

District of Barriere

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Request for Decision

Date: February 23, 2026	File: 530.20/Rpts
To: Council	From: Deputy Corporate Officer
Re: Updating Policy No. 44 – Public Engagement to a Communications Policy, including revisions to establish a District Social Media Presence	
Recommendation: THAT Council direct Staff to amend and rename Policy No. 44 – Public Engagement to a Communications Policy, to update and clarify how the District communicates and shares information with residents, including the use of social media as a District communication tool, aligned with the inform level of the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation and to make other general revisions as needed.	

Purpose

To seek Council direction for Staff to amend and rename the existing Public Engagement Policy (Policy No. 44) to a Communications Policy. The proposed amendments will modernize and clarify how the District communicates with residents, including the use of social media platforms, while maintaining the strong governance framework already established.

Background

As part of the Strategic Plan, Council identified the need to enhance engagement with the community and improve how information is shared, including exploring the use of Social Media platforms such as Facebook. The District currently operates under Policy No. 44 – Public Engagement, which provides clear direction on communication principles, roles and responsibilities, and a wide range of communication tools. While the policy is strong and remains relevant, it does not explicitly address corporate social media use for District information-sharing. Staff are recommending that the policy be amended and renamed to better reflect its purpose and current operations.

Summary

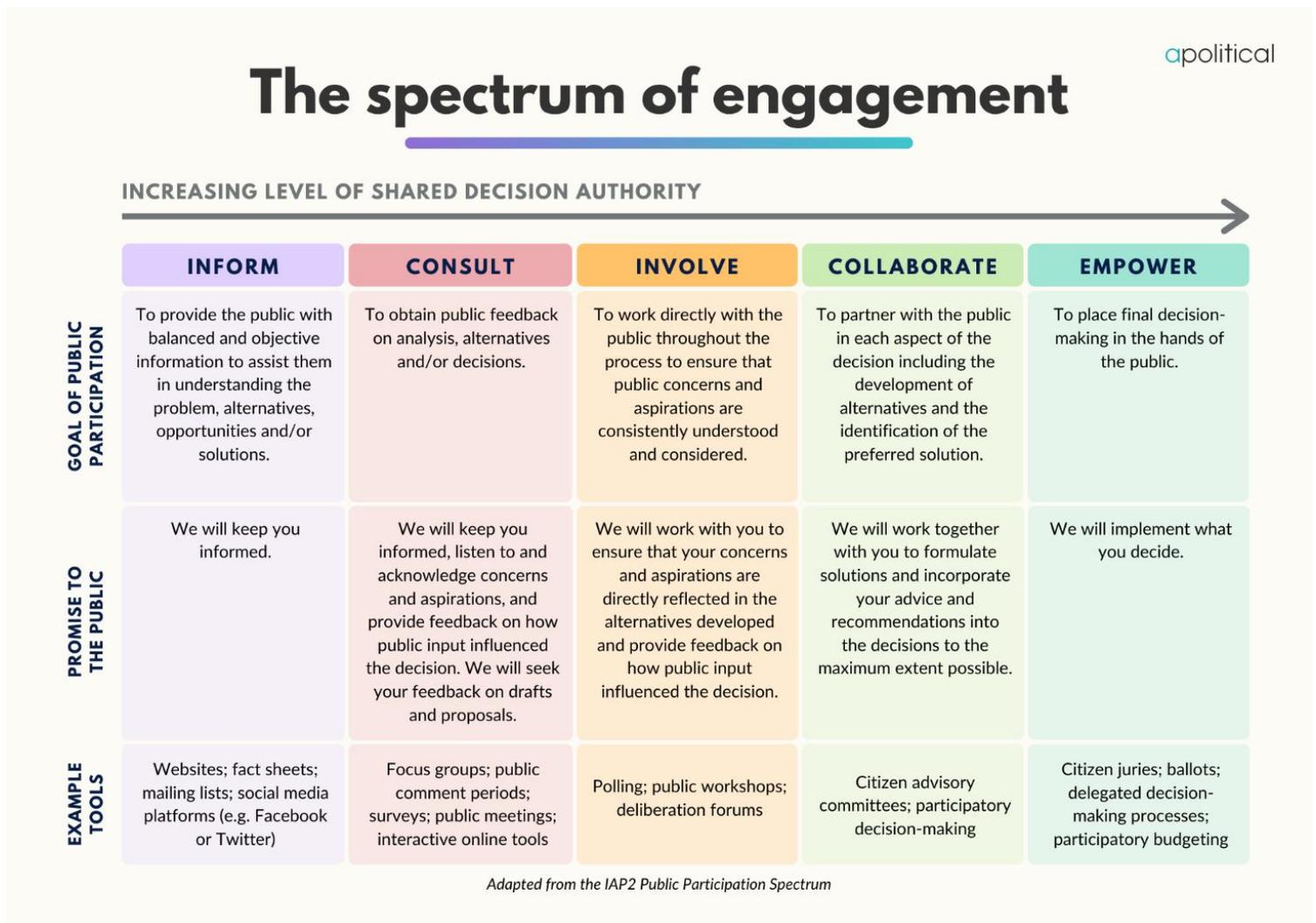
The District is already communicating with residents through a variety of established tools and methods including:

- Social Media (Inform)
 - Use of the Barriere Recreation Facebook Page to share recreation programs, events and minor community information.
 - Currently 600 followers.

- E-News and Website (Inform)
 - Distribution of District Highlights.
 - Sharing service notices, updates and public information.
 - Currently 340 Registrants.
- Open Houses
 - In-Person information sharing.
 - Attendance typically ranges from approximately 50-100 residents.

These practices align with the “inform” level of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum and reflect how the District currently shares information.

Below is a snapshot of the IAP2 spectrum for public participation.



Building on this inform-level approach, and consistent with Council direction through the Strategic Planning process, Staff is proposing refinements to how information is shared through existing digital platforms, particularly the Barriere Recreation Facebook Page. These updates would include rebranding the page to Barriere Recreation and Information, which would be used to share District updates, public notices and recreation information.

Over time, this platform may be used to share high-level informational updates, such as “Did You Know?” features, service reminders, and notices to improve public awareness on topics such as Animal Control, as identified through Strategic Planning. These updates will complement existing communication tools, including E-News, the District website and Open Houses.

Clear visual branding would be developed to differentiate between recreation-related content and District or Council-related information.

Currently, Staff capacity supports participation at the Inform level only. Moving beyond this level into Consult, Involve, Collaborate, or Empower would require additional staffing resources. Staff can only commit to providing balanced, objective information and helping residents understand issues, alternatives and opportunities.

With respect to engagement on Facebook, comments would remain enabled for recreation-related posts and disabled for District or Council-related content. If required, comment functionality could be adjusted or disabled entirely to ensure the platform remains focused on information-sharing.

Proposed Policy Amendments:

- Rename to Communications and Engagement Policy – No. 44.
- Clarify expectations around information-sharing versus engagement.
- Modernize language to reflect social media presence.
- Minor office cleanup of current policy items

Benefits or Impact

General

Provides clear and consistent direction for District communications and aligns policy language with current communications practices.

Finances

N/A

Strategic Impact

Priority #4: General Governance and Community Engagement

Goal 3. – Enhanced Engagement with the Community and our Partners

- a. Develop a plan that would enhance and broaden District communications to enable sharing of critical information on budgets, asset management, and other critical information.
 - a. a report highlighting options to enhance and broaden District communications is presented to Council. The report should include potential risks and expected levels of service.

The Results We Want to See:

- a. Communications regarding District projects are enhanced on the platforms that our citizens are wanting to be engaged on.
 - a. Present a report to Council for consideration in Q1 of 2026 to potentially:
 - i. Establish a Social Media presence, for example on Facebook.
 - ii. Provide regular “Did You Know?” updates through eNews and Social Media.
 1. To include Animal Control messaging
 - iii. Other engagement opportunities such as pamphlets and open houses

Risk Assessment

Compliance:

Communications will remain aligned with Council-approved decisions and policies.

Risk Impact:

Potential public feedback related to social media use is mitigated through an inform-only approach and controlled comment settings. Some members of community may be dissatisfied with limitations on commenting for District or Council-related social media posts. This risk is mitigated by clearly communicating the purpose of the platform as an information-sharing tool only and reaching out to the District directly for any questions or comments.

Internal Control Process:

Existing approval processes and roles outlined in the policy will continue to apply.

Next Steps / Communication

- Prepare amendments and rename Policy No. 44 and bring to Council for consideration in March 2026.

Attachments

- Policy No. 44 – Public Engagement
- IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

Recommendation

THAT Council direct Staff to amend and rename Policy No. 44 – Public Engagement to a Communications Policy, to update and clarify how the District communicates and shares information with residents, including the use of social media as a District communication tool, aligned with the inform level of the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation and to make other general revisions as needed.

Alternative Options

1. Council could choose not to amend or rename the existing policy.
2. Council could choose to direct Staff to explore alternative policy approaches.

Prepared by:

J.Mosdell, Deputy Corporate Officer



DISTRICT OF BARRIERE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

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Approval Date: February 21, 2023

NO: 44
DEPARTMENT: ADMINISTRATION AND COUNCIL
SUBJECT: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

POLICY OBJECTIVE:

The District of Barriere seeks to engage citizens and provide information through a variety of communication strategies and tools. Communication from the Municipality shall be accessible, well managed, cost effective and responsive to the information needs of the public.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to municipal staff, contractors, and elected or appointed officials, including committee chairs and members. In the event that the municipal Emergency Operations Centre is activated, the Emergency Communications Plan supersedes this policy.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Provide the public with timely, clear, factual, consistent and complete information about municipal policies, bylaws, programs, services and initiatives.
2. Employ a variety of strategies to effectively communicate to and with the public.
3. Identify and address communication needs and issues as part of the development, implementation and evaluation of municipal policies, bylaws, programs, services and initiatives.
4. Manage municipal funds responsibly to obtain good value for all communication activities.
5. Meet all statutory requirements for notification and consultation.
6. Respect citizens' privacy and rights by ensuring compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and other relevant legislation such as the *BC Human Rights Code*.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Municipal staff, contractors, and elected or appointed officials share responsibility for communication with the public. All are required to treat sensitive or confidential information with discretion.

1. The designated spokesperson for communicating decisions of Council is the Mayor.

2. The Chief Administrative Officer is responsible for ensuring the Policy Objective is met.
3. The Chief Administrative Officer is responsible for coordinating and implementing strategic communication plans, using a variety of communication strategies and tools.
4. Municipal staff and contractors may communicate with the public about policies, bylaws, programs, services and initiatives for which they are responsible. Staff and contractors are expected to provide current, accurate and impartial information.
5. Bylaw Enforcement files and land use inquiries shall only be communicated by staff authorized by the Chief Administrative Officer.

COMMUNICATION TOOLS:

As part of communication plans, some or all of the following tools may be used. Additional tools may be included at a later date. Written and online communication from the District of Barriere typically includes the municipal logo.

Municipal Website – updated regularly. Serves as the primary online tool for communication with the public. Includes email links and e-news subscription sign up. Ensure that printed material for public distribution is published on the website.

Council and Committee Meeting Agendas and Minutes – published on the municipal website with a hard copy available for public inspection, with the exception of meetings that must be closed to the public under section 90 of the *Community Charter*.

Video Streaming of Municipal Council and Committee Meetings – livestreamed via link posted on municipal website for those wishing to attend meetings but are unable to attend in person or who prefer to attend virtually, with the exception of meetings that must be closed to the public under section 90 of the *Community Charter*.

Other Meeting Formats – as required. Includes Committees of the Whole, public hearings, town halls, open houses, information sessions and facilitated special-purpose meetings.

Statement of Financial Information (SOFI) – Submitted to Council annually prior to legislated required publication and posted on the municipal website.

Annual Reports – prepared by June 30 of each year as required under section 98 of the Community Charter. It must be available for public inspection prior to the actual public presentation. It reports on the prior year's activities, includes the audited annual financial statements and plans for the upcoming year.

Staff Reports – prepared as needed. Identify and address communication needs and issues in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, bylaws, programs, services and initiatives. Prepared in a standard template provided by the Corporate Officer or designate.

Municipal Updates – brief summaries of Council initiatives prepared by the CAO or staff designate from time to time and published in the local newspaper. Brief summaries of Council initiatives relayed by the Mayor or Acting Mayor via local radio interview or recording from time to time.

Press Releases – Municipal announcements of significant program implementation, grant funding awards, infrastructure changes and other topics of impact may be distributed as a press release to local media and/or via E-News as deemed appropriate by the CAO or on the direction of Council. Emergency Notices forwarded to Local Area News for publishing on their respective Social Media pages.

Counter Service at Municipal Hall – ongoing.

Telephone and Voicemail – as required. Ensure voicemail messages are kept up-to-date and minimize the number of times a caller is transferred. Calls should be returned the same day whenever possible.

Ongoing Electronic Communication – prepared as needed. Include on the website a signup option: “Subscribe for E-News”, to join an electronic mail list for municipal news and notices. May also be distributed to local media, other local governments in the valley including the TNRD.

Barriere Star Journal (Paid Advertising) – Legislative Notices as well as communicating planned infrastructure works, interruption of services, health notices, municipal events, and other notices as determined appropriate by the CAO.

Local Radio – Emergency Notices, Public Health Advisories, community events, information sessions, election information and other notices that the CAO deems appropriate.

Utility/Tax Billing Inserts – as required and organized by the CAO. Annual garbage/recycling collection schedule cards included in tax billing and made available at the front desk and on the municipal website.

Downtown Notice Board - website address to remain posted whenever possible. Other information posted as needed such as (but not inclusive of), service interruptions, planned infrastructure works, health notices, municipal events, and holiday well-wishes.

Door to Door Hand Delivery – As directed by the Public Works Manager for all properties subject to a boil water advisory notice and for other urgent notices when deemed necessary by the CAO.

100m radius Notices regarding Development/Land Use: As per Council Procedure Bylaw, owners & tenants within 100m of a property subject to a Development Permit, Rezoning, OCP Amendment, or Variance will either be delivered via regular mail or a combination of regular mail and hand delivery as determined by the Corporate Officer.

Posters: Emergency Notices, Public Health Advisories, community events, information sessions, open-houses, election information and other notices that the CAO deems appropriate shall be posted in high traffic areas & businesses (as permitted by the business).

Fire Department Social Media Page – Emergency Notices posted on the Barriere Fire Department Facebook page as directed by the CAO. Fire safety related content posted via the Fire Chief or member appointed by the Fire Chief or his/her Deputy.

Barriere Blooms Social Media Page – Content directly related to the Barriere Blooms program only.

APPROVAL PROCEDURES

Routine communication relies on the good judgment and professionalism of Council and staff, contractors and committee chairs. Defined legislative procedures are in place for approval of such material as agendas, minutes and reports.

Communication such as paid advertisements, news and notices, and social media posts may also require formal approval. The typical procedure is outlined below:

Task	Responsible
1. Identify a communication need.	Staff, Council or other elected or appointed officials, contractors, committee chairs and members.
2. Describe the purpose of any proposed communication and the level of public participation required.	The initiator of the communication, in consultation with the CAO
3. Determine level of approval required.	CAO
4. Develop a Communications Plan, including cost estimates.	The initiator of the communication, in consultation with the CAO
5. Develop written material, graphics and images.	The initiator of the communication, in consultation with the CAO
6. Review draft materials and edit for consistency with DoB messaging and branding.	CAO or staff member designated by the CAO
7. Send approved material to staff.	CAO or staff designate.
8. Distribute approved material to the public by means determined in the Communication Plan (as per step 4)	CAO or staff designate.