



CITY OF WESTWOOD

Strategic Communications Plan

INTRODUCTION

About Westwood

The City of Westwood, Kansas was incorporated on June 8, 1949 and is governed by a Mayor and five Council members. The City was excited to celebrate its 75th anniversary in June of 2024.

Westwood is both a residential community of approximately 1,800 people, and a city of business and commerce as it is home to several University of Kansas Hospital facilities, and other corporate office and retail businesses like the Midwest Transplant Network and Woodside, a luxury health club. In addition, Westwood boasts two different schools, the newly constructed Westwood View Elementary, in the Shawnee Mission School District, and Olivet Baptist church with its own school.

Plan Purpose and Vision

The City of Westwood is committed to:

- Transparent communications.
- Telling the story of the why and how behind key city initiatives.
- Proactively engaging with the mission of Communities for All Ages; an age-friendly initiative that helps increase awareness in local jurisdictions of the impact of a growing older population.
- Increasing communication efforts and frequency.
- Understanding residents' communication needs better through data collection.

Westwood has always valued effective communication. As the City continues to move forward through commercial development, capital improvement projects, enhanced community programs and other initiatives, it is more important than ever before that the City places an even greater emphasis on strategic communications. This initiative aims to plan ahead in order to provide proactive communications to residents, businesses and City stakeholders.

This plan outlines efforts for the next three years. It is intended to be updated and refined as new information becomes available. For example, the City executed a City-wide survey in 2024 with specific communication questions created defined City Council goals through the creation of a Governing Body Strategic Plan. Those results and goals are incorporated into the plan and are crucial in informing continued communication efforts.

PLAN OUTLINE

The following sections can be found in further detail throughout this document:

- Communication Goals
- City Council Goals
- Communication Survey Data
- Target Audiences
- Key Messages
- Strategy, Tactics, Key Performance Indicators (“KPI”s; goal setting metrics) by Channel
- Implementation

COMMUNICATION GOALS

The City has outlined three major communication goals:

1. Establish greater awareness and understanding of City programs and initiatives through more effective usage of City communication vehicles.
2. Proactively and transparently tell the story of the City’s advancement plans.
3. Be the leading source of information for all City and local government news to all of the City’s target audiences e.g. Communities for All Ages programming, development plans, resident resource news like trash, snow removal, tax rebate programs, and more.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS

Mission

The City of Westwood manages public and financial resources to provide reliable, responsive services aligned with residents' evolving expectations and future needs. Our leaders and professional staff are open and accessible, building relationships and trust within our community. Together, we protect and advance what makes Westwood special and unique.

Vision

Westwood is a unique and charming community, one that is both historic yet dynamic and progressive. Our residents develop deep connections with their neighbors, homes, schools and businesses.

Community Redevelopment

Goal Statement:

By 2027, the Westwood City Council will have considered and encouraged opportunities to diversify our economic activity by choosing redevelopment projects that maintain community fiscal health and the unique and historic character of Westwood.

Housing

Goal Statement:

Over the next three years, the Westwood City Council and City Administrator will be open to and supportive of different types of housing that provide options for existing and new residents by evaluating each new residential housing project in the context of Westwood's community character, housing needs and resident input in accordance with the 2017 Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Goal Statement:

By the end of 2026, the Westwood City Council and City Administrator will have identified and pursued a sustainable funding plan to implement capital plan priorities that improve upon and preserve infrastructure and address deferred maintenance.

Safety and Law Enforcement

Goal Statement:

Over the next three years, the Westwood City Council, City Administrator and Chief of Police will support the just enforcement of city laws and codes, revisit and revise laws and codes as necessary, and be responsive to community concerns in order to preserve community safety.

Community Amenities

Goal Statement:

Over the next three years, the Westwood City Council will foster and maintain strong partnerships to encourage community amenities that support walkability and community connections that sustain the unique character of Westwood.

City Communication and Engagement

Goal Statement:

Over the next three years, the Westwood City Council and city staff will maintain a high level of communication with residents and enhance the usefulness and availability of information to keep our residents informed about developing issues, City news and opportunities for community input.

Proposed Metrics:

Measure	2024 Actual	2027 Target
Resident satisfaction with communications from the city (rating of excellent or good)	81%	85%
Counts of resident participation/engagement in communication channels:		

Measure	2024 Actual	2027 Target
Email newsletter subscribers	1,150	1,600
Email newsletter open / read rate	68%	75%
City website visits / clicks	Data collection beginning 2025	3,000/month
Followers on Facebook	895	1,600
Engagements on Facebook	>1%	5%

Proposed Strategies:

- On an ongoing basis, the City will create opportunities for two-way communication and engagement between residents and City/Council to create a feedback loop twice per year such as “Coffee with the Council” or “Coffee with a Cop.”
- On an ongoing basis, the City will communicate to residents about ways to mitigate or prevent crime activity in the community as new trends emerge (including potentially a regular message in the Buzz).

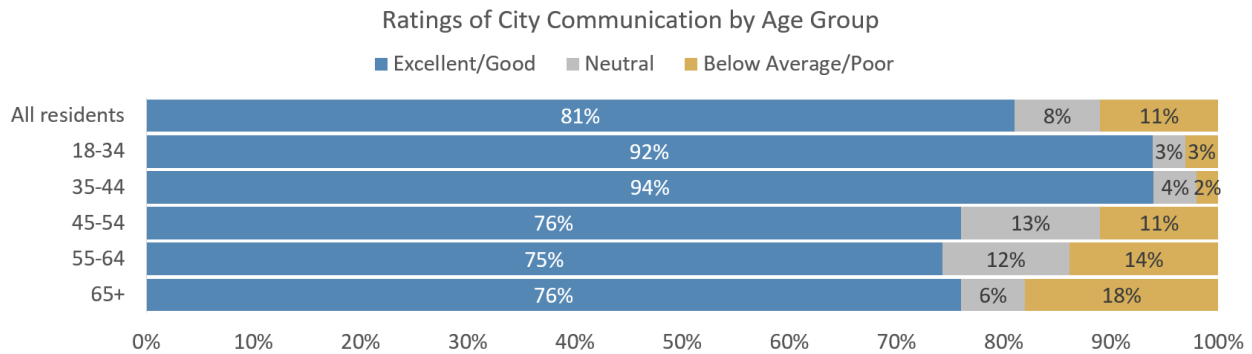
SURVEY DATA

- **Westwood Community Survey Key Insights: [Linked Here](#)**
- **2024 ETC Community Survey: [Linked Here](#)**
- **2024 Community Survey Findings Report: [Linked Here](#)**

Ratings of Communications and Customer Service from the City



Ratings of city communications and city customer service are both higher for younger age groups / lower for older age groups



Those who **do not** read the quarterly newsletter or the weekly email Buzz have **less positive** ratings of communications

Those who have **attended a Planning Commission** meeting have **higher negative ratings** of customer service

Preferences for communication are relatively consistent across age, except that **65+ has a stronger preference for print**

TARGET AUDIENCES

The City will focus on forming a deeper connection and stronger communication with these stakeholders.

- Residents/Citizens of all ages.
- Business Community.
- Visitors of businesses located within the City.
- Community organizations, local and regional agencies, nonprofit/ education groups and state and federal government agencies.

KEY MESSAGES

The City will use these messages as the guide for transparent and effective communication.

1. The City is proud of the community that has been created and aims to help it continue to thrive and grow through strategic development planning.
2. The City is a well-run government operation that is here to serve its citizens, providing an extensive array of resources that are available and accessible to everyone who resides within City limits.
3. The City proactively plans, considers and accommodates both the desires and needs of all to ensure people can live and thrive here with a special lens on Communities for All Ages.
4. The City encourages resident feedback and is looking for increased civic/community engagement.
5. The City always strives to use taxpayers' resources in the most efficient way possible with the highest level of responsiveness and transparency.

STRATEGY + TACTICS

Use a variety of communication channels to deliver information in a timely and thoughtful manner that clearly tells a story and delivers important messaging. The content mix between digital, print and in-person ensures residents of all ages can engage and garner information in ways that meet their needs.

Channel: Website

Content / Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Dedicated landing page for Communities for All Ages information.-Dedicated landing pages for all development projects and capital improvement projects-Short and concise news alerts for breaking and important City news.-Meeting recaps.-Events calendar.-All City information and news should live on the website and be easily accessible, findable and understandable.
Frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-The website should be updated weekly and, in some cases, daily.-Landing pages for programs like Communities for All Ages should be updated monthly with links to resources, new programming and ways for residents to get involved/ benefit from the initiative.-News alerts should be posted weekly.-All media releases should be posted on the website as they are drafted.
KPIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Unique and returning visitors.-Page Views.-Top Pages.-Time on page/ bounce rate.-Yearly/monthly usage comparisons.

Channel: Social Media

Content / Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use social media pages to post short, concise information not only on every day City services but also on key community programs like Communities for All Ages as well as development projects. -The City will share relevant information from other agencies as well as Westwood businesses pertaining to information that will be helpful and relevant to its target audiences. -The City will link back to longer form information on the website for target audiences to learn more.
Frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social media pages should be updated 2x-3x per week depending on City announcements. -The content should be a mix of breaking news, with community news, reminders and information on Communities for All Ages. -Share news from other organizations weekly.
KPIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of Followers. -Engagement. -Top Posts. -Link Clicks. -Competitor Reporting.

Channel: Email Newsletter

Content / Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Highlight the top news and events for the week. -Link back to the website for more detailed information. -Include a weekly Communities for All Ages engagement section for residents to read/learn more from. -Spotlight Westwood businesses e.g. openings, celebrations, special offers and more.
Frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Send 1x per week.
KPIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Number of Subscribers. -Open Rates. -Click Through Rates.

Channel: Printed Newsletter

Content /	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Highlight the top news and events quarterly.
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Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create short links or QR codes that link back to the website for more detailed information. -Include a Communities for All Ages engagement section for residents to read/learn more from. -Spotlight Westwood businesses e.g. openings, celebrations, special offers and more.
Frequency	-Quarterly (4x a year)
KPIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Distribution Rates. -Include a quarterly survey question and monitor online / mail-in responses. (micro-responses)

Channel: Media

Content / Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Write/send media releases as hard-hitting news occurs on development projects, City awards and any news that features Westwood as the first, the only or the best. -Media releases should also be posted across all other communications channels.
Frequency	-As news occurs.
KPIs	-Media Placements.

Channel: Meetings

Content / Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use in-person events to communicate important City news and programming. -Use City Council Meetings to allow community leaders and organizations to present, such as important stakeholders that are a part of the Communities for All Ages program. -Plan informal events like the egg hunt, coffee meet-ups and other get-togethers to continue to foster community / civic engagement.
Frequency	-1x per quarter.
KPIs	-Attendance Rates.

Channel: Signage

Content / Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use temporary signage including yard signs, banners, and sandwich board placement to communicate important City news, events and programming. -Place signage in high-traffic City areas. -Ensure different promotions are highlighted like civic, community and City service news.
Frequency	-As needed.
KPIs	-Call-to-action measurement from signage e.g. event attendance, QR code scans and more.

IMPLEMENTATION

The following timeline was developed to guide the City on execution.

Now / Top Priority:

Create a baseline KPI report by marketing channel.

Create a monthly communications calendar by topic/initiative to ensure a content mix is being created.

Determine staffing needs and assign communication task owners.

Explore opportunities to use machine learning (aka Artificial Intelligence) for content creation and sharing.

Next 6 Months:

Meet with communication task owners monthly to discuss content and frequency by channel. Discuss target audience feedback and course correct as needed.

Continue to create a monthly communications calendar by topic/initiative to ensure a diverse content mix is being created.

Report on KPIs quarterly and include qualitative resident feedback.

Within 1-3 Years:

Establish monthly, and quarterly protocols and standard communications operating procedures based on learnings from the previous year.

Review and update the strategic communications plan.

Create a year-over-year communications report for a deeper understanding of whether goals and KPIs were achieved.