



Working together with our community

Council-In-Committee Meeting – June 11, 2024

Subject: EngageNorfolk Granicus Platform - Single Source Procurement
Report Number: CS-24-081
Division: Corporate Services
Department: Corporate Communications
Ward: All Wards
Purpose: For Decision

Recommendation(s):

THAT Staff Report CS-24-081 EngageNorfolk Granicus Platform - Single Source Procurement be received as information;

AND THAT Council authorizes a single source supply as outlined in Norfolk County Purchasing Policy CS-02, Section 4.8.4 with Granicus's Bang the Table Engagement HQ platform for a two (2) year term, with three (3) one (1) year optional extensions, to continue to provide online community engagement services as identified within the report;

AND FURTHER THAT the Director, Corporate Customer Service and Communications, be authorized to enter into an agreement with Granicus for the continued licences and services of the platform for an annual fee of \$17,120 (excluding HST).

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to renew the single source procurement for the continued use of Granicus's Bang the Table Engagement HQ platform for online engagement between Norfolk County and its residents, stakeholders, and businesses.

Discussion:

In 2021, Norfolk County staff launched the EngageNorfolk website as a pilot using the Bang the Table Engagement HQ platform. Provincial grant funding through the Municipal Modernization Program covered the cost of a two-year contract.

Over the past two years, staff from departments across the Corporation have used the platform for more than 45 engagements, including feedback on annual budgets, the County Land Review, roads projects, and paid parking.

Since its launch in 2021, the platform has tracked:

- More than 28,000 total visits
- More than 5,600 engagements, such as survey completions and idea submissions
- More than 5,000 document downloads, including maps and reports
- More than 850 registered users

The data collected can be analyzed efficiently using built-in platform tools, such as survey analysis, text analysis with sentiment, tool and project dashboards, customizable PDF survey reports, and downloadable Excel reports.

Norfolk County is among over 100 municipalities across Ontario using the platform, including several neighbouring and nearby municipalities such as:

- Brant County: engagebrant.ca
- Elgin County: engageelgin.ca
- Brantford: letstalkbrantford.ca
- Hamilton: engage.hamilton.ca
- Waterloo Region: engagewr.ca
- ~~Niagara Falls: letstalk.niagarafalls.ca~~

While there are other potential ways to perform online engagement, Bang the Table Engagement HQ's platform not only offers the benefits noted above, but having used the platform for the past two years, staff and residents are already familiar with how to use the tools and features. In addition, the modern, accessible, well-designed user experience of the platform makes it easy to use.

The annual subscription includes unlimited engagement projects per year, allowing multiple projects to run simultaneously. There is also no limit to the number of residents who can register as users or the number of staff who can access engagement data and reports.

The platform allows visitors to subscribe to projects to receive updates, enabling staff to easily share new information with engaged residents via project newsletters.

The Corporate Communications team will act as the community engagement lead, providing training, consulting on engagement strategies, and content development. The team will also build engagement pages and tools, share reports and data.

The existing approved Corporate Communication budget (Computer Software Service) will cover the \$17,120 annual subscription.

Financial Services Comments:

The Final 2024 Levy Supported Operating Budget contains an allocation of \$49,800 related to Communications' software services. Costs associated with the renewed agreement are expected to be accommodated within this budget in 2024.

Impacts in future years will be incorporated into annual budgets as needed.

Interdepartmental Implications:

The Corporate Communications team has and will continue to work collaboratively with departments and divisions across the Corporation to use the platform to plan and implement effective community engagements.

Purchasing Services

Purchasing staff have reviewed the report and advises that Norfolk County Policy CS-02, Section 4.8.4 requires all single source procurements to be authorized prior to the purchase through resolution of Council. Single source supply is defined where there is more than one vendor able to supply the goods or service but for reasons of function or service, one supplier is recommended for consideration and the purchase will be made without a competitive bidding process.

Consultation(s):

In 2023, consultation resulted in the transfer of responsibility for the platform from Community Development to Corporate Communications. This move ensures that community engagement projects align with corporate communication standards, timelines, and objectives.

Strategic Plan Linkage:

This report aligns with the 2022-2026 Council Strategic Priority Serving Norfolk - Ensuring a fiscally responsible organization with engaged employees who value excellent service.

Explanation: Continuing to use Granicus's Bang the Table Engagement HQ platform, which will further strengthen communication and engagement with residents, stakeholders, and businesses by providing a centralized, accessible, and easy-to-use online space to provide feedback. Continuing to use the platform will make capturing, analyzing, and reporting data more efficient for staff.

Conclusion:

Staff are recommending a single-source purchasing approach to allow the Corporation to continue to use a well-established, effective engagement tool that has extensive reporting capabilities.

Continuing to use Granicus's Bang the Table Engagement HQ platform for online engagement supports Council's Strategic Priorities.

Attachment(s):

None

Approval:

Approved By:
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