

City of Salem

2023 Strategic Communications & Engagement Plan

July 2023

Prepared by Territory Inc.

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Introduction

In 2022, the City of Salem began to review how effectively its communication and engagement functions operated. It has been making progress in developing a core functional team addressing communications and engagement since 2018, relying primarily on individuals in different departments and divisions who were able to devote some portion of their FTE on this work. But much of the City's outreach and engagement, beyond the work of this ad hoc Communications Team, relied on project communications that are often supported by external consultants. And while this has been moderately successful, the addition of new tools and channels to support has made it difficult to be truly effective.

A number of other factors have helped to create an even more difficult challenge. The City budget is facing a shortfall, which could make investment in improvement difficult. A newly elected City Council and newly hired City Manager have brought new leadership styles and expectations, especially in how the City engages and informs its growing Spanish-speaking population and in how the City tells the stories of its progress. And all of these issues converge amid a continually changing media and information landscape, where channels, tools, and processes the City has long relied upon are growing obsolete.

To that end, we have prepared a comprehensive plan that recommends priority strategies in nine key areas to improve City communications and engagement substantially. We have conducted significant research to gain insight and understanding into the City of Salem's needs and challenges, as well as those of similar cities in the western US. These research activities include:

- Discovery work sessions with City communications staff (2)
- Discovery work sessions with City leadership (2)
- 1:1 interviews with City Councilors & Mayor (9)
- Focus group conversations with community stakeholders (6)
- Peer City communications and engagement research (11 cities)
- Review of communications/engagement strategy documentation, including:
 - 2022 Communications Working Strategy
 - City of Salem Comprehensive Plan 2022
 - City of Salem Strategic Plan 2016
 - City of Salem Strategic Plan 2021
 - City Council Policy Agenda 2023

...and over two dozen additional strategy documents.

The documentation of this research can be found in an appendix to this report.

City Council Goals & Expectations

In the 2023 City Council Policy Agenda, City leadership sets forth several priorities for action as it works toward its Strategic Plan Policy goals. The second priority listed in the agenda is:

*“**Improve engagement and communications.** A comprehensive engagement and communications plan is expected to result in strategies to tell our story, increase awareness of the impact the City has in day-to-day lives, and increase civic participation and diversity in participation, enhance our volunteer base, expand Neighborhood Associations, advisory boards and commissions, and benefit talent acquisition and recruitment strategies.”*

In our discussions with City leadership, they were clear that existing communications and engagement efforts were not sufficient to create the kind of connection to City activities that they feel is necessary. These goals have guided the development of the strategic recommendations in this plan.

Primary Communications & Engagement Objectives

The primary strategic objectives this plan is designed to support:

1. Increase the public’s trust of City government and its awareness of City resources and activities
2. Increase consistency and quality of non-English communication, particularly in Spanish
3. Better represent City’s point of view/brand in all communications
4. Create a more effective, coordinated communications organization
5. Create greater public engagement in City activities and decisions

The strategic and measurement recommendations that follow are designed to ladder up to these critical objectives.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

The City has committed to bringing an equity lens to all aspects of government and community engagement. Thoughtful, informed, and strategic communications are integral to being accountable to that commitment. Territory recommends creating a DEI liaison role in the communications department that works collaboratively with the City’s DEI office to address equity and inclusion issues as they apply throughout all communications, both internally and externally. In particular, this role should work closely within the realms of public outreach and engagement, accessibility in communications services, and growing and supporting an equitable City workforce.

Audiences

The City of Salem addresses its communication and engagement activities to multiple audiences who actively seek information from or about the City. To ensure an effective communication program, it is essential to connect with specific audiences in ways that cater to their needs. The City’s priority audiences include:

Residents: As of September 2021, more than 174,000 people live within the City, making it the third largest city in Oregon. Most residents identify as white (74.4%), and most speak English. About 27.1% of the population identifies as Latino or Hispanic. About 18.4% of the population speak languages other than English at home. Per capita income is less than the statewide average and more than half of students in the school district are considered to be living in poverty.

Their needs: Residents are interested in obtaining information about basic city services, decision-making processes, and opportunities for engagement. They access information through traditional means like newspapers and newsletters, as well as through electronic channels such as email and social media.

Business Community: Salem accommodates a diverse range of small and large businesses, employing a significant number of local residents across various sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, education, healthcare, retail, and services.

Their needs: Businesses require information on permitting, as well as changes in city policies that impact their ability to thrive. Similar to residents, businesses obtain information through traditional means and electronic channels.

City of Salem Employees: City employees form a unique part of the workforce and have specific information needs related to their job performance and personal financial decisions. They also share common informational needs with other Salem workers.

Their needs: City supervisors, human resource officials, co-workers, the City’s public website, and intranet serve as vital sources of information for city employees. Informed employees also

have the opportunity to share the City's initiatives with their family, friends, and colleagues, and of course with City residents, who routinely make information requests of multiple departments.

Local and Commuting Workforce: The city's non-farm employees are primarily engaged in government work, trade, transportation, utilities, education, and healthcare services.

Their needs: The local workforce seeks information regarding transportation options, city decisions affecting their jobs, and policy changes that may impact their employers. Workers rely on their employers for city-related information, in addition to traditional and electronic sources.

Visitors: Salem attracts numerous visitors who come for public and private events, local services or businesses, to visit friends and relatives, testify at the state Capitol, or as a stopover on their way to other destinations.

Their needs: Visitors seek information tailored to their specific reasons for being in Salem or its surrounding communities.

Media: Multiple media outlets serve the Salem community, including newspapers such as the Salem Statesman Journal, Salem Weekly, Salem Business Journal, as well as publications affiliated with Willamette University (Willamette University Collegian) and Chemeketa Community College (Chemeketa Community College Courier). The media landscape also encompasses both English and Spanish language radio stations, online blogs, and occasionally, Portland-based media outlets covering news stories in Salem, particularly those related to activities at the state Capitol.

Their needs: Media outlets have long played a crucial role as a primary source of information for Salem residents, businesses, workers, and City employees. However, as the conglomeration of media continues and fewer media resources are devoted to local news, we can no longer rely on existing media outlets as the sole source of local information and news. Reporters still seek timely information about City decision-making processes, police activities, City events, and projects that may impact the local community, though they gather that information in more distributed ways than in the past.

Recommended Strategic Communication & Engagement Strategies

In order to reach the primary objectives of this plan, we recommend the following strategic shifts in how the City of Salem approaches its communications and engagement efforts. These shifts are significant, and to implement them will require City leadership to collaborate with staff to make the best possible decisions for using existing resources and staff, including reorganizing where communications roles sit within the City's departments.

Our recommendations address specific issues in the following categories: Resources, People, Structure, Tools, Channels, Messaging, Process, Best Practices, and Leadership.

RESOURCES: Provide dedicated funding

Communications leaders in the comparable cities research we conducted highlighted the need and efficacy of having dedicated, centralized funding for communications personnel, tools, and resources that can provide services and be shared across the City. City of Salem staff who perform communications roles agreed that dedicated funding is imperative to solving the widespread and unsustainable capacity issues they currently face. While we acknowledge the revenue and budget issues the City faces now, it is important to emphasize that an effective, successful communications system will require real investment.

PEOPLE: Install a Chief Communications Officer and a centralized Communications Team

One of the primary obstacles to better communications and engagement is the lack of a dedicated position with leadership authority, budget responsibility, and results accountability. The system is currently run part time by the Strategic Initiatives Manager, who has no authority to direct efforts and little budgetary control. A new leadership position will be necessary if communications and engagement are to make the kind of progress that City Council expects. This position would guide a centralized team that provides City-wide communications services, tools, and resources, as well as support services for each department as needed. Centralized services should include widely needed skills like graphic design, data analysis and visualization, public information communication, community engagement, and media management, among others.

STRUCTURE: Implement a 'Hub & Spoke' model

Effective communications and engagement in the City of Salem will only occur through better coordination, collaboration, and resource sharing. A 'hub & spoke' organizational model would work well here, with a central 'hub' including leadership and supportive team that has greater authority and more formal policies to manage collaboration among 'spokes' and to centralize resources. During our final project workshop, the leadership group agreed that spokes would

include communications personnel within departments, who are connected to and collaborate with the central hub while retaining independence in certain unique and clearly defined elements of communication.

TOOLS: Centralize tools to support communications

City staff who currently perform communication roles as part of their job voiced consensus that all communications tools aside from a few department-branded exceptions should be held and managed centrally. Some key tools already exist in departments or are available centrally but are not widely known, for example, audio-visual recording equipment. There are other tools the City will need to acquire and a centralized City communications team will need to coordinate, with clear and appropriate policies. For example, graphic design software licenses (e.g. Adobe Creative Suite, Canva, etc.) would be owned and managed centrally, and provided to department-specific staff as needed.

CHANNELS: Continue to improve website

Modern technology has made the web perhaps the most critical communications channel for many organizations and industries. City government is no different. It is appropriate to use it as the primary way to share city news, events, regulations, and more with residents. The recent overhaul of the City website brought great improvements to useability, however it's important to note that community members and City staff report that navigation, and specifically the search function, continues to be a source of frustration. This is a known issue whose cause is unfortunately inherent to the website's structural design. Moving forward, it is important to continue to push the website vendor for improved user experience options in order to better align with the needs of Salem residents.

MESSAGING: Promote existing channels, services, and resources

Many requests and suggested improvements from community members and staff are for things that already exist or are currently in the works. We recommend awareness campaigns, both internal and external, to focus on these existing assets and inform people that the City has heard them and been responsive to their input. The City has already accomplished building much of what people want from local government communications. It's time to tell them that it's there and how to find it.

PROCESS: Implement a newsroom approach to City storytelling

An expectation we heard clearly from City leadership was taking greater advantage of technology and information to change how stories are framed about the City and its activities. Shifting communication from information delivery to the storytelling focus favored by City Council will mean treating data and information differently. We recommend using an approach not unlike a newsroom: Share information and its impact. Using context and outcomes to help shape stories about City activity will mean thinking less like PR agents and more like journalists. This will mean more collaboration internally and will rely on greater central communications leadership.

PROCESS: Adopt a “Communications-first” / “Spanish-first” orientation

When anyone in city government is planning any city initiative, communications leadership should be at the table from the outset to understand the rationale, goals, timelines, and desired outcomes necessary to shape any communications or engagement effort to support it. Bringing communications in at the 11th hour will no longer suffice — there are too many important decisions that need to be made about messaging, channels, and timing in today’s information landscape. A critical corollary to this is to also include Spanish-specific language issues in this initial planning. As this segment of City residents continues to grow, awareness of and attention to their health, safety, and civic needs must grow as well.

BEST PRACTICES: Create a C&E best practice handbook

Collaboration and coordination can be achieved in a modified hub & spoke model so long as the ‘spokes’ have a shared understanding of how they must work together to be successful. Relying on ‘look & feel’ guidelines alone ignores the reality and the challenges of distributed responsibility for City communications. A ‘Communications and Engagement Playbook’ would set expectations for how the spokes would work with the hub and with each other, and would include explicit agreements and policies on internal communication, sharing feedback, sharing resources, collaboration, timing, and so on — a significant step up from shared brand guidelines.

BEST PRACTICES: Invest in staff training

In order to help existing staff better leverage modern media and storytelling advances, professional development for staff in communications roles should be a budget priority. In addition, because of the dynamic nature of public engagement and the City’s growing reliance on neighbor-to-neighbor communication, professional development for staff in engagement roles should also be prioritized.

LEADERSHIP: Leadership needs to provide clarity

This strategic communications and engagement plan has been heavily informed by those who experience the challenges within the current City communications system every day—City staff who perform communications roles, a variety of local groups and community members, City employees as a whole, and elected officials. This plan needs to have the aligned support of City leadership to be effective. This means owning and championing the decisions represented in the plan, and ongoing, engaged support of the changes needed for a successful implementation of the plan.

Strategic Implementation Timeline

Short Term

Strategies that should be initiated quickly — in the next 6 months

- PEOPLE: Install a Chief Communications Officer
- STRUCTURE: Finalize organization of a 'hub & spoke' model
- MESSAGING: Promote existing channels, services, and resources
- LEADERSHIP: Leadership needs to provide clarity
- RESOURCES: Begin planning for dedicated funding

Medium Term

Strategies that should be initiated in the next 6-12 months

- PEOPLE: Organize a centralized communications team
- TOOLS: Centralize tools to support communications
- PROCESS: Implement a newsroom approach to City storytelling
- PROCESS: Adopt a “communications-first” / “Spanish-first” orientation
- BEST PRACTICES: Create a C&E best practice handbook

Long Term

Strategies that should be initiated no later than the next 12-18 months

- RESOURCES: Finalize & implement dedicated funding
- CHANNELS: Continue to improve website
- BEST PRACTICES: Invest in staff training

Measurement

The strategies we recommend are in support of the objectives outlined on page 2 of this plan. For each objective, we have identified a number of potential metrics of success that the City might choose to track in order to understand the effectiveness of communications and engagement functions going forward. We have chosen to offer an array of possible metrics rather than recommend specific ones, so that City leadership may discuss these possibilities and make a shared decision about which to pursue.

Whichever measures of success the City chooses to use, we recommend tracking them consistently, reporting on them biannually, and using those reports as opportunities to adjust communications and engagement activities.

Note: We agree with the recommendation from your prior plan to regularly deploy a statistically-valid citywide Community Satisfaction Survey to assess community values and priorities, level of engagement, and level of satisfaction with City communications. However, that plan recommended a survey every five years. We strongly recommend residents and stakeholders should instead be surveyed on a regular, quarterly basis via brief “pulse” surveys in order to get quicker feedback on City activities and to lessen the burden of conducting such a large-scale survey. We recommend beginning this in Q4 2023.

| Objective | Potential Metrics of Success |
|--|---|
| <p>Increase the public’s trust of City government and its awareness of City resources and activities</p> | <p>Increase in number of website visits and social media impressions.</p> <p>Increase in the number of social media likes, comments, and shares.</p> <p>Increase in the duration of website visits</p> <p>Increase in the number of people attending City events and neighborhood association meetings.</p> <p>Increase in the number of residents actively using City resources</p> <p>Reduced number of negative comments about lack of public process</p> <p>Increase in community members’ satisfaction with City actions, responses, and decisions</p> <p>Increase in email subscription registrations</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Increase consistency and quality of non-English communication, particularly in Spanish</p> | <p>Increase in number and frequency of translated materials</p> <p>Increased page views and duration of website visits on non-English language pages</p> <p>Increase in use of trained Spanish translators at City-sponsored events</p> <p>Increase in number of bilingual staff</p> <p>Increase in number of comments received and responded to in Spanish</p> |
| <p>Better represent City's point of view/brand in all communications</p> | <p>Year-over-year increase in percentage of materials adhering to the City style guide</p> <p>Increase in Net Promoter Score (NPS) results on residents view of City</p> <p>Increase in the number of media mentions and/or media information requests</p> <p>Assessment of the tone of coverage (positive, neutral, or negative), and the extent to which the city's key messages are included in media stories.</p> |
| <p>Create a more effective, coordinated communications organization</p> | <p>Assess team members' perception of teamwork, communication effectiveness, and the overall level of collaboration within the organization</p> <p>Decrease in time taken to produce (and distribute) communications materials, or increase in the percentage of projects completed within deadlines</p> <p>Reduction in response time to internal and external communications inquiries</p> <p>Assess key stakeholders' satisfaction with communications responsiveness, clarity of communication, and overall satisfaction with the support provided</p> <p>Set and track key performance indicators (KPIs) related to organizational goals, such as increased awareness, improved public perception, or enhanced stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>Assess the professional growth and development of team members within the communications organization.</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Create greater public engagement in City activities and decisions</p> | <p>Increase in attendance or registration numbers for City-sponsored events</p> <p>Increase in the number of residents providing feedback or comments on city initiatives</p> <p>Increase in number of suggestions, comments, or inquiries received through various channels, such as email, online forms, or dedicated feedback platforms</p> <p>Increase in the diversity and inclusiveness of public engagement efforts</p> <p>Increase in instances where public input or feedback has directly influenced policy changes, project modifications, or strategic decisions made by the City</p> |
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Communications Workforce Plan & Structure

See [Appendix 1](#) for a roles diagram.

A hub and spoke approach with a centralized communications group (hub) provides strategic alignment and shared communications services and resources, while also collaborating with departments through a limited number of embedded communications staff (spokes) to meet specific communications needs and make best use of subject matter experts. Based on information collected from peer city research and what we heard from current staff in communications roles and City leadership, we recommend a hub and spoke model for the City communications division.

To prevent silos and communication breakdowns, communications liaison roles can coordinate with key roles across other divisions to keep people informed and to strategize effectively.

City staff, community members, peer cities, and Salem City leadership all emphasized that it is imperative that staff with dedicated communications roles are granted the capacity, clarity, and authority needed to perform those roles effectively and without burnout. That said, not every role in the structure described below needs to be a FTE position. Territory recommends that “officer,” “coordinator,” and “expert,” roles should be dedicated communications staff, while “liaison,” “support,” and “storyteller” roles could be combined into multi-faceted communications positions, or part-time duties of staff whose main roles are outside of communications.

Centrally Managed Tools & Resources

Current staff in communications roles agreed that nearly all communications tools and resources that are not branded to a specific department should be managed in a centralized way, to better enable sharing with all departments and to increase awareness of the resources available. Examples of communications tools and resources we recommend centralizing are listed below.

Funding

- Dedicated communications funding
- Grants coordination (hybrid)

Channels

- All-city email
- Wall space
- Tangible communication
- Signage, etc.
- YouTube channel
- Community dashboard
- Intranet homepage
- Print communications
- Local radio monthly spot
- Flash alerts networks
- Website

Equipment and supplies

(Availability list, reservations, and check-out managed centrally)

- GoPros
- Tool library
- Cameras and microphones
- Video (videography equipment)
- City branded equipment (e.g. banner)
- “Meeting in a box”
- Public meetings supplies (easels, paper, markers, etc.)
- Printing tech

Software, data, and analytics

- Business intelligence tools
- Survey software (e.g. Alchemer)
- Adobe Creative Suite
- Canva and other social media design software
- Mailchimp or similar email software
- Data and info relevant to specific viewer (portal, AI)
- Website archive software
- Intranet (e.g., Teams)
- Customer relationship management system
- Website analytics software
- Data Salem
- Web design development software
- Gov QA (records requests)
- Website searchable open data
- Balancing act- budget

Plans, policies, memberships, and navigation

- Strategic communications and engagement plan
- Style Guide
- Clear map of organizational structure
- Directory
- Map of all city offices and services
- Comms admin - policies and procedures
- Community engagement best practices
- Intranet comms hub of resources
- Professional organizations memberships

Meetings

- Regularly scheduled communications meetings
- Department head meetings - info distribution with cohesive messaging
- Intentional briefing spaces
- Materials and prep for cohesive messaging (e.g. for city council)

People

- Paid city ambassadors
- Childcare providers
- Volunteers (hybrid: centralized list of volunteer opportunities, database, and recruitment; volunteer events management at the department level)

Citywide Messages & Strategic Messaging Approach

Key message 1: “The City of Salem government has so much to offer, thanks in part to your valuable input and ideas.”

Much of what community members, staff, and City Council members asked for in focus groups and interviews already exists or is in the process of being built or evaluated. Communities appreciate action that shows they are being heard. Invest in getting the word out, that action has already happened or is happening now. Follow up with community engagement participants, business orgs, community leaders, neighborhood associations, and City staff and leadership to celebrate existing resources and the improvements that have been made or are being made. Use all available channels to point external audiences to a one-stop shop, the new Customer Service Center, for ways to get and stay informed about City services and resources. Point internal staff and leadership to one-stop shop for communications tools and resources. Keep shouting it from the rooftops until significantly less surveyed people suggest that City communications should do things it has already done.

Key message 2: “We, Salem, have important and exciting stories to tell. We are doing great things, as we face great challenges.”

Build a practice of storytelling. Create a network of department-embedded storyteller liaisons and a centralized storyteller role to help collect and tell the everyday stories of the important and interesting things City employees, departments, and leaders do. Focus on building identity around Salem as a community and how the City government is a part of that. Focus on impact, or the “why does this matter?” as opposed to just getting data out to the public. Be honest about the real challenges Salem faces, with an underlying message of “we’re in this together.” Create formalized policies to make sure stories are surfaced and told, like CC’ing your department’s storyteller liaison on RFPs, asking staff to share recent and upcoming projects and work anecdotes in departmental meetings, and sending daily or weekly story ideas to a centralized role. Experiment with a wide range of channels and formats and gather metrics data to find out what works well.

Engagement Best Practices

Public engagement should never just be a box to check. An effective, long-term public engagement strategy requires building and maintaining trust-based relationships. Relationship building, like equity, should be a lens the City of Salem communications department brings to everything it does. This requires time and genuine investment. The communications department should collect, try, develop, and select policy around engagement best practices to align all departments on how the City engages effectively with the community and builds trust.

Meanwhile, here are some recommended best practices based on what we heard through focus groups, interviews, and peer city research, to support this foundational goal.

Ask respectfully to join meetings and events held by existing groups and organizations, instead of only inviting people to join the City's table. Come without an agenda, and primarily to listen and understand. Look for potential ways the City could support the work already being done, or address issues that have already been identified, but make relationship building your main goal. Keep coming. Get to know people on an individual level, and gain understanding of what groups and organizations are all about. This process can't be rushed. The investment will pay off when the relationships City staff have built make genuine collaboration with and accountability to the community possible. For every engagement opportunity, keep asking "How can this help build relationships?"

Work with culturally-specific partners to plan and implement culturally-specific engagement opportunities. Build relationships with these partners and support their work before asking them if they would be willing to support yours. Respect their time and energy and compensate them appropriately.

Don't make promises unless the City can absolutely keep them. When the City asks community members to invest their time and energy into engagement projects, a promise of follow-through is implied. Make both the ask and the outcome clear up-front, before people decide whether to put in effort. Make every engagement opportunity worthwhile.

Do your homework. Don't replicate work that's already been done. For example, if the City and/or community groups themselves have already engaged in processes that provided input on what the City should do around an issue, don't ask them to start again from scratch. If the City needs more clarity or enough time has passed that the context has changed significantly, come prepared with the previous work and acknowledge its significance.

Go to where the people are. When planning City-led meetings and events, select locations that are easily accessible and already well known to target audiences. Multiple smaller events are easier to tailor to a variety of audiences in culturally specific and accessible ways, instead of trying to make a large event meet everyone's needs.

Get the word out. Plan marketing of events well in advance, when possible. Use a variety of channels to inform people of engagement opportunities. Collect data to see what channels work best for different audiences. Trusted partner orgs and well-connected community

ambassadors may be able to help inform and encourage participation from people in their networks. Support neighborhood associations while also addressing their tendency to amplify select voices and have low participation among residents who are tenants, not homeowners.

Address language and accessibility barriers. Here are a variety of recommendations to consider when planning events and developing materials.

- Provide food and childcare to make in-person engagement events more accessible.
- All audiences benefit from accommodations for hearing and sight impairment. Make text large and choose typefaces that are easy to read from a distance. Use sound amplification if an in-person event is large or outdoors. Provide alt text or auditory descriptions of visuals and closed captions of spoken words. Provide a clear way to request ASL interpretation well before a live event.
- If you can use clear and simple visuals to communicate ideas instead of or in support of text, do so.
- Always use clear and simple language, free of jargon, slang, and unnecessarily complicated words. Avoid acronyms or spell out full words before using acronyms.
- Translate all general and Latin American community-specific engagement materials into Spanish, to better serve Salem's large population of Spanish speaking residents.
- Translate materials into appropriate languages for any engagement opportunities targeted toward other culturally-specific groups.
- Use trained translators instead of counting on multilingual staff to translate.
- Provide a clear way for people to access information in their preferred language later if they can't access it at a live event.

Create a safe space and respect boundaries. Do not ask people to share their lived experience unless it is offered. Make it clear that people from marginalized groups will be supported and protected. Be prepared for any potential safety concerns leading up to a live event.

Learn from past and future mistakes. Many communities and individuals have good reasons for not trusting City government. Listening to criticism and changing policies and behavior can go a long way toward earning back trust. Come to conversations ready to answer uncomfortable questions and acknowledge critique without being defensive, while keeping in mind that the loudest voices don't always represent the views of broader groups or the community as a whole.

Broaden volunteer opportunities and add centralized awareness and recruitment efforts. Collect information about volunteer opportunities from all parts of City government into one place and use City-wide channels to promote all of them. Give former and active volunteers information about the wide variety of opportunities. Make every volunteer opportunity well organized and worthwhile.

Acknowledgements

This project was supported by funding from the City of Salem. We thank our colleagues and partners in Salem City Government who provided insight and expertise and greatly assisted in the coordination of every aspect of planning, research, and development of the Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan. We extend our sincerest thanks to each of you.

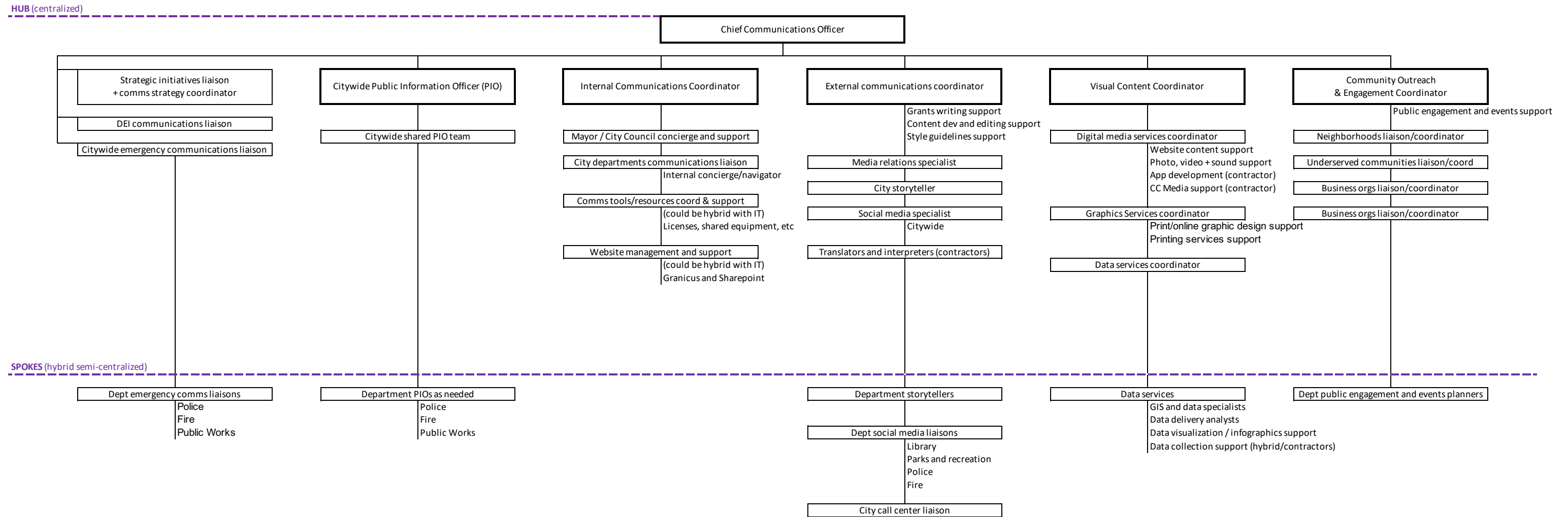
We are indebted to everyone in the communications organization and City leadership with whom we worked. Each of the members of the Working Group provided extensive professional guidance and taught us a great deal about the challenges and potential for a transformed communications and engagement function in Salem. The people we engaged during this process — including members of the business and cultural communities, neighborhood associations, Salem residents, the Latino community, and City staff — were generous with their time and their willingness to share their experiences and needs. The communications leaders of the ten cities in the Western US we spoke to were transparent, collaborative, and helpful beyond measure. And the Leadership Group thoughtfully represented the needs and interests of the City, its constituents, its stakeholders, and their communities.

Finally, we would like to thank the City's Strategic Initiatives Manager, Courtney Knox Busch, for her guidance, coordination, and support in completing this project.

APPENDICES

A1. Recommended City of Salem communications roles structure (11x17)

Recommended City of Salem communications roles structure



A2. Research Report on Peer Cities Communications Teams & Activities



2023 Salem Survey of City Comms Teams **Research Report**

May 5, 2023

Executive Summary

This survey was conducted to determine how similar cities in the Western U.S. have structured and operate their communications teams. Our goal was to find any conditions or trends that may lead to smoother operations of the communications functions, greater continuity of the cities' branding and messaging, and more comprehensive and successful engagement with the various populations in the cities.

In addition to this Research Report, we have provided an Excel spreadsheet containing the data from all interviews and a Topline Report with the overall metrics and information from the survey. This Research Report will satisfy the needs of most who are interested in the survey findings, while the spreadsheet and Topline Report will be most useful for those who want to take a deeper dive.

The 11 cities included in this study do not, of course, provide a definitive answer to any of the initial questions, but they do give us important clues to what may benefit the communications teams in any similar cities.

- ★ Common points of pain include:
 - Having insufficient staff to fulfill all of the needed and desired communications functions and tasks.
 - Lacking control and coordination of communications activities throughout the various groups and departments that is required to successfully tell the city's story.
 - Struggling to fully engage with all of the city's myriad populations in all of the needed languages.
 - Not having the data needed to fully understand the efficacy of communications strategies or to help guide communications plans.
- ★ Some of the more successful strategies include:
 - Having individual communications staff who are highly skilled and passionate about their work and who are given the time and latitude to create successful strategies. This seems especially important for those working with Police, Fire, and

some other fairly unique city groups, and those tasked with engaging harder-to-reach populations.

- Having the time and authority to effect comprehensive coordination among the core communications team and all decentralized communications staff.
- Limiting the number of decentralized staff with communications responsibilities, especially when it comes to accessing and editing the city’s website and social media content or conducting citizen surveys.
- Having individual staff with the background and language skills needed to develop mutually-beneficial relationships between the city and community/neighborhood groups.
- Conducting surveys on a regular basis with residents, businesses and even city employees to help keep apprised of shifting sentiments and needs.

Of course, enacting new strategies to successfully deal with the communications issues in these cities will require a supportive mayor and city council along with sufficient budget to employ the needed staff and finance their activities and needed tools. And continued sharing of both successful strategies and less successful efforts can provide camaraderie and even cost-efficiency for all cities involved.

We wish you tremendous success and satisfaction as you continue the evolution of your communications teams.

Implications for Salem

Throughout this report, we have opted to withhold the names of specific cities to help more clearly see different approaches without bias. However, in all tables and diagrams shared here, we have highlighted Salem’s information (city 8) for ease of comparison.

It is worth mentioning that in among our interviewees, Salem is one of only two cities that does not employ more than one FTE dedicated to communications at the city level. The effectiveness of any city’s communications and engagement function is a factor of capacity, structure, and skill. Some of our responding cities may be able to accomplish their work more effectively because they enjoy a greater staff size, but that is not the only factor in their effectiveness.

Summary of Findings

- Telephone survey of 11 City Communications team leaders
- All participants were very enthusiastic about sharing their experiences and learning what other city Communications teams are doing. Especially interesting to them are how communications functions are managed when they are spread among various city departments, and how community engagement is effectively achieved.
- Titles and functions use traditional Communications terms but are increasingly adding “engagement” and related terminology as that critical function continues gaining importance.

- Communications staffing models vary from completely centralized Communications functions to no citywide Communications team at all. In between are a wide variety of hybrid models.
- Whether a city adopts a centralized or somewhat decentralized approach to Communications, solid collaboration with the central team seems to be a necessary element to control branding and messaging and even community engagement.
- While community engagement is becoming more of a priority for the participating cities, engaging with the broad diversity of community members requires the right staff and partners, and, ideally, sufficient data to understand their needs and desires.
- Engaging with harder-to-reach populations is a particular challenge. Building relationships with and partnering with local organizations and attending existing events seems to be the most effective approach. Most participants said they are actively working to do just that, and they're using a variety of engagement techniques. But it takes time and continuing effort, something many do not feel equipped to fully accommodate.
- Translations are largely dictated by demographics (mostly Spanish) and perception of importance of information. Both staff and consultants are used for translation work.
- The functions of city Communications teams are seemingly endless, including both citywide and department needs for community engagement and information, to city employee communications and events, to whatever the City Councils and Mayors may require.
- Most do not feel they are in complete control of their city's branding and messaging.
- Communications teams have most of the necessary expertise on staff and adequate budgets for updating and maintaining essential tools. So, the primary concerns seem to be choosing the best versions of those tools and quickly optimizing their use, acquiring new tools, and controlling the use of all of the tools by staff outside the Communications department.
- Most cited Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Nextdoor as their primary social media accounts.
- While some department-specific accounts are controlled by staff outside the Communications team, some have managed to limit or even eliminate such decentralized use and do a great job of controlling content.
- Communication channels used by the cities include traditional media, social media, TV, radio, in-person at events, citywide with various signage, and even at outdoor kiosks. Most include utility bill inserts and cable access TV to keep citizens informed.
- Data is universally desired to better understand a city's communication needs and effectiveness. Most conduct citizen surveys, at least one conducts business and employee surveys, and all use measures such as clicks, follows, attendance, etc. Few use data analysis to inform their communications decisions.
- Participants rely on less scientific measures such as public comments, lack of complaints, satisfaction of community and city leaders, platform growth, event attendance, et al.
- Internal communication strategies typically include e-mails and newsletters, but also a variety of innovative techniques that seem to be well-received.

Detailed Findings

Survey Participants

This telephone survey was conducted in March 2023 with 11 cities in Oregon, Washington, California, Utah and Arizona, with populations ranging from 102,059 to 229,071. Only one city—Glendale, AZ—did not respond to our invitation. The participants reported city budgets of \$460 million to \$1.5 billion, operating budgets/general funds of \$158 to \$669 million, and communications budgets that are largely undefined.

Participants were all the heads of their city’s communication team, most with titles of Director or Manager. Their teams range from 1-20 staff with an average of 8.7 and median of 8. Many of the staff titles include the broad area of “Communication(s)” and more specific functional areas including:

- Content
- Digital Media
- Graphic Design
- Production
- Public Information
- Video/Visual
- Web/Website

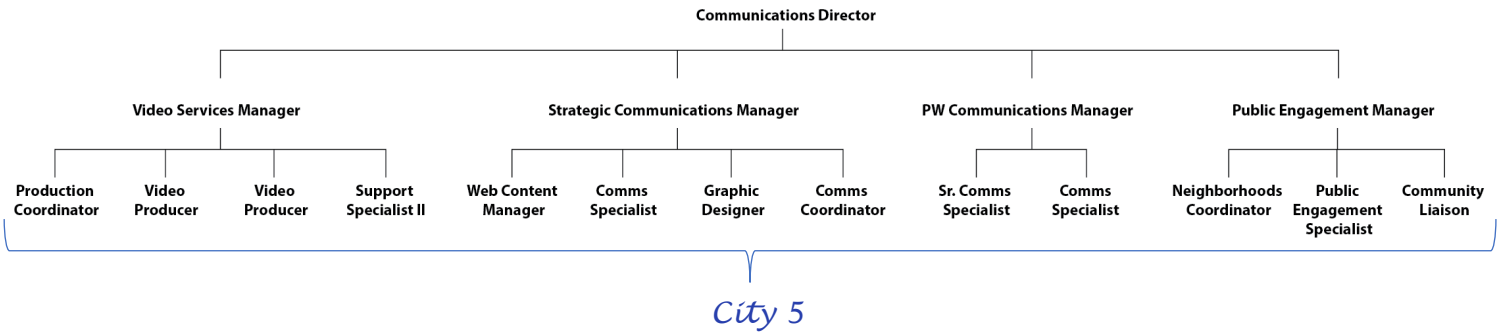
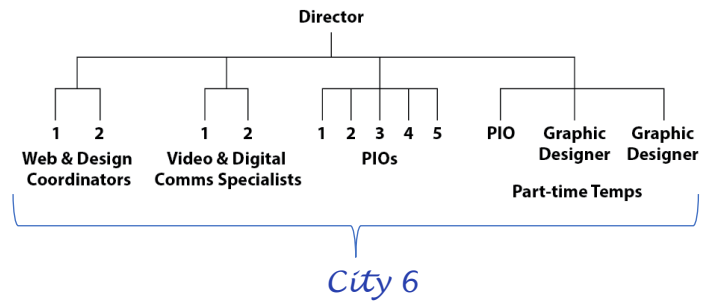
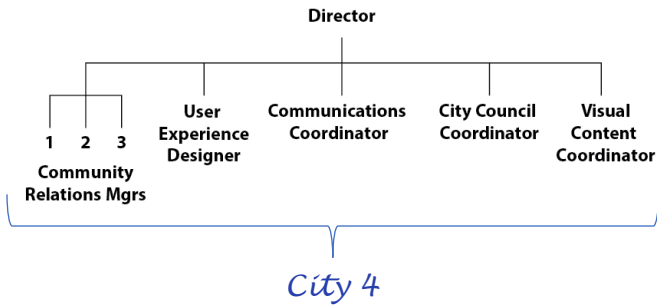
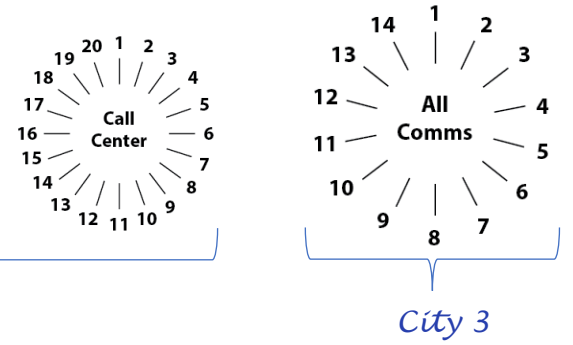
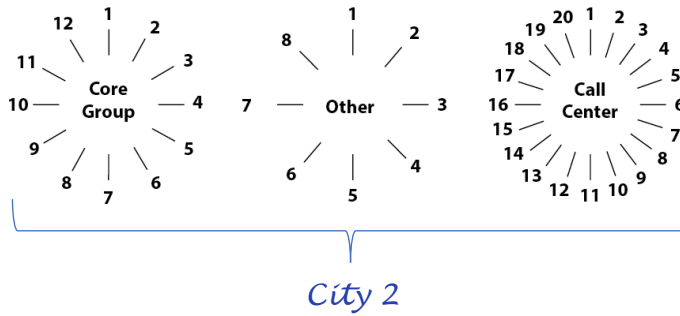
All participants were very enthusiastic about sharing their experiences and learning what other city Communications teams are doing. Especially interesting to them are how communications functions are managed when they are spread among various city departments, and how community engagement is effectively achieved.

“I worry we’re not telling the story exactly. I don’t know everything or get time to think like this.”

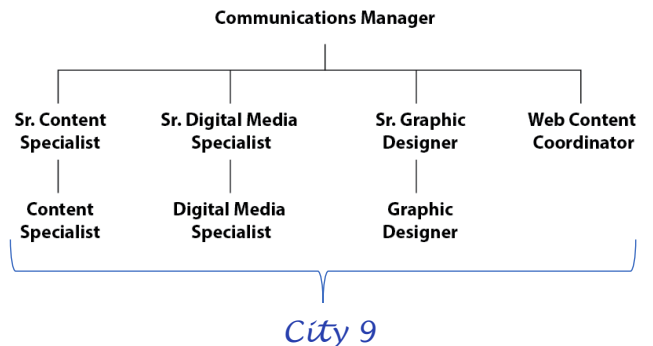
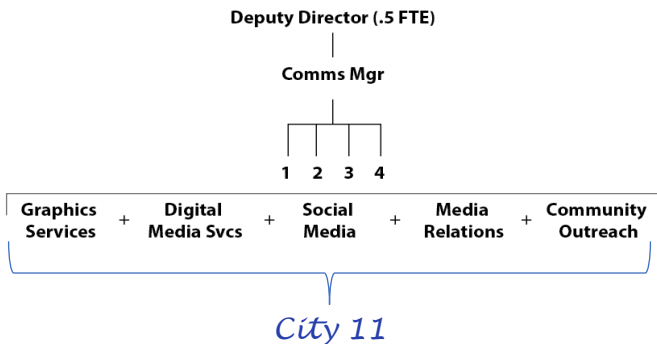
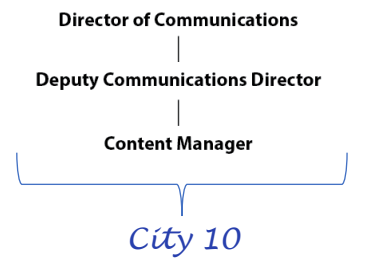
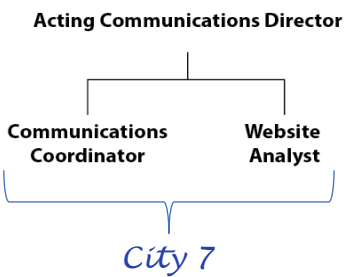
Before we delve into these topics, let’s look at the variety of staffing models reported by the participants...

Staffing Models

Sr. Mgmt Analyst



(This is the Mayor's Office comms team, not city-wide)



Centralized and Decentralized Communications Staff

There are as many variations of the Communications staffing model in these cities as there are participants in the survey, from completely centralized Communications functions to no citywide Communications team at all. In between are a wide variety of hybrid models which include:

- Centralized external communications with Hybrid internal,
- Excellent collaboration between centralized and decentralized staff, and
- Various levels of confusion about what everyone is doing, resulting in a lack of branding and messaging control.

“They might have content creators within their PIO teams in various departments. I don’t see everything they do. Each PIO reports to their own department and all are doing their own thing. There’s not consistent messaging or branding. No coordinated effort.”

Decentralized staff tend to be experts in their respective departments with some interest and talent in handling Communications functions for their specific department. Communications professionals outside the Communications team are mostly involved in community engagement efforts, or function as PIOs in PDs, Fire, and various other departments.

The participants reporting the smoothest Communications operations were one with complete control of all Communications functions, and another who has a combination of control and collaboration accomplished with frequent meetings and other interactions. So, while a hybrid approach can work well, problems seem to arise when a myriad of individuals have the ability to tell the story of their siloed function, event, or project without regard for any other communications or the city’s larger story as a whole. In at least one city, various individuals conduct community surveys with no regard for what other surveys have been recently conducted, are planned for the near future, or are even happening at the same time. So, whether a city adopts a centralized or somewhat decentralized approach to Communications, solid collaboration with the central team seems to be a necessary element to control branding and messaging and even community engagement.

| City | Centralized, Decentralized, Hybrid | PIOs/ Comms Staff | Others Handling Communications Task |
|------|------------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 1 | Hybrid | PD | Battalion Chief |
| 2 | Hybrid | Fire | Communication Manager of Public Safety for PD & Fire |
| 3 | Hybrid | PD & Fire | 3-4 Comms staff in Community Engagement |
| 4 | Mostly Centralized | | PD & Fire handle their own social media; Web editors citywide |
| 5 | Getting Centralized | Fire, PD, PW, Parks | Communications Specialist in PD |
| 6 | Mostly Centralized | PD | |
| 7 | Decentralized | Most depts | Exec Asst handling comms tasks for Fire |
| 8 | “Sort of” Centralized | Most depts | Volunteer Coordinator in Parks, Engagement Group in Library |
| 9 | Mostly Centralized | | Content Editors in various depts for internal comms only |
| 10 | Decentralized | | Communications Officers citywide |
| 11 | Hybrid | PD & Fire | |

Community Engagement

“Engagement is part and parcel of any communications we do, and all major plans have an engagement component that we help with. We’re making it more templated with certain things you have to do. And we’re starting a comprehensive plan for engagement.”

While community engagement is becoming more of a priority for the participating cities, engaging with the broad diversity of community members requires the right staff and partners, and, ideally, sufficient data to understand their needs and desires.

“We’re on an upward trajectory for engagement – strategic engagement.”

In some cities, Communications staff titles have been crafted to reflect the emphasis on community engagement that is increasingly important in these cities, using the terms:

- Neighborhoods (e.g., Neighborhood Program Coordinator)
- Public Engagement (e.g., Public Engagement Manager)
- User Experience (e.g., User Experience Designer)

“It’s a hybrid model – two centralized positions, plus a lot happens at the department and project levels.”

Only two participants said engagement is in the purview of Communications, while most reported having groups or individual staff outside Communications that are specifically tasked with improving community engagement:

- Community Engagement
- Housing & Neighborhood Services
- Office of Equity & Community Engagement
- Community Engagement Manager
- Community Relationship Manager
- Public Engagement Manager
- Neighborhoods Coordinator
- Community Liaison & Public Engagement Specialist, Community Liaison Manager

“We’re teaching people in other departments about engagement, and there’s a real interest in learning.”

Seven said there are centralized Engagement teams, nine said there are engagement staff decentralized in various departments, and only one reported having no engagement positions in their city.

“We’ve heard from leadership that they want more engagement and outreach, but we don’t have staffing for it.”

Engaging with harder-to-reach populations is a particular challenge. Building relationships/partnering with local organizations and attending existing events seems to be the most effective approach to strengthen community ties and keep apprised of changing priorities. Most participants said they are actively working to do just that. But it takes time and continuing effort, something many do not feel equipped to fully accommodate, and it seems all could benefit from one city’s solution...

“We have a lot of Council support and the perfect person with deep roots in the community. He’s bilingual and he maintains relationships with these organizations. His job has been to develop and increase our partnerships with those hard-to-reach people. He’ll hear about some issue bubbling up and organizes a meeting about it and pulls in staff to attend.”

In addition to these broad efforts, participants reported using a variety of techniques to try to connect with and engage harder-to-reach populations:

- Bilingual outreach with flyers, mailings, posters, door hangers
- Closed captioning on video and TV
- Staff going door-to-door for critical issues
- Provide food & childcare for event attendees
- Offer a free tree planting service in those communities
- Helping with issues such as dumping and parking problems
- Translators at meetings
- Headphones w/transmitters, and
- Asking organizations about the best approach.

“It is a priority. We are trying to find the right way to engage with the community – bringing people in or going out to them.”

Translation decisions are primarily dictated by community demographics and perceived importance of information. Spanish is often the only language translated, and both staff and outside consultants are used as needed. If other languages are needed, cities tend to rely on Google translate and close captioning. One participant had this advice:

“We met with Spanish-speaking community leaders and asked what they want translated and created a how-to checklist—if this condition, then translate... One other thing they made very clear, don’t translate stuff if you can’t follow through with it in Spanish. You need someone on standby to answer those questions.”

Communications Team Functions & Tools

The functions of city Communications teams are seemingly endless, including both citywide and department needs for community engagement and information, to city employee communications and events, to whatever the City Councils and Mayors may require.

“We work on events, programs, services, facilities – places & spaces.”

Participants listed a myriad of responsibilities top-of-mind, and there are undoubtedly many more that they did not cite during their interviews. So, it is not surprising that most do not feel they are in complete control of their city’s branding and messaging.

“A lot of times we’re very reactive, so the goal would be to proactively tell our story.”

| Types of Communication | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------|
| City | Strategic | External | Internal | News/ Info | Emergencies | Fire Tips | Issues Mgmt | Tell City’s Story |
| 1 | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| 4 | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| 5 | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| 6 | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| 7 | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ |
| 8 | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | |
| 9 | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| 10 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| 11 | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |

| Communication Channels | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------|---------|-------|--------------|-------------|------------------|------------|----------------|--------|-------------|----------|
| City | News-letters | Website | Video | Social Media | Call Center | Public Access TV | TV Station | Press Releases | TV Ads | Direct Mail | Intranet |
| 1 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | |
| 3 | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | |
| 6 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| 8 | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| 9 | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 10 | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | |
| 11 | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | | |

| Communication Skills | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------|----------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|------------|
| City | Graphic Design | Printing | Content/Writing | Photography | Videography | Media Relations | Brand Mgmt | Engagement |
| 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | |
| 3 | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ |
| 4 | ✓ | | | | | | | ✓ |
| 5 | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 6 | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | | | | ✓ |
| 8 | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 9 | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 10 | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| 11 | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ |

| Areas of Communications Responsibility/Collaboration | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|--------|------------|----------|-------|--------------|------------------|--------------|----|------|-------|---------|----|
| City | Programs | Projects | Events | Facilities | Services | Mayor | City Council | Depts Comms Mgmt | Public Works | PD | Fire | Parks | Library | IT |
| 1 | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ |
| 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ |
| 3 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | | | ✓ |
| 4 | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 6 | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | | | ✓ |
| 7 | | | | | ✓ | | | | | | | | | ✓ |
| 8 | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ✓ |
| 10 | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | | | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ |

There are many software tools and web applications the participants use to help deliver their messages and tell their stories. Of course, many are requirements of communication, such as graphic design programs, websites, and social media accounts, while others are newer or more aspirational such as photo libraries, automated problem reporting, and performance measurement. Communications teams have most of the necessary expertise on staff and adequate budgets for updating and maintaining essential tools. So, the primary concerns seem to be choosing the best versions of those tools and quickly optimizing their use, acquiring new tools, and controlling the use of all of the tools by staff outside the Communications department.

| Communications Tools Used – Design & Photos/Video | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------|-------|------|---------|----------|-----------------------|
| City | Adobe (design prods) | Canva (design) | Canto | NetX | Flicker | You-Tube | Unspec. photo library |
| 1 | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | ✓ |
| 3 | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ✓ |
| 4 | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | |
| 5 | | | | | ✓ | | |
| 6 | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | ✓ | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | | |
| 9 | | | ✓ | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | | | |
| 11 | | | ✓ | | | | |

| Communications Tools Used – Performance Metrics | | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|--------|-------------------|
| City | Power VI | Google Web Analytics | Site-improve | Sprout (social media metrics) | Cision | Unspec. Analytics |
| 1 | | | | | | |
| 2 | ✓ | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | ✓ |
| 4 | | | ✓ | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | ✓ | | | |
| 7 | | ✓ | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | |
| 9 | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 10 | | | | | | |
| 11 | | | | | | |

| Communications Tools Used – Website, E-mail, Engagement | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|------------|------------|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|----------------------|------|
| City | Granicus | Civic-Plus | Word-Press | Website Apps Developed In-house | gov-Delivery | Mail Chimp | Engage-ment HQ (BTT) | Zoom |
| 1 | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | |
| 2 | | | | ✓ | | | | |
| 3 | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| 4 | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | ✓ | | | | | |
| 6 | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | |
| 7 | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | |
| 8 | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | |
| 9 | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 10 | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | |

| Communications Tools Used – Design & Photos/Video | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|----------------|-------|------|---------|----------|-----------------------|
| City | Adobe (design prods) | Canva (design) | Canto | NetX | Flicker | You-Tube | Unspec. photo library |
| 1 | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | ✓ |
| 3 | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ✓ |
| 4 | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | |
| 5 | | | | | ✓ | | |
| 6 | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | ✓ | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | | |
| 9 | | | ✓ | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | | | |
| 11 | | | ✓ | | | | |

| Communications Tools Used - Other | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| City | Public Stuff (problem reporting) | Rock Solid (problem reporting) | Sendable (social media mgmt) | Archive Social |
| 1 | ✓ | | | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | ✓ | |
| 4 | | | | ✓ |
| 5 | | | | |
| 6 | | | | |
| 7 | | | | |
| 8 | | | | |
| 9 | | | | |
| 10 | | | | |
| 11 | | ✓ | | |

Participants’ use of social media profiles differs greatly in number (6 to 30) but is very consistent in which platforms are used: most cited Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Nextdoor as their primary social media accounts. LinkedIn seems to be used mostly by HR departments, and TikTok by just a few Police Departments. Some mentioned using YouTube and Vimeo for videos, and at least one uses Spanish language versions of Instagram and Facebook.

“We are very careful as we craft our messages, especially for IG, FB & Nextdoor – we include feel good community stuff and regulatory stuff – like meetings and their agendas, and we’re always trying to find good imagery and stories.”

| Social Media Employed | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------|---------|-------|---------|------------|------------|----------------|
| City | Facebook | Instagram | Linked In | Nextdoor | TikTok | Twitter | Vimeo | YouTube | Spanish FB | Spanish IG | Total Profiles |
| 1 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | 6 |
| 2 | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | 5 |
| 3 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | 14+ |
| 4 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | 13 |
| 5 | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | 13 |
| 6 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ~30 |
| 7 | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | | | DK |
| 8 | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | DK |
| 9 | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | 10 |
| 10 | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | DK |
| 11 | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | 15 |

While some department-specific accounts are controlled by staff outside the Communications team, some have managed to limit or even eliminate such decentralized use and do a great job of controlling content.

“Approximately 200 people have rights to the website; we have way too many pages; we need to get that under control.”

“When we get a new request, it’s pretty easy to talk them out of it. It takes a full-time staff person, and we say unless you’re going to get an FTE, which they’re not, you can’t do it... Then we offer to support them centralized – ‘Work with me, and we’ll get it out there’.”

In addition to digital forms of communication, the cities all use written and video communications. Some also mentioned the importance of word-of-mouth communication to spread important information.

Communication channels used by the cities include traditional media, social media, TV, radio, in-person at events, citywide with various signage, and even at outdoor kiosks (although the latter has not been deemed successful). Most include utility bill inserts and cable access TV to keep citizens informed.

Traditional news media as a communications channel has widely varied success, primarily due to a city's proximity to a larger news market.

“The best way for us to tell our story is to really channelize – what’s the message we’re trying to get across? who’s our audience? who already has footing in that market? and get out through that channel. I’ve been trying to push the city as an enterprise. We are all of these things, not one thing, but we need to differentiate the messages down to a key audience; really discerning the key audience for each message.”

Communications Strategies

Qualitative and quantitative information is universally desired to better understand a city's communication needs and effectiveness. Most conduct citizen surveys, at least one conducts business and employee surveys, and all use more "widgety" measures, as one participant describes it, such as clicks, follows, attendance, etc. Few use data analysis to inform their communications decisions.

"We do utilize it. But we don't use it to inform our strategy, just for awareness & tracking over time."

In addition to survey data, participants rely on less scientific measures such as public comments, lack of complaints, satisfaction of community and city leaders, platform growth, event attendance, et al.

"Real measure would be what residents are doing and feeling. Like if we're saying we're working all avenues to assist the homeless, do people believe we are?"

Internal communication strategies typically include e-mails and newsletters, but also a variety of innovative techniques that seem to be well-received. Some notable examples include:

- Videos from the mayor to snowplow drivers
- Printed e-mails delivered by admin staff to those without desks
- "Porcelain Press" notices in bathroom stalls
- A mentorship program matching sr. department heads with up-and-coming middle managers
- A "very active" wellness program with yoga, healthy chats, etc.
- A big family picnic in a local park that is often cited by employees as a plus
- Onboarding with in-person tours of all buildings that includes introductions
- A "robust program" headed by an Internal Communications Manager

| Type of Gov't | Population | Size of Comms Team | Structure/Roles of Comms Team | Centralized, Decentralized, Hybrid | Centralized vs. Decentralized Specifics | Functions Handled by Comms Team | Is Web a Comms Team Function or IT-Supported? | Tools | Citywide Social Media | Forms & Channels | |
|--|------------|------------------------|--|---|--|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| 1 Council Manager | ~175k | 1 | Sr. Mgmt Analyst | Hybrid | *PID in PD w/ similar responsibilities *Patrol Chief writes up news releases & sends to the media | *Citywide news events, programs & projects *Emergency communications *Fire safety tips & prevention *Newsletters, website & video | *Comms - home page & news *Each dept has web editor & handles their own content *IT - issues & problems | *Granicus website *GoDelivery for content delivery to subscribers *Public Staff - city app for problem reporting | 6 social media profiles: *Instagram - citywide, PD, Fire, Library, Water, Parks & Rec *Twitter *LinkedIn *Nextdoor | | |
| 2 Strong Mayor | ~225k | 20 + call center of 20 | NOT YET PROVIDED | Hybrid | *Communication Manager of Public Safety for PD (mostly) & Fire (some) *PID for Fire | *TV station, 4 guys operate it *Web team of 3 *Power V website section updated quarterly w/ automated performance measures, but not like a dashboard for performance, we're not there yet *Call center | *Comms handles website *IT supports own website | *Lots of apps on website that were developed in house *Not using goDelivery or Engagement HQ *Working on photo library *Power V website section updated quarterly w/ automated performance measures, but not like a dashboard for performance, we're not there yet *We like to know how others centralize and control pages, those who want pages don't think thru the process of maintaining content and building the audience. | *Wimeo *Instagram *Facebook *Twitter *Nextdoor *YouTube | *Weekly newsletter to 85,000 e-mail addresses externally that drives traffic to website & other platforms *TV station operated 24/7 & broadcasts bigger public meetings, park board, planning commission, etc. *Create content for 2-minute stories for TV & social media *Inserts for utility bills | |
| 3 Council Manager | ~100k | 14 | Doesn't have titles and responsibilities mapped out by person | Hybrid | *3-A Comms staff in Community Engagement handle newsletters & events *PID in PD and Fire & Rescue - Defined line heavy involvement, but report directly to Fire or Police Chief *Rely on Comms team for a lot of functions - website, printing the newsletter that goes to citywide general info to entire community twice a month | Focused on: *Information *Connecting and engaging w/ community members *Good transparency & customer service *Send city to working on and what it means for residents *Odds for residents to interact w/ decision making & events Three main areas of focus: Internal, Targeted, General communication *Internal - making sure our ~1,200 staff are informed about webinars, meetings, etc. *Targeted - outreach about open houses on a project, online, etc. *General communication - community events, a space or presence, and city events. | *Centralized for the entire city *Each dept has web editor & handles their own content *IT (not IT) helps with problems | *Granicus for e-mail delivery *GoDelivery for content delivery to subscribers *Content mgmt is Granicus *We use MailChimp & Constant Contact but moving all to goDelivery *Adobe and Canva for graphics *Getting a video library - is looking at what Washington County just got *Adobe design products *Canva usage for small ball stuff *Some analytics thru website & social media | 14 social media profiles: *Citywide & 7 others *Some depts do their own social media separately - Police and Fire & Rescue are most popular with the most followers *FB and Twitter are central and in several depts *Nextdoor is citywide *Instagram is citywide and in at least two depts *Spanish language FB and IG are centralized *LinkedIn is citywide *We've asked depts to stay with citywide accounts to be more unified, less siloed. We don't need to have 900 different channels. We're still working on that - One City, One Voice. | *Granicus for website forms to share info *Survey Monkey, trying to switch to Engagement HQ for surveying *Forms: written, digital, video, posters *Videos online *Press & email newsletters *Not webpage update style - that's on the horizon; want them to read newsletters to get info they're not asking for, so we're doing that first before granular updates. *Posters at facilities. *Outdoor looks that are not effective - nobody references them, staff doesn't see people there, nonworking kiosks don't get reported. But they're not clearly located. *Channels: No TV or radio *Video production with the "Creative Television" group | |
| 4 Council Manager | ~100k | 8 | Director 1 Community Relations Mgr (may be only 2 of them) User Experience Designer Communications Coordinator City Council Coordinator Visual Content Coordinator | Centralized (except PD & Fire) | *PD & Fire handle their own social media *Web editors across the city | *Oversee all of the city's website, social media (including PD & Fire) & engagement programs (neighborhood associations & underrepresented events) *Public relations, photographer & internal comms coordinator *Support City Council | *Full time website position, very comfortable w/ tech & coordinates with the dispersed web editors | *Granicus e-mail function, may be moving to Mail Chimp or Constant Contact because Granicus is hard to use *Stimproove is a supplementary website function *Adobe and Canva for graphics *Active Social to archive social media *We are just using YouTube for photos and videos, and we want to optimize a little better. *We don't use goDelivery or Engagement HQ. *When we get a new request, it's pretty easy to talk them out of it. It takes a full time staff person, and we only wish we were going to get an ITE, which they're not, you can't do it... Then we offer to support them centralized - work with me, and we'll get it out there." | 13 social media profiles: *Citywide & 7 others *Facebook - citywide, PD, Fire *Instagram - citywide, PD, Fire *Twitter - citywide, PD, Fire *Nextdoor *YouTube *LinkedIn - managed through HR *When we get a new request, it's pretty easy to talk them out of it. It takes a full time staff person, and we only wish we were going to get an ITE, which they're not, you can't do it... Then we offer to support them centralized - work with me, and we'll get it out there." | *Written - monthly e-newsletter to about 10,000 subscribers, e-newsletter for neighborhood associations, press releases as needed. *Podcasts: Ryan, handouts, no poster lately. *Digital - social media, videos, webpage *Video - mostly on social, newsletters, YouTube channel - 1 to 3 a month *Neighborhood association meetings - we fund 13 support and send staff to monthly meetings and annual board meetings. Emails, project based engagement *Equity partnerships - one staff person mostly does relationship building and being there and coordinating speakers. They want more in person engagement. Coordinating meetings. This is where we're growing. *Support a lot of ribbon cutting, or project based open houses, such as through a cable channel with a big project. *Public opinion channel that broadcasts our big meetings, one through a engineer. | |
| 5 City Manager | ~200k | 18 | Video Services Manager - 4 (Production Coordinator, Video Producer, Support Specialist) Strategic Communications Manager - 4 (Web Content Manager, Communications Specialist, Graphic Designer, Communications Coordinator) PR/Communications Manager - 2 (Sr. Communications Specialist, Communications Specialist) Public Engagement Manager - 3 (Neighborhoods Coordinator, Public Engagement Specialist, Community Liaison) | Centralized | *Getting centralized *City Manager asked my opinion on - if it keeps them happy and they still come work with me on the big things, I'm fine either way. | *When I got here, Core Comms team did citywide work, big initiatives, mayor and council work, while I did a lot of their own. *Fire has a team of PIOs who are 24/7, incident based *Police are building their capabilities with a public affairs manager, PIO, and she's called a specialist, and they try to do their own comms. But we all work as well together, we get pulled in and are responsible for major police communications. So, when we hired a new police chief, my department handled it. Body camera, police report that... we do get pulled in. *Public Works comms staff did PIO work, emergency mgmt, press releases. When it came to anything complex, they couldn't do it. *Fire, Police, Public Works, and Parks are separate, they ask for help when needed. Public Works is the first we're consulting, you get more service with central communications. | *We're all pretty much 24/7 because of emergencies. *We do services - public access channel CCTV *Core Comms team - web, social, graphics, photography, media relations, basic strategic communications *Public Engagement - Neighborhoods, community liaison, community involvement *Public Works communications *We have a manager over each department | Comms team function | *Very intentional in choosing not to use CivicPlus Granicus; they were the #1 of the show, but they're becoming more cookie cutter, and it's our way or highway - you have to use this content management system. It's corporate *Public Engagement - Neighborhoods, community liaison, community involvement *Public Works communications *We have a manager over each department *We manage the core city social profiles. PD runs theirs, Parks, Public Works *Fire doesn't have social media; PD wants to do it, and periodically brings it up but doesn't have the capacity to follow through. *We have an intake form. We're rebuilding the website right now - first time in 10 years. We had way too many people understanding the backend and building pages. Now there's governance. And we'll review the new website every 6 months. Departments can add certain types of pages with our oversight. Like project page. Major pages have to come through my web content manager. | 13 social media profiles: *YouTube *Instagram - citywide, PD, Parks, Public Works *Twitter - citywide, PD, Parks, Public Works *Facebook - citywide, PD, Parks, Public Works *Nextdoor *LinkedIn - managed through HR *When we get a new request, it's pretty easy to talk them out of it. It takes a full time staff person, and we only wish we were going to get an ITE, which they're not, you can't do it... Then we offer to support them centralized - work with me, and we'll get it out there." | *TV channel - high quality production on videos, we do a lot of videos *Podcasts: Ryan, handouts, no poster lately. *Website *Video - mostly on social, newsletters, YouTube channel - 1 to 3 a month *Neighborhood association meetings - we fund 13 support and send staff to monthly meetings and annual board meetings. Emails, project based engagement *Equity partnerships - one staff person mostly does relationship building and being there and coordinating speakers. They want more in person engagement. Coordinating meetings. This is where we're growing. *Support a lot of ribbon cutting, or project based open houses, such as through a cable channel with a big project. *Public opinion channel that broadcasts our big meetings, one through a engineer. |
| 6 Strong Mayor | ~175k | 10 | Director 2 Web & Design Coordinators 3 PIOs 2 Video & Digital Comms Specialists 3 Part-time Temps: PIO & 2 Graphic Designers | Centralized (except PD) | *Only Police communications are outside our group. There are people who have deputized to post to social accounts, website & e-newsletters. There are guards. *Always they have been sworn people and that's a challenge because they aren't communications professionals. That may be changing. | *Promote the offerings of the city and help manage issues *Work on events, programs, services, facilities - places & spaces *Help with issues mgmt around homelessness, affordable housing, etc. | Comms team w/ help from IT for issues | *CMS from Granicus *Stimproove as a check on website quality *Mail Chimp - we like it to use *Pursuing a vendor for a CRM system, but that's a ways off | *All social media profiles: *LinkedIn *Instagram *Facebook - citywide, Parks, Rec, Library, PD *Twitter *Nextdoor *YouTube - PD only *Effort to get clearance for a new social page at the dept level. Frequently determine it's not what's needed or it's not sustainable - we don't have the manpower for it. *Webinar - citywide, PD & Fire We need to get that under control. Something like 200 people have rights to the website, we have way too many pages. It's hard to keep any brand integrity and information integrity. We need to contract. | *We have 3 websites - citywide, library, and center for the arts *Digital sites and social media, video *Nextdoor - The annual residents survey has a question about communication tools used, #1 every year but since 2007 it's water bill print newsletter. There's not a ton of print; it's more digital. *E-newsletter goes out weekly *Podcast is new *Traditional - we get a lot of free media because we're near the news stations. And we have a dedicated best reporter from the newspaper | |
| 7 Council Manager | ~175k | 3 | Acting Communications Director Communications Coordinator Website Analyst | Decentralized | *Most depts have a PIO/Community Engagement person. PD has 2 PIOs, Fire has an executive assistant who does comms tasks. They might have content creators within their PIO teams in various departments. I don't see everything they do. Each PIO reports to their own department and all are doing their own thing. The majority are professional communications folks. We all speak the same language. Some departments don't have funding for communications and have an executive assistant. *I'm Acting Communications Director because the position was Community Relations/City Manager office person. They want a Communications Director who oversees all communications in the city. Hybrid might be most beneficial right now. | *Inform and engage the community on city events and policies. To tell our story. | *Comms team w/ support from IT *Website mgmt team includes people in all depts who work with the Website Analyst | *Bang the Table (Granicus now) *Civipius for web *Trying to get next for photos *Performance measures, only Google Analytics | Total number of profiles unknown: *Facebook *Instagram *Nextdoor or Twitter *PD is very social media friendly. They use TikTok, but they don't have a profile on it. *We have a social media policy and a website policy. A department submits approvals through the website mgmt team. We discuss them because of trying not to dilute the brand and capacity issues. | *Written, digital, video *TV starting podcasts *Traditional, social | |
| 8 Council Manager w/ Strong City Manager | ~175k | 4 | Strategic Initiatives Mgr City PIO (vacant) Communications & Media Relations Manager Neighborhood Program (or Award) Coordinator (MPC or NAC) | Hybrid | *Sort of centralised, but all kinds of people have communications & engagement as a side job *Library - I have a person, but the Engagement Group there's doing all kinds of things that don't make it to the city calendar. Same with Parks *I have gotten myself on the list for bid announcements because that's the only way I become aware of projects coming up for Public Works. *With 1,300 employees, many feel more like a dept employee than a city employee. They are actively planning projects that are totally decentralized. People are really insular and don't see the broader impact. *Fire & PD have their own PIO structures, they operate independently. They choose when they want us involved. It's not the City's brand. *The Housing Authority has a communications person, but there's no process for how they might work with the Communications group. *I don't think there's any communication prep work for those who do comms tasks, not any times test. | *Design standards, the style guide *Managing web content and publishing *Media relations except Fire PD *Social media and standards *Neighborhood stuff *Neighborhood marketing campaign. A council member put \$50k in the budget for neighborhood comms. Did a survey to see why people engage neighborhoods & used that to build the marketing campaign. There are 17 neighborhood associations. *We do photo shoots, put in yard signs, etc. in Spanish or English, making sure people know they belong. *We're working w/ neighborhood associations about what they want to accomplish. One group said we need to market what our annual meeting will be about. We brought in Fire, had pizza, and got double the number of turnout. Another wants to have a park volunteers party *Increasing engagement - we saw neighborhood associations as a gateway to civic engagement. People participate because there's strength in numbers, like influencing change in dev projects. They're a critical group in land use mgmt; they're independent, but needed, for land use requirements. We teach them how to be official. They have bylaws and comms platforms. We provide the website platform. | *Comms team *Launched a new website last year *We use our own web publishing. Most everything can be done by Comms staff, can publish calendar items and basic thing *Social media and standards *Neighborhood stuff *Neighborhood marketing campaign. A council member put \$50k in the budget for neighborhood comms. Did a survey to see why people engage neighborhoods & used that to build the marketing campaign. There are 17 neighborhood associations. *We do photo shoots, put in yard signs, etc. in Spanish or English, making sure people know they belong. *We're working w/ neighborhood associations about what they want to accomplish. One group said we need to market what our annual meeting will be about. We brought in Fire, had pizza, and got double the number of turnout. Another wants to have a park volunteers party *Increasing engagement - we saw neighborhood associations as a gateway to civic engagement. People participate because there's strength in numbers, like influencing change in dev projects. They're a critical group in land use mgmt; they're independent, but needed, for land use requirements. We teach them how to be official. They have bylaws and comms platforms. We provide the website platform. | *Website from Granicus, had been using SharePoint *Used Bang the Table one time through a contract | *We do all of them except PD and Fire *We use social media all the time - FB, Twitter, IG, Nextdoor. Twitter used to be really good for PD. We have heard in the last survey that FB was predominant. I don't know if I'll still use. *We have tried to centralize who gets social media. If it's not being used up, you can't have them. We ask that they start providing content to citywide sources. If they can keep it up, they can have it. *I have a Communications Social Media person, so I don't keep track of how many profiles we have. Library, PD, Fire, City, Parks volunteers, some kind of a 211 might have too many. *We bigger brands have their own presence that attracts a certain kind of user. They all think it's the answer for recruitment, trying to create their own domains. *When there's turnover among Neighborhood Association board members, they lose access to things. We set up a way to keep track of passwords and such for them. | *Photography & videography, we've got equipment & people & an existing workload that makes it hard for me to manage the big thinking projects of videography with the immediate response demands for web pages, press releases, etc. *Written, digital, video, YouTube for meetings. *Video - We have a strange historical relationship w/ the local station: Public Works person would go weekly to talk about whatever was on his mind. Don't hear about that anymore. *TV & radio - We write and produced a news show once a month, we don't do that anymore. They now just push and produce Council meetings. *We would like to crack the large city media nut, but don't know how. They show up when anything is big, like homelessness. We don't have any local TV stations except cable access. *Two local papers are starting to furnish their reporters. A third paper is entirely digital and not friendly. *Traditional - those papers. Other episodic publications - an arts one every other month and a business journal. MSM mag (don't see from mom). *Social media *Word of mouth - 40% said that's where they got City news. | |
| 9 Council Manager | ~125k | 8 | Communications Manager Sr. Content Specialist Content Specialist Sr. Digital Media Specialist Digital Media Specialist Sr. Graphic Designer Graphic Designer Web Content Coordinator | Centralized for external comms Hybrid for internal comms | *Internal - manage intranet including overall access & design w/ content editors in various depts *External - manage intranet including overall access & design w/ content editors in various depts *Those in other depts are probably subject matter experts. What they do is for our internal audience only, so we're less concerned with the overall cohesiveness etc. | *Manage all internal and external communications *Internally - employee intranet, initiatives, campaigns *Externally - serving all departments for social media, press releases, direct mail, digital newsletters, TV advertisement *Fire & PD are integrated; it's more of a working relationship with their PIOs. For day-to-day functions that happen, they handle their own press releases or social media around that. Things that rise above when we'll start working together. | *A little bit of both *Comms manages the content & has a Web Content Coordinator *IT has Web Administrator for backend things | Bang the Table: *Very successful soft launch last year *Community Engagement team owns it *Comms plans to start using it too *Also use Zoom or other platforms Digital Library - Comms: *Fantastic service that we pay for *Priority access by internal staff *Photographer/Videographer on staff *Other users have access to it. *Automated performance measures? *Not cohesive *Tech tool has a performance measure capability *Sprout social media measurement tool *Reporting to City page from the anticipated TV One *Track hits on website page - where they're from, on PC or mobile, etc. | 10 social media profiles: *Twitter - citywide, PD, Fire *Facebook - citywide, PD, Fire *Instagram - citywide, PD, Fire *Nextdoor - neighborhood associations team *For social media, it's less of a policy, more of a practice, that we don't add pages and fragment audience. *For web pages, it's a broader conversation to see longevity, and go through an assessment of length, duration, priority. *Things need to be housed with us, so we ask that they don't go off and start their own pages somewhere. *Capacity is a huge part of it - being able to maintain it adequately. | Written: *Printed newsletter quarterly *We needed, direct mail postcards or utility bill inserts, flyers, posters Digital: *Website *Monthly e-newsletter to the community, one for business, one for small business, community based orgs. *Social media, photo and video on social media - both short and long format *Press releases and TV media partners *Polling to see what kinds of communication is valued, the majority get information from traditional news media and Facebook *Less radio *Traditional TV | |
| 10 Mayor/ Council | ~200k | 3 | Director of Communications Deputy Communications Director Content Manager | Decentralized | *No citywide comms team *3 stated positions are in the Mayor's office *Communications officers team meeting monthly *If someone is looking for info on a specific program by Public Utility or Airports or whatever, both of those are enterprise funds depts. I can hand things over to a person at either of those and have full confidence that they can handle it. Police too. And other depts. *For general fund depts, some of them may not have anyone who handles communications. Based on the inquiry, I'd need to work with department director and handle those requests myself. It's like a gatekeeper for citywide communications. We have a team that does communications but doesn't handle media. They do social media and video for city council meetings. | *Coordinate all communications messages, internal and external - media *Oversee the mayor's calendar, staffing those events *Calendar and organization for press conferences, roundtables, stakeholder meetings *Approve more sensitive social media *Work with other depts on their comms needs. We don't have a citywide communications arm, so it falls to me, including working through media requests that don't involve the mayor, in all areas. Communications for whomever, though it's not my role. There's no citywide communication person. There's communications in other depts. *Handle a lot for events, including writing that, it's external for mayor and city officials. *My primary writer is the go to voice of the mayor's top person. Writes 75% of the mayor's remarks and talking points, edits press releases, assists with social media, and does a lot of internal outreach to organize events. *Content Manager populates the majority of our social media posts. She writes and posts. She was a news photographer, so she does photography too. She's a jack of all trades, a Swiss army knife. She helps with set up and tear down at events. | *2 webmasters in Info Mgmt Services dept make changes. *They pretty much do whatever someone asks them to do. *Marketing a Chief Comms Officer who would oversee web, social, press releases, etc. *Writing process for requests, but website is notoriously terrible. It was released in 2014! *Comms Dev. has a good communication person, but may lose an ITE when CCDO is brought in. | No idea | Don't know *Mayor's office uses Twitter, Instagram & Facebook *Community Liaison Team uses Nextdoor. | *The written, digital & video comms *No ad buys. The city does some in the local publications, sponsors events, and such, but that's out of my ballpark. *TV internally - Capital City News weekly *We may own a TV channel (not sure) | |
| 11 Council Manager | ~150k | 7 | Deputy Director Comms Mgr Digital Media Secs Graphics Services Social Media Media Relations Community Outreach | Hybrid | *Collaborate with PIOs in PD and Fire *Others are comms professionals *Many use consultants | Citywide internal & external | *Civipius website *Engagement HQ for outreach *Mock Solid for problem reporting *Canva for image storage | 15 social media profiles: *Facebook - citywide, PD, Fire, Tourism & 2 Lakes *Instagram - citywide, PD, Fire, Sports Center & Tourism *Twitter - citywide, PD *YouTube *Nextdoor *Wimeo | *Website, social media *Email, letters, print/direct mail *Internal communication *Surveys *Data engage & banners *Vehicle & employee uniform signage *Rec guides in print *Public access channel, *Community partner events and city sponsored events *Big banners across major intersections. *Sign digital billboards on freeway and in shopping center *Weekly activity report with everything covered *Messaging for elected officials, especially for hot topics *No radio. | | |

| Measure Success | Tell City's Story | Internal Comm. Strategies | Conduct Citizen Surveys? | Engagement | Engaging Harder to Reach Populations | Translating | Comments |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| <p>"Evaluate by public input & growth of a platform – newsletter subscribers, number of followers "No one took, just their experience "Look at yearly growth & have a 30 year chart. "Substituted a software app that would provide data, but too expensive – not a priority</p> | | <p>"Quarterly newsletter "Emails from City Manager as needed</p> | <p>"Conduct Citizen Surveys?</p> | <p>Engagement "Decentralized: "e.g., Parks Planning leads engagement about potential projects "Housing & Neighborhood Services work with partners "Staff outreach helps us find partners</p> | <p>Engaging Harder to Reach Populations "Many thru Community Resource Centers: "Is in high-rise, low income neighborhoods "Partner with local orgs (childcare, healthcare, NA, parenting groups, Spanish-speaking, military) "Recruit computers there "Staff are local, often grew up there, bilingual "Also do "Flyers & mailings bilingually "Staff go door-to-door when important to reach everyone "Translation for meetings "Buying headphones w/transmitters</p> | <p>Translating "Demographics tell us it's mostly English & Spanish "Can't have a variety of language skills & get bilingual pay "Translate important materials, especially any that are money saving "Don't use consultants; several staff members check and hone translations, ensuring local slang is used</p> | <p>Comments "I bet you're going to hear a lot about the tooth people are using, and I'm interested in hearing about that."</p> |
| <p>"Monitor media daily, measuring ability to get our message and content out "Use Thought Exchange, quantitative measurements "Overall service with ability to deliver quantitative results "Bullet box for bonds or levies "Constant Contact for some surveying, but nothing formal or regular "Call center measures customer service performance metrics and surveys users to fill out an assessment "Try to use data, sometimes other community data is available to us "Use CRM for content mgmt system when people call in, mine that for most requested subjects</p> | <p>"Monitor media daily, measuring ability to get our message and content out "Use Thought Exchange, quantitative measurements "Overall service with ability to deliver quantitative results "Bullet box for bonds or levies "Constant Contact for some surveying, but nothing formal or regular "Call center measures customer service performance metrics and surveys users to fill out an assessment "Try to use data, sometimes other community data is available to us "Use CRM for content mgmt system when people call in, mine that for most requested subjects</p> | <p>"Tuesday newsletter email w/benefits, pandemic info, etc. People have responded well to it. "Bulletin board hyper material for those who don't use email, like train collectors "Posters and things "Quarterly department head meeting with full update, and an Employee of the Quarter award and regular video presentations to employees "Annual employee recognition program</p> | <p>"We would like to survey our community "District leaders have concerns and questions and let us "I've had more of a staffing presence, if we had more of a communications mentality of outreach like mobile library – we could get qualitative feedback. "We're all part of the engagement puzzle. "We do strategic communication, but also strategic engagement. A lot are very specific, not general for the community. We did a strategic engagement project with parks and made a community decision about which models to show. That's bringing in a new audience to that Engagement HQ page. By coming to it, they're exposed to all the other things too.</p> | <p>"Most effective to partner w/community orgs that have preexisting platforms "Translate written comms</p> | <p>"Large Latino population, Russian & a couple of others "Deciding what to translate depends on the need; we do so much, we can't cost-effectively do it every day "I used captioning on video & TV "Subcontract for translation services, some printing, and some construction-related video production services</p> | <p>"This was very thorough. "I'd like to know how others centralize and control them. The people who went page don't think through the process of maintaining the content and building the audience.</p> | |
| <p>"That's a focus for us right now "Necessarily do a centralized leadership staff? Does the community talk about it? "No surveys of community; can't say 10% is satisfied "Growth in newsletters and website usage "Not receiving complaints about our content, work hard to get it out there in different ways "Community partners, so measure is lack of failures that we're aware of. We have been keeping asking our partners for feedback "Website visits – total & page gives us community interest "Newsletters getting the most clicks. A handful of subjects we know the community cares about – like homelessness and development. We use like, share and comments on posts. "Engagement website – which projects get the most commentary "Walks to our libraries and facilities, attendance "Old promotion lead to attendance? e.g., summer camp registration for Day 1 based on communication</p> | <p>"City manager does monthly video update on his phone, kind of casual, just to connect his face and voice. "Florida Press in bathroom stalls "Some webinars and staff lunch 'n' learns "Lots of profiles of staff – meet and so, so to know them – some videos for prominent high-level staff "The newsletter – benefits & policy</p> | <p>"New, really robust internal comms program; Internal Communications Manager (ICM) "Florida Press in bathroom stalls "Monthly newsletter doesn't seem to be getting opened much "ICM helps City Manager w/ quarterly meetings for staff, rotating around different departments – highlights happening in the city and live streamed. "Monthly updates from City Manager too "Want to establish some monitor/reader boards in various departments</p> | <p>"Hybrid model "Have community managers "A lot happens at the department and project level</p> | <p>"News Community Relations Manager's job has been to develop and increase our partnerships with those that create a how-to check-in – it's his position, then the perfect person with deep roots in the community, bilingual – maintains relationships with these orgs. Hears about some issue bubbling up and organizes a meeting about it and pulls in staff to support. "CMC performance "Latin Community Assn "Partner's group "Lighty groups "Less formal groups "Other folks groups "Racial diversity groups "Environmental "He connects with all. He just goes out to coffee. He's hardly ever in the office, has a shared workspace and runs into people there. He's mingling all the time – water cooler talk.</p> | <p>"Public engagement is part of our communication and comms people at school districts. "Also, NAACP and others – 5 to 10 groups that serve traditionally underserved populations "PEM regularly meets with all of them and develops relationships. Less transactional and more like co-creation of projects. Instead of the city dictating it, we work with these groups for the plan. – What do they want? "We're really trying. It's all the PEMs doing.</p> | <p>"Public safety must be translated into Spanish (24% Latino community) "For other languages we encourage use of Google Translate on our website "Also translate engagement-related things "Translate whatever affects a group that speaks a different language "Don't translate stuff if you can't follow through with it in Spanish. You need someone on standby to answer those questions "In-house graphic designer creates things, then the words are translated outside "If internal person translates, they get a little extra money for using language skills.</p> | <p>"This is a great opportunity to learn, and I'm grateful that the information is being shared."</p> |
| <p>"Survey of residents "Social media analytics – set goals and continue to grow "Membership apps measured by members who sign up "Open rates for e-mails "Engagement is hard to measure "Use survey, social media & e-mail data</p> | <p>"Internal communication was only an e-mail newsletter that went out every week, to be successful, the City Manager has to be willing to do it. "Every project should have a communications plan; like the plan for changes at city hall parking lot – targeted messages to employees who use the lot & their managers. Used a manager briefing about what's happening, community options & change report. Meeting with employees after that. Forums. Then follow-up messages with recordings and FAQs. More than an email. "Did an internal communication survey to find what people like and want. Now we do the newsletter at most twice a month and not on holidays. Employees didn't care. "Trying to have message to all employees to be regarded more like leadership messages. When General Services sends an email, there's no gravitas to it. Upgrading the professionalism of e-mails with a header and signature.</p> | <p>"Worked with ETC institute (in Kansas) since 2007 for an annual survey of residents "Annually for residents, bi-annually for businesses and employees – one in 10 one year, the other is done the next.</p> | <p>"Public Engagement Manager, Community Liaison, and Engagement Specialist. "PEM is so important, knows the audiences and the under-represented communities. PEM is teaching people to go, and there's a real interest in learning. Some departments are better than others. "All major projects have an engagement component. A project mgmt gets talked with it, it comes to us for help. We're making it more templated with certain things you have to do. For larger projects, we're heavily engaged. We're starting a comprehensive plan, and the PEM is embedded into that plan. "The demand for public engagement keeps going up, so adding a Manager, a PE Specialist, and a Neighborhoods Coordinator.</p> | <p>"PEM is a DEI manager "They're engaging w/engagement and comms people at school districts. "Also, NAACP and others – 5 to 10 groups that serve traditionally underserved populations "PEM regularly meets with all of them and develops relationships. Less transactional and more like co-creation of projects. Instead of the city dictating it, we work with these groups for the plan. – What do they want? "We're really trying. It's all the PEMs doing.</p> | <p>"DE Director is supposed to be doing an analysis of the need of that; the city has been just guessing. "Right now we translate into Spanish, Chinese, Chukchee from the island of Chuk, Micronesia, Russian, and Vietnamese. Some mailers and FAQs are translated into all those languages. "Language translation all languages. We send text to a format, and then they translate it. No graphics yet, just a table. We send "pdf" files and they translate directly in the document. "We have budget money for a tactile printer. Some people who serve on boards and commissions need Braille. We're going to use it for maps so they can read them with their hands.</p> | <p>"I'm always curious about how others do citizen surveys. Do they use local or national firms to conduct them? How often do they do them?</p> | |
| <p>"Strategic management office for performance tracking citywide. Two biggest measures are satisfaction with the availability of city info & satisfaction w/websites. "Satisfaction ratings in the annual survey "Attendance at events "People registering for events "Some really anecdotal awareness "Engagement and follow-up measures "Real measure would be what residents are doing and feeling. Like if we're saying we're working all avenues to assist the homeless, do people believe we are? "Don't use data analysis in a really formal or intended sort of way. You can track in a campaign how many people saw/interacted or how many times you said something, but not what they did with it. Events are hard to measure because so many other things influence attendance.</p> | <p>"This is a real gap for us. We've always been oriented externally; we do very little internal. "We'd like to do a monthly newsletter for employees. "Not doing mostly onboarding and performance report, but there are no performance measures, just positive reinforcement/going settings. "We have employee union groups and affinity groups, and a lot happens at those levels. 4 union groups, pride groups, and the black employee association</p> | <p>"Community wide last August, ETC institute did the citizen survey "Planning to conduct the survey annually "Some departments do them all the time on specific topics. They're being launched out of each other. "Some departments use a ca. out of Portland, OR. Some internally as well. DHM Research gets some good comments from other depts.</p> | <p>"Decentralized "A priority "Trying to find the right way to engage with the community – bringing people in or going out to them "The Office of Equity and Community Engagement is focused on neighborhoods. We try to work together. "Some depts use a ca. out of Portland, OR. Some internally as well. DHM Research gets some good comments from other depts.</p> | <p>"DECE – They have a couple of staff members that reach out "They partner with the Human Rights Commission and meet with communities on a regular basis. If Public Works is putting out a survey, they'll run it by DECE to make sure they're asking the right questions and reaching the right groups. "Relationships with community groups and associations. Staff reach out to them, asking them to connect.</p> | <p>"No policy, just people deciding whether it's necessary "If a large Spanish-speaking neighborhood is involved, we translate "Reaction information is mostly in Spanish, and they're recently translated into Arabic and Mandarin. "City offers a stipend if staff pass a test and use their language through customer service – mostly verbal, sometimes written "Professional translators – there's a woman with her own company that I use. I don't know what other departments do.</p> | | |
| <p>"Biggest priority is to do a survey or find ways to ask community members what they're using to obtain information and what information they want. "That's a big challenge. Communications and outreach metric – how do we measure the effectiveness? We look at clicks in social media. "We did a community survey this past August. One of the primary measures is how many 'don't know' are given in the survey. 25% is a big red flag for the council. "Surveys help, but need more data. Are we hitting marginalized populations? Need more targeted audience data.</p> | <p>"There's not consistent messaging or branding. No coordinated effort. A lot of times we're very reactive, so the goal would be to proactively tell our story. We're always asking how we can tell our story and engage our community better.</p> | <p>"Twice a month all city meetings with the City Manager that we call The Huddle. There are different topics – just of O&A, and a different supervisor drops in every week. "Also send e-mails "And there's the city hub page</p> | <p>"Community wide last August, ETC institute did the citizen survey "Planning to conduct the survey annually "Some departments do them all the time on specific topics. They're being launched out of each other. "Some departments use a ca. out of Portland, OR. Some internally as well. DHM Research gets some good comments from other depts.</p> | <p>"Decentralized "A priority "Trying to find the right way to engage with the community – bringing people in or going out to them "The Office of Equity and Community Engagement is focused on neighborhoods. We try to work together. "Some depts use a ca. out of Portland, OR. Some internally as well. DHM Research gets some good comments from other depts.</p> | <p>"Typically get surveys translated into Spanish, not many other materials "Web staff and local consultants help translate</p> | <p>With traditional media declining and social media increasing, how do we get the message out and what's important to the community? "How is a community engagement structure? Centralized? What works/best? How are people communicating with the community? What's working?</p> | |
| <p>"Primary goal is get annual metrics on social media followers, press releases, etc. That's annual "Right now we just do things because they're important to do. ASL is Spanish, interpretation of our city council meetings. I don't know who's watching it. It's just important to do. "We used to do more evaluation of engagement. It's in our newsletter click through in Mail Chimp. "We're reporting annual growth in newsletter sign up and followers. "We also have an annual community satisfaction survey with two or three communication questions.</p> | <p>"Private voices "The city's story is really complicated. We're full service, do all manner of things that don't make sense in the private sector. We are really hard to understand. "The best way for us to tell our story is to really channelize – what's the message we're trying to get across? Who's our audience? Who already has footing in that market? And get out thru that channel. "Trying to push the city as an employer. We are all of these things, not one thing, but we need to differentiate the message down to a key audience. People go to the news outlet that most affirms their existing beliefs, so let's use that. Really differentiating the key audience for each msg. "Do an audience profile. Revenue, climate, not doing enough for advocates and too much for some business partners. Homeless, bicycle & pedestrian connectivity. Things we need to tell people and things we need to engage people on. "Media release, social media, e-newsletter at a minimum. But I worry we're not telling the story exactly. I don't know everything or get time to think this through. "Video series. First was about a guy you call for funny smells in your water. Our market is everyone for a whole bunch of strange things. We're trying to get everyone to know it.</p> | <p>"We don't have internal communications. We rely on video releases. "There's one person who has been doing some wellness messaging through city-wide messages.</p> | <p>"Yes, annually "Statistically acid "Use DHM Research in Portland, OR</p> | <p>"Decentralized "Significant Latino populations, we try to target our Latino radio stations. "We held our first ever Spanish language fair that was highly successful. "We had six different groups to help with topics that make sense for them. Like a water crisis do not drink advisory, that only affected the very young and very old. We asked our Economic Development group to help get word out to brewers and food processors that use Salem water. We are fairly adept at doing that. We could do better with cultural communities. "We do really well on individual things, but there are no intentional relationships. Sometimes staff go places where they know people are going to be. Rely on a relationship network. People reaching out to whomver. "Micromission – nonprofit can do focus groups together. "Three people are vying to be the relationship person.</p> | <p>"We are just doing Spanish because we have this & that says you have to for transportation projects, so we do it as much as we can. "Library always done it; others do too. "Library always done it; others do too. "We're not translating enough documents. The school district has 18 languages, and we are not responsive to all of those. Web-based you can use a translator, but print is more troubling. "We have many staffed consultants but never hiring outside. "There's a stipend for employees, but there's a question about testing for written translation skills.</p> | <p>Want someone to tell me how we can measure success. I want guidance about the gold standard of measures. "How do you get to the people you can't reach – engagement?</p> | |
| <p>"Different for each initiative "For promotion of an event, attendance "For strategic plan initiative, how many data points were received back, i.e., how many residents we heard from "Try to use data analysis to inform community decisions. Community Engagement Team based on robust demographics, and we use polls about how the community receives information, and we use trends of best practices in communication from the last two years.</p> | <p>"Really important over the past year "City really relies on traditional media, but important to continue to grow social media "Digital Media specialist is a digital marketer who spends time looking at campaigns, 30-minute video clips, creating that, and looking at it periodically – how can we have more of a unified messaging going on?</p> | <p>"Comms does a lot of depts do. We're trying to make sure we're not hitting engagement fatigue. "Usually do surveys internally with Survey Monkey "For larger surveys, use Probability Research (Newport Beach, San Francisco & DC) "Seems like it's ongoing. We do utility bill ones. We do bigger City initiative ones that we promote heavily – 2-3 times a year. "Would like more regular polls or surveys from the community.</p> | <p>"Community Engagement is a separate centralized group that works with community-based organizations – community liaison programs, city events. They work with all departments that do active community engagement. We work closely and promote all of their events. "We have Community Liaisons, if of them, and a manager over the program. That group is out of the EMS group. "City engagement is 12 people for Transportation, Public Utility projects, more traditional for government outreach.</p> | <p>"We try to lean on community-based organizations. We pay stipends to them when we ask them to help with a focus group. Leveraging those relationships; that's really the best way to reach those marginalized groups because that's already there. We ask how to approach them. "Non-profits in the community, like New Avenue for Youth, Hacienda CDC, Beyond Black, POC (Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center).</p> | <p>"The languages we use are Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese based on census data. We typically do all three unless it's specific for a neighborhood. "We haven't used staff consistently because they're extremely busy. So our default is to use services we pay for, we contract out.</p> | | |
| <p>"If the mayor gets re-elected, that would be a good barometer "We look at impressions, new followers, etc. "We're proactive showing the mayor's values in what the community cares about, staying out of front of them – not just reacting. "We have 26,000 followers on Twitter, 12,000 on Instagram, 10,000 on Facebook. "Track metrics on Facebook, Instagram & Twitter. But we don't seem to inform our strategies, just for awareness & tracking over time – Did she say anything particularly meaningful?</p> | <p>"We work closely with the team managing the city's web account. "Hiring a Social Media Manager right now, adding a 4th person to the Mayor's office comms team – not a content person, but to be responding to resident complaints and engaging in that way. "The Community Liaison Team is hiring a Digital Liaison for Nextdoor and other online space because people aren't coming to meetings anymore.</p> | <p>"The city has had an internal newsletter, but that's not really active since covid "2 all employee gatherings a year. "Mayor sends an email once a quarter, really effective; people love her. She's active on social media, a great speaker. She sends videos to newspaper dinners. People just grate to be her.</p> | <p>"Survey all residents every other year through Quattrici & local consultant. "That guides our policy a bit. Parks and public spaces were being used 43% more than before the pandemic. That info helped inform a \$75 million bond that passed at TRU. "Also, conduct an all-business survey every spring through the Economic Development through a state group. They have membership to a statewide economic group. We have 17,000 businesses, and we ask about crime, homelessness, barriers such as workforce. That survey is broadly impactful, but it doesn't quite get to how well problems.</p> | <p>"Zero for the mayor's office "We have Community Liaisons, if of them, and a manager over the program. That group is out of the EMS group. "City engagement is 12 people for Transportation, Public Utility projects, more traditional for government outreach.</p> | <p>"Accessibility and ADA Coordinator helps with best practices, particularly those in underserved communities and those with various disabilities. "Language Access Coordinator – fluent in Spanish "Local translation on our final docs into any language. The top 7 languages in the school district inform which languages we most often use.</p> | <p>"Can't do it all for everyone. The need to invest in these operators should be a priority. I think to communicate that to the public is important for cities to show they're leading, have a handle on issues and are addressing them. "I think every city should have a CMO (Chief Marketing Officer)</p> | |
| <p>"We try and do things that have analytics associated with them. So much is intangible. We do a lot of social listening – searching, alerts about what community is talking about. "We've conducted two community satisfaction surveys to see if messaging is being received well & difficult in some areas. "We page the general overall satisfaction of city and community leaders. "When something big is happening, like during the pandemic there was civic unrest around social justice issues. We listened and observed, and our Public Safety and other teams kept that space safe and allowed us to engage with community leaders, and Police have kept those relationships going.</p> | <p>"We have two large community-driven FB groups, and we watch those conversations. "Additional media used to be involved, now we get maybe one person with a camera. "If we see an issue, like a pothole, we've been able to show proactivity with that. "We are very careful as we craft our messages, especially for IG, FB & Nextdoor – we include feed good community stuff and regulatory stuff – like meetings and air agendas, and we're always trying to find good imagery and stories. A lot of hope for the new website to satisfy the branding and messaging.</p> | <p>"Mentorship program – annually matches senior dept head or chief of captain with an up-and-coming middle management person. "Newsletter "Breakroom notices "Very active wellness program – yoga, healthy chats, etc. "Big family picnic in our big local park – it's one of the things people mention that they like about working for the city. "Onboarding – make sure people are oriented to all buildings, people, etc. – and we do it in-person.</p> | <p>Yes "True North Research "Annually</p> | <p>Decentralized – Housing & Neighborhoods team "Leadership wants more, but no staff "Neighborhood leaders help w/IG & IG msging "Free tree planting "Help w/ issues like dumping & parking</p> | <p>"Default to Spanish only "Google Translate helps "We need translator required docs, emergency notices, community engagement materials, etc. "Use staff for little docs, consultants for big docs or nuanced materials</p> | | |

A3. Discovery Workshop Capture Report



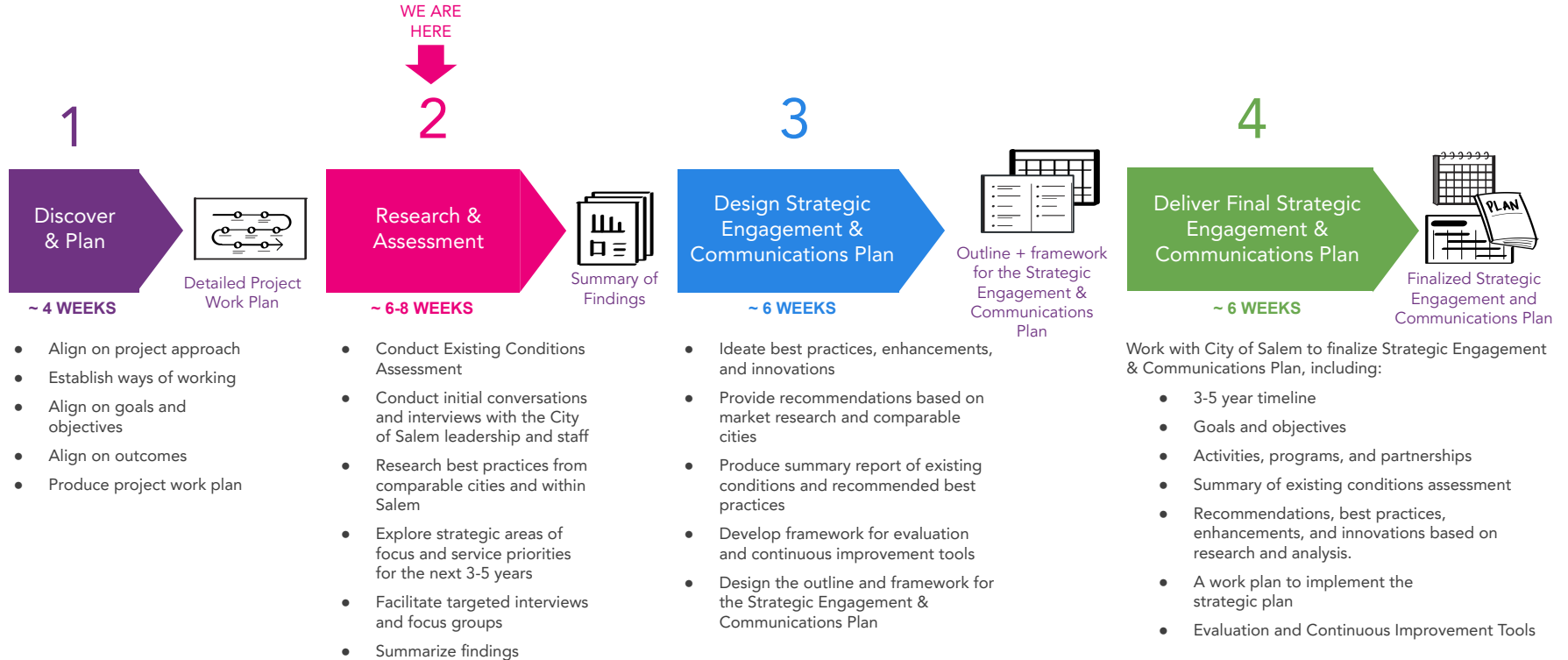
City of Salem

Discovery Workshop Capture Report Strategic Communications & Engagement Plan

February 16, 2023

territory

Project Phases





WORKSHOP



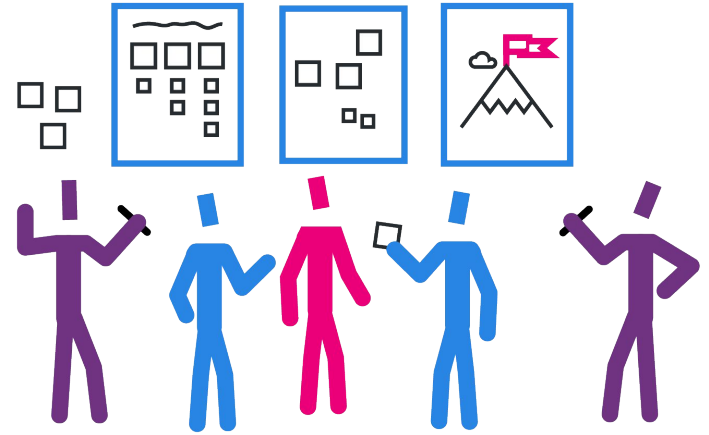
Workshop Recap

On Thursday, February 16, 2023, Territory held an initial Discovery Workshop with key members of the City of Salem's staff who own responsibility for communications and engagement activity. This was followed immediately by a brief orientation with City leaders who are primary stakeholders for the project.

Angie Hedrick, Courtney Busch, Dan Brown, Eunice Kim, Grant Davis, Heather Dimke, Irma Coleman, Julie Warncke, Kathy Ursprung, Michelle Teed, Nicole Miller, Rob Romanek, and Trevor Smith joined from the planning team.

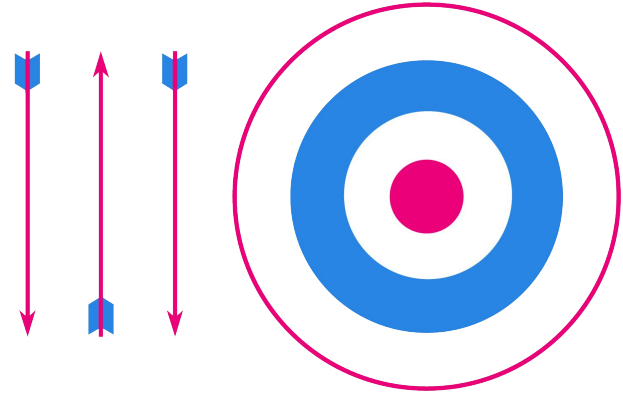
Trevor Womack, Kristin Retherford, Krishna Namburi, and Keith Stahley joined from City leadership.

Madeline Carroll and Greg Netzer from Territory facilitated the session.



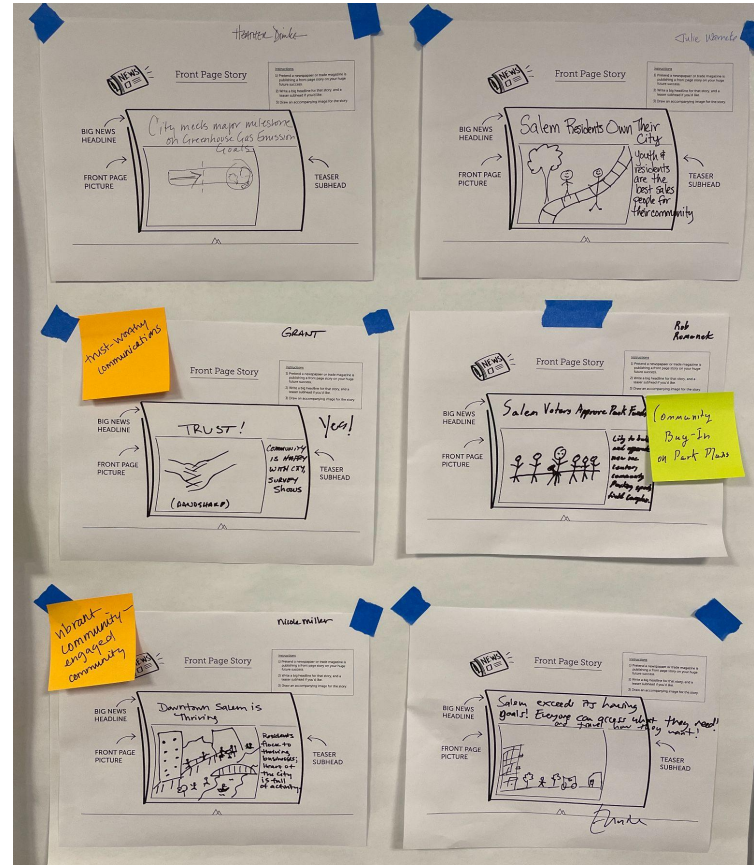
Workshop Goals & Activities

The goal of the Discovery Workshop was to kick off our project by having the planning team validate what we have learned to date about Salem's strategic communications and engagement activities. We primarily wanted the team to help us think through staff structure, communications and engagement tools, and services they provide. We also had each person share a vision of their ideal future state, and we brainstormed a large list of the ideal outcomes we hope to see this plan make manifest.



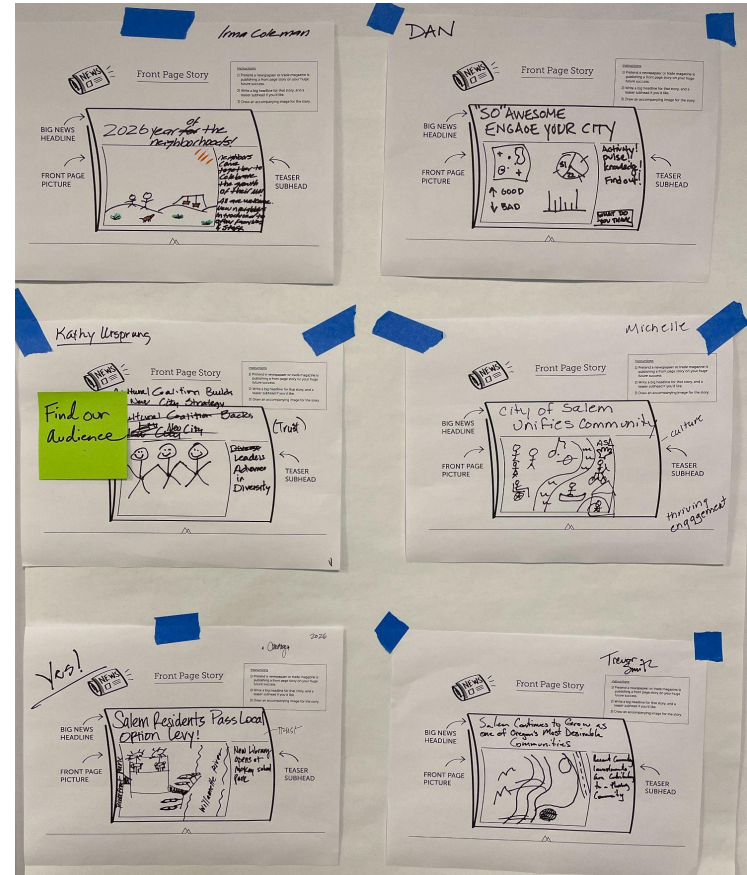
Headlines

We started the session by having each person draw a vision of their ideal future state: what the City of Salem would look like if they were able to communicate and engage with the citizens in the way they hope to accomplish. They were to tell this story through the lens of a major newspaper or magazine headline and image. The story headlines from all 12 people in the working group showed points of view throughout the City — from public works to parks to neighborhoods to the Police Department. They addressed economic development, housing, climate goals, and a tax levy.



Headlines (cont'd)

The major underlying theme that arose from this range of drawings and discussion was the establishment of trust in the community. Almost all of the headline stories the group shared were milestones made possible by an engaged community that trusted the City and its employees. When we brought this up as part of the discussion, the group unanimously agreed: The major thing they believe they need to create in the community is greater trust.

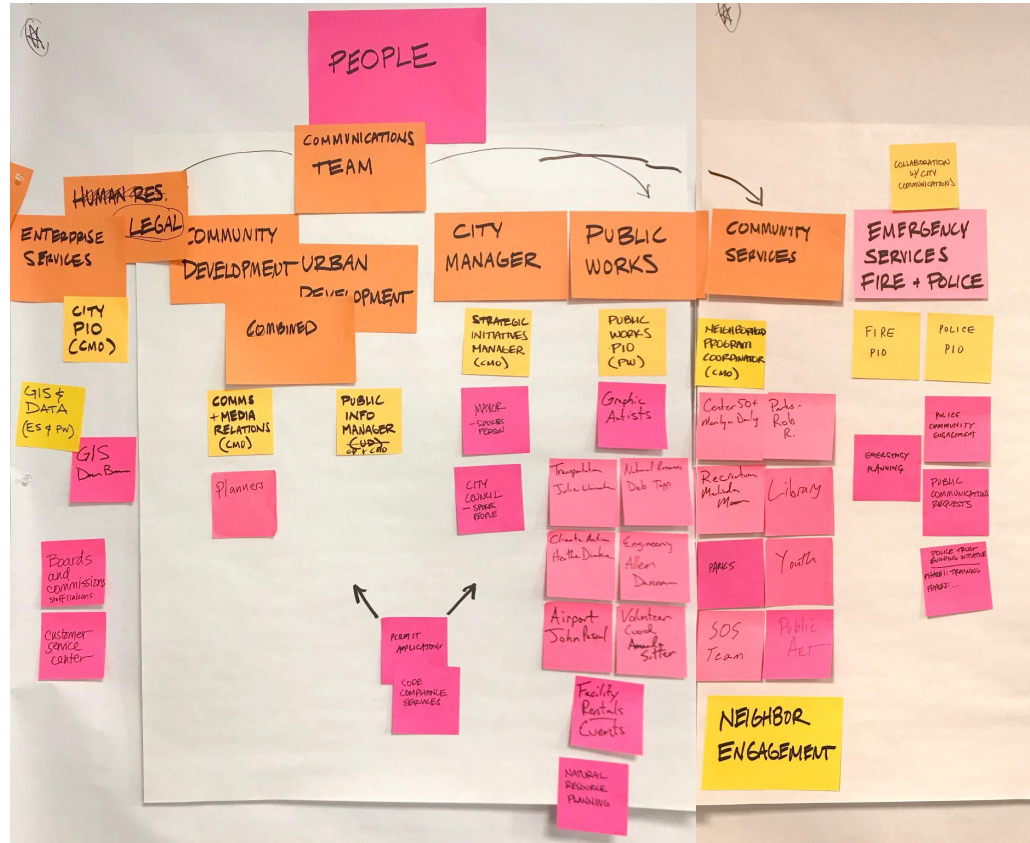


People

Our first task was to understand how communications tasks are handled now throughout the City staffing structure. The team helped us validate the appropriate city departments:

- Enterprise Services
- Legal
- Community/Urban Development
- City Manager
- Public Works
- Community Services
- Emergency Services

We then highlighted the individual roles in each department that were responsible for comms activity. Some roles split time between multiple departments. Finally, we listed tactical activities and/or roles that lived in each department.



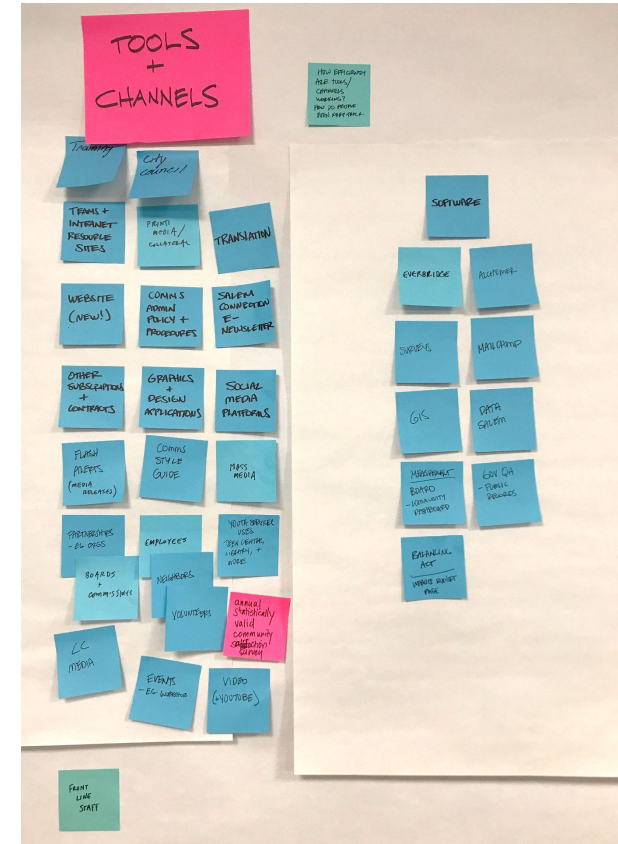
Tools & Channels

We listed the multiple tools and channels used today by the City in communicating news to the community.

- People
 - City Council
 - Employees
 - Neighbors
 - Volunteers
 - Boards & Commissions
 - Front-Line Staff
 - Partnership Orgs
- Activities
 - Training
 - Translation
 - Community satisfaction survey
- Channels
 - Teams / Intranet resources
 - Website
 - Salem Connection
 - Email subscriptions
 - Social media platforms
 - Mass media
 - CC media
 - Video (YouTube)
- Executions
 - Print / Collateral
 - Flash alerts / Media releases
 - Events
- Guidance
 - Comms Admin/Policies & Procedures
 - Comms style guide

We also separated software-specific tools used throughout City activities:

- Graphics / Design applications
- Everbridge
- Alchemer
- Mailchimp
- Surveys
- Data Salem
- GIS
- GovQA (records requests)
- Board (community dashboard)
- Balancing Act (budget tool)



Services

We next discussed the communications and engagement-related services the City provides. We broke them into three categories:

Services provided everywhere

- Weekly coordination meetings with dept. lead comms staff
- City design standards
- City Council comms support
- City department comms support
- Graphic design support
- Review of all media releases
- Translation
- Comms campaign planning
- Paid advertising (placement & design)
- Consultation for media inquiries
- Engaging local media and community partners
- Council concierge services
- City-wide website management support
- Recorder services at public meetings

Services provided in some areas

- Project & Ad Hoc GIS/Data support
- Community engagement plan review
- Community engagement best practices
- Community engagement implementation support
- City-wide message distribution (Internal)
- Coordination with Strategic Initiatives manager
- Paid participation program
- Internal comms team "agency" consultants
- Police department message distribution

Services planned but not yet provided

- Childcare for City activities and events
- City-wide consulting onboarding guide
- Design review
- Review of all materials for external audiences
- Website searchable open data



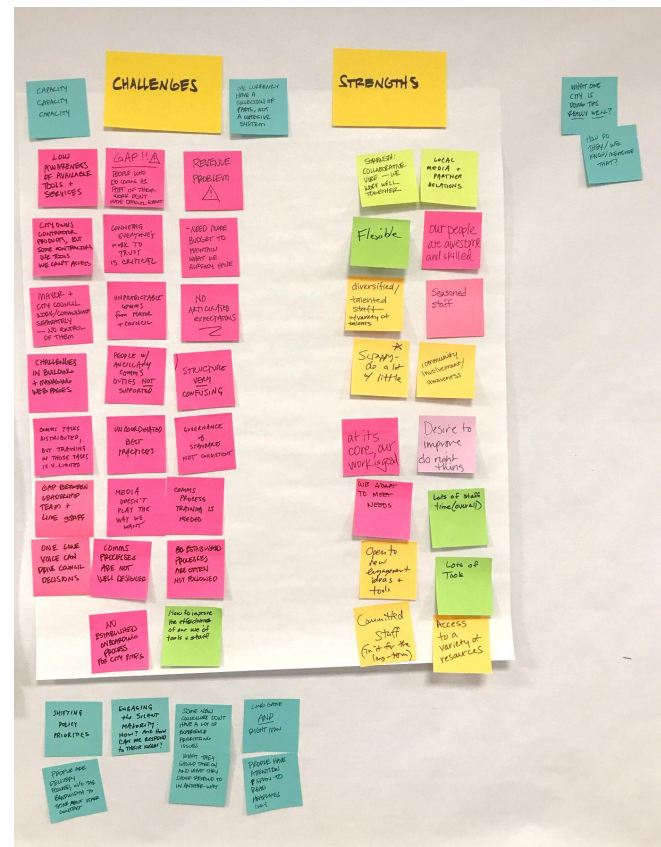
Challenges & Strengths

Strengths

- Collaborative staff works well together
- Flexible, seasoned staff
- Local media & partner relations
- Awesome, skilled people
- Diversified, talented staff
- Scrappy — do a lot with a little
- Community involvement/awareness
- At its core, our work is good
- Desire to improve
- We adapt to meet needs
- Lots of tools, staff time
- Access to a variety of resources
- Committed staff

Challenges

- Low awareness of available tools & services
- People with ancillary comms duties not supported
- Revenue shortfall
- Contactors use tools we can't access
- Connecting everyone's work to trust is critical
- Need more budget to maintain what we already have
- No articulated expectations
- Unpredictable comms from mayor & council
- Mayor & council work, communicate separately
- Challenges building / managing web pages
- Limited comms training for distributed responsibilities
- Comms structure very confusing
- Inconsistent governance
- Uncoordinated best practices
- Gap between leadership and line staff
- Media doesn't play nicely
- Comms process training is needed
- One lone voice can control council decisions
- Comms processes not well designed
- Existing comms processes not followed
- No established onboarding process for City employees
- Unclear how to improve effective use of tools and staff resources
- Shifting policy priorities
- Engaging the "silent majority"
- People are delivery focused, no bandwidth to think about broader context
- People have attention spans to read headlines only
- Some new councillors don't have experience prioritizing issues



Ideal Future Outcomes / Comms Team

The comms team then listed the outcomes they hoped to bring to fruition in the future.

- Validate and give evidence to information the PIOs put out
- Migrate from content to information
- Communication between departments and personnel done with dignity and respect to build toward trust and collaboration
- Maintain day-to-day communications and media relations
- Build capacity
- Internal communications platforms further developed
- E-services strategy
- Standard operating procedures for PIO and Data
- Consistent communication goals
- Alignment on goals and timing
- Change management
- Ongoing data strategy and governance (comms at the table)
- Transparency
- Establish equity partnership
- Build relationships
- Professional, "slick" finished communications products
- Cohesive, defined external information, aligned between departments
- Establish process/flow & structure to information/ communication
- Community relationship building events
- Host cultural events
- Collective communications plan includes all key initiatives
- Excellent hybrid meeting/event experience
- Engaging cultural communities & currently under-reached communities

- Expand internal communications
- Expand neighbor-to-neighbor communications
- Trust building in the Police dept & in comms generally
- Internal consulting for departments re: comms/engagement needs
- Informed employees w/ tools for comms success
- Open communication channels (not Ad Hoc)
- Shared understanding
- Open information flow internally and externally
- Civic ambassador!
- Better listening
- Easy access to visualize data
- Expectations are clear
- More coordinated DEI outreach
- Comms teams part of the planning process
- Collaboration
- Better coordination and use of existing tools & strategy
- Everyone knows what we are trying to achieve
- We fail fast, take chances, innovate, and learn
- Shared ownership of goals in the community
- Consistent communication with hybrid/remote staff
- We are communicating resonant messages of success with employees, council, and community
- Shared visions
- Inclusion
- Trust within the communities & neighbors
- Access to information and services people need
- Well-informed community that talk to less informed folks
- People can get & know how to get the information they want/need
- Expert resources to turn to when I need help



Ideal Future Outcomes / Leadership

When city leaders reviewed the outcomes the comms team shared, they added a significant number of outcomes they wanted to see in the future. These were added to teal-colored sticky notes at the top and bottom of the chart.

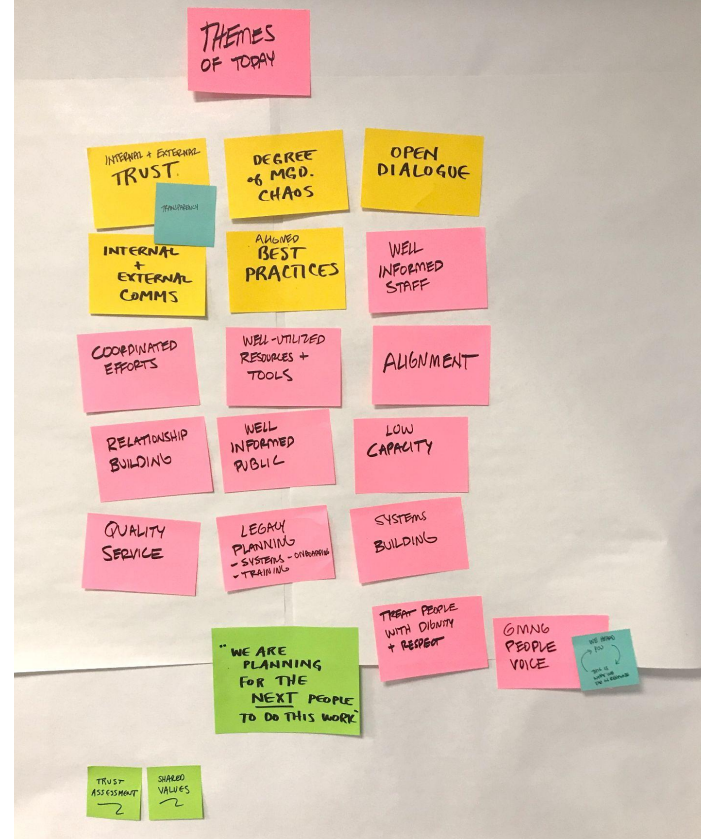
- City-wide trust initiative
- Shared responsibility starts with shared understanding
- Trust takes time and intentionality
- Our first job is building trust and understanding with council members
- Use of data to make decisions
- Centralized consolidated information accessible to everyone (eg., Dashboard)
- Metrics and tools for policymakers to test priority of issues
- Tool to engage citizens about what they're interested in re: City government
- Leadership takes plan and guides/supports staff in change and alignment
- Leadership backs up staff when they do what we tell them to do and/or prioritize
- Employees are informed about decisions and why they were made
- Factor silent majority into feedback response
- Validating people's concerns – explain why something is not happening now, explore how they want it done
- Connecting the impact of the work City employees do, and telling those stories – recognized as more than a job or a task
- People understand the impact/outcomes of our work, how that closes the loop with the community
- City employees accomplishments are honored and celebrated
- New systems and trust are election-proof
- Broader civic understanding of what activity they can see vs. what activity they don't know exists (eg., "tip of the iceberg")
- Educating citizens about how the City operates
- Specify the actions the City wants citizens to take



Major Themes

At the close of our work session, the Territory team asked the participants to share what they believed were the day's primary themes.

- Internal & external trust
- Degree of managed chaos
- Open dialogue
- Internal & external communications
- Aligned best practices
- Well-informed staff
- Coordinated efforts
- Well-utilized resources & tools
- Alignment
- Relationship building
- Well-informed public
- Low capacity
- Quality service
- Legacy planning (systems, onboarding, training)
- Systems building
- Treat people with respect & dignity
- Giving people voice
- Shared values



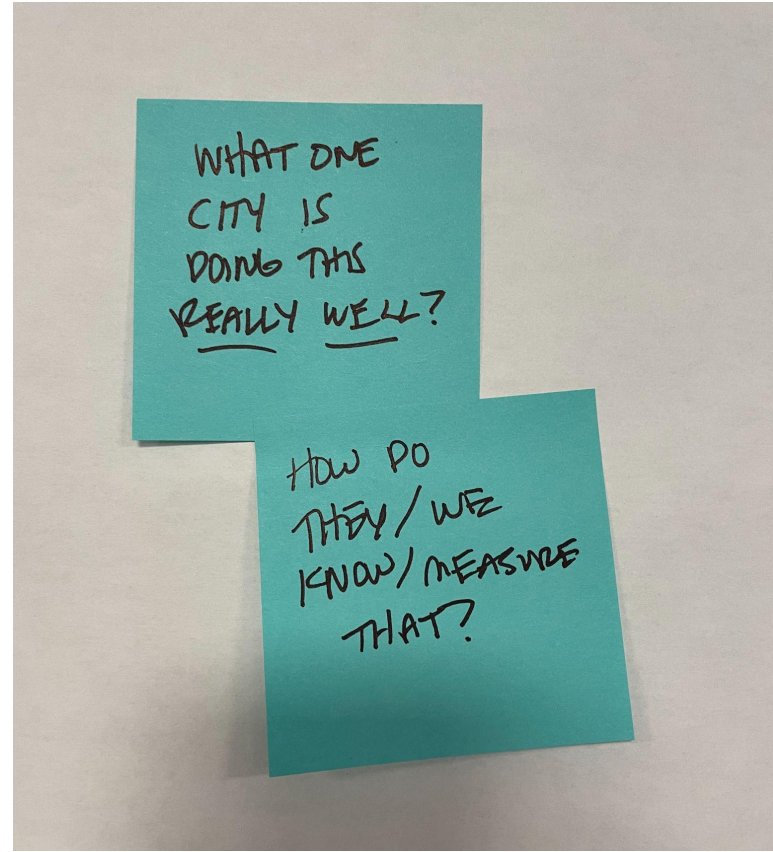


NEXT STEPS



Next Steps

- Conduct comparable city research into capacity, tools, structure, effectiveness of communications and engagement activities
- Draft discussion guide for all interviews and focus groups
- Begin stakeholder interviews with Mayor and City Council members



thank
you.

One final idea



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 [Our experiences on Instagram](#)

A4. Themes from Discovery Interviews & Focus Groups



City of Salem

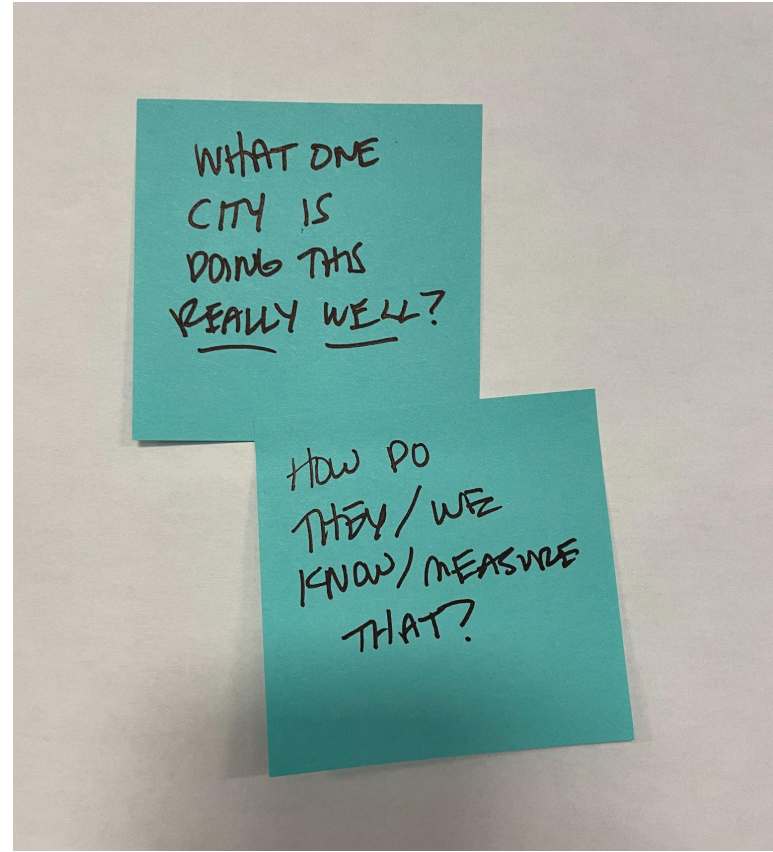
Themes from Discovery Interviews & Focus Groups
Strategic Communications & Engagement Plan

May 15, 2023

territory

Summary of Inputs

- 1:1 interviews with City Councilors (9)
- Focus group conversations (6)
- Peer City research (11 cities)
- Review of communications/engagement documentation
 - 2016 strategic plan
 - 2022 working strategy
 - City of Salem Comprehensive Plan 2022
 - City of Salem Strategic Plan 2021
 - ...and over three dozen additional communications documents



A group of approximately ten people are seated around a long, light-colored table in a meeting room. They appear to be engaged in a discussion or meeting. In the background, a whiteboard is visible with the word "AGENDA" at the top and several bullet points below it. The room has a neutral color palette, and the lighting is soft. The overall scene suggests a professional or collaborative environment.

FINDINGS



Interviews

In March and April of 2023, Madeline Carroll and Greg Netzer from Territory conducted video interviews with all of the members of Salem's city council:

- Mayor Chris Hoy
- Councilor Virginia Stapleton
- Councilor Linda Nishioka
- Councilor Trevor Phillips
- Councilor Deanna Gwyn
- Councilor Jose Gonzalez
- Councilor Julie Hoy
- Councilor Vanessa Nordyke
- Councilor Micki Varney



Our conversations centered on their experience with city communications and outreach — what they thought worked well, what didn't, and where they would like to see more focus going forward.

Interview Themes

“Communications and engagement is a top priority, and I want to provide the resources we need.”

Use existing channels and networks more effectively, and try out new ones

- Leverage the Mayor’s communications expertise, and use City Councilors to connect with people and tell stories.
- Use short videos on social media, CC media, website, etc. for electeds and employees to give updates and tell engaging human stories.
- Make it easier to search the City website and to find the information you need and/or the person you need to contact.
- Engage more effectively with neighborhood associations and find ways to encourage broader participation.
- Invite the community to engage more around telling local stories and creating solutions, e.g. for the Climate Action Plan, and Our Salem.
- Be thoughtful about creating more value in our use of mailed materials, like water bills and required notices.
- Build new partnerships with local school districts and colleges, to inform and engage students and families.
- Be looking for what the next communication trends will be, after current social media.

Tell the City of Salem’s story

- Coordinate and create communications materials to tell cohesive stories across City government.
- Be strategic. Develop an effective way to build and share our narrative.
- Focus on what is important, and what is positive. Stories of what we **are** doing.
- Be honest about the struggles our community currently faces.
- Tell Salem’s story in a way that differentiates it from other cities. Build local pride.
- Improve public safety perceptions.

Interview Themes (continued)

“Communications and engagement is a top priority, and I want to provide the resources we need.”

Prioritize reaching diverse audiences

- Identify and remove barriers to engagement.
- Invest in finding creative and effective ways to engage with people in their preferred languages
- Translate *everything* into Spanish.
- Continue and expand use of ASL interpreters.
- Hire diverse staff, in terms of age, race, ethnicity, nationality, languages spoken, LGBTQIA+, ability, and others.

Invest in overcoming public engagement challenges

- Create more opportunities for high quality engagement, like the Our Salem process and the Public Works “day at the park.”
- Go to where they people are, instead of requiring them to come to you.
- Build community sense of buy-in and ownership. The city is all of us. Build civic engagement and volunteerism. Be thoughtful about creating positive volunteer experiences.
- Currently, many people are uninformed, under-informed, or misinformed about City government. Build trust and media literacy and have more two-way engagement.
- Honor and respect people’s time and energy. When people engage, make it worthwhile. They need to see results to combat disillusionment.
- The City needs to be more responsive. When people contact us with solvable problems, we need to help solve them.

Interview Themes (continued 2)

“Communications and engagement is a top priority, and I want to provide the resources we need.”

Grow and coordinate communications staff and resources

- Hire and dedicate more staff to communications and engagement. At current levels, the City is not able to engage with the community effectively.
- Have dedicated, City-wide communications staff to coordinate efforts and connect currently siloed departmental staff.
- Set funding aside specifically for communications and engagement.
- Look for ways to decrease complexity in organization of communications staff.
- Build resiliency in the system so we can handle unanticipated crises and plan for the future at the same time.

Improve internal communications

- Clarify structure and responsibilities and create a directory and map of City offices to make it easier to know who is in charge of what, and who to talk to if you need information.
- Improve onboarding for new employees and elected officials.
- Develop more ways for employees to engage with each other and share creative ideas.
- Help City Council align on City stories and key messages, and prepare comms materials to share them.

Focus Groups

In April 2023, Madeline Carroll and Greg Netzer from Territory also conducted six in-person focus groups at the Salem Public Library with the following groups:

- Salem City Employees
- Utility Customers
- Neighborhood Associations
- Salem City Volunteers
- Business Community Representatives
- Cultural Community Representatives*

Our conversations centered on their experience with city communications and outreach — what they thought worked well, what didn't, and where they would like to see more focus going forward.

**Only one participant was able to join this discussion*



Focus Group Themes

Lack of Information and Communication

People, including city employees, feel uninformed about what is happening in the city. Residents find it difficult to access relevant information and struggle to know where to look for it. City staff believe information is fragmented and unevenly distributed, leading to a siloed approach. Lack of trust in the city is also evident.

Ineffective Communication Channels

Traditional communication channels are changing, and old-school methods are no longer reliable. Email newsletters exist, but many people are unaware of their existence or struggle to find where to sign up for them. The website is hard to navigate, and the average resident may not understand the city's jargon. Social media is prevalent but underutilized.

Lack of Customer Service Orientation

There is a perceived lack of customer service orientation in the city's communication efforts. People want curated and summarized information in their language, as they are already overwhelmed with excessive information. They also don't know where to turn in city government for answers. General transparency is lacking, leading to a lack of trust in the city's communication.

Focus Group Themes (continued)

Inadequate Outreach and Engagement

Neighborhood associations have potential as a message delivery vehicle, but few residents attend their meetings. Additionally, there is limited staff assigned to them, particularly for Spanish-speaking communities, and they primarily focus on land use issues. Reaching certain individuals and communities is challenging, and some people may not engage at all.

Insufficient Resources and Strategic Approach

City staff members want to help but feel disempowered due to a lack of tools and capacity for success. Communications are reactive rather than strategic. Language barriers exist, and translators need to be trained. Spanish communications are often delayed, which is problematic during crises. Visual communication could improve engagement and understanding.

Peer City Research

In March and April of 2023, Sue Allison from Territory conducted interviews with communications leaders from 11 cities in the Western US of comparable size to Salem:

- Bend, OR
- Eugene, OR
- Escondido, CA
- Gresham, OR
- Hillsboro, OR
- Oceanside, CA
- Tempe, AZ
- Salem, OR
- Salt Lake City, UT
- Spokane, WA
- Vancouver, WA

These interviews conversations centered the process and tools each city used in their city communications and outreach, including staff size and budget.



2023 Salem Survey of City Comms Teams



**2023 Salem Survey of City Comms Teams
Research Report**

May 5, 2023

Peer City Research Summary

Common points of pain

- Having insufficient staff to fulfill all of the needed and desired communications functions and tasks.
- Lacking control and coordination of communications activities throughout the various groups and departments that is required to successfully tell the city's story.
- Struggling to fully engage with all of the city's myriad of populations in all of the needed languages.
- Not having the data needed to fully understand the efficacy of communications strategies or to help guide communications plans.

Successful strategies

- Having individual communications staff who are highly skilled and passionate about their work and who are given the time and latitude to create successful strategies. This seems especially important for those working with Police, Fire, and some other fairly unique city groups, and those tasked with engaging harder-to-reach populations.
- Having the time and authority to effect comprehensive coordination among the core communications team and all decentralized communications staff.
- Limiting the number of decentralized staff with communications responsibilities, especially when it comes to accessing and editing the city's website and social media content or conducting citizen surveys.
- Having individual staff with the background and language skills needed to develop mutually-beneficial relationships between the city and community/neighborhood groups.
- Conducting surveys on a regular basis with residents, businesses and even city employees to help keep apprised of shifting sentiments and needs.

Areas of Alignment

There were several areas where the community's stated needs overlapped with Salem communications' stated ideal future. These focused in four main areas:

Build relationships

- Community relationship building events
- Host cultural events
- Engaging cultural communities & currently under-reached communities
- Expand neighbor-to-neighbor communications

Build trust

- Trust building in the Police dept & in comms generally
- Trust within the communities & neighbors
- Validate and give evidence to information the PIOs put out
- Collaborate between departments and personnel to provide same information to public

Build capacity

- Clear to everyone that comms is understaffed and decentralized
- Native Spanish speakers a clear need

Build a better user experience

- Transparency
- Better listening
- Open communication channels (not Ad Hoc)
- Better coordination and use of existing tools & strategy
- People can get & know how to get the information they want/need

thank
you.



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 [Our thoughts on Twitter](#)

 [Our experiences on Instagram](#)

A5. Leadership Workshop Report & Strategic Recommendations

City of Salem

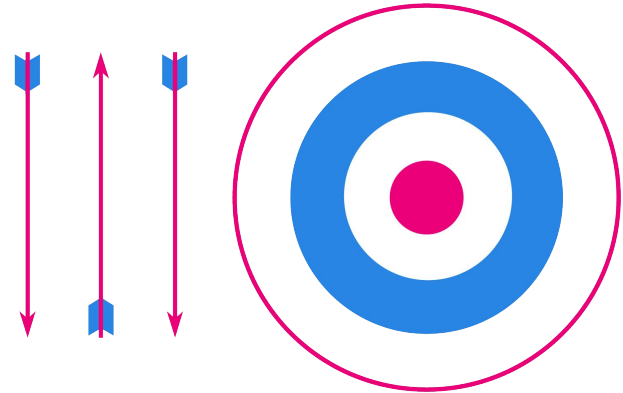
Leadership Workshop Report & Strategic Recommendations
Strategic Communications & Engagement Plan

MAY 18, 2023

territory

Workshop Summary

On May 18, 2023, Territory held a second workshop for the City of Salem's strategic communications and engagement planning effort. In the morning session, we reviewed with the planning team what we heard from our interviews and focus group discussions about the City's communications and engagement activities. We then discussed how the community's needs overlapped with the City's communications and engagement ambitions, highlighted the key activities and tools, and marked which could be centralized for greater efficiency and effectiveness. In the afternoon session we reviewed all of the above with City leadership, as well as discussing some early learning from our research on peer cities' communications and engagement organizations.





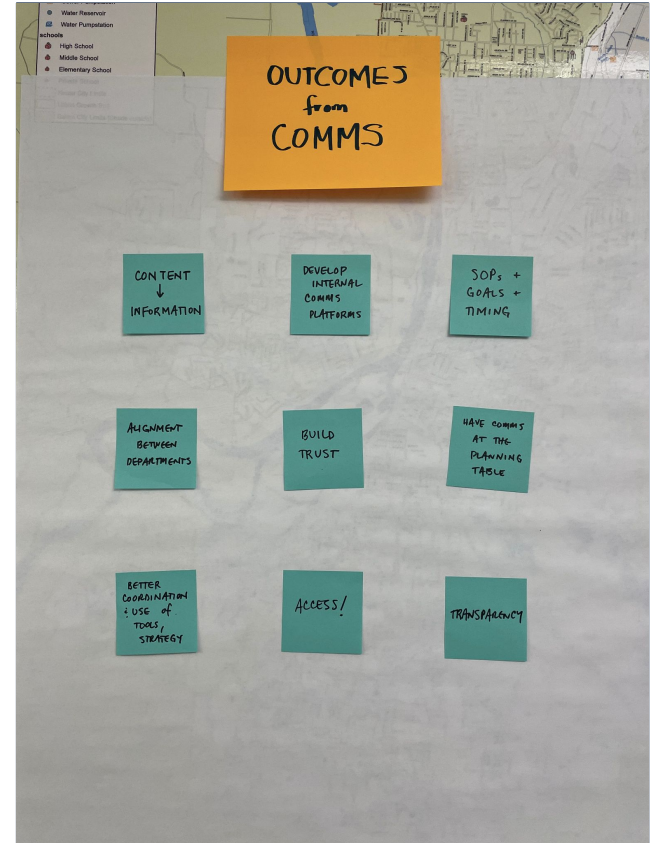
HIGH-LEVEL THEMES



Outcomes: C & E

We started the day by sharing what key communications and engagement outcomes the planning team highlighted in our initial workshop:

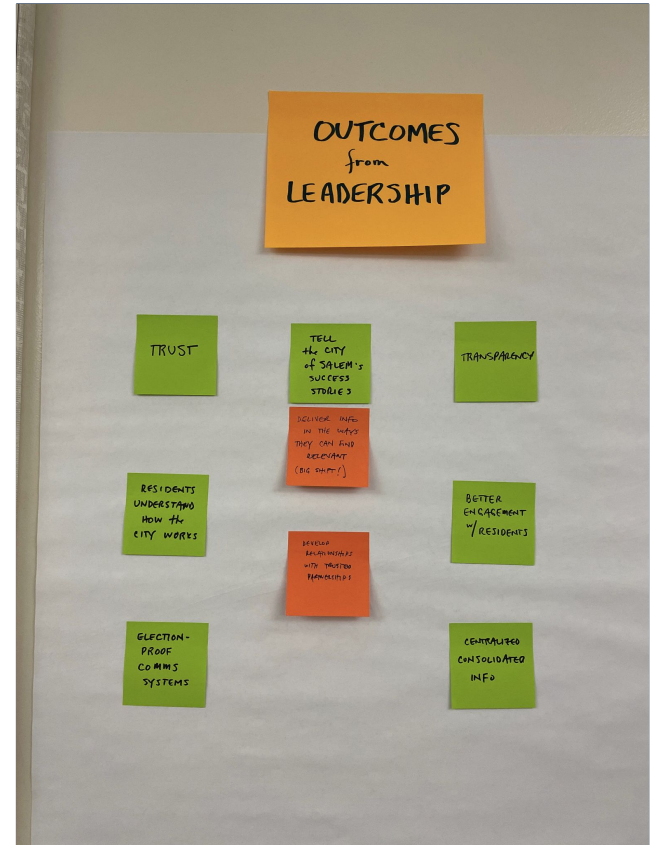
- Content → information
- Develop internal comms platforms
- SOPs + goals + timing
- Alignment between departments
- Build trust
- Have comms at the planning table
- Better coordination and use of tools and strategy
- Access!
- Transparency



Outcomes: Leadership

Next, we shared what outcomes that City leadership felt would be critical in a future communications and engagement activity.

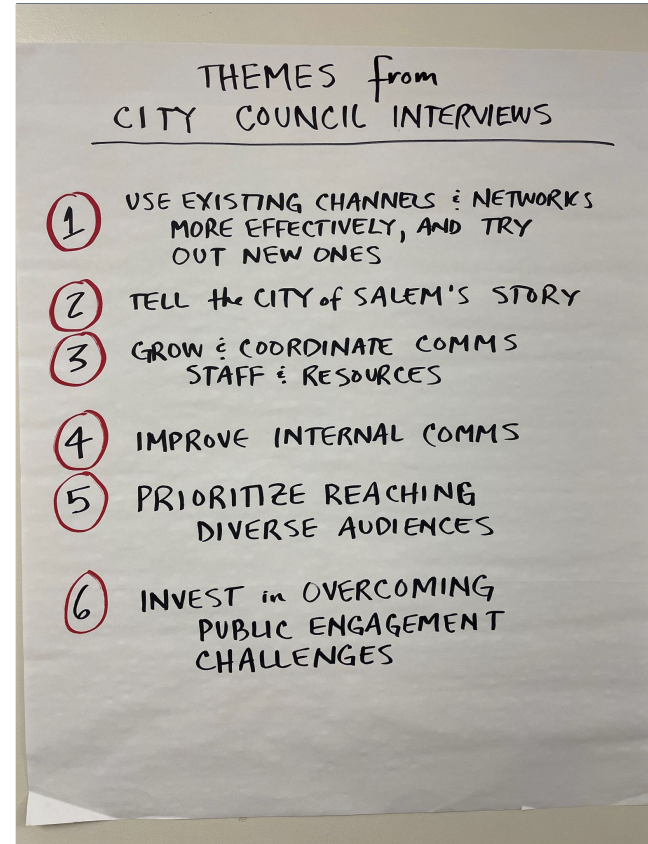
- Trust
- Tell the City of Salem's success stories
 - Deliver information in ways they can find relevant
- Transparency
- Residents understand how the city works
- Develop relationships with trusted partnerships
- Better engagements with residents
- Election-proof comms systems
- Centralized consolidated information



Themes: City Council

We walked the team through the resonant themes we found in our interviews with Salem's Mayor and City Councilors.

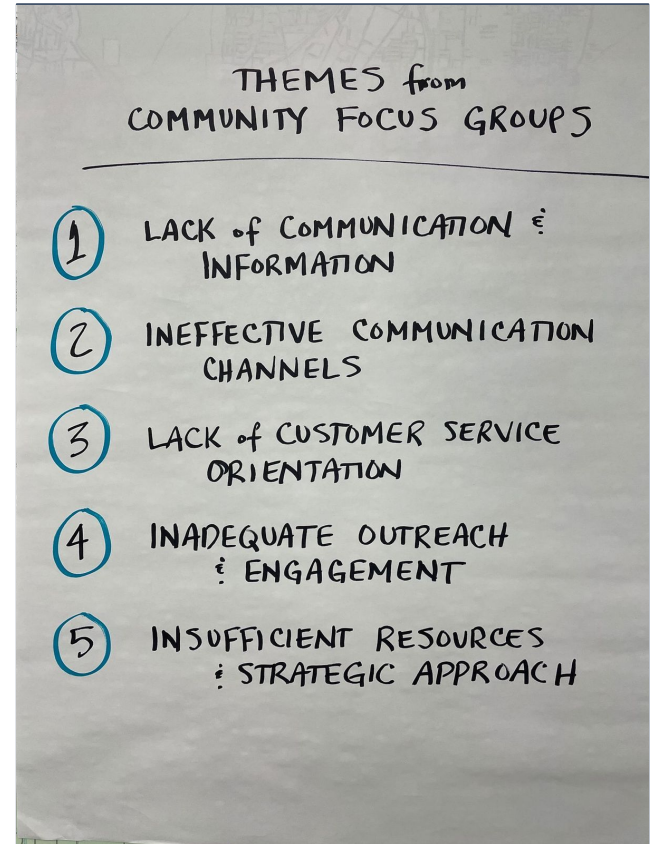
1. Use existing channels and networks more effectively, and try out new ones
2. Tell the City of Salem's story
3. Grow and coordinate comms staff and resources
4. Improve internal communications
5. Prioritize reaching diverse audiences
6. Invest in overcoming public engagement challenges



Themes: Community

We also spent time reviewing what we heard in our focus group conversations with Salem's key stakeholder groups, including business and community leaders, neighborhoods, cultural communities, and city employees.

1. Lack of communication and information
2. Ineffective communication channels
3. Lack of customer service orientation
4. Inadequate outreach and engagement
5. Insufficient resources and strategic approach



Alignment

Finally, we shared the areas of overlap we heard in the concerns shared by leadership, community, and staff.

- Build capacity
 - Comms is understaffed and decentralized
 - Native Spanish speakers a clear need
- Build relationships
 - Host community relationship building and cultural events
 - Engage cultural communities
 - Expand neighbor-to-neighbor communications
- Built trust
 - Trust building in the Police dept & in comms generally
 - Trust within the communities & neighbors
 - Validate and give evidence to information the PIOs put out
 - Collaborate between departments and personnel to provide same information to public
- Build a better user experience
 - Migrate from content to information
 - Greater transparency
 - Better listening
 - Open communication channels (not Ad Hoc)
 - Better coordination and use of existing tools & strategy
 - People can & know how to get the information they want/need
 - Expert resources to turn to when people need help



Issues from peer cities

In our discussion with City leadership, we shared some high-level takeaways from our peer city research.

Pains

- Insufficient staff
- Lack of control across city departments
- Struggle to engage with populations and multiple languages
- Inability to harness data

Gains

- Skilled staff with flexibility
- Time and authority to coordinate across functions
- Limiting number of decentralized comms "staff"
- Multilingual staff
- Regular surveys



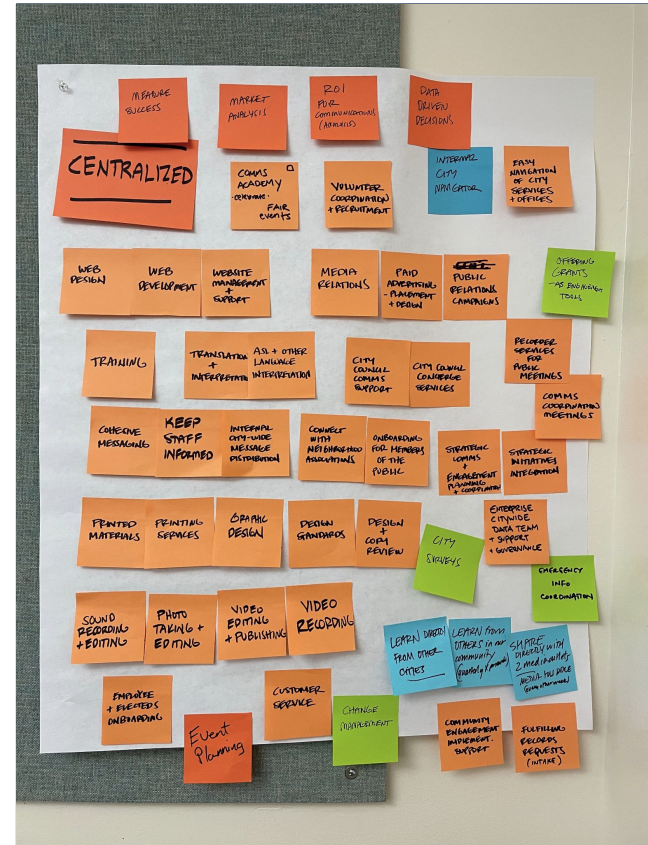


ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES



Capabilities: centralized

- Measure success
- Market analysis
- ROI for communications
- Data driven decisions
- Comms academy
- Volunteer coordination and recruitment
- Internal city navigator
- Easy navigation of city services and offices
- Web design
- Web development
- Website management and support
- Media relations
- Paid advertising– placement and design
- PR campaigns
- Offering grants as engagement tools
- Training
- Translation and interpretation
- ASL and other language interpretation
- City council comms support
- City council concierge services
- Recorder services for public meeting
- Comms coordination meetings
- Cohesive messaging
- Keep staff informed
- Internal city-wide message distribution
- Connect with neighborhood associations



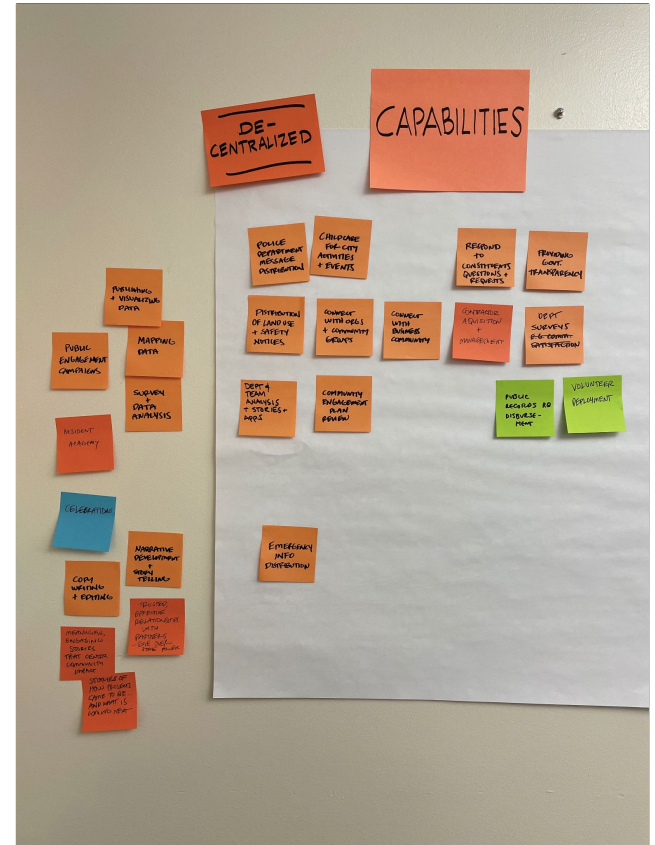
Capabilities: centralized

- Onboarding for members of the public
- Strategic comms and engagement planning and coordination
- Strategic initiative integration
- Printed materials
- Printing services
- Graphic design
- Design standards
- Design and copy review
- City Surveys
- Enterprise citywide data team + support + governance
- Emergency info coordination
- Sound recording and editing
- Photo taking and editing
- Video editing and publishing
- Video recording
- Learn directly from other cities
- Learn from others in our community
- Share directly with 2 media outlets—media huddle (every other week)
- Employee and electeds onboarding
- Event planning
- Customer service
- Change management
- Community engagement implementat support
- Fulfilling records requests (intake)



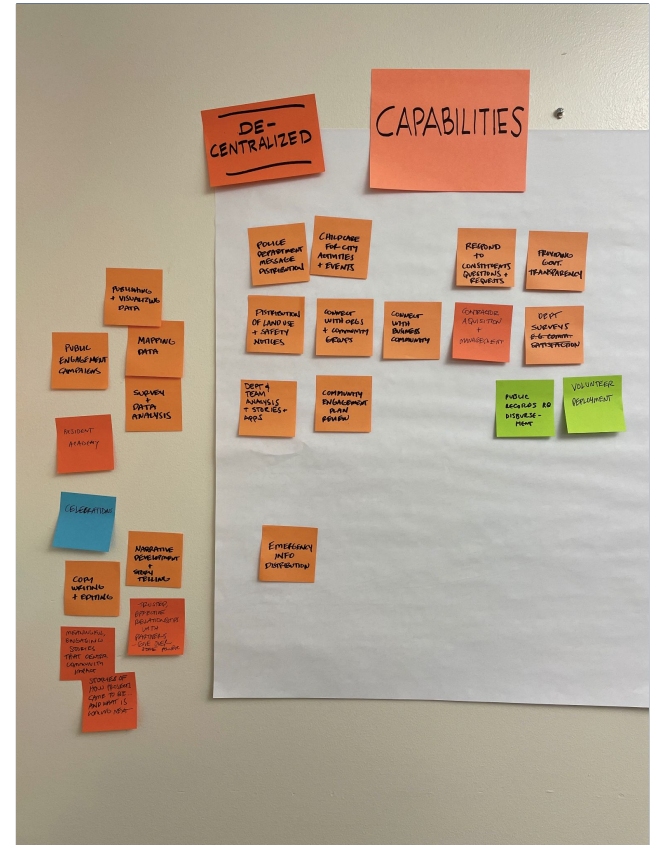
Capabilities: hybrid

- Publishing + visualizing data
- Mapping data
- Survey and data analysis
- Public engagement campaigns
- Resident academy
- Celebrations
- Narrative development and storytelling
- Copy writing and editing
- Trusted, effective relationships with partners (give over some power)
- Meaningful, engaging stories that center community impact
- Stories of how projects came to be... and what is coming next



Capabilities: decentralized

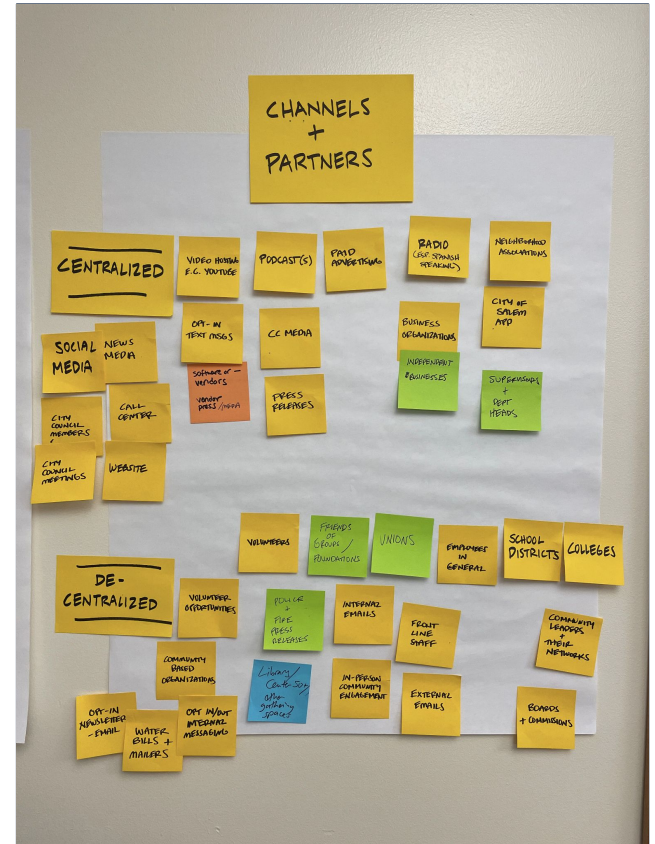
- Police department message distribution
- Childcare for city activities and events
- Respond to constituents' questions and concerns
- Providing government transparency
- Distribution of land use and safety notices
- Connect with organizations and community groups
- Connect with business community
- Contractor acquisition and management
- Department surveys
- Department and team analysis + stories + apps
- Community engagement plan review
- Public records RQ disbursement
- Volunteer deployment
- Emergency info distribution



Channels and Partners

Centralized

- Video hosting (e.g. YouTube)
- Podcast(s)
- Paid advertising
- Radio (esp. Spanish speaking)
- Neighborhood associations
- Social media
- News media
- Opt-in text messaging
- CC media
- Business organizations
- City of Salem APD
- City council members
- Call center
- Software or vendors— vendor press/ media
- Press releases
- Independent businesses
- Supervisors and department heads
- City council meetings
- Website



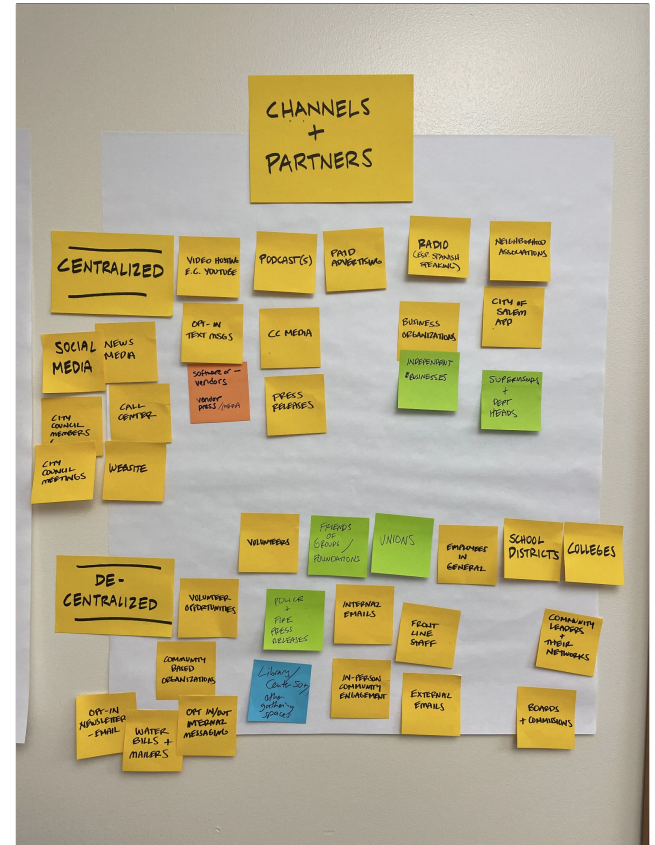
Channels and Partners

Hybrid

- Volunteers
- Friends of groups/ foundations
- Unions
- Employees in general
- School districts
- Colleges

Decentralized

- Volunteer opportunities
- Police and fire press releases
- Internal emails
- Front line staff
- Community leaders and their networks
- Community-based organizations
- Library/ Center 50+/ other gathering spaces
- In-person community engagement
- External emails
- Boards and commissions



Tools

Centralized

- All-city email
- Wall space
 - Tangible communication
 - Signage, etc.
- GoPro
- Tool library
 - List
 - Availability
 - Reserve and check out
- Professional organizations memberships
- Intranet homepage
- Business intelligence tools
- Cameras and microphones
- Public meetings supplies (easels, paper, markers, etc.)
- Intentional briefing spaces
- Survey software (e.g. Alchemer)
- Adobe Creative Suite
- Canva and other social media design software
- Mailchimp or similar email software
- Materials and prep for cohesive messaging (e.g. for city council)
- Data and info relevant to specific viewer (portal, AI)
- Website archive software
- YouTube channel
- Paid city ambassadors
- Gov QA (records requests)
- Community dashboard
- Style Guide
- Intranet (e.g. Teams)



Tools

Centralized

- Strategic comms and engagement plan(s)
- Print communications for non tech-savvy community members
- Video (videography equipment)
- City branded equipment (e.g> Banter)
- Customer relationship management system
- Map of all city offices and services
- Website analytics software
- Clear organizational structure and directory
- Childcare activities
- Printing tech
- Flash alert
- Local radio monthly spot
- Website searchable open data
- Community engagement best practices
- Web design development software
- Data Salem
- "Meeting in a box"
- Flash alerts networks
- Balancing act- budget
- Intranet comms hub of resources
- Comms admin - policies and procedures
- Department head meetings - info distribution with cohesive messaging

Decentralized

- Department branded pub meeting equipment r.e. police department banner



Resources

Centralized

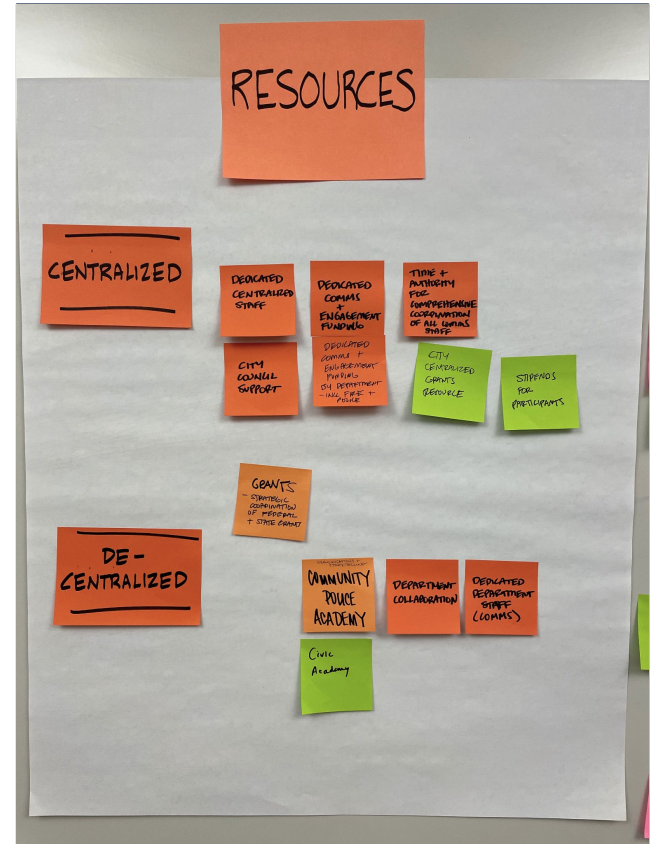
- Dedicated centralized staff
- Dedicated comms and engagement funding
 - By department - including fire and police
- Time and authority for comprehensive coordination of all comms staff
- City council support
- City centralized grants resource
- Stipends for participants

Hybrid

- Grants

Decentralized

- Strategic coordination of federal and state grants
- Community police academy
- Department collaboration
- Dedicated department staff (comms)
- Civic Academy



People

Centralized

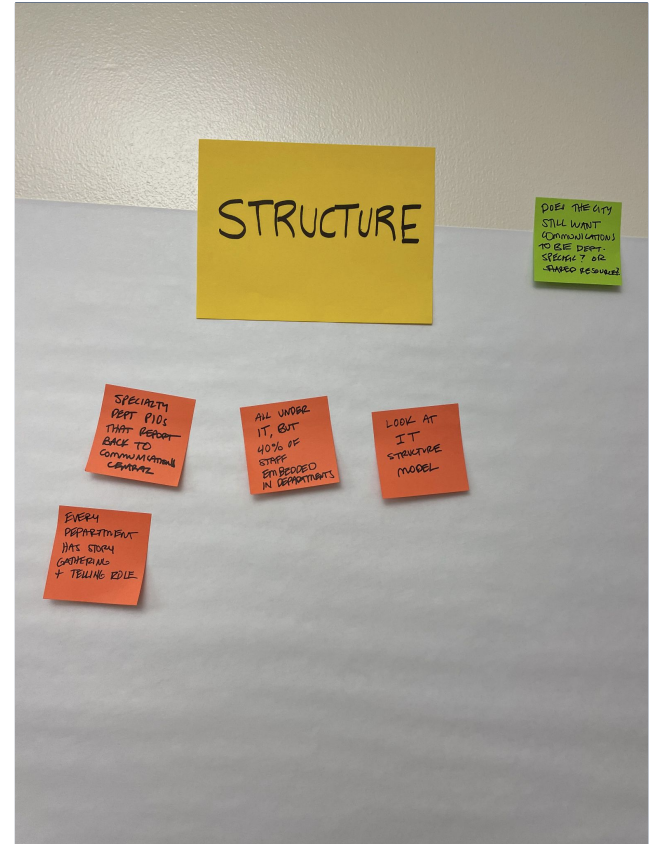
- Communications manager/ director
- Microsoft product owner
- Graphic designer(s)
- Website manager
- Web Designer
- Manager of implementing communications strategy
- Business orgs coordinator and liaison
- City call center operators
- Videographer
- Video editor
- Photographer and photo editor
- Sound engineer and editor
- Recorder (public meetings)
- Childcare coordinator
- City concierge/navigator
- City council concierge
- Underserved communities/ liaison/ navigator
- Strategic initiatives liaison
- Social media manager(s)
- Internal comms team "agency" consultants
- Contractor manager and acquisition person
- Advertising buyer
- NA event coordinator
- Community orgs coordinator and liaison
- Neighborhood association coordinator and liaison
- City council comms support staff
- City sharing info event coordinator



Structure

Does the city still want communications to be department specific?
Or shared resources?

- Specialty department PIOs that report back to communication central
- All under it, but 40% of staff embedded in departments
- Look at IT structure model
- Every department has story gathering and telling role





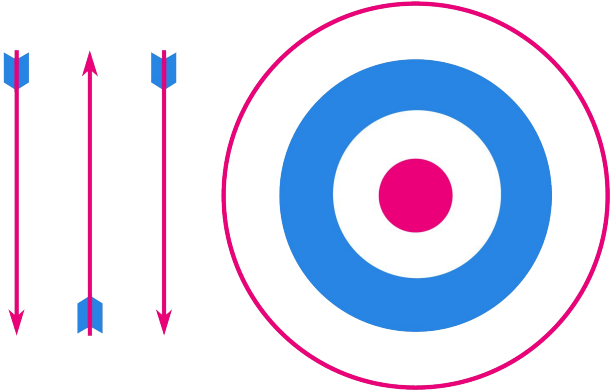
RECOMMENDATIONS



Recommendation: Resources

Dedicated funding

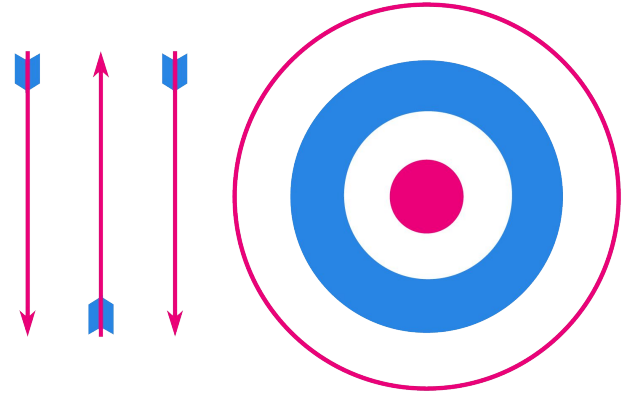
Communications leaders in the comparable cities research highlighted the need and efficacy of having dedicated, centralized funding for communications personnel, tools, and resources that can provide services and be shared across the City. City of Salem staff who perform communications roles agreed that dedicated funding is imperative to solving the widespread and unsustainable capacity issues they currently face. While acknowledging the revenue and budget issues the City faces now, it is important to emphasize that an effective, successful communications system will require real investment.



Recommendation: People

Chief Communications Officer and Centralized Communications Team

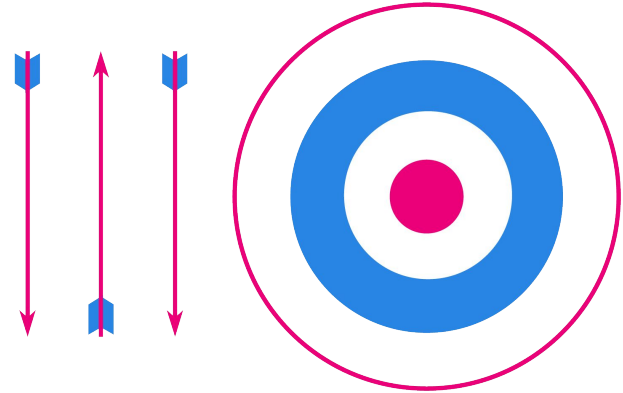
One of the primary obstacles to better communications and engagement is the lack of a dedicated position with leadership authority, budget responsibility, and results accountability. The system is currently run part time by the Strategic Initiatives Manager, who has no authority to direct efforts and little budgetary control. A new leadership position will be necessary if communications and engagement are to make the kind of progress that City Council expects. This position would guide a centralized team that provides City-wide communications services, tools, and resources, as well as support services for each department as needed. Centralized services should include widely needed skills like graphic design, data analysis and visualization, public information communication, community engagement, and media management, among others.



Recommendation: Structure

Hub and spoke model

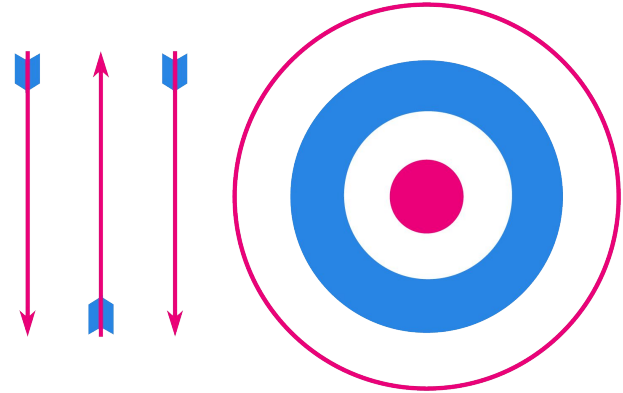
Effective communications and engagement in the City of Salem will only occur through better coordination, collaboration, and resource sharing. A 'hub & spoke' organizational model would work well here, with a central 'hub' including leadership and supportive team that has greater authority and more formal policies to manage collaboration among 'spokes' and to centralize resources. During our most recent workshop, the leadership group agreed that spokes would include communications personnel within departments, who are connected to and collaborate with the central hub while retaining independence in certain unique and clearly defined elements of communication.



Recommendation: Tools

Centralized tools to support communications

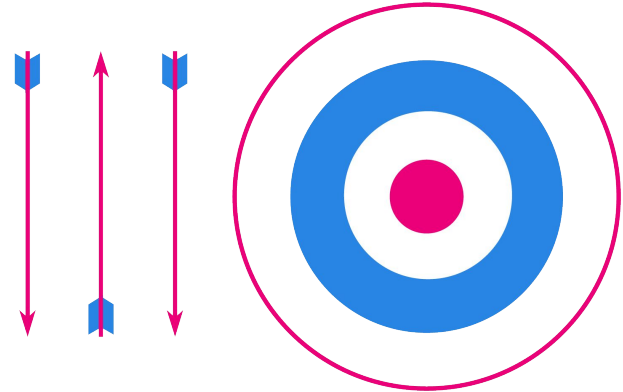
City staff who currently perform communication roles as part of their job voiced consensus that all communications tools aside from a few department-branded exceptions should be held and managed centrally. Some key tools already exist in departments or are available centrally but are not widely known, for example, audio-visual recording equipment. There are other tools the City will need to acquire and a centralized City communications team will need to coordinate, with clear and appropriate policies. For example, graphic design software licenses (e.g. Adobe Creative Suite, Canva, etc) would be owned and managed centrally, and provided to department-specific staff as needed.



Recommendation: Messaging

Awareness of existing channels, services, and resources

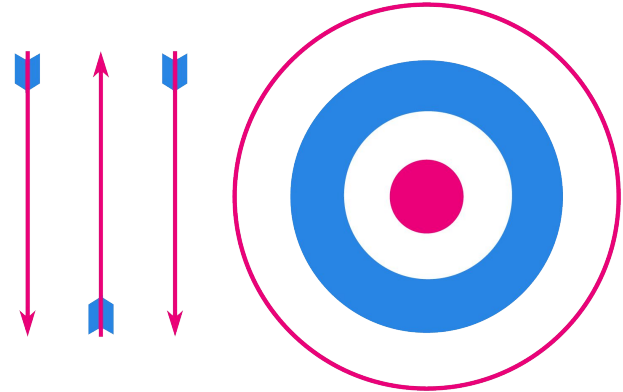
Many requests and suggested improvements from community members and staff were for things that already exist or are currently in the works. This is a great opportunity to focus efforts on awareness campaigns, both internally and externally, to inform people that the City has heard them and been responsive to their input. The City has already accomplished building so much of what people want from local government communications! It's time to tell them that it's there and how to find it.



Recommendation: Leadership

Leadership needs to provide clarity

The forthcoming strategic communications and engagement plan has been heavily informed by those who experience the challenges within the current City communications system every day—City staff who perform communications roles, a variety of local groups and community members, City employees as a whole, and elected officials. The final plan needs to have the aligned support of City leadership to be effective. This means owning and championing the decisions represented in the plan, and ongoing, engaged support of the changes needed for a successful implementation of the plan.



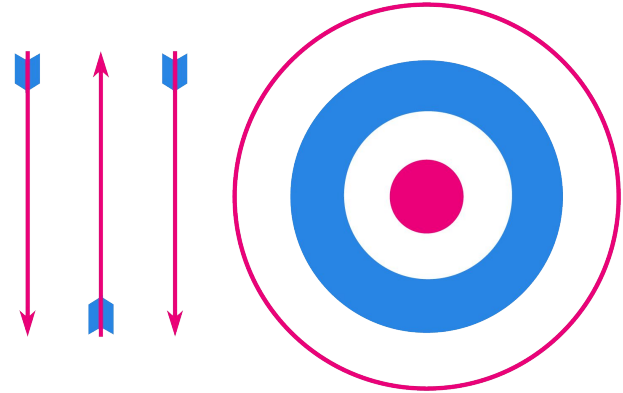
Recommendations: Process

Newsroom approach to city storytelling

Shifting communication from information delivery to storytelling will mean treating data and information differently. Using context and outcomes to help shape stories about city activity will mean thinking less like PR agents and more like journalists.

“Communications-first” orientation

When anyone in city government is planning any city initiative, communications leadership should be at the table from the outset to understand the rationale, goals, timelines, and desired outcomes necessary to shape any communications or engagement effort to support it.



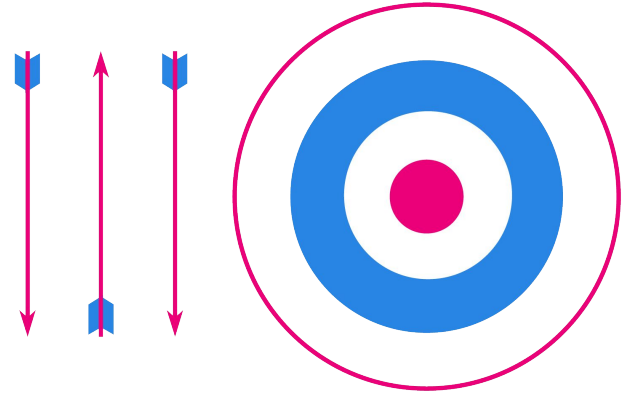
Recommendations: Best Practices

C&E Best Practice Handbook

Collaboration and coordination can be achieved in a modified hub & spoke model so long as the 'spokes' have a shared understanding of how they must work together to be successful. This would include explicit agreements and policies on internal communication, sharing feedback, sharing resources, and so on — a significant step up from shared brand guidelines.

Training

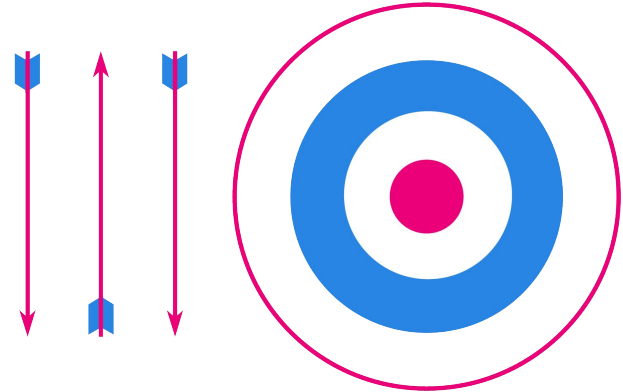
In order to help existing staff better leverage modern media and storytelling advances, professional development for staff in comms roles should be a budget priority.



Recommendation: Channel

Continue to Improve Website

Modern technology has made the web perhaps the most critical communications channel for many organizations and industries. City government is no different. It is appropriate to use it as the primary way to share city news, events, regulations, and more with residents. The recent overhaul of the City website brought great improvements to useability, however it's important to note that community members and City staff report that navigation and specifically the search function continues to be a source of frustration. This is a known issue and the cause is, unfortunately, inherent to the website's structural design. Moving forward, it is important to continue to push the website vendor for better user experience options in order to better align with the needs of Salem residents.



thank
you.



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