



2025 - 2026 Communications Goals



Strategy Overview

Building for quality content, optimized efficiency.

Effective communication is the cornerstone of any successful organization. As we strive to enhance our messaging and better engage Islanders, we recognize the need for a strategic approach that prioritizes both process improvements and content quality. This communications plan outlines a comprehensive framework built upon seven key pillars designed to elevate our communications efforts.

- 1 Better, More Engaging Content**
- 2 New Content Management Tools**
- 3 Department Self-Service Structure**
- 4 Redesigned Email Marketing**
- 5 Canva for Teams Migration**
- 6 Thrift Shop Marketing Overhaul (Rebrand)**
- 7 Photo Management System**

Each pillar outlines an approachable and actionable step for improving our communications. These goals are realistic and fitting of our existing staff structure, ensuring we can execute them efficiently and consistently.

The following sections will outline each pillar, illustrating how they interconnect to create a cohesive and robust communications program.



1 Better, More Engaging Content

CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Throughout a given workweek, countless updates and issues arise – from good-news items to critical community messages. The City currently shares these out through several key channels: social media, website news items, and the City’s MI Weekly newsletter. The landscape for communications messaging has shifted significantly in the past five years. Social media algorithms have redefined what content gets seen, and constituent interest has decreased. Because social media is our primary touchpoint with the community, these channels continue to be of pivotal importance.

Currently, content is identified from existing resources, such as the City Manager’s weekly emails to City Council and staff, project meetings, or direct advance notice from staff. It is then shared out.

GOAL

Broaden our reach and increase awareness of City actions in the community, through dynamic and modernized social media content that integrates the strategies of today (short-form video, personality-first tone, playful-yet-informative content).

ACTION PLAN

We’ll develop an outline for new content modalities, primarily including short-form video series that creatively showcase City updates. We’ll also leverage quicker storytelling (live videos at ribbon-cuttings, short posts with small updates, playful and topical posts aligned with trending subjects) to supplement our more serious content. An outline of these creative ideas will be developed, then the communications team will identify department storytelling opportunities and work with department staff to produce the content. Together, this simple improved approach will allow us to increase engagement and the visibility of our content with the community.

PROCESS STACK



ANTICIPATED EFFORT STACK



2 New Content Management Tools

CURRENT LANDSCAPE

The volume and variety of content needing promotion at the City is significant and often requires complex posting schedules to result in adequate community engagement. This is challenging to manage without the use of efficient software and organizational tools, and without an efficient method for organizing different department promotion needs.

Currently, we use a manual content calendar and scheduling process built in OneNote. This opens the door for incorrectly scheduled content while also requiring significantly more time to organize materials, and finally, post content across each channel. We also do not have a standardized procedure for staff to initiate a request for promotion.

GOAL

Implement a new software platform to more easily manage content scheduling and posting while revamping the internal staff process for requesting content promotion.

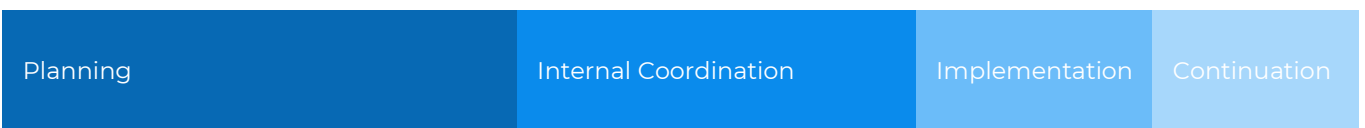
ACTION PLAN

We'll integrate a new software system to manage content and ease posting in one place (Orlo is the current front-runner) – this system will allow us to transparently and efficiently manage content through an organized content calendar, while also allowing us to schedule posts across all channels in advance. We'll then deploy a new City policy with guided structure on how to request content promotion through a new form – this will ensure the communications team receives all needed content efficiently which can be organized and scheduled within the new software system.

PROCESS STACK



ANTICIPATED EFFORT STACK



3 Department Self-Service Structure

CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Across all departments, regular communications are necessary to keep the community informed and respond to changing needs. This can be a significant challenge to produce and manage as a full-service City without department-level communications support.

Currently, we have a single communications practitioner to manage all City communications needs and department-level support is executed on an ad-hoc basis, depending on staff-to-staff relationships and project-specific assignments. We do not have a formalized structure to provide communications support within departments.

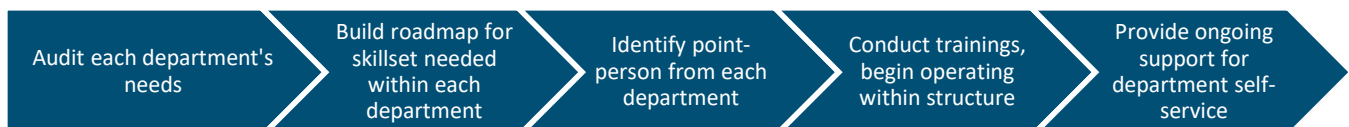
GOAL

Develop a strategy for deputizing staff within each department to serve as a communications point person and create new department protocols for the self-service of many communications needs in coordination with the Communications Manager.

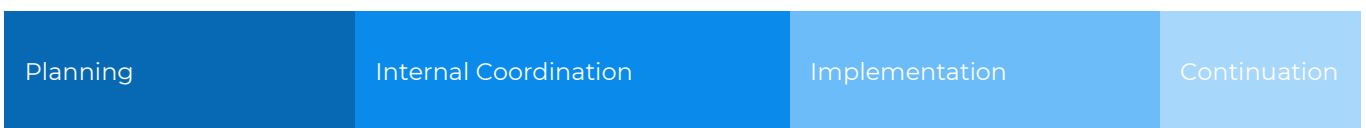
ACTION PLAN

We'll build a new staffing map for communications: the Communications Manager will continue to oversee all City communications but will rely on point-people within each department to assist with gathering information and drafting baseline messaging. These point-people will work closely with the Communications Manager to provide context on department-specific nuance and work internally in the department to answer questions, locate information, and develop/gather supporting materials (graphics, photos, etc.). We'll identify the specific needs of each department and highlight frequent communications needs and pinch-points, then identify ideal point-people from each department. Once these staff are selected, they will be trained on these new support responsibilities and will begin working closely with the Communications Manager. Ongoing training and support will continue to be provided.

PROCESS STACK



ANTICIPATED EFFORT STACK



4 Redesigned Email Marketing

CURRENT LANDSCAPE

The City’s primary communications channel is the MI Weekly email newsletter. With 4,000 subscribers and an average open rate of 64%, this tool is an active engagement point. Currently, the City relies heavily on this weekly email to disseminate information. However, the subscriber list has remained fairly stagnant (despite marketing efforts to encourage subscriptions) and the format is beginning to feel dated and is incongruent with modern best practices for email communications. The current format also restricts content to five articles, which can result in delays in disseminating information during busy times.

GOAL

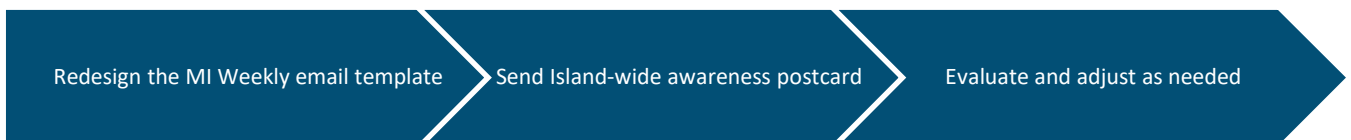
Redesign the City’s email marketing approach to integrate current best practices while expanding flexibility for content shared, boost readership even further, and grow the Island’s subscriber base.

ACTION PLAN

We’ll redesign the current MI Weekly email template to be simplified and with more flexibility – this structure will include one or two main headline articles, several smaller features, and a list of “quick read” links. This simplified structure will also be designed to increase open rates and lengthen retention. An optional one-off email template will be included.

To grow our subscriber base, we’ll produce and distribute an Island-wide postcard mailer with a simple call to action to subscribe for City updates – this will also include information on following our social media channels, contacting Customer Service for many needs, and signing up for emergency alerts through CodeRed.

PROCESS STACK



ANTICIPATED EFFORT STACK



5 Canva for Teams Migration

CURRENT LANDSCAPE

The City’s rebrand in 2022 built a fresh and modern brand kit based on the City’s existing logo and color, providing a comprehensive suite of brand assets and styles to be used across all City materials. However, these assets are deployed manually and remain unmanaged, resulting in fragmentation and inconsistent use across departments.

Currently, the production of designed materials that are brand compliant is highly dependent on an individual staff member’s skillset and desire to use the new brand. Brand assets (logo files, color codes, graphical elements, and document templates) are stored in the Share Drive and several file formats require Adobe experience to edit or use. This requires coordination with communications-trained staff to produce materials, which is inefficient and a pinch-point for time management.

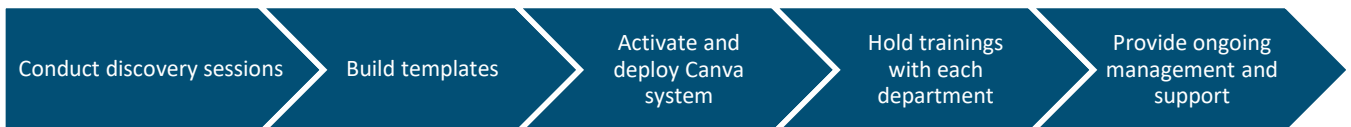
GOAL

Deploy the Canva for Teams platform for the entire City to provide an easy and intuitive graphic design tool for staff that easily organizes and managed our branded assets.

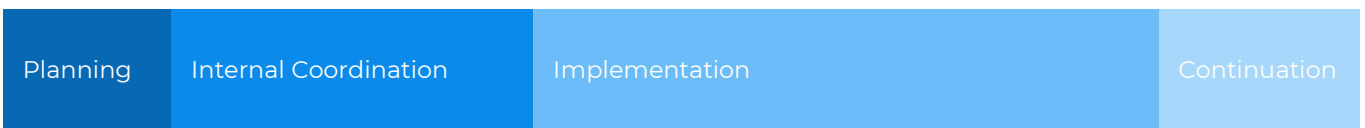
ACTION PLAN

In partnership with a marketing firm, we’ll migrate the City to Canva for Teams. This platform offers a web- and app-based interface to easily download logo files, generate branded graphics, quickly build presentation slides, compile infographics, and more. Each department will have a shared login to the system, which will be pre-populated with branded templates. As part of the deployment process, we’ll hold discovery sessions with staff from each department to identify what templates would be helpful for their workflows. The design firm will then develop these templates, communications staff will organize templates and assign them to each department’s login account, then conduct trainings with each department to launch the platform.

PROCESS STACK



ANTICIPATED EFFORT STACK



6 Thrift Shop Marketing Overhaul

CURRENT LANDSCAPE

The City’s Thrift Shop is a retail business and requires marketing platforms fitting of a retail business – from email marketing to frequent (and quality) social media.

Currently, the Thrift Shop coordinates their marketing and communications internally, however there is not a communications-trained practitioner on the Thrift Shop team. This has led to an ad-hoc approach to the Thrift Shop’s marketing program, which lacks present-day best practices and results in missed opportunities for sales. The Thrift Shop’s brand is also dated, incomplete, and mismatched with the vision of the Shop.

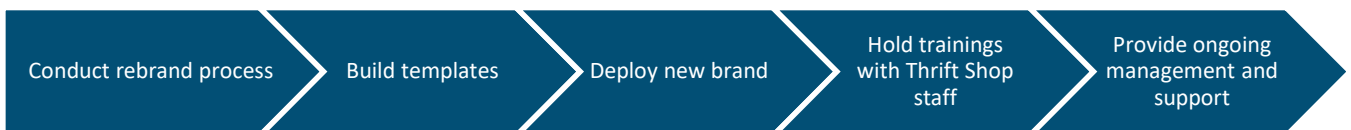
GOAL

Build a comprehensive brand and subsequent toolkit for the Thrift Shop that is easy to use and templated, ensuring staff of any skillset can replicate and execute marketing strategies that appropriately meet the needs of the operation and drive sales.

ACTION PLAN

In tandem with our Canva for Teams migration project, we’ll work with a marketing firm to conduct a rebrand for the Thrift Shop, building a new logo, color set, and supporting brand assets. We’ll then “re-skin” all Thrift Shop communications tools (website, social media, email marketing platform) with the new brand. We’ll also develop a suite of templates for each channel that are brand-compliant and integrate modern best practices – staff of all levels will use these templates to easily build daily marketing deliverables, such as email alerts for sales, signage for the Shop, social media posts) – this ensures all messaging from the Thrift Shop meets standards for quality and consistency while maximizing effectiveness with the staffing resources available. The Thrift Shop will also be migrated to Canva for Teams.

PROCESS STACK



ANTICIPATED EFFORT STACK



7 Photo Management System

CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Photos are a critical asset used across the City to document progress and share updates with the community. They are a key piece of our visual storytelling and necessary for compelling and engaging social media content.

Currently, the City does not have a photo management system. Photos are sorted and stored on a department-by-department basis, living in a variety of locations across storage platforms. This results in considerable difficulty for communications and other staff to locate and identify photos for varying communications needs.

GOAL

Implement an organized photo management system that all City staff will use to centrally store and organize photo assets – this system will employ a managed file system and meta-tagging, which allows for easy search and filtering.

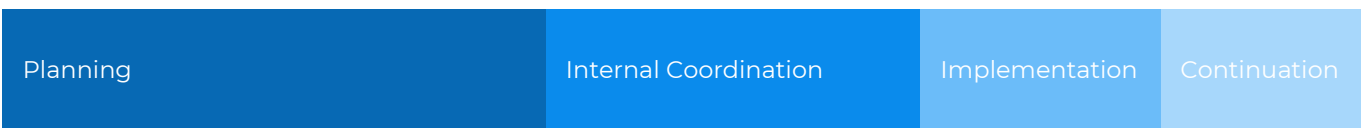
ACTION PLAN

We'll research and select a photo management tool, or an existing file storage system like OneDrive, to build our photo management system. We'll then work with departments to identify their photo storage needs – both current and unmet – and integrate their workflows into the new system. The file system will be built, and existing photos will be migrated over. All departments will then be trained on best practices and standards for using the new system.

PROCESS STACK



ANTICIPATED EFFORT STACK



Prioritization

Options for execution:

GOLD

- 1 Better, More Engaging Content
- 2 New Content Management Tools
- 3 Department Self-Service Structure
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SILVER

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BRONZE

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