



1593 Four Mile Creek Road
P.O. BOX 100, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0
905-468-3266 • FAX: 905-468-2959

www.notl.com

The Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Information Report to Council

SUBJECT: Community Engagement Update
DATE: 2024-04-16
REPORT #: CAO-24-010
PREPARED BY: Marah Minor
DEPARTMENT: CAO/Administration

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Niagara-on-the-Lake takes pride in its thoughtful and dynamic community engagement efforts. Community members, including residents, visitors, business owners, community partners and more, are passionate about participating in municipal matters and eager to share their feedback, helping to make Niagara-on-the-Lake a connected municipality.

The Town has utilized its Join the Conversation (JTC) engagement platform on EngagementHQ since its implementation in 2019 and has seen year-over-year increases in its participation rates. The goal of JTC is to offer the opportunity for community members to share their feedback, needs and concerns and report these responses to Council to assist in decision-making.

The site allows users to participate in surveys, polls, and forums and view project pages that provide key information, including key project dates, timelines, Staff and consultant contact information, videos, report links, frequently asked questions and more.

JTC SITE REVIEW AND BENCHMARKING REPORT

Staff recognize the importance of monitoring and evaluating its online engagement efforts and recently contacted EngagementHQ to gather feedback and insights. Through this, Staff have gained a deeper understanding of strengths and areas for enhancement concerning the Town's JTC platform. By leveraging the latest best practices and tools to better engage the community, Staff aims to enhance community engagement further.

EngagementHQ provided the Town with a JTC Site Review and Benchmarking Report from the period of October 15, 2022, to October 14, 2023. A summary of the notable findings are as follows:

- JTC had **11,382** unique site visitors, **14,451** total site visits, and **1,410** total site contributors.
- The site saw **531** new registered participants, reaching a database size of over **3,200**.
- Niagara-on-the-Lake has the **largest database size** compared with three other peer comparison clients of EngagementHQ.
- The Tourism Strategy Survey had the highest number of engaged participants (**399**), followed by the Patio Program Survey (**394**) and the Customer Experience Survey (**259**).
- Niagara-on-the-Lake has the **highest average engagement rate** at **27.8%** of peer comparisons.
- The two newsletters distributed during the survey period had an open rate between **84.4%- 85.5%**.
- The highest traffic channel is Search (**43%**), indicating awareness about the site and that residents are looking it up, followed by Direct (**33.8%**).
- The surveys completed received **1,171** participants in total, a high number in relation to comparison clients.

For the full report, please refer to the attached Appendix I – Site Review and Benchmarking Report.

NEXT STEP / CONCLUSION

Niagara-on-the-Lake's receipt of continuous feedback is a testament to the Town's commitment to engaging with community members and fostering opportunities for two-way communication. Through actively seeking feedback and input, the Town has been able to develop initiatives and plans that reflect the community's needs and priorities.

As identified in Council's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan, a Community Engagement Plan will be created by Q1 of 2026 to define engagement strategies and consider new tools to enhance engagement and better connect with audiences. In leveraging the latest tools and best practices, Niagara-on-the-Lake is poised to continue building a thriving and engaged community for years to come. The data gathered by EngagementHQ is a valuable resource that will help Staff in the Community Engagement Plan consultation process and serve as a baseline for future comparison.

The Town is committed to inclusive and collaborative decision-making processes and looks forward to enhancing engagement efforts in the future. By seeking feedback and input from all community members and exploring new and innovative ways to connect with residents, the Town will continue to build an informed, engaged, and inspired community.

ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix I – Site Review and Benchmarking Report