Date: March 3, 2020  
To: Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Thomas B. Modica, Acting City Manager
Subject: Strategic Communications Plan

The City Council has identified providing enhanced communications to stakeholders as a top priority for the City of Long Beach (City). Meaningful and transparent communication provides the community with clear information on key programs, projects, and initiatives, and opens up dialogue with the public to gain important community insights and feedback. After significant outreach, research and analysis, staff is pleased to present a Strategic Communications Plan (Attachment A) for City Council and community review.

The five-year Strategic Communications Plan outlines the strategic focus areas, goals, objectives and tactics the City will develop and implement to enhance City communications efforts, while strengthening engagement and increasing transparency. As a companion piece, the City is also publishing a Community Engagement Playbook (Playbook) (Attachment B). The Playbook provides guidance on best practices to follow when engaging the community in person. There is no single best approach to community engagement due to the wide variety of projects and initiatives that the City works on, with varying factors such as budget, scope, staffing, and time. That said, the City has developed this Playbook to provide examples of what could be implemented on a per-project or per-initiative basis.

Background

At its August 22, 2017 meeting, the City Council requested that the City Manager develop a Neighborhood Engagement and Community Communications Plan. Specific requests included: outline the City’s existing internal and external communication channels and public affairs efforts; report on past citywide surveys or other feedback mechanisms on the prioritization and resident/user satisfaction of existing City services; align departmental coordination and public outreach within one of the five stated priorities of the City Council; and specify how staff aim to expand the scope, reach and effectiveness of public communication to increase transparency and strengthen levels of civic engagement in the years ahead.

To meet this request, the City embarked on developing the Strategic Communications Plan. On January 31, 2018, June 22, 2018, November 30, 2018 and January 31, 2020, the City Manager’s Office provided updates to the Mayor and City Council regarding the Strategic Communications Plan’s development. As a result of early research and analysis, the Playbook was developed.

The Strategic Communications Plan is an important document that provides a framework on how the City will strategically engage the communities it serves in the coming years. The prior plan was published in 2007 and has been obsolete for many years, especially
with the rapid advancements in technology and social media. The development of a new Strategic Communications Plan has been a major, multi-department, multi-stakeholder effort that has included extensive research and analysis.

Research methods included: interviews with residents, community leaders, business representatives, and news media; citywide community communications survey; employee interviews and communications survey; evaluation of City public outreach efforts; and evaluation of City communications assets.

**Strategic Communications Plan Elements**

Based on the analysis of key research findings as well as other insights from staff, the strategic focus areas, goals, and objectives were developed:

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During the research phase, a few tactical projects were identified, like the Playbook, to prioritize and develop ahead of the Strategic Communications Plan. The following projects are already finalized:

- Internal Newsletter (City Manager News)
- Crisis Communications Plan
- Mass Notification Plan

One of the most exciting projects that is well underway, due to early insights gained in the research phase of the Strategic Communications Plan, and that will have a great impact on how the City provides information to increase public engagement, is the new **Citywide Events and Meetings Calendar System**. This engaging, interactive public-facing calendar will replace the current calendars that reside on the homepage of the City’s website. The system will have filtering capabilities for the public, provide users the ability to subscribe, and include a mapping feature. Departmental calendars will feed into this master calendar, so that it will act as a one-stop shop for residents to get information on City events and meetings, making it easier for the public to get information. As part of the calendar system, the City is creating an **Engagement** feature that will display events and meetings that are asking for collaboration with, or feedback from, the public. This feature will help civically-minded community members get the information they want, to stay engaged throughout the city.

**Work Plan**

Over the next six months, from March through August of 2020, several communications projects, identified in the Strategic Communications Plan, will come to fruition. Provided below is a high-level work plan. The fiscal impact of the projects listed below is approximately $40,000 for Fiscal Year 2020. The ongoing annual fiscal impact of implementing all the new tactics in the Strategic Communications Plan, excluding new positions and projects that have already been approved and are in the process of implementation, could be up to $200,000. Most of the work will be developed and implemented by staff, using in-house resources and skills.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calendar System</td>
<td>Develop a new public-facing calendar system</td>
<td>April 2020: Employees trained</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>May 2020: Launch and promote</td>
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<tr>
<td>Street Work Information</td>
<td>Develop system to easily provide information regarding street work and closure</td>
<td>March 2020: Research/Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>April 2020: Launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Timeline</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Explainer Videos</strong></td>
<td>Develop and finalize a series of explainer videos regarding homelessness</td>
<td>April 2020: Develop scripts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>May 2020: Film</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>June 2020: Review and edit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>July 2020: Launch</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>#GoLongBeach Newsletter Readership</strong></td>
<td>Introduce a new Social Media marketing campaign to increase #GoLongBeach Newsletter readership</td>
<td>May 2020: Develop content</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>June 2020: Launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Media Livestreaming</strong></td>
<td>Pilot livestreaming of City Council meetings on a City social media page</td>
<td>April 2020: Test</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May 2020: Launch pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communications Webpage</strong></td>
<td>Launch a Communications section on the City website</td>
<td>May 2020: Content development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>June 2020: Build page</td>
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<td></td>
<td>July 2020: Launch</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social Media Town Hall</strong></td>
<td>Conduct a social media town hall about an important City initiative</td>
<td>June 2020: Content development</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>July 2020: Advertise event</td>
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<td></td>
<td>August 2020: Conduct event</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hard Copy Newsletters</strong></td>
<td>Make available hard copy newsletters for employees without emails</td>
<td>March 2020: Launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employee Town Hall</strong></td>
<td>Conduct an employee town hall regarding employee benefits, career development or City goals-initiatives-programs</td>
<td>May 2020: Content development</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>June 2020: Advertise event</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>July 2020: Conduct event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch and Learn</strong></td>
<td>Conduct a lunch-and-learn about an important City initiative</td>
<td>April 2020: Content development</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>June 2020: Conduct event</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Event Alerts</strong></td>
<td>Pilot an email alert that will notify the Mayor and City Council about upcoming events the City is involved with</td>
<td>March 2020: Develop template; launch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communications Section on Intranet</strong></td>
<td>Finalize version 2 of the Communications section on the intranet</td>
<td>June 2020: Content development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>July 2020: Launch</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communications Handbook</strong></td>
<td>Make major update to the Communications Handbook</td>
<td>April 2020: Content development</td>
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<td>May 2020: Publish</td>
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<td>June 2020: Staff training</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>On-camera media training</strong></td>
<td>On-camera media training</td>
<td>June 2020: Program development</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>July 2020: Scheduling</td>
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<td>August 2020: Launch</td>
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### Joint Information Team/Center

Train and develop a JIT for a JIC  
**April 2020:** Identify JIT  
**June 2020:** Develop training program  
**July 2020:** Schedule training  
**August 2020:** JIC exercise

### Digital/Social Media Style Guide

Start Digital/Social Media Style Guide  
**June 2020:** Content development  
**July 2020:** Layout and Design  
**August 2020:** Launch

### Branded Design Tools

Providing Canva enterprise account, with branded templates, to communications staff  
**May 2020:** Develop templates  
**June 2020:** Test  
**July 2020:** Training  
**August 2020:** Launch

### New Employee Orientation

Comms info at NEO  
**May 2020:** Content development  
**June 2020:** Advertise event  
**July 2020:** Conduct event

### Health Public Affairs Officer

Hire a Health and Human Services Public Affairs Officer  
**April 2020:** Conduct interviews; make offer  
**May 2020:** Onboard

### Police Communications Strategist

Hire a Police Department Communications Strategist  
**March 2020:** Interviews and Conditional Offer  
**April 2020:** Onboard

### City Manager Social Media Specialist

Hire a Social Media Specialist to work under guidance of the Digital Communications Lead  
**March 2020:** Final interviews; make offer  
**April 2020:** Onboard

Other projects that were already being considered when the Strategic Communications Plan research started, but are also identified in the Strategic Communications Plan as important pieces to create more transparency and engagement, include the forthcoming Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which includes a complete overhaul of the Go Long Beach app, and the new One Number project. Both of these projects will hit major milestones this year.

Staff plans to bring the Strategic Communications Plan to City Council for a presentation and discussion about communications priorities and next steps in April 2020. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Chief Public Affairs Officer Kevin Lee at (562) 570-6811.

**ATTACHMENTS**

**CC:**  
Charles Parkin, City Attorney  
Laura L. Doud, City Auditor  
Douglas Haubert, City Prosecutor  
Rebecca Garner, Acting Assistant City Manager  
Kevin Jackson, Deputy City Manager  
Teresa Chandler, Interim Deputy City Manager  
Department Heads
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This 2020 Strategic Communications Plan was developed in response to the Long Beach City Council’s direction to develop a Neighborhood Engagement and Community Communications Plan that would also identify the current scope of communications within the City and develop ways to expand it in order to create more transparency and strengthen levels of civic engagement. This Strategic Communications Plan includes new tactics for engagement, acts as a guide to further develop communications in the City over the coming years and is a reference for the development of program- or initiative-specific communications plans. This Plan identifies some key findings and takeaways from the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. Some of those findings and takeaways include: There was no single communication tactic that dictates how people receive information and that the City should continue to use multiple channels; the ability to receive curated content or easily curate content for specific communities would be helpful, as nearly half of residents are not getting the engagement opportunities that they would like; and the community wants more information from the City across varying topics, but specifically more on scheduled road and infrastructure maintenance, City finances and changes in public services such as street sweeping and trash pick-up and they would prefer to receive information via mail and email. There is also interest in receiving information from the City during already established neighborhood and community meetings.

More findings and takeaways include: There was a sense that the City could do a better job at providing easily understandable information about important decisions made in City Hall to the general public; There was also interest in the City continuing to do more for community members with Limited English Proficiency; and training of public-facing City staff on the various functions of other departments was expressed as helpful to ensure the community can more easily get the information they need.

Key finding and takeaways related to City staff and internal communications include: There was a desire to receive easy to understand information about what is going on throughout the organization; The great majority of employees specifically want to receive more information about employee benefits, career development, and City goals, initiatives and programs on a regular basis; Employees identified email and newsletter as their preferred method of receiving information; and many employees do not have a City email address and do not have easy access to the City intranet and therefore are looking for alternative ways to receive information from the City.
Additional findings and takeaways include: Employees were fairly indifferent about the quality of departmental and interdepartmental communications, however indicated that communications among departments could be better; and it was noted that many employees also felt they did not know their colleagues in other departments and an overall lack of knowledge of the various functions of other City departments.

These key findings and takeaways lead to the development of five Strategic Focus Areas, with corresponding goals and objectives, for this five-year (2020-2025) Strategic Communications Plan:

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The Chief Public Affairs Officer (Chief PAO) will continue to meet regularly with the Public Affairs and Communications team as well as Citywide communications staff to discuss progress on goals, objectives and tactics. The team will conduct future surveys and interviews and make adjustments as needed, especially as new technologies or shifts in communications tactics come into play. The Chief PAO will update the City Manager on a regular basis.
BACKGROUND

The City of Long Beach is a big, diverse and modern city. A full-service charter City, it is home to approximately 470,000 people and is the second most populous city in Los Angeles County, seventh largest in California and in the top 40 in the country. Long Beach offers all the world-class amenities of a large metropolitan city while maintaining a strong sense of individual and diverse neighborhoods nestled together along the California coast.

As one of the most diverse cities in the country Long Beach’s residents represent a wide variety of cultural backgrounds that provide a variety of unique voices and views that ultimately strengthen the city. Long Beach is home to the internationally known Queen Mary and Aquarium of the Pacific, several museums and theaters, a highly-rated school district, Long Beach Airport and the Port of Long Beach. The City also has a highly-respected university and city college, two historic ranchos, five hospitals, five golf courses, 171 parks, miles of beaches, marinas, bike paths and a popular Bike Share program.

The City currently does a commendable job communicating with its residents, business community and visitors. And it has room to strengthen that communication. Over the last few years, the Mayor, City Council and City Manager have put a greater emphasis on Communications and subsequently increased staffing and communications output. Under the leadership of the City Manager, the Office of Public Affairs and Communications (OPAC) was established. The OPAC consists of communications professionals who provide guidance to City management as well as City departments. The OPAC develops and implements communications policies, best practices, strategies, objectives, tactics and tools to reach appropriate audiences.

The OPAC currently consists of a:

- Chief Public Affairs Officer who oversees the OPAC and is the City’s lead Public Information Officer, acting as a spokesperson for the City and liaison between the news media and departments.
- Public Affairs Specialist who develops and distributes public messaging through the news media via myriad tactics, including press releases and press events.
- Digital Communications Lead who guides and develops digital and social media strategies and output for the City’s primary digital assets as well as departmental assets.
- Strategic Communications Specialist who provides guidance on strategic focus areas as well on internal communications.
- Designer who develops and guides the City’s brand and design efforts and well as maintains its integrity.
Departmental staff, who take on communications roles or duties, are vital to the City’s communications efforts as they work directly with the community and are closely aligned with subject matter experts in their respective departments and bureaus. While every department employs someone who fulfills a communications role, not all departments have the same communications functions or capacity. Through the Strategic Communications Plan process, the OPAC has identified key communications roles that should be considered by departments.

For a city as large and diverse as Long Beach, communications is the responsibility of everyone, from departments, legislative offices, elected officials and the individual project managers. The OPAC is a communications resource, developing plans, policies and guides, as well as supporting projects and initiatives across departments. The OPAC provides the communications tools needed to further empower staff.

The City, despite the positive efforts it already puts into communications, understanding that there is always room to strengthen communications and more effectively reach its audiences. With that in mind, and direction from the City Council to develop a Neighborhood Engagement Plan, the OPAC embarked on a path to better understand its gaps in communications and the needs and desires of the community and City employees as it pertains to communications. This Strategic Communications Plan, which involves neighborhood engagement goals, was developed following a series of primary research efforts that included involvement from the public and City staff as well as a self-evaluation of current communications assets.

The vision of the 2020 Strategic Communications Plan is: Hear all who want to be heard. Engage all who want to be engaged. The overarching goal of this Plan is to better engage internal and external stakeholders.
Recent Communications Asset Developments

From 2017 through 2019, the City has developed and implemented several communications tools, enhanced current communications tools and added communications functions to better serve the community. Some of these assets are:

**Official City Newsletter:** Launched the #GoLongBeach Newsletter and grew it to approximately 11,000 subscribers; a 400 percent increase in subscribers happened in 2019 due to a focused social media advertising campaign; The newsletter is produced twice a month and highlights City initiatives and news along with announcements on upcoming events to keep Long Beach stakeholders informed of things happening in the City.

**Official City Blog:** Developed “InsideLB,” an award-winning magazine format blog that takes a more in-depth look into how the City helps shape the lives of its residents through its resources and programs; Since its launch, the City has published 40 stories, including a five-part video series called Long Beach Life, created in partnership with a local artist.

**Live streaming:** Introduced live streamed press conferences, City events and explainer videos, via several social media platforms, bringing more visibility to these events and tapping into Long Beach’s online community in order to provide a direct source of live updates.

**Instagram:** Created an official City of Long Beach Instagram page to expand the City’s reach to a younger, more visual audience.

**Facebook Alerts:** Due to the relationship the City has built with Facebook over the last couple of years, Facebook asked the City to participate in a limited pilot for what they are calling Facebook Alerts; Facebook Alerts are a function of the platform that can be used to announce things like emergencies, missing persons, major road closures and public health hazards to everyone (or a targeted area) on Facebook within the City limits even if the individual is not following the City page.
Social Media Presence: Increased social media audiences and engagement across platforms; The City’s primary social media accounts have 92,000 Twitter followers, 37,300 Facebook Likes, 15,800 Instagram followers and 12,500 LinkedIn followers, reaching approximately 1 million users a month; The City’s 100+ social pages across departments and offices equates to a following of more than a half million social media users, some which may overlap

Social Media Management: Purchased a social media management tool that provides analytics, social listening and customer service tools; These tools are used to better manage the over 100 social media pages the City has in order to create a better user experience

Archive Social: Purchased a service that allows the City to automatically archive social media posts and activity; this service allows the City to more easily fulfill Public Records Act requests

Media Monitoring: Purchased a media monitoring tool that provides analytics and reports on what is transpiring in the news around relevant topics; These tools are used to better understand media engagement around specific topics and to identify media influencers

News Alerts: Launched “In the News,” a weekly curation of Long Beach media mentions in print, broadcast, radio and digital media stories; The alerts are sent out to City employees to better inform staff of Long Beach in the news

Social Media Policy: Implemented the City’s first Social Media Policy to provide employees with guidance around social media, and to officially provide the community with appropriate terms of service
**City Style Guide:** Managed City branding of print, broadcast and digital collateral and developed, and subsequently updated, the first City of Long Beach Style Guide

**City Logos:** Updated several department logos to coordinate with the City's primary logo, creating a stronger brand that the community will more immediately recognize and trust

**Adobe Suite:** This software makes user-centered design possible and enables the City to create eye-catching, professional and branded collateral

**Internal Events Calendar:** Created an ongoing internal events calendar in order to better manage timing of events across departments; This has cut down on events overlapping with each other, and creates less competition for media coverage and community engagement

**Citywide Communications Meetings:** Organized monthly interdepartmental Citywide Communications meetings, in which Public Information Officers, Social Media Administrators and other communications staff gather to share social media and communications best practices, provide updates on new departmental initiatives, introduce new communications tools, and learn from programs and events; These meetings foster interdepartmental collaboration shaping strategy surrounding social media campaigns and unifying the City’s voice through online platforms on a variety of topics relevant to the City; Communications staff also receive training in best practices on ADA accessibility, language access protocol, branding and social media
**Forms and Templates:** Developed the City’s first official PowerPoint template and email signature to help unify and strengthen the City brand; updated its official letterhead and several customer-facing forms

**Social Media Best Practices:** Developed one-sheet social media best practice guidelines to help staff to develop engaging and impactful social media content per social media platform

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This list includes tools developed to support and benefit Citywide communications efforts. However, it should be noted that on a parallel timeline, departments have implemented many communications programs and practices to provide a better and more transparent experience for their specific audiences related to the programs and initiatives that they produce for the benefit of the community.
In addition to the above listed assets, there are several others that the City has available to support communications efforts between the City and the community. These assets are all useful tools and can be utilized to further strengthen communications depending on key audiences. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to communications when reaching out about a wide range of topics and to a large diverse city.

**Website:** LongBeach.gov is the City’s primary source of information available to the community, and a go-to source for the community. Most other forms of communications should link back to the City’s website for more information. The City is regularly looking at enhancements to the City and departmental websites to improve service delivery and transparency. Some recent improvements that provide efficiencies in communications include, but are not limited to: BizPort an intuitive and straightforward one-stop-shop for entrepreneurs; Long Beach publicity, Development Services Development Projects Map; and new dashboards for public art installations, crime incidents, and recent infrastructure and public safety projects. In 2019, the Long Beach Public Library, Long Beach Development Services and the Long Beach Airport modernized their websites, moving from an outdated content management system to the City standard while still customizing the look and feel of the website. These website updates are also a part of a bigger effort to create one City site that community members can search and find anything they need from the City.
Social Media: Citywide and/or Department social media pages (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube) are great sources of information and dialogue between the City and the community.

Email Marketing: Email continues to be a mode of communication preferred by a majority of stakeholders. The City of Long Beach’s LinkLB system has dozens of newsletters that the public can subscribe to that allows for updates, public hearing body agendas and meeting notifications, and special interest information to be delivered directly to a person’s inbox. The Go Long Beach newsletter, the City’s main newsletter, also shares departmental information.

Video Production: Data shows that video performs really well on social media. Long Beach TV supports City communications through produced and livestreamed video of projects, programs, initiatives and events.

Professional Photography: The City employs a full-time City photographer to produce high-quality photos to be used for social media, marketing collateral pieces and to document special events.

Event Audio/Visual: The Technology and Innovation Department’s Wireless Communications team provides audio and visual support for reoccurring meetings, like City Council meetings, as well as events, press conferences and special videos.

Press Releases, Media Advisories, Media Pitching and Public Notices: The City sends out over 200 notices to the press a year to keep the public informed about City services, accomplishments and opportunities for community involvement and engagement. It also continually fosters relationships with news outlets across web, broadcast, radio and print. As a result, the City continues to increase its local, regional, and occasionally national coverage.

Event/Meeting Coordination and Production: The City coordinates many events throughout the year with internal and external partners. The Special Events and Filming office supports several high-profile events such as the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach as well as several festivals and parades. Communications staff throughout the City, coordinate press conferences, ribbon cuttings, grand openings and other events.

Marketing Collateral Development: The City Graphic Designer is responsible for unifying the City’s voice through large branding projects such as further developing the current Style Guide, developing and refining brand templates, providing department logo recommendations, innovating merchandise branding ideas, creating a unified City email signature that allows for departmental identities and leading other special graphic design projects in collaboration with departments. The designer also helps create in-house graphics and marketing materials.
**Long Beach Year-in-Review:** While some departments produce important annual reports that focus on a particular segment of their work, the Long Beach Year-in-Review is a publication that provides annual highlights and data across departments to provide the public with a snapshot of how the City is using its resources to improve the quality of life of the community.

**Community-Facing Events Calendar:** The City event calendar allows people to find events relevant to them. However, the current calendar is lacking in functionality and isn’t widely used among departments, leaving a gap in communications to the public. Through this Plan process, the City has already embarked on implementing a new, robust calendar that will be helpful to the community when looking for meetings and events in their area of interest.

**Electronic Billboards:** The City has use of two electronic billboards that is used to educate the public about citywide impacting programs and initiatives or significant special events. The billboards combined garner over 670,000 impressions per day.

**City Hall Elevator Screens:** Screens in City Hall elevators are used to deliver quick messages such as seasonal reminders, updates to municipal services and special events to all visitors and employees using the elevators.

**Media Wall:** The City Hall media wall is a feature of the new City Hall building. The media wall provides: video and photographic works featuring a wide range of styles and genres; simulcasts of City Council, Harbor Commission, and other civic meetings as needed for overflow conditions; and activations of the Civic Center lobby by the City or Harbor.

**AlertLB:** The primary purpose for AlertLB notifications is to alert residents of emergencies and hazards. Notifications can be sent via text, email or phone depending on individual subscription settings.

**Go Long Beach Mobile App:** The Go Long Beach mobile app provides the community an opportunity to submit service requests for issues such as graffiti, potholes and sign damage 24-hours a day, seven days a week, from anywhere. A complete overhaul of this app is forthcoming.
Two primary areas of research for the 2020 Strategic Communications Plan were identified as critical components of understanding the full communications needs of stakeholders: Internal and External stakeholder research. The goal of Internal research was to get a better understanding from City staff and elected officials what their needs are regarding internal communications flow through the organization and to gain their insights on what their primary audiences or customers needed. The goal of External research was to get a general understanding from the public what their communications needs were, both one-way communications and two-way communications.

The following are the research methods that were conducted:

- **Self-evaluation:** The City collected the communications assets that are currently available and analyzed how they are being used as a benefit to both employees and the public. Further, it reviewed the most recent citywide survey of residents regarding views on City services to gain insights on the perceptions of residents.

- **City Employee Survey:** The survey was conducted to gain a general understanding of how employees received information throughout the organization and how they would prefer to receive it, as well as the types of information they would like to receive. As there are a large number of employees that do not function through a City of Long Beach email address, the survey was available in both digital and hard copy form.

- **City Employee Interviews:** Interviews were conducted with departments and offices throughout the organization, and offered to offices of elected officials, to better understand internal communications needs. The interviews also provided an understanding of what departments thought their audiences wanted and needed.

- **Community Stakeholder Interviews:** Professional external stakeholder interviews were conducted to provide the City with unique viewpoints for stakeholders representing many different backgrounds and perspectives, including residents and the business community. Stakeholders included people who were often engaged with the City and with the community so that they can provide insights as to the current process and what could be enhanced or improved upon.

- **Community Survey:** The professional statistically valid survey was conducted to get a general understanding of communications needs and wants of residents from across all areas of the city. The research is valuable as it is coming from residents who may or may not be engaged in local government, but the work of local governments has an impact on them. The intent of the survey is to identify what kind of information, and in what form, residents would like to receive to have more of an opportunity for engagement.
KEY FINDINGS AND TAKEAWAYS

Qualitative and quantitative data analysis revealed important insights that helped developed the Strategic Focus Areas, Goals, Objectives and Tactics in the 2020 Strategic Communications Plan. While the methods were separated into internal and external, the findings, takeaways and the resulting goals all ultimately enhance the experience of the community.

Community Survey and Interviews Analysis - Highlights

The survey revealed that the community is more satisfied than dissatisfied, when surveyed, with the City’s efforts to communicate with them. However, opinions are soft with 11% saying they are “very” satisfied. Most of the community stakeholders that were interviewed believe the City is making a genuine effort to get them the information they need and be a helpful resource, and that the City has improved in this area over time. There were multiple individuals who mentioned that the City’s public information process has improved in recent years.

When asking the community how they get information about the City, there was no single communication vehicle that dominated. About half get information regularly from the City’s website, but half do not. The same is true for getting information through the news media and for flyers in the mail. In fact, when interviewing community stakeholders, it was apparent that no single communications tool should be seen as the magic ingredient. Those interviewed overwhelmingly received information through multiple channels and that repetition through different channels helped reinforce the information. In turn, those interviewed also used that same method when providing the information to their constituency. However, several community stakeholders who were interviewed mentioned that it would be helpful to get curated content for the community they represent or the ability to easily get to the information they need all in one place. For example, not having to search through several calendars just to find something that was of interest to them. These opinions will help the City better strategize around how information, especially about meetings and events, is presented to the public.

About three quarters of respondents say they closely follow what is happening in the City and somewhat fewer say they closely follow the City government. This means that there are hundreds of thousands of residents that have some level of interest in information that City Hall can provide. However, about 45% of the respondents say they didn’t have the opportunity to voice their concerns to the City on major decisions that affect life in Long Beach. This presents a big opportunity for the City to strategically develop goals and objectives to improve awareness and engagement among residents, especially
considering the interest from the surveyed community.

Significant numbers of those surveyed wanted more information from the City on just about everything and anything. However, the greatest interest is in scheduled road and infrastructure maintenance, City finances and changes in public services such as street sweeping and trash pick-up. The preferred method of receiving information is mail and email. Again, this presents an opportunity for the City to develop strategic goals and objectives that support providing more of this information to the community.

Roughly half of those surveyed said they are extremely or very likely to attend a City neighborhood meeting in their neighborhood. The biggest drivers of their attendance are the subject matter, time of day (far more prefer evening to day-time), convenience of the location and advance notice of the meeting. Although those who were interviewed said that due to resources, community meetings could not be the primary driver of information, there is still an opportunity for the City to participate in more pre-established neighborhood meetings for topics that are specific to a community or neighborhood.

Although there were no specific recommendations on how to achieve this, there was a sense among stakeholders that the City could do a better job of sending clear and easy to understand information about important decisions made in City Hall to the general public. Those interviewed did recognize that the general public also needed to make an effort to obtain information as the relationship between government and the community needs to go both ways. Some members of the media that were interviewed expressed that it would be helpful to receive information about important decisions via video content. Those interviewed also noted that the City should continue to make progress on making important information available to community members with limited English proficiency so that all members of the public have an opportunity to engage with the City.

Some who were interviewed expressed the need for the City to educate employees on the job functions of other staff across departments. There was some frustration that when calling the City they would get transferred from department to department because the first employee was unsure who to transfer the community member to.

When reviewing the latest citywide community survey regarding the community’s attitudes toward City services, a few notable findings arose regarding concerns and interests of the community: Affordable housing and homelessness were considered the biggest issues and a priority; Other community priorities included protecting local water resources, public safety services and repairing local roads; Planning for the future and maintaining public parks and building were highly important; recreational opportunities and library services ranked high when considering quality of life as well as graffiti removal. An amplification of future communications regarding these topics should be considered when moving forward with City communications and this Plan.
The employee survey and interviews yielded important information as it relates to internal communications. The interviews consisted primarily of management and communications staff while nearly 70 percent of employee survey respondents identified as line staff. The combination of the two created a great understanding of how the City can bolster internal communications in order to develop a culture of better information flow throughout the organization. Providing more opportunities for staff to learn more of what is going on throughout the organization tends to lead to a more empowered staff that can provide an even better experience to our community.

The overwhelming majority of staff wanted to be provided more easy access to information. The communication tool that was discussed more than any other tool during interviews was the City Manager’s weekly newsletter. This was time and again identified as a great source of information, because: 1) It provided short digestible pieces of information, 2) It was a personable easy read, 3) It gave people a sense of what the City Manager thought was important for people to know that week, and 4) It provided links to memos if people wanted to learn more. The primary audience of the Newsletter had been solely Legislative offices, and it was also sent to department directors. There was no expectation for directors to pass it along to their staff, however some did pass it along to their managers and supervisors and some of them passed it along to line staff. However, there was no distribution consistency through the organization. The one thing that seemed to be consistent is that the people who did receive it really enjoyed it and assumed that everyone else received it. It became apparent through the interviews that this platform would be a great tool to get information to employees. After consultation with the Acting City Manager, he decided to open up the Newsletter to all employees ahead of the completion of this Plan, and make it more dynamic and interactive. As of the March 2020 publication of this Plan, the new Newsletter has been distributed to staff over the last six months and has a very strong open rate of approximately 40%. Most commonly, the highest clicks are on links to memos to the Mayor and City Council, which means that employees are interested in learning more and enjoy the easy access to information.

When asked about topics that most interested them, a vast majority of staff, roughly 80-90% were very interested or somewhat interested in employee benefits, career development, and City goals, initiatives and programs. The City has an opportunity to provide more of this type of content to employees through multiple channels, including the City intranet which was identified as a fairly popular source of information. It should be noted that while the intranet is a good source of information, a lot of the content needs to be more regularly updated by staff responsible for specific content.

Employees identified email and newsletter as their preferred method of receiving information. Expanding the City Manager’s Newsletter to employees via email has already supported that employee need. Employees also receive the City’s community-focused #GoLongBeach Newsletter via email. However, a communications gap that was identified was that these newsletters were not extended to employees that don’t have a City email address. An expectation of this Plan is to fill that gap.
There was a desire among employees that were surveyed that it would be helpful to gain a better understanding of the various job functions of their colleagues across departments. This correlates with comments made by external stakeholders that their seemed to be a lack of understanding among City staff about what other departments and other staff were responsible for. There is an opportunity through this Plan to address this issue. On average, employees didn’t feel strongly one way or another about communication flow within a department or among departments, however there is a desire for more interdepartmental collaboration.

When interviewed about crisis and emergency communications, employees had a general understanding that there are people in the organization that would be called upon to respond, however they were unclear who those individuals are or what the process is. There was a common understanding among communications staff that more training was needed for all communications staff that would be called upon in a crisis situation.

**STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND TACTICS**

The analysis of the internal and external surveys and interviews, along with the City’s self-assessment and review of a recent Citywide survey regarding opinions on City services helped inform the Strategic Focus Areas and Goals that the City needs to concentrate on in order to deliver enhanced communications over the years to come. Public engagement and employee engagement are at the forefront of the strategy, not only because that seems like common sense, but also because the analysis tells us that is where we need to concentrate the majority of our efforts in order to deliver even more timely and impactful communications.

The individual findings as well as some additional insights from staff lead to the development of the objectives and tactics, which were developed to respond to current gaps in communication and prepare for the future of communications in the City.

The timeline for implementation of new tactics will be based on a number of criteria, including, but not limited to: complexity, resources, funding and timeliness. Timelines may change due to changes in City priorities and updates to technology.

These Strategic Focus Areas, Goals, Objectives and Tactics will address City Council’s direction to develop a Plan by expanding the scope, reach and effectiveness of communications while increasing transparency and strengthening levels of civic engagement. This Plan supports the City’s desire to amplify effectiveness of communications with the community as well supports the priorities of the City Council.
STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA

LOCAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

GOAL 1  Make a more well-informed community

OBJECTIVE 1A  Increase awareness of City priorities, projects, programs, initiatives, services, events and meetings
• Develop a more comprehensive public-facing City events calendar to provide the public with a one-stop shop for City-sponsored events and meetings, enhancing engagement and transparency
• Standardize usage of social media event tools (Facebook events, etc.) to provide updated information on a platform that many in the community are already using on a daily basis
• Increase paid social and digital media promotions and advertising where possible to better reach specific audiences and enhance engagement
• Increase communication on social media threads, providing the public with relevant and factual information
• Produce explainer videos on relevant topics to make it easier for the public to understand important initiatives and City finances
• Increase notifications on the City’s homepage to bring more attention to content that is relevant to the general public
• Increase readership of the #GoLongBeach Newsletter to better inform the community of City news, events, programs and job openings
• Increase readership of insideLB, the City’s official blog, to provide the community with information about City programs and initiatives in a way that is relatable
• Increase social media engagement across platforms as a way to expand general reach
• Promote City Council and commission meetings to increase interest and engagement among the community
• Pilot livestreaming of City Council meetings on social media
• Develop a system where the community can easily get the latest information and updates on street work, closures and changes to public services such as street sweeping and trash pick-up
• Develop additional messaging throughout the year on high level City priorities in order to keep the community informed and inspire engagement
• Collaborate with other community organizations and individuals to help promote City information through their social and digital channels in order to increase reach
• Look for opportunities to hire Communications-specific staff for departments in need - specifically in the areas of general public information and social media
• Expand digital communications in the OPAC by hiring a Social Media Specialist who develops content for all of the City’s primary social media pages and provides customer service information via dialogue on social threads
• Hire a Public Affairs Officer for the Health and Human Services Department to tell the many Health-related stories that develop from the work of the department
• Hire a Communications Strategist for the Police Department to develop and implement communication strategies to promote understanding and awareness of department programs and operations
STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA
LOCAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

GOAL 1
Make a more well-informed community

OBJECTIVE 1B
Create more equitable and accessible opportunities for the public
• Increase opportunities for Language Access, including American Sign Language (ASL) at meetings and events to continue to create a more inclusive environment for the entire community
• Further develop and enhance Citywide standards for Language Access opportunities on brochures and collateral
• Actively provide communications resources to communities that have a high language access need
• Establish best practices and guidance on ADA and language access needs for communications to keep this top of mind
• Provide captioning, and/or ASL, on more City videos to expand the effectiveness of video content for all
• Create simple FAQs to decode commonly used terms in order for residents to better understand City Council and commission meetings
• Consider transportation opportunities for all meetings and events so that more community members have the opportunity to more easily participate
• Provide notifications about City engagement opportunities (surveys and meetings where we are asking for feedback) in English, Spanish, Khmer and Tagalog; Provide feedback in-language
STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA

LOCAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

**GOAL 2** Make a more civically-engaged community

**OBJECTIVE 2A** Enhance opportunities for civic engagement
• Develop a community engagement calendar that provides information about meetings where the City is specifically asking for community input
• Expand social media livestreaming opportunities so that community members can engage in the moment without being at the event or meeting in person
• Produce social media or telephone town halls on priority topics so the community can more easily engage without have to attend at a particular location
• Implement a one-number phone system to ease the burden on community members trying to access information from the City
• Overhaul the Go Long Beach App with more robust Customer Relationship Management system back-end system and better user interface for a more transparent process
• Increase pop-ups and tabling at City and community events to provide information to community members where they are already congregating
• Increase pop-ups and tabling at parks and libraries to provide information to community members where they are already congregating
• Develop a Citywide neighborhood engagement playbook to provide various best practices on face-to face engagement opportunities depending on the type of engagement needed
• Issue more surveys that are followed up with results and City actions in order to get more community insights and to create a more transparent process
STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

GOAL 3 Make a more well-informed and empowered staff

OBJECTIVE 3A Better communicate Citywide happenings with City staff
• Provide communications information at New Employee Orientation in order to get more employees engaged from day one
• Develop a newsletter from the City Manager to staff to provide staff and elected offices with a sampling of the many different projects, programs and initiatives happening across the City
• Enhance the City intranet by keeping content more up-to-date and organized
• Provide opportunities for staff without email to receive hard copies of newsletters so that they can be as engaged and up-to-date with information as staff who are connected digitally
• Provide more information in a variety of ways to staff regarding employee benefits, career development, and City goals, initiatives and programs
• Provide staff, through newsletters and the intranet, an opportunity to easily learn more about other departments and job functions Citywide in order to provide the community with better guidance on finding the information they are looking for
• Develop lunch-and-learn opportunities for staff as a casual way to provide engaging information in-person
• Conduct employee town halls to provide information to a larger group of employees through presentations
GOAL 3  
Make a more well-informed and empowered staff

OBJECTIVE 3B  
Enhance internal processes among cross-departmental Communications staff
• Develop standard timeframes for release of information internally and to the public to provide enough lead time to the public (memos, alerts, press releases, social media, flyers, etc.)
• Develop a more efficient way to alert elected offices of City community events and meetings
• Standardize the City’s survey platform and make non-sensitive surveys available to all departments in order to inform the work of all departments
• Develop and regularly update a Communications section on the City intranet as an easy one stop shop for employees needing communications support
• Implement a major update to communications handbook
GOAL 3  Make a more well-informed and empowered staff

OBJECTIVE 3C  Enhance internal processes to more effectively communicate with the news media
• Create a more streamlined process for press releases in order to get the information to the public in a more timely manner
• Develop more instruments of media communications other than press releases to better engage the media depending on the news topic
• Better curate and update media lists (writers per focus area, industry publications and magazines) in order to gain more effective coverage of City news
• Engage in more active media pitching to provide the media with even more relevant and in-depth content in order to provide the public with more information
• Create more opportunities for City staff to engage with local and regional media (outside of the news cycle) in order for staff to know who to reach out to depending on the news topic and for the media to have a better understanding of what communicators cover specific subjects in the City and therefore streamlining the process
• Strengthen engagement with media outlets whose audience is more specific or narrow in order to provide relevant information to the communities they speak to
• Provide more media training to City Staff, especially on-camera training, in order to strengthen the content staff is providing the public through media interviews
STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA

BROADENED REACH
BROADENED REACH

GOAL 4
Make Long Beach stand out on a broader stage

OBJECTIVE 4A
Promote the City, on a regional and national stage, as a great place to live, work, visit and invest in

Sourced From
The New York Times

After Years of Decline, a California Port City Sheds Its Past
About three dozen development projects, valued around $3.5 billion, are underway or in the pipeline in Long Beach.

The port city of Long Beach, Calif., has long struggled to revive its downtown core, which steadily deteriorated as the Navy pared down and eventually closed its decades-old operations there by the late ’90s, with military contractors following.

The once-active naval community, where ships were regularly serviced and docked, became a place that, not too long ago, fewer people cared to visit, especially after dark.

“Downtown was really a no-go zone during nighttime,” said Richard Talbot, a market researcher who was hired in 2002 to help create a revitalization plan for the city’s retail district, centered on its main thoroughfare, Pine Avenue. It would be one of several plans, studies and updates commissioned in recent years.

“There were many attractive Art Deco buildings, but derelict,” Mr. Talbot recalled. “Business people didn’t want to go downtown. There was homelessness. There were drug deals on many corners.”

Today, on some of those same corners, bulldozers and construction crews work almost nonstop to transform Long Beach’s 1.3-square-mile downtown and outlying areas into a more vibrant urban center. Roughly three dozen projects, valued at around $3.5 billion, are underway or in the pipeline in one of the country’s largest continuing downtown redevelopments.

“The downtown is being reborn and reimagined,” Robert Garcia, the mayor of Long Beach since 2014, said. “A lot of people view Long Beach as the kid sister to Los Angeles. It’s finally stepping into the national stage, and I’m really excited about the transformation.”
TACTICS

• Pitch more regional and national media regarding City priorities and initiatives as they align with more far-ranging topics that the general larger population is interested in
• Engage with influencers and celebrities to promote the City in various ways in order to expand reach within the City and beyond
• Focus on industry-specific media to pitch advancements in the City around topics such as economic development, technology and tourism
• Create InsideLB listicles, designed for easy and wide sharing, to highlight Long Beach livability
• Pitch travel and lifestyle writers around popular Long Beach events, such as Beach Streets
GOAL 5 Make a larger team of emergency and crisis communicators

OBJECTIVE 5A Increase staff readiness regarding crisis and emergency communication
CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

GOAL 5
OBJECTIVE 5A

TACTICS

- Develop a City Crisis Communications Plan in order to have a documented standard for communications in case of a crisis, and to have a guide from which to train from.
- Develop a crisis communications Joint Information Team to be more prepared in times of crisis.
- Develop a Mass Notification Plan in order to have a documented process for which to refer to in order to reach a large audience about emergency-related topics.
- Increase hands-on training exercises in emergency and crisis communications in order to have a strong team of crisis communicators.
- Increase training opportunities in the Incident Command System, Federal Emergency Management Agency and National Incident Management System practices so that staff is up-to-date on best practices.
- Provide more on-camera training for staff that provides public information to the media, especially in times of emergency and crisis.
STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA
BRANDING

GOAL 6 Make a stronger City brand

OBJECTIVE 6A Elevate the City’s brand
• Continue to update and expand City’s Brand Style Guide
• Create a Digital/Social Media Style Guide
• Continue to update department logos in accordance with City brand
• Provide branded design tools to City staff to maintain the brand at different skill levels
The Chief Public Affairs Officer (Chief PAO) will continue to meet regularly with the Public Affairs and Communications team as well as Citywide communications staff to discuss progress on goals, objectives and tactics. The team will conduct future surveys and interviews and make adjustments as needed, especially as new technologies or shifts in communications tactics come into play. The Chief PAO will update the City Manager on a regular basis.
Because there is no one-size-fits-all approach to reaching audiences and for developing initiatives, or project-based communications plans, the City has developed a number of communications documents, including this one, to use as tools and guides to develop plans that are appropriate to the size, scope and audience of any specific project. The key documents include:

- Strategic Communications Plan (Finalized March 2020)
- Community Engagement Playbook (finalized February 2020)
- Communications Handbook (major update coming summer 2020)
- Social Media Best Practices One-Sheets
- Style Guide

All of these documents either are, or will be upon completion, available in one section of the City intranet dedicated to communications: Under Employee Services, Communication and Branding section. The OPAC developed, and continues to expand, this intranet hub in order to provide a one-stop-shop for any employees that needs easy access to communications tools. The need for a hub like this became apparent during the research phase of the Strategic Communications Plan.

The following are examples of how these documents can be pulled from in order to develop initiatives- or project-based communications plans, whether it needs to be scaled for a small event, medium-sized project or large Citywide initiative. These examples are simply that, examples, and not the only way to develop plans.
These events require the fewest resources, and typically require less coordination with outside agencies. Small events may not have broad appeal to a citywide audience, so appropriate outreach is critical. The preparation timeline for these events may need to be more abbreviated based on need.

- Secure date, time and location
- Create invite
- Complete LBTV Event Intake Form
- Provide notice to the Office of Public Affairs & Communication (OPAC)
- Notify appropriate Council Districts
- Post event on City Calendar
- Promote on social media
- Conduct outreach to nearby neighborhood associations and stakeholders
- Consider Council Office interest and request key stakeholder and groups through the OPAC
- Prepare informational materials
  - Boards
  - Contact information
  - FAQs
  - Presentation
- Ensure event accessibility
  - Language Access Program compliance
  - ADA compliance
- Secure refreshments
  - Ensure compliance with the City’s Expanded Polystyrene Ban
- Provide contact information for follow-up
MEDIUM EVENT

These events require a higher level of coordination and a longer preparatory timeline. While the subject matter may not be of interest to all city residents and stakeholders, it’s important to share the event details with relevant Council offices and the community at large.

- Secure date, time and location
  - Consider attendee size when selecting the event venue
- Create invite, flyer or save the date
  - Consider various social media platforms graphic dimensions
- Provide notice and event materials to the Office of Public Affairs & Communication (OPAC)
  - Event date, time and location when confirmed
  - Media Advisory to OPAC one week before event
  - Briefing Materials two weeks before event
  - Public Notice to OPAC two weeks before event
  - Press Release to OPAC three to four weeks before event
- Complete LBTV Event Intake Form
- Request City Photographer support
- Post event on City Calendar
- Promote on Social Media
  - Create Facebook event and add the City’s main Facebook account as co-host
- Notify appropriate Council Districts
  - Request key stakeholder and groups through the OPAC
- Conduct outreach to nearby Community Associations
- Consider partner expectations
  - Department
  - Mayor’s Office
  - Council Offices
  - Outside Agencies
- Prepare event and informational materials
  - Briefing materials (run of show, talking points, social media run down)
  - Boards
  - Contact information
  - FAQs
  - Presentation
- Ensure event accessibility
  - Language Access Program compliance
  - ADA compliance
- Secure refreshments
  - Ensure compliance with the City’s Expanded Polystyrene Ban
- Provide contact information for follow-up
Events related to projects, programs or initiatives with Citywide interest or part of a multi-year process should be noticed widely. These events will require a greater amount of preparation and can include many partners.

- Confirm budget
- Secure date, time and location
  - Consider attendee size when selecting the event venue
- Create invite, flyer or save the date
  - Consider various social media platforms graphic dimensions
- Provide notice and event materials to the Office of Public Affairs & Communication (OPAC)
  - Event date, time and location when confirmed
  - Media Advisory and Press Kit to OPAC one week before event
  - Briefing Materials two weeks before event
  - Public Notice to OPAC two weeks before event
  - Press Release to OPAC three to four weeks before event
  - To/For/From Memo four weeks before event to the Office of the City Manager
- Complete LBTV Event Intake Form
- Request City Photographer support
- Post event on City Calendar
- Consider #GoLongBeach and Council District email newsletter promotion
- Request use of the City’s electronic billboards for event promotion
- Promote on Social Media
  - Create Facebook event and add the City’s main Facebook account as co-host
  - Notify appropriate Council Districts
  - Request key stakeholders and groups through the OPAC
- Consider partner expectations
  - Department
  - Council Offices
  - Mayor’s Office
  - Outside Agencies
- Hold walkthrough with all appropriate partners one week prior to the event
- Prepare event and informational materials
  - Briefing materials (run of show, talking points, social media run down, project background)
  - Boards
  - Contact information
  - FAQs
  - Presentation
- Ensure event accessibility
  - Language Access Program compliance
  - ADA compliance
- Secure refreshments
  - Ensure compliance with the City’s Expanded Polystyrene Ban
- Provide contact information for follow-up
Community Engagement Playbook
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The City of Long Beach is committed to building lasting relationships with all members of our community through intentional outreach. Digital communications, including social media and email, leads the way in efficiency and reach. However, certain projects require, and benefit from, additional in-person communication and engagement if they are to be effective and supported. It is important to think about what type of outreach and engagement is needed before you begin any outreach process. There are three levels of engagement for City projects: Inform, Consult and Collaborate.
Questions to determine whether (and at what level) to engage:

It is important to make sure that decision-makers have agreed on the need for engagement, the appropriate level of engagement, and how feedback will be used. If the appropriate decision makers are not on board, input may be overlooked or used in a different way than has been communicated to those involved. Because no one wants their time wasted, this can damage public trust more than failing to engage in the first place.

1. What is the initiative/program/project you need to engage around?
   - Does everyone involved internally (elected, staff, commission, etc.) have a shared understanding of the scope and definition of the issue at hand?

2. Who makes the final decision?
   - Is this a staff decision?
   - Subject to advisory body review?
   - Will City Council ultimately receive the item for action?

3. What type of community interaction is desired?
   - You may need to inform residents about a decision that has already been made. Most informing can be done through traditional communication efforts, but occasionally an item may more deeply impact particular residents (i.e., infrastructure project on Long Beach Boulevard) or may require some level of action on the part of residents (i.e., mandatory water restrictions during a drought). These may require another layer of engagement.
   - You may need to consult the community or stakeholder group members over proposed changes or new initiatives (i.e., historical design guidelines; new library hours). That requires listening to the views of the public and providing feedback on how their input influenced the project or decision.
   - You may need to collaborate with the community to develop ideas, plans or programs on large scale future items (i.e., land use and housing decisions, city budget).

4. Who needs to be informed?
   This question is critical and calls for some consideration. The focus of engagement is to involve the community. In Long Beach, that community has many faces: residents at large (along with individual neighborhoods); interest groups ranging from older adults to business and arts groups to educators and youth. Some issues may draw crowds from across the city and other communities; others may appeal to a limited number of residents. It is imperative to reach out to anyone who may want to be involved, especially if they are directly affected by a decision (i.e. a road closure may not be a citywide issue, but it is important to those who frequent the road in question). Determining the outreach audience calls for thought, some digging and your own good judgment.
5 When does the outreach need to happen?

- The City’s review process may have several steps and take some time to unfold. Give the community adequate time to be informed, educated, and involved. No one likes to be caught unprepared on short notice. Start early and keep in touch. If there is a time-limit to implementation (e.g., a state mandate with a narrow adoption timeline), communicate this clearly to residents, and tailor the scope of engagement appropriately. Consider whether there may be future opportunities for deeper engagement.

*Inform residents of public outreach opportunities at least two weeks prior to the date of the event.

6 What needs to be done?

- This guide outlines a series of recommended outreach methods to use as reference for best practices on engaging your item.
- These methods are not the end all be all, and some sensitive or unique populations may require modified outreach methods.

7 What does success look like?

- The purpose of each process will guide how you define success, whether that is more people attending your community outreach event, increasing diversity of feedback, introducing new ideas or keeping in touch with residents and stakeholders. Setting appropriate goals will provide a benchmark for future efforts.
- Note what worked, what didn’t and any valuable feedback from the public. Consider issuing a survey to assess public satisfaction with outreach efforts following engagement events.

The development of the following tools and best practices were facilitated through the analysis of community engagement best practices and current citywide engagement efforts.
Determine Level of Engagement

It’s not easy to immediately determine the communication/outreach plan needed for individual projects, services and other items that make their way through the City decision-making process. Who needs to know? How do we tell them? This guide will help you better understand when to engage, the most appropriate process, and provide best practices for outreach.

Ongoing innovation and evaluation are a necessary part of a culture of engagement, so this toolkit is intended to guide thinking, not define it. Outreach methods will depend on a number of factors, including a budget, scope, staff resources, implementation timeline, etc., and one size will not fit all situations.

Community Engagement Spectrum

When planning your community engagement strategies, determine the level of engagement you are seeking from the community using the following spectrum.

- One-way communication – outreach to the community.
- Provide public with balanced and objective project/issue information to increase awareness and/or understanding of problems, alternatives and solutions.
- Keep community informed on project updates, changes, regulatory constraints and progress through the lifecycle of the project.

**Example:** New list of recyclable items accepted in refuse bins

**Inform**

- Get ideas on several options and understanding of the community’s concerns.
- Solicit and record public feedback on project or other issue proposal.
- Keep community informed, listen to views and provide feedback on how the input influenced the project and/or decisions.

**Example:** Provide a menu of options for Short-Term Rental Regulations

**Consult**

- Interactive process that incorporates recommendations as much as possible.
- Seek community input in partnership with stakeholders.
- Share how concerns/views were reflected in analyses or solutions and designs developed; share how input influenced the final decision or project.

**Example:** Co-creation of specific plans (e.g. UPLAN, CAAP)
BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENTS

The following community outreach event methods are meant to expand involvement opportunities for community members by giving them a chance to speak directly to an issue or have direct involvement in the decision-making process. Neighborhood meetings, workshops, open houses, pop-ups and virtual town halls should encourage participation, and every effort should be made to make the public feel welcome and heard.

- Ensure best efforts are made to accommodate accessibility requests, including translation, interpretation or accessibility technology.
- All community events should be preceded by outreach noted in the “Inform” section of the outreach tools matrix. A well-attended event provides the opportunity for greater reach in the community.
- Incorporating outreach tools from the “Supplemental” column of your matrix will attract a larger audience which results in greater representation and feedback.
- Identify all Council offices, community members, groups and organizations that will be impacted by or have an interest in your project.
  - Refer to the Long Beach Neighborhood Groups List for neighborhood associations in proximity to the project, program or initiative.
  - By request, the Office of Public Affairs & Communications can collect lists of key stakeholders and groups from relevant City Council offices.
- For activities that have citywide impacts consider holding multiple engagement opportunities throughout the City.
- Advertising community events well ahead of their date with ongoing reminders is essential.
- Consider assistance to participate in meetings, such as options for child care, food and transportation (including free shuttle or bus service) or indicate nearest transit stops and route options.
- Plan for enough space to accommodate the audience. Visit the Long Beach Parks, Recreation and Marine Facility Reservations page for a list of potential meeting space venues.
- If a resident wants to provide input or feedback outside of the particular outreach event, make key project contact information available.
- Close the feedback loop. Create a plan for collecting and reporting out about community engagement efforts.
- Host a debrief meeting with appropriate members to analyze all aspects of your event to help understand what worked and could be changed or improved for future engagement activities.
OUTREACH TOOLS

Expectation

- Official notice
- E-notification
- Department website posting (news item or dedicated project page)
- Calendar posting
- Applicable advisory bodies
- Appropriate community groups and liaisons
- Social media event page (Create through Department or City accounts)

Supplemental

- Social Media (on-going event and day of promotion)
- Utility billing insert – flyer
- #GoLongBeach newsletter
- Council district email newsletters
- Signage
- Paid media
- Informational materials (available digitally)
- City website home page
- Press Release or Media Advisory
- Neighborhood meetings

Inform

Expectation

- All of the “Inform” expectations listed above
- Hearing (if legally required)
- Social media

Supplemental

- The above, plus
- Transit messaging (shelters and bus cards)
- Online feedback (comment forms, email boxes, surveys/polls)
- Electronic Billboards
- Mailed survey

Consult

Expectation

- All of the “Inform” and “Consult” expectations listed above
- Community Outreach Event (workshop, open house, neighborhood meeting, etc.)

Supplemental

- Utilities billing insert – survey
- #GoLongBeach newsletter
- Neighborhood, civic association, and Council District newsletters
- Electronic billboards
- Transit messaging
- Mailed survey
- Telephone survey

Collaborate

Supplemental

- Telephone survey
- Study session
- Special events with opportunities for interaction
- Focus group
- Pop-up
- Open house
- Virtual town hall

- Council district email newsletters
- Signage
- Paid media
- Informational materials (available digitally)
- City website home page
- Press Release or Media Advisory
- Neighborhood meetings
Neighborhood meetings are similar to workshops in that they involve staff presentation and public discussion. Neighborhood meetings mean staff bring their presentations directly to their intended audience, which could include a stakeholder group or a specific neighborhood.

- **When do I have a neighborhood meeting?**
  
  Neighborhood meetings should occur early in the planning process, so feedback can be incorporated down the line. Staff should schedule a neighborhood meeting during hours when most people in the affected group will be available, typically after-work hours.

- **What should be included?**
  
  Neighborhood meetings benefit from creativity and content/style directed at the audience. Neighborhood meetings should include equal parts staff presentation and public discussion. Always let the public know what happens next in the process, so that they understand what will happen with their feedback. Comment cards should also be provided for people who do not feel comfortable speaking up.

  **Essentials checklist:**

  - Space large enough to comfortably accommodate the expected audience
    (consider seating capacity as well)
  - Water; Other refreshments and snacks are optional
    - Be sure to reference the single-use disposable compliant products guide
    - For compliant businesses refer to the Foam Free Business List
  - Sign-in sheets for names, email addresses or phone numbers and physical addresses
    (when applicable) so staff can follow up with attendees
  - Visual or informational aid(s) of some sort to be included in the presentation
    (PowerPoint, video, photos, plans, maps, graphics, etc.)
  - Large format paper and thick pens for notes that the public can see
  - Comment cards
  - Name tags for city staff
  - Contact information
  - "What’s Next" explanation
An Open House typically features various informational stations rather than a formal presentation. The public is encouraged to engage in open dialogue with the facilitator at each station, including asking questions and providing feedback. Notes can be taken on large format paper, so people can see their comments have been noted.

• **When do I hold an Open House?**

   An Open House should be held in the middle of the planning process once drafts and conceptual plans are available. Open Houses should take place during hours where most of the public/affected audience will be able to participate, typically after-work hours and during the weekend.

• **What should be included?**

   The public should have a clear understanding of the distinction between an open house and workshop ahead of the event. Stations should be clearly labeled, feature visual representations or aids, and incorporate a place where comments can be written down and seen by everyone. Staff should also consider comment cards, as some people are more comfortable speaking up than others. Be sure to provide appropriate contact information so people can follow up.

### Essentials checklist:

- [ ] Space large enough to comfortably accommodate the expected audience (consider seating capacity as well)
- [ ] Water; Other refreshments and snacks are optional
  - Be sure to reference the single-use disposable compliant products guide
  - For compliant businesses refer to the Foam Free Business List
- [ ] Sign-in sheets for names, email addresses or phone numbers and physical addresses (when applicable) so staff can follow up with attendees
- [ ] Visual or informational aid(s) of some sort to be included in the presentation (PowerPoint, video, photos, plans, maps, graphics, etc.)
- [ ] Large format paper and thick pens for notes that the public can see
- [ ] Facilitators for all
- [ ] Comment cards
- [ ] Name tags for city staff
- [ ] Contact information
- [ ] "What’s Next" explanation
Workshops allow the public to hear a presentation on a particular item from city staff or consultants, then work in smaller groups to develop ideas and alternatives that directly affect the planning process. They can be designed to exchange information; to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges for an idea or project; to obtain ideas and innovative thinking for a way forward for a project; or they can be specifically geared towards prioritization and the production of an action plan. Following small group discussion, the groups can reconvene to share their ideas with the larger group, and workshop outcomes are then passed on to decision-makers. Workshops should include an even balance of staff presentation and group discussion.

- **When do I have a workshop?**

  Workshops are an effective tool for collaboration and can take place early in the planning process so feedback can be incorporated down the line or in the middle of the process to focus community engagement on a specific issue. To keep group discussion focused, workshops should not take place until a project has a determined set of options or ideas to explore.

  Workshops are a useful method for encouraging discussion among those who may feel less confident in a larger group. Those often excluded from a wider engagement exercise can be identified and invited to attend this type of event.

- **What should be included?**

  Discussion groups should represent various parts of a plan where the public has an opportunity to weigh in on options or develop alternatives and solutions. Groups should be facilitated by city staff or consultants, and these facilitators should lead and promote public discussion. Always let the public know what happens next in the process, so that they understand what will happen with their feedback. Be sure to provide appropriate contact information so people can follow up.

  **Essentials checklist:**

  - [ ] Space large enough to comfortably accommodate the expected audience (consider seating capacity as well)
  - [ ] Water; Other refreshments and snacks are optional
    - [ ] Be sure to reference the single-use disposable compliant products guide
    - [ ] For compliant businesses refer to the Foam Free Business List
  - [ ] Sign-in sheets for names, email addresses or phone numbers and physical addresses (when applicable) so staff can follow up with attendees
  - [ ] Visual or informational aid(s) of some sort to be included in the presentation (PowerPoint, video, photos, plans, maps, graphics, etc.)
  - [ ] Large format paper and thick pens for notes that the public can see
  - [ ] Facilitators for all small group discussions
  - [ ] Comment cards
  - [ ] Name tags for city staff
  - [ ] Contact information
  - [ ] “What’s Next” explanation
**POP-UPS**

*Pop-Ups* can add an element of fun to public engagement and can take advantage of pre-existing opportunities to drive attendance. For example, if you are having a conversation around open space, you may consider a pop-up at a popular trail or park, or you could have a pop-up near a soccer field if the issue on the table relates to youth services or other family-focused issues. You might also consider partnering with concert nights, farmers markets or other community events where large numbers of the community gather to see if you can hold a pop-up booth.

- **When do I hold a Pop-Up?**

  Pop-Ups can be valuable ways of soliciting informed feedback as well as providing opportunities for residents to identify priorities. They do not lend themselves as well to lengthy deliberation or to having residents engage with trade-offs of various plan options and choices. As such they should be held near the beginning of a process as plans are being developed. They should include information about further opportunities to engage as the process is developed, including community workshops, open houses, etc.

- **What should be included?**

  Pop-Ups should include some visual element that will attract people’s curiosity and encourage them to engage. Consider how you might incorporate large scale photographs or other intriguing visual graphics. Create an inviting space to sit or even to play. Use infographics and practice simple, time-conscious explanations. Provide easy and quick opportunities for feedback (i.e., providing colored stickers to put on a poster to identify priorities, sorting marbles into bins to visualize limited resources around a budget discussion, etc.). Plan on being able to engage and receive some feedback in 8 minutes or less.

**Essentials checklist:**

- Space large enough to comfortably accommodate the expected audience (consider seating capacity as well)
- Water; Other refreshments and snacks are optional
  - Be sure to reference the single-use disposable compliant products guide
  - For compliant businesses refer to the Foam Free Business List
- Sign-in sheets for names, email addresses or phone numbers and physical addresses (when applicable) so staff can follow up with attendees
- Visual or informational aid(s) of some sort to be included in the presentation (PowerPoint, video, photos, plans, maps, graphics, etc.)
- Large format paper and thick pens for notes that the public can see
- Comment cards
- Name tags for city staff
- Contact information
- “What’s Next” explanation
ACCESSIBILITY FOR ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

ADA

It is the policy of the City of Long Beach that all City-sponsored public meetings, programs, services, activities and events are physically and programmatically accessible to individuals with disabilities in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADA). All City departments, commissions, advisory committees, and councils shall ensure that their meetings are accessible to people with disabilities. This includes the facility, programs and services.

Information must also be as clear and understandable to people with disabilities as it is for people without disabilities, including program participants, members of the public and their companions.

Prior to selecting a meeting location for an engagement event, a site visit to the venue should be conducted to determine whether barriers to physical access exist. The site visit should consider barriers to those with a wide range of disabilities in the following areas:

- Availability of accessible parking, shuttles and public transportation
- Entrances and interior doorways – width, ramps, automatic door openers, etc.
- Signage indicating location of accessible bathrooms, entrances, etc.
- Corridors, doorways, and aisles – width for wheelchair access, etc.
- Elevators – easy access and adequate braille signage
- Meeting rooms that allow for extra room capacity and table space to accommodate wheelchairs and service animals, including banquet, reception or meal areas
- Ensure there is space allocated for a clear line of sight to a sign language interpreter or to where a screen may be utilized for showing real-time captions, accessible restrooms and relief area for service animals.

View the full ADA Accessibility Event Checklist
For questions regarding ADA Accessibility or to submit a request, email: Heather.VanWijk@longbeach.gov

Language Access

The City recognizes that removing language barriers is critical to achieving equitable access to available City services. The Language Access Policy (LAP) empowers residents to fully participate in their communities. Below are event best practices to ensure greater understandable access to services, programs, and activities for limited English language proficiency individuals. For questions regarding LAP or to submit a request, email: LanguageAccess@longbeach.gov

Prior to Event

- Translate event promotional materials, signage, handouts and materials into LAP languages
- All promotional materials (including social media) should state that interpretation will be available, and which languages will be translated
- Request Interpretation from LAP. Schedule interpreters as far in advance as possible
- Coordinate with LAP staff to pick up interpretation equipment
- Provide materials for interpreters to review in preparation for the meeting or event. (i.e. PowerPoint slides, agendas, handouts, etc.)
- Work with multicultural community partners to help advertise and let community residents know that interpretation will be available at the event
Day of Event

• If possible, have bilingual staff available at registration or check-in to direct participants to where interpretation is available
  • Have all written materials grouped together by language for attendees
• Include a separate interpretation table
  • Placement should be visible and easy to find
  • Signage should be translated into the languages provided
• Provide multilingual welcome and announcement before the start of program to let people know that interpretation is available
• Ask people who received interpretation services about their experience. (Mini-Survey)
• "I Speak" name tags for bilingual staff

Following Event

• Return interpretation equipment to LAP staff
• Follow up with coordinating community partners to see if they have any feedback.

Virtual Town Halls

**Virtual town halls** are an online tool for community engagement. Use of this tool allows those who can’t attend meetings to receive the same information and provide feedback. They can be used as an online alternative or in conjunction with in-person community outreach events like Workshops and Open Houses.

• **When do I use Virtual Town Halls?**

  Virtual Town Halls are encouraged to be used in conjunction with City hosted in-person consultation or collaboration-based community outreach event. Virtual Town Halls have the ability to pose questions in different ways, collect ideas, conduct polls, develop priority lists, comment on maps and more.

• **What should be included?**

  The experience should mirror that of an in-person outreach event and can use many of the same materials. Virtual Town Halls topics can contain graphics, videos and slide presentations (including narration).