



# City of Lathrup Village Communication Plan

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## Executive Summary

The Communication Plan is a living document intended to be adapted and enhanced. As communications technology and platforms for citizen engagement continue to advance, this Plan is expected to change to meet the emerging needs. The Plan as it is adopted today is a snapshot of the City's current communication goals and objectives providing a unified method to achieve those goals and best serve Lathrup Village's constituents.

The Plan outlines an overall communications philosophy, structure, audience and platforms.

## Why We Have a Plan

In addition to communication being a basic obligation of government and an essential component of a democratic process, communicating with the residents, business leaders and visitors to our community is vital to the continued success of Lathrup Village. Through consistent and engaged communication, Lathrup Village has the ability to grow informed participation, enhance community pride and improve overall livability. The City recognizes that having a public communication plan in place that effectively outlines this structure will foster that engaged, informed community as well as attract quality employees thereby making these efforts more efficient and comprehensive.

This Plan encompasses general and crisis communication regarding the City of Lathrup Village and its various departments, services, and programs. For disaster or emergency situations, please refer to the Emergency Management Plan for the City of Lathrup Village.

## Organizational Values

The City's Communication Plan is based on the following values which guide its overall development and implementation:

- We believe in an open city government for citizens and employees.
- We believe in being the best source of information about Lathrup Village city government.
- We believe in a proactive, coordinated and timely approach to disseminating information.
- We believe in the development of a unified message that effectively supports and reflects the goals of the city government as established by the City Council.
- We believe in a unified communication system that supports open, inclusive government and provides all City employees with the training necessary to effectively and accurately communicate each department's programs and services.
- We believe in promoting positive relationships and partnerships between the city government, residents, businesses, community organizations and schools.
- We believe in the successful future of Lathrup Village for its citizens, customers and partners.

## Communications Team

Everyone who represents the City government in any official capacity can be considered a communicator for the City. It is important to create a unified structure defining the message and process for all communicators to ensure reliable communication with and for the City's stakeholders. The success of a communications program depends on everyone's understanding and participation.

For the purposes of this Plan, the City defines its core communications team as follows:

- Mayor and City Council
- City Manager
- Assistant City Manager
- City Clerk
- Communications Specialist
- Department Directors and Designated Representatives
- City Boards, Commissions and Committees
- Other Council-Appointed Officials

## Target Audience

A key component of any communication plan is to identify partners in the conversation.

### *External Stakeholders:*

- Residents / Citizens
- Visitors
- Business leaders
- Community organizations
- Schools
- Regional influencers
- Media

### *Internal Stakeholders:*

- Employees
- City Council
- City Boards, Commissions and Committees

## Background

This Lathrup Village Communication Plan is new. Establishing and updating the City-wide communication plan is part of Lathrup Village City Council's commitment to keeping its constituents and partners informed. This Plan incorporates an open communications philosophy within the organization through listening and responding that guides daily operations, decisions and interactions with the public by City staff.

With the continuing advancement of digital media, this document has been developed to be dynamic and updated as needed.

## Communication Structure

- **Public and Internal Communication**

*Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.*

- Objective 1: Regularly communicate Lathrup Village City Council decisions and actions.
- Objective 2: Make information regarding City programs and services readily available and easy to comprehend.
- Objective 3: Increase awareness, interest, participation and engagement of residents, business and community leaders in City government programs and activities.
- Objective 4: Produce quality communication that adheres to industry best practices and standards.
- Objective 5: Unify City communication outreach efforts under a shared philosophy.
- Objective 6: Increase employee awareness and build organizational confidence with City core service values.

- **Crisis Communication**

*Goal: Inform our residents and protect our organization's stability and reputation in times of crisis.*

- Objective 1: Assess our readiness for crisis communication scenarios.
- Objective 2: Identify protocols, tools and training to improve our communication during crisis situations.
- Objective 3: Develop Crisis Communication Plan as addendum to Communication Plan.

- **Media Relations**

*Goal: Develop and maintain positive working relationships with members of the media on all aspects of City municipal services, programs, activities and news.*

- Objective 1: Provide consistent, proactive news releases and public service announcements to achieve accurate coverage.
- Objective 2: Provide timely response to media inquiries and requests.
- Objective 3: Align Media Relations Policy with current communication industry trends.

## Current Communication Tactics

### *Advertising*

Except for legal requirements for public notices, the City does not, as a rule, advertise for the sole purpose of promoting itself.

### *Communications Training and Assistance*

All City employees receive basic communications training at new employee orientation. Comprehensive social media training was conducted in 2010 and incorporated into new employee orientation.

### *Digital Communications*

The predominant form of providing information to public constituents is through various forms of digital communications and media. Below is a listing of communication methods currently employed:

[LathrupVillage.org](http://LathrupVillage.org) – the official City of Lathrup Village website

[Facebook-LathrupVillage](https://www.facebook.com/LathrupVillage) – Lathrup Village Facebook page where news, events, video, and photos are posted to provide citywide news coverage for residents

Lathrup Village public subscriptions:

- City of Lathrup Village Community Calendar – event calendar for all types of community events sponsored by local or county organizations.
- City of Lathrup Village Public Meetings Calendar – event calendar for all public meetings of Council and the various boards and commissions. Meeting posts include access to specific meeting agendas/packets.
- LathrupVillage.org Notify Me – email subscription service for news and events posted to the website. Allows subscriptions to various calendars and news published by the City and various departments.
- City of Lathrup Village Emergency Alerts – urgent notifications regarding emergencies, storm clean-up, or other related information.
- Lathrup Village Weekly Update – weekly e-newsletter focusing on events and news announcements for residents.

### *Social Media Guidelines*

The City developed a set of guidelines for City of Lathrup Village employees. The guidelines set forth expectations, guidance and best practices to make official City social media outlets successful and engaging while maintaining our brand. The guidelines are intended to cover all types of social media managed by coordinators. All employees are required to sign that they received and will adhere to the guidelines.

### *Graphic Identity Manual*

Branding for the City was done recently and established guidelines for uniform logo usage on equipment, signage, facilities, correspondence, documents, forms and employee uniforms and other clothing, as well as specifications for logo format and color.

### *Media Relations*

A positive working relationship with the news media is vital for successful communication of City-related information. The Communication Plan ensures the City responds in a factual, professional and, where possible, prompt manner to all media inquiries.

### *Print Publications*

With the shift in information gathering to digital channels, the cost versus effectiveness of print publications is continually under review. In most cases, digital distribution of information is the predominant method. The City produces the quarterly newsletter *Your Town* that is mailed out to all residents and made available online.

### *Public Relations*

The City is striving to establish good, transparent relationships with Lathrup Village residents, business owners and visitors through the various communication platforms described throughout the Plan.

The City oversees Lathrup Village Television (LVTV), the government access station. Programming is available online through [YouTube](#). Locally, residents can access the cable channel on WOW! Cable Channel 10, Comcast Channel 17, AT&T Channel 99. LVTV provides programming that is centered on government programs, activities, events, and services through public service announcements, features and news coverage.

## **Current Communication Tools**

The City invests in a variety of software, video and technology services, tools and platforms to support communication activities. The primary tools utilized by the department are as follows:

- Revize - website content management platform
- Constant Contact – subscription platform for E-Newsletters
- Archive Social – archives all social account activity for open records purposes

## Appendix A – Communications Plan Implementation

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
<i>Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
<b>Objective 1: Regularly communicate Lathrup Village City Council decisions and actions.</b>		
<b>Strategy 1: Provide consistent and regular updates on city government decisions and actions.</b>		<b>Completion Information</b>
<b>Tactic 1:</b> Comply with Michigan Open Meetings Act and post official City agendas per state law.	ONGOING	
<b>Tactic 2:</b> Provide on-air and internet streaming video of City Council Regular Meetings and Planning & Zoning Commission Meetings.	ONGOING	
<b>Tactic 3:</b> Distribute media releases on development and major infrastructure projects approved by Council.	ONGOING	

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
<b>Goal:</b> <i>Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
<b>Objective 2:</b> Make information regarding City programs and services readily available and easy to comprehend.		
Strategy 1: Provide an accessible and informative website presence that is easy to use.		Completion Information
<b>Tactic 1:</b> Work with contracted website vendor to maintain reliable public websites.	ONGOING	
<b>Tactic 2:</b> Coordinate and train departmental staff responsible (website coordinators) for website information updates and maintenance.	Annual best practice training for all website coordinators.	
<b>Tactic 3:</b> Analyze website statistics and usage and adjust as needed.	Monthly	
<b>Tactic 4:</b> Conduct website audit	Annual – basic Every third year - comprehensive	Last comprehensive audit completed 2019?

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
<b>Goal:</b> <i>Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
<b>Objective 2:</b> Make information regarding City programs and services readily available and easy to comprehend.		
Strategy 2: Monitor communication preferences and accessibility needs of City stakeholders.		Completion Information
<b>Tactic 1:</b> Analyze current communication channel statistics for patterns and deficiencies.	ONGOING	
<b>Tactic 2:</b> Make reasonable communication accommodations available and upon request in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.	ONGOING	

<b>PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION</b>	
<i>Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>	
<b>Objective 2: Make information regarding City programs and services readily available and easy to comprehend.</b>	
<b>Strategy 3: Effectively communicate transition from general communications to emergency communications as per the Emergency Management Plan governed by City of Lathrup Village Police Department.</b>	As Needed

<b>PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION</b>		
<b>Goal:</b> <i>Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
<b>Objective 3:</b> Increase awareness, interest, participation and engagement of residents, business and community leaders in City government programs and activities.		
<b>Strategy 1:</b> Provide dependable and accurate public communication through cross functioning communication platforms		<b>Completion Information</b>
<b>Tactic 1:</b> Oversee departmental release of information and coordinate cross promotional efforts.	ONGOING	
<b>Tactic 2:</b> Produce and show quality programming through LVTv.	ONGOING	
<b>Tactic 3:</b> Maintain informative and accessible City websites.	ONGOING	
<b>Tactic 4:</b> Monitor and engage in official City social media outlets.	ONGOING	
<b>Tactic 5:</b> Produce print and digital publications for city-wide distribution and/or subscription.	ONGOING	
<b>Tactic 6:</b> Utilize available technology to multiply information release and reach to stakeholders.	ONGOING	
<b>Tactic 7:</b> Regularly assess various communication platforms effectiveness.	ONGOING	

<b>PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION</b>		
<i>Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
<b>Objective 3: Increase awareness, interest, participation and engagement of residents, business and community leaders in City government programs and activities.</b>		
<b>Strategy 2: Investigate emerging technology and communication trends.</b>		<b>Completion Information</b>
<b>Tactic 1:</b> Identify new sources for best practice information, training, and tools through participation in regional and online seminars and programs through organizations such as Public Relations Society of America, Government Social Media, Social Shake-Up and others.		
<b>Tactic 2:</b> Identify and implement new communication platforms.		

<b>PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION</b>		
<b>Goal:</b> <i>Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
<b>Objective 3:</b> Increase awareness, interest, participation and engagement of residents, business and community leaders in City government programs and activities.		
<b>Strategy 3:</b> Create a positive feedback loop that encourages open dialogue with public.		<b>Completion Information</b>
<b>Tactic 1:</b> Develop communication partner relationships with community, civic, religious, and business organizations in Lathrup Village.	ONGOING	
<b>Tactic 2:</b> Produce and distribute specialty content to reach select audiences such as new residents, HOAs, or neighborhood block captains.	ONGOING	
<b>Tactic 3:</b> Respond within 24 business hours to questions, requests, and concerns received via phone, email, mobile app, or on social media channels.	ONGOING	
<b>Tactic 4:</b> Continually monitor technological developments in citizen engagement platforms.	ONGOING	
<b>Tactic 5:</b> Provide a variety of options for residents to participate in public forums.	ONGOING	

<b>PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION</b>		
<i>Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
<b>Objective 3: Increase awareness, interest, participation and engagement of residents, business and community leaders in City government programs and activities.</b>		
<b>Strategy 4: Investigate feasibility of creating citizen program to educate on basic municipal operations.</b>		<b>Completion Information</b>
<b>Tactic 1:</b> Research programs offered by other municipalities.		
<b>Tactic 2:</b> Research citizen interest in program and Council and staff interest and availability.		

<b>PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION</b>		
<i>Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
<b>Objective 4: Produce quality communication that adheres to industry best practices and standards.</b>		
<b>Strategy 1: Conduct city-wide communication audit on an ongoing basis.</b>		<b>Completion Information</b>
<b>Tactic 1:</b> Coordinate updates and revisions to communication materials across departments to adhere to uniform guidelines.	ONGOING	
<b>Tactic 2:</b> Utilize editorial calendar to track reoccurring events and activities.	ONGOING	
<b>Tactic 3:</b> Utilize social media management platform to streamline management of official social media accounts.	ONGOING	
<b>Tactic 4:</b> Develop and maintain message strategy and voice for each social platform	ONGOING	

<b>PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION</b>		
<i>Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
<b>Objective 5: Unify City communication outreach efforts under a shared philosophy.</b>		
<b>Strategy 1: Increase awareness among City employees of communication structure.</b>	<b>Completion Information</b>	
Tactic 1: Conduct consultative outreach meeting on communication plan development and maintenance with departmental marketing and outreach staff.		
Tactic 2: Coordinate with Communications Specialist to provide basic communications training for employees.		

  

<b>PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION</b>		
<i>Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
<b>Objective 3: Unify City communication outreach efforts under a shared philosophy.</b>		
<b>Strategy 2: Educate employees on various aspects of Social Media.</b>	<b>Completion Information</b>	
<b>Tactic 1:</b> Review policy on employee use of social media and current industry trends and tools		
<b>Tactic 2:</b> Modify policy as needed based on research and best practices		
<b>Tactic 3:</b> Coordinate with Communications Specialist to provide basic training on the City's social media policy and guidelines.		
<b>Tactic 4:</b> Provide best practices training for employees who manage social media accounts on behalf of the City.		

<b>PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION</b>		
<i>Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
<b>Objective 3: Unify City communication outreach efforts under a shared philosophy.</b>		
<b>Strategy 3: Create Graphic Identity Manual.</b>	<b>Completion Information</b>	
<b>Tactic 1:</b> Create graphic identity manual containing all branding, logos, and print material.		
<b>Tactic 2:</b> Conduct comparative research on other municipalities' graphic identity policies and usage.		
<b>Tactic 3:</b> Include results and findings from research as well as address supplemental City logo development and usage guidelines.		

<b>PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION</b>		
<i>Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
<b>Objective 6: Increase employee awareness and build organizational confidence with City core service values.</b>		
<b>Strategy 1: Coordinate with Communications Specialist to develop strategic plan on internal communication objectives, structure and methods.</b>	<b>Completion Information</b>	
<b>Tactic 1:</b> Form internal communication advisory committee.		
<b>Tactic 2:</b> Conduct audit of current internal communication efforts.		
<b>Tactic 3:</b> Define communication process, structure and roles related to release of employee communication		

<b>PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION</b>		
<i>Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
<b>Objective 6: Increase employee awareness and build organizational confidence with City core service values.</b>		
<b>Strategy 2: Develop effective communication tools/methods for reaching all levels of employees – from desk to field, etc.</b>		
<b>Tactic 1:</b> Conduct audit of current method to reach varying levels of employees.		
<b>Tactic 2:</b> Research communication tools available to enhance communication efforts across all levels of employees.		
<b>Tactic 3:</b> Implement findings and best practices.		

  

<b>CRISIS COMMUNICATION</b>		
<i>Goal: Inform our residents and protect our organization's stability and reputation in times of crisis.</i>		
<b>Objective 1: Assess our readiness for crisis communication scenarios.</b>		
<b>Objective 2: Identify protocols, tools and training to improve our communication during crisis situations.</b>		
<b>Objective 3: Develop Crisis Communication Plan as addendum to Communication Plan.</b>		
<b>Strategy 1: Lathrup Village Chief of Police or Designee to participate in Public Communicator Certification</b>		

<b>MEDIA RELATIONS</b>		
<i>Goal: Develop and maintain positive working relationships with members of the media on all aspects of City municipal services, programs, activities and news.</i>		
<b>Objective 1: Provide consistent, proactive news releases and public service announcements to achieve accurate coverage.</b>		
<b>Strategy 1: Regularly distribute releases, briefs and/or newsflashes to area media on City related programs, activities, events, actions, etc.</b>		<b>Completion Information</b>
<b>Tactic 1:</b> Maintain regular media distribution list and technique for efficient delivery of releases and news tips.		
<b>Tactic 2:</b> Promote various City sources for information about City programs and service to the media for proactive media access.		

<b>MEDIA RELATIONS</b>		
<i>Goal: Develop and maintain positive working relationships with members of the media on all aspects of City municipal services, programs, activities and news.</i>		
<b>Objective 1: Provide consistent, proactive news releases and public service announcements to achieve accurate coverage.</b>		
<b>Strategy 2: Continue to foster a proactive approach within the organization regarding possible emerging issues or controversies.</b>		<b>Completion Information</b>
<b>Tactic 1:</b> Utilize regular Executive Staff Meetings as internal forum to participate in an ongoing discussion about items of potential media interest.		
<b>Tactic 2:</b> Conduct regular interdepartmental status meetings on upcoming programs, events, activities, etc. in need of promotion or of media interest.		

<b>MEDIA RELATIONS</b>		
<i>Goal: Develop and maintain positive working relationships with members of the media on all aspects of City municipal services, programs, activities and news.</i>		
<b>Objective 2: Provide timely response to media inquiries and requests.</b>		
<b>Strategy 1: Regularly review media requests and respond accordingly.</b>	<b>Completion Information</b>	
<b>Tactic 1:</b> Respond to media requests and inquiries in a timely manner		
<b>Tactic 2:</b> Coordinate subject matter experts as needed for media requests		
<b>Tactic 3:</b> Log and report media interaction		

<b>MEDIA RELATIONS</b>		
<i>Goal: Develop and maintain positive working relationships with members of the media on all aspects of City municipal services, programs, activities and news.</i>		
<b>Objective 2: Provide timely response to media inquiries and requests.</b>		
<b>Strategy 2: Foster working relationships with members of the media.</b>	<b>Completion Information</b>	
<b>Tactic 1:</b> Provide individual news tips and possible stories to local media.		
<b>Tactic 2:</b> Reach out to new members of the local media to discuss general information gathering opportunities for Lathrup Village.		
<b>TACTIC 3:</b> Assess opportunities to host media events		

<b>MEDIA RELATIONS</b>		
<i>Goal: Develop and maintain positive working relationships with members of the media on all aspects of City municipal services, programs, activities and news.</i>		
<b>Objective 3: Align Media Relations Policy with Current Communication Industry Trends.</b>		
<b>Strategy 1: Create Media Relations Policy.</b>		<b>Completion Information</b>
<b>Tactic 1:</b> Determine media relations needs.		
<b>Tactic 2:</b> Conduct comparative research on other municipalities' media relations policies.		
<b>Tactic 3:</b> Conduct comparative research on current communication trends.		
<b>Tactic 4:</b> Create media relations policy to include results and findings from research.		

## Appendix B –Digital Strategy

The Digital Strategy applies to the City’s primary website and social media platforms. It has been developed to guide types of content and frequency of sharing on a per-platform basis that can be managed by existing staff resources.

### OUR VOICE:

- Professional
- Factual
- Authentic
- Respectful
- Good-natured

### OUR STRATEGY

Channel	Messages	Frequency
Main Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All service, program, facility and event information</li> <li>• News, announcements and updates</li> </ul>	Weekly updates and posts
LVTN (PEG Channel)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council and P&amp;Z Commission meeting coverage</li> <li>• PSAs on City events and services</li> <li>• Calendar/bulletin board</li> <li>• Specialty features</li> <li>• Spotlights and program series</li> <li>• Content from other government agency sources</li> <li>• Includes Video-on-demand and live streaming</li> </ul>	Weekly meeting coverage Weekly changes in program content PSAs and programs/mo.
Email Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News highlights and events</li> </ul>	Weekly distribution
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News, alerts, updates, events, goodwill messages</li> </ul>	5-10 posts/wk
YouTube	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program and event PSAs</li> <li>• People / program features</li> </ul>	6-10 uploads/mo
Your Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trash/recycling and seasonal reminders</li> <li>• Major information campaigns</li> <li>• Citizen volunteer invitations</li> <li>• Targeted traffic/road construction alerts</li> </ul>	Quarterly