

City Council Study Session

Monday, April 17, 2023 – 6:00 PM

27400 Southfield Road, Lathrup Village, Michigan 48076

In the Meeting Place

ADDRESSING THE CITY COUNCIL

- Your comments shall be made during times set aside for that purpose.
- Stand or raise a hand to indicate that you wish to speak.
- When recognized, state your name and direct your comments and/or questions to any City official in attendance.
- Each person wishing to address the City Council and/or attending officials shall be afforded one opportunity of up to three (3) minutes duration during the first and last occasion for citizen comments and questions and one opportunity of up to three (3) minutes duration during each public hearing. Comments made during public hearings shall be relevant to the subject for which the public hearings are held.
- In addition to the opportunities described above, a citizen may respond to questions posed to him or her by the Mayor or members of the Council, provided members have been granted the floor to pose such questions.
- No speaker may make personal or impertinent attacks upon any officer, employee, or City Council member or other Elected Official, that is unrelated to the manner in which the officer, employee, or City Council member or other Elected Official, performs his or her duties.
- No person shall use abusive or threatening language toward any individual when addressing the City Council.
- Any person who violates this section shall be directed by the Mayor to be orderly and silent. If a person addressing the Council refuses to become silent when so directed, such person may be deemed by the Mayor to have committed a “breach of the peace” by disrupting and impeding the orderly conduct of the public meeting of the City Council and may be ordered by the Mayor to leave the meeting. If the person refuses to leave as directed, the Mayor may direct any law enforcement officer who is present to escort the violator from the meeting.

1. **Call to Order** by Mayor Garrett

2. **Discussion Items**

A. Sam Surnow

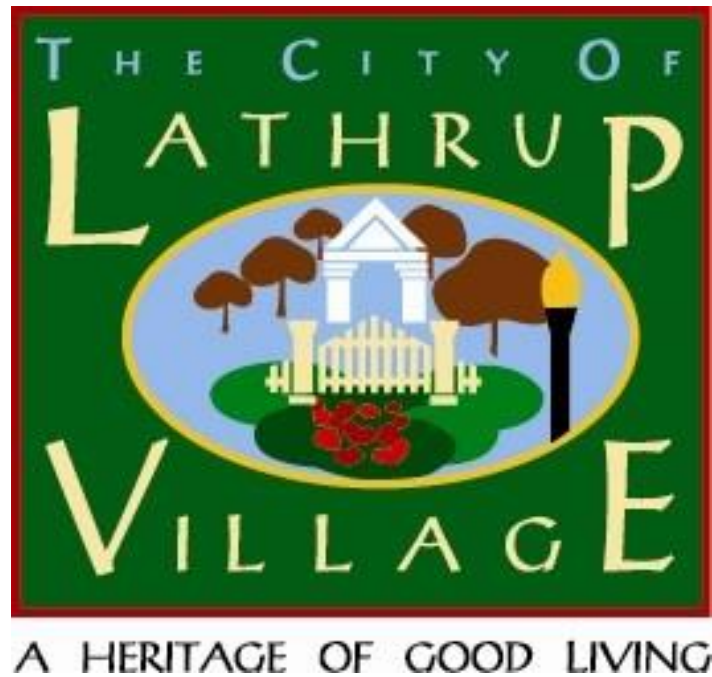
B. Communication Plan Discussion

C. In-Home Water Line Identification Plan

3. **Public Comments**

4. **Mayor and Council Comments**

5. **Adjourn**



City of Lathrup Village Communication Plan

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Executive Summary

The Communication Plan is a living document intended to be adapted and enhanced. As communications technology and platforms for citizen engagement continue to advance, this Plan is expected to change to meet the emerging needs. The Plan as it is adopted today is a snapshot of the City's current communication goals and objectives providing a unified method to achieve those goals and best serve Lathrup Village's constituents.

The Plan outlines an overall communications philosophy, structure, audience and platforms.

Why We Have a Plan

In addition to communication being a basic obligation of government and an essential component of a democratic process, communicating with the residents, business leaders and visitors to our community is vital to the continued success of Lathrup Village. Through consistent and engaged communication, Lathrup Village has the ability to grow informed participation, enhance community pride and improve overall livability. The City recognizes that having a public communication plan in place that effectively outlines this structure will foster that engaged, informed community as well as attract quality employees thereby making these efforts more efficient and comprehensive.

This Plan encompasses general and crisis communication regarding the City of Lathrup Village and its various departments, services, and programs. For disaster or emergency situations, please refer to the Emergency Management Plan for the City of Lathrup Village.

Organizational Values

The City's Communication Plan is based on the following values which guide its overall development and implementation:

- We believe in an open city government for citizens and employees.
- We believe in being the best source of information about Lathrup Village city government.
- We believe in a proactive, coordinated and timely approach to disseminating information.
- We believe in the development of a unified message that effectively supports and reflects the goals of the city government as established by the City Council.
- We believe in a unified communication system that supports open, inclusive government and provides all City employees with the training necessary to effectively and accurately communicate each department's programs and services.
- We believe in promoting positive relationships and partnerships between the city government, residents, businesses, community organizations and schools.
- We believe in the successful future of Lathrup Village for its citizens, customers and partners.

Communications Team

Everyone who represents the City government in any official capacity can be considered a communicator for the City. It is important to create a unified structure defining the message and process for all communicators to ensure reliable communication with and for the City's stakeholders. The success of a communications program depends on everyone's understanding and participation.

For the purposes of this Plan, the City defines its core communications team as follows:

- Mayor and City Council
- City Manager
- Assistant City Manager
- City Clerk
- Communications Specialist
- Department Directors and Designated Representatives
- City Boards, Commissions and Committees
- Other Council-Appointed Officials

Target Audience

A key component of any communication plan is to identify partners in the conversation.

External Stakeholders:

- Residents / Citizens
- Visitors
- Business leaders
- Community organizations
- Schools
- Regional influencers
- Media

Internal Stakeholders:

- Employees
- City Council
- City Boards, Commissions and Committees

Background

This Lathrup Village Communication Plan is new. Establishing and updating the City-wide communication plan is part of Lathrup Village City Council's commitment to keeping its constituents and partners informed. This Plan incorporates an open communications philosophy within the organization through listening and responding that guides daily operations, decisions and interactions with the public by City staff.

With the continuing advancement of digital media, this document has been developed to be dynamic and updated as needed.

Communication Structure

- **Public and Internal Communication**

Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.

- Objective 1: Regularly communicate Lathrup Village City Council decisions and actions.
- Objective 2: Make information regarding City programs and services readily available and easy to comprehend.
- Objective 3: Increase awareness, interest, participation and engagement of residents, business and community leaders in City government programs and activities.
- Objective 4: Produce quality communication that adheres to industry best practices and standards.
- Objective 5: Unify City communication outreach efforts under a shared philosophy.
- Objective 6: Increase employee awareness and build organizational confidence with City core service values.

- **Crisis Communication**

Goal: Inform our residents and protect our organization's stability and reputation in times of crisis.

- Objective 1: Assess our readiness for crisis communication scenarios.
- Objective 2: Identify protocols, tools and training to improve our communication during crisis situations.
- Objective 3: Develop Crisis Communication Plan as addendum to Communication Plan.

- **Media Relations**

Goal: Develop and maintain positive working relationships with members of the media on all aspects of City municipal services, programs, activities and news.

- Objective 1: Provide consistent, proactive news releases and public service announcements to achieve accurate coverage.
- Objective 2: Provide timely response to media inquiries and requests.
- Objective 3: Align Media Relations Policy with current communication industry trends.

Current Communication Tactics

Advertising

Except for legal requirements for public notices, the City does not, as a rule, advertise for the sole purpose of promoting itself.

Communications Training and Assistance

All City employees receive basic communications training at new employee orientation. Comprehensive social media training was conducted in 2010 and incorporated into new employee orientation.

Digital Communications

The predominant form of providing information to public constituents is through various forms of digital communications and media. Below is a listing of communication methods currently employed:

LathrupVillage.org – the official City of Lathrup Village website

[Facebook-LathrupVillage](https://www.facebook.com/LathrupVillage) – Lathrup Village Facebook page where news, events, video, and photos are posted to provide citywide news coverage for residents

Lathrup Village public subscriptions:

- City of Lathrup Village Community Calendar – event calendar for all types of community events sponsored by local or county organizations.
- City of Lathrup Village Public Meetings Calendar – event calendar for all public meetings of Council and the various boards and commissions. Meeting posts include access to specific meeting agendas/packets.
- LathrupVillage.org Notify Me – email subscription service for news and events posted to the website. Allows subscriptions to various calendars and news published by the City and various departments.
- City of Lathrup Village Emergency Alerts – urgent notifications regarding emergencies, storm clean-up, or other related information.
- Lathrup Village Weekly Update – weekly e-newsletter focusing on events and news announcements for residents.

Social Media Guidelines

The City developed a set of guidelines for City of Lathrup Village employees. The guidelines set forth expectations, guidance and best practices to make official City social media outlets successful and engaging while maintaining our brand. The guidelines are intended to cover all types of social media managed by coordinators. All employees are required to sign that they received and will adhere to the guidelines.

Graphic Identity Manual

Branding for the City was done recently and established guidelines for uniform logo usage on equipment, signage, facilities, correspondence, documents, forms and employee uniforms and other clothing, as well as specifications for logo format and color.

Media Relations

A positive working relationship with the news media is vital for successful communication of City-related information. The Communication Plan ensures the City responds in a factual, professional and, where possible, prompt manner to all media inquiries.

Print Publications

With the shift in information gathering to digital channels, the cost versus effectiveness of print publications is continually under review. In most cases, digital distribution of information is the predominant method. The City produces the quarterly newsletter *Your Town* that is mailed out to all residents and made available online.

Public Relations

The City is striving to establish good, transparent relationships with Lathrup Village residents, business owners and visitors through the various communication platforms described throughout the Plan.

The City oversees Lathrup Village Television (LVTV), the government access station. Programming is available online through [YouTube](#). Locally, residents can access the cable channel on WOW! Cable Channel 10, Comcast Channel 17, AT&T Channel 99. LVTV provides programming that is centered on government programs, activities, events, and services through public service announcements, features and news coverage.

Current Communication Tools

The City invests in a variety of software, video and technology services, tools and platforms to support communication activities. The primary tools utilized by the department are as follows:

- Revize - website content management platform
- Constant Contact – subscription platform for E-Newsletters
- Archive Social – archives all social account activity for open records purposes

Appendix A – Communications Plan Implementation

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
Goal: <i>Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
Objective 1: Regularly communicate Lathrup Village City Council decisions and actions.		
Strategy 1: Provide consistent and regular updates on city government decisions and actions.		Completion Information
Tactic 1: Comply with Michigan Open Meetings Act and post official City agendas per state law.	ONGOING	
Tactic 2: Provide on-air and internet streaming video of City Council Regular Meetings and Planning & Zoning Commission Meetings.	ONGOING	
Tactic 3: Distribute media releases on development and major infrastructure projects approved by Council.	ONGOING	

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
Goal: <i>Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
Objective 2: Make information regarding City programs and services readily available and easy to comprehend.		
Strategy 1: Provide an accessible and informative website presence that is easy to use.		Completion Information
Tactic 1: Work with contracted website vendor to maintain reliable public websites.	ONGOING	
Tactic 2: Coordinate and train departmental staff responsible (website coordinators) for website information updates and maintenance.	Annual best practice training for all website coordinators.	
Tactic 3: Analyze website statistics and usage and adjust as needed.	Monthly	
Tactic 4: Conduct website audit	Annual – basic Every third year - comprehensive	Last comprehensive audit completed 2019?

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
Goal: <i>Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
Objective 2: Make information regarding City programs and services readily available and easy to comprehend.		
Strategy 2: Monitor communication preferences and accessibility needs of City stakeholders.		Completion Information
Tactic 1: Analyze current communication channel statistics for patterns and deficiencies.	ONGOING	
Tactic 2: Make reasonable communication accommodations available and upon request in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.	ONGOING	

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION	
<i>Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>	
Objective 2: Make information regarding City programs and services readily available and easy to comprehend.	
Strategy 3: Effectively communicate transition from general communications to emergency communications as per the Emergency Management Plan governed by City of Lathrup Village Police Department.	As Needed

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
Goal: <i>Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
Objective 3: Increase awareness, interest, participation and engagement of residents, business and community leaders in City government programs and activities.		
Strategy 1: Provide dependable and accurate public communication through cross functioning communication platforms		Completion Information
Tactic 1: Oversee departmental release of information and coordinate cross promotional efforts.	ONGOING	
Tactic 2: Produce and show quality programming through LVTv.	ONGOING	
Tactic 3: Maintain informative and accessible City websites.	ONGOING	
Tactic 4: Monitor and engage in official City social media outlets.	ONGOING	
Tactic 5: Produce print and digital publications for city-wide distribution and/or subscription.	ONGOING	
Tactic 6: Utilize available technology to multiply information release and reach to stakeholders.	ONGOING	
Tactic 7: Regularly assess various communication platforms effectiveness.	ONGOING	

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
Goal: <i>Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
Objective 3: Increase awareness, interest, participation and engagement of residents, business and community leaders in City government programs and activities.		
Strategy 2: Investigate emerging technology and communication trends.		Completion Information
Tactic 1: Identify new sources for best practice information, training, and tools through participation in regional and online seminars and programs through organizations such as Public Relations Society of America, Government Social Media, Social Shake-Up and others.		
Tactic 2: Identify and implement new communication platforms.		

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
Goal: <i>Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
Objective 3: Increase awareness, interest, participation and engagement of residents, business and community leaders in City government programs and activities.		
Strategy 3: Create a positive feedback loop that encourages open dialogue with public.		Completion Information
Tactic 1: Develop communication partner relationships with community, civic, religious, and business organizations in Lathrup Village.	ONGOING	
Tactic 2: Produce and distribute specialty content to reach select audiences such as new residents, HOAs, or neighborhood block captains.	ONGOING	
Tactic 3: Respond within 24 business hours to questions, requests, and concerns received via phone, email, mobile app, or on social media channels.	ONGOING	
Tactic 4: Continually monitor technological developments in citizen engagement platforms.	ONGOING	
Tactic 5: Provide a variety of options for residents to participate in public forums.	ONGOING	

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
Goal: <i>Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
Objective 3: Increase awareness, interest, participation and engagement of residents, business and community leaders in City government programs and activities.		
Strategy 4: Investigate feasibility of creating citizen program to educate on basic municipal operations.		Completion Information
Tactic 1: Research programs offered by other municipalities.		
Tactic 2: Research citizen interest in program and Council and staff interest and availability.		

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
Goal: <i>Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
Objective 4: Produce quality communication that adheres to industry best practices and standards.		
Strategy 1: Conduct city-wide communication audit on an ongoing basis.		Completion Information
Tactic 1: Coordinate updates and revisions to communication materials across departments to adhere to uniform guidelines.	ONGOING	
Tactic 2: Utilize editorial calendar to track reoccurring events and activities.	ONGOING	
Tactic 3: Utilize social media management platform to streamline management of official social media accounts.	ONGOING	
Tactic 4: Develop and maintain message strategy and voice for each social platform	ONGOING	

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
<i>Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
Objective 5: Unify City communication outreach efforts under a shared philosophy.		
Strategy 1: Increase awareness among City employees of communication structure.	Completion Information	
Tactic 1: Conduct consultative outreach meeting on communication plan development and maintenance with departmental marketing and outreach staff.		
Tactic 2: Coordinate with Communications Specialist to provide basic communications training for employees.		

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
<i>Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
Objective 3: Unify City communication outreach efforts under a shared philosophy.		
Strategy 2: Educate employees on various aspects of Social Media.	Completion Information	
Tactic 1: Review policy on employee use of social media and current industry trends and tools		
Tactic 2: Modify policy as needed based on research and best practices		
Tactic 3: Coordinate with Communications Specialist to provide basic training on the City's social media policy and guidelines.		
Tactic 4: Provide best practices training for employees who manage social media accounts on behalf of the City.		

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
<i>Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
Objective 3: Unify City communication outreach efforts under a shared philosophy.		
Strategy 3: Create Graphic Identity Manual.	Completion Information	
Tactic 1: Create graphic identity manual containing all branding, logos, and print material.		
Tactic 2: Conduct comparative research on other municipalities' graphic identity policies and usage.		
Tactic 3: Include results and findings from research as well as address supplemental City logo development and usage guidelines.		

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
<i>Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
Objective 6: Increase employee awareness and build organizational confidence with City core service values.		
Strategy 1: Coordinate with Communications Specialist to develop strategic plan on internal communication objectives, structure and methods.	Completion Information	
Tactic 1: Form internal communication advisory committee.		
Tactic 2: Conduct audit of current internal communication efforts.		
Tactic 3: Define communication process, structure and roles related to release of employee communication		

PUBLIC AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION		
<i>Goal: Responsibly communicate information regarding City programs and services through a framework of unified, layered communication methods.</i>		
Objective 6: Increase employee awareness and build organizational confidence with City core service values.		
Strategy 2: Develop effective communication tools/methods for reaching all levels of employees – from desk to field, etc.		
Tactic 1: Conduct audit of current method to reach varying levels of employees.		
Tactic 2: Research communication tools available to enhance communication efforts across all levels of employees.		
Tactic 3: Implement findings and best practices.		

CRISIS COMMUNICATION	
<i>Goal: Inform our residents and protect our organization's stability and reputation in times of crisis.</i>	
Objective 1: Assess our readiness for crisis communication scenarios.	
Objective 2: Identify protocols, tools and training to improve our communication during crisis situations.	
Objective 3: Develop Crisis Communication Plan as addendum to Communication Plan.	
Strategy 1: Lathrup Village Chief of Police or Designee to participate in Public Communicator Certification	

MEDIA RELATIONS		
Goal: <i>Develop and maintain positive working relationships with members of the media on all aspects of City municipal services, programs, activities and news.</i>		
Objective 1: Provide consistent, proactive news releases and public service announcements to achieve accurate coverage.		
Strategy 1: Regularly distribute releases, briefs and/or newsflashes to area media on City related programs, activities, events, actions, etc.		Completion Information
Tactic 1: Maintain regular media distribution list and technique for efficient delivery of releases and news tips.		
Tactic 2: Promote various City sources for information about City programs and service to the media for proactive media access.		

MEDIA RELATIONS		
Goal: <i>Develop and maintain positive working relationships with members of the media on all aspects of City municipal services, programs, activities and news.</i>		
Objective 1: Provide consistent, proactive news releases and public service announcements to achieve accurate coverage.		
Strategy 2: Continue to foster a proactive approach within the organization regarding possible emerging issues or controversies.		Completion Information
Tactic 1: Utilize regular Executive Staff Meetings as internal forum to participate in an ongoing discussion about items of potential media interest.		
Tactic 2: Conduct regular interdepartmental status meetings on upcoming programs, events, activities, etc. in need of promotion or of media interest.		

MEDIA RELATIONS		
<i>Goal: Develop and maintain positive working relationships with members of the media on all aspects of City municipal services, programs, activities and news.</i>		
Objective 2: Provide timely response to media inquiries and requests.		
Strategy 1: Regularly review media requests and respond accordingly.	Completion Information	
Tactic 1: Respond to media requests and inquiries in a timely manner		
Tactic 2: Coordinate subject matter experts as needed for media requests		
Tactic 3: Log and report media interaction		

MEDIA RELATIONS		
<i>Goal: Develop and maintain positive working relationships with members of the media on all aspects of City municipal services, programs, activities and news.</i>		
Objective 2: Provide timely response to media inquiries and requests.		
Strategy 2: Foster working relationships with members of the media.	Completion Information	
Tactic 1: Provide individual news tips and possible stories to local media.		
Tactic 2: Reach out to new members of the local media to discuss general information gathering opportunities for Lathrup Village.		
TACTIC 3: Assess opportunities to host media events		

MEDIA RELATIONS		
<i>Goal: Develop and maintain positive working relationships with members of the media on all aspects of City municipal services, programs, activities and news.</i>		
Objective 3: Align Media Relations Policy with Current Communication Industry Trends.		
Strategy 1: Create Media Relations Policy.		Completion Information
Tactic 1: Determine media relations needs.		
Tactic 2: Conduct comparative research on other municipalities' media relations policies.		
Tactic 3: Conduct comparative research on current communication trends.		
Tactic 4: Create media relations policy to include results and findings from research.		

Appendix B –Digital Strategy

The Digital Strategy applies to the City’s primary website and social media platforms. It has been developed to guide types of content and frequency of sharing on a per-platform basis that can be managed by existing staff resources.

OUR VOICE:

- Professional
- Factual
- Authentic
- Respectful
- Good-natured

OUR STRATEGY

Channel	Messages	Frequency
Main Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All service, program, facility and event information • News, announcements and updates 	Weekly updates and posts
LVTN (PEG Channel)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council and P&Z Commission meeting coverage • PSAs on City events and services • Calendar/bulletin board • Specialty features • Spotlights and program series • Content from other government agency sources • Includes Video-on-demand and live streaming 	Weekly meeting coverage Weekly changes in program content PSAs and programs/mo.
Email Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News highlights and events 	Weekly distribution
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News, alerts, updates, events, goodwill messages 	5-10 posts/wk
YouTube	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program and event PSAs • People / program features 	6-10 uploads/mo
Your Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trash/recycling and seasonal reminders • Major information campaigns • Citizen volunteer invitations • Targeted traffic/road construction alerts 	Quarterly



CITY OF LATHRUP VILLAGE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

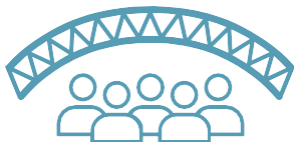
PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of this Communications Plan (Plan) is to clearly define the messages, priorities, strategies, and tools the City of Lathrup Village will use when communicating with the community. The Plan ensures the Lathrup Village story is told effectively despite interference, and engagement between the City and the community is implemented in a timely and effective manner.

This Plan aligns with the strategic priorities of the Lathrup Village City Council, furthering the City's mission and enhancing community pride.

PLAN GOAL

The goal of the Communications Plan is to increase stakeholder engagement and community understanding of City services, initiatives, and resources, and to record measurable outcomes that inform future communication.



Community: Lathrup Village has an intense sense of community and pride. The fabric of our diverse community is woven together through concerts, parades, festivals, cultural celebrations, and abounding volunteerism.



Small Town Feel: Lathrup Village is the city where you know your neighbors by name. There is intense support for – and pride in – all things local. Lathrup Village is a great place to raise a family with tight-knit neighborhoods, block parties, and tree-lined streets.



COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST – CORE FUNCTIONS

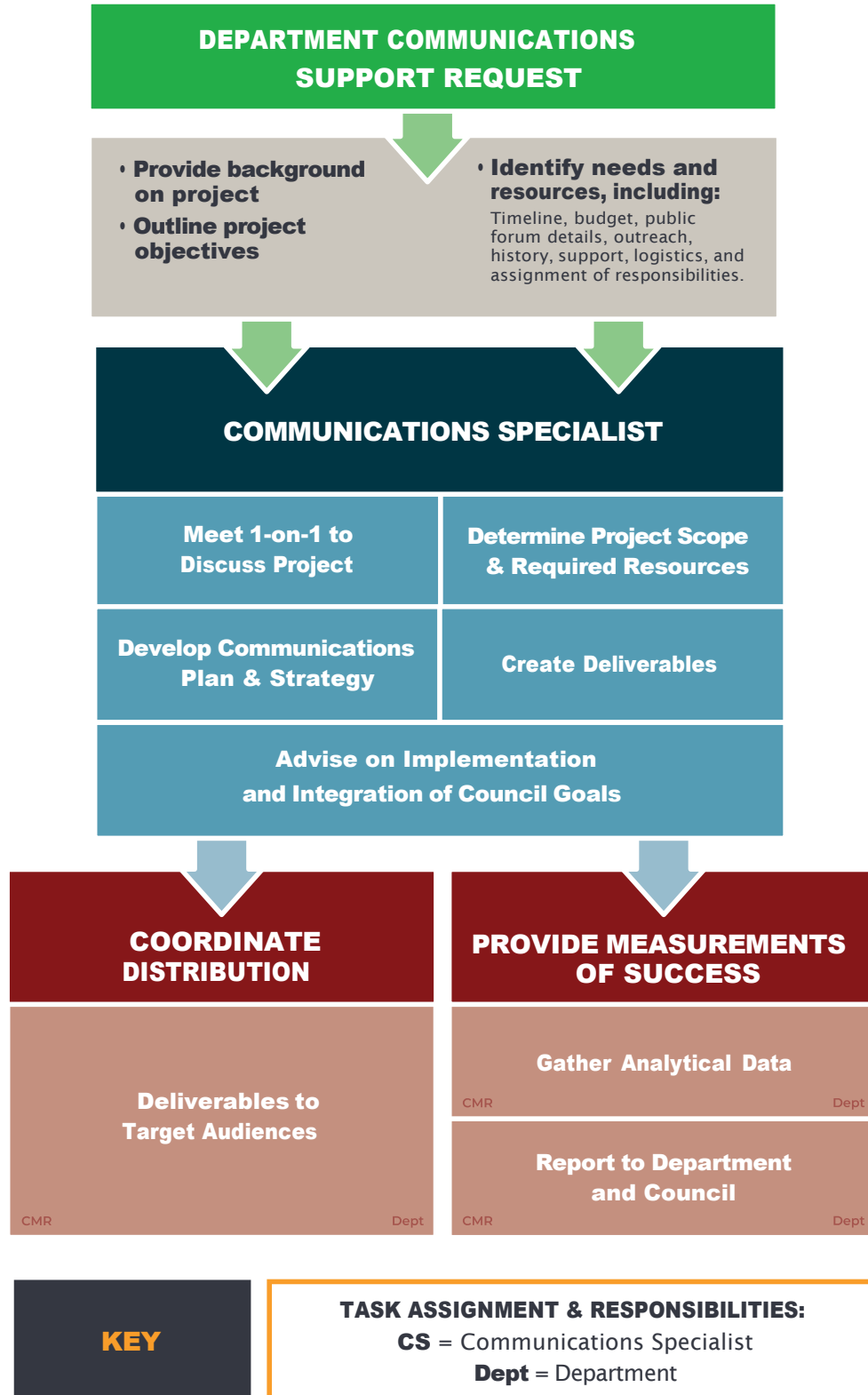
ROLE OF THE COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

The role of the Communications Specialist is to establish, nurture, and sustain a high level of trust in Lathrup Village's City government among residents, businesses, visitors, and other key stakeholders. The City must maintain its organizational integrity and a positive brand reputation through its strategic communication efforts. The Communications Specialist is a primary conduit for sharing timely, accurate, important, and relevant information to the people the City serves. Below is an overview of the functions of this position and its communications process.

Strategic Communication Planning Process	Implement City Council's strategic planning goals and guiding principles through thoughtful, essential, and effective communications. This form of communication is about telling the stories of Lathrup Village services and how those services impact the community. By uncovering and sharing the human aspect of the City's work, we illustrate how implied goals are translated into action for our residents and businesses.
Communications Support for Offices and Departments	As department leaders and City staff seek communications support for programs and projects, the Communications Specialist staff helps to ensure that projects, initiatives, and events are communicated through the lens of the Lathrup Village brand.
Public Engagement	Communications staff works to develop and carry out successful strategies to engage the public in their local government through participation at events, through digital platforms, and with City services.
Brand Management	The Communications Specialist ensures the Lathrup Village brand is being used consistently and brand messages are used appropriately and often in all communication efforts.
Emergency Communication	This form of communication occurs unexpectedly and takes many forms. When a crisis occurs, the Communications Specialist will develop and position emergency messages, correctly and effectively disseminate information, prepare department leaders and emergency responders, and manage media relations.

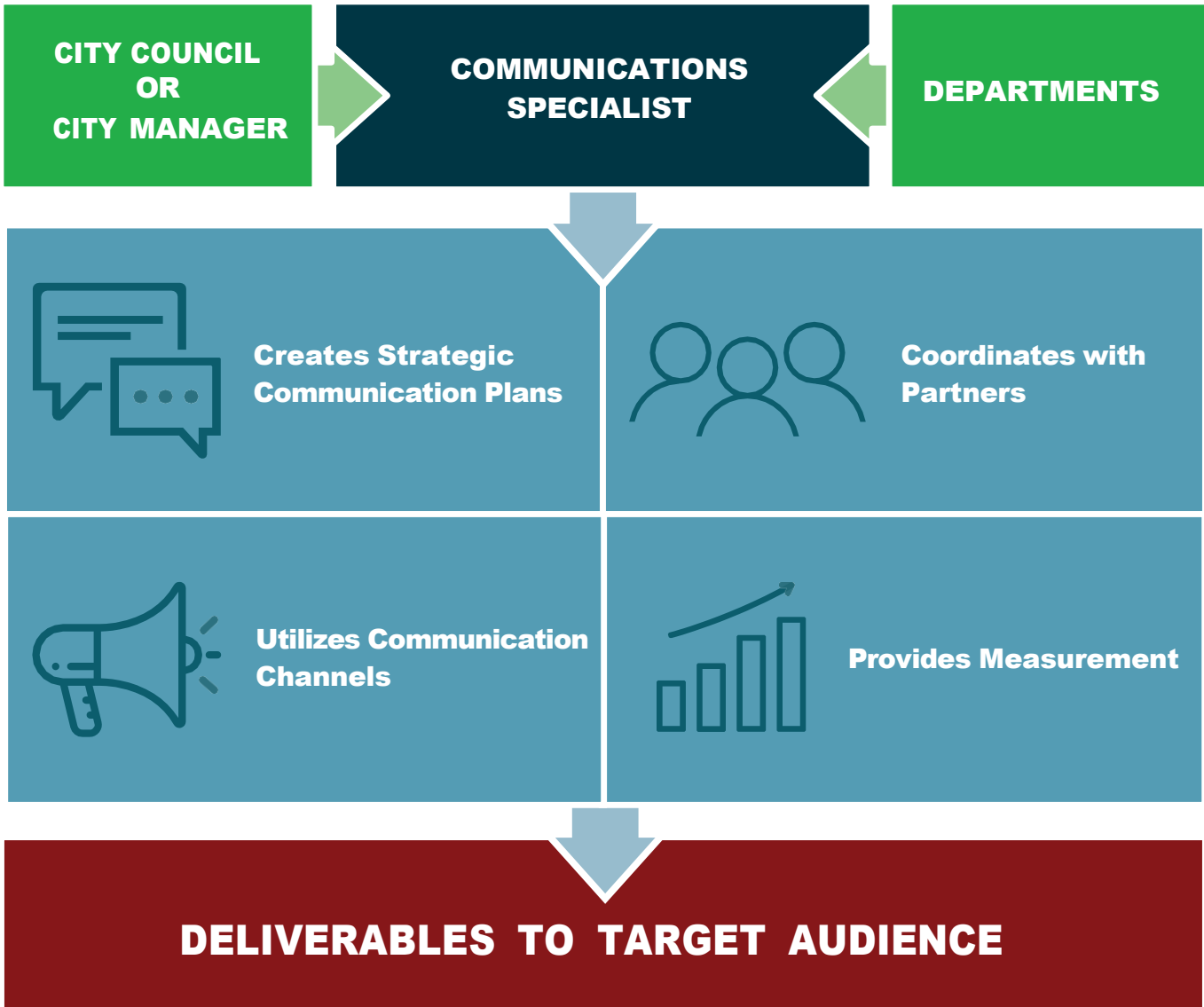
OFFICE AND DEPARTMENT SUPPORT PROCESS

Use this chart to better understand how communication requests flow through the division and the responsibilities of each team member.



STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLANNING PROCESS

To best support the City, the Communications Specialist utilizes this process to intake ideas, strategize key messages and create high-quality content in order to effectively communicate and engage the residents of Lathrup Village.





COMMUNICATION PRIORITIES FOR THE COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

The Communications Specialist has the principal responsibility for supporting, guiding, and managing communications functions in the overall City organization.

This Communications Plan is based on the priorities below. Practical strategies and tactics to achieve our goals follow each priority. The result of this Plan is a more effective local government with broad community interaction, and greater community understanding of City goals and services.

PRIORITY #1: Lead Strategic Communication Efforts

Work directly with Council, staff, and partners to ensure communication and outreach efforts, objectives, and outcomes align with the strategic goals of the organization and promote community understanding.

PRIORITY #2: Create Opportunities for Effective Stakeholder Participation and Collaboration

Encourage engagement through audience-appropriate, two-way communication and opportunities for constructive feedback.

PRIORITY #3: Provide Open and Timely Communication

Share accurate, non-biased information promptly through a variety of communication channels.

PRIORITY #4: Reinforce Brand Identity

Develop consistent messaging that builds and solidifies Lathrup Village's brand and tells the City's story with one voice.

PRIORITY #5: Ensure a Well-Informed City Workforce

Keep City employees informed and involved in public engagement so they can assist in telling the Lathrup Village story.

PRIORITY #6: Provide Measurements of Progress and Success

Track metrics to evaluate communication efforts and effectiveness in order to guide future communications programs and projects.

PRIORITY #1: Lead Strategic Communication Efforts

Work directly with Council, staff, and partners to ensure communication and outreach efforts, objectives, and outcomes align with the strategic goals of the organization and promote community understanding.

STRATEGIES

Create a better understanding of City Council goals and priorities. By clearly and consistently outlining the goals and vision for the City of Lathrup Village, residents will have a better understanding of why and how public policy decisions are made, and actions are implemented by the local government, and will trust that their suggestions and feedback is considered in policies, procedures, and programs.

Work directly with the city administrator and department directors to ensure messaging and communication efforts support the City's Strategic Plan and City Council priorities. Just as City projects and initiatives should align with Council's priorities and tie into the City's long-range planning initiatives, all communication efforts should also reflect and support City goals. This includes internal communication initiatives for employees, external communication to community members, and communication shared with partner organizations. This coordination ensures consistency, strengthens strategic message delivery, and enhances mutual understanding.

TACTICS

1. Quarterly Meetings with Departments

Meet quarterly with each department to discuss the major issues and opportunities coming up in the next quarter and beyond, identify communication priorities and resources, and develop key messages and communication strategies.

2. Share Goals and Vision on Website

The City's website is the first place that residents go for information about Lathrup Village, and it's important to clearly outline the vision and central goals of the City on the site. This is a simple and effective way to show the guidelines that government officials refer to when making decisions and how they are working to shape Lathrup Village for the future.

3. Integrate Vision, Goals, and Strategies into Communication Efforts

The main vision, goals, and strategies of the City should be present in all forms of communication. By sharing these points with residents, the City can regularly articulate how services and actions are related and help achieve its goals.

4. Standardize Communication Processes and Procedures

To help ensure that a project or initiative is properly communicated, a solid communication process should be established. Through this process, standard communication steps can be outlined and then followed for each new messaging campaign. This may include sharing information on the City website, scheduling social media posts or in-person meetings, distributing information to the media and City staff, and creating custom graphics for the campaign. The process will be adjusted based on the project goals and constraints, but a general approach will provide a framework for how communication tools can be used.

PRIORITY #2: Create Opportunities for Effective Stakeholder Participation and Collaboration

Encourage engagement through audience-appropriate, two-way communication and opportunities for constructive feedback.

STRATEGIES

Use interactive communication approaches to maintain ongoing dialogue between constituents and City government. Provide opportunities for two-way communication whenever possible. It's important to solicit feedback on how the City is doing and how it can best serve the community and its constituencies. Put tools in place that make it easier for residents to engage with their local government, gain a better understanding of City services, and achieve greater consensus for programs.

Expand outreach to audiences in targeted areas and special groups. The residents of Lathrup Village are diverse and come from many cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Use a variety of communication methods and leverage partnerships to reach a broader audience. Utilize the platforms the audience prefers to more effectively distribute information.

TACTICS

1. Community Polls and Micro-Interactions	<p>Separate from a large, formal survey, the City will offer smaller and more manageable opportunities for public input several times a year based on information the City Council and staff needs to fulfill the goals and policies of the strategic plan. It is a best practice only to ask questions about topics the City can truly influence, change, or resolve. When soliciting feedback, it is important to be conscious of how the input will be used. If the City asks for feedback on projects or programs, it is assumed by the participant that their feedback will be used in decision making. Thus, interactions should be focused on specific projects and initiatives.</p>
2. External Advisory Groups (either formal or informal)	<p>Establish general or issue-specific community advisory groups that can ensure the City is collaboratively marketing to reach Lathrup Village's diverse audience segments. This could include creating a more formal advisory group or intentionally engaging with external stakeholders when an opportunity arises that warrants their unique perspective and input.</p>
3. Collaborate with Education Institutions	<p>Meet regularly with counterparts at the local county office of education, school districts, and colleges in order to share communication goals and initiatives.</p>

PRIORITY #3: Provide Open and Timely Communication

Share accurate, non-biased information promptly through a variety of communication channels.

STRATEGIES

Provide information that is convenient, timely, and easily accessible for the target audience. Lathrup Village should be prompt in publishing information on a variety of channels appropriate for key audiences so that the public is informed as quickly as possible. Timely and effective distribution of relevant information will reinforce the City's commitment to transparency and demonstrates that public feedback is highly valued.

Promote accurate, comprehensive local and regional media coverage. Building relationships between the City and local media is helpful to the community. By working with the media to establish greater trust, the City will have more influence over the accuracy of information that is communicated to the public and increase the likelihood of stories about Lathrup Village receiving appropriate media coverage.

TACTICS

1. Editorial Calendars

Develop an annual editorial calendar and review and update monthly to strategically plan out social media, newsletter, news media, and website content. This will help ensure communication campaigns are coordinated to reduce conflicts and resource bottlenecks, and allow the City to be strategic about communicating important projects, overarching stories, and timely topics.

2. Annual Financial Reporting

Through the Budget, the City helps facilitate resident learning about how government works and outlines the services provided by the City. Annual reports highlight spending and explain current challenges. These reports will be made more accessible when shared electronically and through social media in small pieces using infographics. This will help expand the reach of the formal reports and educate community members about government operations and policies.

4. Columns, Editorial and Paid Content Opportunities

To have greater presence and ensure consistent messages, feature articles, guest columns, and/or editorial opportunities should be developed in coordination with the Communications Specialist. The City will work with local newspapers to provide regularly scheduled columns in which a City representative writes about pertinent City-related topics.

PRIORITY #4: Reinforce Brand Identity

Develop consistent messaging that builds and solidifies Lathrup Village's brand and tells the City's story with one voice.

STRATEGIES

Empower and train employees to use the City brand correctly in order to tell the City's story with "one voice." Employees can be empowered to help reinforce the City's brand by incorporating personal stories in media interactions and online engagements and offer suggestions on how to reinforce the City's motto in everyday work. Every interaction a staff member has with the public is an opportunity to build brand awareness, whether it is through email, a phone call, or face-to-face interactions.

Implement effective strategies for increasing brand awareness through marketing and advertising. With the City's diverse demographics, the most communication impact will come from using both traditional and innovative digital communication tools. Reinforce the notion that the City brand is not the logo, tagline, and motto in-and-of themselves; it's our story, told in many ways over time.

TACTICS

1. Collaborate with Community Organizations to Market the City for Broader Awareness

Meet with social influencers and stakeholder groups to find common interests and collaborative ways to market the City of Lathrup Village and highlight all the great things the community has to offer. Example partners could include: Southfield Chamber of Commerce, Oakland County, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Lathrup Village Community Foundation, Lathrup Village DDA, Southfield Public Schools, and non-profit and public agencies. Partnering with these types of groups can add communication channels for the City to reach a broader audience. Reach out to industry or trade groups that reflect the Lathrup Village market to align storytelling efforts.

2. City Messaging

Establishing core messages about the community as well as City administration and departments, will support staff and Council efforts to help tell the Lathrup Village story.

3. Employee Ambassador Program

Empower employee “storytellers” to be the eyes, ears, and voice of the organization and expand upon the City’s traditional communication reach. These employees serve as champions, helping to spread information about important topics, listening to community concerns and ideas, and reinforcing the City’s brand. At least one employee from each department serves as an employee ambassador to support the City’s communication, messaging, and branding efforts. This group also assists in developing an editorial calendar.

4. Brand Education for Employees

Train employees to utilize the City’s brand and style guide and online brand platform. At least annually and as-needed, offer training and education on the City’s brand and importance of brand consistency.

PRIORITY #5: Ensure a Well-Informed City Workforce

Keep City employees informed and involved in public dialogue so they can assist in telling the Lathrup Village story.

STRATEGIES

Provide employees with regular opportunities to learn about the issues, challenges, and decisions affecting both the City’s operations and the work environment. Communicate with employees on as many platforms as necessary so all employees receive consistent and timely messages. Provide relevant and accurate information to employees in the office and in the field.

TACTICS

1. Regular Employee Information	Develop and distribute regular employee newsletters, email blasts, and messages from the City Administrator and other executive team members.
2. Provide Employee “Storyteller” Training	Every community meeting is an opportunity for City employees to be on the record representing the City, and thus an opportunity for news media and community networks to quote them. Training for employees will strengthen their professional skills while improving their effectiveness as representatives.
3. Develop Regular Face-to-Face Meetings with Employee Groups	It’s important for City management to meet with employees in town halls, tailgates, awards events, etc., to strengthen familiarity and trust within the organization. At the same time, these are opportunities for employees to ask questions and get straight answers.
4. Celebrate Employee Accomplishments	As teams and individuals accomplish significant milestones, we will provide opportunities for the workforce and the community to understand and appreciate these achievements.

PRIORITY #6: Provide Measurements of Progress and Success

Track metrics to evaluate communication efforts and effectiveness in order to guide future communications programs and projects.

STRATEGIES

There are a variety of standard metrics, also known as key performance indicators, which will be used to track the success of the City’s communication techniques. The City will evaluate these metrics on a regular basis and compare them to previous statistics to understand what techniques are working well and which need improvements, refinement, or further implementation.

Less standard metrics that are quite a bit more challenging to monitor include behavior changes, attitude changes, and awareness changes. These metrics are attached to considerable effort but may give a better picture of outreach effectiveness. The Communications Specialist will continue to look for proven methods for monitoring these metrics.

As part of our ongoing communication planning process and ahead of each major project launch, staff will set goals then outline the key performance indicators that will be used to identify success, measure effectiveness, and refine future plans.



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

MEDIA COVERAGE

News Releases	The number of releases reacted to by the media.
News Sentiment	The sentiment of mentions, articles or interviews published by the media.
Reach	The reach of advertisements (both paid and unpaid) and news stories in media outlets. Examples include ads and news stories in print and online and the number of people who saw it based on the number of publications printed or the number of people who visited the webpage where the content is located.

E-BLASTS / E-NEWSLETTERS

Subscribers	The number of people who have signed up to receive the communication.
Open Rate	The average percentage of recipients who open the email or notification.
Click-Through Rate	The average percentage of recipients who click on an active link within the email or publication.

WEBSITE

Unique Visits	The number of distinct individuals visiting the site.
Page Views	The number of times a page on the site has been viewed.
Top Pages	The pages that are visited most frequently – the top 5-10 should be tracked regularly.
Bounce Rate	The percentage of people that navigate away from the site after only viewing one page. A lower bounce rate means that people are exploring the page and finding the information they need.
Search Terms	The more frequently a term is searched, the more likely it is that visitors are not finding what they need and suggest it may need to be displayed more prominently.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Followers	The number of people who subscribe to, and follow, the City's pages.
Engagement	The number of people who take action by interacting with the City's pages including likes, comments, tags, or shares.
Reach	The number of people who saw the City's posts.
Quantity and Quality of Posts	Number of posts and metrics on content, including photos, videos, events, and polls.

PRINTED MATERIALS AND PAID ADVERTISEMENTS

Distribution Rates	The number of places a printed piece can be found – both physical and online – and the actual number of pieces distributed.
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OTHER METRICS

Quantity of survey responses
Council feedback
Reduction in unsolicited inquiries to departments (demonstrating that the proactive messaging is working at effectively delivering the message)
Digital billboard effectiveness
Video views
Poll results that demonstrate community understanding and engagement
Consistency in brand use across departments
Positive employee response to storyteller program
Positive community or industry response to advisory groups (quantity and frequency of participation)
Quantity of community complaints
Event and forum attendance



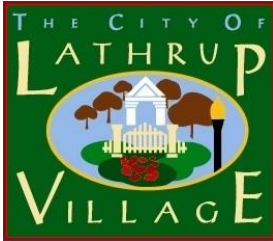
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

HIGH PRIORITY

- Institute an engaging Employee Storyteller Program
- Identify ways to bring brand training to employees
- Integrate City vision, goals, and strategies into communication efforts

MEDIUM PRIORITY

- Collaborate with community organizations to market the City, serving as ambassadors of the Lathrup Village brand
- Collaborate with external advisory groups (either formal or informal) to ensure effective communication and marketing within the community
- Attend quarterly department meetings in order to create mini major project-specific communications plans
- Outline the City's Strategic Plan elements on the website
- Develop or retool community polls and micro-interactions
- Research and establish editorial calendars, along with a process of developing content for columns, editorials, and paid opportunities
- Develop and implement a City branding strategy



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COUNCIL COMMUNICATION:

TO: Mayor Garrett and City Council Members
FROM: Susan Montenegro, City Administrator
DATE: April 17, 2023
RE: Coordinated Water Service Line Identification Plan

A coordinated water service line identification plan has been developed to outline necessary steps in promoting and completing identification of each water service line in Lathrup Village before the deadline of December 31, 2024.

Currently, there are approximately 1700 water service lines that still need to be identified. The plan is a coordinated effort to incentivize water customers to perform self-identification of the water service line in their home or business. Incentives are listed in the plan that will be rolled out per council's approval to increase the likelihood of cooperation.

An RFP is ready to go out this week to hire a contractor to perform this work. Another idea is to consider hiring or contracting out the inspections. If hired, the inspector would be covered under the city's insurance. If contracted, the inspector would be required to carry insurance/workers compensation/liability and have the city listed as an additional insured.

I look forward to discussing this further with Council at the meeting and answering questions.

Suggested Motion:

No motion is needed as this is informational. Council can provide direction on preference of doing an RFP or hiring/contracting the inspections out.

COORDINATED WATER SERVICE LINE IDENTIFICATION PLAN

Education Campaign

1. Postcards will be mailed to every water customer explaining the need to complete the water service line identification at their location.
 - a. Instructions and QR code will be included.
 - b. Incentives will be listed.
 - i. \$50 off water bill to first 100 that complete water service line identification test. (\$5,000)
 - ii. \$30 off water bill to next 100 that complete water service line identification test. (\$3,000)
 - iii. \$15 off water bill to next 100 that complete water service line identification test. (\$1,500)
2. Explain the state mandated testing and due date for completion.
3. Explain how the test is performed.
4. Targeted campaign on the following: (include “how to” video where applicable)
 - a. Order and place temporary yard signs throughout the city. (Block captains and staff will place in designated areas)
 - b. Mail postcards.
 - c. City website.
 - d. City Facebook page.
 - e. Weekly e-newsletter.
 - f. Quarterly *Your Town* publication.

Block Captains

- a. Create block segments throughout the city.
- b. Incentivize block captain to sign up.
 - i. Block captains can earn \$5 per address contacted that completes test on their next water bill (need to flush this out more)
- c. Create and provide document to record addresses contacted/completed.
- d. Provide informational flyers to hand out.

RFP for Water Service Line Identification

1. Send out RFP on April 18, 2023.
2. Bid opening on May 8, 2023.

3. Award of Bid on May 15, 2023.
4. List of addresses where inspections/identifications need to take place will be created no later than May 26, 2023.
5. Project start date is June 1, 2023.
6. Project end date is June 1, 2024.

Other Ideas

1. Hire, or contract with, retired plumber(s) or engineer(s) to do water service line inspections.
 - a. Responsible to schedule appointments with water customers.
 - b. Pay by inspection (\$25 x 3 inspections in one hour = \$75/hour).
 - c. If hired would be covered under city insurance/workers compensation/liability.
 - d. If contracted be required to carry insurance/workers compensation/liability with City listed as additional insured.
2. Incentivize water customers to keep appointments.
 - a. \$10 off next water bill if inspection done by City.
 - b. \$50 fee charged to water customer for missed appointment, \$75 charged for subsequent missed appointments.

Timeline for Implementation

1. Temporary yard signs ordered and placed no later than July 1, 2023.
2. Flyers created and printed for dissemination no later than May 25, 2023.
3. RFP timeline listed above.
4. Block captains given training of expectations by June 1, 2023.
5. Posting for inspector (if this option is chosen) will be done by April 21, 2023 and will run until May 8, 2023.
 - a. City Administrator will select top candidates to present to Council for selection and approval at the May 15, 2023 regular council meeting.

Monitoring Progress

1. Staff will monitor GIS self-reporting site weekly.
2. Addresses will be updated bi-weekly.
3. Block captains will report bi-weekly.
4. RFP or hiring plumber/engineer will report weekly.
5. Monthly updates will be given to Council.

