

County launches Community Engagement Framework and Climate-Equity Lenses

Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The County of Dufferin has introduced a new framework for community engagement and has also adopted climate and equity lenses as part of its 2023 -2026 Corporate Strategic Plan.

"The County is charting a path to a sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous future for our community, and the Community Engagement Framework and Climate and Equity Lenses will help us as we work to achieve our goals under our strategic plan. With a focus on collaboration and social and environmental considerations, the County will ensure a thriving, equitable and resilient community for all in Dufferin," said Wade Mills, Warden of Dufferin County.

The County's first-ever Community Engagement Framework will serve as a guide for future consultation and engagement opportunities. The framework, which is based on the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) public engagement spectrum, looks to:

- Define community engagement and the County's commitment to it
- Outline the roles and responsibilities of County Council, staff and the community
- Define the different levels of community engagement and tactics for each based on IAP2's spectrum
- Feature useful tools for staff to help develop community engagement plans that will help ensure county engagements are meaningful, accessible and inclusive

"The County is committed to actively engaging and partnering across departments and with community members, stakeholders, and other organizations to collectively address local challenges and achieved shared goals," reads a Nov. 15 press release from the County of Dufferin.

The County has also adopted equity and climate lenses as part of the Corporate Strategic Plan that will be applied across the entire administration through its day-to-day operations and policy design.

The Equity Lens is a method for analyzing or diagnosing the impact of the design and implementation of policies and programs on under served individuals and marginalized groups. It will focus on the inclusion of marginalized groups such as racialized communities, Indigenous peoples, 2SLGBTQ+ communities and persons with disabilities.

The Climate Lens is a process to analyze the relationship between a municipal decision and climate change. The Climate Lens will have the County consider whether its policies, plans and projects will affect the climate through the production of greenhouse gas emissions or be affected by climate variables like temperature or precipitation.

The County will be trailing the equity and climate lenses on a set of projects and initiatives across the corporation to inform ongoing work and provide updates if required.

"The lenses will help the County understand and evaluate the impacts of new or changing policies, programs and services, ensuring decision are made with social and environmental consideration foregrounded and in alignment with its long-term objectives," states the press release.

In January, Dufferin County Council approved the 2023-2026 Corporate Strategic Plan, which will act as a roadmap to guide council and staff plans for the future and form the foundation of operational plans, the annual budget, and recommendations to council on day-to-day decision-making.