

?Join in Dufferin? portal targets more community involvement in County business

Written By **MIKE BAKER**

The County of Dufferin will today launch a new online portal designed to increase community involvement in the development of regional policies and prioritization of municipal projects.

Labelled 'Join in Dufferin', the new forum will provide opportunities for people in the County to share stories, ideas and experiences, connect with others in the community and express their thoughts on new projects and initiatives, says County CAO Sonya Pritchard.

'Traditional engagement tools such as public meetings and Town Halls don't work for everyone in today's environment, by adding an online tool we hope to involve more residents,' Ms. Pritchard tells the Citizen. 'Join in Dufferin is an online space that will provide information about different initiatives that are being planned at the County level. The community will have an opportunity to participate in surveys and respond to questionnaires.'

She added, 'It is a great way for residents to learn about new initiatives, be a part of an online community and provide input.'

The forum, Ms. Pritchard says, will go live at some point today. Residents can access the new space at joinindufferin.ca.

This initiative is seen as an important step towards the County improving its community consultation process. Ms. Pritchard noted it was a priority for both regional staff and County Council to further engage with local residents on key projects over the next few years.

'County policies, services and projects impact residents in Dufferin County. Receiving input from more residents before finalizing an initiative will help County Council make better decisions,' Ms. Pritchard said. 'By sharing perspectives and experiences, citizens are helping to shape the community and future.'

She confirmed there will be at least two issues posted on the site at launch, with more to follow over the coming weeks.

'Come Thursday, you will note there is a post about planning for the future of Dufferin County, which is the first in a series of posts that will help inform the Dufferin County strategic plan for 2019-2022. There is also a project about destination signage, which is the beginning of posts related to economic development,' Ms. Pritchard said.

'This is only the start as the County is currently moving forward with many other initiatives that will seek the input of our local community, so stay tuned for more projects to continue to pop up throughout the winter and into spring,' she concluded.

For more, visit joinindufferin.ca.