RESOLUTION NO. <u>2022-55</u>

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE CITY OF FOREST GROVE COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY (COMMUNICATIONS PLAN)

WHEREAS, the Forest Grove City Council adopted the goal to "Improve Communications & Engagement"; and

WHEREAS, the Forest Grove City Council adopted the objective to "Complete the Communications Plan"; and

WHEREAS, City staff contracted with Pitchfork Communications to evaluate and inventory the current communications landscape, interview staff on needs, and draft the initial Communications Plan; and

WHEREAS, City staff revised the draft, solicited feedback from the Internal Communications team, the Committee for Community Involvement, and from Council at a Work Session, the revised final draft is attached Exhibit A.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE CITY OF FOREST GROVE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The City Council of the City of Forest Grove hereby accepts the City of Forest Grove Communications & Engagement Strategy attached as Exhibit A.

Section 2. This resolution is effective immediately upon its enactment by the City Council.

PRESENTED AND PASSED this 22nd day of August, 2022.

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Anna D. Ruggles, City Recorder

APPROVED by the Mayor this 22nd day of August, 2022.

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Peter B. Truax, Mayor

CITY OF FOREST GROVE

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

CITY OF FOREST GROVE

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

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City of Forest Grove
COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGMENT STRATEGY

OVERVIEW

Located approximately 25 miles west of Portland in Washington County, Oregon, Forest Grove was historically known as a farming community. While retaining connection to its agricultural roots in the verdant Tualatin Valley, Forest Grove has evolved, steadily growing in various leaps and bounds and, since 2010, at a rate of about 4% annually. As of 2021, Forest Grove has approximately 26,000 people living within the City limits. It's recognized as a distant suburb of Portland and is enjoyed by many who commute into the city for work and pleasure. However, a destination in and of itself, it's long been known as a centrally located hub that serves as a gateway to forests, waterways, beaches, mountains, and wine country.

Forest Grove is home to Pacific University and in more recent years, it has built upon and attracted a number of key, growing industries, including manufacturing, education, and healthcare. Forest Grove values a small-town feel as its city and community change over time. It strives to manage challenges with tact and diplomacy while welcoming the benefits and opportunities that positive changes inevitably bring.

The City of Forest Grove has always valued good communication and has strived to keep pace with effective ways to communicate with the people it serves. It believes great communication is essential for reaching the City's goals and objectives, particularly around providing excellent customer service and upholding its responsibility as a government to preserve the democratic process. Such effective communication also facilitates the City's ability to engage the community in decision-making, retaining an informed and high-functioning workforce, and attracting and retaining residents, businesses, and visitors.

ABOUT THIS PLAN

This communication plan is a blueprint for our organization's communication commitments, goals, and activities and provides a structure for equitably engaging our community. As communication fundamentals hold fast over time, specific communication goals, strategies, tactics, and tools will inevitably change. With that understanding, this plan should be viewed as a living document, revisited periodically for assessment and necessary updates.

This communication plan does not suggest all goals, tactics, strategies, and metrics be pursued immediately; rather, City Staff can use this as a long-term plan, identify annually what's vital and doable, and take consistent action against that decision and as is possible given resources (e.g., time, budget, personnel).

Typically, communication plans are reviewed annually. The annual review helps those implementing the plan determine whether the goals, strategies, and tactics are achieving the desired outcomes. It also allows them to make adjustments as needed.

To ensure and strengthen the effectiveness of its communication efforts going forward, the City recommends following this plan in a manner that consistently and collaboratively reflects and upholds the City's mission, vision, and values.

COMMUNICATION GOALS

The City of Forest Grove and those representing it have four major goals:

- Goal 1. City communications proactively and transparently advance the City's vision, goals, and strategies.
- Goal 2. Those communicating on behalf of the City know and engage the communication policies, procedures, and protocols.
- Goal 3. The City has efficient, effective tools and resources to consistently communicate events, activities, news, alerts, and resources/information, both internally and externally.
- Goal 4. The City is the leading source of interesting and relevant content for the City of Forest Grove services and operations to the community and the media. That information is shared internally and externally.

KEY AUDIENCES

- Community members
- Business community
- Development community
- Community partners, including but not limited to local and regional agencies, nonprofit, education, business and community groups, state and federal government agencies
- City of Forest Grove employees and elected/appointed officials
- Volunteers, including members of commissions and committees
- Media
- Visitors and tourists
- Prospective businesses and community members, or those looking to relocate to the City

KEY MESSAGES

- The City is a full-service government operation, providing an extensive array of services and resources that enable people to live and thrive.
- The City practices "community by design." Proactive planning considers and accommodates both the desires and needs of all to ensure people can live and thrive here.
- The City provides excellent customer service in its actions and through its words. This means practicing empathy for others; respect for diversity; patience in our interactions; passion for the job; persistence in solutions and resolutions; and an unwavering desire to listen, learn, and improve.
- Forest Grove treasures its small-town, historic feel and supports a healthy, vibrant downtown.
- The City's Urban Renewal Agency invests in downtown improvements.
- Forest Grove supports a healthy economy by striving to enable ample housing, employment and shopping opportunities.
- Forest Grove cares about its community. Programs and outreach offered by various departments enlighten, educate, and empower residents of all ages, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Forest Grove is an attractive place to live and visit. It has an abundance of events and activities for visitors and community members alike.
- The community preserves and showcases its natural, historic, and cultural assets while maintaining a welcoming, progressive mindset. Visual and performing arts festivals support its appreciation of diverse cultures.
- Forest Grove, just 25 miles west of Portland, remains a hub for many natural and recreational assets, including forests, waterways, mountains, and beaches. It collaborates with Washington County, neighboring counties and cities, and state-wide agencies to protect and promote these assets. As the hub, it welcomes visitors and serves as the unofficial concierge for these many outdoor recreation amenities.
- Forest Grove reflects a distinct look and feel with various types of housing, neighborhoods, schools, places of worship, farmlands, parks, and open spaces. Planning efforts strive to ensure and sustain this look and feel.

FOREST GROVE OREGON

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES, TACTICS & METRICS

GOAL 1. CITY COMMUNICATIONS PROACTIVELY AND TRANSPARENTLY REFLECT AND ADVANCE THE CITY'S VISION, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES.

Strategy: Use a variety of communications channels (web, social media, print) to deliver public information in a timely and thoughtful manner.

TACTICS – HIGH LEVEL	MEASUREMENT
1.1 City Communication Team develops an annual editorial calendar that facilitates delivering public information in a timely and thoughtful manner.	Engagement from the community, staff productivity.
1.2 City staff have access to translation services and other tools to improve access for people facing barriers.	Access and satisfaction among residents for City services and customer service.
1.3 Brand guidelines and templates help ensure the community can recognize information coming from the City and relate to its consistent look and voice.	Access and satisfaction among residents for City services, staff productivity and consistency.
1.4 Regularly survey the community about their communications preferences and respond/adapt accordingly.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, followers on social media.
1.5 City staff serve as advocates for the public, providing and facilitating excellent communication and customer service regardless of the communication or channel used.	Access and satisfaction among residents for City services.

GOAL 1. CITY COMMUNICATIONS PROACTIVELY AND TRANSPARENTLY REFLECT AND ADVANCE THE CITY'S VISION, VALUES, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES.

Strategy: Use a variety of communications channels (web, social media, print) to deliver public information in a timely and thoughtful manner.

TACTICS – WEBSITE	MEASUREMENT
1.6 The Executive Assistant to the City Manager or Communications Coordinator updates information on forestgrove-or.gov as needed to ensure community members receive information in a timely manner.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, followers on social media, access, and satisfaction among residents for City services and customer service.
1.7 The Executive Assistant to the City Manager or Communications Coordinator regularly reviews Google Analytics to determine areas for improvement.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, staff feedback.

TACTICS – SOCIAL MEDIA	MEASUREMENT
1.8 Post to all social media channels in a consistent manner and frequency and respond to questions and comments in a timely manner.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, followers on social media, access and satisfaction among residents for City services and customer service.
1.9 Regularly review social media analytics to determine areas for improvement.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, followers on social media.

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Strategy: Use a variety of communications channels (web, social media, print) to deliver public information in a timely and thoughtful manner.

TACTICS – PRINT & DIGITAL MEDIA	MEASUREMENT
1.10 Distribute information about City Council meetings, public hearings, and emergency alerts – in both Spanish and English.	Engagement from the community, access and satisfaction among residents for City services and customer service.
1.11 Distribute a quarterly e-newsletter that provides timely, accurate information about City events, projects, services, stories, and initiatives.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, subscriptions to email list.
1.12 Purchase print and digital advertising as needed to invite residents to participate in public meetings and events and participate in decision-making.	Engagement from the community, access and satisfaction among residents for City services and customer service.
1.13 Share information with the public through flyers – in Spanish and English.	Engagement from the community.
1.14 Complete a website audit every three years to ensure consistency and accuracy, and to ensure that people facing systemic economic, political, social and cultural barriers can access information. Include recommendations to make the website more user friendly.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, community access to government, staff feedback.

FOREST GROVE OREGON

WE ARE THE CITY OF FOREST GROVE
Where families and businesses thrive.

GOAL 1. CITY COMMUNICATIONS PROACTIVELY AND TRANSPARENTLY REFLECT AND ADVANCE THE CITY'S VISION, VALUES, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES.

Strategy: Create and share content that tells how the City is honoring its vision, goals, values and strategies.

TACTICS – HIGH LEVEL	MEASUREMENT
1.15 Improve staff awareness of City's vision, goals, values, and strategies through employee orientation, training, and consistent, persistent messaging, and education.	Employee engagement, morale, productivity, and retention; staff feedback.
1.16 Communication Team works together and with staff to surface and share stories that align and underscore the City's vision, values, goals, and strategies.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, email list subscriptions, public trust in the City.
1.17 Communication Team regularly prepares, posts, and distributes press releases.	Public trust in the City.

TACTICS – WEBSITE	MEASUREMENT
1.18 Create a landing page on the City's website where stories and photos are shared. Promote stories across multiple channels. Include messaging in each story that demonstrates the City's success relative to its vision, values, goals, and strategies.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, email list subscriptions, social media followers, public trust in the City.

GOAL 1. CITY COMMUNICATIONS PROACTIVELY AND TRANSPARENTLY REFLECT AND ADVANCE THE CITY'S VISION, VALUES, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES.

Strategy: Create and share content that tells how the City is honoring its vision, goals, values and strategies.

TACTICS – SOCIAL MEDIA	MEASUREMENT
1.19 Post photos and content that relate to the City's vision, goals, and strategies. Utilize the hashtag #whatsgrowingonfg to align with the stories landing page on the website.	Engagement from the community, public trust in the City, support for budget decisions and needs.
1.20 Craft supportive content that reflects how the post aligns with the City's vision, values, goals, and strategies.	Engagement from the community, public trust in the City, support for budget decisions and needs.
1.21 Share City success stories (earned and unearned) published by media and highlight ways in which these stories reflect the City's vision, values, goals, and strategies.	Public trust in the City, support for budget decisions and needs.

GOAL 1. CITY COMMUNICATIONS PROACTIVELY AND TRANSPARENTLY REFLECT AND ADVANCE THE CITY'S VISION, VALUES, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES.

Strategy: Create and share content that tells how the City is honoring its vision, goals, values and strategies.

TACTICS – PRINT & DIGITAL MEDIA	MEASUREMENT
1.22 Repurpose stories featured on the City's stories landing page and pitch to local media as a press release with strong leads, multiple quotes, and a consistent format. Utilize press release template.	Employee engagement, morale, productivity, and retention; staff feedback.
1.23 Craft headlines and subheads that clearly communicate the link between the story and the City's vision, values, goals, and strategies.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, email list subscriptions, public trust in the City.
1.24 Communication Team to coach staff and Council on cultivating successful media relations and interviews, demonstrating how to respond in ways that communicate the City's vision, values, goals, and strategies.	Public trust in the City, support for budget decisions and needs.

FOREST GROVE OREGON

WE ARE THE CITY OF FOREST GROVE
Where families and businesses thrive.

GOAL 2. THOSE COMMUNICATING ON BEHALF OF THE CITY KNOW AND ENGAGE THE COMMUNICATION POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PROTOCOLS.

Strategy: Educate staff who have communication in their roles and responsibilities on City Communication Policies and Guidelines.

TACTICS	MEASUREMENT
2.1 Communications Coordinator leads internal and external communication efforts to improve the cohesion, quality, and frequency of communication.	Consistency in deliverables, reduction in errors and time spent addressing errors.
2.2 Communications Team, comprised of Department Directors and/or staff tasked with communication responsibilities, collaborate to improve the cohesion, quality, and frequency of communication.	Consistency in deliverables, confidence in efforts and outreach, reduction in errors and time spent addressing errors, staff productivity.
2.3 Communications Coordinator, Department Directors, and other staff tasked with communication responsibilities are proficient in communication policies, procedures, and protocols.	Consistency in deliverables, confidence in efforts and outreach, reduction in errors and time spent addressing errors, staff productivity.
2.4 City departments manage communications in a decentralized manner while partnering with the Communications Coordinator to ensure a collective brand and an effective impact.	Staff productivity.

GOAL 3. THE CITY HAS EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO CONSISTENTLY COMMUNICATE EVENTS, ACTIVITIES, NEWS, ALERTS, AND RESOURCES, BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY.

Strategy: Staff has access to sustainable, cost-effective, and current communication tools/technology.

TACTICS	MEASUREMENT
3.1 The Communications Team regularly meets and works together to develop and follow an annual editorial calendar that serves as a framework for delivering public information in a timely and thoughtful manner.	Engagement from the community, access to City services, followers on social media, staff productivity.
3.2 Provide the Communications Team with translation services and other tools to improve access for people facing language and cultural barriers. Train the Team in communication best practices.	Engagement from the community, access to City services, confidence in efforts and outreach, reduction in errors and time spent addressing errors, staff productivity.
3.3 Provide a central location with marketing tools and resources, including templates, brand guidelines, photos, and the Communications & Engagement Strategy. Create an intranet or other internal platform to share information.	Consistency in deliverables, confidence in efforts and outreach, staff productivity.
3.4 Communications Coordinator reviews all public-facing forms according to branding guidelines and so they are user-friendly (interactive, if helpful). Coordinator works with staff to update materials.	Access to City services, reduction in errors and time spent addressing errors, staff productivity.

GOAL 4. THE CITY IS THE LEADING SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR THE CITY OF FOREST GROVE SERVICES AND OPERATIONS TO THE COMMUNITY AND THE MEDIA. THAT INFORMATION IS SHARED INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY.

Strategy: Craft and distribute City information and news proactively.

TACTICS	MEASUREMENT
4.1 Share City news internally first, externally second via formal press releases.	Staff and public participation at City events, meetings, activities, etc.; employee engagement, morale, and retention.
4.2 Prepare talking points in advance of potential media interviews, particularly in regard to sensitive or controversial topics.	Staff productivity, social media followers, website traffic, public trust of the City's transparency.
4.3 Provide City-released updates/summaries after each City Council meeting.	Engagement from the community, public trust in the City, support for budget decisions and needs.
4.4 Offer more opportunities for the public to interact with City staff, such as town hall meetings, open houses and listening sessions.	Public participation at City events, meetings, activities; access to City services; access to influencing policy.
4.5 Commit to a minimum number of press releases and public service announcements annually, and social media posts (ideally per department) weekly.	Staff productivity, social media traffic, website traffic, earned media placements.
4.6 Ensure all news supports the City's vision, goals, values, and strategies.	Public trust in the City, support for budget decisions and needs.

FOREST GROVE OREGON

COMMUNICATION POLICIES & GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

In our fast-paced, digitally connected and multicultural community, it's paramount to ensure the City has the tools, policies and processes needed to ensure great communication, both internally and externally. The City's internal and external communication policies and guidelines provide information for City staff and elected and appointed officials around communication policies and processes.

Strategic communication is the responsibility of the City Manager's Office and other designated staff who are tasked with communication responsibilities as part of their job. Individual departments are responsible for providing and maintaining content for specific communication channels. The City strives to be consistent in its voice and key messages, speaking as one voice, reflecting one brand and sharing common messages. All elected officials, staff, community members, business owners, and even visitors to the community are unofficial ambassadors for the City who help shape and communicate the City's vision and key messages.

COMMUNICATION PROMISE

- We are committed to open, transparent, and accessible communication.
- We value and prioritize face-to-face communication.
- We encourage feedback and discussion.
- We make time for discussion.
- We value diversity of thought.
- We believe all communication must be truthful and ethical.
- We are committed to communicating both good and bad news in a reasonable timeframe, ensuring both expedience and thoughtful consideration.
- We communicate in a way that supports the City's vision, values, goals, and branding.

1. We are committed to open, transparent, and accessible communication.

Communication about significant happenings needs to be thoroughly planned. Effective communication is always considered a priority.

Care should be taken to decide what requires formal communication and by whom, and what can be communicated informally. Significant information to staff and City officials should show who has authorized its release (i.e., a memo to all City staff from the City Manager). The communication needs of those located in off-site and/or remote locations is always considered.

Consideration of barriers, including but not limited to speech and language disabilities, hearing challenges, identity barriers, physical location and technology challenges, should be given to employees and City officials attempting to access official City information and/or actively needing to participate in City communication.

2. We value and prioritize face-to-face communication.

To help support an effective exchange of meaning or understanding, there needs to be opportunity for discussion and for questions to be asked and answers received. This is best conveyed in face-to-face communication whenever possible. However, the City recognizes it is not always possible to meet in person. As appropriate or needed, the City will accommodate for video conferencing and conference-call options for meetings.

The needs of various audiences should be taken into account when planning communication. Some audiences will be satisfied with simple verbal presentations while others will require documentation of significant information.

3. We encourage feedback and discussion.

Obtaining feedback and listening effectively are critically important for good communication.

Effective communication will only come if people within all organizational levels and entities seek out feedback and take appropriate action to ensure the intended meaning is passed on to the relevant audience.

4. We make time for discussion.

Topics that warrant discussion and time should be accommodated for on agendas, in meetings, and with face-to-face conversations. Our City maintains an open-door policy that invites candor and supports transparency without bias or retribution.

5. We value diversity of thought.

Opinions and ideas are valued. Diversity of thought is essential to equality, fairness, and representation. Everyone's ideas should be heard and considered.

6. We believe all communication must be truthful and ethical.

The impact and consequences of all communication must be taken into account. Communication among City staff, officials, and the community should reflect integrity and honesty, thereby earning and maintaining the public's trust in the City.

When appropriate, information provided to any one person will also be provided at the same time to all others involved or likely to be interested. Exceptions exist, including Human Resources information as well as anything that puts confidentiality or someone's privacy and/or security at risk or violates the law.

Mischievous communication, for example, starting or spreading rumors known to be untrue, and other unethical communication behaviors, in-person or online will not be tolerated.

City staff and officials should understand their responsibility to uphold the integrity, confidentiality and reputation of the City. Staff should ensure all information presented publicly has been approved for such distribution. Staff should be cautious to not engage in conversations about projects, programs or other City matters that have not been approved for public discussion.

7. We are committed to communicating both good and bad news in a reasonable timeframe, ensuring both expedience and thoughtful consideration.

Rumors should be addressed with effective communication as soon as is practicable.

A proactive, transparent approach to addressing controversial issues is preferred. However, cases, situations and/or news that involve City Staff and are private/confidential in nature are handled according to Human Resource laws and policy.

When possible, communications that are sensitive or contain "bad news," should be reviewed by at least one other staff member or consultant (e.g., emergency communications expert, City Manager, etc.) before being disseminated.

8. We communicate in a way that supports the City's vision, values, goals, and branding and builds public trust.

Everything we write or say aligns with and reinforces the values that shape and direct our activities, objectives and visions of success. In this promise, we recognize that communications impact the City of Forest Grove's culture and reflect our style and the importance of communication in the community.

APPLICABILITY

These policies and guidelines apply to all City of Forest Grove staff and elected or appointed officials, which includes any members of boards and commissions.

In all communication, City employees should follow the standards of conduct outlined, both online and when having in-person interactions.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

These are the primary ways in which the City distributes information to the public.

WEBSITE

The City's website forestgrove-or.gov is its primary communication tool. The City website is intended to provide public information concerning City services, activities, and policies, and to provide an avenue for residents to access the City's online version of its newsletter, What's Growing On in Forest Grove.

The Communication Coordinator serves as Managing Editor of forestgrove-or.gov. However, departments are responsible for updating content for their unique department's page. City departments are not permitted to purchase or otherwise establish domain names or to use other external resources for presenting City information on the Internet, unless otherwise approved by the City Manager or designee.

Purpose
These policies and guidelines establish procedures governing the content on the City of Forest Grove's public website and delineates procedures and responsibilities for approving content.

Use of the City's website must comply with all Federal government guidelines that apply to the Dotgov domain name. City departments are not permitted to purchase or otherwise establish domain names or to use other external resources for presenting City information on the Internet, unless otherwise approved by the City Manager or designee.

The City's website is externally hosted with all content maintained and managed by assigned City of Forest Grove staff. It serves the people living in, visiting, and moving to Forest Grove, as well as news media and City staff, government officials, and volunteers.

Website content is used strictly for the purposes of advancing the business and services of the City, as well as educating the public. Permission to reproduce and/or redistribute information (text or graphics) may be granted by the City, in accordance with Copyright laws. All such requests should be directed to the Communications Coordinator for permission and tracking.

Prohibitions and Limitations

All content will be consistent with the mission of the City of Forest Grove, and the Forest Grove Public Website will provide its visitors with an entry point to services and information at any time, from any place, allowing them to communicate and to conduct business 24/7 with the City of Forest Grove. All content becomes part of the City's public records.

The following types of content are prohibited on the City's website. (Exceptions for some of these types of content may be considered for approval by the City Manager or designee):

- commercial activities
- fundraisers (exception: board and commissions' fundraisers; ok to hyperlink to public fundraisers but not directly post to website)
- political activities
- harassing or offensive language or images
- endorsements of any product, service or private organization
- open, unstructured chat sessions
- discussion forums, online commentary, and interactive services not approved by the City Manager
- advertisements, with the exception of City events and employment

All content of multimedia, including video, on the City website is subject to this policy. Photos of individuals may appear on the website provided the image was taken at a public facility or community event and the photo depicts a City program or service. Please consult with the Communication Coordinator regarding the requirement of release forms for unique circumstances (e.g., marketing photo shoot, health department photos). Releases are not necessary for City employees if the photo relates to their official role at the City.

Content on the Forest Grove public website will be accessible as much as possible to users with physical or cognitive disabilities or language barriers.

The City of Forest Grove complies with copyright law. Text, video, audio, photographs, and/or other images found on the web and not accompanied by an explicit permission grant may not be reused without permission from the copyright owner.

Web content belonging to one City department's section of the website should not be copied or duplicated within another department section of the website, but rather referenced by hyperlink to ensure the most current information is provided.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Web Manager:
The City's Communication Coordinator serves as the managing editor of the City's website. This position is responsible for the following duties related to the website: oversees development and maintenance of content that provides information regarding City actions, announcements, programs, community events, and storytelling; addresses internal and external queries regarding content found on the website; responds to external inquiries for information or directs them to the appropriate departments; envisions, encourages, and creates new means of enhancing web communications; works with the IT Department staff to monitor best practices and communicates with internal users to ensure the use of best practices; coordinates with Department Directors, Communication Team members, and any staff members who are assigned to communication responsibilities to identify corrections and/or improvements to the website and the internal systems that relate to the website; works with IT to monitor, improve, and refresh graphic elements of the website; represents Forest Grove on inter-agency content management issues; identifies and manages the development, updates, and implementation of web content policy, procedures, and standards; trains internal web content managers; and assists departments in understanding audiences and website usage, incorporating supportive data (e.g., Google Analytics).

Web Infrastructure Manager:
The City's IT Manager serves as the Web Infrastructure Manager. This position includes the following duties: provides technical support for internal content managers and internal and external web users; coordinates with the Web Manager, Department Directors, Communication Team Members, and any staff assigned to website communication to identify corrections and/or improvements to the website and the internal systems that relate to the website; works with Web Consultant on technical issues and coordinates Citywide web changes/resources that cannot be performed internally; oversees security of the website; ensures the City is in compliance with Federal and State policies.

Web Consultant:
A web consulting company created and developed the City of Forest Grove's website superstructure. It is hired as a consultant to the City. The company is responsible for the following duties: website hosting services; support for existing features and functions of the website and development of new features; major structural changes to the site; reset of administrative user passwords; and technical support for the Web Infrastructure Manager and Web Manager.

Department Content Managers:
The Department Content Managers are identified by the Department Directors (and may also include Department Directors) to perform the following duties: develop specific web pages explaining Department-specific issues; maintain pages to make sure they are current; work with the Web Manager to look for new means of enhancing web communication; works with Web Manager in promoting items to the homepage and the Latest News button; posts and updates meeting information, including calendar items, posting of agendas, minutes, supporting documents; works with Web Manager to develop more involved web materials and/or features, including blogs; works with Web Manager and Web Infrastructure Manager to identify issues and potential improvements to the site; and participates on the City's internal Communication Team if assigned by the Department Director.

Department Directors:
The Department Directors are responsible for designating a person(s) within their department to serve as Content Managers to create web pages explaining Department specific issues. Or, they opt to take on their responsibility themselves. In either role, they oversee and are responsible for the Department's content; and work with the City's Web Manager and Web Infrastructure Manager to identify issues and potential improvements to the site.

WEBSITE BEST PRACTICES
These include but are not limited to:

- Write content for readability. Keep communication as simple as possible (e.g., targeting a third-grade reading level).
- Define acronyms, and do not assume technical jargon or terms are widely understood.
- Use a simple, clean, and logical design with simple navigation.
- Incorporate graphics, photos, charts, and illustrations whenever helpful.
- Keep branding consistent throughout the site. For example, department landing pages should have a similar look and feel, with a consistent amount of content, links, etc.
- Follow the City of Forest Grove Brand Guide.
- Use SEO (Search Engine Optimization) best practices. Determine keywords, integrating them in content to drive stronger search engine rankings.
- Make it mobile-friendly. Test out the website regularly, particularly when there are updates, to ensure it's easy to use and visually appealing.
- Choose and adhere to style guidelines, practicing correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, consistent voice, and professional tone.
- Attribute staff-authored blogs/articles to the author, with name, title, and content information.
- Post information supporting "Latest News" as soon as it is available (per normal staff hours).
- Promote the website URL/domain name via all communication channels and mediums.
- Link to other websites/resources only if they clearly relate to City operations, business, services, news, and information.
- Make updates to the staff directory (and other pages that include staff contact information) as soon as changes occur.
- Provide official email address and phone number for all current staff members listed.
- Post Terms of Use, Website Policy and Disclaimer information in a clear, visible landing page or linked document.
- Ensure department landing pages have a clear way for the public to know whoDepartment Directors are and the contact information (if relevant). Pick a way to do this and keep it consistent among all landing pages.

LATEST NEWS SECTION

Latest News, a special feature on the City's website home page, is an efficient and timely communication tool that the City uses to share important information with citizens.

Headlines and links to information items will be provided. Links to the following types of items may be included:

- City Manager news releases
- News releases from other departments
- City Council announcements
- City events and activities
- Other items as determined by the Web Manager, such as important issues/topics at upcoming public hearings and meetings, and follow up on those issues/topics.

The following item will have priority:

- Major public health, safety, and security issues

The Communication Coordinator, who serves as the Web Manager, will make every effort to publish submitted announcements to the fullest extent possible. The Communication Coordinator reserves the right to determine if a *News and Announcement* item meets the requirements outlined in this policy, its placement, and the length of time it appears. If an item is determined to be unsuitable for the *Latest News* feature, the requestor will be notified.

Requests for items to be included in the *Latest News* section must be initiated by City departments and must be of interest to the majority of City residents. Requests can be emailed to the Communication Coordinator.

PUBLIC-FACING FORMS (DOWNLOADS)

The City of Forest Grove strives to uphold a cohesive approach to the look, feel and usability of all communication materials, including public-facing forms. Official City forms should, at a minimum, follow these guidelines and best practices:

- All public forms can be located online through the City's website, downloaded and printed.
- All public forms may be accessed in person. The City's website will inform the public where it can access forms in person. Staff members can easily direct public inquiries around where to access and complete public forms.
- Forms specific to, created and updated by Forest Grove will include the Forest Grove logo, colors and font, and reflect other Forest Grove branding assets as appropriate, adhering to the Forest Grove Brand Guide.
- Forms available online will be interactive (e.g., interactive PDFs) so users can easily input their information into open fields, save, download, and print.
- All public forms will be stored in a common City folder (and appropriate subfolders), located on the City's server or an online portal available to all City employees.
- All forms will be proofed for spelling, grammar, syntax, tone, style, branding, etc.
- All forms should be reviewed and updated periodically.
- All forms should meet ADA requirements.

SOCIAL MEDIA

For the City of Forest Grove, the primary benefit of social media is that it's easier than ever for the City to engage community members. However, such online conversations—just like face-to-face conversations—require listening and engaging. City staff with official communication roles are increasingly dedicated to social media. A big piece of the social media job is crafting compelling content. The role also requires responding to the public's questions, concerns and feedback, always noting and even tracking what topics and trends are attractive to or igniting the social media audience. City staff often must look for, respond to and correct misinformation that may spread faster than the truth.

PURPOSE

Social media is defined as a highly scaled, web-based application that facilitates information sharing and collaboration. Social media can be a web-based community, bulletin board, forum, social networking site, video- and music-sharing site, wiki, blog, listserve, podcast, instant messaging, and others. Examples include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Social media is a powerful communication tool that has a significant, growing impact on the City of Forest Grove's ability to inform, engage, and serve the community. It can be effective in the areas of public relations, internal and external communications, recruiting, employee morale, learning, collaboration, government-to-government connection, collecting feedback/data, and more.

All information posted through the City's social media platforms is intended for the public and communicates the City's vision, goals, brand, events, activities, services, news, and current issues.

People who have a positive experience on social media are likely to recommend it to others. Purposeful, positive and effective use can share messages that confirm for the public that the City and its staff are doing their job and that the public is invited and encouraged to participate in beneficial two-way communication exchanges. However, the use of social media presents certain risks and carries responsibilities.

The guidelines outlined here are designed to assist City employees who use social media to communicate on behalf of the City. The guidelines help clarify how best to advance the City's goals and responsibilities through the use of social media. The guidance can enhance the City's brand and reputation, and it is crafted to educate and empower City employees as they navigate issues and risks unique to social media.

Given the evolving nature of social media, the following guidelines will be reviewed and updated periodically.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All City staff members are to be cognizant of their responsibility to protect the reputation of the City and the services it provides for our community. This holds true regardless of whether they are serving during working or nonworking hours.

With all social media activity, City staff members are viewed as City brand ambassadors. Posts on social media sites will protect the City's brand and voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. No department should construe its social media site as representing the City as a whole. Above all, whether on work time or off, staff are to remain focused on the City's customers, commitments, and mission. The City has designated Public Information Officers for the following departments:
- Police
- Fire & Rescue

Also, every Department Director is considered the communication lead for that department. Some departments have staff members assigned to manage social media under the direction of the Department Director.

Communication Coordinator:
This staff person facilitates consistent, accurate communication on behalf of the City and actively uses social media to do so. The Communication Coordinator may work with a Communication Team, the members of which follow this social media policy as part of their job responsibilities. The Communication Coordinator will provide Human Resources with social media policy updates for the purpose of staff orientation and training. Both the general and social media roles and responsibilities of the Communications Coordinator correlate with and support the success of City of Forest Grove's Communication Plan, which is designed to be a long-term plan. Thus, some roles and responsibilities may be fixed while others will change over time.

IT Team:
The IT Team is responsible for administering security for social media sites and monitoring employee use in support of this policy. Compliance rests with Department Directors, supervisors, and individual employees. IT will change social network passwords periodically to prevent potential access by hackers and other security risks.

Elected and Appointed City Officials:
The City recognizes that elected and appointed City officials have the right to post on their personal social media sites. City officials are discouraged from posting about City-related activities and issues on their personal social media pages. Should any important or controversial conversations happen to take place on City officials' personal social media pages, they are to report those incidents to the City's Communications Coordinator.

At this time, the City does not allow City boards and commissions to have separate City-represented social media pages due to a potential violation of public records retention and serial communication laws (please refer to the Council Rules: Meetings Open to the Public and Serial Communications). Also the City does not permit City Council members or board and commission members to directly post to City-owned social media pages. These officials may send draft posts to the City's Communication Coordinator for consideration for the City's social media sites. Any changes in this policy should carefully consider the risks versus benefits. Keep in mind, all engagement and interactions on social media may become part of the public record.

SOCIAL MEDIA DO'S AND DON'TS

When representing the City of Forest Grove on social media sites, do:

- Follow the City's brand guidelines and photo guidelines (which are part of the City's Communication Plan).
- Adhere to the social network's terms of use. Adhere to the City's terms of use for sites if applicable. (For Facebook, see appendix.)
- Respect copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws.
- Verify information, including dates, before posting; include/tag all sources.
- Proofread all posts (and any links) before posting and have a second staff member (ideally the Communication Coordinator) proof the content before posting. Address all grammar and style issues before posting.
- Encourage feedback by asking questions and/or responding in a respectful way to comments.
- Respond to inquiries in a timely manner, being cautious not to rush in responding. When needed, consult other staff before responding. If in doubt about what to post or the City's policy, ask your department's official spokesperson or the City Communication Coordinator.
- Thank people for their comments, including negative feedback. If a comment relates to another department, notify the Department Director or staff member so the feedback is appropriately received and the message is passed on.
- Be accountable and correct mistakes.
- Use disclaimers or speak in the first person on personal media accounts to clarify opinions expressed are not those of their employer. Staff representing the City on City social media accounts will most often use "we" or "the City of Forest Grove."
- All comments are in the public domain and can be published or discussed in all media forms. Have no expectation of privacy.
- Identify yourself as a City employee when posting to the internet.
- Whenever posting to social media sites, include a link to the relevant page on the City's website.

When representing the City of Forest Grove on social media sites, don't:

- Allow social networking to interrupt productivity.
- Use profanity. Discourage others from using profanity as well.
- Post disrespectful comments. Do encourage others not to use disrespectful comments as well.
- Use inaccurate or misleading information (or encourage others to use inaccurate or misleading information).
- Rush to respond to profanity, disrespectful or inaccurate comments. Consult other staff and consider your response.

- Share irrelevant comments or content (or encourage others to share irrelevant comments).
- Share self-serving content (or encourage others to share self-serving content).
- Share content without providing context or framing information (e.g., do not simply "retweet" a post without also adding a comment).
- Post on any social media before first considering the post's implications, usefulness or thoughtful contribution.
- Use or reference your formal position when writing in a non-official capacity; instead, consider using a disclaimer such as "this posting is my own and does not represent the City of Forest Grove's positions, strategies, or opinions."
- Post confidential information about the City, its customers, clients, or employees. Employees who share confidential information do so at the risk of disciplinary action.

If others do any of the above, remove the posting; if the postings are egregious, ban them from the page.

In the case of inappropriate photos and videos, you can also report them to the appropriate social media site for things like spam/scams, pornography/nudity, graphic violence, attacks on an individual or group, hate symbols, and illegal drug use.

HASHTAGS

The City of Forest Grove frequently uses the following hashtags: #ForestGrove #WCCLS #ForestGrovePD #forestgrovefireandrescue #forestgrovefire #WashCoLUT

Use Hashtags to:
- Link your post to align with a specific event, activity, alert or affiliated/relevant organization, entity or agency.
- Lead followers to additional information on this topic (the more specific the hashtag the more useful it is to the audience).

When posting with hashtags:
- Keep it short, simple and catchy.
- Know what hashtags mean. Sites like Tag Def (https://tagdef.com/en/) can clue you in.
- Avoid hashtags that speak to emotion or state of mind (e.g., #angry or #confused).
- Get as specific as possible (i.e. general hashtags like #4thofJuly are not very helpful to the audience).

TWITTER GUIDELINES

The City has two main Twitter accounts—one being used by the Police Department and one being used by Fire & Rescue. The handles are @ForestGrovePD and @ForestGroveFire.

Use Twitter for:
- Connecting with and engaging new users/followers.
- News, City alerts and event updates.
- Play-by-play reporting from City events and activities.
- Other types of eyewitness reporting.
- Encouraging conversations with your followers.
- Discussions of topics (e.g., new Police Department building).
- Driving website traffic.

When posting to Twitter:
- Tag organizations and people only when appropriate.
- Ensure that followers being "tagged" are "real" people and not bots.
- When referencing a program, event or resource of the City, include a link from your post back to www.forestgrove-or.gov.
- Make every effort possible to include an image, and attribute the source of the image.

Frequency:
- 3xs per week

LINKEDIN GUIDELINES

Use LinkedIn for:
- News and event updates.
- Sharing inspirational stories or tips-based articles.
- Sharing any earned media—news stories that quote City staff and/or representatives, e.g., Council members, commissioners, committee members, volunteers, etc.
- Information about the City of Forest Grove.
- Noteworthy new hire news, HR updates and staff insights appropriate for public knowledge.

When posting to LinkedIn:
1. Include the hashtag #ForestGrove to refer back to the City. This lets people know you are affiliated with the City.
2. Tag organizations and people only when appropriate.
3. Always attribute the source of the image.
4. Try to use images whenever possible.

Frequency:
- 3-5xs per month (consider what you can repurpose from Facebook posts to save time).

FACEBOOK GUIDELINES

The City has a number of Facebook accounts: ForestGroveCityHall, Forest Grove Fire & Rescue, Forest Grove Police, Forest Grove City Library, Forest Grove Parks & Rec, Forest Grove Aquatics, and Forest Grove Light & Power.

Use Facebook for:
- News and event updates.
- Sharing inspirational stories.
- Sharing any earned media—news stories that quote City staff, council members, members of boards and commissions, volunteers, etc.
- Information about City events, announcements, awards, significant activities, etc.
- Meeting announcements and topics.

When posting to Facebook:
- Include the hashtag #ForestGrove. This lets people know you are affiliated with the City.
- Tag organizations and people only when appropriate.
- Always attribute the source of the image.
- Always lead with a photo if possible. Facebook is about "faces" so the more faces, the better!

Frequency:
- 4-5xs per week

NEWSLETTER/E-NEWSLETTER

The City publishes a monthly billing insert: FYI Forest Grove. The Communication Coordinator serves as Managing Editor of FYI Forest Grove. This 1-2 page document serves as the City's mini-newsletter and is mailed with the utility bill. PDF newsletter versions are available at forestgrove-or.gov/community/page/fyi-forest-grove on the City's website, under the "Our Community" tab.

The goal of this newsletter is to share timely, accurate information about City events, projects, services and initiatives. Departments are asked to submit material at least a month in advance of the event being promoted.

Nonprofits may run announcements in the FYI Forest Grove, subject to space availability and a first-come/first-serve basis. City announcements are always considered a publishing priority.

QUARTERLY/ANNUAL TOWN MEETINGS

The City holds its Town Meetings quarterly in the Community Auditorium, 1915 Main Street. The Committee for Community Involvement sponsors, plans, coordinates, and moderates the event. The Town Meetings are an opportunity for the community to hear presentations from staff, receive information on how residents can be involved in local government, and meet with elected officials and senior staff to ask questions.

TUALATIN VALLEY COMMUNITY TELEVISION (TVCTV)

Tualatin Valley Community Television provides programming that makes government accessible to communities. TVCTV provides live coverage of the City's Council Meetings on Channel 30.

MEDIA RELATIONS

PURPOSE

The City of Forest Grove takes a strategic approach to media relations. It recognizes the value of media (editors, reporters, journalists, bloggers, etc.) as partners who play a valuable role in helping disseminate information to the public on behalf of the City.

Through strategic media relations, the City should strive to communicate its newsworthiness through reputable outlets and trusted media partners and mediums including but not limited to newspaper, radio, television, and online.

The City believes in maintaining good relationships with media professionals. Everything presented by the City of Forest Grove should be carried out in a way that places the City in positive light, upholds integrity and ethics, builds public trust, and prevents barriers between the City and media.

Members of the media are important partners in helping the City meet its communication objectives. Collaborating with local media is one of the fastest, most efficient ways for the City to publish and share information. As such, the City aims to provide consistent, proactive news releases and public service announcements to achieve accurate coverage by members of the press.

- All formal City press releases are sent out by the City Manager's Office with the exception of press releases from the following departments: Police, Fire & Rescue, and the Library.
- Any media inquiries received by City staff or officials should be referred to their Department Director who, in turn, will immediately forward the contact to the City Manager's Office. Police and Fire & Rescue respond to the media inquiry independently of the City Manager's office, however, they immediately inform the City Manager's office of media inquires that are more serious or controversial in nature.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At the City of Forest Grove, the City Manager is the official spokesperson for the City. However, Department Directors and other staff members assigned official communication responsibilities may also communicate on behalf of the City, such as Public Information Officers (PIOs). Roles and responsibilities relating to communication with the press are described in staff job descriptions.

Communication Coordinator:
As part of the City Manager's department, the Communication Coordinator is responsible for actively helping coordinate strategic media relations on behalf of the City Manager's department, Department Directors, and any staff assigned communication responsibilities. This includes:

- maintaining awareness of all City activities and actions.
- increasing public awareness of the City's initiatives through news releases, story pitches, blogs, articles, surveys, studies, alerts/announcements, and other earned media strategies.
- preparing statements/talking points, coordinating interviews, and/or conducting interviews in a timely, thoughtful way in response to media inquiries.
- responding to press inquiries from media outlets (print, radio, television, and the Internet).
- making sure media have access to the appropriate City staff to interview.
- gathering and supplying key facts, data, and other types of information that provide accuracy, promote "bottom line" favorable public policy outcomes, reduce the cost of doing business, and support with marketing/operational effectiveness.
- tracking earned and unearned media.
- coordinating press conferences and, with the help of City Manager, making all necessary arrangements (people, place, other needs, etc.) for press conference success.
- verifying all City communication reflects its brand and style guidelines.

Elected and Appointed City Officials:
The City recognizes that elected and appointed City officials may have opportunities to interact with local media. It is the City's policy to direct all media interviews, planned or not planned, to the City's Communication Coordinator. City officials will help facilitate this by contacting the City Communication Coordinator and giving this City staff member as many helpful details as possible, including: who requested the interview, best media contact information, media deadline, and expected publication/air date/time. If being interviewed on behalf of the City, the City official will coordinate with the Communications Coordinator to prepare talking points and statements.

Sometimes, City officials may be quoted or filmed unexpectedly by media. In such cases, City officials are to inform the City's Communication Coordinator about the incident as close to the action as reasonably possible.

City Manager:
The City Manager is the official spokesperson for the City. Per his/her discretion, the City Manager may receive and respond to direct inquiries from media outlets for interviews and also independently seek out interview opportunities, distribute media releases, and share information in other ways.

The City Manager will work in tandem with the Communication Coordinator to produce and distribute all communication. This includes and is not limited to all media relations activities, relying on the Communication Coordinator to help with writing, editing/proofing; creating talking points and statements; coordinating interviews, following up with reporters; and sharing news about published stories via social media, the City website, the City newsletter, and other channels.

Department Directors:
Each Department Director is the spokesperson for his/her department. Per their discretion, Department Directors may receive and respond to direct inquiries from media outlets for interviews and also independently seek out interview opportunities, pitch story ideas, distribute media releases, and share information in other ways. Department Directors may work in tandem with the Communication Coordinator to produce and distribute all communication not just on behalf of their department but, as needed, on behalf of the City.

Public Information Officers (PIOs):
The City's Fire & Rescue and Police Departments have official PIOs. Staff in these positions may receive and respond to direct inquiries from media for interviews and also independently seek out interview opportunities, pitch story ideas, distribute media releases, and share information in other ways. PIOs have the authority to coordinate and do media interviews independently and are encouraged to seek approval by their Department Director when the subject matter is sensitive in nature, controversial, litigious, or otherwise challenging.

Community Outreach Specialist:
The Police Department has a Community Outreach Specialist. This staff member may receive and respond to direct inquiries from media outlets for interviews and also independently seek out interview opportunities, pitch story ideas, distribute media releases, and share information in other ways. This staff member should make every effort to get approval from his/her Department Director prior to any significant media relation activities (e.g., press releases, interviews, reports, etc.). This staff member has the authority to coordinate and do media interviews independently yet is encouraged to seek approval by their Department Director when the subject matter is sensitive in nature, controversial, litigious, or otherwise challenging.

City Employees:
City employees for whom communication is not part of their official role should notify their Department Directors of any activities, positive or negative, likely to draw media attention. Always inform the Department Director first and the Communication Coordinator second if contacted by a media member, especially if the subject is controversial to any degree. All contact by media must be channeled through the Communication Coordinator. However, due to the nature of the job, Police and Fire & Rescue need only inform the City Manager or Communication Coordinator if the issues are major/controversial in nature. Respond to media inquiries in a timely, polite manner, connecting them to the correct City communications staff member.

In addition, Department Directors and all official communication support staff are to inform the Communication Coordinator of media relations activities as close to the action as possible. This will better ensure:

1. The City Manager's Office is aware of all department communication activities.
2. The Communication Coordinator can better support and, if helpful, reinforce and sustain department media relations efforts.
3. Information accuracy, less room for error, and any associated legal repercussions.
4. Accurate tracking of staff performance and successes relative to communication roles and responsibilities.
5. City news and information can quickly be shared internally among leadership or among all staff.
6. Communication activities are part of the public record.

MEDIA GUIDELINES

Listed below are several key guidelines for media interviews. The City's Communication Coordinator is available to provide media-interview guidance to all City employees and officials.

- Be strategic, clear, and concise. Consider yourself a driver of the City's vision, values, goals, and strategies. Use verbal and nonverbal communication that support and reinforce the vision, goals, and strategies.
- Prepare and use talking points.
- Avoid jargon and profanity; maintain professionalism at all times.
- Represent only the City. Do not promote any personal agenda, bias, opinions, etc.
- If you don't know an answer, communicate that and offer to follow up on that answer if appropriate.
- Refrain from saying, "No comment." Instead, opt for something like, "At this time, the City is unable to comment on this due to pending litigation."
- Don't lie—ever!
- Do not go "off the record." While many members of the media have high integrity, do not trust them to keep their word. One bad experience can be catastrophic.
- Don't say anything you wouldn't want on the evening news or Page 1 of the local paper.
- Don't play favorites with media even if you personally have a preference.
- Return all media calls promptly. Let media know whether they can text you in the event of urgent needs.
- Keep confidential information confidential, particularly regarding personnel, pending litigation, certain law enforcement records, and certain internal and external security measures.

PRESS RELEASES AND PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS
PROCEDURES

Responding to media inquiries
- Any staff members who do not have communication roles and responsibilities and who are contacted by a media representative should direct these calls and inquiries in a timely fashion to their Department Director, who in turn should contact the Communication Coordinator (or the City Manager when appropriate).
- Official statements are approved by the Communication Coordinator (or the City Manager when appropriate) and are to be issued only by the Communication Coordinator to the media and other interested parties. (Exceptions: Police and Fire & Rescue.)

Distributing press releases
- Upon completion, all finalized press releases should be sent to the Communication Coordinator who will post them on the City's website and highlight them under Latest News on the City's homepage. If the Communication Coordinator discovers any errors or issues with final drafts submitted for the website, the Communication Coordinator will make corrections, if minor, but return the media release to its author if significant changes are needed.
- For all other departments, the Communication Coordinator is available to help with media distribution as needed.

PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

The City has a press release template that reflects its current branding and style guidelines. It is available on Citywide Forms.

Some standard press release guidelines and best practices:

- Use the City's official press release template. This template is designed to have the same look/feel/branding across all departments. Police, Fire & Rescue and other departments may highlight that their press releases are coming from their specific departments.
- Keep it brief, ideally, no more than 500 words for standard press releases. For more complex subjects, 750 words max.
- Use eye-catching headlines. Active headlines, using strong verbs and actions items help. Include the most compelling news in the headline and subhead.
- Include an interesting lead and the key facts in the first paragraph.
- Adhere to Associated Press (AP) Style guidelines (preferred by most media outlets).
- Create content that communicates how the subject strategically communicates the City's vision, goals, strategies, etc.
- Include at least one quote, choosing the appropriate staff person/source to quote. Ideally, two quotes/two sources. Quotes should come from official City spokespeople.
- Include photographs if possible, plus attachments of any embedded photos in jpg or tiff format (min. 350 dpi). Provide brief captions for all photos, as well as photo credits. Always make sure you have permission to share photos and photo release forms have been filled out by the subjects.
- Consider Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Building in keywords helps with online searches.
- Include the City's boilerplate.
- Include contact information—either Department Directors, PIOs or the Communication Coordinator, depending on who is sending the press release.

PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDELINES

City staff should ensure photos being used in official City communications are consistent and on-brand. Photos should reinforce your key messages. Other tips to consider are:

Photos of People
- Use images of City employees enjoying activities, working, volunteering, and connecting with one another.
- Use photos that represent the actual demographics of Forest Grove.
- Whenever possible, capture people with genuine expressions rather than posing for a photographer.
- Photos of people making eye contact are preferable.
- Be mindful of any risky or inappropriate messages reflected in a photo (e.g., racial, ludicrous or libelous messages on someone's clothing or on signs/posters, through hand gestures, etc.)
- Choose images reflecting a variety of people; avoid repeating the same photos of City staff, council members, volunteers, meeting attendees, etc.

Photos of Places
- Use photos that capture the natural beauty of Forest Grove—parks, trails, paths, agriculture, vineyards, etc.
- Use photos of some of Forest Grove's most popular/most celebrated/most recognized places.
- Highlight various City departments and facilities, capturing behind-the-scenes snapshots, activities and events.

Composition
- Photos should fill the frame, and the subject should be a significant portion of the image.
- Existing photos can and should be cropped to fit the frame after they are taken.
- Photos for print need to be high-resolution and follow the guidelines provided by the publication.

Additional Notes
- Don't use copyrighted photos without permission.
- If using professional photos, always abide by usage rights from the photographer.
- Use photos of real people rather than stock photos whenever possible.
- In the event that original photography does not exist, it's okay to use stock photography.
- Always abide by usage rights from the stock photography provider.
- Do not overuse the same image.
- If using an online file-sharing platform to share images, "retire" older images and/or images for which you no longer have usage rights by placing them in a clearly labeled folder, so others know not to use them.
- Create an online storage and filing system, organizing the photos so they're easy to locate, sort, and share as needed.
- Tag/label photos by subject (person, place, event) and date, if possible.

Stock Photography Resources
- Recommended resources for royalty-free stock photography include:
- shutterstock.com, istockphoto.com, stocksy.com, and gallerystock.com.
- Free resources include: unsplash.com, searchcreativecommons.org, and flickr.com/creativecommons/.
- Affordable photo editing/design software: canva.com, affinity.serif.com, and vsco.co.

HYPERLINKS

Hyperlinks, inserted on the City of Forest Grove's website, social media platforms or otherwise, are used to provide people with a quick, easy way to access more relevant information and sources. The City uses hyperlinks in its external communication to enhance understanding, support content, and provide additional content such as through appendix, definitions, credited material and more.

Anyone formally tasked with the role of communications may use hyperlinks to support external communication. The Communication Coordinator is the designated Managing Web Editor and should review and test all hyperlinks as the City's landing pages are updated.

Helpful Hyperlink Hints:
Hyperlinks on public-facing content should support the City's vision, goals and strategies AND meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Relevant to the context of the content.
- Relates to City operations, services, business, etc.
- Free of any commercial purposes.
- Not linked to sites containing: pornography, or sending pornographic, racist, sexist or other inappropriate jokes or stories via email, is considered harassment and will be addressed according to the City's Harassment Policy and will be immediately referred to Human Resources.
- Not an endorsement or indication of preferential treatment of any private person or service.
- Functional—always test links.

EMAIL
As in all external communication, the City is committed to communicating via email in a positive light, upholding its vision, goals, and strategies. Use the City's preferred signature, available in your settings, to uphold a consistent brand.

External Communications Email Etiquette:
- Strive to respond to email within a 24-hour timeframe. Even just a quick response to let the sender know you're aware of the email and will respond in more detail can suffice if warranted.
- Less is more. Clear, brief emails are generally preferable.
- Loop in (cc: or bcc:) other staff who should be aware of the communication.
- Don't rush to send emails if in doubt about the content, tone, grammar, style, accuracy, etc. Wait and address any ambiguity or issues first, asking your supervisor or fellow staff member for support whenever helpful.
- Avoid ALL CAPs. It comes across as shouting. Use bold or underline to communicate emphasis.
- Include any action required in the subject line so people know they need to respond (e.g., "48-hour response required).
- Mention in writing whatever attachments you might be including.
- Don't include huge attachments. Upload and link those to the cloud or the server instead.
- Avoid hitting "reply all" whenever possible. Just reply to those who truly need to hear from you.
- Pick up the phone or talk face to face if you sense tension. Talk first to a supervisor or the Communication Coordinator before responding either by phone or email.
- Verify the recipients before hitting "send."
- Keep good manners, ethics and integrity in mind when crafting content. Always avoid abusive words, emotionally charged language, harassment, racial slurs, and even jokes, the latter of which could be misunderstood or considered offensive to some.
- Send only information you know to be true. Verify facts before sending.

APPENDIX

SWOT ANALYSIS

The result of the situation analysis conducted was an outline of the City's communication Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT).

Strengths
- City Manager has strong leadership.
- Department directors' biweekly meeting consistently supports cross-department communication.
- City Manager distributes a report to City Council (twice monthly).
- Department directors have a collaborative nature.
- City has long-term employee retention/institutional knowledge.
- City has lots of great news, events, and stories to share.
- Engaged followers on the Facebook pages of the City, Police, Fire, and Library.
- High number of Facebook followers for Police (10K) and Fire (14K).
- Police, Fire, and Library have well-established media relationships.
- Good relationships with certain partners, including Pacific University and the school district.
- FYI Forest Grove is a very effective tool for delivering news to the public.
- City Council and department directors recognize the value of having stronger communication plans and policies.
- All staff have a designated email address for receiving formal communication.
- TV monitors and electronic signs are beneficial for informing the public about events, news, and happenings.
- Communication successes are happening in all departments.
- Decentralized management approach supports creativity, empowerment, and autonomy.
- City vision and values will be updated in 2021.
- Light & Power has resources to put toward improved communication.
- Staff members try to support Department Directors with communication support even when it's not in their job description or core skillset.
- Many employees have autonomy around posting to social media, which generally allows for quick distribution of information; posts removed only when obscene or offensive.
- Small City staff often supports nimble communications.
- Most Directors, particularly in our dynamic communication world, recognize the value behind a more cohesive, well-defined, and strategic communications plan.

Weaknesses

- Internal communication is marginal among departments outside weekly Directors' meeting.
- Internal communication is marginal down the chain of command, resulting in a lack of clarity among City staff about what's happening outside of their department (and even sometimes within their department).
- External communication sometimes occurs with errors (grammar, punctuation, misspellings).
- No guidelines, procedures, or templates for external communication means messages and branding are inconsistent and, at times, incorrect.
- Department Directors lack resources (technology – i.e. Intranet, tools – i.e. software to create interactive, branded forms, staff – i.e. dedicated Communication Coordinator, budget – i.e. depts. don't have specific communication budget) to support consistent internal communications.
- City lacks intranet and other technology to support internal communications.
- Communication job expectations are poorly defined for some staff.
- City staff in various departments experience varying degrees of communication support.
- No central clearinghouse for disseminating internal communication results in staff feeling overwhelmed by City emails; they lack clarity around what's essential vs. nonessential.
- Not all staff have or use computers consistently and do not check email daily or even weekly.
- The FG Community Facebook page has posts with factual errors and misinformation about the City.
- Lack of an official editorial calendar and resources (i.e. time and formal communication lead) results in many great stories never being shared with the public.
- Decentralized management approach results in staff working in silos, and contributes to some feelings of isolation and disconnect, weakens cross-department communication and hinders alignment, engagement, and openness to change.
- Local newspaper lacks resources, resulting in public being less engaged and aware of City news.
- City's 2011 communication plan was never implemented due to lack of resources, clearly defined communication roles, and communication leadership.
- Need better procedures for posting power outages during an emergency; no process/canned responses for that prepared.

Opportunities

- Formal/updated guidelines, policies, protocols and procedures for communication channels (i.e. website, social media, newsletter).
- An editorial calendar outlining deliverables (blog posts, social media campaigns, press releases, etc.).
- An official communication team, which meets monthly to share best practices, review the editorial plan, and problem-solve.
- One staff member assigned to serve as Communication Director (clarify role in job expectations).
- Process for storytelling and sharing important information with the public.
- Improved process/procedures for communication that directly support more responsive, respectful customer service.
- Survey the public and staff about how they prefer to receive information (i.e. electronic vs. print).

- Prepare for upcoming FYI Forest Grove distribution changes, including online bill pay and mailings to be managed by contracted vendor vs. in-house.
- Intranet to support internal communication, including staff news, department news, events, employee benefit updates, etc.
- Create one location on the City's intranet for all branding and communication resources.
- Increase followers of and engagement with the City's official Facebook page by increasing the frequency and quality of posts and eliminating errors.

Threats
- Lack of policies and procedures might put City at legal risk.
- An individual Councilor, City Board Member or City Commissioner's Facebook page might put the City at legal risk.
- Lack of policies and procedures result in inefficiency and, at times, unprofessional, inconsistent communication.
- FG Community Facebook page generates false information, undermining the official City Facebook page and other City communication efforts.
- The local media is not covering important City issues and events.
- City has limited budget for communication resources.
- Public misses out on important news as FYI Forest Grove changes format, moves to online billing.
- Feeling among departments and staff that people are working in silos = disengagement, disempowerment, HR challenges and turnover, and takes a financial toll.
- Traditional media has less of an impact/reach in today's digital world.

KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is no official City of Forest Grove communication team and no single point person for citywide communication activities. This contributes to a lack of cohesion in the frequency and quality of communication being distributed by the City as a whole.

Recommendation 1: Form an official communication team comprised of one to two people from each department. This team would be responsible for implementing the strategies and tactics in the communication plan in a cohesive, collaborative way.

One person should be designated as the coordinator of this team. Example roles and responsibilities of this person: set agendas for meetings, provide direction and guidance, edit and publish materials produced by the team, evaluate the effectiveness of the communication plan in achieving the City's communication goals, and other duties as determined by the City Manager. This team would meet monthly, perhaps right after one of the Department Directors' bi-monthly meetings, to briefly share best practices, review the editorial plan, problem-solve, and ensure alignment to communication goals. Based on the discovery process, the City has the ability to hire/assign someone to this part-time role and update the job title and description.

Recommendation 2: Designate a person to serve in the role of official Communication Coordinator, whose primary role would be leading the implementation of the communication plan.

This person would coordinate communication activities in a way that is consistent and professional and leads to the City sharing timely, accurate information, generating and distributing positive stories, educating/informing the public, and empowering its staff. This person would lead the above-mentioned communication team and coordinate with Department Directors and other staff to make sure all communication activities align and support the City's communication goals and align with the City's mission, vision and values. Based on the discovery process, the City has the ability to assign a Staff member to this part-time role and update his or her job title and description.

2. Employees' roles and responsibilities do not include defined communication expectations and tasks.
Numerous City of Forest Grove employees are responsible for communication. However, very few employees have clearly defined roles, expectations or accountability around their communication-related job duties. This leads to misunderstandings around who should do what, when and how, relative to supporting both internal and external communication. They have expressed that they seek more structure, direction and guidance around expectations and accountability in general.

Recommendation 3: Upon the creation of an official communication team and the designation of a Communication Coordinator, immediately update employee job descriptions to reflect official communication roles/responsibilities. Include metrics of success.

3. Communication policies and procedures are outdated and not adhered to.

Recommendation 4: Develop an internal communication policy that includes the following: email, Internet and equipment policy, social media policy and media relations guidelines.*

Recommendation 5: Develop an external communication policy that includes the following: updated social media management guidelines (hashtags, guidelines for each social media channel, Dos and Don'ts of social media, Tips for On-Camera & Print Interviews), website policy and best practices, media relations guidelines, public-facing forms (downloads), and a press release template. These policies should include guidelines for distributing formal communication from Forest Grove boards, commissions and City Council.*

Recommendation 6: Ensure that staff who perform communication activites as part of their formal job receive specific training (i.e. social media training and media relations training) to support them in their efforts. Ensure all existing employees are briefed on the external and internal communication policies; and moving forward, all new staff are briefed on the policies during their orientation.

4. There is a lack of standard procedures for drafting and distributing content to external stakeholders. This leads to a lack of cohesion in the frequency and quality of communication being distributed by the City as a whole. While some departments do a great job of disseminating information and stories, others lack the resources to do so or simply do not know to what degree they should be doing such tasks. There is a lack of timely and accurate information going out from the City.

Recommendation 7: Develop a communication plan that more clearly defines communication goals and communication strategies, tactics and metrics of success.*

The Communication Plan might include:
- Communication Goals
- Key Audiences
- Tone/Voice
- Style Guidelines (as an appendix)
- Branding Guidelines (as an appendix)
- Photo Guidelines
- List of all available communication tools
- Communication goals, strategies, tactics, and measurements of success
- Copy of the City's internal and external communication policies

Recommendation 8: Develop an editorial plan that outlines specific stories/topics, channels, and deadlines for the year ahead.

Recommendation 9: Ensure the communication team meets consistently, ideally once a month, to ensure the editorial plan is being followed, to swap success stories and best practices, and to build a sense of teamwork.

*Pitchfork Communications has started this project as part of its current scope of work.

COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (CCI) FEEDBACK

Page	Section/Paragraph	Comment/s
4	3	This language could be included in a communications link for all employees and directors.
5	3	Should this be reviewed semi annually by the stewards for this?
5	3	Perhaps specified portions could be reviewed on a semiannual basis, such that the whole plan gets reviewed annually.
5	5 subsection 3	Tools and Resources a priority.
6	1 Title	Determined by the audience we currently have and the audience we need to connect with.
6	1 subsection 6	These are resources.
6	2 subsection 3	Can we add being a good listener?
7	1 subsection 1	Proactive approach of communication. One of the critical parts.
7	1 subsection 2	Probably a budget limitation.
7	1 subsection 4	Is there an appropriate role in the plan and or calendar.
8	1	Who will be responsible for coordinating posts to SM?
8	2	Appropriate but consistent communication in all areas.
8	2 subsection 7	What is a GIS StoryMap?
8	4 subsection 3	Do we have a way of measuring readership levels?
9	1	What about annual goals?
9	2	This should have a timeline/calendar plan that is reviewed by the communications team. CCI can review quarterly.
9	3	Resources may limit this.
9	4 subsection 3	Who will provide this coaching?
11	1	Educate Commission/Committees?
11	1 subsection 1	Reference to page 41 does staff understand their role and appropriate procedures to the city's communication?
12	1 subsection 7	I like this approach, but knowing how to make things user-friendly is not easy and is best done with the aid of those specifically trained in this area.
14	Title	Can we add "Accurate" to interesting and relevant?
14	1	This is a game changer for the City.
14	1 subsection 3	City manager's newsletter "What's growing on in the Grove?"
14	3 subsection 4	Absence of instances where communications "damage control" is needed.
15	3	How are these being fulfilled?
15	3	Can these promises be illustrated?
15	3 subsection 3	Letters to Mayor and Council, what happens with those?
15	4	We anticipate the questions and issues that the public/media will likely have and strive to provide responses that are as accurate and as complete as possible.

16	6	and as complete (i.e. the whole truth) as reasonably possible.
17	3 subsection 2	Social media presents special problems. Can CCI help?
17	3 subsection 3	Examples of what City could have done differently. Police Chief? Policing.
17	3 subsection 4	Include Council and Mayor?
15	3 subsection 3	Letters to Mayor and Council, what happens with those?
15	4	We anticipate the questions and issues that the public/media will likely have and strive to provide responses that are as accurate and as complete as possible.
16	6	and as complete (i.e. the whole truth) as reasonably possible.
17	3 subsection 2	Social media presents special problems. Can CCI help?
17	3 subsection 3	Examples of what City could have done differently. Police Chief? Policing.
17	3 subsection 4	Include Council and Mayor?

FOREST GROVE OREGON

CITY COUNCIL STAFF MEMORANDUM

TO: *City Council*

FROM: *Jesse VanderZanden, City Manager*

PROJECT TEAM: *Elizabeth Stover, Communications Coordinator*

MEETING DATE: *August 22, 2022*

SUBJECT TITLE: *Resolution Accepting the Communications & Engagement Strategy*

ACTION REQUESTED:	Ordinance		Order	X	Resolution		Motion		Informational

X all that apply

BACKGROUND:

The Communications & Engagement Strategy (Plan) is a response to City Council values:

- Community Engagement: We will invite members of the community in developing City policies and programs, and
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: We are committed to fair inclusion where all diverse members of our community can participate and thrive.

The Plan also addresses the Council Goal to "Improve Communications and Engagement".

The Plan is comprised of communication goals; communication policies and guidelines; communication channels; roles and responsibilities; best practices; and addresses policies regarding City-owned communication channels. The Communication Goals in the Plan include:

1. City communications proactively and transparently advance the City's vision and values.
2. Those communicating on behalf of the City know and engage the communication policies, procedures, and protocols.
3. The City has efficient, effective tools and resources to consistently communicate events, activities, news, alerts, and resources/information, both internally and externally.
4. The City is the leading source of interesting and relevant content for the City of Forest Grove services and operations to the community and the media. That information is shared internally and externally.

The City Council held a Work Session on June 13, 2022 to review the Plan and discuss any questions and concerns. Some changes suggested by Council have been incorporated into the document. Additionally, the document has been reviewed by the City Communications Team and the Committee for Community Involvement's Subcommittee on Communications. Questions and comments were discussed and some changes incorporated.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:
Staff recommends the City Council adopt the attached resolution accepting the Communications & Engagement Strategy effective August 22, 2022.

ATTACHMENT(s):
- Resolution Accepting the Communications & Engagement Strategy.
- Exhibit A: Communications & Engagement Strategy, August 22, 2022.

Contents

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WE ARE THE CITY OF FOREST GROVE
Where families and businesses thrive.

City of Forest Grove
COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGMENT STRATEGY

OVERVIEW

Located approximately 25 miles west of Portland in Washington County, Oregon, Forest Grove was histor-ically known as a farming community. While retaining connection to its agricultural roots in the verdant Tualatin Valley, Forest Grove has evolved, steadily growing in various leaps and bounds and, since 2010, at a rate of about 4% annually. As of 2021, Forest Grove has approximately 26,000 people living within the City limits. It's recognized as a distant suburb of Portland and is enjoyed by many who commute into the city for work and pleasure. However, a destination in and of itself, it's long been known as a centrally located hub that serves as a gateway to forests, waterways, beaches, mountains, and wine country.

Forest Grove is home to Pacific University and in more recent years, it has built upon and attracted a number of key, growing industries, including manufacturing, education, and healthcare. Forest Grove values a small-town feel as its city and community change over time. It strives to manage challenges with tact and diplomacy while welcoming the benefits and opportunities that positive changes inevitably bring.

The City of Forest Grove has always valued good communication and has strived to keep pace with effective ways to communicate with the people it serves. It believes great communication is essential for reaching the City's goals and objectives, particularly around providing excellent customer service and upholding its responsibility as a government to preserve the democratic process. Such effective communication also facilitates the City's ability to engage the community in decision-making, retaining an informed and high-functioning workforce, and attracting and retaining residents, businesses, and visitors.

ABOUT THIS PLAN

This communication plan is a blueprint for our organization's communication commitments, goals, and activities and provides a structure for equitably engaging our community. As communication fundamentals hold fast over time, specific communication goals, strategies, tactics, and tools will inevitably change. With that understanding, this plan should be viewed as a living document, revisited periodically for assessment and necessary updates.

This communication plan does not suggest all goals, tactics, strategies, and metrics be pursued immediately; rather, City Staff can use this as a long-term plan, identify annually what's vital and doable, and take consistent action against that decision and as is possible given resources (e.g., time, budget, personnel).

Typically, communication plans are reviewed annually. The annual review helps those implementing the plan determine whether the goals, strategies, and tactics are achieving the desired outcomes. It also allows them to make adjustments as needed.

To ensure and strengthen the effectiveness of its communication efforts going forward, the City recommends following this plan in a manner that consistently and collaboratively reflects and upholds the City's mission, vision, and values.

COMMUNICATION GOALS

The City of Forest Grove and those representing it have four major goals:

- Goal 1. City communications proactively and transparently advance the City's vision, goals, and strategies.
- Goal 2. Those communicating on behalf of the City know and engage the communication policies, procedures, and protocols.
- Goal 3. The City has efficient, effective tools and resources to consistently communicate events, activities, news, alerts, and resources/information, both internally and externally.
- Goal 4. The City is the leading source of interesting and relevant content for the City of Forest Grove services and operations to the community and the media. That information is shared internally and externally.

KEY AUDIENCES
- Community members
- Business community
- Development community
- Community partners, including but not limited to local and regional agencies, nonprofit, education, business and community groups, state and federal government agencies
- City of Forest Grove employees and elected/appointed officials
- Volunteers, including members of commissions and committees
- Media
- Visitors and tourists
- Prospective businesses and community members, or those looking to relocate to the City

KEY MESSAGES
- The City is a full-service government operation, providing an extensive array of services and resources that enable people to live and thrive.
- The City practices "community by design." Proactive planning considers and accommodates both the desires and needs of all to ensure people can live and thrive here.
- The City provides excellent customer service in its actions and through its words. This means practicing empathy for others; respect for diversity; patience in our interactions; passion for the job; persistence in solutions and resolutions; and an unwavering desire to listen, learn, and improve.
- Forest Grove treasures its small-town, historic feel and supports a healthy, vibrant downtown.
- The City's Urban Renewal Agency invests in downtown improvements.
- Forest Grove supports a healthy economy by striving to enable ample housing, employment and shopping opportunities.
- Forest Grove cares about its community. Programs and outreach offered by various departments enlighten, educate, and empower residents of all ages, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Forest Grove is an attractive place to live and visit. It has an abundance of events and activities for visitors and community members alike.
- The community preserves and showcases its natural, historic, and cultural assets while maintaining a welcoming, progressive mindset. Visual and performing arts festivals support its appreciation of diverse cultures.
- Forest Grove, just 25 miles west of Portland, remains a hub for many natural and recreational assets, including forests, waterways, mountains, and beaches. It collaborates with Washington County, neighboring counties and cities, and state-wide agencies to protect and promote these assets. As the hub, it welcomes visitors and serves as the unofficial concierge for these many outdoor recreation amenities.
- Forest Grove reflects a distinct look and feel with various types of housing, neighborhoods, schools, places of worship, farmlands, parks, and open spaces. Planning efforts strive to ensure and sustain this look and feel.

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Where families and businesses thrive.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES, TACTICS & METRICS

GOAL 1. CITY COMMUNICATIONS PROACTIVELY AND TRANSPARENTLY REFLECT AND ADVANCE THE CITY'S VISION, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES.

Strategy: Use a variety of communications channels (web, social media, print) to deliver public information in a timely and thoughtful manner.

TACTICS – HIGH LEVEL	MEASUREMENT
1.1 City Communication Team develops an annual editorial calendar that facilitates delivering public information in a timely and thoughtful manner.	Engagement from the community, staff productivity.
1.2 City staff have access to translation services and other tools to improve access for people facing barriers.	Access and satisfaction among residents for City services and customer service.
1.3 Brand guidelines and templates help ensure the community can recognize information coming from the City and relate to its consistent look and voice.	Access and satisfaction among residents for City services, staff productivity and consistency.
1.4 Regularly survey the community about their communications preferences and respond/adapt accordingly.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, followers on social media.
1.5 City staff serve as advocates for the public, providing and facilitating excellent communication and customer service regardless of the communication or channel used.	Access and satisfaction among residents for City services.

GOAL 1. CITY COMMUNICATIONS PROACTIVELY AND TRANSPARENTLY REFLECT AND ADVANCE THE CITY'S VISION, VALUES, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES.

Strategy: Use a variety of communications channels (web, social media, print) to deliver public information in a timely and thoughtful manner.

TACTICS – WEBSITE	MEASUREMENT
1.6 The Executive Assistant to the City Manager or Communications Coordinator updates information on forestgrove-or.gov as needed to ensure community members receive information in a timely manner.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, followers on social media, access, and satisfaction among residents for City services and customer service.
1.7 The Executive Assistant to the City Manager or Communications Coordinator regularly reviews Google Analytics to determine areas for improvement.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, staff feedback.

TACTICS – SOCIAL MEDIA	MEASUREMENT
1.8 Post to all social media channels in a consistent manner and frequency and respond to questions and comments in a timely manner.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, followers on social media, access and satisfaction among residents for City services and customer service.
1.9 Regularly review social media analytics to determine areas for improvement.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, followers on social media.

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GOAL 1. CITY COMMUNICATIONS PROACTIVELY AND TRANSPARENTLY REFLECT AND ADVANCE THE CITY'S VISION, VALUES, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES.

Strategy: Use a variety of communications channels (web, social media, print) to deliver public information in a timely and thoughtful manner.

TACTICS – PRINT & DIGITAL MEDIA	MEASUREMENT
1.10 Distribute information about City Council meetings, public hearings, and emergency alerts – in both Spanish and English.	Engagement from the community, access and satisfaction among residents for City services and customer service.
1.11 Distribute a quarterly e-newsletter that provides timely, accurate information about City events, projects, services, stories, and initiatives.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, subscriptions to email list.
1.12 Purchase print and digital advertising as needed to invite residents to participate in public meetings and events and participate in decision-making.	Engagement from the community, access and satisfaction among residents for City services and customer service.
1.13 Share information with the public through flyers – in Spanish and English.	Engagement from the community.
1.14 Complete a website audit every three years to ensure consistency and accuracy, and to ensure that people facing systemic economic, political, social and cultural barriers can access information. Include recommendations to make the website more user friendly.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, community access to government, staff feedback.

GOAL 1. CITY COMMUNICATIONS PROACTIVELY AND TRANSPARENTLY REFLECT AND ADVANCE THE CITY'S VISION, VALUES, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES.

Strategy: Create and share content that tells how the City is honoring its vision, goals, values and strategies.

TACTICS – HIGH LEVEL	MEASUREMENT
1.15 Improve staff awareness of City's vision, goals, values, and strategies through employee orientation, training, and consistent, persistent messaging, and education.	Employee engagement, morale, productivity, and retention; staff feedback.
1.16 Communication Team works together and with staff to surface and share stories that align and underscore the City's vision, values, goals, and strategies.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, email list subscriptions, public trust in the City.
1.17 Communication Team regularly prepares, posts, and distributes press releases.	Public trust in the City.

TACTICS – WEBSITE	MEASUREMENT
1.18 Create a landing page on the City's website where stories and photos are shared. Promote stories across multiple channels. Include messaging in each story that demonstrates the City's success relative to its vision, values, goals, and strategies.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, email list subscriptions, social media followers, public trust in the City.

GOAL 1. CITY COMMUNICATIONS PROACTIVELY AND TRANSPARENTLY REFLECT AND ADVANCE THE CITY'S VISION, VALUES, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES.

Strategy: Create and share content that tells how the City is honoring its vision, goals, values and strategies.

TACTICS – SOCIAL MEDIA	MEASUREMENT
1.19 Post photos and content that relate to the City's vision, goals, and strategies. Utilize the hashtag #whatsgrowingonfg to align with the stories landing page on the website.	Engagement from the community, public trust in the City, support for budget decisions and needs.
1.20 Craft supportive content that reflects how the post aligns with the City's vision, values, goals, and strategies.	Engagement from the community, public trust in the City, support for budget decisions and needs.
1.21 Share City success stories (earned and unearned) published by media and highlight ways in which these stories reflect the City's vision, values, goals, and strategies.	Public trust in the City, support for budget decisions and needs.

GOAL 1. CITY COMMUNICATIONS PROACTIVELY AND TRANSPARENTLY REFLECT AND ADVANCE THE CITY'S VISION, VALUES, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES.

Strategy: Create and share content that tells how the City is honoring its vision, goals, values and strategies.

TACTICS – PRINT & DIGITAL MEDIA	MEASUREMENT
1.22 Repurpose stories featured on the City's stories landing page and pitch to local media as a press release with strong leads, multiple quotes, and a consistent format. Utilize press release template.	Employee engagement, morale, productivity, and retention; staff feedback.
1.23 Craft headlines and subheads that clearly communicate the link between the story and the City's vision, values, goals, and strategies.	Engagement from the community, traffic to the City's website, email list subscriptions, public trust in the City.
1.24 Communication Team to coach staff and Council on cultivating successful media relations and interviews, demonstrating how to respond in ways that communicate the City's vision, values, goals, and strategies.	Public trust in the City, support for budget decisions and needs.

GOAL 2. THOSE COMMUNICATING ON BEHALF OF THE CITY KNOW AND ENGAGE THE COMMUNICATION POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PROTOCOLS.

Strategy: Educate staff who have communication in their roles and responsibilities on City Communication Policies and Guidelines.

TACTICS	MEASUREMENT
2.1 Communications Coordinator leads internal and external communication efforts to improve the cohesion, quality, and frequency of communication.	Consistency in deliverables, reduction in errors and time spent addressing errors.
2.2 Communications Team, comprised of Department Directors and/or staff tasked with communication responsibilities, collaborate to improve the cohesion, quality, and frequency of communication.	Consistency in deliverables, confidence in efforts and outreach, reduction in errors and time spent addressing errors, staff productivity.
2.3 Communications Coordinator, Department Directors, and other staff tasked with communication responsibilities are proficient in communication policies, procedures, and protocols.	Consistency in deliverables, confidence in efforts and outreach, reduction in errors and time spent addressing errors, staff productivity.
2.4 City departments manage communications in a decentralized manner while partnering with the Communications Coordinator to ensure a collective brand and an effective impact.	Staff productivity.

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GOAL 3. THE CITY HAS EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO CONSISTENTLY COMMUNICATE EVENTS, ACTIVITIES, NEWS, ALERTS, AND RESOURCES, BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY.

Strategy: Staff has access to sustainable, cost-effective, and current communication tools/technology.

TACTICS	MEASUREMENT
3.1 The Communications Team regularly meets and works together to develop and follow an annual editorial calendar that serves as a framework for delivering public information in a timely and thoughtful manner.	Engagement from the community, access to City services, followers on social media, staff productivity.
3.2 Provide the Communications Team with translation services and other tools to improve access for people facing language and cultural barriers. Train the Team in communication best practices.	Engagement from the community, access to City services, confidence in efforts and outreach, reduction in errors and time spent addressing errors, staff productivity.
3.3 Provide a central location with marketing tools and resources, including templates, brand guidelines, photos, and the Communications & Engagement Strategy. Create an intranet or other internal platform to share information.	Consistency in deliverables, confidence in efforts and outreach, staff productivity.
3.4 Communications Coordinator reviews all public-facing forms according to branding guidelines and so they are user-friendly (interactive, if helpful). Coordinator works with staff to update materials.	Access to City services, reduction in errors and time spent addressing errors, staff productivity.

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GOAL 4. THE CITY IS THE LEADING SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR THE CITY OF FOREST GROVE SERVICES AND OPERATIONS TO THE COMMUNITY AND THE MEDIA. THAT INFORMATION IS SHARED INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY.

Strategy: Craft and distribute City information and news proactively.

TACTICS	MEASUREMENT
4.1 Share City news internally first, externally second via formal press releases.	Staff and public participation at City events, meetings, activities, etc.; employee engagement, morale, and retention.
4.2 Prepare talking points in advance of potential media interviews, particularly in regard to sensitive or controversial topics.	Staff productivity, social media followers, website traffic, public trust of the City's transparency.
4.3 Provide City-released updates/summaries after each City Council meeting.	Engagement from the community, public trust in the City, support for budget decisions and needs.
4.4 Offer more opportunities for the public to interact with City staff, such as town hall meetings, open houses and listening sessions.	Public participation at City events, meetings, activities; access to City services; access to influencing policy.
4.5 Commit to a minimum number of press releases and public service announcements annually, and social media posts (ideally per department) weekly.	Staff productivity, social media traffic, website traffic, earned media placements.
4.6 Ensure all news supports the City's vision, goals, values, and strategies.	Public trust in the City, support for budget decisions and needs.

COMMUNICATION POLICIES & GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

In our fast-paced, digitally connected and multicultural community, it's paramount to ensure the City has the tools, policies and processes needed to ensure great communication, both internally and externally. The City's internal and external communication policies and guidelines provide information for City staff and elected and appointed officials around communication policies and processes.

Strategic communication is the responsibility of the City Manager's Office and other designated staff who are tasked with communication responsibilities as part of their job. Individual departments are responsible for providing and maintaining content for specific communication channels. The City strives to be consistent in its voice and key messages, speaking as one voice, reflecting one brand and sharing common messages. All elected officials, staff, community members, business owners, and even visitors to the community are unofficial ambassadors for the City who help shape and communicate the City's vision and key messages.

COMMUNICATION PROMISE

- We are committed to open, transparent, and accessible communication.
- We value and prioritize face-to-face communication.
- We encourage feedback and discussion.
- We make time for discussion.
- We value diversity of thought.
- We believe all communication must be truthful and ethical.
- We are committed to communicating both good and bad news in a reasonable timeframe, ensuring both expedience and thoughtful consideration.
- We communicate in a way that supports the City's vision, values, goals, and branding.

1. We are committed to open, transparent, and accessible communication.

Communication about significant happenings needs to be thoroughly planned. Effective communication is always considered a priority.

Care should be taken to decide what requires formal communication and by whom, and what can be communicated informally. Significant information to staff and City officials should show who has authorized its release (i.e., a memo to all City staff from the City Manager). The communication needs of those located in off-site and/or remote locations is always considered.

Consideration of barriers, including but not limited to speech and language disabilities, hearing challenges, identity barriers, physical location and technology challenges, should be given to employees and City officials attempting to access official City information and/or actively needing to participate in City communication.

2. We value and prioritize face-to-face communication.

To help support an effective exchange of meaning or understanding, there needs to be opportunity for discussion and for questions to be asked and answers received. This is best conveyed in face-to-face communication whenever possible. However, the City recognizes it is not always possible to meet in person. As appropriate or needed, the City will accommodate for video conferencing and conference-call options for meetings.

The needs of various audiences should be taken into account when planning communication. Some audiences will be satisfied with simple verbal presentations while others will require documentation of significant information.

3. We encourage feedback and discussion.

Obtaining feedback and listening effectively are critically important for good communication.

Effective communication will only come if people within all organizational levels and entities seek out feedback and take appropriate action to ensure the intended meaning is passed on to the relevant audience.

4. We make time for discussion.

Topics that warrant discussion and time should be accommodated for on agendas, in meetings, and with face-to-face conversations. Our City maintains an open-door policy that invites candor and supports transparency without bias or retribution.

5. We value diversity of thought.

Opinions and ideas are valued. Diversity of thought is essential to equality, fairness, and representation. Everyone's ideas should be heard and considered.

6. We believe all communication must be truthful and ethical.

The impact and consequences of all communication must be taken into account. Communication among City staff, officials, and the community should reflect integrity and honesty, thereby earning and maintaining the public's trust in the City.

When appropriate, information provided to any one person will also be provided at the same time to all others involved or likely to be interested. Exceptions exist, including Human Resources information as well as anything that puts confidentiality or someone's privacy and/or security at risk or violates the law.

Mischievous communication, for example, starting or spreading rumors known to be untrue, and other unethical communication behaviors, in-person or online will not be tolerated.

City staff and officials should understand their responsibility to uphold the integrity, confidentiality and reputation of the City. Staff should ensure all information presented publicly has been approved for such distribution. Staff should be cautious to not engage in conversations about projects, programs or other City matters that have not been approved for public discussion.

7. We are committed to communicating both good and bad news in a reasonable timeframe, ensuring both expedience and thoughtful consideration.

Rumors should be addressed with effective communication as soon as is practicable.

A proactive, transparent approach to addressing controversial issues is preferred. However, cases, situations and/or news that involve City Staff and are private/confidential in nature are handled according to Human Resource laws and policy.

When possible, communications that are sensitive or contain "bad news," should be reviewed by at least one other staff member or consultant (e.g., emergency communications expert, City Manager, etc.) before being disseminated.

8. We communicate in a way that supports the City's vision, values, goals, and branding and builds public trust.

Everything we write or say aligns with and reinforces the values that shape and direct our activities, objectives and visions of success. In this promise, we recognize that communications impact the City of Forest Grove's culture and reflect our style and the importance of communication in the community.

APPLICABILITY

These policies and guidelines apply to all City of Forest Grove staff and elected or appointed officials, which includes any members of boards and commissions.

In all communication, City employees should follow the standards of conduct outlined, both online and when having in-person interactions.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

These are the primary ways in which the City distributes information to the public.

WEBSITE

The City's website forestgrove-or.gov is its primary communication tool. The City website is intended to provide public information concerning City services, activities, and policies, and to provide an avenue for residents to access the City's online version of its newsletter, What's Growing On in Forest Grove.

The Communication Coordinator serves as Managing Editor of forestgrove-or.gov. However, departments are responsible for updating content for their unique department's page. City departments are not permitted to purchase or otherwise establish domain names or to use other external resources for presenting City information on the Internet, unless otherwise approved by the City Manager or designee.

Purpose
These policies and guidelines establish procedures governing the content on the City of Forest Grove's public website and delineates procedures and responsibilities for approving content.

Use of the City's website must comply with all Federal government guidelines that apply to the Dotgov domain name. City departments are not permitted to purchase or otherwise establish domain names or to use other external resources for presenting City information on the Internet, unless otherwise approved by the City Manager or designee.

The City's website is externally hosted with all content maintained and managed by assigned City of Forest Grove staff. It serves the people living in, visiting, and moving to Forest Grove, as well as news media and City staff, government officials, and volunteers.

Website content is used strictly for the purposes of advancing the business and services of the City, as well as educating the public. Permission to reproduce and/or redistribute information (text or graphics) may be granted by the City, in accordance with Copyright laws. All such requests should be directed to the Communications Coordinator for permission and tracking.

Prohibitions and Limitations

All content will be consistent with the mission of the City of Forest Grove, and the Forest Grove Public Website will provide its visitors with an entry point to services and information at any time, from any place, allowing them to communicate and to conduct business 24/7 with the City of Forest Grove. All content becomes part of the City's public records.

The following types of content are prohibited on the City's website. (Exceptions for some of these types of content may be considered for approval by the City Manager or designee):

- commercial activities
- fundraisers (exception: board and commissions' fundraisers; ok to hyperlink to public fundraisers but not directly post to website)
- political activities
- harassing or offensive language or images
- endorsements of any product, service or private organization
- open, unstructured chat sessions
- discussion forums, online commentary, and interactive services not approved by the City Manager
- advertisements, with the exception of City events and employment

All content of multimedia, including video, on the City website is subject to this policy. Photos of individuals may appear on the website provided the image was taken at a public facility or community event and the photo depicts a City program or service. Please consult with the Communication Coordinator regarding the requirement of release forms for unique circumstances (e.g., marketing photo shoot, health department photos). Releases are not necessary for City employees if the photo relates to their official role at the City.

Content on the Forest Grove public website will be accessible as much as possible to users with physical or cognitive disabilities or language barriers.

The City of Forest Grove complies with copyright law. Text, video, audio, photographs, and/or other images found on the web and not accompanied by an explicit permission grant may not be reused without permission from the copyright owner.

Web content belonging to one City department's section of the website should not be copied or duplicated within another department section of the website, but rather referenced by hyperlink to ensure the most current information is provided.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Web Manager:
The City's Communication Coordinator serves as the managing editor of the City's website. This position is responsible for the following duties related to the website: oversees development and maintenance of content that provides information regarding City actions, announcements, programs, community events, and storytelling; addresses internal and external queries regarding content found on the website; responds to external inquiries for information or directs them to the appropriate departments; envisions, encourages, and creates new means of enhancing web communications; works with the IT Department staff to monitor best practices and communicates with internal users to ensure the use of best practices; coordinates with Department Directors, Communication Team members, and any staff members who are assigned to communication responsibilities to identify corrections and/or improvements to the website and the internal systems that relate to the website; works with IT to monitor, improve, and refresh graphic elements of the website; represents Forest Grove on inter-agency content management issues; identifies and manages the development, updates, and implementation of web content policy, procedures, and standards; trains internal web content managers; and assists departments in understanding audiences and website usage, incorporating supportive data (e.g., Google Analytics).

Web Infrastructure Manager:
The City's IT Manager serves as the Web Infrastructure Manager. This position includes the following duties: provides technical support for internal content managers and internal and external web users; coordinates with the Web Manager, Department Directors, Communication Team Members, and any staff assigned to website communication to identify corrections and/or improvements to the website and the internal systems that relate to the website; works with Web Consultant on technical issues and coordinates Citywide web changes/resources that cannot be performed internally; oversees security of the website; ensures the City is in compliance with Federal and State policies.

Web Consultant:
A web consulting company created and developed the City of Forest Grove's website superstructure. It is hired as a consultant to the City. The company is responsible for the following duties: website hosting services; support for existing features and functions of the website and development of new features; major structural changes to the site; reset of administrative user passwords; and technical support for the Web Infrastructure Manager and Web Manager.

Department Content Managers:
The Department Content Managers are identified by the Department Directors (and may also include Department Directors) to perform the following duties: develop specific web pages explaining Department-specific issues; maintain pages to make sure they are current; work with the Web Manager to look for new means of enhancing web communication; works with Web Manager in promoting items to the homepage and the Latest News button; posts and updates meeting information, including calendar items, posting of agendas, minutes, supporting documents; works with Web Manager to develop more involved web materials and/or features, including blogs; works with Web Manager and Web Infrastructure Manager to identify issues and potential improvements to the site; and participates on the City's internal Communication Team if assigned by the Department Director.

Department Directors:
The Department Directors are responsible for designating a person(s) within their department to serve as Content Managers to create web pages explaining Department specific issues. Or, they opt to take on their responsibility themselves. In either role, they oversee and are responsible for the Department's content; and work with the City's Web Manager and Web Infrastructure Manager to identify issues and potential improvements to the site.

WEBSITE BEST PRACTICES

These include but are not limited to:

- Write content for readability. Keep communication as simple as possible (e.g., targeting a third-grade reading level).
- Define acronyms, and do not assume technical jargon or terms are widely understood.
- Use a simple, clean, and logical design with simple navigation.
- Incorporate graphics, photos, charts, and illustrations whenever helpful.
- Keep branding consistent throughout the site. For example, department landing pages should have a similar look and feel, with a consistent amount of content, links, etc.
- Follow the City of Forest Grove Brand Guide.
- Use SEO (Search Engine Optimization) best practices. Determine keywords, integrating them in content to drive stronger search engine rankings.
- Make it mobile-friendly. Test out the website regularly, particularly when there are updates, to ensure it's easy to use and visually appealing.
- Choose and adhere to style guidelines, practicing correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, consistent voice, and professional tone.
- Attribute staff-authored blogs/articles to the author, with name, title, and content information.
- Post information supporting "Latest News" as soon as it is available (per normal staff hours).
- Promote the website URL/domain name via all communication channels and mediums.
- Link to other websites/resources only if they clearly relate to City operations, business, services, news, and information.
- Make updates to the staff directory (and other pages that include staff contact information) as soon as changes occur.
- Provide official email address and phone number for all current staff members listed.
- Post Terms of Use, Website Policy and Disclaimer information in a clear, visible landing page or linked document.
- Ensure department landing pages have a clear way for the public to know whoDepartment Directors are and the contact information (if relevant). Pick a way to do this and keep it consistent among all landing pages.

LATEST NEWS SECTION

Latest News, a special feature on the City's website home page, is an efficient and timely communication tool that the City uses to share important information with citizens.

Headlines and links to information items will be provided. Links to the following types of items may be included:

- City Manager news releases
- News releases from other departments
- City Council announcements
- City events and activities
- Other items as determined by the Web Manager, such as important issues/topics at upcoming public hearings and meetings, and follow up on those issues/topics.

The following item will have priority:

- Major public health, safety, and security issues

The Communication Coordinator, who serves as the Web Manager, will make every effort to publish submitted announcements to the fullest extent possible. The Communication Coordinator reserves the right to determine if a *News and Announcement* item meets the requirements outlined in this policy, its placement, and the length of time it appears. If an item is determined to be unsuitable for the *Latest News* feature, the requestor will be notified.

Requests for items to be included in the *Latest News* section must be initiated by City departments and must be of interest to the majority of City residents. Requests can be emailed to the Communication Coordinator.

PUBLIC-FACING FORMS (DOWNLOADS)

The City of Forest Grove strives to uphold a cohesive approach to the look, feel and usability of all communication materials, including public-facing forms. Official City forms should, at a minimum, follow these guidelines and best practices:

- All public forms can be located online through the City's website, downloaded and printed.
- All public forms may be accessed in person. The City's website will inform the public where it can access forms in person. Staff members can easily direct public inquiries around where to access and complete public forms.
- Forms specific to, created and updated by Forest Grove will include the Forest Grove logo, colors and font, and reflect other Forest Grove branding assets as appropriate, adhering to the Forest Grove Brand Guide.
- Forms available online will be interactive (e.g., interactive PDFs) so users can easily input their information into open fields, save, download, and print.
- All public forms will be stored in a common City folder (and appropriate subfolders), located on the City's server or an online portal available to all City employees.
- All forms will be proofed for spelling, grammar, syntax, tone, style, branding, etc.
- All forms should be reviewed and updated periodically.
- All forms should meet ADA requirements.

SOCIAL MEDIA

For the City of Forest Grove, the primary benefit of social media is that it's easier than ever for the City to engage community members. However, such online conversations—just like face-to-face conversations—require listening and engaging. City staff with official communication roles are increasingly dedicated to social media. A big piece of the social media job is crafting compelling content. The role also requires responding to the public's questions, concerns and feedback, always noting and even tracking what topics and trends are attractive to or igniting the social media audience. City staff often must look for, respond to and correct misinformation that may spread faster than the truth.

PURPOSE

Social media is defined as a highly scaled, web-based application that facilitates information sharing and collaboration. Social media can be a web-based community, bulletin board, forum, social networking site, video- and music-sharing site, wiki, blog, listserve, podcast, instant messaging, and others. Examples include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

Social media is a powerful communication tool that has a significant, growing impact on the City of Forest Grove's ability to inform, engage, and serve the community. It can be effective in the areas of public relations, internal and external communications, recruiting, employee morale, learning, collaboration, government-to-government connection, collecting feedback/data, and more.

All information posted through the City's social media platforms is intended for the public and communicates the City's vision, goals, brand, events, activities, services, news, and current issues.

People who have a positive experience on social media are likely to recommend it to others. Purposeful, positive and effective use can share messages that confirm for the public that the City and its staff are doing their job and that the public is invited and encouraged to participate in beneficial two-way communication exchanges. However, the use of social media presents certain risks and carries responsibilities.

The guidelines outlined here are designed to assist City employees who use social media to communicate on behalf of the City. The guidelines help clarify how best to advance the City's goals and responsibilities through the use of social media. The guidance can enhance the City's brand and reputation, and it is crafted to educate and empower City employees as they navigate issues and risks unique to social media.

Given the evolving nature of social media, the following guidelines will be reviewed and updated periodically.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All City staff members are to be cognizant of their responsibility to protect the reputation of the City and the services it provides for our community. This holds true regardless of whether they are serving during working or nonworking hours.

With all social media activity, City staff members are viewed as City brand ambassadors. Posts on social media sites will protect the City's brand and voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. No department should construe its social media site as representing the City as a whole. Above all, whether on work time or off, staff are to remain focused on the City's customers, commitments, and mission. The City has designated Public Information Officers for the following departments:
- Police
- Fire & Rescue

Also, every Department Director is considered the communication lead for that department. Some departments have staff members assigned to manage social media under the direction of the Department Director.

Communication Coordinator:

This staff person facilitates consistent, accurate communication on behalf of the City and actively uses social media to do so. The Communication Coordinator may work with a Communication Team, the members of which follow this social media policy as part of their job responsibilities. The Communication Coordinator will provide Human Resources with social media policy updates for the purpose of staff orientation and training. Both the general and social media roles and responsibilities of the Communications Coordinator correlate with and support the success of City of Forest Grove's Communication Plan, which is designed to be a long-term plan. Thus, some roles and responsibilities may be fixed while others will change over time.

IT Team:

The IT Team is responsible for administering security for social media sites and monitoring employee use in support of this policy. Compliance rests with Department Directors, supervisors, and individual employees. IT will change social network passwords periodically to prevent potential access by hackers and other security risks.

Elected and Appointed City Officials:

The City recognizes that elected and appointed City officials have the right to post on their personal social media sites. City officials are discouraged from posting about City-related activities and issues on their personal social media pages. Should any important or controversial conversations happen to take place on City officials' personal social media pages, they are to report those incidents to the City's Communications Coordinator.

At this time, the City does not allow City boards and commissions to have separate City-represented social media pages due to a potential violation of public records retention and serial communication laws (please refer to the Council Rules: Meetings Open to the Public and Serial Communications). Also the City does not permit City Council members or board and commission members to directly post to City-owned social media pages. These officials may send draft posts to the City's Communication Coordinator for consideration for the City's social media sites. Any changes in this policy should carefully consider the risks versus benefits. Keep in mind, all engagement and interactions on social media may become part of the public record.

SOCIAL MEDIA DO'S AND DON'TS

When representing the City of Forest Grove on social media sites, do:

- Follow the City's brand guidelines and photo guidelines (which are part of the City's Communication Plan).
- Adhere to the social network's terms of use. Adhere to the City's terms of use for sites if applicable. (For Facebook, see appendix.)
- Respect copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws.
- Verify information, including dates, before posting; include/tag all sources.
- Proofread all posts (and any links) before posting and have a second staff member (ideally the Communication Coordinator) proof the content before posting. Address all grammar and style issues before posting.
- Encourage feedback by asking questions and/or responding in a respectful way to comments.
- Respond to inquiries in a timely manner, being cautious not to rush in responding. When needed, consult other staff before responding. If in doubt about what to post or the City's policy, ask your department's official spokesperson or the City Communication Coordinator.
- Thank people for their comments, including negative feedback. If a comment relates to another department, notify the Department Director or staff member so the feedback is appropriately received and the message is passed on.
- Be accountable and correct mistakes.
- Use disclaimers or speak in the first person on personal media accounts to clarify opinions expressed are not those of their employer. Staff representing the City on City social media accounts will most often use "we" or "the City of Forest Grove."
- All comments are in the public domain and can be published or discussed in all media forms. Have no expectation of privacy.
- Identify yourself as a City employee when posting to the internet.
- Whenever posting to social media sites, include a link to the relevant page on the City's website.

When representing the City of Forest Grove on social media sites, don't:

- Allow social networking to interrupt productivity.
- Use profanity. Discourage others from using profanity as well.
- Post disrespectful comments. Do encourage others not to use disrespectful comments as well.
- Use inaccurate or misleading information (or encourage others to use inaccurate or misleading information).
- Rush to respond to profanity, disrespectful or inaccurate comments. Consult other staff and consider your response.

- Share irrelevant comments or content (or encourage others to share irrelevant comments).
- Share self-serving content (or encourage others to share self-serving content).
- Share content without providing context or framing information (e.g., do not simply "retweet" a post without also adding a comment).
- Post on any social media before first considering the post's implications, usefulness or thoughtful contribution.
- Use or reference your formal position when writing in a non-official capacity; instead, consider using a disclaimer such as "this posting is my own and does not represent the City of Forest Grove's positions, strategies, or opinions."
- Post confidential information about the City, its customers, clients, or employees. Employees who share confidential information do so at the risk of disciplinary action.

If others do any of the above, remove the posting; if the postings are egregious, ban them from the page.

In the case of inappropriate photos and videos, you can also report them to the appropriate social media site for things like spam/scams, pornography/nudity, graphic violence, attacks on an individual or group, hate symbols, and illegal drug use.

HASHTAGS
The City of Forest Grove frequently uses the following hashtags: #ForestGrove #WCCLS #ForestGrovePD #forestgrovefireandrescue #forestgrovefire #WashCoLUT

Use Hashtags to:
- Link your post to align with a specific event, activity, alert or affiliated/relevant organization, entity or agency.
- Lead followers to additional information on this topic (the more specific the hashtag the more useful it is to the audience).

When posting with hashtags:
- Keep it short, simple and catchy.
- Know what hashtags mean. Sites like Tag Def (https://tagdef.com/en/) can clue you in.
- Avoid hashtags that speak to emotion or state of mind (e.g., #angry or #confused).
- Get as specific as possible (i.e. general hashtags like #4thofJuly are not very helpful to the audience).

TWITTER GUIDELINES

The City has two main Twitter accounts—one being used by the Police Department and one being used by Fire & Rescue. The handles are @ForestGrovePD and @ForestGroveFire.

Use Twitter for:
- Connecting with and engaging new users/followers.
- News, City alerts and event updates.
- Play-by-play reporting from City events and activities.
- Other types of eyewitness reporting.
- Encouraging conversations with your followers.
- Discussions of topics (e.g., new Police Department building).
- Driving website traffic.

When posting to Twitter:
- Tag organizations and people only when appropriate.
- Ensure that followers being "tagged" are "real" people and not bots.
- When referencing a program, event or resource of the City, include a link from your post back to www.forestgrove-or.gov.
- Make every effort possible to include an image, and attribute the source of the image.

Frequency:
- 3xs per week

LINKEDIN GUIDELINES

Use LinkedIn for:
- News and event updates.
- Sharing inspirational stories or tips-based articles.
- Sharing any earned media—news stories that quote City staff and/or representatives, e.g., Council members, commissioners, committee members, volunteers, etc.
- Information about the City of Forest Grove.
- Noteworthy new hire news, HR updates and staff insights appropriate for public knowledge.

When posting to LinkedIn:
1. Include the hashtag #ForestGrove to refer back to the City. This lets people know you are affiliated with the City.
2. Tag organizations and people only when appropriate.
3. Always attribute the source of the image.
4. Try to use images whenever possible.

Frequency:
- 3-5xs per month (consider what you can repurpose from Facebook posts to save time).

FACEBOOK GUIDELINES

The City has a number of Facebook accounts: ForestGroveCityHall, Forest Grove Fire & Rescue, Forest Grove Police, Forest Grove City Library, Forest Grove Parks & Rec, Forest Grove Aquatics, and Forest Grove Light & Power.

Use Facebook for:
- News and event updates.
- Sharing inspirational stories.
- Sharing any earned media—news stories that quote City staff, council members, members of boards and commissions, volunteers, etc.
- Information about City events, announcements, awards, significant activities, etc.
- Meeting announcements and topics.

When posting to Facebook:
- Include the hashtag #ForestGrove. This lets people know you are affiliated with the City.
- Tag organizations and people only when appropriate.
- Always attribute the source of the image.
- Always lead with a photo if possible. Facebook is about "faces" so the more faces, the better!

Frequency:
- 4-5xs per week

NEWSLETTER/E-NEWSLETTER

The City publishes a monthly billing insert: FYI Forest Grove. The Communication Coordinator serves as Managing Editor of FYI Forest Grove. This 1-2 page document serves as the City's mini-newsletter and is mailed with the utility bill. PDF newsletter versions are available at forestgrove-or.gov/community/page/fyi-forest-grove on the City's website, under the "Our Community" tab.

The goal of this newsletter is to share timely, accurate information about City events, projects, services and initiatives. Departments are asked to submit material at least a month in advance of the event being promoted.

Nonprofits may run announcements in the FYI Forest Grove, subject to space availability and a first-come/first-serve basis. City announcements are always considered a publishing priority.

QUARTERLY/ANNUAL TOWN MEETINGS

The City holds its Town Meetings quarterly in the Community Auditorium, 1915 Main Street. The Committee for Community Involvement sponsors, plans, coordinates, and moderates the event. The Town Meetings are an opportunity for the community to hear presentations from staff, receive information on how residents can be involved in local government, and meet with elected officials and senior staff to ask questions.

TUALATIN VALLEY COMMUNITY TELEVISION (TVCTV)

Tualatin Valley Community Television provides programming that makes government accessible to communities. TVCTV provides live coverage of the City's Council Meetings on Channel 30.

MEDIA RELATIONS

PURPOSE

The City of Forest Grove takes a strategic approach to media relations. It recognizes the value of media (editors, reporters, journalists, bloggers, etc.) as partners who play a valuable role in helping disseminate information to the public on behalf of the City.

Through strategic media relations, the City should strive to communicate its newsworthiness through reputable outlets and trusted media partners and mediums including but not limited to newspaper, radio, television, and online.

The City believes in maintaining good relationships with media professionals. Everything presented by the City of Forest Grove should be carried out in a way that places the City in positive light, upholds integrity and ethics, builds public trust, and prevents barriers between the City and media.

Members of the media are important partners in helping the City meet its communication objectives. Collaborating with local media is one of the fastest, most efficient ways for the City to publish and share information. As such, the City aims to provide consistent, proactive news releases and public service announcements to achieve accurate coverage by members of the press.

- All formal City press releases are sent out by the City Manager's Office with the exception of press releases from the following departments: Police, Fire & Rescue, and the Library.
- Any media inquiries received by City staff or officials should be referred to their Department Director who, in turn, will immediately forward the contact to the City Manager's Office. Police and Fire & Rescue respond to the media inquiry independently of the City Manager's office, however, they immediately inform the City Manager's office of media inquires that are more serious or controversial in nature.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At the City of Forest Grove, the City Manager is the official spokesperson for the City. However, Department Directors and other staff members assigned official communication responsibilities may also communicate on behalf of the City, such as Public Information Officers (PIOs). Roles and responsibilities relating to communication with the press are described in staff job descriptions.

Communication Coordinator:
As part of the City Manager's department, the Communication Coordinator is responsible for actively helping coordinate strategic media relations on behalf of the City Manager's department, Department Directors, and any staff assigned communication responsibilities. This includes:

- maintaining awareness of all City activities and actions.
- increasing public awareness of the City's initiatives through news releases, story pitches, blogs, articles, surveys, studies, alerts/announcements, and other earned media strategies.
- preparing statements/talking points, coordinating interviews, and/or conducting interviews in a timely, thoughtful way in response to media inquiries.
- responding to press inquiries from media outlets (print, radio, television, and the Internet).
- making sure media have access to the appropriate City staff to interview.
- gathering and supplying key facts, data, and other types of information that provide accuracy, promote "bottom line" favorable public policy outcomes, reduce the cost of doing business, and support with marketing/operational effectiveness.
- tracking earned and unearned media.
- coordinating press conferences and, with the help of City Manager, making all necessary arrangements (people, place, other needs, etc.) for press conference success.
- verifying all City communication reflects its brand and style guidelines.

Elected and Appointed City Officials:
The City recognizes that elected and appointed City officials may have opportunities to interact with local media. It is the City's policy to direct all media interviews, planned or not planned, to the City's Communication Coordinator. City officials will help facilitate this by contacting the City Communication Coordinator and giving this City staff member as many helpful details as possible, including: who requested the interview, best media contact information, media deadline, and expected publication/air date/time. If being interviewed on behalf of the City, the City official will coordinate with the Communications Coordinator to prepare talking points and statements.

Sometimes, City officials may be quoted or filmed unexpectedly by media. In such cases, City officials are to inform the City's Communication Coordinator about the incident as close to the action as reasonably possible.

City Manager:
The City Manager is the official spokesperson for the City. Per his/her discretion, the City Manager may receive and respond to direct inquiries from media outlets for interviews and also independently seek out interview opportunities, distribute media releases, and share information in other ways.

The City Manager will work in tandem with the Communication Coordinator to produce and distribute all communication. This includes and is not limited to all media relations activities, relying on the Communication Coordinator to help with writing, editing/proofing; creating talking points and statements; coordinating interviews, following up with reporters; and sharing news about published stories via social media, the City website, the City newsletter, and other channels.

Department Directors:
Each Department Director is the spokesperson for his/her department. Per their discretion, Department Directors may receive and respond to direct inquiries from media outlets for interviews and also independently seek out interview opportunities, pitch story ideas, distribute media releases, and share information in other ways. Department Directors may work in tandem with the Communication Coordinator to produce and distribute all communication not just on behalf of their department but, as needed, on behalf of the City.

Public Information Officers (PIOs):
The City's Fire & Rescue and Police Departments have official PIOs. Staff in these positions may receive and respond to direct inquiries from media for interviews and also independently seek out interview opportunities, pitch story ideas, distribute media releases, and share information in other ways. PIOs have the authority to coordinate and do media interviews independently and are encouraged to seek approval by their Department Director when the subject matter is sensitive in nature, controversial, litigious, or otherwise challenging.

Community Outreach Specialist:
The Police Department has a Community Outreach Specialist. This staff member may receive and respond to direct inquiries from media outlets for interviews and also independently seek out interview opportunities, pitch story ideas, distribute media releases, and share information in other ways. This staff member should make every effort to get approval from his/her Department Director prior to any significant media relation activities (e.g., press releases, interviews, reports, etc.). This staff member has the authority to coordinate and do media interviews independently yet is encouraged to seek approval by their Department Director when the subject matter is sensitive in nature, controversial, litigious, or otherwise challenging.

City Employees:
City employees for whom communication is not part of their official role should notify their Department Directors of any activities, positive or negative, likely to draw media attention. Always inform the Department Director first and the Communication Coordinator second if contacted by a media member, especially if the subject is controversial to any degree. All contact by media must be channeled through the Communication Coordinator. However, due to the nature of the job, Police and Fire & Rescue need only inform the City Manager or Communication Coordinator if the issues are major/controversial in nature. Respond to media inquiries in a timely, polite manner, connecting them to the correct City communications staff member.

In addition, Department Directors and all official communication support staff are to inform the Communication Coordinator of media relations activities as close to the action as possible. This will better ensure:

1. The City Manager's Office is aware of all department communication activities.
2. The Communication Coordinator can better support and, if helpful, reinforce and sustain department media relations efforts.
3. Information accuracy, less room for error, and any associated legal repercussions.
4. Accurate tracking of staff performance and successes relative to communication roles and responsibilities.
5. City news and information can quickly be shared internally among leadership or among all staff.
6. Communication activities are part of the public record.

MEDIA GUIDELINES

Listed below are several key guidelines for media interviews. The City's Communication Coordinator is available to provide media-interview guidance to all City employees and officials.

- Be strategic, clear, and concise. Consider yourself a driver of the City's vision, values, goals, and strategies. Use verbal and nonverbal communication that support and reinforce the vision, goals, and strategies.
- Prepare and use talking points.
- Avoid jargon and profanity; maintain professionalism at all times.
- Represent only the City. Do not promote any personal agenda, bias, opinions, etc.
- If you don't know an answer, communicate that and offer to follow up on that answer if appropriate.
- Refrain from saying, "No comment." Instead, opt for something like, "At this time, the City is unable to comment on this due to pending litigation."
- Don't lie—ever!
- Do not go "off the record." While many members of the media have high integrity, do not trust them to keep their word. One bad experience can be catastrophic.
- Don't say anything you wouldn't want on the evening news or Page 1 of the local paper.
- Don't play favorites with media even if you personally have a preference.
- Return all media calls promptly. Let media know whether they can text you in the event of urgent needs.
- Keep confidential information confidential, particularly regarding personnel, pending litigation, certain law enforcement records, and certain internal and external security measures.

PRESS RELEASES AND PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS
PROCEDURES

Responding to media inquiries
- Any staff members who do not have communication roles and responsibilities and who are contacted by a media representative should direct these calls and inquiries in a timely fashion to their Department Director, who in turn should contact the Communication Coordinator (or the City Manager when appropriate).
- Official statements are approved by the Communication Coordinator (or the City Manager when appropriate) and are to be issued only by the Communication Coordinator to the media and other interested parties. (Exceptions: Police and Fire & Rescue.)

Distributing press releases
- Upon completion, all finalized press releases should be sent to the Communication Coordinator who will post them on the City's website and highlight them under Latest News on the City's homepage. If the Communication Coordinator discovers any errors or issues with final drafts submitted for the website, the Communication Coordinator will make corrections, if minor, but return the media release to its author if significant changes are needed.
- For all other departments, the Communication Coordinator is available to help with media distribution as needed.

PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

The City has a press release template that reflects its current branding and style guidelines. It is available on Citywide Forms.

Some standard press release guidelines and best practices:

- Use the City's official press release template. This template is designed to have the same look/feel/branding across all departments. Police, Fire & Rescue and other departments may highlight that their press releases are coming from their specific departments.
- Keep it brief, ideally, no more than 500 words for standard press releases. For more complex subjects, 750 words max.
- Use eye-catching headlines. Active headlines, using strong verbs and actions items help. Include the most compelling news in the headline and subhead.
- Include an interesting lead and the key facts in the first paragraph.
- Adhere to Associated Press (AP) Style guidelines (preferred by most media outlets).
- Create content that communicates how the subject strategically communicates the City's vision, goals, strategies, etc.
- Include at least one quote, choosing the appropriate staff person/source to quote. Ideally, two quotes/two sources. Quotes should come from official City spokespeople.
- Include photographs if possible, plus attachments of any embedded photos in jpg or tiff format (min. 350 dpi). Provide brief captions for all photos, as well as photo credits. Always make sure you have permission to share photos and photo release forms have been filled out by the subjects.
- Consider Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Building in keywords helps with online searches.
- Include the City's boilerplate.
- Include contact information—either Department Directors, PIOs or the Communication Coordinator, depending on who is sending the press release.

PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDELINES

City staff should ensure photos being used in official City communications are consistent and on-brand. Photos should reinforce your key messages. Other tips to consider are:

Photos of People
- Use images of City employees enjoying activities, working, volunteering, and connecting with one another.
- Use photos that represent the actual demographics of Forest Grove.
- Whenever possible, capture people with genuine expressions rather than posing for a photographer.
- Photos of people making eye contact are preferable.
- Be mindful of any risky or inappropriate messages reflected in a photo (e.g., racial, ludicrous or libelous messages on someone's clothing or on signs/posters, through hand gestures, etc.)
- Choose images reflecting a variety of people; avoid repeating the same photos of City staff, council members, volunteers, meeting attendees, etc.

Photos of Places
- Use photos that capture the natural beauty of Forest Grove—parks, trails, paths, agriculture, vineyards, etc.
- Use photos of some of Forest Grove's most popular/most celebrated/most recognized places.
- Highlight various City departments and facilities, capturing behind-the-scenes snapshots, activities and events.

Composition
- Photos should fill the frame, and the subject should be a significant portion of the image.
- Existing photos can and should be cropped to fit the frame after they are taken.
- Photos for print need to be high-resolution and follow the guidelines provided by the publication.

Additional Notes
- Don't use copyrighted photos without permission.
- If using professional photos, always abide by usage rights from the photographer.
- Use photos of real people rather than stock photos whenever possible.
- In the event that original photography does not exist, it's okay to use stock photography.
- Always abide by usage rights from the stock photography provider.
- Do not overuse the same image.
- If using an online file-sharing platform to share images, "retire" older images and/or images for which you no longer have usage rights by placing them in a clearly labeled folder, so others know not to use them.
- Create an online storage and filing system, organizing the photos so they're easy to locate, sort, and share as needed.
- Tag/label photos by subject (person, place, event) and date, if possible.

Stock Photography Resources
- Recommended resources for royalty-free stock photography include:
- shutterstock.com, istockphoto.com, stocksy.com, and gallerystock.com.
- Free resources include: unsplash.com, searchcreativecommons.org, and flickr.com/creativecommons/.
- Affordable photo editing/design software: canva.com, affinity.serif.com, and vsco.co.

HYPERLINKS

Hyperlinks, inserted on the City of Forest Grove's website, social media platforms or otherwise, are used to provide people with a quick, easy way to access more relevant information and sources. The City uses hyperlinks in its external communication to enhance understanding, support content, and provide additional content such as through appendix, definitions, credited material and more.

Anyone formally tasked with the role of communications may use hyperlinks to support external communication. The Communication Coordinator is the designated Managing Web Editor and should review and test all hyperlinks as the City's landing pages are updated.

Helpful Hyperlink Hints:
Hyperlinks on public-facing content should support the City's vision, goals and strategies AND meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Relevant to the context of the content.
- Relates to City operations, services, business, etc.
- Free of any commercial purposes.
- Not linked to sites containing: pornography, or sending pornographic, racist, sexist or other inappropriate jokes or stories via email, is considered harassment and will be addressed according to the City's Harassment Policy and will be immediately referred to Human Resources.
- Not an endorsement or indication of preferential treatment of any private person or service.
- Functional—always test links.

EMAIL

As in all external communication, the City is committed to communicating via email in a positive light, upholding its vision, goals, and strategies. Use the City's preferred signature, available in your settings, to uphold a consistent brand.

External Communications Email Etiquette:
- Strive to respond to email within a 24-hour timeframe. Even just a quick response to let the sender know you're aware of the email and will respond in more detail can suffice if warranted.
- Less is more. Clear, brief emails are generally preferable.
- Loop in (cc: or bcc:) other staff who should be aware of the communication.
- Don't rush to send emails if in doubt about the content, tone, grammar, style, accuracy, etc. Wait and address any ambiguity or issues first, asking your supervisor or fellow staff member for support whenever helpful.
- Avoid ALL CAPs. It comes across as shouting. Use bold or underline to communicate emphasis.
- Include any action required in the subject line so people know they need to respond (e.g., "48-hour response required).
- Mention in writing whatever attachments you might be including.
- Don't include huge attachments. Upload and link those to the cloud or the server instead.
- Avoid hitting "reply all" whenever possible. Just reply to those who truly need to hear from you.
- Pick up the phone or talk face to face if you sense tension. Talk first to a supervisor or the Communication Coordinator before responding either by phone or email.
- Verify the recipients before hitting "send."
- Keep good manners, ethics and integrity in mind when crafting content. Always avoid abusive words, emotionally charged language, harassment, racial slurs, and even jokes, the latter of which could be misunderstood or considered offensive to some.
- Send only information you know to be true. Verify facts before sending.

APPENDIX

SWOT ANALYSIS

The result of the situation analysis conducted was an outline of the City's communication Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT).

Strengths
- City Manager has strong leadership.
- Department directors' biweekly meeting consistently supports cross-department communication.
- City Manager distributes a report to City Council (twice monthly).
- Department directors have a collaborative nature.
- City has long-term employee retention/institutional knowledge.
- City has lots of great news, events, and stories to share.
- Engaged followers on the Facebook pages of the City, Police, Fire, and Library.
- High number of Facebook followers for Police (10K) and Fire (14K).
- Police, Fire, and Library have well-established media relationships.
- Good relationships with certain partners, including Pacific University and the school district.
- FYI Forest Grove is a very effective tool for delivering news to the public.
- City Council and department directors recognize the value of having stronger communication plans and policies.
- All staff have a designated email address for receiving formal communication.
- TV monitors and electronic signs are beneficial for informing the public about events, news, and happenings.
- Communication successes are happening in all departments.
- Decentralized management approach supports creativity, empowerment, and autonomy.
- City vision and values will be updated in 2021.
- Light & Power has resources to put toward improved communication.
- Staff members try to support Department Directors with communication support even when it's not in their job description or core skillset.
- Many employees have autonomy around posting to social media, which generally allows for quick distribution of information; posts removed only when obscene or offensive.
- Small City staff often supports nimble communications.
- Most Directors, particularly in our dynamic communication world, recognize the value behind a more cohesive, well-defined, and strategic communications plan.

Weaknesses
- Internal communication is marginal among departments outside weekly Directors' meeting.
- Internal communication is marginal down the chain of command, resulting in a lack of clarity among City staff about what's happening outside of their department (and even sometimes within their department).
- External communication sometimes occurs with errors (grammar, punctuation, misspellings).
- No guidelines, procedures, or templates for external communication means messages and branding are inconsistent and, at times, incorrect.
- Department Directors lack resources (technology – i.e. Intranet, tools – i.e. software to create interactive, branded forms, staff – i.e. dedicated Communication Coordinator, budget – i.e. depts. don't have specific communication budget) to support consistent internal communications.
- City lacks intranet and other technology to support internal communications.
- Communication job expectations are poorly defined for some staff.
- City staff in various departments experience varying degrees of communication support.
- No central clearinghouse for disseminating internal communication results in staff feeling overwhelmed by City emails; they lack clarity around what's essential vs. nonessential.
- Not all staff have or use computers consistently and do not check email daily or even weekly.
- The FG Community Facebook page has posts with factual errors and misinformation about the City.
- Lack of an official editorial calendar and resources (i.e. time and formal communication lead) results in many great stories never being shared with the public.
- Decentralized management approach results in staff working in silos, and contributes to some feelings of isolation and disconnect, weakens cross-department communication and hinders alignment, engagement, and openness to change.
- Local newspaper lacks resources, resulting in public being less engaged and aware of City news.
- City's 2011 communication plan was never implemented due to lack of resources, clearly defined communication roles, and communication leadership.
- Need better procedures for posting power outages during an emergency; no process/canned responses for that prepared.

Opportunities
- Formal/updated guidelines, policies, protocols and procedures for communication channels (i.e. website, social media, newsletter).
- An editorial calendar outlining deliverables (blog posts, social media campaigns, press releases, etc.).
- An official communication team, which meets monthly to share best practices, review the editorial plan, and problem-solve.
- One staff member assigned to serve as Communication Director (clarify role in job expectations).
- Process for storytelling and sharing important information with the public.
- Improved process/procedures for communication that directly support more responsive, respectful customer service.
- Survey the public and staff about how they prefer to receive information (i.e. electronic vs. print).

- Prepare for upcoming FYI Forest Grove distribution changes, including online bill pay and mailings to be managed by contracted vendor vs. in-house.
- Intranet to support internal communication, including staff news, department news, events, employee benefit updates, etc.
- Create one location on the City's intranet for all branding and communication resources.
- Increase followers of and engagement with the City's official Facebook page by increasing the frequency and quality of posts and eliminating errors.

Threats

- Lack of policies and procedures might put City at legal risk.
- An individual Councilor, City Board Member or City Commissioner's Facebook page might put the City at legal risk.
- Lack of policies and procedures result in inefficiency and, at times, unprofessional, inconsistent communication.
- FG Community Facebook page generates false information, undermining the official City Facebook page and other City communication efforts.
- The local media is not covering important City issues and events.
- City has limited budget for communication resources.
- Public misses out on important news as FYI Forest Grove changes format, moves to online billing.
- Feeling among departments and staff that people are working in silos = disengagement, disempowerment, HR challenges and turnover, and takes a financial toll.
- Traditional media has less of an impact/reach in today's digital world.

KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is no official City of Forest Grove communication team and no single point person for citywide communication activities. This contributes to a lack of cohesion in the frequency and quality of communication being distributed by the City as a whole.

Recommendation 1: Form an official communication team comprised of one to two people from each department. This team would be responsible for implementing the strategies and tactics in the communication plan in a cohesive, collaborative way.

One person should be designated as the coordinator of this team. Example roles and responsibilities of this person: set agendas for meetings, provide direction and guidance, edit and publish materials produced by the team, evaluate the effectiveness of the communication plan in achieving the City's communication goals, and other duties as determined by the City Manager. This team would meet monthly, perhaps right after one of the Department Directors' bi-monthly meetings, to briefly share best practices, review the editorial plan, problem-solve, and ensure alignment to communication goals. Based on the discovery process, the City has the ability to hire/assign someone to this part-time role and update the job title and description.

Recommendation 2: Designate a person to serve in the role of official Communication Coordinator, whose primary role would be leading the implementation of the communication plan.

This person would coordinate communication activities in a way that is consistent and professional and leads to the City sharing timely, accurate information, generating and distributing positive stories, educating/informing the public, and empowering its staff. This person would lead the above-mentioned communication team and coordinate with Department Directors and other staff to make sure all communication activities align and support the City's communication goals and align with the City's mission, vision and values. Based on the discovery process, the City has the ability to assign a Staff member to this part-time role and update his or her job title and description.

2. Employees' roles and responsibilities do not include defined communication expectations and tasks.
Numerous City of Forest Grove employees are responsible for communication. However, very few employees have clearly defined roles, expectations or accountability around their communication-related job duties. This leads to misunderstandings around who should do what, when and how, relative to supporting both internal and external communication. They have expressed that they seek more structure, direction and guidance around expectations and accountability in general.

Recommendation 3: Upon the creation of an official communication team and the designation of a Communication Coordinator, immediately update employee job descriptions to reflect official communication roles/responsibilities. Include metrics of success.

3. Communication policies and procedures are outdated and not adhered to.

Recommendation 4: Develop an internal communication policy that includes the following: email, Internet and equipment policy, social media policy and media relations guidelines.*

Recommendation 5: Develop an external communication policy that includes the following: updated social media management guidelines (hashtags, guidelines for each social media channel, Dos and Don'ts of social media, Tips for On-Camera & Print Interviews), website policy and best practices, media relations guidelines, public-facing forms (downloads), and a press release template. These policies should include guidelines for distributing formal communication from Forest Grove boards, commissions and City Council.*

Recommendation 6: Ensure that staff who perform communication activites as part of their formal job receive specific training (i.e. social media training and media relations training) to support them in their efforts. Ensure all existing employees are briefed on the external and internal communication policies; and moving forward, all new staff are briefed on the policies during their orientation.

4. There is a lack of standard procedures for drafting and distributing content to external stakeholders. This leads to a lack of cohesion in the frequency and quality of communication being distributed by the City as a whole. While some departments do a great job of disseminating information and stories, others lack the resources to do so or simply do not know to what degree they should be doing such tasks. There is a lack of timely and accurate information going out from the City.

Recommendation 7: Develop a communication plan that more clearly defines communication goals and communication strategies, tactics and metrics of success.*

The Communication Plan might include:
- Communication Goals
- Key Audiences
- Tone/Voice
- Style Guidelines (as an appendix)
- Branding Guidelines (as an appendix)
- Photo Guidelines
- List of all available communication tools
- Communication goals, strategies, tactics, and measurements of success
- Copy of the City's internal and external communication policies

Recommendation 8: Develop an editorial plan that outlines specific stories/topics, channels, and deadlines for the year ahead.

Recommendation 9: Ensure the communication team meets consistently, ideally once a month, to ensure the editorial plan is being followed, to swap success stories and best practices, and to build a sense of teamwork.

*Pitchfork Communications has started this project as part of its current scope of work.

COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (CCI) FEEDBACK

Page	Section/Paragraph	Comment/s
4	3	This language could be included in a communications link for all employees and directors.
5	3	Should this be reviewed semi annually by the stewards for this?
5	3	Perhaps specified portions could be reviewed on a semiannual basis, such that the whole plan gets reviewed annually.
5	5 subsection 3	Tools and Resources a priority.
6	1 Title	Determined by the audience we currently have and the audience we need to connect with.
6	1 subsection 6	These are resources.
6	2 subsection 3	Can we add being a good listener?
7	1 subsection 1	Proactive approach of communication. One of the critical parts.
7	1 subsection 2	Probably a budget limitation.
7	1 subsection 4	Is there an appropriate role in the plan and or calendar.
8	1	Who will be responsible for coordinating posts to SM?
8	2	Appropriate but consistent communication in all areas.
8	2 subsection 7	What is a GIS StoryMap?
8	4 subsection 3	Do we have a way of measuring readership levels?
9	1	What about annual goals?
9	2	This should have a timeline/calendar plan that is reviewed by the communications team. CCI can review quarterly.
9	3	Resources may limit this.
9	4 subsection 3	Who will provide this coaching?
11	1	Educate Commission/Committees?
11	1 subsection 1	Reference to page 41 does staff understand their role and appropriate procedures to the city's communication?
12	1 subsection 7	I like this approach, but knowing how to make things user-friendly is not easy and is best done with the aid of those specifically trained in this area.
14	Title	Can we add "Accurate" to interesting and relevant?
14	1	This is a game changer for the City.
14	1 subsection 3	City manager's newsletter "What's growing on in the Grove?"
14	3 subsection 4	Absence of instances where communications "damage control" is needed.
15	3	How are these being fulfilled?
15	3	Can these promises be illustrated?
15	3 subsection 3	Letters to Mayor and Council, what happens with those?
15	4	We anticipate the questions and issues that the public/media will likely have and strive to provide responses that are as accurate and as complete as possible.

16	6	and as complete (i.e. the whole truth) as reasonably possible.
17	3 subsection 2	Social media presents special problems. Can CCI help?
17	3 subsection 3	Examples of what City could have done differently. Police Chief? Policing.
17	3 subsection 4	Include Council and Mayor?
15	3 subsection 3	Letters to Mayor and Council, what happens with those?
15	4	We anticipate the questions and issues that the public/media will likely have and strive to provide responses that are as accurate and as complete as possible.
16	6	and as complete (i.e. the whole truth) as reasonably possible.
17	3 subsection 2	Social media presents special problems. Can CCI help?
17	3 subsection 3	Examples of what City could have done differently. Police Chief? Policing.
17	3 subsection 4	Include Council and Mayor?