of communicating internally and with the public, the role of IT was upgraded to that of Information Officer, boosting consistency, expertise, and timeliness in the areas of:

- Sharing Strategic information (i.e., decisions of Council, updated policies, and information regarding programs, services, and initiatives/events)
- Managing Strategic communications channels (e.g., website, social media, advertising, County app)
- Support media relations (e.g., local print newspaper, major market media franchises)
- Ensure consistent implementation of the County's visual identity
- Support key County representatives to share effective messaging whether related to a key opportunity or emerging issue.

As part of its 2019 strategic planning, County Council directed the County's Administration to develop a Strategic Communications Plan. Based on the concentrated efforts through 2020 to protect the County's reputation and interests, Council recognized the importance behind a well-informed, adequately resourced, and forward-thinking approach to communicating externally with an authentic, trustworthy voice.

In addition to developing a Strategic Communications Plan, the County has recently reached the one-year milestone of utilizing a new County-wide alert system. This app has been used to offer critical information on transportation, pandemic, and emergency situations and continues to grow its subscriber base. The creation and implementation of a County app was another aspect of the County's Strategic Plan designed to connect directly to ratepayers.

# 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The development of this Strategic Communications Plan considers two years of informal and formal inputs, along with expertise in best practices for communication. This combined approach lends itself to a plan that is:

- **Well-informed** – includes understanding the municipal context, local priorities, internal and external sentiment, and trends and best practices in municipal communications.
- **Well-supported** – includes ensuring that the goals and initiatives outlined in the plan address the input of the County’s key audiences and provide a strong rationale for the specific choices.

This process began with a review of the County of Paintearth’s internal and external communications, resources, and literature, with respect to handling the flow of information on County media.

## Current Communications Channels:

- Internal meetings (Council, management, staff)
- Internal memos
- Website
- Facebook
- Email distributions (public and all staff)
- Open houses
- County Bulletin newsletter
- Press releases
- Notices
- Posters
- Digital signage
- County entrance sign
- Sandwich boards
- Community presentations
- Community bulletin boards
- Schools
- Mail drop
- Fax
- Promo items

The literature review provided a foundational understanding of the County of Paintearth’s vision and priorities, communications channels, communications content, communications-related roles and responsibilities, feedback with key audiences, and approach to branding and visual identity.

It also helped to identify questions about the County’s communications-related governance, policies, planning, processes, and practices. The flavour of current trends in media, and stakeholder engagement were taken into account when the following policies and tools were developed:

- **Communications Policy AD003**  
*Accountable for the County’s overall communications processes internally, externally and with digital mediums*
- **Communications Flow Chart**  
*Outlines the County’s external media access points, some County operated, some privately owned*
- **Public Participation Policy LE007**  
*Accountable for establishing minimum thresholds for public participation*

The collage shows three overlapping documents. At the top is the header for 'Communications, Media Relations, Social Media' (Policy: AD 003). Below it is the header for 'Public Participation' (Policy: LE 007). The largest document is the 'COUNTY OF PAINTEARTH COMMUNICATIONS FLOWCHART', which details various communication channels and their contact information.

WEBSITE	SOCIAL MEDIA	RADIO	PRINT	COUNTY PUBLICATION
<p><b>Website</b></p> <p>What: Community Events, Important Notices, Meeting Highlights, Public Events</p> <p>www.countypaintearth.ca</p> <p>Formats: PDF, JPG, JAR, PNG</p> <p>All materials requested to be posted should be approved by the AD/CM Council and approved by the County Clerk.</p>	<p><b>FACEBOOK</b></p> <p>What: County of Paintearth page covers all events, notices, news, and updates. Also link to website and other social media.</p> <p>Format: Word &amp; pics or posters must be JPEG</p> <p><b>INSTAGRAM (Optional)</b></p> <p>What: County of Paintearth account for photos, videos, notices, notices or promotional.</p> <p>Format: Text - pics or posters</p> <p><b>YOUTUBE</b></p> <p>What: County of Paintearth account for video and audio recordings, notices, notices or promotional.</p> <p>All materials requested to be posted should be approved by the AD/CM Council and approved by the County Clerk.</p>	<p><b>93.3 CKQJ FM Real County Settler (Western border of County to Carleton Place)</b></p> <p>Local News: Real-time and county for the County of Paintearth.</p> <p><b>910 CFOW AM Drumheller (All of Paintearth County)</b></p> <p>Local News: Real-time and county for the County of Paintearth.</p>	<p><b>Castor Advance</b></p> <p>What: Castor Advance is the leading newspaper in the County of Paintearth. It is published weekly on Wednesdays.</p> <p>East Central Alberta Review (Independent Publisher)</p> <p>Settler Independent</p>	<p><b>County Bulletin</b></p> <p>What: County Bulletin is the official publication of the County of Paintearth. It is published quarterly.</p>

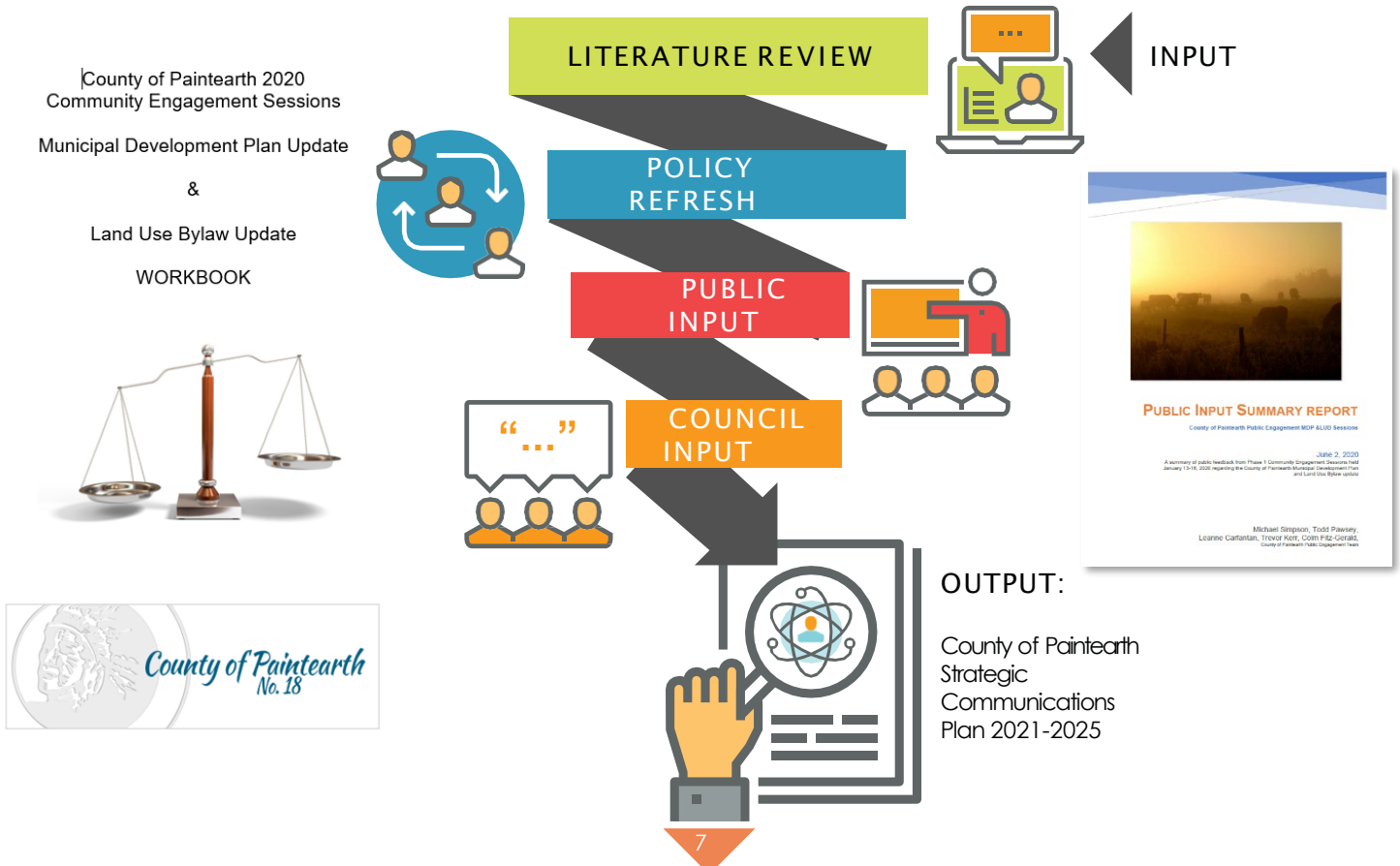
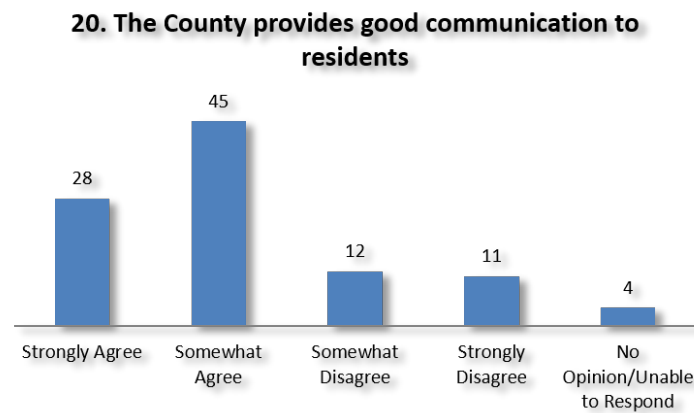


Fine tuning the direction that the County will take relies heavily on feedback from the ratepayers whom the County serves. In late 2018 a public input survey sought to determine the public's satisfaction with current county communication levels and received the following response; most felt communication was okay, however there was room for improvement.

With the public mandate for more communication in mind, the County undertook public engagement training to learn how to facilitate open dialogue in direct-engagement sessions with ratepayers, and used the recently concluded Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw update as the testing ground for a new standard of public discourse.

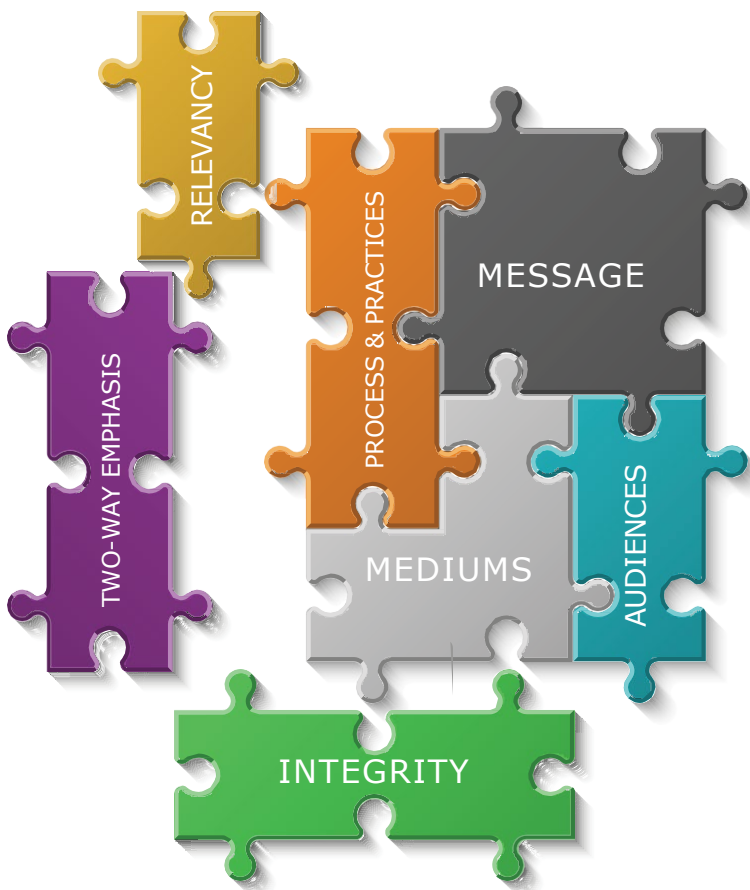
The County's goal was to be able to demonstrate to the public that their ideas were to form the basis for the new Municipal Development Plan, and that established thresholds for Land Use Regulations up for review were to incorporate the direct values and preference of the people.

With Council's seal of approval on process, a new culture of communication has emerged.



# 4.0 EVOLVED APPROACH TO COMMUNICATIONS

The County of Paintearth’s evolved approach to communication centers around connections and trust – reliable and ethical. Citizens will respect the message if it is delivered in a manner that respects the audience’s values and intelligence. The County recognizes it is best to use an integrity-based approach in order to maintain critical rapport with ratepayers.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

### Greater Public Understanding-

In order to participate, and be aware of issues that affect ratepayers, knowledge must be shared

### Public ownership of awareness

Stay mindful of the end goal, the public wants to stay in the conversation.

### Trustworthy processes

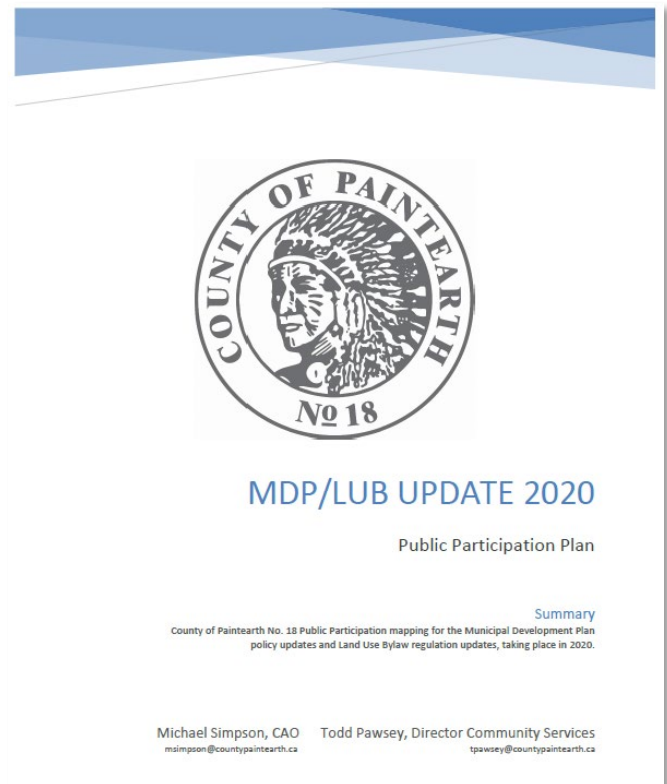
No hidden agendas, all possible information publicly available

### Inclusive Dialogue

We want to hear from you

### Relatable topics and information

How does the topic impact the public’s health, education, finances, next generation and personal rights?



## Seriously, we want to hear from you!

We want to know what you **VALUE** about living in the County of Paintearth.

**RSVP** for a Community Engagement Session near you.

**Tell us what you think**



# 5.0 A NEW CULTURE OF COMMUNICATION

In reviewing the County of Paintearth’s success with its cultural shift in communications, four primary strengths became evident:

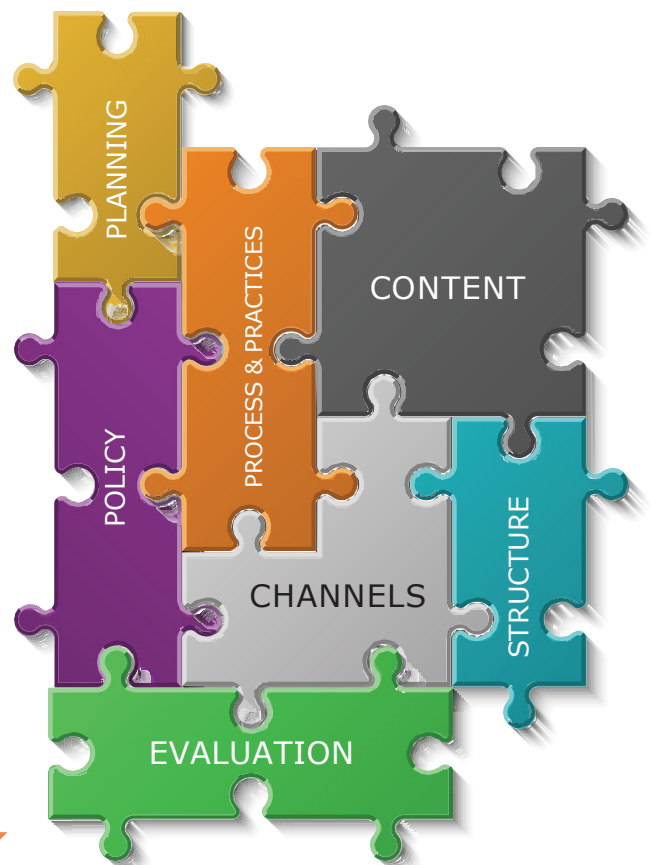
1. The County recognizes communications as a critical function of direct democracy and is committed to providing a dedicated resource for Strategic communications functions (i.e., the Information Officer/App).
2. The County understands that it has a responsibility to communicate with a broad audience that includes multiple demographics and it is using a wide variety of channels to reach them. (App, Social Media, Print, Web, Newspaper, Video)
3. The County strives to provide timely communications, especially through digital storytelling tools.
4. The County audience responds more on opportunities to converse rather than simply to receive information).

## Strategic Communications Functions

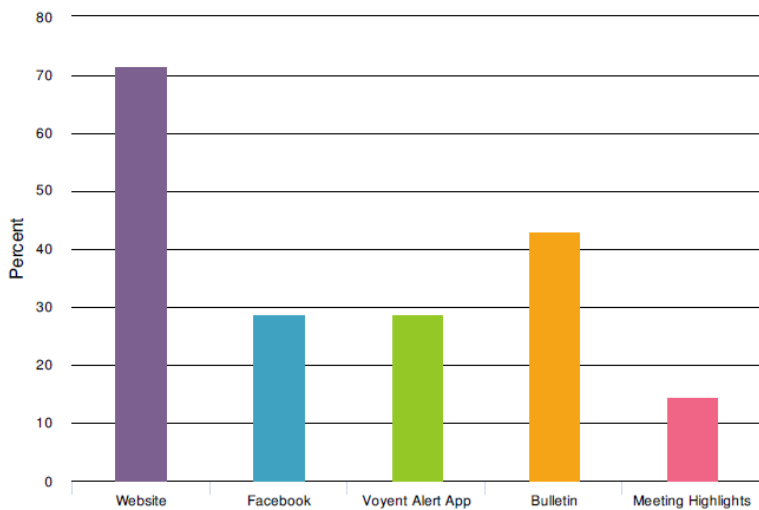
The County of Paintearth’s 4.5 year plan focuses on integrating Policy, Planning, and Evaluation into a dialogue-based model that uses mediums, content, relevancy, and two-way systems to engage, inform and learn from the public in order to maintain policies that are relevant in a modernized world.

Over the past two years, the ideas discussed herein have been field tested, ratepayer approved, council vetted, and staff developed. Some notable events of the County’s new culture of communication beginning in 2019 have included:

- ◆ Door to door satisfaction survey on service delivery
- ◆ Pattern of sharing public feedback externally
- ◆ Staff training on communications and engagement
- ◆ Targeted issues management over public channels
- ◆ Public engagement sessions
- ◆ Efforts to show validation to public on their inputs
- ◆ Pre-budget public opinion polling on budget policy
- ◆ Target specific surveys on future service levels
- ◆ Data sharing on issues of public interest



1. How do you prefer to access information from the County?  
all that apply)



To achieve meaningful dialogue, the community-based approach to communications focuses on four goals over the next four and a half years:

- 1. Strategy & Alignment** – Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the County of Paintearth’s strategic communications by aligning messaging with the right storytelling tools for the audience.
- 2. Compelling Content** – Conversations based around topics that have an impact to the ratepayer, and questions put to the audience that garner a response.
- 3. Feedback & Engagement** – Seek out opportunities for feedback from the public and engage with them upfront for input in policymaking, including being able to demonstrate how their input was utilized in the final policy product
- 4. Effective Communications Technologies** – Use of multiple media streams to reach maximum audience capacity, over a broad spectrum demographic. Adequate funding of modern technologies and software is crucial to relevant storytelling

## 5.1 Goals and Initiatives

### GOAL #1: STRATEGY AND ALIGNMENT

The County recognizes communications as a critical function of direct democracy and is committed to providing a dedicated resource for Strategic communications functions

*Rationale:*

The County oversees a wide range of service areas that touch all aspects of people’s lives, requiring the utilization of broad spectrum communications channels. No one household is like the other, and so being able to send the right content to the right audience is a consideration that must be done upfront when communications strategies are employed.

Making use of smartphone-friendly services such as Voyent alert is a great means of reaching audience members on the go, instantaneously. This service is an example of providing immense value in the world of emergency management, with the ability to deliver quick, concise messaging that can save lives and property.

*Initiatives:*

- Develop a communications, social media and media relations policy
- Develop and implement a communications plan template
- Maintain an advocacy tool for Council



It is necessary for the County to maintain a current communications policy. The current policy ensures:

- Everyone in the County understands the purpose of communications,
- Guiding principles to support effective communication,
- The various roles and responsibilities related to communications, and how internal and external communications work together to get the best information moving within the County.

It is also helpful to provide clarity to staff about how to manage higher-risk communications channels, including media relations and social media.

## GOAL #2: COMPELLING CONTENT

*Conversations based around topics that have an impact to the ratepayer, and questions put to the audience that garner a response.*

It's also important that the County's content is engaging, meaningful, and easy to absorb for the public. Distributing meaningful content helps to maximize engagement. For example, some respondents in public surveys indicated that, while they are happy to see the County's presence on social media, they are still using more traditional means to get information, such as the Bulletin newsletter.

The County recognizes this approach alone however will not win the day. Employing a conversational approach to sharing information about services will be a new tactic designed to keep the dialogue engaging, aiding retention for the audience. Examples can include video public service announcements, podcasts on information about the county, or matters that impact the county – both the organization, and the people that live there.

# County of Paintearth No. 18

## Position Statement of Council

### Background

In early 2019, AESO (Alberta Electric System Operator) provided notification to County of Paintearth Council of future plans to expand the transmission infrastructure within the county in response to an identified need to expand capacity to meet future energy needs. The proposed project is identified as Central East Transfer Out (CETO) Project. It is understood by the County that a submission will be made to the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) in late 2019 with a proposed route connecting infrastructure in Paintearth County to infrastructure further west within the province.

AESO delivered a presentation to County Council in March of 2019, and as part of a dialogue with local ratepayers, the County directed written correspondence be sent to AESO for further information in May.

Council of the County of Paintearth taken an active role in becoming informed of the CETO project, and has participated in open houses hosted by ATCO and AESO.

Council has received responses from all parties, and as indicated, has exercised its right to provide input on the project as an impacted stakeholder.

Council has requested consideration in light of the County's Municipal Development Plan (MDP) of how the project may or may not have impacts on the environment, public safety, and natural qualities of the areas potentially involved.

Council takes its position after having carefully reviewed information from project planners, engineers, environmental biologists, planners, local business owners, area residents, and contracted fire protection providers;

### Council Position Statement

It is the position of the County of Paintearth that greater preference be given to the northernmost routes proposed for the Central East Transfer Out Project, however the Council recognizes that the final decision on route selection will rest with ATCO, derivative of their motives to provide a safe, efficient and cost-effective project that will deliver increased capacity in the energy market for the province's electrical needs.

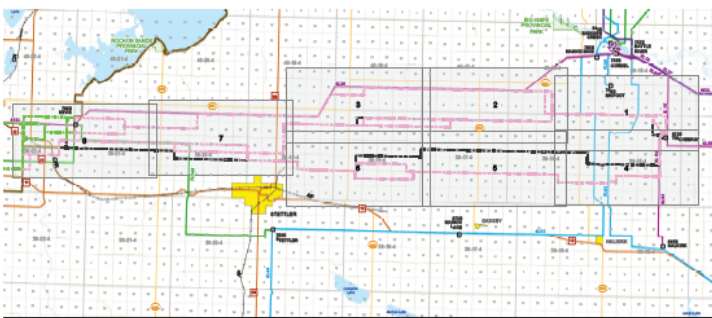
In taking this position, Council undertook the following considerations:

### Public Safety Considerations

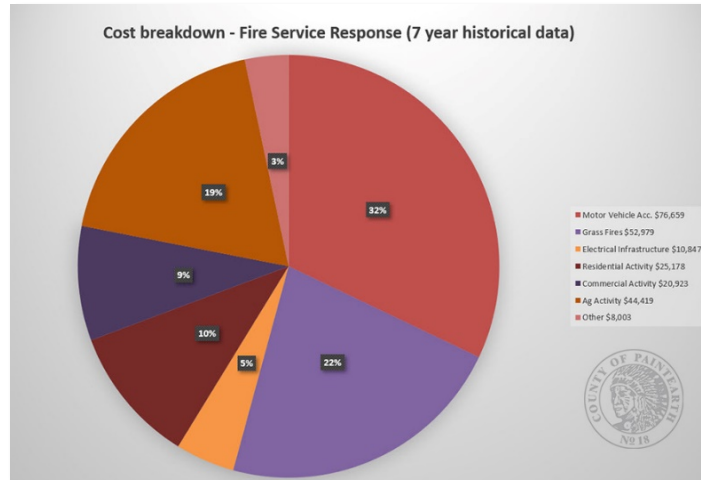
Residents have written to Council outlining a concern for public safety of the risk of fire due to infrastructure design. Council inquired as to what safety considerations are given in such a project as CETO to AESO and ATCO in a written letter, to which a reply has been given in a letter from ATCO dated July 23, 2019.

Based on information provided by ATCO, the Council is of the understanding that transmission infrastructure is designed by professional engineers to meet Alberta Safety Codes and CSA standards, both of which take fire safety into consideration, particularly with respect to clearance distances in which case CAN/CSA C22.3 No. 1-10 "Overhead Systems" and AIEUC 4th Edition (2013) guidelines are followed.

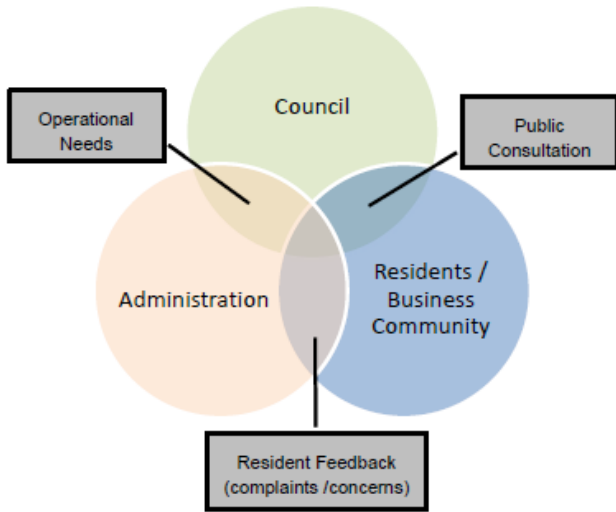
Further, Council is of the understanding that ATCO crews routinely respond to scenes of fire involving energized sites in order to make the scene safe for fire crews to combat fires, as well as serving as advisors on technical aspects of their infrastructure when larger-scale emergency incidents are



Proposed routes for CETO are shown in pink. Council for the County of Paintearth, having considered submissions from impacted parties, endorses the practice of selecting routes that provide the most accessibility for emergency crews, make best use of existing utility corridors and minimize impacts to the environment. Council also endorses routes that have the least social and economic impact to local businesses and the community. (Public usage occurred online at <https://www.atco.com/en-ca/projects/central-east-transfer-out-transmission-project.html> using web with permission)







**GOAL #3: FEEDBACK & ENGAGEMENT**

Seek out opportunities for feedback from the public and engage with them upfront for input in policymaking, including being able to demonstrate how their input was utilized in the final policy product

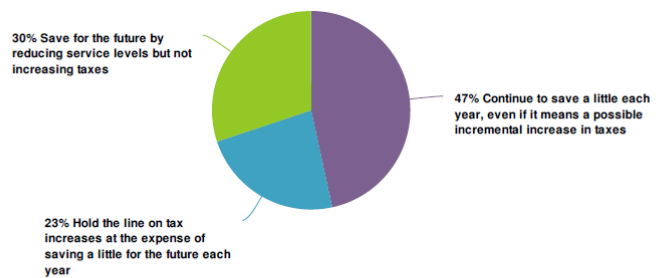
*Rationale:*

The County benefits from using two-way communication (e.g., feedback loops and inviting input) to build relationships, learn from its public, and collaborate on the best solutions for the County. Outside of its communications role, the County also uses engagement as part of its decision-making. It has some legal obligations related to public engagement (e.g. requirement for a public engagement policy and to engage on specific decisions described within the *Municipal Government Act*) and other opportunities where it knows that public engagement can lead to better informed and better supported outcomes.



The County is expending greater efforts at sharing information and inviting feedback or involving members of the public in its decision-making. As a result, more real-time data derived from the public makes its way into policymaking and long range community planning. Building public dialogue into the policymaking process helps to keep the County’s decisions aligned with the ratepayers core values and beliefs, which continually assists in maintaining relevancy.

5. County policy has been to save up a little each year to replace these assets when they are used up. Which are you in favor of? Choose one answer:



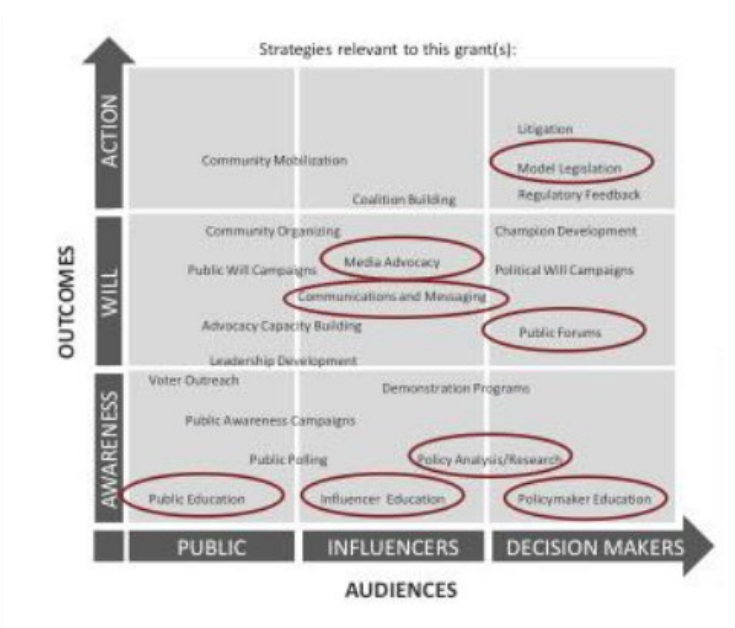
Value	Percent	Responses
Continue to save a little each year, even if it means a possible incremental increase in taxes	46.6%	34
Hold the line on tax increases at the expense of saving a little for the future each year	23.3%	17
Save for the future by reducing service levels but not increasing taxes	30.1%	22

Totals: 73

## Advocacy on behalf of ratepayers

The County recognizes that Elected Officials have the ability to be champions of the people on issues that affect them which are beyond the full control of the municipal scope of governance. To this end, advocacy on issues to higher levels of government, and industry, where applicable, is a major function of Council.

The County of Paintearth has developed a functional advocacy tool that is used to analyze issues that are pertinent to County interests, helping to identify the targeted groups, the right messaging, and the right measures for determining if the advocacy efforts were successful or if more advocacy is required.



### Initiatives:

- Identify and adopt formal feedback channels for the public
- Strive for genuine feedback, not public-educating on County positions
- Maintain a public engagement policy to ensure consistency
- Advocate for ratepayers

## GOAL #4: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

Use multiple media streams reaching maximum audiences over a broad spectrum demographic. Adequate funding of modern technologies and software is crucial to relevant storytelling

### Rationale:

Effective messaging in a digital age requires effective utilization of current digital mediums. While reliance on print exclusively has helped to shape the relationship between ratepayers and Councils historically, the present age of instantaneous and responsive digital mediums must be embraced to reach a larger audience, and convey complex ideas in a simplified manner.



The County has begun, and must continue to use emergency communication platforms such as the Voyent Alert smartphone application, free to County users, for timely sharing of important information in emergency situations. The same app can be used for top of mind awareness regarding County events, such as public hearings. In addition, marketing the app increases audience size and therefore effectiveness of the app.



Use of other electronic media such as video has begun to play a larger role in conveying information where the conveyance of trust is essential. The COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020-2021 brought enormous social pressure to the Paintearth Community. Leadership in demonstrating community spirit and humanity was essential, and so instantaneous, sincere messaging was adopted to set the standard on how we treated each other during this difficult time.

Maintaining an active, timely website also serves as the point of reference for County activities, reports, events, and messages to the public. Whatever is published on any other channel must also be shared on the website, to enhance its role as a master resource for information for public reference.



*Initiatives:*

- Maintain and update the County website
- Effective use of social media to keep a consistent audience
- Run a County and area-specific app with important updates for ratepayers



# 6.0 ENABLING THE PLAN

In order for the County of Paintearth to fully realize the benefits and positive outcomes of this plan, there are some considerations that may impact the County’s ability to deliver all of the recommendations:

**1. Accountability** – Leadership, responsibilities, and accountabilities need to be clear for each activity outlined in this plan. While the Information Officer will take the lead on the plan there is a need to ensure that the plan resonates with and is supported by staff across departments. Communications are a County function that everyone plays a role in. The County will be most successful when it strives for collaborative approaches that help achieve consistent, timely, and meaningful communications.

**2. Technology** – Communications efforts are often tightly connected to technology that enables delivery of and access to the message for internal and external audiences. The technology portions of this plan will fall under the responsibility of the Chief Administrative Officer and Information Officer, with input from all staff to ensure efforts are aligned and technology solutions address communications needs.

**3. Council Engagement** – Although this plan is aimed at Administration, there are important opportunities for Council to be aware of and make use of this plan and its various components. Council support of the plans goals can come in the form of budget supports, active use of the supported County channels outlined in this plan, and informing residents of the contents of this plan to increase audience participation.

**4. Annual Realignment** – During the implementation of this plan, the landscape in which the County operates will continue to evolve and change, affecting the priorities that Administration will need to address. This plan, therefore, is a living document to be reassessed on an annual basis and aligned with the County’s most current priorities. Ensuring annual alignment of the plan enables the County to remain proactive and ensure continual, meaningful improvement.



# 7.0 EVALUATION and METRICS

To determine how well the County is advancing its communications efforts, it is recommended that annual surveys of both the staff and the public are implemented to measure progress on the goals outlined in this plan. The first year of the survey will set a baseline to which the next two years will be compared.

The following outlines the information what a community survey could gather:



**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY**

- Preferred channels for communication
- Satisfaction with County Services
- Receiving relevant information to make decisions that impact daily living
- Receiving timely information that has impact to residents
- Proactively curating information that is of value to ratepayers, ie: current events that impact region
- The County's desire to hear ideas and concerns
- Opportunities to communicate ideas and concerns
- Ability to access information when needed, independently
- Opportunities to get involved in the community
- Opportunities to express pride in their community
- Opportunities for improving communication and engagement



**GOAL #1: STRATEGY AND ALIGNMENT**

Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the County of Paintearth's communications by aligning messaging with the right storytelling tools for the audience

<i>Initiatives</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Strategic Function</i>
Maintain a communications, social media and media relations policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain communications policy AD003 which:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- states the purpose of the County's communications;</li> <li>- identifies guiding principles;</li> <li>- identifies roles and responsibilities for internal and external communications.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	2019	Governance, Policy,
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain social media and media relations policy AD003 which:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- identifies the purpose, roles and responsibilities, and approach to these public communications channels</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	2019	Governance, Public Engagement
Maintain a communications plan flowchart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain a communications plan flowchart that includes a selection of mediums and channels to share information with County ratepayers, including bylaws, policies, programs, services, events and/or initiatives and/or public engagement to support decision-making</li> </ul>	2019	Planning, Processes and Practices
Maintain an advocacy tool for council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guide Council through the advocacy gap analysis using advocacy tool on issues that impact ratepayers</li> </ul>	2020	Processes and Practices
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure advocacy efforts are supported in annual budget</li> </ul>	2020	Processes and Practices

## GOAL #2: COMPELLING CONTENT

Adopt the what, why, and how model of content development and storytelling

<i>Initiatives</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Strategic Function</i>
Align content with communications planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create overview of types of information the public needs:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What's going on in County (e.g., recreation, events)</li> <li>- Status of services (e.g., snow removal, road closures)</li> <li>- Economic development (e.g., land development, new business)</li> <li>- Council decisions (e.g., bylaws, budget)</li> <li>- How to get involved (e.g., volunteer, meet officials)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	2020	Content
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the County public engagement and communications policies as the foundation for content planning</li> </ul>	2019	Planning and Content
Adopt the journalistic model of communicating (e.g., emphasis on ledes and storytelling)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a process that approaches content development through a journalistic lens:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify and confirm the facts (what)</li> <li>- Describe why they are the facts (why)</li> <li>- Explain how the facts affect the audience (how)</li> <li>- Identify next steps or a call to action, where necessary</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	2018	Processes and Practices
Offer content development capacity building tools and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify communications training opportunities for Council to support more effective and efficient interactions with the public (e.g., media interviews, public speaking)</li> </ul>	ongoing	Processes and Practices
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore new ways of sharing ideas and information on topics relevant to region, and ratepayer interests</li> </ul>	ongoing	Processes and Practices, Content



### GOAL #3: FEEDBACK AND ENGAGEMENT

In addition to a formal focus on information, ensure there are set mechanisms to invite feedback from the public as well as clear direction and support for public engagement

<i>Initiatives</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Strategic Function</i>
Identify and adopt formal feedback channels for the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify, develop/refine, adopt, and communicate three preferred channels that directly invite ongoing feedback from staff (i.e., one online method, one scheduled face-to-face method, and one hard copy method)</li> </ul>	2018	Planning, Processes and Practices, Channels, and Evaluation
Strive for genuine feedback, not public educating on County positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make use of digital engagement tools such as surveys, q+a mailouts to capture public opinion on topics that form the policy agenda of Council</li> <li>Provide Council with clear summaries of data based on feedback received that is attributable back to the source (genuine)</li> </ul>	ongoing	Planning, Processes and Practices
Maintain a public engagement policy to ensure consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and adopt a policy that identifies:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>roles and responsibilities;</li> <li>principles of engagement; and</li> <li>alignment of the County's decision-making with public engagement (e.g., why and when the County will engage the public)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	2018	Structure, Policy, Planning
Advocate for ratepayers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of advocacy tool to measure goals, steps required, target audiences, and key messaging to promote public interests to higher levels of government and key stakeholders</li> </ul>	2019	Planning, Channels

## GOAL #4: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES

Leverage and make use of communications technologies to improve the capacity of the County to both proactively and responsively communicate internally and externally

<i>Initiatives</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Strategic Function</i>
Maintain and update the County website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make available a website platform with an emphasis on self-directed communications subscriptions and personal services (e.g., program registration, sign-up email notifications, service issue reporting and progress)</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Processes and Practices, Channels, Content
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a communications culture within the organization to help increase the flow of information from departments through the website</li> </ul>	ongoing	Planning, Processes and Practices, Channels, Content and Evaluation
Effective use of social media to keep a consistent audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Source and implement a platform(s) to support internal communications</li> <li>Create streaming channel for live applications to integrate into County communications platforms</li> </ul>	2021	Processes and Practices
Run a County and area-specific app with important updates for ratepayers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to promote app as info-available tool for important notices</li> <li>Increase scope with new information streams as they become available (ie police reports)</li> </ul>	2021	Planning, Practices