

Rev. 7/19

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

A guide for how the City of Fort Collins communicates internally, externally and in an emergency or crisis







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THAMEL IMPORT GIFT SHOP

Fort Collins Tours

OPEN

BEHOLD RETRO APPAREL & MORE

Retro

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RETRO

the right track



Introduction

The City of Fort Collins' mission is to provide exceptional service for an exceptional community. Strong communications and engagement are essential to this mission and ensure residents, businesses and visitors are connected to their local government and to each other. An engaged and thriving community is well-informed, enabled and encouraged to participate and equipped to make informed decisions.

As Fort Collins continues to grow and change, the ways in which the City interacts with the community also will evolve. New technology has shifted how information is shared, and an overabundance of information has created both a challenge and an opportunity for local governments to rise above the noise by embracing creativity and innovation, soliciting candid feedback, sharing rich stories and encouraging meaningful engagement.

This Strategic Communications Plan serves as a guide for how the City of Fort Collins communicates internally, externally and in an emergency or crisis. It enables a consistent approach across the organization and outlines opportunities for coordination, alignment and continuous improvement. As we implement the plan, we strive to build strong organizational relationships, inspire improved collaboration, foster partnerships and deliver an outstanding experience for our entire community.

Sincerely,

Amanda King
*Communications and
Public Involvement Director*



This plan was crafted in partnership with the Strategic Communication Department at Texas Christian University as part of the Certified Public Communicator program.



About the City of Fort Collins

VISION:

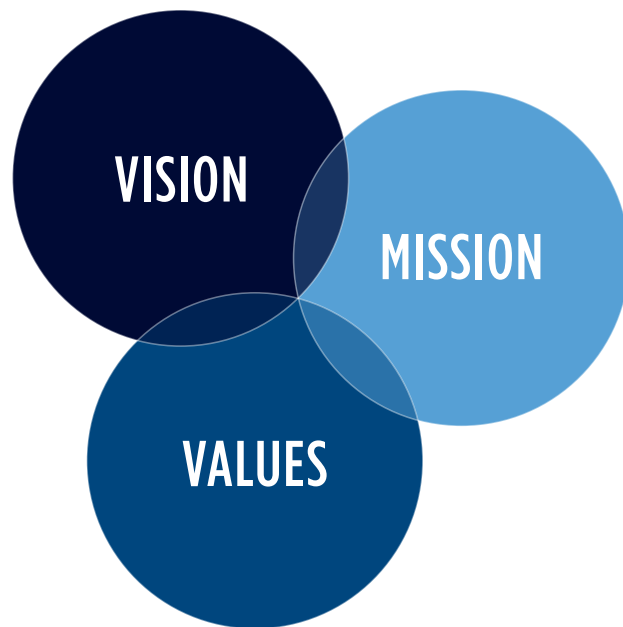
To Provide World-Class Municipal Services through Operational Excellence and a Culture of Innovation

MISSION:

Exceptional Service for an Exceptional Community

VALUES:

Collaboration - Excellence
Integrity - Outstanding Service
Safety & Well-being - Stewardship



Defining Our Values:

Collaboration

We partner internally and externally and believe that by working together we achieve better results.

Excellence

We set high standards, explore creative approaches to service delivery and problem solving, and seek ways to innovate and improve.

Integrity

We exemplify the highest standards of ethical behavior. We treat others with respect, and are honest, inclusive and transparent.

Outstanding Service

We seek to understand our customer's diverse needs and explore ways to exceed their expectations.

Safety & Well-being

We embody a culture of safety and wellness and believe that life balance matters.

Stewardship

We are dedicated to protect and enhance our organization and community's social, economic, and environmental resources.



Strategic Outcomes

The City has organized the community's priorities within seven key outcome areas:



Neighborhood Livability and Social Health

Provide a high quality built environment, support quality, diverse neighborhoods and foster the social health of residents



Culture and Recreation

Provide diverse cultural and recreational amenities



Economic Health

Promote a healthy, sustainable economy reflecting community values



Environmental Health

Promote, protect and enhance a healthy & sustainable environment



Safe Community

Provide a safe place to live, work, learn and play



Transportation

Provide for safe & reliable multi-modal travel to, from, and throughout the city



High Performing Government

Deliver an efficient, innovative, transparent, effective and collaborative city government



Role of Communications

Communications Philosophy

In line with the City's mission, vision and values, City communicators are committed to transparent and inclusive information and engagement, the core tenants of which include:

- **ACCURACY:**
We share accurate information and correct ourselves when we haven't.
- **HONESTY:**
We are truthful in our interactions with the community and each other.
- **TIMELINESS:**
We are proactive and communicate early and often.
- **RESPONSIVENESS:**
We are attentive to the questions and concerns of our community and quick to respond.
- **DIVERSITY:**
We leverage a wide range of tools and methods to share information and welcome feedback from all the unique voices within our community.
- **EQUITY:**
We reduce barriers and meet people where they are.
- **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:**
We regularly evaluate and measure the effectiveness of our communications and adjust to further enhance our work.

Public Engagement

The City of Fort Collins places a high value on the involvement and engagement of our residents and businesses. Local government has the advantage of being closest to the people it serves. It protects and enables the lives of the community's residents every day by providing basic needs from sidewalks and roads, to cultural enrichment, like festivals and healthy natural spaces.



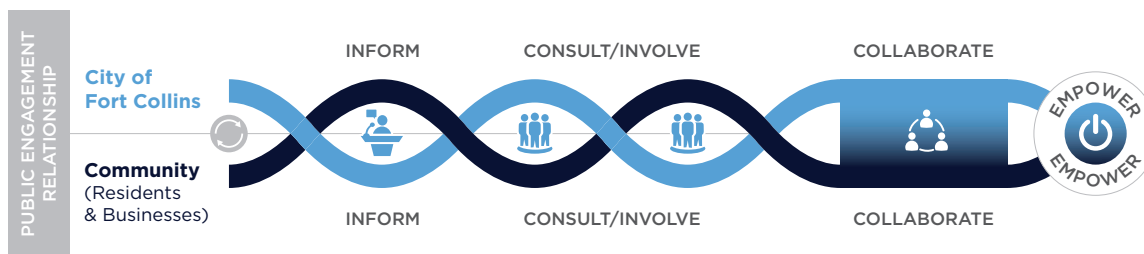
The City has adopted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) model as the framework for how it will engage the community. Communications and engagement work in tandem and in support of one another. It's important that IAP2 principles are considered when designing any communication or engagement campaign.



The backbone of this model is the public engagement spectrum. This spectrum outlines the roles, relationships and responsibilities of both the City and public and the corresponding methods of communication or engagement required based on the impact or perceived impact to the community.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM

INCREASING IMPACT OR PERCEPTION OF IMPACT ON PUBLIC



Public engagement is not always a linear process and communicators should feel empowered to move between levels as needed.

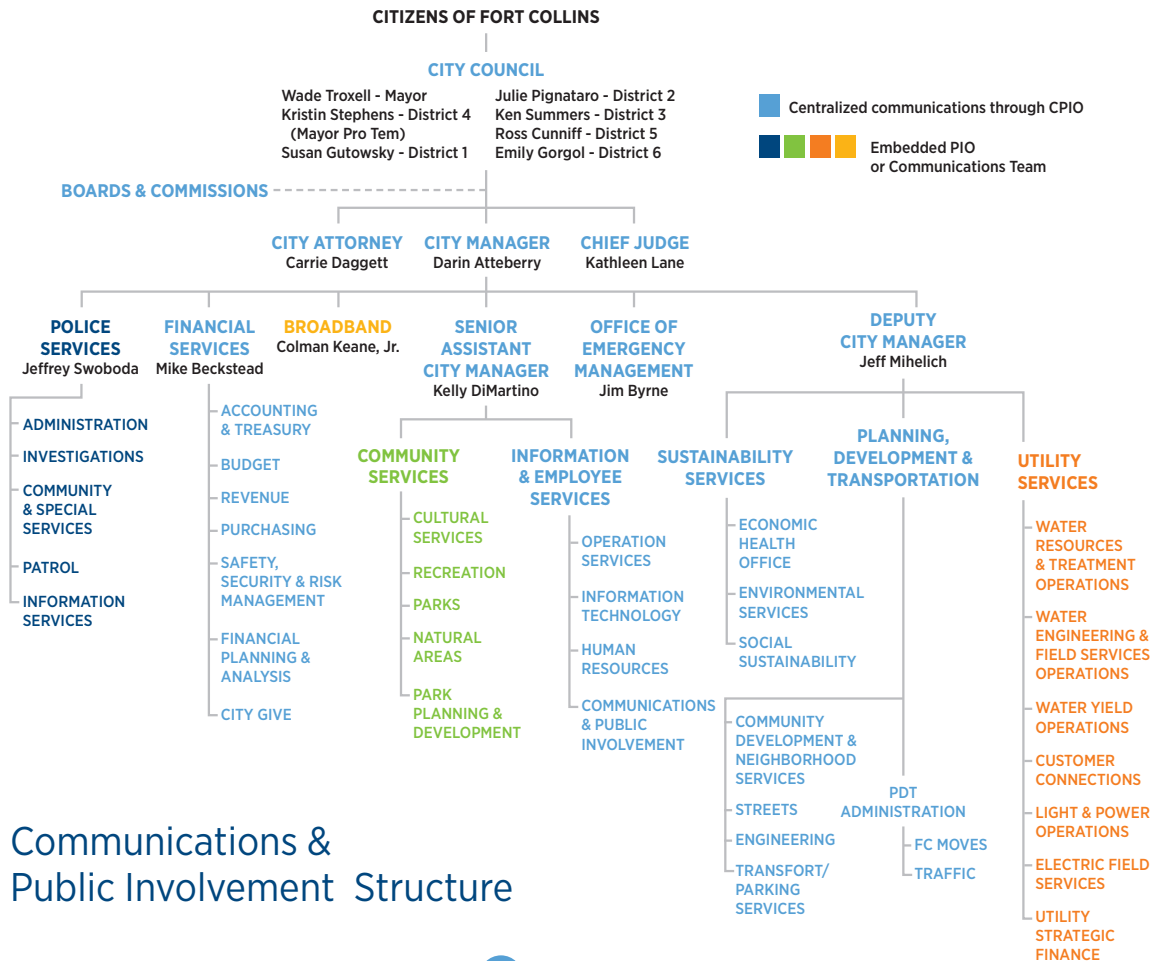
Current State

Organizational Structure

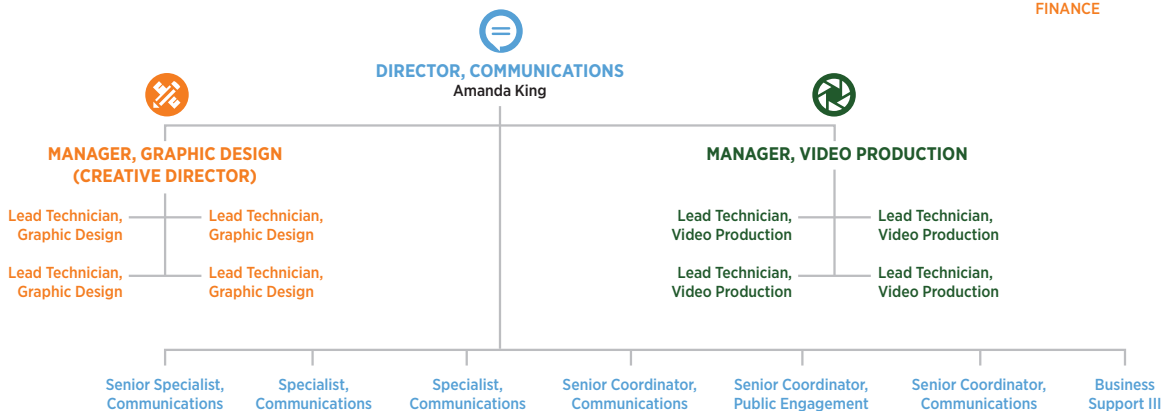


The City of Fort Collins employs a hybrid centralized and decentralized communications model. The Communications & Public Involvement Office serves as the centralized team. Other departments with unique business needs

or private-sector marketing competition may require embedded marketing or communications staff. Regardless, the City strives for an aligned and consistent approach to community communications and engagement.



Communications & Public Involvement Structure





Communication Roles & Authority

Information is shared at many levels throughout the organization. It's important to understand what topics or messages should be shared by each level, and the corresponding audience.

| SPOKESPERSON | MESSAGE DESIGN | MESSAGE APPROVAL | TOPICS | AUDIENCES |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Mayor/Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor/Council CPIO Other staff subject matter experts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor/Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ordinances, resolutions & policies Priorities & other organizational topics Official Council direction/opinion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Media Other Govt entities |
| City Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Manager CPIO Other staff subject matter experts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council direction Policy & procedural updates Priorities & other organizational topics Community topics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Staff Public Media Other municipal leaders |
| ELT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELT CPIO/Embedded Comms Other staff subject matter experts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Manager ELT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priorities & other organizational topics Policy & procedural | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Staff |
| PIO's/Other staff subject matter experts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELT CPIO/Embedded Comms Other staff subject matter experts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELT CPIO/Embedded Comms Other staff subject matter experts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public information Operational updates Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Public Media Staff |



SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Centralized consistent brand management & strong brand standards and awareness
- Shared resources, strengths & talents within centralized team
- Back-up/support and fewer silos within centralized team
- Centralized team has high-level view of all organizational priorities
- Embedded staff allows for subject matter experts and custom focus, prioritization and quicker response time
- Decentralized teams provide unique perspectives and additional career growth opportunities
- Collaboration and information sharing across disciplines and within teams
- Dedicated and talented staff (marketing, communications, graphics, video and web)
- Robust external communication and engagement
- Key internal communication tools (intranet, newsletter, etc.)
- Strong social media presence/following
- Large network of crisis communication support
- Educated, engaged and active community audience (residents, businesses and partner agencies)

OPPORTUNITIES

- Team building and collaboration across centralized and decentralized teams
- Regular crisis communications training exercises
- Consolidate and coordinate surveys and public engagement efforts
- Improve information sharing and transparency within teams and across the organization
- Share priorities
- Strategic storytelling/narrative focus
- Provide training and skill building workshops
- Coordinate and align internal communications
- Meet the community where they are in person and online
- Leverage user generated content to share the story of our broader community
- Clearly identify roles, responsibilities and authority of various communications staff/teams
- Use a common process and work flow
- Network and learn from partner agencies like PFA, PSD, CSU, etc.
- Update and enforce brand standards across the organization





WEAKNESSES

- Decentralized teams can be siloed or exhibit turf mentalities
- Lack of coordination, alignment and collaboration
- Different levels of service, capacity and budget
- Confusing, inefficient or different processes
- Disjointed or inconsistent voice, messaging & branding
- Lack of dedicated knowledge/focus with centralized team – divided attention
- Unclear roles and responsibilities
- Lack of central communications authority
- Over-communication with the community
- Reactive vs. proactive
- Inconsistent (or non-existent) crisis communication plans
- Lack of prioritization
- Inconsistent and overabundant internal communications
- Risk adverse
- Limited community diversity

THREATS

- Emergencies or disasters we are unprepared to respond to
- Crisis/controversy
- Lack of resources/capacity & changing workforce (budget cuts, turnover, etc.)
- Politics or changes in elected/executive leadership
- County, state and federal political changes/climate
- Decline in civility or civic engagement - apathy
- Not keeping up with new technology/tools
- Survey fatigue
- Information overload
- Barriers to communicate or participate (language, accessibility, etc.)
- Cyber security attacks
- Population changes
- Diminished trust in government
- Decline in traditional media outlets

Tools of the Trade

| | PAID | EARNED | SOCIAL | OWNED |
|---|---|--|---|--|
|  INFORM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print/digital Advertising • Videos • OOH Advertising (buses, benches, shelters, banners, billboards) • Festivals & events • Direct mail/post cards • Utility bill inserts • Print materials (brochures, rack cards, posters, door hangers) • Signage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press Release/ media advisory • Interviews • In the City Column/ Op eds • Stakeholder presentations • Festivals & events • Features • Press Conference | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook, Twitter, Instagram posts • YouTube videos • Nextdoor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CityNews • CityView • FCGov.com (webpages, spotlights, events calendar, etc.) • OurCity • Cable video programming • Live Stream video programming • Public meetings/ presentations • Public hotlines/phone • Information kiosks • Apps (FC Parking, Alexa, Transport, etc.) • Access Fort Collins FAQs • LETA notifications • Council memos & staff reports • Newsletters/City Manager's Monthly Report • Open Data portal • CityNet • FortShorts/Dept. Newsletters • City Manager's Video Blog • Citywide email (requires CPIO review/approval) |
|  CONSULT/INVOLVE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone Town Hall • Scientific Surveys • Festivals & events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press Conference • Stakeholder presentations • CORE 34 • Festivals & events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick polls • Posted questions/ voting • FB Live/ Twitter Chats • Nextdoor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OurCity • Online/Opt-in surveys • Open Houses/ Workshops/ Charrettes • Listening sessions/ Coffee Chats • Ask me anything/ panels • B&C Super issues • CityWorks 101 & Alumni Forums • Summer in the City • Public comment • Access Fort Collins • Lunch n' Learns • Talk it up Sessions • Wellness classes or presentations • Employee forums |

- Internal Only
- Two-Way Communications



| | PAID | EARNED | SOCIAL | OWNED |
|-------------|---|--|--|--|
| COLLABORATE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus Group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Editorial Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook groups Discussion forums | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OurCity platform Community Issues Forum Stakeholder meetings |
| EMPOWER | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ballot initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takeovers | |



Goals, Objectives, Strategies & Tactics

INTERNAL Communications Goal

To build a team of strong City ambassadors and foster an informed and engaged workforce through an efficient, comprehensive and valued internal communication framework
 (Strategic Plan Alignment: 7.4 Attract, retain, engage, develop and reward a diverse and competitive workforce to meet the needs of the community now and in the future)

Objective I-1:

Coordinate & align internal communications across the organization

STRATEGY I-1A:

Streamline key employee messages (powerful not prolific)

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|--|----------|----------------|----------------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Audit all internal communications to review format, platform, frequency & effectiveness and identify opportunities to streamline, combine and calendarize messages | | Audit/Strategy | Implementation |
| Create a shared internal messaging calendar to organize and prioritize regular updates | | ● | |

STRATEGY I-1B:

Ensure unified brand standards are applied to all internal communications

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|--|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Develop approved department templates to ensure consistent branding across all internal communications | | ● | |

Objective I-2:

Leverage new tools and technology to enhance employee communication and engagement and improve efficiencies

STRATEGY I-2A:

Make CityNet a robust and dynamic hub and source for organizational information

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|--|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Work with eGov to transition CityNet to Word Press CMS | | ● | |
| Revamp department content strategy and best practices for CityNet | | | ● |
| Develop employee engagement page that provides various cross-functional teams/ committee opportunities and other resources | | ● | |

STRATEGY I-2B:

Support understanding & adoption of Office 365 tools for enhanced collaboration

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Work with IT on an education plan for using OneDrive, SharePoint, Teams, etc. | | ● | |

Objective I-3:

Support and improve the flow of information up, down and through the organization

STRATEGY I-3A:

Revamp executive communication strategy

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Refresh City Manager communications plan including (Vlog, Talk it Up sessions, Issues & Answers) | | ● | |
| Develop an ELT communications toolkit with opportunities available (i.e., listening sessions, video messages, etc.) | | ● | |

STRATEGY I-3B:

Enable and support better cascade of information

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Create a manager's toolkit for deploying key information | | ● | |
| Partner with HR LOD to identify opportunities to include in management/ leadership curriculum | | | ● |

STRATEGY I-3C:

Support effective and consistent Council communications

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|--|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Effective Council communications training series | ● | | |
| Develop/expand Council communications guide | | | ● |

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS PERFORMANCE METRICS

| PROGRAM OUTCOMES | OUTPUT | EFFICIENCY | EFFECTIVENESS |
|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| <p>CORE 34 scores:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am clear on my work priorities - i.e., what I need to achieve in the next 3-6 months Senior leaders of my Service Area communicate honestly I have the materials, equipment and information to do my work | Reduce number of daily all staff emails by 25% | Increase in CityNet use by 25% | CORE 34 scores |
| Workforce metrics | Completed audit/ toolkit and shared calendar by Q4 2020 | Increase adoption of O365 tools by 30% | 100% internal branding compliance |

EXTERNAL Communications Goal

To develop and support policies, procedures, best practices and resources that enable staff across the organization to communicate and engage effectively and consistently with all corners of the community

(Strategic Plan Alignment: 7.3 Broaden methods of community engagement with additional consideration to diverse backgrounds, languages and needs)

Objective E-1:

Ensure organizational alignment for both centralized and decentralized communications and engagement teams

STRATEGY E-1A:

Foster improved coordination, transparency and best practices to promote effective and consistent communications across departments and channels

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|--|-------------|---|--|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Communication leads team (CLT) meetings to share priorities, strategize and align work | (Bi-Weekly) | | |
| Develop a shared communication and event content calendar on SharePoint | | ● | |
| Develop shared learning and training opportunities for continuous growth and improvement | | Work with CLT & HR/LOD to evaluate options for curriculum | Deploy basic required training & investigate enhanced training opportunities |

STRATEGY E-1B:

Establish and reinforce City brand standards and policies

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|--|----------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Update and expand the City's brand guide and AP style guide | | Draft in 2019, deploy in 2020 | Regular updates & reminders |
| Develop a template and resource library for all communicators including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation & report templates • Event planning guides & checklists (Groundbreakings, ribbon cuttings, awards, etc.) | | Start building library in 2019 | Continued growth/expansion of library |

Objective E-2:

Support enhanced storytelling and a common voice across all departments and channels to improve information sharing and meaningful engagement with the entire community (reach, retention and response)

STRATEGY E-2A:

Develop an internal storytelling/editorial team(s) to guide and direct content strategy for key community-wide communication channels

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|--|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Identify team and establish work plan | | ● | |
| Assign channels/tools | | ● | |
| Develop owned media strategies as local/regional media declines (be the news source) | | | ● |

STRATEGY E-2B:

Leverage shared data, resources, tools & technology to reach all corners of community

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|--|----------|--|-------------------------------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Work with eGov team to audit, update and improve FCgov.com | ● | Bootstrap 4 (mobile first UX) upgrade Press Release CMS upgrade | Council Dashboard application |
| Social Media strategy – cross promotions & best practices | ● | | |
| Use video – 360, drone, etc. | ● | | |
| Audit, align and streamline eNewsletters | ● | | |

STRATEGY E-2C:

Cultivate strong relationships with local, regional and national media

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|---|----------|--|-------------------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Establish best practices & training for working with the media like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> when/how to respond when to issue a press release, media advisory or statement how to conduct a press conference | | Develop best practices and training curriculum | Roll out training |
| Proactively connect with and build relationships with local reporters | ● | | |

Objective E-3:

Foster inclusive engagement by reducing barriers and meeting people where they are

STRATEGY E-3A:

Leverage IAP2 principles to inform, listen & respond to the community

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|--|----------|---|---|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Regular training and certification opportunities for staff | ● | | |
| Update Public Engagement spectrum and guide & educate community around our process | | Spectrum & PE guide update in 2019/2020 | Community education/training after update |

STRATEGY E-3B:

Cultivate cultural competency

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|---|----------|---|-----------------------------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Identify and promote training opportunities for inclusive communications to diverse audiences | | ● | |
| Develop best practices for using informal and formal cultural broker partnerships | | Identify formal/informal partners and begin building best practices | Develop long term framework |

STRATEGY E-3C:

Prioritize accessibility in communications by leveraging opportunities to reach diverse audiences and unique learning styles

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Work with Title VI partners and Language Access Plan to determine what must, should and can be translated, and develop best practices for non-required translation | | ● | |
| Develop translation guide and FAQ | | | ● |
| Ensure written and digital materials meet ADA requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch SiteImprove platform • Begin closed captioning for cable broadcast & online video | | ● | |
| Establish a translation bank with local and regional partners | | | ● |

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS PERFORMANCE METRICS

| PROGRAM OUTCOMES | OUTPUT | EFFICIENCY | EFFECTIVENESS |
|---|---|-----------------------|---|
| Community/NBS Survey trend – “City does a good job and informing residents & businesses” | 95% CLT meeting attendance & calendar use | 100% Brand compliance | Improved Community/NBS survey response rate/ratings |
| Community/NBS Survey trend – “City does a good job welcoming resident/business involvement” | Reduced Site Improve page errors | | Diverse in-person/ online engagement |
| Community/NBS Survey trend – “City does a good job listening to residents/businesses” | | | |

CRISIS Communications Goal

To be the first and most reliable source of information in a crisis, during risk management, or whatever timely communication is needed to ensure public safety and to protect the organization’s reputation

(Strategic Plan Alignment: 5.1 Improve community involvement, education and regional partnerships to increase the level of public trust and keep the community safe)

Objective C-1:

Ensure the City has a clearly articulated and current emergency communications plan

STRATEGY C-1A:

Work with OEM to update, align and share Citywide emergency communications plan

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|--|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Outline types of crisis/emergencies, roles and response requirements | | ● | |
| Collect & update emergency contact information & formalize/align on-call process for response & recovery | | ● | |

STRATEGY C-1B:

Ensure all departments have and understand the Citywide emergency communications plan

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Education and outreach on the updated plan & how each department fits into the plan (roadshows, webinars, etc.) | | | ● |

Objective C-2:

Ensure all departments are resourced and prepared to manage/support Citywide or smaller scale crisis/emergency communications consistently

STRATEGY C-2A:

Develop a common SOP template that can be modified by each department to use in their own smaller scale crisis/emergencies

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Identify potential situations, roles/responsibilities, standard processes, sample messages and best practices | | | ● |
| Develop 'go kits' for each role | | | ● |

STRATEGY C-2B:

Ensure staff is ready to respond through regular training and learning opportunities

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Quarterly training opportunities/exercises (tabletop, larger scale, LETA911) | | ● | |
| NIMS/FEMA/DHS training compliance | ● | | |
| Maintain regional PIO contact list and ensure regular networking/learning opportunities | ● | | |

Objective C-3:

Ensure the community, media and other agency partners are well informed and prepared to respond to crisis/emergency

STRATEGY C-3A:

Leverage all tools & technology to ensure the community gets timely and accurate updates

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Align, deploy and market LETA 911 alerts and notification options | | ● | |
| Leverage website & social media alerts & notifications | ● | | |
| Regularly test cable override system | ● | | |

STRATEGY C-3B:

Identify alternative communication methods/tools for underrepresented parts of the community including non-English speaking residents/businesses or those experiencing homelessness

| TACTICS ▼ | TIMELINE | | |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | ONGOING | 1-2 YEARS | 3-5 YEARS |
| Proactively create a Spanish language library of common emergency messages | | ● | |
| Cultivate an email, social media or SMS subscription for Spanish speaking residents | | | ● |
| Develop mini-communication plan with service providers for reaching those experiencing homelessness | | | ● |

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PERFORMANCE METRICS

| PROGRAM OUTCOMES | OUTPUT | EFFICIENCY | EFFECTIVENESS |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| Community survey: Emergency preparedness (services that prepare the community for natural disasters or other emergency situations) | Updated approved plan completed w/ OEM | Plan is shared with all City leaders | # of staff trained with NIMS/other basic training |
| Community survey: Disaster response and restoration of services | # Trainings offered each year | | |

