

ROCHELLE CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM MEMO REGULAR MEETING

SUBJECT: A Motion to Adopt the City of Rochelle Strategic Communications Plan

Staff Contact: Jenny Thompson, Director of Community Engagement/Assistant to the City Manager

Summary: The City of Rochelle’s Strategic Communications Plan provides a roadmap for building stronger trust, transparency, and engagement with our community. Developed through the nationally recognized TCU Certified Public Communicator® Program, the plan reflects best practices in data-driven strategy, listening, crisis preparedness, and employee engagement.

At its core, the plan is built around three strategic goals. First, we aim to position the City of Rochelle as the primary, trusted source of information for residents, businesses, and stakeholders. By strengthening newsletters, expanding social media and text alerts, launching direct mail campaigns, and introducing “RochelleU” educational sessions, the City will ensure that information is reliable, accessible, and engaging. Alongside these efforts, refreshed branding and signage will foster greater community pride and visibility.

Second, the plan emphasizes consistent and meaningful communication within City departments. Employees will receive information before it is released to the public, creating a sense of trust and inclusion. New opportunities for cross-departmental learning, networking, and staff recognition will encourage collaboration, strengthen culture, and help employees feel more connected to one another and the community they serve.

Third, the City will prioritize readiness for crisis communication. Through annual drills and mock press conferences, leadership teams and backup staff will build “muscle memory” so they can respond quickly, confidently, and accurately when emergencies arise. This commitment to preparedness ensures that Rochelle is ready to deliver timely and trusted updates under pressure.

The plan recognizes Rochelle’s existing strengths, such as a responsive social media presence, a current website, and engaged communication channels. It also identifies opportunities to expand bilingual outreach, increase transparency in project updates, highlight employees through storytelling, and strengthen collaboration with local organizations. At the same time, it acknowledges challenges, including cybersecurity risks, misinformation, reaching non-digital audiences, departmental silos, and generational differences.

Success will be measured through tangible outcomes: higher newsletter engagement, strong participation in “RochelleU,” improved employee survey feedback, and consistent completion of crisis drills. Together, these metrics reflect a City that communicates clearly, serves transparently, and listens closely.

Ultimately, this Communications Plan positions Rochelle to deliver not only information, but also connection. By treating communication as a core service, the City strengthens its role as a trusted community partner.

Strategic Plan Goal Application: Community Inclusivity & Engagement

Recommendation: Approve a Motion to Adopt the City of Rochelle Strategic Communications Plan