

TOOL 3: Communication and Marketing Strategy

Introduction

The Housing Community Improvement Plan (Housing CIP) has been developed to address the housing and workforce needs of the town of Hearst. The effective use of the Housing CIP should, therefore, achieve the following main objectives:

- The Hearst community (town of Hearst) offers a variety of housing types to meet demand and address various market needs.
- The Hearst community (town of Hearst) provides a variety of housing types in anticipation of short, medium, and long-term demands.

To achieve these main objectives, it is essential for the Housing CIP to be well-shared within the target market, easily accessible, and available. The Town of Hearst must commit to actively sharing the plan by following a well-established communication and marketing strategy. This toolbox will serve as a guide to disseminate the plan to relevant stakeholders to optimize the implementation of strategies and actions and maximize the use of incentives.

Target Market

To ensure the achievement of the plan's objectives, it is necessary to disseminate the Housing CIP to key stakeholders playing a role in its implementation and utilization. The target market for the Housing CIP must be defined, and strategies must be put in place to share the plan with these key stakeholders. This section will identify the primary target market of the Housing CIP. It is also important to note that the entire population of Hearst is affected by the plan and may have a role to play in its implementation. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure good information sharing about the plan.

Town of Hearst

The Town of Hearst plays a very important role in implementing the Housing CIP. Its staff involved in the plan must be informed and prepared to answer questions related to it. The Town of Hearst must also implement strategies that will enable the population to use housing and workforce-related incentives. It must act as a guide and leader in using the plan and ensure its sharing through various media. The Town of Hearst is also responsible for undertaking certain proposed actions in the plan to promote housing development and attract workforce, either through immigration or by taking actions contributing to the retention of youth in schools and post-secondary institutions.



Owners of Rental Housing, Private Housing

Owners of rental housing and private housing, as well as those interested in becoming such, play a significant role in the plan's implementation, especially concerning housing. Indeed, the development of housing in the Hearst region is an important strategy to address the housing shortage, whether by renovating existing buildings, constructing new buildings, or adding additional housing units to existing buildings. These new housing units will thus accommodate people from outside the area or students who can contribute to addressing the workforce shortage.

Business Owners

Business owners have a significant influence on both the housing crisis and the workforce shortage. Their ability to consider integrating housing units within their establishments can have a positive impact by increasing the housing supply in the community. This approach helps alleviate the housing shortage by offering additional rental options. Simultaneously, the availability and diversity of businesses play a crucial role in the attractiveness of the community. For families considering settling in Hearst, the presence of diverse businesses creates an appealing environment. Additionally, it can contribute to the retention of youth, students, and workers by offering a range of professional opportunities and services.

Employers

Employers must be involved in the plan's implementation regarding workforce recruitment and retention. Employers who choose to focus on immigration to attract workforce must try to optimize the process to ensure workforce retention, whether in the immigration process or in raising awareness among their current staff about cultural differences and new staff about the Canadian job market. Employers can also ensure youth retention by partnering with schools and post-secondary institutions.

Schools and Post-Secondary Institutions

Schools and post-secondary institutions play an essential role in training young people, serving as a gateway to the job market. As places where students acquire essential skills and develop their knowledge, these institutions have a significant influence on preparing the future workforce. Their impact goes beyond simply transmitting knowledge, as they also serve as a direct entry point to the job market. Partnerships established between educational institutions and employers in the region are crucial to ensure a close alignment between the skills taught and the needs of the market. These collaborations can facilitate the recruitment of qualified talent and promote the retention of local workforce by creating internship opportunities, apprenticeship programs, and mentoring initiatives.



Communication and Marketing of the Housing CIP

The following communication methods will allow the Housing CIP to be shared with as many people as possible and thus achieve its two main objectives.

Website

Creating a website or a dedicated section of a website solely for the Housing CIP is a good strategy to inform the target market about important information that may concern them in the plan. A website containing not only the plan but also quick links, answers to frequently asked questions, downloadable documents, feedback or application forms, and summaries of available incentives improves accessibility to the plan and its information.

Social Media

The use of social media is one of the preferred methods for sharing the Housing CIP and related information with the general population since it makes information easily accessible and engaging through reactions and comments. For example, links, infographics, posters, and even short videos on social media can reach a large part of the population. Indeed, according to the survey conducted in the fall of 2023 among the population of Hearst and those interested in settling in Hearst, 86.76% of respondents would like to receive information about the plan through the Town of Hearst's Facebook page. It is, therefore, essential to use this communication method to effectively share the plan.

Public Meetings

The organization and holding of public meetings are a form of communication that allows engaging in discussions with those interested in the plan. It gives them the opportunity to ask more specific questions, provide them with resources, and, most importantly, obtain their feedback and suggestions for updating the plan or implementing other strategies to address the housing and workforce shortage. Public meetings also help explain the plan's objectives and available incentives further.

Newsletter

Regular newsletters would keep community residents informed about the plan's progress, available incentives, upcoming events, and their opportunities for participation. According to the survey conducted in the fall of 2023, 64.46% of respondents would be interested in the idea of subscribing to a newsletter that would share updates on projects undertaken by the Town of Hearst. The Housing CIP could, therefore, be featured in a section of a Town newsletter.



Advertising in Traditional Media

Advertising in traditional media is an important method to reach a part of the population that may not necessarily use social media for community news. Indeed, traditional media such as radio and the local newspaper are recognized as reliable sources of information providing community-related information. Using these media could be an effective method to share information about the plan and indicate to the general population the means of accessing the plan.

Town of Hearst

The use of Town of Hearst offices and spaces to promote the Housing CIP is also an interesting communication method. Simply installing posters, making brochures or infographics available to visitors, and having informed staff on the plan can contribute to its effective sharing.

Integration into Community Events

The participation of Town of Hearst staff in various community events such as fairs, workshops, or information sessions can attract attention to the plan and allow the community to learn about it. Networking, adding a short presentation by the Town of Hearst, or a booth can be methods to explore for sharing information about the plan.

Community Partnerships

Collaboration is an important element of plan implementation. Developing community partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and other community partners extends the reach of promotion. Indeed, these partners can support the dissemination of information and encourage participation among their clientele and partners.

Celebration of Success Stories

In the early years of the Housing CIP implementation, it is very important to celebrate success stories, whether by publishing written testimonials, video testimonials, photos, or texts about them to make them known to the community. This indicates to the community that the plan is maintaining its momentum and has a real impact. Highlighting successful candidates sparks positive discussions about the plan and encourages the submission of new applications.



Recommended Marketing Tools

The following tools are recommended to promote the Housing CIP. Depending on the budget available, the elements below should be considered for a successful marketing and communication strategy. The following list is not absolute and limited to the proposed options. Any effective method of promoting the plan can be considered.

- Website
- Facebook Publications
- Virtual Information Resources
- Promotional Posters
- Brochures
- Infographics or One-page Documents
- Newsletters
- Press Releases
- Videos and Photos of Final Products

