



# **COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

## **ARTICLE 1 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

- To promote common understanding by all stakeholders of the vision, municipal mission, goals, and action plan for communications between the Town and its citizens.
- To provide direction to all stakeholders regarding the role they play in meeting the goals.

## **ARTICLE 2 DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE**

To ensure a common understanding of the policy the following definitions have been used:

### **Communications**

The communications addressed in this policy relate to those between the Town of Sutton and its community. This policy is not intended to address communications with visitors or tourists; or promotion of the Town of Sutton to potential new businesses, residents or tourists.

### **Citizens and community**

By citizens or community, this policy means those who pay taxes to the Town of Sutton both directly or indirectly, namely: individual citizens, adult and child; corporate citizens; full-time residents; second home owners.

### **Personnel**

By personnel, the policy means all individuals in the paid employment of the Town of Sutton.

### **Stakeholders**

By stakeholders, the policy means citizens, the personnel of the Town of Sutton and its elected officials.

### **Information**

By information, this policy means public information provided by the Town of Sutton to its community.

## **ARTICLE 3 CONTEXT**

Communication policies are an important tool in the sound management of a municipality. A policy focused on two-way communications with citizens, along with its action plan, should:

- Ensure that municipal communications are well-coordinated, effectively-managed and responsive to the information needs of the citizens, the personnel and the council;

- Foster a positive and collaborative relationship between the stakeholders;
- Emphasize the responsibility of citizens to stay abreast of information circulated by the municipality.
- Encourage and support effective public participation.

The adoption of this policy firmly underlines the importance that the Town of Sutton gives to communications between it and the citizens. This policy, together with the communications action plan attached, lays out the roles and responsibilities of everyone, including citizens; the steps to follow; and the concrete actions to take if we are to achieve the vision for our community as defined below.

#### **ARTICLE 4 COMMUNICATION VISION**

The community of Sutton places two-way communication and collaboration at the heart of its practices. Municipal employees are engaged and responsive, citizens are informed and involved, and communication is open and respectful.

#### **ARTICLE 5 COMMUNICATION MISSION OF THE MUNICIPALITY**

To provide a framework that favours an accessible and appropriate exchange of information, promoting a culture of two-way communication that is open, respectful and trustworthy. In concrete terms this means the Town of Sutton will:

- Implement and track the progress of any adopted communications action plan
- Increase communication skills and enhance the communication capacity of the municipal organization as a whole
- Support and develop opportunities for the public participation process

#### **ARTICLE 6 GOALS FOR COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE MUNICIPALITY AND ITS CITIZENS**

1. Provide municipal information that is pro-active, timely, accurate, clear and accessible.
2. Increase awareness of municipal regulations, policies, procedures and goals through effective communication programs.
3. Provide systems that ensure enquiries, complaints, and requests for municipal services are dealt with in a timely manner.
4. Boost citizen involvement in the public participation process. (As presented in the action plan, the term “participation” has a broader sense than consultation and acknowledges that there are a variety of ways in which citizens can contribute to the decision-making process, even though the final responsibility must rest in the hands of the elected officials).

#### **ARTICLE 7 COMMITMENT, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

This policy requires the involvement of all stakeholders:

| <b>Role</b>  | <b>Responsibility</b>  |
|--|--|
| Creation, update and revision of the communication policy                                    | Personnel and council  |
| Identification of issues, creation and annual review of communications action plan           | Communications working group (personnel, citizens and councillors) |
| Adoption of policy, action plan and related budget items                                     | Council  |
| Implementation of policy and action plan   | Director general and personnel                                     |
| Staying abreast of municipal information and taking part in the public participation process | Citizens   |

## **ARTICLE 8 RIGHT TO INFORMATION**

Every person has a right to information to the extent provided by law. These rights exist mainly within the provisions of the *Loi sur l'accès aux documents des organismes publics et sur la protection des renseignements personnels*.

## **ARTICLE 9 LANGUAGE**

Under the *Charte de la langue française* the Town of Sutton, like every municipality in Quebec, must produce all its notices, communications and printed matter in French. This includes, for example, internal directives and procedures, forms, permits, regulations and other documents for citizens.

By virtue of its bilingual status accorded by the *Charte de la langue française*, the Town of Sutton may also, at its discretion, provide information for its citizens in English.

The Town of Sutton desires to provide as much of its communications with citizens in English as in French. Nonetheless the level of cost and effort required for translation should always be taken into consideration. In a case where such cost or effort is substantial, this will be brought to the attention of the council for their consideration and decision.