

City of Lathrup Village
27400 Southfield Road
Lathrup Village, MI 48076
www.lathrupvillage.org | (248) 557-2600

TO: Mayor & City Council
FROM: Mike Greene – City Administrator
DATE: September 23, 2024
RE: Study Session

Finance Review Committee Recommendation

Mayor Pro-Tem Kantor will provide a high-level overview of the Finance Review Committee’s recommendation, and the Council can discuss their initial thoughts on the recommendation. A formal presentation from the entire committee will take place during the regular meeting.

Communication Plan

Councilmember Hammond and staff have continued discussions regarding a formal Communication Plan for the City. These discussions have led to reviewing the neighboring community’s plans as a template. Included in your packet is the City of Berkley’s Communication Plan which has been the plan we intend to build ours from. It is understood that Berkley is a different community from Lathrup Village and the staffing levels to manage such a plan and the services they offer vary, however, the structure of the plan is solid. Below are initial thoughts on items that will need to be addressed when modifying the Berkley plan to meet our needs. The purpose of the discussion is to gauge the rest of the Council’s vision of the Communication Plan and to see if we are heading in the right direction before committing an excess of staff and Council time to finalize this plan.

- It’s too long. A communication plan should be clear, concise, and readable in less than 30 minutes.
- Many typos and grammatical errors. A Communication Plan should not include typos and grammar mistakes. It should be clear that it was crafted with care to provide clear communication itself. Typos and grammar mistakes send a message that not even the plan itself was done carefully. Mistakes may happen and typos may exist. It will be important to quickly identify them and remediate them.
- Chapter 1: Communication Plan Overview and the Community Engagement Officer
 - We don’t have a Community Engagement Officer position. Perhaps 1 or 2 staff members or residents could be assigned to share the role.
 - *Introduction*
 - Makes it clear what the intent of the document and policy is.
 - Final paragraph: "*Strategic communication is an essential service provided by the City...*"
 - Should include something like "fosters a method for clear, efficient, valuable information between the city and its citizens and stakeholders"
 - *Purpose:*
 - We could customize it to better reflect the purpose of Lathrup Village
 - *Image, Identity, and Perception:*
 - Be cautious of stating the structure of messages should be to "create a positive or neutral effect". This could be construed as a massaging message to suppress potentially negative, problematic, or controversial topics.
 - The last paragraph is important. We need to be clear that the Communication Plan is a "living document" that can be adjusted and improved as appropriate and necessary.
 - *Audience sectors:*
 - Independent volunteers should be included in the "Additional stakeholders" section. They may not be associated with a defined Community Organization, city committee, or city event.
 - *Community Engagement Officer (CEO):*

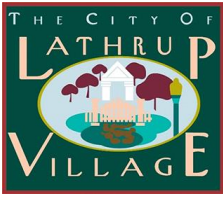
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- We do not need a full-time CEO or to assign this task to a single staff member. Perhaps this could be assigned to a couple of people, and maybe even include a resident who works with staff to craft communications.
- If we don't have a CEO, the plan should state that the City Administrator or another person is delegated the responsibility to, create, update, implement, and manage the City Communication Plan. Or it could say the assigned Community Engagement people, in partnership with the City Administrator, do this.
- The role should be described as helping to promote, inform, and provide information to all audiences defined in the "Audience sectors" section.
- Chapter 2: Communications Plans Goals & Objectives
 - Objectives look good
 - Goals should be "targeted" not "used"
 - Goals should be measurable
 - Goals for communicating with residents should be the #1 item in the goals list. There is a lot in this section about communication with media and only little mention of residents
 - Item 8: Do they mean their public access TV\Cable channel? We should do this and be very clear about what we mean by "public governmental channel"
 - Periodic training for city officials in media relations is important and we should include this, but only if we can first determine how we would do it.
 - "Potential Future Initiatives" shouldn't be in this section. If we want to include that, perhaps it goes into an appendix which is referenced at the end of this section.
- Chapter 3: Ways to Communicate Our Message
 - I like the list of "*Distribution Channels/Communications Toolbox*". I suggest we make the primary channels/tools **bold** and place them at the top of the list. Some of these we don't use at all or might only use infrequently
 - "*Public Feedback*" section is a positive
 - For the process that statements actions will be taken by a specific interval following a meeting, event, or post\comment.
 - Responses to voicemail messages and emails should be included
 - Expectations for what should happen if a deadline is missed should be stated
 - I like the idea of strategy tiers. They should reflect how often people should expect communications from various channels, which ones are used more commonly, and which are used under special circumstances
 - Outreach by city staff and elected and appointed officials should be included in the strategies
 - I like having clear rules about what can and cannot be posted in city facilities
 - City website: A deadline should be indicated for when important documents are posted to the city website (ordinance changes, election results, financial documents, water quality documents, etc.)
 - The rest of the info about the website in the Berkley plan is overly verbose. If we decide we need something like that, it should be in a separate, dedicated document specifically about the website and linked in the Comms Plan
 - Same for Government Public Access TV channels
- Chapter 4: Creation of Public Information Materials Policy & Procedure
 - Description of public information materials should be shorter, highlighting the most common types of materials, and should have a disclaimer that the list is not comprehensive and other material types could be created
- Chapter 5: News Release and Public Service Announcements (PSA) Guidelines and Submittal Policy

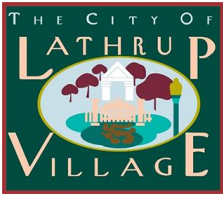
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- We should have a brief explanation of how Public Safety\LVPD PSAs are distributed
- Suggest we state that the city retains the right to utilize distribution methods not defined in the Comms Plan in extenuating or emergencies
- Chapter 6: Policy for Requesting & Releasing Public Information Documents
 - Our policy should be much more concise
 - Important to include examples of information that will be released (I.F., I.G.) and will not be released (I.H.)
- Chapter 7: Policy for Requesting Ceremonial Documents
 - It would be a good policy to define outside of the communication plan.
- Chapter 8: Media Request for an Interview with City Employee and/or Holding a Press Conference Policy & Guidelines
 - This is an important part of the Comms Plan to protect city staff and provide them with guidance on how to handle a request for comment from a media outlet
- Chapter 9: Social Media Policy, Users Guidelines & Codes of Conduct
 - Our Comms Plan should note that the city is required by state FOIA and public records laws to treat all official social media posts and comments as public records and to manage them in compliance with these laws. As a result, the policy only authorizes social media posts on specific channels that the city backs up. The city is not responsible for and does not participate in posts on community or resident-administered social media pages.
- Chapter 10: Crisis Communication Plan
 - Should be a separate policy for Crisis Communications. The policy could be referenced and linked in the Comms Plan

Town Hall Scheduling – Plans & Priorities Feedback

Councilmember Hammond requested a discussion regarding scheduling a town hall to receive resident and business feedback for future plans/priorities for the City.

Short-Term Rental Enforcement

Mayor Pro-Tem Kantor requested a discussion regarding the potential specific enforcement of short-term rentals.

Eastbound 11-Mile Paving Project

This item is an action item on the regular meeting agenda. The purpose of this discussion is for staff to answer any initial questions regarding this project and the cost share required from the City.

Service Line Marketing Agreement Amendment

This item is an action item on the regular meeting agenda. The purpose of this discussion is for staff to answer any initial questions regarding this program.

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