



## REPORT TO COUNCIL

### Regular Meeting of Council

**DATE:** May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
**TO:** Robert Buchan, City Manager  
**FROM:** Veronika Stewart, Manager of Communications, Engagement and Social Development

**SUBJECT: BIG PROJECT COMMUNICATIONS REVIEW**

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#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**That Council receive this update for information regarding communications work in relation to the BIG Project.**

#### **REASON FOR REPORT:**

At the April 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, Council requested additional information with respect to the BIG Project be made publicly available. This report shares the existing channels used for communications and provides an overview of areas for improvement that staff have flagged internally with the project team and external contractors.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Replacement of the water main on Crestview drive has now been completed, marking the first completion of a major residential section of utilities as part of the BIG Project, and as such, an opportunity to reflect on communication efforts that were effective, but also those that could be improved in the next section, which starts mid-May on Bacon Street. Site signage, door knockers, and direct letters to impacted households were delivered over the past two weeks to the Bacon Street area to advise of the project.

Below is an overall review of the communications efforts that have been made to date regarding the project.

- **Initial Project Overviews:** Presentations to Council at outset of the project, press releases, as well as the 2024 Town Hall meeting.
- **Open House in December at Conrad School:** Mailers sent to all residents in Phase 1 + 2 of the project, with 70 residents in attendance. The event provided an opportunity to share updates, address concerns, and answer questions related to construction timelines and accessibility.

- **Staffing Support:** A part-time staff member has been hired to assist with project-related communications and coordination.
- **Issues Register:** An ongoing issues register has been maintained to log community concerns as they arise. This tool is instrumental in ensuring accountability and closing the loop on communications.
- **Contractor Coordination:** Weekly meetings with contractors are held to review the issues register and discuss upcoming work and community impacts. Concerns from the issue register are addressed at these meetings and assigned. Follow up is monitored and communicated through the same meetings.
- **Online Engagement Platform:** The project webpage at [engage.princerpert.ca/big](https://engage.princerpert.ca/big) provides regular updates, FAQs, Q&A functionality, and a map/table of current traffic disruptions (linked to the City's GOMAP platform). The Q&A section is monitored daily by the Communications team.
- **Dedicated phone line and email:** From the start of the project, the phone number (250) 627 2822 and [big@princerpert.ca](mailto:big@princerpert.ca) have been used to intake project inquiries from the public. Business cards have also been developed for the contractors and on site staff to hand out, and can be provided to Council.
- **Direct Communications:** Regular mail-outs, including letters and door knockers, have been distributed to keep residents informed. Site signage and door knocking have also been used for targeted notifications. Most recently, a letter has been distributed to Crestview residents regarding the upcoming work on curb and gutter repairs and paving, which is to occur Summer/Fall (dependent on contractor availability).
- **Encroachment Notifications:** Specific communications including letters and door knocking have been issued to residents regarding property encroachments when they are likely to be impacted by construction works.
- **Accessibility Resource Handout:** Where accessibility has been flagged as a concern at certain residences through the Issues Register or on the ground reporting, staff have delivered a list of accessibility focused resources for residents to access and to encourage them to reach out to the team to enable accommodations, where possible.
- **Emergency Communications:** A dedicated emergency communications plan is in place to ensure timely updates in critical situations.
- **Targeted Survey:** A survey is being prepared for distribution to residents in the Crestview area to gather feedback.
- **Digital Updates:** Ongoing updates are provided via the City's website and social media channels, including posts related to delays.

**LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

This project supports the Council's Strategic Objective of renewing and maintaining core infrastructure, while ensuring clear and transparent communication with residents throughout the process.

**ANALYSIS:**

The following takeaways have been generated based on the initial phase of the project.

**Lessons Learned**

- Clarification of impacts during investigative works is essential. It has been communicated clearly with the project team that a minimum of 48 hours notice should be provided any time that there is a planned disruption to water service.
- Communications planning has been adjusted to better reflect the impacts of commissioning activities. Commissioning will also not be scheduled on weekends to ensure that staff are more readily available to support the contractor given the specificity of the City's water system in some areas.
- A contractor roundtable has been scheduled to review additional project takeaways and ensure these are reflected in future planning and implementation.
- As soon as the project team becomes aware of potential project delays, broader communications internally and to the community will be provided to promote transparency. If desired, this can include monthly Council updates.

**COMMUNITY SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS:**

Considerations related to equity, accessibility, sustainability and communication have been proactively integrated into the planning and delivery of communications for the BIG Project.

- Accessibility Considerations – accessibility has been a key concern expressed by residents. The communications team developed an Accessibility Hand Out to Crestview Drive residents outlining local supports, accessibility planning and outreach options during construction. These materials aimed to reduce barriers for those with mobility issues and help residents navigate temporary disruptions. An Emergency Communication Strategy document has also been developed with accessibility in mind, ensuring critical information is delivered in an inclusive and timely manner.
- Community Engagement – The December Open House and continued updates via [engage.princerpert.ca/big](https://engage.princerpert.ca/big) website have been central to ensuring that residents that are affected by the BIG Project have a voice in the process. Questions and concerns raised by the community directly influenced the creation of specific outreach resources. Additionally, ensuring the use of multiple communication methods (door knocking, mailing letters/notices, in-person events, printed handouts, online updates) is consistently applied to all phases of

the project to give continuity to all residents and business owners.

**LINKS TO COUNCIL PLANS AND POLICY DIRECTION:**

This project is the direct execution of the City's Infrastructure Renewal Strategy, included in the 2025 Budget.

**COST:**

Costs of the above communication efforts are included within the total budget for the BIG Project.

**Report Prepared By:**

**Report Reviewed By:**

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Veronika Stewart  
Manager of Communications,  
Engagement and Social Development

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Robert Buchan,  
City Manager