

A large, stylized graphic of reeds or grasses in a light tan color, positioned on the left side of the page. The reeds are of varying heights and are set against a white background. The bottom of the page features a dark blue, wavy graphic that resembles water or a field, extending across the width of the page.

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 outlines a process by which the City can provide an intentional and consistent voice and message.

Audience

The City of Ramsey's target audiences are:

- 1) Residents – Ramsey has nearly 30,000 residents. This includes homeowners, renters and various family-members.
- 2) Businesses – Ramsey is home to over 500 businesses. This includes owners, executives, managers, employees and prospect businesses.
- 3) Visitors – Millions of people travel to, or through, Ramsey annually. This includes visitors, commuters, shoppers and employees of local businesses.
- 4) Developers – This audience includes developers, brokers, builders, and contractors.

Key Messages

The foundation of the City's messaging will reflect its core values and strategic vision:

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.

Mission Statement

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

Objectives

- Financial Stability
- A Balance of Rural Character and Urban Growth
- An Active and Connected Community
- Smart, Citizen Focused Government
- An Effective Organization

The concepts and values below serve as a guide for the preparation of city communications:

- 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 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 values and respects the input of its local businesses, and encourages local business officials to be engaged in civic matters.
- 5) Economic development is a priority for the City.
- 6) The City is easy to work with, professional, and organized.
- 7) Ramsey values and respects investments made by developers, and the services/end users they produce.
- 8) The City welcomes visitors, commuters, shoppers, and employees of local businesses.
- 9) The City is committed to improving the quality of life for its residents, businesses, and visitors.

Above all, 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.

Accountability

The Communications & Events Coordinator will provide a regular progress update using graphs, charts and other visuals 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 including Public Safety posts as provided by the Police Department
- 5) QCTV Viewership report (if applicable)

Resources

The City's primary vehicles for communicating include, but are not limited to, the following tools:

- 1) Print materials such as the Ramsey Resident (bi-monthly newsletter), brochures, articles, postcards and other mailers.
- 2) Electronic materials such as email, website postings, the Weekly Update electronic newsletter, the New Resident Packet, community signs and social media posts
- 3) Media relations such as requests for interviews, QCTV programming, news releases and media inquiries.
- 4) In person communications and events – such as open houses, city meetings, business networking events, the State of the Cities Address, and Happy Days.
- 5) Media such as newspaper, radio, television, and online providers.
- 6) Community: Faith-based organizations, non-profits, business owners, schools and others.
- 7) City staff, elected and appointed officials communicating messages to the community through regular interactions with the public such as city meetings, open houses, at city events, through QCTV interviews, and mailings.

Roles & Responsibilities

City Administrator

The City Administrator will provide administrative oversight and coordination of all external communications as directed by the City Council.

Emergency Management Director/Public Information Officer (PIO)

The City's Emergency Management Plan outlines who the Public Information Officer (PIO) is in any given emergency. All communications efforts should follow those outlined in the Emergency Management Manual.

Department Heads

All department heads (or designee) will produce external communication materials that reflects the priorities and key messaging outlined in this document.

Communications & Events Coordinator

The *Communications and Events Coordinator* will create non-emergency, external communications material as requested and will work with staff when reviewing or producing material for external communication.

The Communications & Events Coordinator will correspond with the City's media partners to provide positive story ideas and promote projects that work to achieve the goals set forth in the Strategic Plan.

Additionally, it is the Communications & Event Coordinator's role to coordinate and assist in the creation of key messages for elected officials as needed.

Procedure

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

- General Communications

- Emergencies
- Critical Issues
- Major Policy Issues
- Legal and Technical Communications

General Communication

Most of the City's external communication falls into this category. External communication efforts are weighed against the key messaging guidelines in order to achieve the goals set forth by the City Council.

Emergencies

Under the direction of the PIO, the Communications and Events Coordinator and Information Technology (IT) staff will facilitate emergency communications, if requested, by informing the public of timely and accurate information. Councilmembers should contact the City Administrator with questions on emergency management and not directly to Public Safety Personnel.

As soon as practicable, the City's Emergency Management Director, City Administrator, or their designee(s) shall authorize dissemination of emergency information.

The City's Emergency Management Director and/or Public Information Officer may choose to harness the partnerships it has with its local media groups in the instance of an emergency. The Communications & Events Coordinator will assist as requested.

Critical Issues

There are many events that do not rise to the category of emergency management, but are still critical issues impacting the community. These issues do not result in traditional public safety response, but are still important topics that require enhanced communication. These are not longer-term policy issues, but may require the City to adapt and refocus its communications efforts. The following incidents may require external communications:

- Public Health Emergency
- Financial/Legal Crisis
- Technological Breakdown

Major Policy Issues

Finally, there are a number of policy issues that aren't in the emergency or critical issues category but still rise to the level of enhanced communications strategies such as:

- Budgeting and Finance
- Transportation
- Infrastructure
- Water Quality

Legal and Technical Communications

There are a number of topics that do not need to follow this overarching process. For example, legal notices and public hearings are handled by individual departments.

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 communication strategy. This section is also critical to Staff to help recommend appropriate resources to meet the vision of the City Council.

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	Q2 2021	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 Internal Review Committee 	Megan Thorstad
2. Identify ways to better engage with our Community, not just inform	Q4 2021	Additional Resources/Reallocation of Existing Resources Budget Impact = Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a "How Stuff Works" series Leverage Social Media for Project Notifications, Agendas and Meetings Create individual project communications plan and talking points for major projects in advance – part of project approval 	Megan Thorstad
3. Create a Communications Committee	Q3 2021	Budget Impact = Low	Committee to include a mix of staff, elected officials and potentially one or two residents	Megan Thorstad
4. Create targeted messaging plan for geographic-based topics (combine with above)	Q1 2022	Budget impact = Medium	Research geo-based software, implement and train staff in its use	Jason Fredrickson

Action	Timeframe	Resources	Key Outcomes and Indicators	Responsible Party
Implement the planned website design refresh				
5. Reorganize website structure to better spotlight key topics	Q1 2022	Existing Resources	Work with each department to spotlight key projects	Jason Fredrickson
6. Better market 'Notify Me' option for opt-in email and text notifications	Q2 2021	Existing Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the use of the text notification system 	Jason Fredrickson
7. Overall improve the Website's User Experience	Q1 2022	Existing Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declutter drop down menus/rename pages to improve clarity 	Jason Fredrickson
Implement frequent, social media posts that focus more on breadth of outreach and less on depth of content – should be timely and instant				
8. Post all public meeting notifications on social media in addition to community events	Q2 2021	Existing Resources	Weekly Updates = Thursdays Agendas = Thursday, Friday or Monday Community Events = As needed	Megan Thorstad
9. Tailor posts to each platform to match targeted audience	Q2 2021	Additional Resources/ Reallocation of Resources Budget Impact = Low	Image = Instagram Short message = Twitter Longer message & web link = Facebook	Megan Thorstad