



Date: January 31, 2020

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Thomas B. Modica, Acting City Manager 

Subject: **Update on the City Strategic Communications Plan**

At its August 22, 2017 meeting, the City Council requested the City Manager to develop a Neighborhood Engagement and Community Communications Plan. [On January 31, 2018](#), the City Manager's Office provided an update to the City Council announcing that a comprehensive City Strategic Communications Plan (Plan) was being developed, and neighborhood engagement would be a component of the Plan. Further updates regarding the Plan's development were provided on [June 22, 2018](#) and [November 30, 2018](#). On [February 19, 2019](#), the City Council approved the funds to pay for stakeholder research through the Fiscal Year 2019 first departmental and fund budget appropriation adjustments.

The Plan is an important document that provides a framework on how the City of Long Beach (City) will strategically engage the communities it serves by amplifying current efforts and instituting new communications tactics to strengthen levels of community engagement and create more transparency. The most recent version of this 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 Plan has been a major, multi-department, multi-stakeholder effort that has included extensive research and analysis, including:

- 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
- Evaluation of City communications assets

The Plan will focus on local public engagement, employee engagement, crisis communications, communications reach, and branding. The document will be finalized by February 28, 2020, as the firm conducting the Citywide survey work completes their analysis to inform the final plan. However, through the research phase, the City Manager's Office identified several projects to prioritize and start development on ahead of the completion of the final Plan. The following projects are already in development or finalized:

- **Community Engagement Playbook:** This document provides City communications staff with a range of direct in-person engagement activities, or plays, that can be utilized to inform, consult or collaborate with the public, creating

more transparency and public participation. This document creates standards based on best practices and allows for flexibility depending on a project's scope and intended audiences. The playbook will be finalized in the next 30 days.

- **Citywide Events and Meetings Calendar:** This new, upgraded, public-facing calendar will replace the current calendars that reside on the homepage of the City's website. The new calendar has more features, is easy to use, and is visually appealing. Departmental calendars will feed into the 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. Staff will be trained on the new calendar interface in the next 60 days. Implementation of the calendar across departments is scheduled in 90 days.
- **Engagement Calendar:** This new public-facing calendar will only contain public events and meetings that are asking for collaboration with, or feedback from, the public. This calendar will have a subscription feature and make it easier for civically-minded community members to receive information on engagement activities. The development and implementation of this calendar will coincide with the Citywide calendar.
- **Internal Newsletter:** To better inform employees of some of the programs, projects and initiatives happening throughout the City, the Acting City Manager extended his weekly newsletter to staff. The City Manager News is sent out weekly and includes snapshots of current topics and provides links to more information, providing employees an easy way to learn more about what is happening outside of their respective departments. This creates a more informed and empowered workforce. The newsletter is ongoing and has been active since October 2019.
- **Crisis Communications Plan:** With the increased prevalence of natural and man-made crises and emergencies throughout the country, it is more important now than ever that the City is prepared, not only operationally, but also from a communications perspective. The Department of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Communications, with input from the City Manager's Office and the Police and Fire Departments, developed the City's first Citywide Crisis Communications Plan in mid-2019.
- **Health and Human Services Public Affairs Officer:** The Department of Health and Human Services (Health Department) is responsible for a wide array of projects, programs and initiatives that impact the lives of our community members, including the City's number one priority – homelessness. Given this impact, the public would benefit greatly from a full-time communications officer in the Health Department. The communications professional will help inform the public of health-related activities, create more transparency within the Health Department, and promote a well-informed and engaged public. This position was approved through the FY 2020 budget process. The application process is closed and interviews are being scheduled.

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Other projects that are underway, and are identified in the 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 projects will hit major milestones in the 2020 calendar year.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Chief Public Affairs Officer Kevin Lee at (562) 570-6811.

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