

**Municipality Of Chatham-Kent**  
**Chief Administrative Office**  
**Corporate Initiatives - Communications**  
**Information Report**

**To:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Amy Wilcox, FCPA, FCMA, PMP - Manager, Corporate Initiatives  
**Date:** February 27, 2020  
**Subject:** Let's Talk Chatham-Kent Report

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This report is for the information of Council.

**Background**

In April 2015, a motion brought forth by Councillor Brock McGregor and seconded by Councillor Doug Sulman was unanimously approved. It called for:

“A social media strategy for communication of municipal governance issues prior to, during, and after council meetings. An ongoing plan to re-evaluate and modify communication strategy, including opportunities for community input.”

In January 2017, Council approved the community strategic plan, CK Plan 2035. One of the critical success factors of the corporation is to operate in an “open and transparent” manner. Corporate Communications determined that an online community engagement tool would assist in this endeavor.

In October 2017, Council approved a sole source purchase of an online community engagement tool provided by Bang the Table to be used as a pilot project.

The project was funded from the Strategic Planning budget using a positive variance due to the vacant Coordinator of Strategic Planning position. This project will be assessed and if warranted to continue, the Corporate Initiatives team will submit a request for funding through the supplementary budget.

**Comments**

**Software**

Bang the Table's mission is to enable public participation as a fundamental pillar of well-functioning 21st century democracies by forging constructive relationships between communities and the institutions of government.

The online community engagement tool, Let's Talk Chatham-Kent, gives the municipality the opportunity to inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower residents and allows administration the ability to obtain feedback from the residents. The tool allows business units the opportunity to provide information to citizens through "widgets", such as a document library, important project dates, project life cycle updates, and a news feed "tool" that can be used to keep the community updated. These tools allow administration to consult, involve and engage residents by providing them the ability to collaborate using surveys, forums, and questionnaires.

### Software Statistics

As of December 3, 2019, there were 1,608 participants who registered to use the service. This tool gives administration the ability to obtain feedback from users with or without the users registering and providing their email address.

Since the fall of 2017, twenty-one projects have been included in the Let's Talk Chatham-Kent tool. There were two projects in 2017 (1,365 visitors), eight projects in 2018 (6,825 visitors) and eleven projects in 2019 (7,723 visitors). As of the writing of this report, the total visitors to the website is 15,913 visitors. Some of those projects are as follows: Arena Development in Chatham-Kent; Business Incubator and Accelerator Program Survey; Chatham-Kent EarlyON Child and Family Centre survey; Chatham-Kent Election 2018; Chatham-Kent Lake Erie Shoreline Study; Chatham-Kent Public Library Satisfaction Survey; CK Public Art Project - Bike Racks; Climate Change Action Plan; Continuous Improvement and "Red Tape" Reduction Project; Council Meetings in Your Community; Driving Forward: CK's Transit Strategy; Housing and Homelessness Plan; Let's Talk Pot: What We Know So Far About Legalization of Cannabis in Chatham-Kent; Sidewalk Winter Control; Smart Cities Challenge; and the Transportation Survey.

The top ten projects with the most visitors are listed in the table below.

Project Name	Number of Visitors
Chatham-Kent Lake Erie Shoreline Study	2,663
Chatham-Kent Election 2018	2,501
Have Your Say in the 2019 Budget	1,503
Sidewalk Winter Control	1,083
Transportation Survey	969
Arena Development in Chatham-Kent	931
Have Your Say in the 2018 Budget	923
Smart Cities Challenge	665
Housing and Homelessness Plan	609
Continuous Improvement and "Red Tape" Reduction Project	592

Let's Talk Chatham-Kent provides an analytical framework and allows Council and administration to benchmark projects against industry standards. Reports can identify project interest, critical issues, and important community stakeholders. Reporting also

allows project leads the ability to analyze or export the results of a single feedback process, an entire project or your entire project history.

System analytics distinguish between visitors that are aware, informed and engaged; terms commonly used in community engagement. An aware visitor, or a visitor that the system considers to be 'aware', has made one single visit to your site or project. The software's methodology suggests that a visitor who has not taken any further action, (has not clicked on anything), can be considered to be aware that the project or site exists. Aware visitors will have visited at least one page. An informed visitor has taken the 'next step' from being aware and clicked on something, such as another project, a news article, a photo, etc. The software considers the visitor to be informed about the project or site. This is done because a click suggests interest in the project. Any one of the actions below is required for the software to consider the visitor 'informed':

- view a photo or video
- download a document
- visit the Key Dates page
- visit a FAQ list page
- visit multiple project pages (that means clicking from one project into the next or clicking on pages within the project. For example into a forum discussion) or
- contributed to a tool (in other words, become 'engaged')

Every visitor that contributes to a tool is considered to be 'engaged'. Examples of an engaged visitor is one that has:

- contributed in forum(s)
- participated in survey(s) and quick polls
- contributed to news article(s) and stories
- posted in guestbook(s)
- asked question(s)
- placed pin(s) on map(s) or
- contributed to brainstormers

Engaged and informed are subsets of aware. That means that every engaged visitor is also always informed and aware. In other words, a visitor cannot be engaged without also being informed and aware. At the same time, an informed visitor is always aware.

Based on the software analytics, since 2017, the total number of visitors that have participated in a survey is 1,150. The top projects for “engaged” participants are listed in the table below.

Project Name	Number of Visitors
Sidewalk Winter Control	770
Transportation Survey	306
Have Your Say on the 2019 Budget	298

Housing and Homelessness Plan	297
Arena Development in Chatham	246
Have Your Say 2018 Budget	217
Chatham-Kent EarlyON and Child and Family Centre	215
Driving Forward: CK's Transit Strategy	106

The top projects for "informed" participants are listed in the table below.

Project Name	Number of Visitors
Have Your Say on the 2019 Budget	1,092
Chatham-Kent Lake Erie Shoreline Study	949
Sidewalk Winter Control	827
Transportation Survey	798
Have Your Say on the 2018 Budget	775
Housing and Homelessness Plan	419
Arena Development in Chatham-Kent	406
Chatham-Kent Election 2018	374

### **Consultation**

Appendix A provides feedback from municipal staff that use the on-line community engagement tool. Business units providing feedback include Child Care and Early Years, Public Health, Economic Development, Chatham-Kent Library Services, Transportation Services and Senior Services.

### **Financial Implications**

The annual subscription for the software is \$25,425 including HST. To better align with Council Priorities, the funds from the Project Management Office project management software has been reallocated to cover this expense.

Prepared by:

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## Appendix A: Pros and Cons from municipal staff using the tool

**Pros**

- Accessible, well-known platform with high traffic
- Lets analyst know where respondents are accessing surveys from (email, website, etc.)
- Informs analyst how many people started but didn't finish the survey
- Allows you to download all facets of the survey into one spreadsheet. Can use excel to maneuver/manipulate data however desired
- People online to assist with whatever questions you have
- Allows for filtering of responses for enhanced analysis
- After a completed survey, the page is directed to the survey home page. This means we could do it in a kiosk mode
- Incredibly user friendly
- Constant and accessible instant messenger support (Bang The Table) through the tool was very helpful throughout the process
- Ability to house all arms of project (i.e. posters, forms, articles, corresponding details, etc.)
- One of the better tools that the Municipality has for engagement
- Clean look
- User friendly on the admin side, so not a lot of training required
- Can bundle different types of information all in one place – ie. surveys, documents, videos, pictures, upcoming events, open communication forums
- Visitors can see other projects happening in the municipality at the same time
- Puts a face on projects with the “Who’s Listening” feature
- Third-party moderation
- Automatic emails when someone leaves a comment
- The reporting/statistics feature has met my needs.

**Cons**

- Filtered survey response graphs can only be downloaded to PDF-can still do all this work via excel, though
- Have to go through Amy to get a survey set up. We should be able to post a survey at our discretion
- Lack of knowledge about tool both municipally and community-wide
- The need for a resident to have to sign up using email in order to submit responses to a survey (not great for when needed purely for survey response or to gather data from large catchment area)
- At the end of the project I was not able to follow up with registered users who submitted ideas/comments. It would be great to be able to send a mass email explaining how their feedback shaped the project – maybe this was user error;

- There does not seem to be a link to Let's Talk on the municipal website(?). The "Have Your Say" button would seem the best place;
- Unless it is used by every department, it will not be viewed by residents as a convenient one-stop shop to provide feedback on various activities. It is just one more place, among many, that needs to be found depending on the topic. Even if departments – like IES, Libraries – set up a simple Let's Talk page that links to their existing project pages, but still gives residents a chance to leave comments or discuss ideas within Let's Talk.

### **Comments**

- We were able to use the Lets Talk tool to share our survey and collect community input on transportation needs for our Transportation Grant.
- I feel this was an efficient way to reach citizens across the Municipality to complete the survey. We had a good response rate to the survey and the data was used in the grant application, which we were successful in obtaining.
- It was user-friendly to put the data from the site.
- Overall, I find the tool useful as it promotes project transparency, two-way communication, and an informed community. I think Let's Talk, or a similar tool, should continue to be implemented.
- We feel it's definitely worth keeping