

RECOMMENDATION

“THAT Report CAO-2024-04 regarding Additional Information Relating to Option 2 Outlined in CAO Report 2024-03, be received as information, and further, THAT Council directs staff to proceed with Option #4 as attached below.”

Option #4: Create a Working Group Comprised of a Balanced Representation of the Individuals and Communities within Wilmot Township to Explore Alternative Approaches for Citizen Engagement and Decision-Making, and Engage Further on the Prime Ministers Path Project.

Council and staff have informally received feedback that the engagement process carried out by First People’s Group was insufficient and the final report did not fully reflect the diverse views and opinions of the community.

The Council wishes to confirm community support for the First People’s Group recommendation to create a Working Group that would engage further with the community and explore alternative approaches for citizen engagement and decision-making.

Further, the Council wishes to confirm community support for the First People’s Group on behalf of the Township, by using the Working Group to plan a collaborative approach to determine a path forward for the Prime Ministers Path Statues project.

To move forward with this work, staff recommend engaging an experienced firm that specializes in creating inclusive engagement plans for diverse communities. This firm would take the lead in shaping the work and providing guidance on the following aspects:

1. **Working Group Implementation:** The firm can offer insights on how to establish an effective working group. This includes defining the group’s purpose, structure, and composition, citing best practices and case studies of similar working groups.
2. **Terms of reference and Mandate:** The firm can assist in crafting clear and comprehensive terms of reference for the Working Group. These documents outline the group’s objectives, scope, and responsibilities.
3. **Selection Process:** Drawing from their experience, the firm can propose best practices for selecting Working Group members to ensure a diverse representation.
4. **Advice to the Working Group:** The firm can provide ongoing advice and support to the working group throughout its operation. This might involve facilitating meetings, addressing challenges, prompting collaboration and assisting with research.

Fostering inclusivity is crucial for successful community engagement. By involving experts experienced in this field, the Township can enhance the effectiveness of the Working Group and achieve better outcomes.

In terms of project timing, it is recommended that the work be staged in conjunction with the Township's strategic planning process, as follows;

- March to August 2024 – Undertake strategic planning process to develop a vision and goals for the community, based on robust community engagement.
- April to June 2024 – Engage a firm specializing in inclusive engagement to make recommendations regarding the creation of the Working Group, Terms of Reference and Mandate.
- June to September 2024 – Establish the Working Group, and engage the firm to provide support to the Working Group as it develops a plan on how to transform community engagement and consultation processes in Wilmot Township and encourage greater openness, accountability and citizen participation in decision-making. The Working Group will make the best effort to submit its recommendations to the Council and staff by approximately September 31, 2024.
- October 2024 - the Council in consultation with staff makes recommendations on implementing any recommendations from the Working Group regarding a) transforming community engagement and consultation processes b) encouraging greater openness, accountability and citizen participation and c) conducting public information and consultation meetings.
- October 2024 – the firm will provide “train-the-trainer” support to the working group on how to conduct participatory consultation meetings with the public.
- November 2024 to June 2025 – the Working Group will conduct information and consultation meetings at Township Community Centres regarding the Prime Ministers Path project.
- June 2025 to July 2025 – the Working Group with the support of the “firm” will collate its data collected during public consultations and summarize its recommendations for the Council and staff.
- September 2025 – the Council will determine how to implement any appropriate recommendations from the Working Group regarding the Prime Ministers Path Project.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Barry Wolfe
Baden