City of Beverly Hills

Strategic Communications Plan

February 2020

Prepared By
SAE Communications

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CO**UNICATIONS** | Strategic and Crisis
Communications for
Local Government

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Introduction

This Plan should be considered a blueprint for the City of Beverly Hills to refine its communications program and build on an already-strategic office focused on engaging and informing the public. This Plan is focused on implementation within the next three to five years.

Communications today is much more complex than in previous decades. Most of us are overloaded with information and therefore are much less likely to read in-depth articles or materials about government agencies or services; most are apt to be informed by visual images and by communications vehicles which reach us with messages specifically tailored to our needs and concerns. This Plan's recommendations strive to find the right balance of traditional and new communications tools.

The City's challenge is to convey consistent messages which serve to explain the organization's purpose and reasons for its decisions, both on an overarching level as well as on a specific project/issue level, to a variety of audiences.

Our efforts were made infinitely easier by the cooperation and openness of all those we worked with on this project. Members of the Beverly Hills City Council, staff, community members and media representatives were universally helpful, honest and willing to share their perceptions with our team. The City's Public Information Office, under new leadership over the past year, has done an exceptional job in broadening the City's visibility and communications initiatives. Rather than a wholesale remaking of the office, this Plan will help prioritize efforts and recommend a new internal structure.

Finally, it is important to note that the principles of communications – a two-way process of communicating and listening – have been viewed as major elements of business and are increasingly becoming not only a function of government, but an integral part. As Thomas Jefferson wrote, "If we think society not enlightened enough to exercise their control over government with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it away from them, but to inform them."

Scott Summerfield

Sheri Benninghoven, APR

Principals
SAE Communications

Research Steps

Research was conducted using a proven process of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. One-on-one interviews were conducted by members of the SAE Communications team with a variety of individuals representing internal City audiences and community members. The list of these participants is available as an appendix. It is important to note that no single person's opinions are quoted; it is the composite of all the voices heard that forms the basis of the recommendations in this Plan.

An online survey of community opinion leaders was also conducted. The results of that survey are included in the appendix.

Finally, an online survey of City employees helped guide the internal communications portion of this Plan. The results of the employee survey are also attached to this Plan.

The research steps included:

- Individual interviews with members of the Beverly Hills City Council
- Several individual interviews with members of the City Manager's Office
- Individual interviews with department heads and senior staff
- Individual interviews with community leaders
- Individual interviews with news media representatives
- Online survey of community members
- Online survey of employees
- Evaluation of City printed and electronic materials
- Analysis of media coverage
- Evaluation of the City's website
- Evaluation of social media accounts
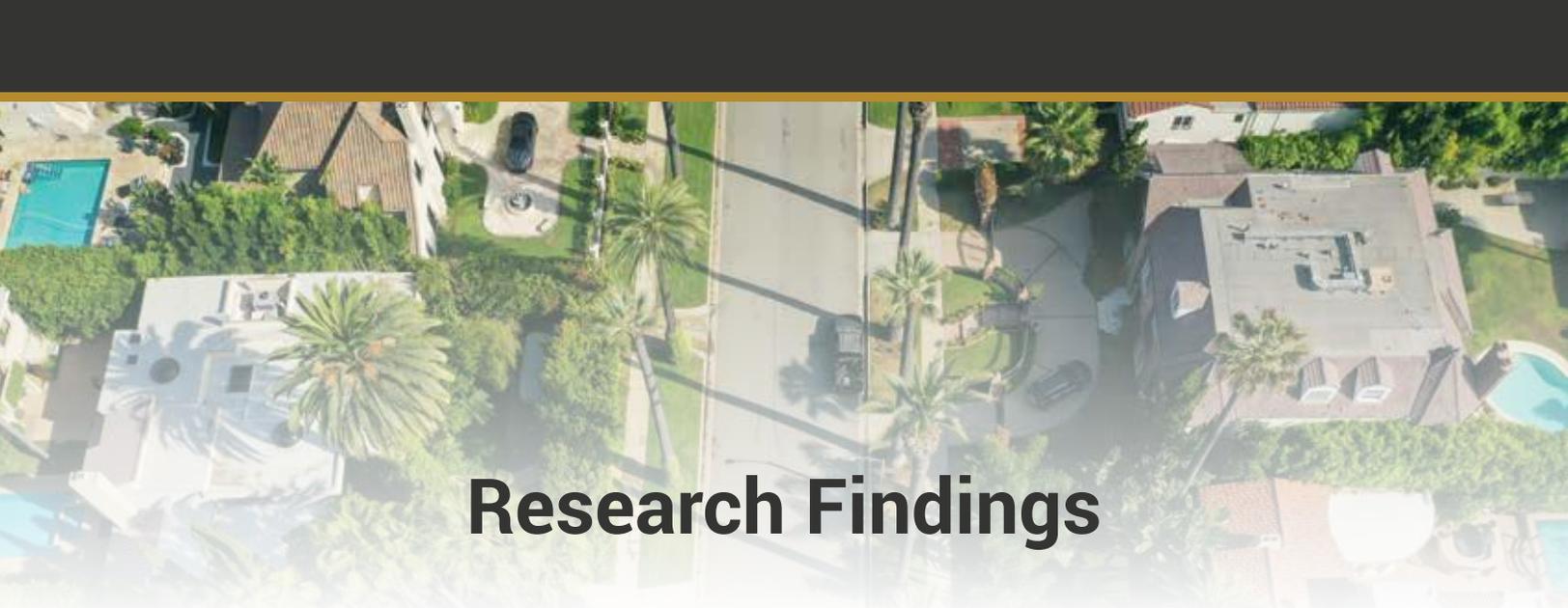
Research Findings

External audience research summary:

A total of 17 external community members were interviewed. Key findings include:

- There is widespread acknowledgement that City communications activities have improved since the current Public Information Office staff members assumed their roles.
- There is broad agreement that the City is effectively utilizing a variety of communications tools and that those who choose to learn about City activities and programs have ample opportunities to do so.
- There is broad consensus that a relatively small number of residents take an active interest in City issues, primarily due to the very high level of responsiveness to service issues.
- There is recognition that more than half of Beverly Hills residents are renters and there are no readily identifiable communications tools that are directed at this audience.
- Key issues identified include the effect of Metro construction and operation on the community, the effect of new State of California housing allocations, upcoming Rodeo Drive development projects, the recent Complete Streets Plan, and the challenging retail environment that has led to several high-profile vacancies.
- Communication with the Persian community is lacking in City priorities and represents an opportunity to better connect with a significant portion of the City's population base.
- There is a desire for regular communication from the City Manager on issues of importance, via a variety of methods.
- There is a desire for 'quick-read" information about significant upcoming City issues and City Council actions that can be delivered on-demand or via sign-ups.
- The local media environment is changing, with new ownership of the Courier and its approach to reporting City issues.
- There is still a strong reliance on traditional media in the community, given the large number of mature residents who aren't active on social media.
- There is a universal sense that the City's website is hard to navigate.

External online survey summary:

Note: The survey was conducted in mid-2018, just after the arrival of the current Public Information Manager and before the current Public Information Office staffing structure was in place.

A total of 27 respondents completed the survey. Key findings include:

- More than half of respondents find that the Public Information Office is a useful resource; the bulk of remaining respondents have not had an opportunity to work with the office.
- Responses to the open-ended question focused on partnership yielded several issues with none noted multiple times.
- Almost half of respondents indicated good coordination and communication with the office; almost a third indicated poor or very poor coordination and communication. This represents an area of future focus for improvement.
- Responses to the open-ended question focused on possible change to better serve external organizations yielded several issues with none noted multiple times.
- Generally, around half of respondents indicated satisfaction with the office's services, resources, and response; the bulk of remaining respondents were unsure or felt the question did not apply.
- Over 95% of respondents at least occasionally use the Internet, local print/online media, and word-of-mouth as information resources about City programs, services, and issues.
- Almost 90% of respondents at least occasionally use the City website as an information resource, with all other sources used by at least half of respondents.
- About half of respondents receive information about City Council policy decisions from official City communications, while about half receive this information from external sources and word-of-mouth.
- Responses to the question focused on other ideas or actions to improve the Office's services yielded several issues with none noted multiple times.

Internal research summary:

A total of 33 interviews were conducted with members of the City Council and staff. Key findings include:

- The BEVY is widely considered to be a phone directory and human resources tool rather than a compelling, interesting site for employee news and information.
- An employee newsletter would be welcomed, with a focus on interesting staff stories and internal/external issues facing the City.
- There is a desire to hear from the City Manager in various settings about important issues, with an opportunity to ask questions; although he is a longtime City employee, he is new to the City Manager role and staff is somewhat unclear about his short- and long-term plans for the City.

- There is a desire to learn more about issues/initiatives/activities of importance in other departments.
- There is widespread appreciation for recent efforts to improve communication, including the distribution of news releases to all employees.
- There is a desire for short-form videos focusing on current issues that could be posted on The BEVY and distributed as a link to all staff.

Internal City employee online survey summary:

Note: The survey was conducted in mid-2018, just after the arrival of the current Public Information Manager and before the current Public Information Office staffing structure was in place.

A total of 104 respondents completed the survey. Key findings include:

- Almost two-thirds of respondents find that the Public Information Office is a useful resource; the bulk of remaining respondents have not had an opportunity to work with the office.
- Responses to the open-ended question focused on partnership yielded a variety of issues; La Cienega Park is the only issue noted multiple times.
- Almost half of respondents indicated good or excellent coordination and communication with the Public Information Office; the bulk of remaining respondents indicated that coordination with the office is not applicable to their job.
- Responses to the open-ended question focused on possible change to better serve external organizations yielded a variety of issues; better communication regarding the role and function of City departments is the only issue noted multiple times.
- Generally, around half of respondents indicated satisfaction with the Public Information Office's services, resources, and response; the bulk of remaining respondents were unsure or felt the question did not apply.
- About 90% of respondents at least occasionally use word-of-mouth, The BEVY, the City website, and the Internet as information resources about City programs, services, and issues; almost all other sources were used by at least half of respondents.
- About 40% of respondents receive information about City Council policy decisions from co-workers, while about 36% receive this information from official City communications.
- Responses to the question focused on other ideas or actions to improve the Public Information Office's services yielded several issues; increased use of social media is the only issue noted multiple times.

Challenges & Opportunities

Challenges

- Engaging residents in public sector information is challenging. A new mindset is needed to revise how the City engages and communicates with target audiences: fewer words, more headlines, more digital graphic design, adoption of new communications platforms, etc.

- Several upcoming issues are likely to general significant community discussion/consternation. These will require extensive strategic communications planning and programming.

- Adequate resources to conduct a robust communications program can be limited, especially during a dramatically-shifting economic environment such as Beverly Hills is facing now with its retail changes.

- Quality and effective public information programs in the public sector place a heavy burden on communications staff to not only maintain traditional efforts that predominantly rely on media relations, printed publications and community outreach, but also to develop and implement new cutting-edge communications platforms and channels.

- Numerous communications channels which are required for a successful strategic public information program are currently housed in different City departments, resulting in fragmentation and a lack of a cohesive and coordinated effort.

- The development and internal distribution of key messages for all significant issues/projects is lacking (see later section of the Plan for additional details).

- The counsel of the Public Information Office is often sought after an issue has become controversial.

- City employees are a vital audience and should know of and/or have access to information about all City programs, services and issues.

- The BEVY is outdated as an internal communications source and should be redesigned and relaunched.

Opportunities

- Beverly Hills has a highly-engaged group of civic leaders who care deeply about their community, are hungry for information about decisions made by their government and want the opportunity to be heard.

- The community enjoys the benefits of having numerous media outlets covering local government.

- Overwhelmingly, the City's Public Information Office receives high marks for progress made in the past year to support traditional office functions while bringing much-needed attention to several important communications functions, such as social media and community outreach.

- The City's staffing in its Public Information Office includes dedicated and experienced public information professionals, and while stretched to carry out its full load of responsibilities, is effective and efficient in its current operations.

- The functions integral to a successful public information program exist now and do not need to be added/created; these include website management, video production and graphic design.

- A citywide team of communications liaisons from each department present the opportunity to readily share communications issues/plans across internal operations.

- Reaching new audiences via the use of cutting-edge technology will enhance engagement efforts from all City departments.

Communications Goals

- Increase confidence and trust in the programs and services offered by the City.
- Raise public understanding of the role of the City to deliver a vast array of services and of the diligence of the City's efforts to make the best decisions possible.
- Instill a sense of partnership between the City and those it serves.
- Embark on a path that leads to direct – improved – communication flow between the City and residents.
- Ensure employees understand the goals and priorities set by City management so their actions help bring about success; also convey the deeply held belief that the employees of the City are incredibly dedicated to serving the public and delivering high-quality services.

Communications Objectives

- Generate positive comments about the City's improved ability to connect with and communicate among at least 75 percent of those interviewed for this Plan in 24 months.

- Generate a minimum of 12 news feature stories per year about the City/departments which deliver an important Key Message.

- Generate a minimum of a 10 percent increase in the awareness of and reliance on City communications tools as a source of information about local government programs and services in 24 months.

- Conduct a baseline user survey of website visitors and re-conduct within 12 months of a site redesign; generate a minimum of a 20 percent increase in positive comments regarding usability/navigation.

- Conduct a baseline telephone poll of residents to gauge satisfaction of City service delivery and awareness of communications channels; re-conduct in 24 to 26 months.

- Generate a minimum 20 percent increase in the positive comments from employees within 24 months (re-conduct the online employee survey).
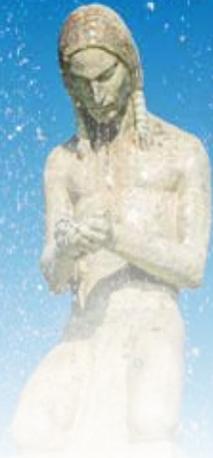
Audiences

Residents

- School leaders
- Parents / PTA
- Seniors
- Renters
- Farsi-speaking Persian residents
- Homeowner association leaders, residents
- City Commissioners
- Youth
- Hills
- Non-hills (flats) residents

City Employees

- City Hall
- Non-City Hall
- Field

Visitors / Business / Organizations

- Conference and Visitors Bureau
- Rodeo Drive
- Chamber of Commerce
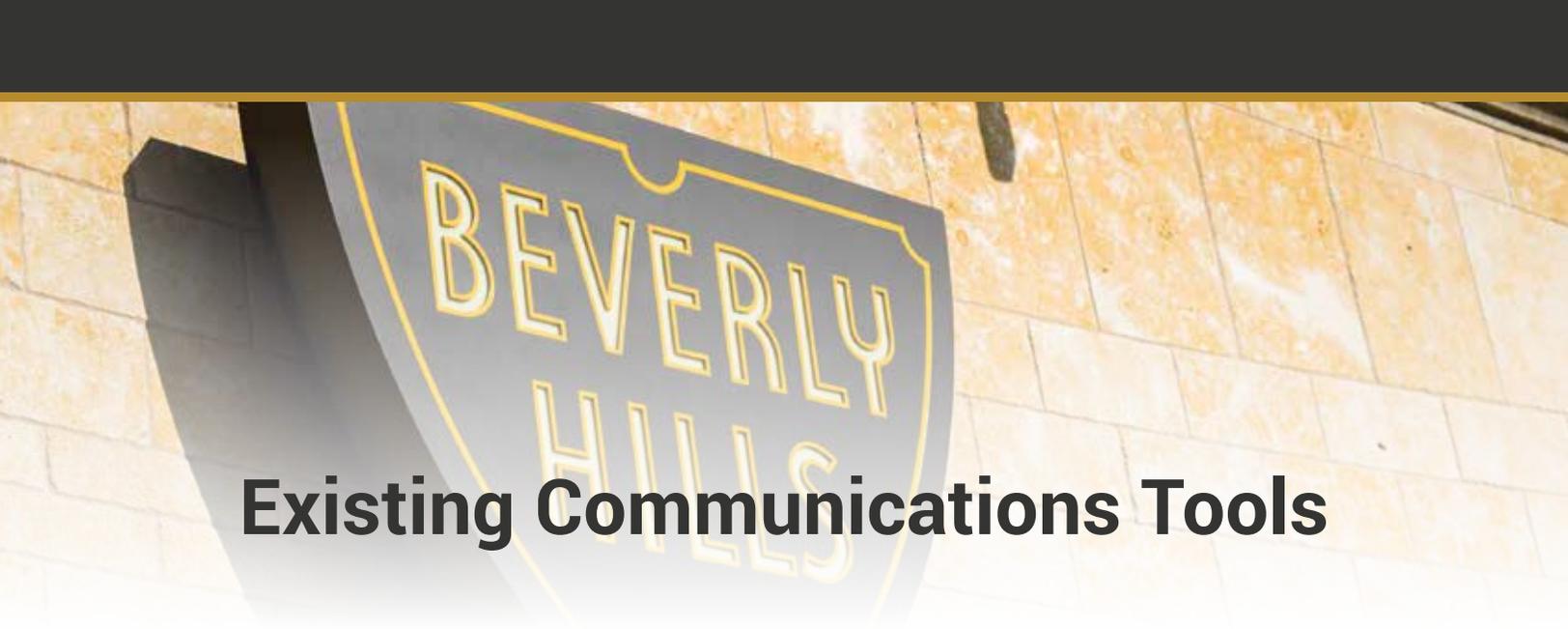
Existing Communications Tools

- Media relations
  - Releases
  - Pitching/calls
  - Respond to calls
  - Press conferences
- Citywide social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- Department/special-focus social media
- Website
- *In Focus* City newsletter (print)
- Display ads: print and digital
- Postcards
- Building signage
- Department newsletters
- Databases of various types of contacts
- Emergency communications tools: E-notify, Nixle, AM radio

City Council Priorities 2019-2020

The City's public information program should prioritize its efforts each year to support the City Council's priorities. The priorities are available under separate cover.

For the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the City Council has established a total of 44 goals impacting the following areas:

- City Auditor
- Community Development
- Community Services
- Finance
- Information Technology
- Policy and Management
- Public Safety
- Public Works

Their ongoing goals involve seven goals for the following City departments/programs:

- Finance
- Human Resources
- Policy and Management
- Public Works

City of Beverly Hills
FY 2019-20
City Council Priorities

City of Beverly Hills
455 N. Rexford
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

June 18, 2019
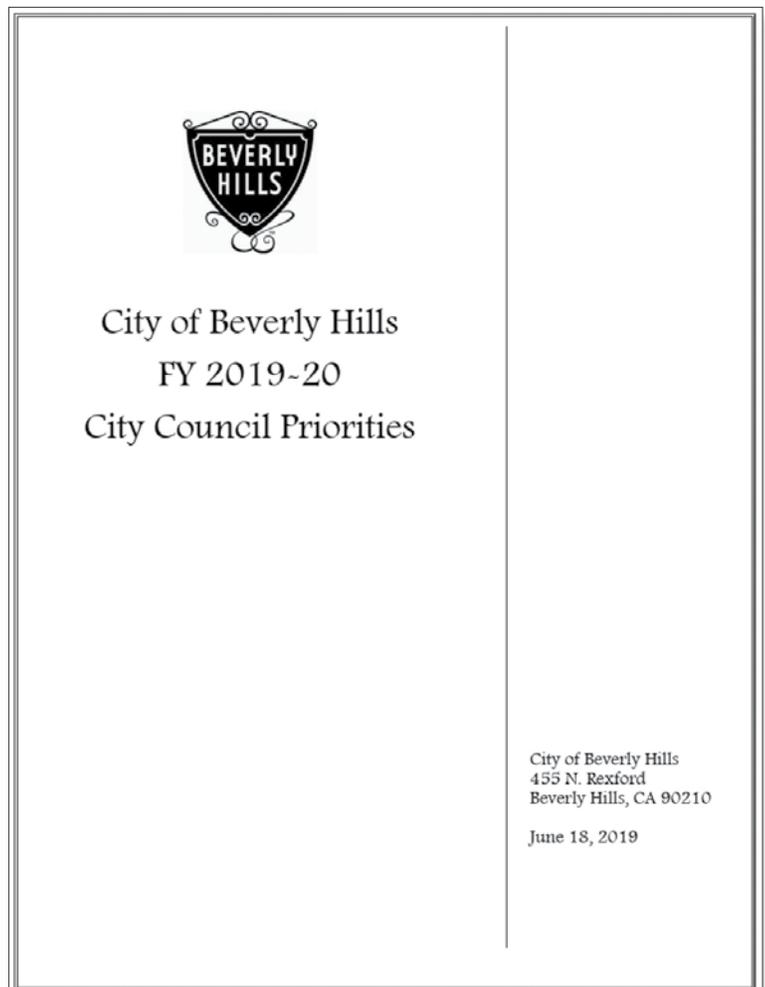
Organizational Key Messages

Key Messages convey to the public and other audiences the City's goals, programs and services. Messages are the "big picture" explanations that the City wants all audiences to know; further, they provide the context for the individual initiatives, department programs, etc. These are included in all comments to the media, written articles, speeches, presentations, web postings and all other communications from the City. The bullets under each message serve to explain or expand on the message, adding facts, anecdotes, etc. It is important to note that messages will not necessarily be used verbatim by staff or elected/ appointed officials; each individual speaks with a unique voice, and the messages should be used as a guideline for communicating the most important thoughts about each issue (thus they are not the same as "talking points").

Overall City messages should be revisited regularly to ensure they continue to represent the main issues that the community needs to know. Additional messages will need to be developed for every project, program or major incident that takes place. A Message Development/Delivery training program will allow City personnel to understand the role of messages and how to develop and deliver them.

The messages below serve to explain the City's overall purpose and current initiatives. They are a first draft and will evolve during the coming months as the City refines its communications efforts. The final overall Key Message platform will also include detailed "proof points" under each message; these provide specific examples, statistics, and other information which support the messages.

City of Beverly Hills Organizational Key Messages

- **The City of Beverly Hills provides a very high level of services, from public safety and community development to libraries and roads.**
  - Proof points would include examples of actual awards, cutting-edge services, innovative technology, dedication of staff, etc.
  - Note awards won, kudos from residents, etc.
  - Note interesting or unusual types of services that are unknown or invisible to most City residents

- **The City of Beverly Hills manages its resources wisely and is financially conservative.**
  - Proof points would include references to improved budget expectations, reserves, operating efficiencies, etc.
  - Note actions taken during Great Recession
  - Note permanent structural changes

- **The residents of the City of Beverly Hills are well-served by a highly-dedicated group of City employees who take seriously their responsibility.**
  - Proof points would include examples of high resident satisfaction figures, continuance of exemplary service with reduced staffing, flexibility in dealing with difficult budget situations, etc.
  - Note examples of employees going "above and beyond"
  - Note creativity in managing increased demands for service

- **Public safety is the City's top priority.**
  - Proof points would include crime rate, percentage of budget spent on PD/FD, etc.
  - Response times
  - Facilities/personnel/training

External Communications Strategies

There are nine overarching communications strategies which emerged as the research, challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives were developed. The tactics to address each are contained in the following section.

1. **Strategic Counsel/Key Messages** – Institutionalize the role and importance of strategic communications planning and key messages throughout the organization.

2. **"Personal Touch" / Opinion Leader Communications Programming** – Engage residents by adopting tactics that bring all together to learn and exchange information about City programs, issues and decisions. Identify and inform key opinion and community leaders by category, such as City Commissioners, parents, visitors or business organization leaders/participants, school leaders, faith-based leaders/participants, etc. A unifying trait to engage with these individuals is personalized attention; tactics focusing on this "personal touch" will be most effective.

3. **Media Relations/Direct Print Tools** – Educate residents via a robust media relations program to generate hard news about City priorities as well as feature stories that help to tell the City's story. Annual City Council goals/priorities should drive media pitching of feature stories. Further, printed materials that reach a broad segment of the City should also continue to supplement media coverage.

4. **Direct Communications Channels and Electronic Community Relations Program** – Increase awareness of City programs and services via pushed information channels as well as via engagement through an electronic community relations program, including an easy-to-navigate website, e-newsletters, social media channels, e-broadcasts of public meetings, etc.

5. **Visual Communications Tools** – Generate confidence and engagement through visually-oriented stories about City programs, services and employees and strategic use of video and graphic design.

6. **Department Public Information Team: Communications Strategy Group** – Leverage the communications resources and knowledge within each City department to benefit the City as a whole and to support all communications with residents through the further development of the existing Communications Strategy Group. This team is especially important to serve as the emergency public

information team during an EOC activation or other significant events that are likely to generate significant media coverage.

7. **Persian Community, Renters Outreach** – Increase awareness about City programs and services to three key audiences that now could feel disenfranchised.

8. **Emergency Public Information Plan** – Ensure life- and property-saving information reaches those impacted before, during and after a natural or man-made disaster.

External Communications Tactics

> **1. Strategic Counsel/Key Messages/Planning – Institutionalize the role and importance of strategic communications planning and key messages throughout the organization.**

Build Key Message development into every project/issue. ◆ Every project manager within each department must become proficient in preparing key messages regarding their programs. Further, every City Council agenda item which might generate media interest or be of broad interest in the community should have a key message. Key messages, once approved, should be distributed to the entire management team, as well as to all employees when the topic is likely to generate broad interest. A "Message Vault" should be developed on The BEVY so that any time a question arises regarding a particular subject, the approved points can be accessed and updated easily.

Ensure the Public Information Office is involved in significant issues as early as possible. ◆ Any issue or project which might generate public interest or which could undermine confidence in the City requires early attention and counsel by the Public Information Office. The Public Information Manager's role is to be a trusted advisor for any sensitive topic, and his role can only be fulfilled when brought into an issue at the earliest possible moment.

Adopt a "beat" structure for the public information team. ◆ Each staff member of the Public Information Office would be assigned to a City department to serve as a communications counselor. Regular meetings are held with Department management and communication staff liaison to understand goals and issues. Department-wide as well as project-specific communications plans would be prepared by Department staff with the assistance of the PIO staff or prepared by the PIO.

This enables the professional communications staff to become familiar with the staff and issues in each Department and to operate as an in-house public relations counseling firm.

Conduct Key Message Development/Delivery Training for all City managers. ◆ Message Development/Delivery Training should be conducted regularly for all employees who may serve as a media spokesperson or who present information to the City Council/community, including department and

division managers and all communications-related staff members. This training includes an introduction to the concept of key messages, elements of a key message, how to deliver messages, venues for message delivery, and other techniques. The training for all management team members should include what is and isn't newsworthy; on-camera interview techniques; how to control an interview (i.e., getting the City's messages delivered); how to develop strategic messages; trends in news coverage; how to generate media coverage of City issues; and other topics. Refresher training should be held on an annual basis, using real-world issues facing City staff as the basis for mock interview sessions.

Conduct strategic communications training for management staff. This highly-tailored training would involve helping all managers to understand the relationship between their areas of responsibility and the audiences affected by those programs. Each manager, with support from the City Manager's Office, would be responsible for including plans to reach targeted audiences with explanations of the City's activities (key messages) and the results. Components explained in the training include audiences, messages, strategies and tactics.

Establish protocol for how the departments respond to a department issue or need / ensure the Public Information Office is aware of significant issues as early as possible. A communications plan or approach, which is an abbreviated plan, should be prepared for any project or issue which could generate media interest or which would be of interest to a somewhat broad group of residents, business owners or visitors. The brief document uses a bullet format to note audiences, messages, tactics, timeline, responsibilities and budget. See sample "Communications Approach" in the appendix.

Maintain a Master Editorial Calendar: "Horizon Report." Using an online team collaboration program such as is offered by Trello, this will allow for planning across departments of
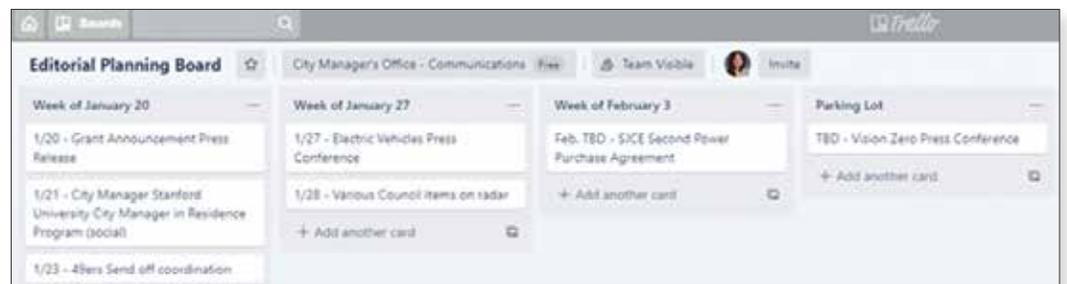
Figure 1 – City of San Jose "Horizon Report."

major events, decisions and issues. While "owned" by the Public Information Office, the Communication Strategy Group would review and update monthly as a regular agenda item. This is the best method to organizationally plan for and strategically monitor significant events and stories. Information about each item would be promoted in all City communications channels, including social media, traditional media briefings, community presentations and BHTV/social media programming.

2. **"Personal Touch" / Opinion Leader Communications Programming** – Engage residents by adopting tactics that bring all together to learn and exchange information about City programs, issues, and decisions. Identify and inform key opinion and community leaders by category, such as City Commissioners, parents, visitors or business organization leaders/participants, school leaders, faith-based leaders/participants, etc. A unifying trait to engage with these individuals is personalized attention; tactics focusing on this "personal touch" will be most effective.

Engage residents at their neighborhood level through in-home/small group/topic specific gatherings. ◆ Holding hyper-local neighborhood meetings about area-specific or citywide topics has the benefit of engaging residents in ways that mass communications techniques do not. When a neighbor invites other neighbors to gather in their home to hear from a City representative about an important topic, many benefits ensue: attendees do not come with the mindset of "taking on" the City, but come with a more moderate view of coming to listen, gather information and share opinions. This is a vastly different mindset than attending a City-sponsored "community meeting" where views are often ones of agitation. This tactic is being adopted throughout the state with excellent results. The challenge is that these take considerable time to find hosts and organize, but the benefits are significant. See content in the appendix from the City of Oakland "Budget Ambassadors" program which includes in-home, small group gatherings hosted by residents.

Homeowner Association Leadership Briefings/Populate HOA Communications Channels. ◆ The leaders of the homeowner associations in Beverly Hills are important opinion sources and shape the views of not only those who reside in their respective communities but also throughout the city. Quarterly or twice-yearly briefings of the HOA leadership, placing content in the HOA newsletters, and making presentations at the HOA annual/regular meetings will provide a "personal touch" type of connection to important audiences.

Provide content of interest to parents at local schools. ◆ Parents of children attending school in Beverly Hills are key audiences, as are the youth served. Rather than relying on the news media and/or creating new channels, inserting messages and content into existing tools produced by the schools and PTAs is ideal. Presentations at PTA events/gatherings should also be part of regular outreach efforts.

Target City commissioners for specific outreach. Commissioners play an important role to not only represent the community within the City governance structure but they are viewed as City Hall insiders out in the community. It's imperative that they are not only aware of City goals, programs, projects and issues, but feel as though they are treated as "insiders." While new content need not be developed, a Commissioner-specific communications vehicle sent on a regular basis will help ensure good engagement by this important audience. Further, reducing the number of informational emails and consolidating information into a single vehicle will be more efficient.

Target local service organizations for presentations. City staff should regularly present the status of various projects/issues to key service clubs and related organizations.

Share City awards/honors to all opinion leaders. City departments regularly do – and should – apply for awards from regional, state and national organizations for the very high level of services and creative

approach taken to address the needs of residents and address issues. When an award is received, it should be shared broadly with all opinion leaders. This is a "third party" voice that affirms the messages that the City delivers high quality services. (Receipt of awards should also be shared broadly with residents via pushed communications tools).

3. **Media Relations – Educate residents via a robust media relations program to generate hard news about City priorities as well as feature stories that help to tell the City's story. Annual City Council goals/priorities should drive media pitching of feature stories. Further, printed materials that reach a broad segment of the City should also be continued to supplement media coverage.**

Beverly Hills enjoys the benefits and responsibilities of having local, regional, national and international media outlets cover it on a regular basis. This traditional method of broadly reaching a significant portion of the City's key audiences is still important and warrants a robust media relations program. That said, the shrinking news hole, fewer trained journalists and the real and perceived bias on the part of the media against government means that staff time and resources spent on media relations should be balanced with the City's increased capability to push content directly to residents via social media and other direct and online tools.

Conduct a Media Fracture© session to match story ideas with key media targets. ◆ The Fracture© is a group brainstorming session envisioned to be a function of the Communications Strategy Group to creatively develop a variety of story ideas which support citywide and departmental goals drawn from the Horizon Report. Further, a list of media outlets, both traditional and non-traditional – including local, regional, national and international – and direct communications channels, such as social media outlets, are developed and the story ideas are matched with channels into a matrix that becomes a Media Pitching Calendar. Various CSG members would be responsible for pitching different outlets. This process utilizes staff resources efficiently and maintains the City's credibility by ensuring that the right story is developed for the right channel. Pitching training would be provided prior to implementation. A goal of 12 feature stories per year for the full CSG would be ambitious but attainable.

Conduct group media briefings. ◆ Complex public policy issues, such as new state housing goals, Metro construction impact, loss of local control, major development projects, etc., that take months or years to address are challenging for the media to cover. A group media briefing is an ideal tool which requires the City to focus on its messages and strategic objectives regarding large issues, and which enables the media to fully understand and explore the issue without being on deadline.

Broadly share feature story pitch results. ◆ Sharing or leveraging feature stories about Beverly Hills can give much greater visibility than the single appearance of a great piece. Target audiences include City Council, all City department managers, community leaders, business leaders, City board/commission members and other opinion leaders. Distribution methods include posting to Twitter/Facebook or other social media outlets, adding a link to Department website and sending via email to key audiences, especially employees, etc.

Prepare "opinion" stories for distribution through the City's own communications channels. ◆ Preparing opinion stories on local, regional and statewide topics and distributing them through the City's own communications channels can be a very effective method of increasing the City's visibility and educating the public on issues before they become highly controversial. These pieces should focus on broad topics which impact many residents and/or business owners, and touch on a variety of sides to any given issue. These would be authored by various City department heads, the City Manager or the full City Council.

Continue "InFocus" Quarterly Print Newsletter. This print, direct mail newsletter should continue at least until electronic and direct communications tools gain traction to reach a larger segment of the community.

Refine electronic Media Room on the website. The Media Room needs to be a one-stop-shop for journalists needing information about the City and each department, including an archive of news releases (in keyword-searchable format), and should be planned for use during both day-to-day and emergency situations. A robust Media Room should include links to background information on a variety of projects, Q&As and fact sheets on key City issues, high- and low-resolution still and video images (including b-roll for TV broadcast use), graphics, maps, etc. Links can also be provided to other resources which are of use to the media in emergencies. Recommend update to this portion of the City website during site redesign.

Figure 2 – This pop-up box from the San Diego County website enables users to sign up for pushed News Center stories.

Move toward "City News Center." As the breadth and capability of the mainstream news media continues to decline and the lack of confidence in the objectivity grows, public agencies have moved to fill the void by creating their own "News Channel" which consolidates agency information into a single site. San Diego County has adopted this approach and reports tremendous success with direct subscribers as well as extensive use of the site content by area news outlets. Ventura County has also adopted this approach and reports exceptional use by the public and the media. See the appendix for a fuller description of Ventura County's channel as well as a link to the San Diego County news channel.

Figure 3 – Ventura County News Channel includes press releases, articles written by agency staff, photos, video stories prepared by the County, and links to the main County website. Local media outlets have begun going to this site for story ideas.

Figure 4 – The San Diego County News Center is a trusted source for media outlets looking for feature story ideas, as well as a trusted source for local residents.

> **4. Direct Communications Channels and an Electronic Community Relations Program** – Increase awareness of City programs and services via pushed information channels as well as via engagement through an electronic community relations program, including an easy-to-navigate website, e-newsletters, social media channels, e-broadcasts of public meetings, etc.

Prepare easy-to-read summary of City Council agenda items and actions. ◆ A brief summary should be prepared of City Council agenda items and the resulting action for use by the news media, for posting on the City's website, for posting to social media channels and for sending to subscribers of a new e-newsletter. Virtually all of those interviewed recommended a tactic along these lines. See a sample in the appendix prepared following each meeting of the Santa Cruz City Council as an example of the type of content being recommended. Below is a format adopted by Ventura County to promote upcoming agenda items.

Figure 5 – Ventura County prepares feature story type of content in advance of newsworthy agenda items.

Establish regular community e-newsletter. ♦ Using a program such as e-Notify, the City would benefit greatly from its own electronic newsletter. Users would be prompted to sign up via a box on the City website and promoted via social media. Distribution lists would be created by topic-specific information, such as City Council agenda items, event calendars, general news, etc. See the appendix for a sample list of types of content available from the City of Santa Clarita and view below from Santa Barbara County's list of content subscription options.

Figure 6 – Santa Barbara County pushes out an e-newsletter in advance of meetings of the Board of Supervisors. The content highlights public hearing items which will generate public attention.

Figure 7 – The City of Glendale produces an electronic newsletter that is pushed to residents who sign up as well as sits on the news section of the City website.

Figure 8 – The City of Long Beach produces a sustainability newsletter that highlights events, programs, issues and City Council actions.

Figures 9 & 10 – The San Jose City Manager issues a pushed and web-based weekly newsletter. A slide show of the headlines from the newsletter appears on LinkedIn and other social media channels to broaden its reach.

Figure 11 – Santa Barbara County's website box encourages visitors to sign up for an electronic newsletter.

Redesign the "Ask Bev" CRM Comcate Capability. ◆ Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems are an integral aspect of public service delivery, having been created decades ago for the private sector. As applied in the public sector, a quality CRM system enables residents and visitors to interact with the City to request services, address issues and provide information using a complex "back end" with customer-friendly interface. The existing City program is in need of a revamp and redesign, especially to add an improved public-facing interface and a customer service orientation. We typically see the internal communications team take the lead in developing these programs and recommend this approach for a rebuild. There are several proprietary firms providing public sector CRM packages; recommend RFP process to determine best partner for the City.

Use City's social media channels, especially Facebook, to humanize the City's volunteers, commissioners and its workforce and to tell "people" stories. Initiate use of Nextdoor. ◆ The City's social media presence is robust and well-viewed. Social media presents a wonderful opportunity to humanize City government. Poking fun at government, jargon, rules, etc. is a way to help the public engage with their government.

NextDoor has become the platform of choice for many hyper-local neighborhood-based chat/sharing sites. Public agencies are prohibited from belonging to a neighborhood Nextdoor. However avenues exist to post information as well as monitor information posted by members. It's vital the City enter this fray.

Use Facebook Live to "broadcast" important public hearings or other important City Council meeting items, important community meetings, events, etc. ◆ This capability has numerous benefits, including the ability to facilitate public comments during a meeting and broaden the reach of viewership.

Adopt 3-1-1 service to provide "high touch" public information. Call centers have increasingly become a vital tool to improve communication and information flow for residents and visitors unable to navigate the complexities of public agencies. Particularly for the LA region where it's unclear which agency handles
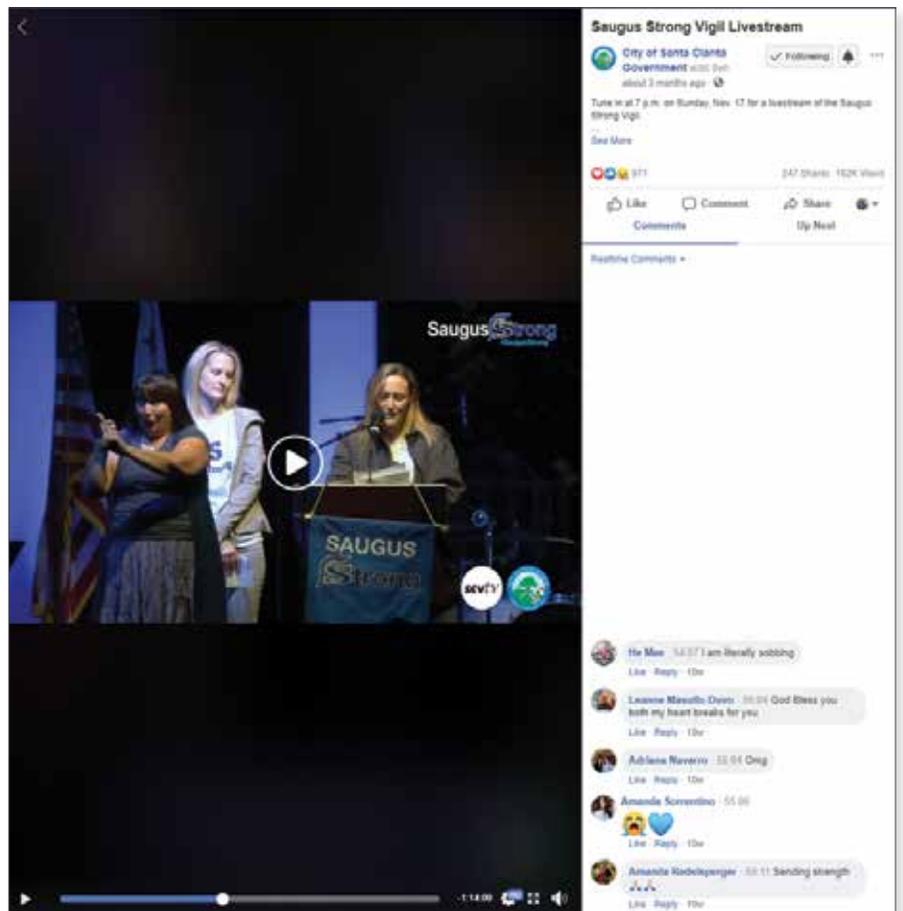

Figure 12 – the City of Santa Clarita used Facebook Live to stream the community vigil following the shooting at Saugus High School.

what services, a single, easy-dial option present significant benefits. Recommend public information program take responsibility for coordinating with IT and call center vendor and to bring a customer service orientation.

Empower City staff to photograph service delivery. Creating an organization of employees empowered to occasionally snap a photo of their service delivery and sending to the Public Information Office for posting on social media will not only positively engage and promote the work of employees, it will turn the entire organization into a communications team that takes pride in showing what it does. Photos – which are highly effective at generating attention – would populate the website and social media channels.

Issue Request for Proposals to completely redesign the City's website. The City's site design, functionality and navigation is generally average for a public agency of the stature of Beverly Hills. Virtually every interviewee noted frustration navigating the City's site. There is a significant amount of data; it's the access to the information that presents challenges. Further, there are numerous best practices and contemporary features of the latest website back-end and design that would benefit the City. Of particular note is the requirement for the website to be accessible as well as available in multiple languages, both of which are missing at this time. Recommend a competitive RFP process that will enable various vendors to present their capabilities. This process will require a significant amount of staff time; recommend that the Public Information Office is the lead to pull together representatives from all City departments to facilitate both the technological challenges as well as address the needs of all public-facing programs/functions.

The City calendar on the current website is highly valued and should continue. This feature should be included in the website redesign RFP.

Redesign/Revamp MobileBeverlyHills app. The City presently offers a mobile app that is intended to take advantage of current technology to provide a variety of types of information. However, it has some interface challenges, could use some customer service overarching content, lacks a contemporary graphic interface, and needs improved links to current website content, content enhancements, added news, etc. It also requires significant promotion to make it a "must-have" app viewed by residents as often as their trusted news sites (the current iOS app store, for example, gives this a single star rating with 2 reviews). Recommend contracting with outside vendor to rebuild the app with the Public Information Office taking the lead to ensure best practices for public input/needs are taken into account.
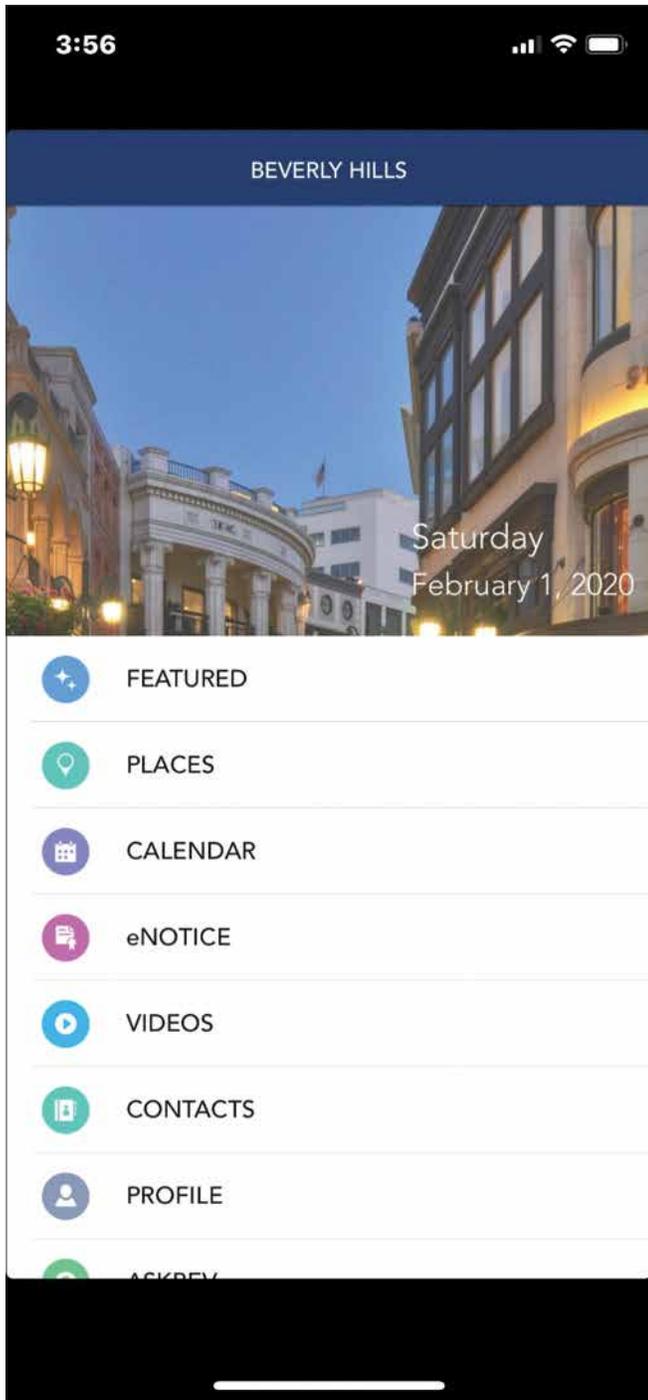
*Figure 13 – Current City app lacks contemporary design and features.*
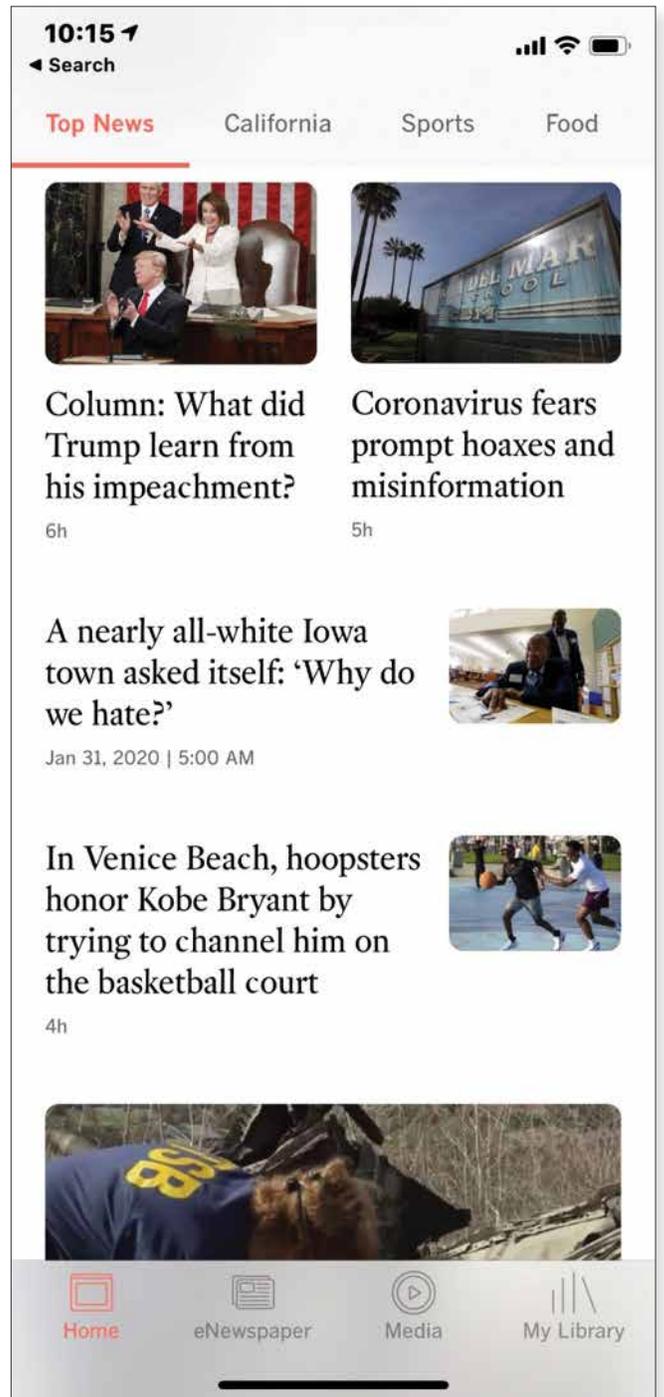
Figure 14 – LA Times new mobile app is a good model to emulate. Note the Home, eNewspaper, Media and Library icons.

Incorporate BHText into this new approach to the app when created. The City offers an innovative capability to allow anyone to text a question or request to the City and obtain an answer within a short period of time. However, there are customer service aspects of the implementation that need to be addressed. Recommend folding into the mobile app or rebuilding/promoting/ adding customer service features to text program.

Conduct "Tele-Town Hall®" to gather input via unique electronic community gathering. The Tele-Town Hall® is the first

Figure 15 – BHTV

large-scale, personal communication tool to help organizations easily interact with hundreds of individuals through a town hall-style meeting conducted via the telephone and web. Tele-Town Hall® rapidly dials out to a list of phone numbers provided by the City. Audience members receive personalized, pre-recorded messages inviting them to remain on the line if they wish to be transferred to your live Tele-Town Hall® event regarding a specific project or issue. Once they have joined the Tele-Town Hall® event, participants can press a button on their keypad to request to ask your Speakers a question live, as well as respond to integrated Survey Questions. Participants, who are unable to ask questions live have the option to leave a personal message with a call screener. Participant statistics are provided along with links for posting to the City's website.

> 5. **Visual Communications Tools – Generate confidence and engagement through visually-oriented stories about City programs, services and employees, and strategic use of video and graphic design.**

Broadly use video programming to tell City service-related stories: reformat BHTV content. ◆ Using existing video production staff, a significant increase in the number of short (90 seconds to 3-minutes) video vignettes should be produced to highlight the array of services being delivered. The videos should populate all social media and web-based channels (Facebook, link via Twitter, website, current Venmo platform, BHTV, mobile app, news center and others). The production quality should balance a newsmagazine style with an informal or handheld style via the use of mobile devices. These varying styles will engage more citizens relate to via their own social media use and which will (a) humanize the video clip and (b) enable more productions to be completed without additional cost.

6. Department Public Information Team: Communications Strategy Group – Leverage the communications resources and knowledge within each City department to benefit the City as a whole and to support all communications with residents through the further development of the existing Communications Strategy Group. This team is especially important to serve as the emergency public information team during an EOC activation.

Build on work of Communications Strategy Group to leverage citywide communications planning/ counsel. ◆ Schedule a regular monthly meeting, led and staffed by the Public Information Office, to serve as a central information sharing body, as well as help to develop communications strategies and address controversial issues. Representatives from each City department should actively attend and participate. Communications-related training and annual workshops, such as "PIO Boot Camp," can be held. The group would also share breaking news or major initiative information. The standing agenda for each month's meeting would include the following:

- Major issues impacting each department
- Review "Horizon Report"
- Communications counsel on how to address departmental issues
- Major actions from the City Council – past and anticipated
- Community relations challenges
- Issues that cross departmental lines

Meetings can occasionally be training opportunities, such as crisis communications, key message development/delivery, media pitching, writing, presentation training, trends in new media/electronic communications, etc.

A key role for the CSG will be to serve as the emergency public information team during a major event or disaster. Therefore, periodic emergency drills or tabletop exercises would also be part of the training program. Another training element would address the tactics necessary both during an emergency and also during non-crisis periods, such as the following:

- Conducting press conferences
- Writing press releases
- Special event planning
- Social Media during a disaster

7. Persian Community, Renters Outreach – Increase awareness about City programs and services to three key audiences that now could feel disenfranchised.

These three audiences were repeatedly identified in the research as in need of focused communications channels and outreach. Additional direct research is required to learn more about the desires/interests of these audiences and methods that each obtain their information about their city government.

Conduct focus groups or form an ad hoc committee with community leaders/representatives from each segment of the community identified. ◆ Convene both or either of these proven research tools – focus groups or ad hoc committee – with leaders and representatives from each of the communities to learn their goals/desires as well as where they obtain information now. This information would form the basis of targeted one-way and two-way information channels to be implemented by the Public Information Office as well as other City departments.

8. Emergency Public Information Plan – Ensure life- and property-saving information reaches those impacted before, during and after a natural or man-made disaster.

Promote Nixle subscribers. ◆ This tool has proven to be an exceptional method of alerting the public to a crisis or disaster. Increasing subscribers should be a high priority. This can be accomplished by adding a tag line to nearly all communications tools directing residents and business owners to subscribe and by conducting special information campaigns.

Conduct tabletop exercises for Communications Strategy Group. ◆ Annual one-day exercises should be conducted to ensure the City communications team understands how to respond and communicate during a disaster.

Annually Update Emergency Public Information Plan/Annex. ◆ The City is presently contracting for the preparation of an Emergency Public Information Plan. Annual reviews should be undertaken to ensure it remains accurate and updated.

Ensure use of 211 or 311 capability during an incident. Ensuring that 211 operators have updated incident information and publicizing 211 as a source of emergency data are important functions of the emergency public information program. This is a proven method of answering calls from the public which typically minimizes calls to 911.

Ensure Farsi-speaking residents and visitors receive emergency public information in appropriate languages. Ensure emergency public information tools reach non-English speaking residents and visitors, including those whose native tongue includes Spanish and Farsi. Materials should be translated to these languages.
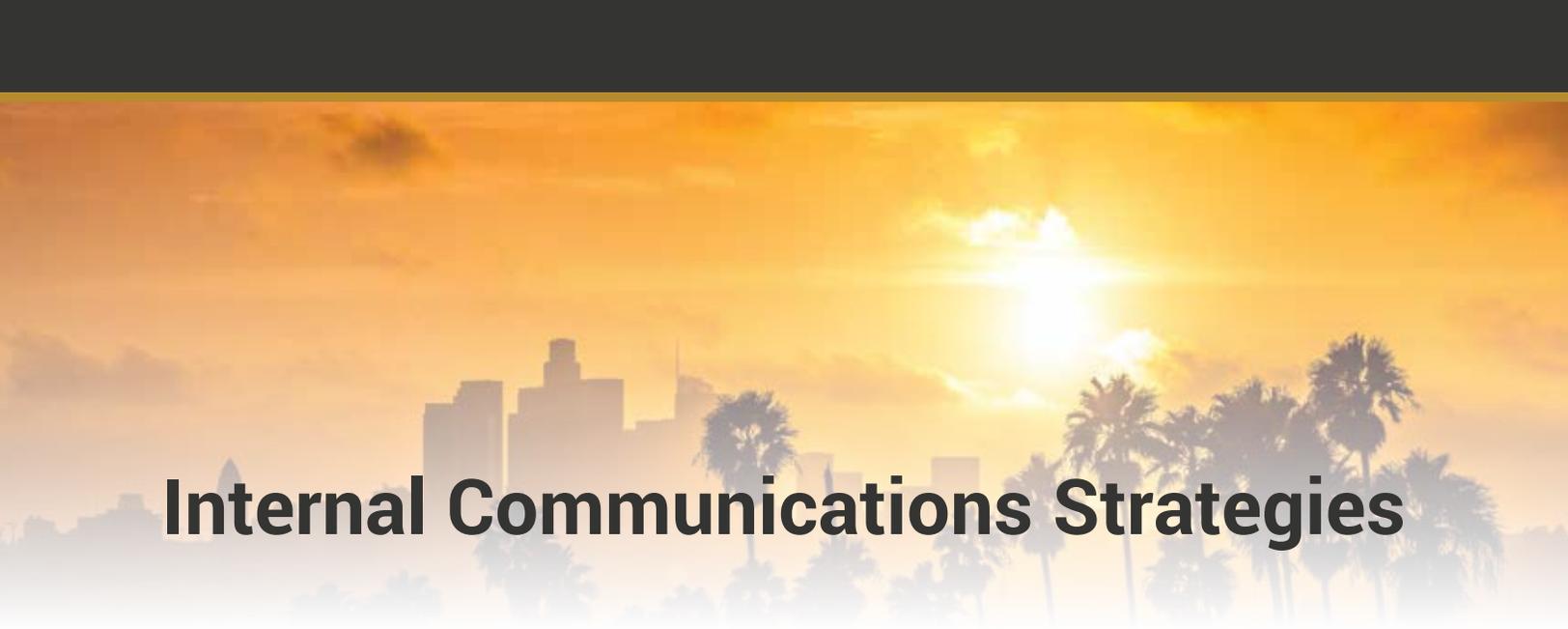
Internal Communications Strategies

The following internal communications strategies are recommended to engage and inform employees.

1. **Develop a broad-based communications program** – Increase awareness among employees by implementing a variety of communications vehicles which reach employees via the most convenient tools possible.

2. **Create an engaging Intranet site** – Embark on an internal communications and education program to convey to all City employees their importance within the organization and organizational goals/programs through a robust Intranet.

Internal Communications Tactics

◆ *Indicates high priority tactic for implementation during the first year of Plan.*

1. Broad-based communications program – Increase awareness of key initiatives among employees by implementing a variety of communications vehicles which reach employees via the most convenient tools possible.

Formal internal communications programs allow all City employees to understand the goals and programs of the organization; see their role in the overall implementation of the programs; help accomplish the goals; and articulate the successes to family, friends, neighbors and other City employees. In effect, this allows them to serve as spokespersons for the City. The results of the employee survey showed a high level of satisfaction with the quantity, quality and sources of information currently provided to employees. The results also show the need for some additional and focused tactics.

Schedule regular visits by the City Manager to all employees. ◆ It is recommended that the City Manager conduct regular briefings in a "brown bag" setting by department or agency. In addition to organizational progress, attendees should have an opportunity to ask questions of the City Manager. A "theme of the quarter" should highlight major initiatives/projects, as well as progress made toward reaching City Council priorities for the year.

Make consistent use of video messages by the City Manager to all employees. ◆ This communications vehicle is extremely well-received by employees, and allows them to watch when convenient. Front line supervisors should ensure all field employees know how to view the video.

Figure 16 – Ventura County CEO regularly distributes a video to all employees which touches on organizational priorities. An added benefit: these can be distributed via social media and other channels to reach non-internal audiences.

Use email more regularly to communicate with all staff. ◆ The City Manager's office has periodically used the "all personnel" feature of email to make citywide announcements; this should be continued and expanded. Employees report that they most prefer to receive emails regarding issues of importance facing the City. Email should be sent directly from the City Manager's email address.

Distribute special bulletins regarding major initiatives. ◆ A special, new e-publication should be created just for City employees to provide breaking, urgent or significant news. The "Update" or similarly named publication should be developed to educate all employees about major projects or issues that cross departmental lines and which may generate considerable community or media interest. The approved Key Messages for each item would be shared in this channel.

Send City Council meeting summaries. ◆ As also described as an external tactic, this new document should be distributed to all employees, the media, community and opinion leaders and those who subscribe to the e-newsletter.

> **2. Create an engaging Intranet site – Embark on an internal communications and education program to convey to all City employees their importance within the organization and organizational goals/programs through a robust Intranet.**

Create a new "vision" for the City Intranet. ◆ The Intranet, when used properly and consistently, can be a vital internal communication link for all employees – both one-way and two-way information flow and engagement. The BEVY is now viewed as an HR tool with static content. A contemporary Intranet should be each employee's homepage and mirror the City's new "News Channel" once implemented. Departmental and citywide news, benefits, new employee orientation and City Council information should all be included, along with employee profiles and exciting content. A few key elements should be considered as this is accomplished:

1. Make the Intranet essential.
2. Align with the City's goals.
3. Provide consistent, reliable and fresh content.
4. Build ownership among all departments as the Intranet is visioned and programmed.
5. "Brand" it with a new name and spread the word: it's the only site dedicated to all City employees.
6. Incorporate the use of the Intranet in all new employee hiring.
7. Sequence the roll-out of new sections and content.

First Year – Recommended Priority Tactics

Strategy	Tactic	One-Time	Ongoing
External Communications			
1. Strategic Counsel/ Key Messages	Conduct Key Message Development and Delivery Training		✓
	Build Key Message development into every project/issue		✓
	Ensure the Public Information Office is involved in all significant issues	✓	
	Adopt a beat structure for CMO PIO team	✓	✓
2. "Personal Touch"/Opinion Leader Communications Programming	Engage residents at their neighborhood level through the use of in-home gatherings		✓
	Homeowner association leadership, resident briefings, information		✓
	Provide content of interest to parents at local schools		✓
3. Media Relations	Conduct a Media Fracture©	✓	
	Conduct group media briefings		✓
	Broadly share feature story pitch results		✓
	Prepare opinion stories		✓
4. Direct Communications Channels and Electronic Community Relations Program	Prepare summary of City Council agenda items, actions		✓
	Establish regular e-newsletter		✓
	Use social media channel to tell people stories		✓
	Use Facebook Live to broadcast important hearings, gatherings		✓
	Redesign the "Ask Bev" CRM Comcate Capability	✓	
5. Visual Communications Tools	Broadly use video programming to tell City stories		✓
6. Department Public Information Team: Communications Strategy Group	Communications Strategy Group meetings, training		✓
7. Persian Community, Spanish-Speaking, Renters Outreach	Conduct focus groups and/or ad hoc committees to research best practices to reach these audiences		✓
8. Emergency Public Information	Promote Nixle subscribers	✓	
	Conduct tabletop and drills for Communications Strategy Group		✓
	Annually update Emergency Public Information Plan		✓
Internal Communications			
1. Develop a Broad-Based Communications Program	Schedule regular visits by City Manager to all departments		✓
	Make consistent use of videos by City Manager to all employees		✓
	Use email more broadly/regularly to reach all employees		✓
	Distribute special bulletins regarding major initiatives		✓
	Send City Council meeting summaries		✓
2. Create an Engaging Intranet for City Employees	Create a new vision for The BEVY	✓	

Appendix A:
Interviewees for this Plan

Huma Ahmed, City Clerk

Lt. Elisabeth Albanese, Beverly Hills Police Department

Sandra Aronberg, Chair, Public Works Commission

Greg Barton, Fire Chief

Dana Beesen, Publicist, Community Services

Laura Biery, Manager, Marketing and Economic Sustainability

Alan Block, Chair, Planning Commission

Michael Bregy, Superintendent, Beverly Hills Unified School District

George Chavez, City Manager

Communication Strategy Group

Marc Coopwood, Assistant Chief of Police

Mark Elliot, Community Member

Shana Epstein, Director of Public Works

Howard Fisher, City Treasurer

Noelle Freeman, Marketing Chair, Next Bev Committee

Lester Friedman, Vice Mayor

Susan Healy Keene, Director, Community Development

Nancy Hunt-Coffey, Assistant City Manager

Garin Hussenjian, Manager, Community Outreach

Dr. Julian Gold, Councilmember

Kathy Gohari, Rodeo Drive Committee

Jonathan Herndon, Manger, Multimedia Services

Todd Johnson, President and CEO, Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce

Eduardo Luna, City Auditor

Joe Matsch, Deputy Fire Chief

Pamela Mottice-Muller, Director, Emergency Management, Resiliency & Recovery

Jeff Muir, Director of Finance

Shelley Ovrom, Human Resources Manager

Sharon Persovski, Chair, Architectural Commission

David Perusse, Fire Battalion Chief

Joe Safier, Chair, Charitable Solicitations

Phil Savenick, Community Member

David Schirmer, Director, Information Technology/CIO

Blair Schlecter, Vice President of Economic Development and Government Affairs, Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce

Sandra Spagnoli, Chief of Police

Keith Sterling, Manager, Public Information

Robert Tanenbaum, Former Mayor

Ray Taylor, Interim Director, Community Services

Stephanie Vahn, Chair, Arts & Culture

Karen and Michael Villalpando, Owners, Beverly Hills Press

Julie Wagner, Chief Executive Office, Beverly Hills Conference and Visitors Bureau

Larry Wiener, City Attorney

Robert Wunderlich, Councilmember

Appendix B:
"Budget Ambassadors":
Example from City of Oakland

Hi there Budget Ambassadors!

It has been about a month since we debriefed about this year's new engagement model around the City's budget. We have since gathered the notes from our 9/14 Saturday meeting in the Mayor's Conference room and outlined the next steps based on our discussion below:

- Ambassador program should be ongoing
- Housing homeless focus, then potholes, voting, and ballots
- Ambassadors should hold gatherings quarterly starting in January
- Ambassadors can invite different subject matter experts
- Recruit NextDoor administrators and a newsletter for budget ambassadors or a zoom call before gatherings are held should be scheduled

Please let me know if you have questions or if I missed anything from our discussion. We will be sending out a calendar invite soon for our first Zoom Call with you as Budget Ambassadors around housing, what the City is doing, and opportunities to learn more about housing at the local or County/regional level.

Hope you all are doing wonderful and thank you kindly.

Figure 17 – Email to Oakland "Budget Ambassadors" with a project update.

Budget Update and FAQs for Budget Ambassadors

Thank you to all #OurOakBudget Ambassadors who participated in Town Halls, house parties, and public meetings.

Here's the latest: As you know, the Mayor and Administration presented their budget to the public last month. On Monday night, Council President Rebecca Kaplan presented her budget to the public.

The City Council declined to take a vote and will revisit adopting a budget next week at the June 18 meeting. We appreciate everyone's participation in this process!

The City Council is required to **pass a budget by June 30** -- we'll keep you posted on when we expect a final vote and how you can continue to engage with your Councilmembers.

This year, we added a new engagement tool which brought members of our community together to discuss what residents of Oakland want most out of this year's budget.

From homelessness and housing to transportation and illegal dumping, we know members of our community care about a range of issues. Through this new engagement strategy, we were able to get more of our community involved in the entire budget process, long before the final vote.

From Spanish media platforms like Pasa La Voz, to wine and cheese parties, to Hip Hop Platforms for Change, Budget Ambassadors gathered their loved ones, friends, and neighbors to watch budget videos and talk about your budget priorities. We shared your input and priorities with the Mayor and budget team and were also able to answer your questions. Keep an eye out for more budget news in the coming weeks.

We collected a lot of FAQs re: the budget and those answers can be found HERE.

This year's Budget Ambassadors and Budget Videos led not only to broader civic engagement, but deeper learning on key topics about the budget.

Figure 18 – Oakland "Budget Ambassadors" receive regular information from the City.

Comments from Budget Ambassadors

"So great for the community to be involved!"

"Fun and informative! A+! Looking forward to civically engaging again!"
"Very professionally done. Lots of good information!"

Town Halls and Viewing Parties

Our Budget Town Hall meetings and Budget Ambassador viewing parties were held all throughout Oakland - providing members of our community from all areas a chance to participate in the discussion and ask questions about budget priorities.

Viewer Feedback

"My biggest priorities are housing for the homeless, finding solutions for illegal dumping, and filling potholes."

"I am concerned about affordable housing, especially for the homeless."

"Housing for the homeless and increasing community safety are very important."

Figure 19 – Feedback from participants helps generate positive feelings about the program.

Figure 20 – Background regarding Oakland "Budget Ambassadors" program.
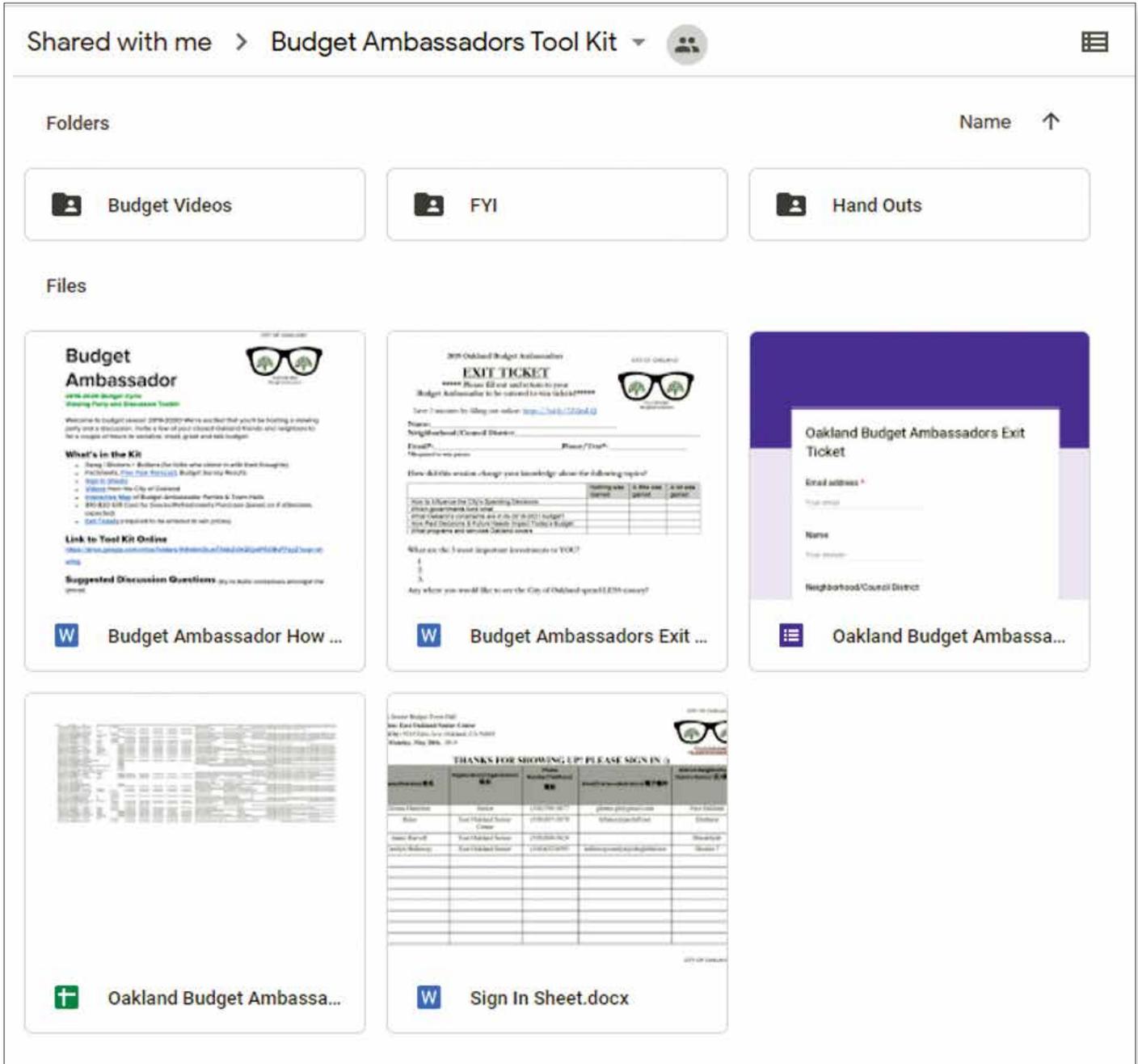
Figure 21 – Oakland "Budget Ambassadors" have access to an electronic toolkit with all materials needed to host events and explain the City's budget process.

Appendix C:
e-Notify List of Topics:
Example from the City of Santa Clarita

News and Information

☐ Building & Safety Information

☐ City Briefs Weekly Updates

☐ Economic Development / Enterprise Zone Information

☐ Film Office Updates

☐ General Updates

☐ Manufactured Home Park Information

☐ Message from the City Manager

☐ Message from the Mayor

☐ Press Release Summary (Weekly)

☐ Recreation Newsletter

SCVTV Morning Digest
(clicking link will take you to SCVTV.com)

☐ Tourism Updates

☐ Transit Updates

☐ Website Updates

Public Meeting Notices

☐ Council Agendas

☐ All Public Meetings (Including Subcommittees and Other Meetings)

☐ Arts Commission

☐ Parks, Recreation & Community Services Commission

☐ Planning Commission

Programs and Projects

☐ Camp Clarita

☐ Drug Free Youth In Town (DFYIT)

☐ Emergency Preparedness

☐ Family Education

☐ Green Santa Clarita (Environmental Services)

☐ Healthy Santa Clarita

☐ Hike Santa Clarita

☐ Human Services

☐ New Bid Opportunities

Santa Clarita 2020
(Major City Project Updates)

☐ Santa Clarita Public Library

☐ Seasons Brochure/Recreation Registration

☐ State of the City Invitation

☐ Teen Programs

☐ Volunteer Opportunities

☐ WorkSource Center

☐ West Creek/Tesoro Annexation

☐ Whittaker-Bermite Property Updates

Email Format

☐ html

☐ text

Appendix D:
City Council Meeting Summary:
Example from the City of Santa Cruz

In other news from Santa Cruz City Council

- **The city council unanimously approved a full renovation of the Branciforte and Garfield Park libraries.** These renovations together are $2 million over budget. The city council approved a plan to allocate an additional $1.5 million of Measure S library bond funds to the projects. Friends of the Santa Cruz Public Libraries, a fundraising nonprofit supporting the library system, has agreed to raise an additional $500,000 for these projects in 2020.
  - Renovations for the Branciforte Library include a new community meeting room with wood paneling throughout. The room is designed with its own entries for after-hours functions. The design also includes a new children's area next to an outdoor patio, a larger teen space and a new reading lounge. The library would remain on the same footprint. Its completion is expected in early 2022.
  - Garfield Park Library's renovations also would maintain the same footprint. That design includes a smaller circulation desk to allow for a larger meeting room. The adult reading room would be refurbished with wood shelving, new furniture and a stone fireplace. Shelving would be moved away from the windows to allow more daylight. The children's area would include computers, a homework zone, and reading benches in the window boxes. A concrete ramp for wheelchairs at the back of the library would have to be updated to meet code, a large portion of the project's cost. Completion is expected in mid-2021.
  - Councilmembers Chris Krohn, Drew Glover and Mayor Jusin Cummings expressed concern about a gate in the Branciforte Library design that would prevent homeless people from camping next to the entry, and called for flexibility in how the gate is designed and built.

- **The city council unanimously advanced a new proposed law that would create a minimum $50 fine for landlords who prevent tenants from posting political signs.** Tenants' free speech rights to post political signs are protected by state law. The new local law would create a penalty.

- **The city council unanimously advanced a $15,000 grant for the local emergency homeless shelter nonprofit Warming Center Program.** The nonprofit shelters as many as 90 homeless people when the temperature falls below 38 degrees. The nonprofit recently added a shower and laundry program. The city council will make a final decision on the grant at an upcoming meeting, pending a formal proposal from the nonprofit.

- **City Manager Martin Bernal announced Tuesday that the 1220 River Street Camp will close Wednesday** and will [relocate to the National Guard Armory in DelaVeaga Park](). The fire marshall will determine the capacity Wednesday, but Bernal hopes it will be at least 80 people, he said. The site will be managed by the Salvation Army.

Appendix E:
News Channel: Example from Ventura County

The primary goal of the Ventura County News Channel (VCNC) is to create a place where the public (and the media) can get County news.

Ventura County shares the greater Los Angeles-area media market with the counties of Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside. A geographic area of that size spreads media resources thin, forces them to concentrate on breaking news and increases the difficulty of attracting media coverage for "good" news and feature stories.

As a result, it follows that adequate media coverage in Ventura County during a widespread disaster – a major earthquake, for example – is highly unlikely. That is the purpose behind establishing the VCNC; it would allow County agencies to tell their stories without having to rely on mainstream media while providing a platform for emergency information during a disaster. The VCNC would also allow the County to post local breaking news that might not warrant coverage from regional, state or national media such as election results, major road closures or significant emergency incidents.

Ventura County News Channel would:
- Tell who we are
- Tell what we do
- Tell what we have accomplished
- Show where to find information

Multi-faceted approach:
- Current Website
- Social Media
- Videos
- Photography
- Feature Stories
- Webcasts
- Local Access TV Programming

Video
Create a dedicated video production team.
- The team would produce videos for VCNC. It could also produce programming for local access TV channels and videos for other agencies/departments for training purposes, events or use on social media. Costs could be billed back to departments if necessary.

- The team would have studio and remote capabilities and include pre-production work, filming, post-production, editing and distribution.
- "Featuring Ventura County" – a regular series of videos designed to spotlight County agencies and departments. Filmed on location, 3-5 minutes in length.
- The site would link to streaming meetings (e.g. Board of Supervisors) and archived videos.

Photography
- Use photographs to highlight "news briefs." These would include awards, new equipment, ribbon cuttings, etc.
- Slide show – "Around the County" – illustrating the great diversity of landscapes, activities and resources in the County.
- An area could also be provided for user-generated photos that illustrate life in Ventura County.

Social Media
- Use appropriate social media platforms to inform and tell the County story. Could include a Facebook page and Instagram site for uploading photos and information.
- A Facebook page would be countywide and not intended to replace successful pages being used by other County departments. It could, however, share information from these pages while giving smaller agencies and departments an outlet for news and information.

Emergencies and Disasters
- In the case of a major disaster, local and/or Los Angeles media may be unable to disseminate timely, accurate local information. VCNC could be used as a central, trusted hub for local information. Depending on the type and scope of the emergency, information could be placed directly on VCNC, or the site could be used to direct residents to the appropriate source(s) for information.

Other
- Important links (cities, chambers of commerce, visitor and convention bureaus, etc.)
- Shared feeds (traffic, weather, etc.)
- County information (history, FAQs, statistics, historical landmarks, etc.)

For a similar program, visit the San Diego County News Center:
http://www.countynewscenter.com/.

Appendix F:
Communications Plan/Approach:
Example from Santa Barbara County

PROJECT NAME: Goleta Beach Communications Plan – DRAFT ***February 17, 2015***

Project Lead: Renee Bahl

Plan author: Sheri Benninghoven	**Phone:** 805-965-7024
Department: CEO/Communications	**Email:** sheri@saecom.com

Situation:
Summarize the reason for the communications plan:

The County has submitted a completed application to the California Coastal Commission (CCC) to seek a Coastal Development permit (CDP) to retain the rock structure at Goleta Beach County Park which was installed under a temporary emergency permit in 2004. The CCC is expected to conduct a hearing regarding the County's application at their May 13-15, 2015 in Santa Barbara.

Communication Goal:

• Educate the general public regarding the County's desire to protect Goleta Beach and the developed park area by allowing the rock structure installed in 2004 to remain

• Inform the users of Goleta Beach and other stakeholders about the County's decision-making process and opportunities for public input

• Generate confidence in the County's diligence to make the best decision possible for the beach

• Convey that the County's request of the CCC to allow the rock structure to remain is based on the best engineering, environmental and scientific studies

• Communicate the importance of the project and the award-winning EIR with the Coastal Commission Executive Director and certain Coastal Commissioners.

Issue(s)/Major Challenge(s):

• The CCC and the Coastal Act has historically raised concerns about and discouraged the use of "hard" or rock protection structures, and in the case of Goleta Beach has specifically directed the County to "study" the feasibility of "managed retreat" including the removal of the unpermitted revetments.

• The CCC staff will make a recommendation to the CCC regarding the County's permit application

- CCC will either approve or deny the permit application; in either scenario the project will return to the Board of Supervisors for certification of the EIR and other actions resulting from whatever decision the CCC renders;

- Despite the County's diligent efforts to promote public access and common sense approach to protect the park, there are some in the region who disagree

Target Audience(s):
Bulleted list of audiences to be targeted.

- Goleta Beach users
- General public
- Coastal Commission and staff
- Environmental community (EDC)
- County staff
- Friends of Goleta Beach
- Residents of unincorporated area of Santa Barbara County adjacent to the City of Goleta
- City of Goleta officials and Goleta residents
- Park Concessionaires (restaurant and non-motorized boat rental)

Strategies:

- Keep the media informed about the application/CCC process via media releases, calls, background briefings, etc.
- Ensure Goleta Beach users are aware of the importance of keeping the rock structures
- Partner with the City of Goleta to reach their and nearby residents
- Offer meetings and site visit to Coastal Commissioners and Coastal Commission staff.

Key Messages:
Three to four simple, bulleted messages that the County wants everyone to know about the project.

- Santa Barbara County has been diligent in looking for ways to protect Goleta Beach County Park supported by stringent environmental research.
- The rock structure, which is buried by sand and not visible, has done a superior job of protecting the beach and various public facilities, including rest rooms, parking lot, walkways, bike path and utility lines.
- The County looks forward to working with the Coastal Commission to have the permit approved and continue to enhance public access to this free park.
- Goleta Beach County Park provides coastal access and no-cost recreation opportunities for over 1.5 million visitors annually.

Tactics Checklist
Fill in as much information as possible for each task, delete tasks that will not be utilized.

Collateral Materials			

Done	Task	Due Date	Responsibility
☐	**Key Message Platform** Attached	2/8/15	SB
☐	**Fact Sheet**	2/10/15	SB
☐	**News Release(s)** PR1 Topic: County submits application to CCC to allow rock structure to remain PR2 Topic: CCC to meet in SB; will review Goleta Beach permit PR3 Topic: TBD if needed	2/8/15 TBD TBD	SB/LW SB/LW TBD
☐	**Question and Answer document (internal and external)**	2/11/15	SB/LW
☐	**Website pages specifically dedicated to the project** Edit page for navigation and visual appeal; link to County home page Location: www.countyofsb.org/goletabeachproject.sbc	2/11/15	LW?
☐	**Poster or Flyer?** Desired locations: Display at Goleta Beach, at Pier and/or entrance?		
☐	**Display Ads** TBD		
☐	**High quality fact sheet for Coastal Commission and other decision makers.**		
☐	**Other** TBD		

Media Relations:			

Done	Task	Due Date	Responsibility
☐	**Media Advisory** TBD		
☐	**Consider background briefings for reporters** Date TBD		LW

Done	Task	Due Date	Responsibility
☐	**Issue regular updates to media** Frequency: TBD		
☐	**Consider joint press conference w/City of Goleta (+-2 weeks advance of CCC meeting)**	4/27/15	All
☐	Other	2/8/15	SB

Special Events/Announcement:

Done	Task	Due Date	Responsibility
☐	**Public Meeting(s)?** Inform beach users of issue		
☐	Event timeline _____ : _____ am/pm _____ : _____ am/pm _____ : _____ am/pm		
☐	**Formal Presentations**		
☐	**PowerPoint**		
☐	**Talking Points**		
☐	**Other**		

Public Agency/Elected Officials:

Done	Task	Due Date	Responsibility
☐	**Board of Supervisors/Staff Briefings**		
☐	**Provide Fact Sheet** (leave behind) TBD – YES		
☐	**CCC Staff, including Executive Director**		

Done	Task	Due Date	Responsibility
☐	**EDC?**		
☐	**Coastal Commissioners**		
☐	**City of Goleta elected and appointed officials**		

Community/HOA/Neighborhood Groups:

Done	Task	Due Date	Responsibility
☐	**Conduct in-person briefings and video screening with key neighborhood groups?**		
☐	**Issue regular e-mail updates to neighborhood groups**		
☐	**Place articles in neighborhood newsletters?**		
☐	**Other**		

Goleta Beach Users/Unincorporated Goleta Area:

Done	Task	Due Date	Responsibility
☐	**Conduct in-person briefings with community groups/leaders?**		
☐	**Conduct in-person briefings with businesses?**		
☐	**Open house/informational event/party at Beach?**		
☐	**EDC?**		

Multimedia:

Done	Task	Due Date	Responsibility
☐	**Informational video segment 15sec/30sec/60sec/3min**		
☐	**Post informational video on web site**		
☐	**Photography**		
☐	**Other**		

Internal Communications:			
Done	Task	Due Date	Responsibility
☐	**All employee email/copy of press release**		
☐	**Other**		
Social Media:			
Done	Task	Due Date	Responsibility
☐	**Facebook Post**		
☐	**Twitter Post**		
☐	**Instagram Post**		
☐	**YouTube Post**		
☐	**SCBTV?**		
☐	**Other**		

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