



Staff Report

Strategic Initiatives – Communications & Customer Service

Report To: COW- Admin, Corp and Finance, SI, Comm. Services
Meeting Date: November 17, 2025
Report Number: SI.25.034
Title: Progress Update of the 2021 - 2025 Communications Strategy
Prepared by: Allan Gibbons, Manager of Communications & Customer Service

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report SI.25.034, entitled “Progress Update of the 2021 - 2025 Communications Strategy” for information.

B. Overview

This report provides Council with an update on the actions taken to implement the recommendations for the 2021 – 2025 Communications Strategy.

C. Background

The Communications Strategy was developed by the former Community Communications Advisory Committee in consultation with Town staff and Council. The strategy was approved by Council on June 11, 2021.

The Communications Strategy helped establish the foundation for community engagement and built a roadmap of goals and actions to improve how the town shares information with residents. Four key objectives were outlined in the strategy, supported by a variety of tactics. Together, the objectives and tactics aimed to create a more meaningful and open relationship between residents, stakeholders and the Town.

Over the past five years, the Communications Division has successfully implemented the majority of the tactics outlined in the strategy. The result of these efforts has helped shape the Town’s communication standards and processes and driven strong engagement through a variety of mediums including print and digital communication methods.

D. Analysis

The implementation of the Communications Strategy has progressed well, with 18/21 (85%) of action items either fully completed, in progress or ongoing. Of the three outstanding action

items, two were removed due to a change in strategic priorities and the third will be proposed in the 2027 budget to align with the new term of Council.

The following chart provides a high-level overview of each action item. Detailed information regarding each action item is included in the progress report as attached.

<p>Completed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Research and define resident/stakeholder personas to enable targeted engagement plans 1.2 Develop and implement Social Media strategy 1.3 Implement email address collection campaign 1.4 Launch quarterly, printed and mailed Town newsletter focused on storytelling 1.5 Launch new corporate Town website 1.6 Evaluate public survey tool and engagement website 1.7 Establish standards for customer service 1.8 Develop communication work plans 2.1 Hire research firm to assist with all Town Surveys 2.2 Develop communications orientation package to onboard new staff and Council members 2.3 Launch monthly e-newsletter 2.4 Develop issues management communications plan 2.5 Conduct Citizen Satisfaction Survey as identified in the Corporate Strategic Plan 2.6 Create new resident welcome package 3.3 Establish youth engagement opportunities through partnerships with local schools and other levels of government
<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Develop department-specific explainer content 4.2 Launch pilot project with Town ‘news boxes’ 5.1 Purchase and improve use of digital screens/signage
<p>Removed / Not Started</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.2 Conduct media relations training for leadership & Council 3.4 Launch resident text message communications and emergency alert tool 4.1 Launch municipal podcast to share news and information with residents

The Communications Strategy, along with the continued support of Council, has helped establish an excellent foundation for proactive and ongoing engagement with the public. Through the implementation of the Strategy, the Town has enhanced its presence and authority as the primary source for information on Town news while fostering a culture of active listening and two-way engagement with the community.

The strategy was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the understanding that communications are ever-evolving and may need to be updated as new information becomes available. Through this understanding, the Communications Division continues to use multiple tools and channels to deliver messages, news and updates and will continue to refine and build upon the framework established by the Communications Strategy.

A Communications Review has been requested in the 2026 Draft Budget. The Communications Review, conducted by an outside consultant, will streamline processes for consistency, enhancing public trust. Hiring a municipal communications consultant will provide expertise for refining processes and aligning standards with industry best practices, offering external insights while allowing staff to focus on core tasks while continuing to build upon the foundation created by the Communications Strategy.

E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders.

2. Organizational Excellence

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

3. Community

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

4. Quality of Life

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

F. Environmental Impacts

No environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of this report.

G. Financial Impacts

No financial impacts are anticipated as a result of this report.

H. In Consultation With

Tim Hendry, Director of Strategic Initiatives

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Allan Gibbons, Manager of Communications & Customer Service communications@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

1. 2021 – 2025 Communications Strategy Implementation Report

Respectfully submitted,

Allan Gibbons
Manager of Communications & Customer Service

For more information, please contact:
Allan Gibbons, Manager of Communications & Customer Service
communications@thebluemountains.ca
(519) 599-3131 extension 266

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SI.25.034 Progress Update of the 2021 - 2025 Communications Strategy.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment-1-2021-2025-Communications-Strategy-Implementation-Report.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 6, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

No Signature found

Allan Gibbons - Nov 6, 2025 - 4:00 PM

Tim Hendry - Nov 6, 2025 - 4:00 PM