

City of Sammamish Communications Strategy

Report to Communications Committee

OCTOBER 5, 2017 | COCKER FENNESSY

Today

1. Review

Findings

Recommendations

Resources

2. Discuss & Clarify

Reactions

Questions

Suggestions

3. Agree to Next Steps

Revise/finalize for
Council presentation

Goal

Evaluation & Recommendations

- Observations on effectiveness of current capabilities and practices
- List of prioritized recommendations for improvement
- Proposed implementation strategy (short and long term)

Input

Perspectives & Activities

City

Council (7)

City staff (25)

- City management
- Communications
- Finance and IT
- Parks and Recreation
- Emergency Services
- Community Development
- Maintenance
- Public Works/Parks Project Mgmt.

Residents

Public opinion research

Virtual Town Hall data

Supplementary interviews with community members (3)

Peers

Edmonds

Redmond

Issaquah

Shoreline

Mercer Island

Materials

City-developed materials

Coverage

Website

Branding

Survey research

Findings:
**Current goals,
objectives &
outcomes**

Strong desire to improve:

- **Audience focus** [content, voice, timing, tools, etc.]
- **Transparency/trust**
- **Proactive approach**
- **Broader outreach**

1. City is communicating key messages.
2. Residents are positive about public information and engagement, but there's room for improvement.
3. Public desire for electronic communications and more timely information.
4. City want to improve transparency/trust.
5. There's a desire to get ahead of controversial issues.
6. It's important to reach broader segments of population.
7. City leaders and staff have questions about the appropriate look, feel and tone of communications.
8. Don't send more info.! Send better/targeted info.

Findings:
**Current Organization/
Model**

Lean

Decentralized

Many voices. Different songs and keys. No sheet music.

9. Lean: Communications Manager position and PT/outside social media.
10. \$250,000 budget. 1.0 FTE + consultant.
11. Communications Manager reports to City Manager's office. Council advises through ad hoc committee.
12. Questions raised about Council and staff roles.
13. Communications is a shared staff responsibility.
14. Former Communications Manager relied on "wisdom of the factory floor."
15. Decentralized model relies on staff being proactive, knowledgeable, confident.
16. Many different staff communicate, with different voices, styles, levels of content. Website has 30+ contributors.
17. Staff limited by file sharing/organization of info/resources; lack of stylebook/brand guidelines, lack of training.
18. Social media program.

Findings:
**Current
Tools/Techniques**

**Print newsletter:
major focus**

Staff need guidance

**Website: Knowledge
bedrock**

19. Variety of tools/activities.
20. Print newsletter: 12x year, reaches every household, distinctive look/feel. Common practice.
21. Desire for more time-sensitive communications, better branding, something digital/shareable.
22. Virtual town hall: interest in email alerts, enews and social media over hardcopy newsletter.
23. Residents want to be reached where they are, using a variety of tools.
24. Strong interest in new/evolving tools, but guidance needed.
25. Staff and Council want better ways to engage with/listen to community to strengthen relationships and inform decisions.
26. Website is critical. Redesign helped, but work to do.
27. Old school works: sandwich boards and banners.
28. New tools may present challenges re: compliance/records.

Recommendations:
OBJECTIVES

- 1. Work smarter, not harder**
- 2. Enhance City of Sammamish brand**
- 3. Take proactive approach**
- 4. Build communications capacity, but stay lean**



Recommendations: OVERARCHING

HIGH PRIORITY

1. Reframe communications function
2. ID key audiences, focus tools
3. Address essentials first
4. Celebrate success

LOWER PRIORITY

5. Invest in an issue-focused campaign

Key Audiences

- Those who **use** City services and **engage** with City
- Those who **benefit from** City services, but **may not be directly engaged**
- Those **affected by** or who **make decisions** that impact the City

Recommendations: **STRUCTURE**

HIGH PRIORITY

6. ID and empower communications “team” across departments

MEDIUM PRIORITY

7. Increase central communications staffing to 1.5 or 2.0 FTEs
8. Share communications assets/resources with team
9. Map activities/develop how to fact sheets

Empowering the Team

- ID Leaders
- Host Team Discussions
- Create Learning Moments
- Train/coach
- Develop Systems/Tools (editorial calendar)

Recommendations: TOOLS/TECHNIQUES part 1

HIGH PRIORITY

10. Develop annual communications work plan
11. Develop high level editorial calendar
12. Focus attention/resources on website
13. Develop social media guidelines
14. Integrate/be strategic about social media



City of Issaquah: Social Media Use Policy
<http://issaquahwa.gov/index.aspx?nid=1304>

Recommendations:
TOOLS/TECHNIQUES
part 2

MEDIUM PRIORITY

16. Develop style guide to build brand consistency/identity
17. Reduce frequency of print newsletter
18. Develop monthly or weekly e-newsletter
19. Improve citizen/customer engagement tracking
20. Develop communications dashboard

Recommendations:
TOOLS/TECHNIQUES
part 3

LOWER PRIORITY

21. Adopt more visual approach
22. Organize/enhance digital assets
23. Restructure GovDelivery
24. Improve Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
25. Test/improve website usability
26. Translate materials
27. Explore new ways to engage public/consider innovative pilots

IMPLEMENTATION: NEXT 1-6 MONTHS

Caveats

- *Costs are additional costs to City*
- *Cost estimates are for discussion only, not fully scoped or guaranteed*

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COST
Overarching	Reframe the communications function	
	Identify key audiences and focus	
	Address communications essentials first	
	Celebrate successes	
Structure	Empower communications across departments	\$3,000-\$6,000
Tools/technique	Develop an annual communications work plan	
	Focus attention/resources on improving website	TBD
	Develop high level editorial calendar	
	Develop social media guidelines	

IMPLEMENTATION:
WITHIN 1 YR.

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COST
Structure	Increase central communications staffing	\$50,000-\$80,000
	Share communications assets and resources	
	Map routine activities/ "how to" fact sheets	
Tools/technique	Integrate/be strategic about social media	
	Develop style guide to support brand	\$20,000-\$90,000
	Reduce frequency of print newsletter	Save \$50,000-\$60,000
	Develop monthly or weekly e-newsletter	\$2,500
	Improve citizen/customer engagement tracking	

IMPLEMENTATION:
1-2 YRS.

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	ADDITIONAL COST
Tools/technique	Develop communications dashboard	
	Adopt more visual approach	
	Organize and enhance digital assets	\$11,000-\$12,000
	Restructure GovDelivery	
	Improve SEO	\$3,000
	Test/improve website usability	\$25,000-\$30,000
	Translate materials	\$12,000-\$20,000
	Explore new ways to engage the public (pilots)	Up to \$90,000
Overarching	Invest in an issue-focused comm. campaign	\$50,000-\$90,000

City of Sammamish Communications Strategy

October, 2017