




Date: November 30, 2018

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Patrick H. West, City Manager 

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

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At its August 22, 2017 meeting, the City Council requested the City Manager develop a *Neighborhood Engagement and Community Communications Plan* (Plan). On [January 31, 2018](#) and [June 22, 2018](#), the City Manager's Office provided updates to the Mayor and City Council announcing the Plan was under development.

The development of a strategic communications plan is a major, multi-department, multi-stakeholder effort. It encompasses extensive research and analysis from City department communications staff, all City employees, and externally from residents and community/neighborhood groups. Staff is currently accepting proposals from consulting firms to conduct research on our community's perception and desires for communications from the City.

This research will determine and help guide decision-making for future communications efforts and will be a major component of the Plan. Using both qualitative and quantitative data, the firm will evaluate the City's current external communications efforts through various research methods, including, but not limited to:

- Interviews with residents, community leaders, business representatives and news media
- Citywide community communications survey
- Evaluation of City public outreach efforts
- Evaluation of City marketing collateral, digital communications and social media to align with industry and national best practices

This research, including a thorough review and analysis, will be used to draft a series of recommendations at the conclusion of the study.

Specific objectives of the research include:

- Analysis of the City's existing communications channels, materials, methods and programs used to inform and educate residents, local businesses, the media, and other stakeholders
- Assess residents' preference for sources of information about City government, including demographic breakdowns

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- Assess the perception of the City's communications efforts among a variety of constituencies
- Identify opportunities to increase the effectiveness of communications processes and tools
- Recommend specific action steps that will enhance the City's future public communications success
- Recommend efficiencies in delivering multi-departmental efforts to the public, using collaborative strategies, tools and tactics.

While the Plan is being developed, Public Affairs staff has, and will continue to, routinely meet with department communications staff to provide updates on communications best practices and strategies. Staff is also in the development of multiple companion pieces to the Plan that detail communications style/branding, processes, and resources.

Since the June 22<sup>nd</sup> memorandum was provided to the Mayor and City Council, the following Plan initiatives have been completed or are underway:

- Developed and finalized a project scope of work for the community/neighborhood portion of the plan;
- Commenced the selection process for an external vendor to conduct data collection and analysis and to author a report for the neighborhood engagement portion of the *Plan*.
- Briefed Department Directors, City communications staff, and Mayor and Council staff on the *Plan's* proposed content and timing;
- Held multiple information and data gathering interviews with City communications staff; and,
- Developed and prepared to launch an all-employee communications survey to gauge employee sentiment on the City's internal and external communications channels.

### **Next Steps:**

Comprehensive data collection, both internal (employee) and external (resident/neighbor), will be crucial to the process, stakeholder buy-in, and eventual implementation of the Plan. In the first and second quarters of FY 19, data collection and analysis will continue. A draft Plan is tentatively scheduled to be completed in the third quarter of FY 19. The total cost of the Plan is anticipated to be \$75,000, staff is currently identifying resources.

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If you have any questions regarding the Plan, please contact Kevin Lee, Public Affairs Officer, at (562) 570-6811 or [kevin.lee@longbeach.gov](mailto:kevin.lee@longbeach.gov).

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