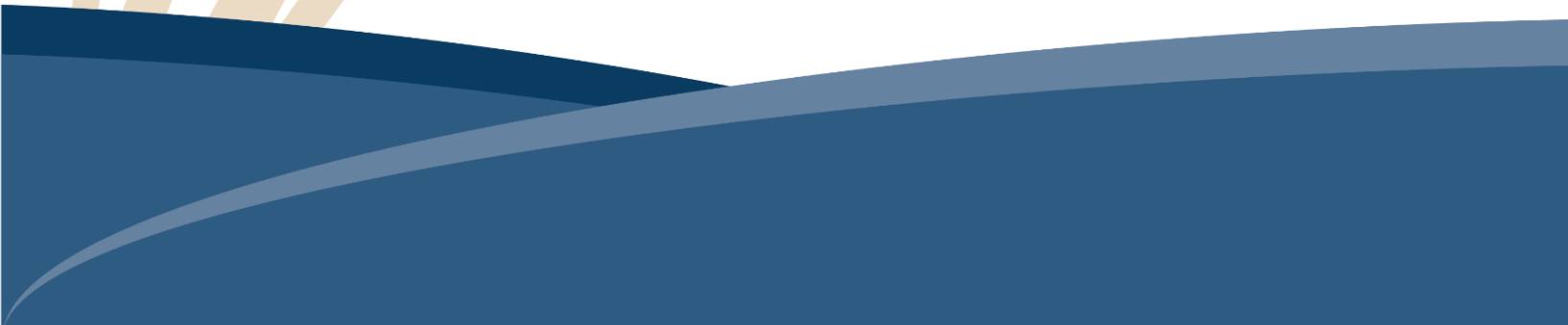


Strategic Communications Plan



Purpose

The City of Ramsey is committed to maintaining effective communication. The City recognizes that quality communication plays an integral role in its ability to responsibly grow the community, and provide quality, cost-effective and efficient government services. The Strategic Communications Plan is intended to be a tool to ensure the City meets the communications goals of the City Council.

This plan will define the target audiences and identify key messages the City intends to deliver. The purpose of this Plan is to ensure the City has an intentional and consistent voice and message.

The City's messaging will be:

1. Accurate – The City will strive to produce material that is free of error and correct in all details.
2. Timely – Material will be produced promptly and at opportune times.
3. Honest – Material will present truthful and sincere information to the best of the author's knowledge at the time of publication.
4. Relatable – Material will include language of empathy and understanding as to avoid seeming unreachable, unattainable or impersonal.
5. Clear – Material will be easily understood; free of unnecessary language and jargon and providing definitions when needed. Examples include CUP, PUD, JPA, TIF and others.
6. Consistent – Material produced should reflect the same message (always guided by the Strategic Plan) over time.

Audience

The City of Ramsey's target audiences are:

- 1) Residents – Ramsey has over 27,000 citizens. This includes homeowners, renters, and various family-members.
- 2) Businesses – Ramsey is home to over 500 businesses. This audience includes owners, executives, and managers of Ramsey businesses, and prospect businesses.
- 3) Visitors – Thousands of people travel to, or through, Ramsey annually. This audience includes visitors, commuters, shoppers, and employees of local businesses.
- 4) Developers – Ramsey is the second fastest growing community in Anoka County, with over 1,200 acres of greenfield still untapped. This audience includes developers, brokers, builders, and contractors.

Priorities

The City's Communications Plan is based on the foundation of the City Council's Strategic Plan. The following section outlines the City's core values and strategic vision for the future.

Mission Statement

It is our mission to work together to responsibly grow our community and to provide quality, cost-effective and efficient government services.

Vision Statement

Ramsey will be a secure, citizen-driven, collaborative community that respects the balance and connectivity between its unique urban, rural and natural environments.

Objectives

The City of Ramsey's communication efforts are centered on the following strategic priorities:

1. Financial Stability
2. A Balance of Rural Character and Urban Growth
3. An Active and Connected Community
4. Smart, Citizen Focused Government
5. An Effective Organization

Below are general, high-level, messages the City would like to deliver to its identified audiences on a consistent basis as outlined in the City's Communications Content Calendar. In situations that require a more targeted message, staff will default to the strategic messages outlined in this document, and the City's Strategic Plan.

Messages

These messages are the driving force of the organization. They serve as our "why" when deciding how resources, like time and funding, should be spent. These messages serve as the broad picture for detailed and specific projects. Each audience may require a modified version of these messages, so the audience and messages should be considered 'plug and play.'

- 1) The City recognizes that residents made a decision to reside within Ramsey, and appreciates the investment residents make in the community (e.g. property taxes, neighborhoods, schools, community organizations, civic matters, economy, natural environment, family, etc.)
- 2) The City of Ramsey values and respects the input of all residents, and encourages citizens to be engaged in civic matters and volunteerism.
- 3) The City values the significant investment local businesses make within the community (e.g. property taxes, jobs/careers, products/services, significant capital expenditures, and support of community based organizations).
- 4) The City of Ramsey values and respects the input of its local business, and encourages local business officials to be engaged in civic matters.
- 5) Economic development is a priority for the City of Ramsey.
- 6) The City of Ramsey is easy to work with, professional, and organized.
- 7) Ramsey values and respects investments made by developers, and the services/end users they produce. The City of Ramsey welcomes visitors, commuters, shoppers, and employees of local businesses.
- 8) Ramsey is a destination city with a positive image and reputation.

- 9) The City of Ramsey is committed to improving U.S. Highway 10 and other key transportation corridors.

Resources

The key messages above will be weighed against the City's Brand Guidelines; E.g., Does the look of the City's communication tools reflect what the City wishes to communicate? The City's primary vehicles for communicating include, but are not limited to, the following tools.

- A. Print materials such as the Ramsey Resident (bi-monthly newsletter), brochures, articles, postcards and other mailers.
- B. Electronic materials such as email, website postings, the Weekly Update electronic newsletter, the New Resident Packet, community signs and social media posts
- C. Media relations such as requests for interviews, QCTV programming, news releases and media inquiries.
- D. In person communications and events – open houses, city meetings, business networking events, the State of the Cities Address, Happy Days and the like.

Reach

To assist the City in spreading its message, the Communications Coordinator will reach out to the following partners:

Media Partners such as QCTV, ABC Newspapers, KSTP, WCCO, KARE 11, and others.
Community Partners: Faith-based organizations, business owners, schools and others.

The City Administrator and Department Heads communicate messages to the community through their regular interactions with the public such as city meetings, open houses, at city events, through QCTV interviews, and mailings. When possible, materials should be reviewed by the Communications & Events Coordinator to ensure they meet brand and formatting standards.

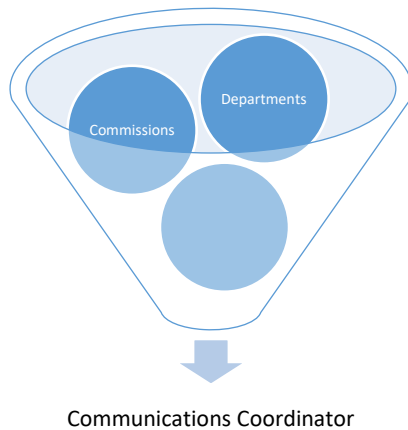
The Communications & Events Coordinator has the authority to correspond with the City's media partners to provide positive story ideas that work to achieve the goals set forth in the Strategic Plan. Furthermore, the Communications & Events Coordinator will connect with the above community partners per the request of the City Administrator or his/her appointed designee to promote projects that work to achieve the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Roles & Responsibilities

The *Communications and Events Coordinator* will provide administrative oversight of external communication functions. He/she will work with the City Administrator, the appropriate department head and/or his or her designee when reviewing or producing material for external communication. All department heads and his/her designee are to

familiarize themselves with this plan and all external material produced are to reflect the messages outlined in this document.

The governance structure will define the content creator, and the *Communications and Events Coordinator* will serve as the editor to refine the message in order to project one voice. Additionally, it is the Communications & Event Coordinator's role to coordinate and assist in the creation of key messages for public officials as needed.



Procedure

An effective communications plan must account for a variety of topics and responses. In order to organize an effective communications response, this Plan divides key communications into major categories.

1. Emergency Management/Public Safety Events
2. Critical Incidents
3. Major Policy Issues
4. Legal Notices and Public Hearings, Etc.
5. General Communications Topics

Emergency Management/Public Safety Events

The City's Emergency Management Plan outlines who the Public Information Officer (PIO) is in any given emergency. Under the direction of the PIO, the Communications and Events Coordinator and IT staff will use the City's resources to inform the public of timely and accurate information if instructed. Councilmembers should contact the City Administrator with questions on emergency management and not directly to Public Safety Personnel.

- Climactic (tornado, blizzard, etc)
- Transportation Emergency (train derailment, serious pile-up on Highway)
- Conflict including terrorism, bomb threat, active shooter, riots
- Fire and Explosions

- HAZMAT emergencies like chemical spill, biological, nuclear threats

Not all information can be made immediately public. In the event that it is determined that it is in the public interest to disseminate information that is available publicly, the City's Emergency Manager and City Administrator, or their designee(s) shall authorize dissemination of information. Additionally, not all emergencies rise to the level of leveraging all emergency management communications tools. All information will be communicated externally via the following channels in this order:

- 1) Baseline Communication (Smaller Events)
 - a. Press Release
 - b. Website
 - c. Social Media
- 2) Major Communitywide Emergency Management Events (reserved for the most critical of critical communitywide events)
 - a. Website with alert bar, built out webpage and Spotlight linked to page to be updated as instructed
 - b. Text/Email Notification/Alert issued
 - c. Written notice (if warranted) via mailed letter
 - d. Video statement (if warranted)

The City of Ramsey should harness the partnership it has with its local media groups in the instance of an emergency. The Emergency Management Manual outlines who has authority to speak on behalf of the City in an Emergency situation. In an Emergency event, timeliness in communications with the media is paramount. Typically, the City would be first in the chain of command as it relates to communication, however, urgent matters of the public should be communicated as quickly and accurately as possible using every resource available to the City including outside partners.

Critical Incidents

There are many events that don't rise to the category of emergency management, but are still critical issues impacting the community. These issues don't result in traditional public safety response, but are still important topics that require enhanced communication. These aren't necessarily longer-term policy issues, but incidents that require us to adapt and refocus our communications efforts. A recent example is the Covid-19 Pandemic. The following incidents require external communications:

1. Public Health Emergency
2. Financial/Legal Crisis
3. Technological Breakdown

Major Policy Issues

Finally, there are a number of policy issues that aren't in the emergency or critical incident category but still rise to the level of enhanced communications strategies. A recent example is the Public Works Campus/Water Treatment Plant. The following incidents require broadcasting via various communications channels:

1. Budgeting and Finance
2. Transportation
3. Infrastructure
4. Water Quality

Legal and Technical Communications

There are a number of pieces of communications that don't need to follow this overarching process. For example, legal notices and public hearings are handled by individual departments.

General Communication

Most of the City's external communication falls into this category. All external communication efforts are weighed against the Strategic Plan and Brand Guidelines in order to achieve the goals set forth by the City Council and that are outlined in this document.

Accountability & Measurables

The Communications & Events Coordinator will provide a regular progress update on a quarterly basis or upon request by the City Council.

The report will include the following statistics:

- 1) Citizen Survey results (when available)
- 2) Ramsey resident content overview
- 3) Web stats including hits, page searches, Spotlight content and more
- 4) Social Media stats
- 5) QCTV Viewership report (if applicable)

CONTENT CALENDAR (METRICS)

<p>January</p> <p>Ramsey Resident Newsletter 10 Social Media Posts (mirrored to website) Development Updates Public Improvement Project Updates</p>	<p>February</p> <p>10 Social Media Posts (mirrored to website) Development Updates Public Improvement Project Updates Celebrate Black History Month</p>	<p>March</p>
<p>April</p>	<p>May</p> <p>Celebrate Building Safety Month</p>	<p>June</p>
<p>July</p> <p>Start Happy Days Advertising</p>	<p>August</p>	<p>September</p> <p>General Fund Budget Update</p>
<p>October</p> <p>Celebrate National Planning Month and Fire Month, Domestic Violence Awareness</p>	<p>November</p>	<p>December</p>

COMMUNICATIONS ACTION PLAN (PROJECT BASED/CHANGES TO PROCESS)

In addition to strategic themes and process, the following action items represent project-based communication tactics to continue to improve the effectiveness of our communications strategy. This section is also critical to Staff to help recommend appropriate resources to meet the vision of the City Council.

This is a work in progress. Staff simply wants to demonstrate progress. This will be completed/finalized as part of the next and final step of final document adoption.

Action	Timeframe	Resources	Key Outcomes and Indicators	Responsible Party
Strategy: Improve Community's Awareness of Key Messages in a timely manner				
1. Improve the preparation of the Ramsey Resident Newsletter		Existing Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Content Calendar and review with City Council on a quarterly basis Use newsletter as anchor for content for website and social media Track emerging issues Re-issue popular articles Implement a Newsletter Editor and Editorial Board 	Megan Thorstad
2. Identify ways to better engage with our Community, not just inform	Q__ 2021	Additional Resources/Reallocation of Existing Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a "How Stuff Works" series Leverage Social Media for Project Notifications and Agendas Create individual project communications plan and talking points for major projects in advance – part of project approval 	Megan Thorstad
3. Create a Communications Committee	Q1 2021	Budget Impact = Low		Megan Thorstad

Action	Timeframe	Resources	Key Outcomes and Indicators	Responsible Party
4. Create a geo-based notification system (hyper-local)	Future	Budget Impact = Medium Would require additional resources	NextDoor App	Megan Thorstad
5. Create targeted messaging plan for geographic-based topics (combine with above)				
Other?				
Other?				
Strategy: Improve the Website's User Experience				
6. Implement the planned website design refresh				Jason Fredrickson
7. Reorganize website structure to better spotlight key topics				Jason Fredrickson
8. Better market 'Notify Me' option for opt-in email and text notifications			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the use of the text notification system 	Jason Fredrickson
Other?				
Other?				
Strategy: Expand Outreach to Community through Social Media				

Action	Timeframe	Resources	Key Outcomes and Indicators	Responsible Party
9. Implement more frequent, quick social media posts that focus more on breadth of outreach and less on depth of content – should be timely and instant				
10. Post all public meeting notifications on social media in addition to community events				
11. Use City’s social media account to push clarifying messages, but not respond directly to private social media pages/groups				
Other?				
Other?				