



## **Communication Working Group Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, July 28, 2026 at 3:30 PM**

**Jordan Conference Room, Town Hall**

- 1. Review and discussion of current policy / guidance documents**
  - A. Communications Strategy 2010**
  - B. Website Operating Guidelines 2009**
  - C. Pubic Communications Coordinator Job Description**
  - D. Webmaster Job Description 2018**
- 2. Review and discussion of neighboring towns' policies**
  - A. South Portland**
  - B. Scarborough**
- 3. Goals and strategies**
- 4. Plan agenda for next meeting**
- 5. Adjourn**

**Adopted: July 12, 2010**

*The Town Council, seeking to enhance more effective citizen participation in local government, will implement a communications strategy to more effectively provide information to citizens on municipal services and on local issues.*

**Town of Cape Elizabeth, Maine  
Communications Strategy  
July 2010**

This communications strategy, adopted by the Cape Elizabeth Town Council on July 12, 2010 is intended to serve as a springboard for the local government to improve effective communication with citizens on municipal services and on local issues. It also provides specific recommendations on how the local government could enhance communications with other parties including the media.

**Desired Outcomes**

The desired outcomes of this strategy are as follows:

- Citizens will know where to find information on their local government and will be able to complete routine transactions with the government 24/7.
- Meeting rooms and meeting procedures will enhance public engagement.
- Citizens will have opportunities to impact local decision making.
- Municipal information, both online and in print, will have a clearly recognized identity.
- Municipal officials and staff will understand opportunities to disseminate information of interest to citizens and other parties.

**I. Citizens Finding Information**



A primary source of official information for citizens of Cape Elizabeth is [www.capeelizabeth.com](http://www.capeelizabeth.com). It received 83,000 visits in March 2010 and nearly 300,000 page views. The website is utilized by the press to access information written by our webmaster and it is a resource for staff and others for searchable reference material on the Town. It has been recognized as one of the best municipal websites in Maine.

The website is staffed by a part-time webmaster who undertakes all of the website design, 99% of the website posting and writes nearly all of the news stories on the homepage. The FY 2011 stipend for the position is \$22,000 which is an exceptional value for the time and talent devoted to the site.

The website guidelines provide: *The Town of Cape Elizabeth homepage is not intended to be a forum for expressive activity by members of the public or by government officials; instead it should provide neutral information and data and links which do not espouse specific views.*

#### **A. Website Recommendations**

1. The website should remain as the primary source of official municipal information, both current and historical. It should be neutral in focus, should archive agendas, minutes and related documents of official meetings, streaming video of taped meetings, and the website should continue to be updated on a daily basis.
2. The website will not serve as a vehicle for commenting on municipal issues and services. The website shall contain links to easily enable e-mails to municipal officials.
3. Other websites provided by the Town of Cape Elizabeth such as the sites for Portland Head Light and the Thomas Memorial Library shall contain numerous prominent links to [www.capeelizabeth.com](http://www.capeelizabeth.com). The main website will contain links to other websites maintained by the Town.
4. The website should be reorganized to better categorize information with drop down menus and shall utilize more color and more video.
5. Municipally produced short videos describing local services or outlining municipal issues should be available on the website and in social media.
6. The staff shall advertise the availability of RSS feeds as an option for citizens to receive website updates.

#### **B. Other Opportunities for Citizens to Find Information**

1. The Town of Cape Elizabeth should regularly issue press releases regarding municipal issues and activities. Press releases should be sent to print media, radio, television and online content providers.
2. The Town Manager shall provide several updates each month on municipal activities that may be of interest to the public. These shall be sent to the same list as press releases.

3. The Town should consider the placement of an electronic message sign on town property at the recycling center to provide important official messages.
4. CETV should continue to broadcast regular meetings of the Town Council, School Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. Programming on CETV shall be expanded to include programs focusing on the activities of municipal departments.
5. The tax bill should contain an insert each time that outlines current municipal information.
6. The Town Council shall annually invite public input on citizen priorities prior to the annual goal setting process.
7. The Town Council will seek opportunities to speak to local groups on topics of interest to citizens.

## **II. Meeting Rooms and Meeting Procedures Should Enable Public Engagement**

The three major meeting rooms at the Town Hall need updating. The Town Council chamber has poor acoustics, and the seating is crowded for many meetings. The Council dais takes up more than half of the room with its ramp, its angle, and the need to have space between its elevated position and the first row of seating.

The William H. Jordan Conference Room is often overcrowded, is not easy to find for new visitors and has heating challenges. Its accessibility through a wheel chair lift does not meet current standards.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room near the ACP office also has little room for the public and is difficult to reach.

### **A. Meeting Space**

A study should be undertaken to see if meeting spaces at the Town Hall could be changed to add public seating, to improve sound projection, and to enhance the opportunity for public engagement at meetings. As part of this study, surplus space at the Cape Elizabeth Police Department should be reviewed to potentially free up additional space for meetings at the Town Hall.

### **B. Participation at Meetings**

All Town Council meetings and meetings of advisory boards and commissions should provide an opportunity for members of the public to speak. Each board shall develop procedural rules in accordance with Maine law that enable this participation to occur while still ensuring there is an opportunity for the board to conduct its deliberations.

### **III. Citizens will Have Opportunities to Impact Local Decision Making**

- A. Except for emergency special meetings, at least 72 hours notice of any municipal meeting shall be provided. The notice shall include a copy of the agenda for the meeting posted on the calendar section of the municipal website.
- B. The Town should continue to expand the online availability of documents related to agenda items.
- C. Every agenda shall contain a brief summary of the procedures for public participation at a meeting.
- D. The procedural rules for each board and commission shall be posted on the website.
- E. The Town will continue to provide an opportunity to e-mail boards and commissions directly via the municipal website.

### **IV. Municipal Information, Both Online and in Print, Will Have a Clearly Recognized Identity.**

The Town does not have a uniform logo or mark identifying itself. There are different versions of the Town seal and municipal departments have developed their own identity marks.

- A. It is recommended that the Town update its Town logo to a single identifying mark for all municipal departments. This mark or logo should be created utilizing volunteer talent within the community.
- B. The new mark shall be utilized on municipal vehicles, on letterheads, on agendas, on municipal publications, on the website and on signage when appropriate.
- C. The new mark shall convey a positive image and identity for the Town of Cape Elizabeth.

**V. Communications Training**

- A. The Town Council will include as part of its own orientation process and as part of the training process for boards and commissions, a discussion of communications strategy and the importance of providing the public timely information and meaningful input into policy deliberations. This shall include specific training on Maine's statutes relating to access to public meetings and public information.
- B. The Town Manager should include as part of the professional development and training opportunities for all employees workshops and seminars related to effective communication.

Adopted: July 12, 2010

*The Town Council, seeking to enhance ~~more effective~~ citizen ~~participation~~ ~~engagement in and access to~~ local government, will implement a ~~revised~~ communications strategy to more effectively provide information to citizens on municipal services, ~~and on~~ local issues, and local businesses operating within Cape Elizabeth.*

**Town of Cape Elizabeth, Maine**  
**Communications Strategy**  
**Public Information Strategy**  
**July 2010**  
**March 2024**

This communications strategy, adopted by the Cape Elizabeth Town Council on July 12, 2010 is intended to serve as a springboard for the local government to improve effective communication with citizens on municipal services, ~~and on~~ local issues, and local businesses. It also provides specific recommendations on how the local government could enhance communications with other parties including the media.

**Desired Outcomes**

The desired outcomes of this strategy are as follows:

- Citizens will ~~know where~~ be able to quickly locate desired to find information on the town website related to all local government and municipal offices.
- Citizens will be able to complete routine transactions with the government 24/7 on the website, on their local government and will be able to complete routine transactions with the government 24/7.
- Meeting rooms, ~~and~~ meeting procedures, and meeting recordings -will enhance public engagement and public access.
- Citizens will have opportunities to impact local decision making.
- Municipal information, both online and in print, will have a clearly recognized identity.
- Municipal officials and staff will understand opportunities to disseminate information of interest to citizens and other parties.
- Local businesses will feel supported by the municipal government.

**I. Citizens Finding Information**



A primary source of official information for citizens of Cape Elizabeth is [www.capeelizabeth.com](http://www.capeelizabeth.com). It received ~~83,000~~24,000 visits in ~~March 2010~~February 2024 and nearly ~~300,000~~170,500 page views. The website is utilized by the press to access information written by and/or posted by our Public Information Coordinator ~~webmaster~~ and it is a resource for staff and others for searchable reference material on the Town. It has been recognized as one of the best municipal websites in Maine.

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The website is staffed by a part-time ~~webmaster~~ Public Information Coordinator who ~~undertakes oversees the all of the~~ website design and redesign with contracted services approximately every three years; ~~writes news stories, meeting reports, and posts public notices and events; posts agendas, meeting materials, and video recordings.~~

In addition to the website, the town utilizes social media, cable tv, and an email subscription service to communicate information to the community. The public information coordinator oversees the town's accounts on Facebook and Twitter to ensure that public inquiries are answered, engagement is forwarded to the appropriate staff, citizens are informed of neighboring initiatives and/or alerts, and maintains an archive of all social media data.

~~.99% of the website posting and writes nearly all of the news stories on the homepage. The FY 2024011 stipend for the position is \$22,00052,530. which is an exceptional value for the time and talent devoted to the site.~~

The website guidelines provide: *The Town of Cape Elizabeth homepage ~~itself iss~~ not intended to be a forum for expressive activity by members of the public or by government officials; instead it should provide neutral information, ~~and data,~~ and links which do not espouse specific views. The website may, however, host a direct link to contracted citizen-engagement platforms which do allow for direct citizen feedback.*

## A. Website Recommendations

- ~~1.—~~ The website should remain as the primary source of official municipal information, both current and historical. It should be neutral in focus, and provide access to archived ~~should archive~~ agendas, minutes, and related documents of official meetings, and video recordings of meetings. streaming-video of taped meetings, and t The website should continue to be updated on a daily and annual basis to ensure best practices. The website should managebasis a regular archiving schedule in order to optimize search capabilities on the website.;

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. The website shall increase the public information coordinator's hours to fulltime, approximately 10 extra hours, to include time for the coordinator to maintain regular communications with the Town Manager, Town Clerk, and department heads in order to receive information on current projects, issues, and/or current events which should be highlighted on the website and other platforms.

- ~~2.—~~ The website will not serve as a direct vehicle for commenting on municipal issues and services. The website shall contain links to contracted platforms (such as Zencity) which facilitate citizen connectivity and/or email subscription services (such as Granicus).easily enable e-mails to municipal officials.

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. The website should consider bundling email subscription services with either the new website CMS and/or the citizen engagement platform. This will not only streamline the information sending process, but might reduce costs.

5. The website will provide links to easily enable emails to municipal

departments, government officials, boards, and committees.

3.6. The website will also provide links to other official town department websites which are maintained independently. These department websites include: Cape Elizabeth Community Services, Cape Elizabeth Fire & Rescue, Cape Elizabeth Schools, Portland Head Light/Fort Williams Park, and Thomas Memorial Library. Other websites provided by the Town of Cape Elizabeth such as the sites for Portland Head Light and the Thomas Memorial Library shall contain numerous prominent links to [www.capeelizabeth.com](http://www.capeelizabeth.com). The main website will contain links to other websites maintained by the Town.

4.7. The website should be reorganized to better categorize information with fewer menu options, faster and curated search capabilities, larger and easier to read fonts, crisp and spacious pages, ADA-compliant design and tools, and improved navigation speed, with drop-down menus and shall utilize more color and more video.

5.8. Municipally produced short videos describing local services or outlining municipal issues should be available on the website and in social media as needed.

6. The website and staff shall advertise the availability of email subscription options for citizens to receive automatic updates on desired subjects. RSS feeds as an option for citizens to receive website updates.

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## **B. Other Opportunities for Citizens to Find Information**

1. The Town of Cape Elizabeth should regularly issue press releases regarding municipal issues and activities. Press releases should be sent to print media, radio, television and online content providers social media accounts.

2. The town website should maintain an easily located and regularly maintained section listing the status of current projects, initiatives, and issues.

3. The town shall create a weekly newsletter which includes recent news, meeting reports, notifications of upcoming meetings, and project updates.

4.4. The town shall consider contracting with a third-party platform to provide a means for direct citizen input and engagement online on current projects, initiatives, and issues.

5. The Town Manager shall provide several updates each month on municipal activities that may be of interest to the public. These shall be sent to the same list as press releases.

6. The Town Manager's Monthly Report will be published monthly following Town Council meetings.

7. The public information coordinator shall request updates from department heads

and committee staff on a cyclical basis and/or as needed.

2.8. The Town Council Chair shall consider providing written updates on issues of their choosing and shall consider requesting that fellow councilors provide updates specific agenda items and/or on subcommittee news on a rotating basis.

~~3.9.~~ The Town ~~should consider~~ shall utilize a message board or consider installing an electronic message sign ~~the placement of an electronic message sign~~ on town property at the recycling center to provide important official messages.

10. CETV should continue to broadcast regular meetings of the Town Council, School Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. Programming on CETV shall be expanded to include programs focusing on the activities of municipal departments.

11. Remote Participation shall be utilized for all Town Council meetings and workshops, Planning Board meetings, Zoning Board of Appeals meetings as technology allows.

~~4.12.~~ Additional video recording devices, such as the “Owl,” shall be considered for use by other boards and committees.

~~5.13.~~ The tax bill should contain an insert each time that outlines current municipal information.

~~6.14.~~ The Town Council shall annually invite public input on citizen priorities prior to the annual goal setting process.

~~7.15.~~ The Town Council will seek opportunities to speak to local groups on topics of interest to citizens.

## **II. Meeting Rooms and Meeting Procedures Should Enable Public Engagement**

The town shall consider installing an electronic message board within Town Hall Council Chambers or Tax Office notifying the public of upcoming meetings with times and locations.

The ~~three~~ four major meeting rooms at the Town Hall need updating. The Town Council chamber has poor acoustics, ~~and the seating is crowded for many meetings. The Council dais takes up more than half of the room with its ramp, its angle, and the need to have space between its elevated position and the first row of seating.~~

The William H. Jordan Conference Room is often overcrowded, is not easy to find for new visitors and has heating challenges. Its accessibility through a wheel chair lift does not meet current standards.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room near the ACP office also has little room for the public and is difficult to reach.

The lower-level conference room is not well marked and possibly not ADA compliant.

### **A. Meeting Space**

A study should be undertaken to see if meeting spaces at the Town Hall could be changed to add public seating, to improve sound projection, and to enhance the opportunity for public engagement at meetings. As part of this study, surplus space at the Cape Elizabeth

Police Department should be reviewed to potentially free up additional space for meetings at the Town Hall.

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## **Town of Cape Elizabeth Online Operating Guidelines**

The Town of Cape Elizabeth, ME provides a municipal website at the address [www.capeelizabeth.com](http://www.capeelizabeth.com) and a website focusing on Portland Head Light at [www.portlandheadlight.com](http://www.portlandheadlight.com). These guidelines do not apply to any website provided by the Cape Elizabeth School Department.

The Town of Cape Elizabeth does not provide official blogging sites.

**Purpose of the Municipal Website.** The purpose of the municipal website is to provide timely information to citizens and other parties regarding municipal services and municipal and school activities in the Town of Cape Elizabeth and to promote the public health, safety and welfare. The Town of Cape Elizabeth homepage is not intended to be a forum for expressive activity by members of the public or by government officials; instead it should provide neutral information and data and links which do not espouse specific views. Citizens and officials may be quoted in news articles appearing on the homepage and in the news archive and any such articles with quotations shall endeavor to represent multiple viewpoints. Copies of e-mails sent to the Town of Cape Elizabeth may be posted on the website as detailed in the privacy policy.

**Webmaster Responsibility.** The webmaster is responsible for the daily operation of the website. The webmaster makes independent editorial judgments on stories appearing on the home page and on other pages, determines the order of links on any page, makes judgments on links that are acceptable pursuant to these guidelines and regularly updates information on the website. Anyone wishing to appeal a judgment of the webmaster may make an appeal in writing to the Town Manager who shall respond in writing within five working days.

**Web links.** For purposes of these guidelines, an “external link” is a link to a website maintained by an outside party. An “internal link” is a link to a portion of the Town website that is maintained by the webmaster or by an operating agreement with the Town.

**External Links.** Any request for an external link shall be submitted to the webmaster in writing through the “contact us” section of the Town website. To be approved, an external link must go to a website that has information specifically related to the Town of Cape Elizabeth. External links must fit within one of the following categories:

- Local Organizations/ Local Places of Worship
- Area Businesses and Real Estate
- Local Attractions
- Local News and Weather
- Travel, Tourism and Entertainment

- Government Services
- Services from Not for Profit Agencies

The Town website will not provide links to sites that promote or exhibit bias, discrimination, pornography, libelous or otherwise defamatory content. The Town website will not link to websites or blogs where anonymous commenting is permitted except to sites of news organizations requiring registration of commenters.

The Town reserves the right to determine how and where external links will appear on its website.

**Internal Links.** The webmaster has discretion as to the placement of internal links.

**Privacy Statement.** The website shall contain a privacy statement with the following wording:

### **Privacy Policy for the Official Website of the Town of Cape Elizabeth, Maine**

The Town of Cape Elizabeth does not capture personal information about visitors to our websites without their permission. We endeavor to collect only the minimum amount of information needed to meet the purposes for which the website was created.

### **Public Disclosure**

All information collected on the Town of Cape Elizabeth website and [Portland Head Light](#) website - including online form submissions and e-mails generated to and from e-mail links -- will be treated the same as any written communication and is subject to the confidentiality and public disclosure provisions of 1 MRSA Chapter 13.

### **PRIVACY STATEMENT**

We may collect some or all of the following information about visitors who view or download information from our websites:

*Date* -- Date the visit occurred.

*Time* -- Time the visit occurred.

*Client IP* -- Unique Internet Protocol (IP) address of the website visitor. The IP address recorded is normally that of the visitor's Internet provider, e.g., aol.com if the visitor connects from an America Online account.

*HTTP Status* -- Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (HTTP) error code. i.e., "404 Requested Page Not Found."

*HTTP Request URL* -- Identifies the Web page or file requested by the website visitor.

*Bytes Sent* -- Amount of data sent from the Web server to website visitor during that connection.

*Bytes Received* -- Amount of data sent from website visitor to the Web server.

*User Agent* -- Type of Web browser or other client software that made request to the Web server.

*Referrer* -- Uniform Resource Locator (URL) that referred to the requested file.

*Protocol Version* -- Version of HTTP used by the visitor's Web browser software.

In addition, we may collect the *Date*, *Time*, *Client IP* and/or *Referrer* on clicks that take visitors to external links.

The information we collect is used to improve the content of our Web services and help us understand how people are using our services. We analyze our website logs to continually improve the value of the materials available on our site. The information in our website logs is not personally identifiable, and we make no attempt to link it with the individuals who browse our website.

Some of this statistical information, such as a running count of the number of visitors, may be displayed on the website or shared with anyone who requests it.

### **Search Engine Statistics**

The Town of Cape Elizabeth also gathers statistics about visitors who use our search engine. As with the viewer statistics described above, the town uses this information to better serve its customers.

The statistics we gather about users of the search engine are:

*Date and Time of Use*

*Keywords or Terms searched for*

*Client IP* (see definition in section above)

*Directories searched on our site*

*Number of documents found*

*Number of documents searched.*

As with the visitor statistics, the search engine statistics are not personally identifiable and no attempt is made to link them with the individuals that browse our website.

## RSS Feeds

The websites may make available RSS feeds. The service providing the Town the capability of RSS feeds may track subscriptions and IP addresses utilizing the service and may provide the information to the Town.

## Personally Identifiable Information

"Personally identifiable information" is information about a person that is readily identifiable to that specific individual. It includes, for example, an individual's name, street address, e-mail address, or phone number.

Personally identifiable information will not be collected unless you voluntarily send an e-mail message, fill out and send an online form. Your choice not to participate in these activities will not impair your ability to access certain information or obtain a service online.

Unless specifically protected under state law, any information provided may be inspected by the public or disclosed in a legal proceeding. This includes personally identifiable information submitted by town staff for staff purposes.

## E-mail Senders

E-mail messages, sent to any Town of Cape Elizabeth government address, will be treated the same as any other written communication.

They are subject to public inspection or legal disclosure and are saved in accordance with Maine statutes.

E-mail or other information requests sent to the Town website are maintained in order to respond to the request, forward that request to the appropriate agency, or to provide the Web designer with valuable customer feedback to assist in improving the site.

E-mail sent using the "Contact Us" feature of the municipal website are public records. E-mails sent to the Town's elected officials as a group and to other standing boards and commissions may be posted on the Town website for viewing by any party. Responses of individual elected officials or appointed officials are not posted on the website unless the official specifically directs them to the online area for e-mails. All e-mails are available by request to the Cape Elizabeth Town Clerk.

**Electronic Form Filers** Any other information provided by a visitor at the request of a department of the Town of Cape Elizabeth, such as the completion and electronic filing of a form, will be considered to be voluntarily provided by the visitor and will be treated in the same manner as information provided in written form or in person during a visit to the agency. Information provided may be subject to public inspection and legal disclosure and may be saved for a period of time before it is destroyed. It may be shared with anyone who requests it.

**InforME Subscribers** The Town of Cape Elizabeth links to the "Rapid Renewal" online vehicle re-registration process offered by the State of Maine through InforME. (Information Resource of Maine) The files we download from the State update our vehicle history file, which includes all the information on a vehicle registration including fees.

We, the Town, are not allowed to give information regarding vehicle registrations. We refer anyone who requests such information to the State of Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

## **Cookies**

Cookies are small files that a site or its service provider transfers to your computers hard drive through your Web browser (if you allow) that enables the sites or service providers systems to recognize your browser and capture and remember certain information

The Town of Cape Elizabeth and Portland Head Light websites use cookies on publically accessed pages to compile aggregate data about site traffic and site interaction so that we can offer better site experiences and tools in the future. We may contract with third-party service providers to assist us in better understanding our site visitors. These service providers are not permitted to use the information collected on our behalf except to help us conduct and improve our business.

## **Disclaimer**

Neither the Town of Cape Elizabeth, nor any agency, officer, or employee of the Town of Cape Elizabeth warrants the accuracy, reliability or timeliness of any information published on the Town of Cape Elizabeth website, nor endorses any products or services linked from the system, and shall not be held liable for any losses caused by reliance on the accuracy, reliability or timeliness of such information.

Portions of the information may be incorrect or not current. Any person or entity that relies on any information obtained from this system does so at his or her own risk.

Various websites may be linked through the Town of Cape Elizabeth website. Visitors to those sites are advised to check the privacy statements of those sites and be cautious about providing personally identifiable information without a clear understanding of how the information will be used. This Privacy Statement does not apply to linked sites that are not affiliated with the Town of Cape Elizabeth.

**Contact Information** To offer comments about the Town of Cape Elizabeth website or about information presented in this Privacy Statement, contact [susana.hubbs@capeelizabeth.org](mailto:susana.hubbs@capeelizabeth.org)

## DRAFT

Dear Pat,

Below is a draft of a new job description for a full-time Public Communications Coordinator. I shared this with Mike McGovern prior to moving into my new expanded role. Formerly, my title was Webmaster and was considered part-time. The new title combines the role of the town webmaster and CETV coordinator, which collectively account for 30+ hours a week. The intent is to combine the two roles into one title which more accurately reflects not only the general purpose/intention of this role, but also supports draft revisions I have made to the Communication's Strategy of July 2010.

In addition, new duties (shown in purple) are included to support the council's goal of "Improving and enhancing municipal and council communications."

New duties are shown in purple and the remaining duties have been updated/edited to reflect their purposes more accurately and are taken from the current job descriptions of the webmaster and CETV coordinator.

### **Public Information Officer – 40/week**

#### **GENERAL PURPOSE**

The general purpose of the Public Information Officer is to facilitate the dissemination of town news and updates so to ensure the public is engaged, informed, and heard via the Town's website, social media accounts, email subscriptions, and streaming/broadcasting on local cable services.

The secondary purpose is to maintain a website for the Town of Cape Elizabeth which provides users with efficient and complete access to all information pertaining to the governing of the town.

#### **SUPERVISION RECEIVED**

Works under the supervision of the Town Manager.

#### **SUPERVISION EXERCISED**

Supervises and trains producers of town meeting broadcasts using CETV technology.

## ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Watches televised meetings of the Town Council and School Board, writes reports on agenda items of their choosing or as requested by the Town Manager or department heads and posts those reports on the town website, social media, and email subscription services.

In times of emergency, posts notices or advisories to the website, social media, and bulletin board in a timely manner.

Works with the Town Clerk during election season to post live election results and maintain the Elections & Voting page is kept up to date.

Participates in regular full department-head meetings to gain insight into critical issues and/or messaging needs.

Edits, rewrites (if necessary) and posts news releases submitted by the Town Manager and/or town department heads.

Communicates with the Town Manager on a weekly basis to receive direction on important updates, messaging, and announcements.

Reaches out to department heads on a regular basis for updates or messaging.

Implements and maintains a citizen-engagement projects platform on the website to keep citizens informed on recent projects and initiatives, and allows for citizen input. This will be facilitated with a new platform coming to the website, from Zencity.

Solicits regular input from Town Council Chair and subcommittee heads for posting on website, newsletter, and social media.

Solicits input from board and committee staff on a regular, cyclical schedule for posting on website, newsletter, and social media.

Coordinates a newsletter which collects recent news stories, updates, and special events.

Posts public meetings of the Town Council, School Board, town boards, town committees, and subcommittees thereof on the website and informs the public of said meetings via email subscription service and weekly announcement of meetings.

Provides the community with a regularly updated Community Events page of local and surrounding neighborhoods' events and important dates.

Posts job openings and RFPs as needed.

Works with the School Department staff to attain and post School Board agendas, meeting materials, and CETV scheduling.

Schedules and records livestream meetings; posts recording of video links to town website.

Coordinates and trains CETV producers for town meetings, and submits producers' timesheets to payroll.

Updates community cable bulletin board with submissions from Cape Elizabeth organizations attained through online form, by email or other communications.

Responds to public inquiries about CETV programming.

Assures public-access users complete appropriate forms and releases.

Maintains town membership in Community Television Association of Maine and in the Community Television Network/Portland Media.

Communicates technical equipment needs to town staff.

## **Town of Cape Elizabeth-Job Description**

### **Webmaster – Part Time ~ 30 hrs/week**

#### **GENERAL PURPOSE**

Maintain the town of Cape Elizabeth and Portland Head Light websites, maintain and administer town of Cape Elizabeth social media accounts

#### **SUPERVISION RECEIVED**

Works under the supervision of the Town Manager.

#### **SUPERVISION EXERCISED**

None

#### **ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Watches televised meetings of the Town Council and School Board, writes reports on agenda items of the webmaster's choosing and posts those reports to the town website.

Edits, rewrites (if necessary) and posts news releases submitted by town department heads.

Posts announcements of an immediate nature to town Facebook and Twitter; shares appropriate posts of related organizations such as the Thomas Memorial Library, Community Services, Police, Fire & Rescue; shares posts of reliable news organizations reporting on town of Cape Elizabeth matters.

At the direction of the museum director, makes updates to the Portland Head Light website.

Makes weekly backups of all website, Facebook and Twitter content.

Posts public meetings of the Town Council, School Board, town boards, town committees and subcommittees thereof on the website calendar.

Posts agendas, minutes and supporting documents for public meetings.

Prepares a website presentation of YouTube video from televised meetings, including links to agenda items.

Reviews Google Analytics for the town and Portland Head Light websites and reports monthly to the Town Manager.

Updates "Most Viewed Links" and "Most Frequent Downloads" section on the town homepage according to Analytics data each month.

Posts job openings submitted by department heads and removes outdated ones.

Works with departments heads on posting and maintaining Google Forms as needed.

Makes weekly updates of building-permit activity.

Maintains website MySQL and flat-file databases for display on the website.

Makes sure domain names and SSL certificates are registered and up-to-date.

Maintains the town's Google Custom Search Engine.

In times of emergency, posts notices or advisories to the website and to social media in a timely manner.

Works with School Department staff to attain School Board agendas, meeting materials and in some cases YouTube videos for posting.

Works with CETV coordinator to update website program guide for town's public access TV channel.

Performs other work as required.

### **PERIPHERAL DUTIES**

Provides support to other department staff as required.

### **DESIRED MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS**

#### **Education and Experience:**

- Bachelor's Degree in communications related field with a concentration in political science or local government.
- Desired experience – 2-3 years experience in local-government reporting. Experience with computers and social media. Experience with scripting languages including perl, PHP, javascript. Experience with Google suite applications. Experience with HTML, CSS. Experience with Adobe Dreamweaver and Photoshop or similar software.

#### **Necessary Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:**

Thorough knowledge and understanding of the town of Cape Elizabeth web publishing guidelines.

Skilled at writing for publication, with attention to detail, grammar and style.

Familiarity with the town of Cape Elizabeth's organizational structure.

Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.

Ability to self-organize and to complete assignments in a timely manner.

Ability to establish successful working relationships with town employees and department heads.

### **SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

Ability to work remotely outside of office hours.

### **TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT USED**

Uses a variety of web publishing and related software including Adobe Dreamweaver, Photoshop, and Acrobat; Microsoft Word and Excel; and web applications including but not limited to Wordpress, Mailchimp, PHPmyAdmin, Google Suite (gmail, docs, forms) Google Analytics, Google Feedburner, Google Custom Search Engine.

### **PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is frequently required to sit and talk or hear; use hands to finger, handle, feel or operate objects, tools, or controls; and reach with hands and arms. The employee is occasionally required to walk, stand, stoop, kneel, crouch or crawl.

The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 20 pounds.

Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, color vision and the ability to adjust focus.

### **WORK ENVIRONMENT**

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

The noise level in the work environment is quiet to moderate.

The duties listed above are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position.

The job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.

July 2018

# City of South Portland 3-Year Communications Plan 2024-2026

This communication plan is based on the results of the City of South Portland's 2023 Communications Survey, completed by over 592 community members. The plan is designed to guide the city's communications strategy and content.

## The Big Picture

Overall, our community is pretty happy with how we communicate, with about 89% saying they are satisfied. However, most people (65%) only feel "somewhat knowledgeable" about what's actually happening in the City. Our goal is to bridge that gap and move more people from "somewhat" to "very" knowledgeable.

## Where People Find Us

We have some very strong core channels. The top ways people currently get their info are:

- **Local News (48.8%)**
- **City E-Newsletter (48.3%)**
- **City Website (46.9%)**
- **Social Media (44.6%)**

## Strategic Channel Guide

| Channel      | Why it matters                                                         | Quick Strategy                                                    |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| City Website | It's our digital front door.                                           | Prioritize ease of finding info (top priority for 86%).           |
| E-Newsletter | People are loyal; nearly 40% read every issue.                         | Keep the biweekly schedule—most don't want it more or less often. |
| Facebook     | It's our biggest social platform – about 50% of respondents follow us. | Post a few times a week to match when followers are most active.  |
| Instagram    | Our second biggest social channel, used by about 25%.                  | Great for the photographs residents say they want to see (47%).   |
| Text Alerts  | Massive opportunity.                                                   | 63% of residents want updates via text message.                   |

## What We Should Talk About

When planning content, focus on these top interests:

- **The "Must-Haves":** City events (78%), programs/initiatives (66%), and

- infrastructure updates like road closures (64%).
- **Safety & Logistics:** Public safety/weather alerts (62%) and election info (49%).
- **What they want more of:** People are hungry for "Project Spotlights" (55%), a "Did You Know?" educational series (46%), and coverage of City events (44%).
- **Format Matters:** Stick to text-based articles as the primary format (82%), but lean into photos (47%) and short videos (27%) to keep it engaging.

## Website Redesign Priorities

Since the website is being revamped, we need to ensure it meets these user-specific needs:

- **Think Mobile First:** Over half (52%) of our residents access our site via smartphone.
- **Make it Easy:** People primarily visit to find specific info (86%), pay bills or submit applications (48%), and find contact information (42%).
- **Report Problems:** 37% want a very clear way to report issues or problems.

## Ways to Level Up

- **Neighborhood Groups:** 36% of people use Nextdoor or local Facebook groups for City info. We should engage there rather than just waiting for them to come to us.
- **New Texting Pilot:** Given the high demand (63%), we should explore a text-alert system for time-sensitive news and events.
- **Expand Our Reach:** Our survey respondents were mostly over 50 (65%) and White (90%). We need specific outreach to younger residents and our diverse communities to make sure everyone is in the loop.

## Information & Sources:

This plan was generated with the assistance of Google Gemini. The following document was used in its production:

- [2024 City of South Portland Communication Survey Results.pdf](#)

# City of South Portland 3-Year Communications Plan 2027-2029

## Looking Back

We have made significant progress in executing the 2024-2026 Communications Plan. Through a combination of digital infrastructure upgrades, proactive community engagement, and responsiveness to public feedback, the City has successfully moved from the strategic framework outlined in the 2024 plan to active implementation.

The City's communications efforts from 2024 to 2026 reflect a concerted effort to align with the survey-driven goals of the Communications Plan.

- **Branding:** We completed a successful roll-out period for our new brand. Launched in April 2023, the City's first logo redesign in over 30 years gives a fresh and more engaging look to South Portland communications.
- **Website Redesign and Accessibility:** The City successfully prioritized a digital-first approach. The website overhaul of 2023-2024 focused on ease of navigation, mobile accessibility, and clear paths for users to report issues and conduct city business. The City also proactively incorporated digital accessibility (ADA compliance) standards into its outreach, ensuring that new flyers and web content are accessible.
- **Transparency and Public Engagement:** The City has consistently provided information and engagement opportunities for major City initiatives (e.g., the Mahoney City Center Project, ALPR technology usage, the SoPo 2040 Comprehensive Plan). The City's new website enables community members to sign up for email alerts when new information is posted on the City site in categories they care about. We have hundreds subscribe to our website alerts, including Tax Bill due date reminders, calendar events, job postings, and more.
- **Diverse Outreach Channels:** The City has grown its digital footprint through regular e-newsletters and social media updates, consistently performing above industry averages in engagement. The City added two communications channels, NextDoor and LinkedIn, based on survey input. We also significantly expanded our press contacts from a few dozen in 2022 at the launch of the communications office to a few hundred in 2026. The City sent regular press releases and posted regular website updates to ensure wide coverage of public meetings, events, programs, activities, and more.
- **Project & Traffic Updates:** We prioritized providing regular project updates

and traffic alerts, in response to community desire for this content.

- **Proactive Positive Storytelling:** The City features uplifting stories from the community and the City (ex: staff spotlights and awards, community events, nonprofit events) on multiple channels. Partnership with SPC-TV has provided excellent and popular video content to share such stories.
- **Myth Busting:** The City launched the Myths vs. Facts series, which provides factual information to counter misinformation. Many communities have followed suit.
- **Neighborhood Group Engagement:** The City engages in selective communications in neighborhood forums (ex: Facebook groups) to provide critical updates and correct misinformation.

## Looking Ahead

While the City has made strong gains, data from the 2024 survey and ongoing operational needs highlight several areas for continued focus in the next three-year cycle:

- **Targeted Demographic Outreach:** The 2024 survey revealed that respondents were predominantly over 50 (65%) and White (90%). Targeted outreach strategies are still required to better engage younger residents and more diverse communities to ensure the "City's voice" reaches all demographics
- **Formalizing Neighborhood Group Engagement:** The 2024 plan identified neighborhood groups (Nextdoor, local Facebook groups) as a key information source for 36% of residents. We must formalize our engagement strategy for these smaller, hyper-local digital communities.
- **Text-Alert System:** The 2024 survey indicated that 63% of residents were interested in receiving updates via text message. While the City has successfully leveraged email and social media, establishing a dedicated text-alert system for time-sensitive news remains a high-demand opportunity for future expansion.
- **Content Diversification:** Residents expressed a strong desire for more "Project Spotlights," "Did You Know?" educational series, and coverage of city events. The next communications plan should build on the current strategy by increasing these specific content types to further boost engagement.
- **Expansion of Feedback Mechanisms:** Recognizing the need for data-driven engagement, the City implemented the FlashVote platform to gather

representative public input, which serves as a powerful tool to inform policy and gauge resident sentiment. This supports the goal of bridging the gap between "somewhat" and "very" knowledgeable residents.

## Priority Actions in 2027-2029

- **Understand Community Needs and Priorities** - Conduct a new communications survey. Build a 3-year communications plan that reflects the needs and addresses the gaps in the city's communications.
- **Get Representative Feedback** - Launch the FlashVote platform and engage residents with the tool to gain scientifically valid input from the whole community to guide staff and City Council's decisions.
- **Elevate Digital Accessibility** - Create and implement a plan to comply with the new federal rules for web accessibility.
- **Get News in People's Hands** - Work with partners to strategize how to fill the void left by the *Sentry* local newspaper. Take action to raise local awareness of municipal topics.
- **Engage and Delight** - Provide opportunities for members of the public to become more involved and invested in the City, and to enjoy doing so. Tell stories to help people feel like an important part of the City fabric.
- **Solid Policy and Procedures** - Revise current policies and procedures (ex: social media policy) and create new ones when necessary to help the City effectively communicate with the public and foster public trust.
- **Build Greater Connections** - Partner with local organizations and businesses, and foster collaboration across departments, to produce greater community synergy and broaden/deepen links in the community.

## Strategic Communications Plan

### 1. Goals and Objectives

*Your plan must define what you want to achieve. Goals: Broad, primary outcomes (e.g., "increase brand awareness" or "reduce confusion around a new policy"). Objectives: Specific, measurable, and time-bound benchmarks (e.g., "increase newsletter open rates to 40% by Q4").*

### 2. Target Audiences

*Determine exactly who you need to reach. This might include internal teams, external stakeholders, customers, or the media. You should segment your*

*audience based on their needs, demographics, and preferred ways of receiving information.*

### **3. Key Messages**

*The core information or primary narrative you want to share with each audience. Messages should be tailored so they resonate personally and address the specific challenges of that audience group.*

### **4. Channels, Tactics, and Frequency**

*The methods you will use to distribute your key messages. Channels: The platforms (e.g., email, Slack, Asana, town hall meetings, or press releases). Frequency: The cadence of your communications (e.g., daily check-ins, weekly status reports, or monthly executive reviews).*

### **5. Roles and Owners**

*Accountability is vital. Establish exactly who is responsible for drafting, sending, and managing the responses for each type of communication.*

### **6. Timeline and Budget**

*Larger plans require an execution schedule and an outline of necessary costs. This plots out when specific tasks are due and the resources required to execute the tactics.*

### **7. Evaluation and Measurement**

*Outline how you will determine if the plan was successful. This usually involves identifying metrics (like engagement rates or survey results) to measure performance against your initial objectives.*

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# MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

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# BACKGROUND

The Town of Scarborough is a community of 23,000 residents, spanning 42 square miles of coast, forest, marsh, agriculture, and developed environments. Effective communication is essential to keep our growing community informed of the Town of Scarborough's efforts to enhance the quality of where we live, work, explore, and recreate. We strive to provide awareness around general town topics, issues, projects, Council initiatives, and more.

The key priorities for Town of Scarborough communications are accessibility, transparency, timeliness, and public engagement. Information should be made available to residents in a digestible format that encourages interest and involvement in local decision making.

Communications efforts support Town departments and the Scarborough Town Council. Many of the annual messages are guided by the Town Council's goals for the year ahead. They are also informed by results of recent community surveys. The Town takes a proactive approach to build a communications plan that addresses current newsworthy happenings balanced with ongoing issues of interest to residents. These broader topics include:

- Fiscal responsibility
- Conservation
- Growth and development
- Capital projects/investments
- Traffic and transportation

Effective communication relies on involvement from administrative leaders, department directors and employees, and the Town Council. Collaboration ensures that residents are made aware of Town information in a timely manner.

# PRIORITIES AND GOALS

## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS EFFORTS

- Be proactive and lead the narrative on town issues
- Capitalize on opportunities to highlight Town accomplishments

## TRANSPARENCY AND ACCESSIBILITY

- Inform on what's happening and make further details and materials available
- Strengthen public confidence to build trust in Town government
- Share content across communication channels to enhance reach



## ENGAGED TOWN COUNCIL

- Provide outlets for councilor messaging
- Collaborate with council communications committee for aligned messaging and priorities

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Support visibility to public engagement opportunities to encourage attendance
- Highlight board and committee updates to showcase them as opportunities for residents to become more involved in town interests
- Use Scarborough events as opportunity for outreach and connection

## BRAND IDENTITY AND VISIBILITY

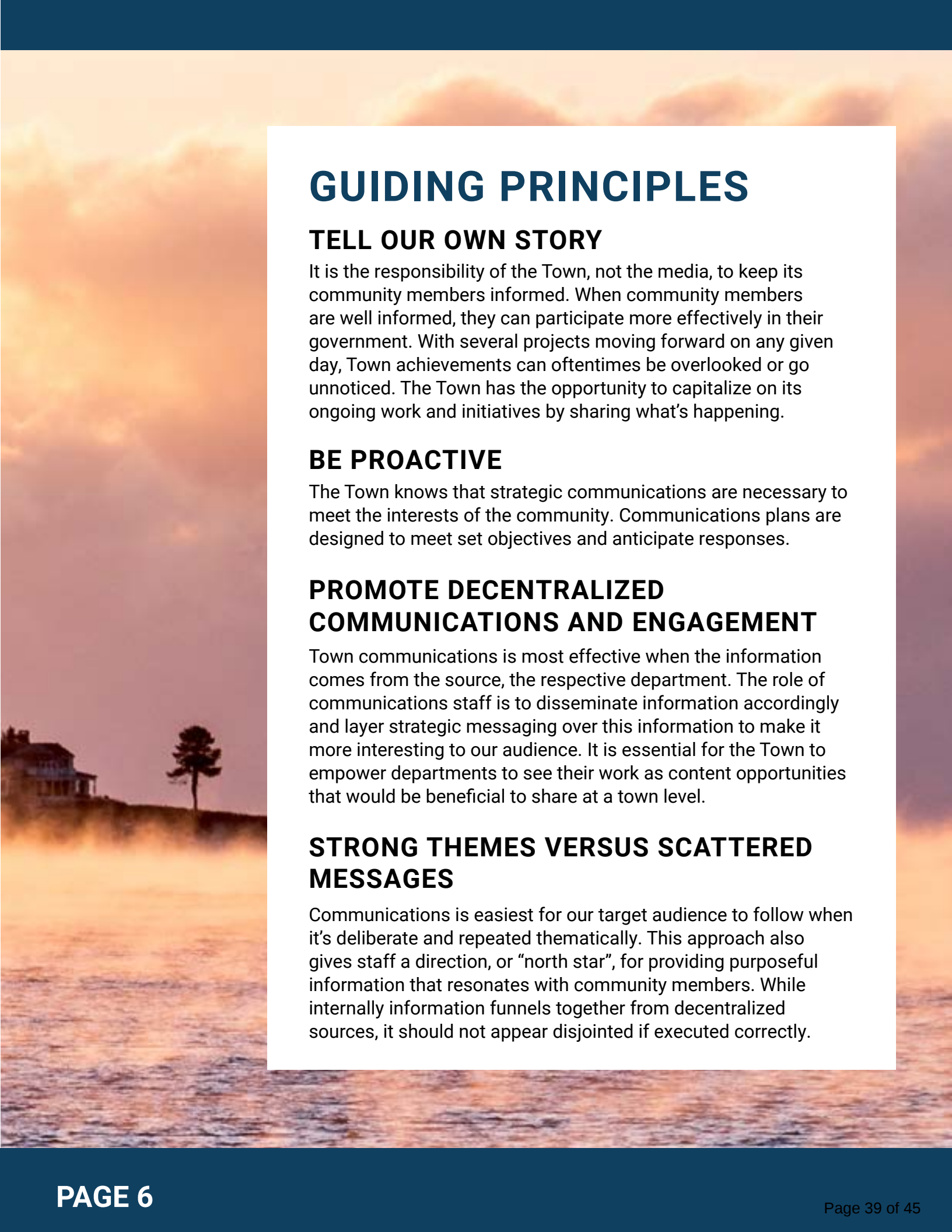
- Display and maintain a visible community presence
- Use logo and branding consistently and appropriately in all communications and engagement efforts
- Manage and share Town style guide to ensure proper use



## AREAS OF FOCUS

The Town of Scarborough communications personnel are responsible for providing comprehensive outreach and information to the community and its residents. Information is conveyed in a timely, accurate, relevant, and consistent manner. These efforts help to build trust with our local government.

- Strategic Communications
- Community Engagement
- Public Relations
- Marketing and Branding



# **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

## **TELL OUR OWN STORY**

It is the responsibility of the Town, not the media, to keep its community members informed. When community members are well informed, they can participate more effectively in their government. With several projects moving forward on any given day, Town achievements can oftentimes be overlooked or go unnoticed. The Town has the opportunity to capitalize on its ongoing work and initiatives by sharing what's happening.

## **BE PROACTIVE**

The Town knows that strategic communications are necessary to meet the interests of the community. Communications plans are designed to meet set objectives and anticipate responses.

## **PROMOTE DECENTRALIZED COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT**

Town communications is most effective when the information comes from the source, the respective department. The role of communications staff is to disseminate information accordingly and layer strategic messaging over this information to make it more interesting to our audience. It is essential for the Town to empower departments to see their work as content opportunities that would be beneficial to share at a town level.

## **STRONG THEMES VERSUS SCATTERED MESSAGES**

Communications is easiest for our target audience to follow when it's deliberate and repeated thematically. This approach also gives staff a direction, or "north star", for providing purposeful information that resonates with community members. While internally information funnels together from decentralized sources, it should not appear disjointed if executed correctly.

# **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT CORE PRINCIPLES**

Bringing the community together on an issue is critical for transparency and inclusive decision making. The following principles guide the process.

## **CAREFUL PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

Through adequate and inclusive planning, ensure that the design, organization, and convening of the process serve a clearly defined purpose and the needs of the participants.

## **INCLUSION AND DEMOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY**

Equitably incorporate diverse people, voices, ideas, and information to lay the groundwork for quality outcomes and democratic legitimacy.

## **COLLABORATION AND SHARED PURPOSE**

Support and encourage participants, government and community institutions, and others to work together to advance the common good.

## **OPENNESS AND LEARNING**

Help all involved listen to each other, explore new ideas unconstrained by predetermined outcomes, learn and apply information in ways that generate new options, and rigorously evaluate the process.

## **TRANSPARENCY AND TRUST**

Be clear and open about the process, and provide a public record of the organizers, sponsors, outcomes, and range of views and ideas expressed.

## **IMPACT AND ACTION**

Ensure each participatory effort has real potential to make a difference, and that participants are aware of that potential.

## **SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATORY CULTURE**

Promote a culture of participation with programs and institutions that support ongoing quality public engagement.

*Source: National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation - [Resource Guide](#)*

# TARGET AUDIENCES

Knowing the audience is key to an effective communications and engagement plan.

## INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

- Town Council
- Town Manager
- Employees

## EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

- Scarborough residents (New, Longtime)
- Community members
- Neighborhood groups
- Nonprofit organizations
- Prospective residents
- Visitors
- Realtors
- Seniors
- Businesses
- Youth
- News media

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Scarborough Schools
- Scarborough Public Library
- Scarborough Economic Development Corporation (SEDCO)
- Project GRACE
- Rotary Club of Scarborough
- Scarborough Lions Club

# COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

Many of the following tools may be implemented for a communications plan, depending on the project objectives and target audience. The emphasis we put on each may vary. We also expect these tools to evolve over time, so part of this process includes monitoring for performance, reach, and engagement so we can adapt as needed.

## PRINT

- Direct mail
- Flyers
- Postcards
- Tax Bill Inserts

## DIGITAL

- Email Newsletter (Bi-Weekly)
- Town Website: Town Calendar, QR codes
- Social Media: Facebook, Instagram  
YouTube, X\*, Nextdoor\*, LinkedIn\*

*\*Not actively using*

## MEDIA

*Print and online*

- Scarborough Leader
  - Press releases
  - “In the Know” column
  - “Council Corner” column

## OTHER

- Electronic messaging (Town sign)
- CodeRED alerts
- Advertisements\*

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Town-hosted community events (tabling)
- Committee open houses/public forums
- Community/neighborhood meetings
- Town Council meetings
- Town Council workshops
- Council Corner Live events
- Elections
- Job fairs (recruitment)
- Door-to-door



# KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The following tools measure the performance outcomes of our communications efforts.

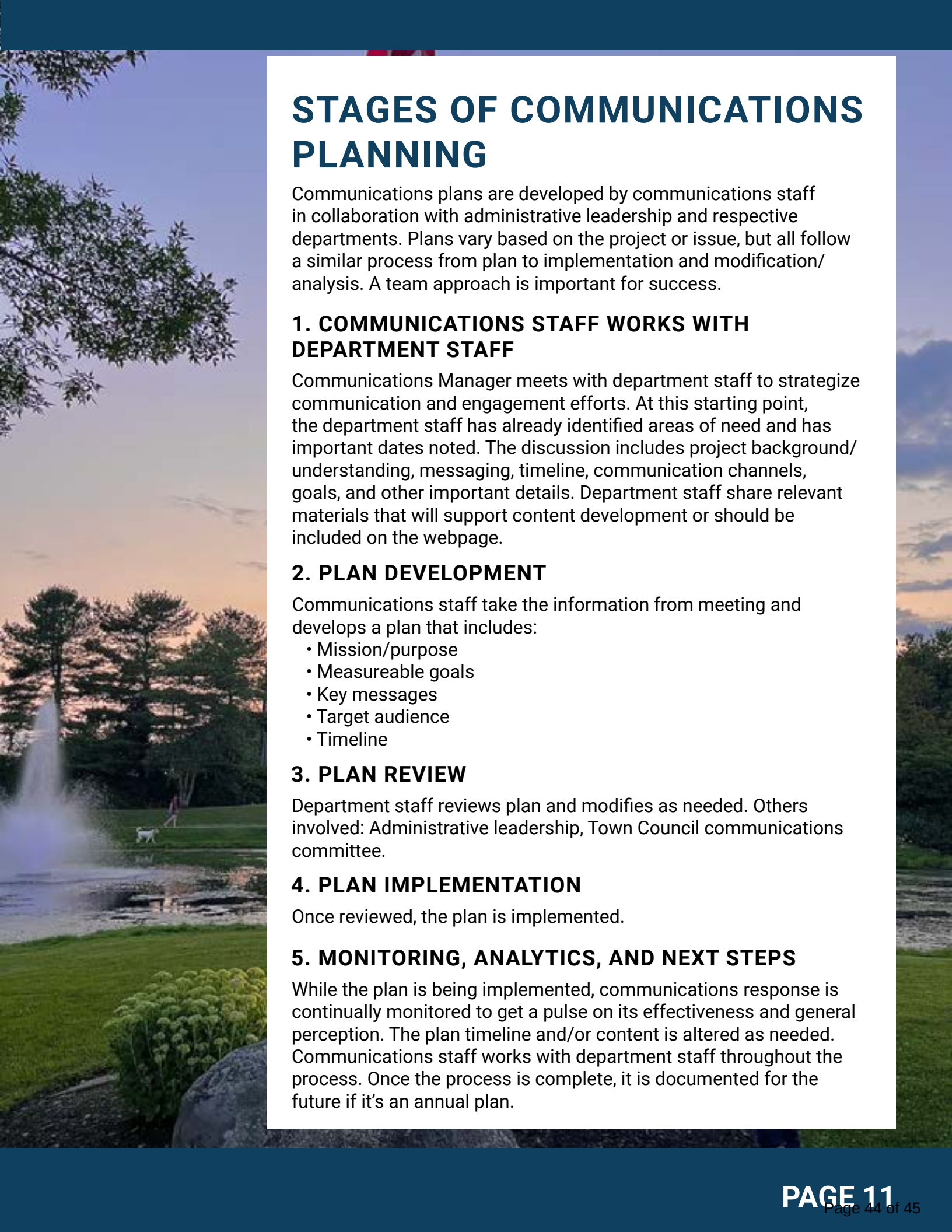
- Website page views
- Newsletter subscribers
- Newsletter engagement (open rate, click rate, links clicked)
- Social media followers (Facebook, Instagram)
- Social media engagement (likes, views, shares, direct messages, reach, comments)
- YouTube video views (public meetings, other)
- Number of surveys completed
- Election participation
- Event/meeting attendance

**How is our target audience responding?  
Evaluation helps us know what's working and what's not.**

## OTHER

- Social media comments
- Community survey results
- Media coverage
- Town Council emails (What are people reacting to? What is the sentiment?)
- Social media commentary on local pages/groups





# STAGES OF COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING

Communications plans are developed by communications staff in collaboration with administrative leadership and respective departments. Plans vary based on the project or issue, but all follow a similar process from plan to implementation and modification/analysis. A team approach is important for success.

## 1. COMMUNICATIONS STAFF WORKS WITH DEPARTMENT STAFF

Communications Manager meets with department staff to strategize communication and engagement efforts. At this starting point, the department staff has already identified areas of need and has important dates noted. The discussion includes project background/understanding, messaging, timeline, communication channels, goals, and other important details. Department staff share relevant materials that will support content development or should be included on the webpage.

## 2. PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Communications staff take the information from meeting and develops a plan that includes:

- Mission/purpose
- Measureable goals
- Key messages
- Target audience
- Timeline

## 3. PLAN REVIEW

Department staff reviews plan and modifies as needed. Others involved: Administrative leadership, Town Council communications committee.

## 4. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Once reviewed, the plan is implemented.

## 5. MONITORING, ANALYTICS, AND NEXT STEPS

While the plan is being implemented, communications response is continually monitored to get a pulse on its effectiveness and general perception. The plan timeline and/or content is altered as needed. Communications staff works with department staff throughout the process. Once the process is complete, it is documented for the future if it's an annual plan.

# FRAMEWORK

Each project across departments that involves some level of public engagement should undergo the exercise of developing a communications framework. This is the first step in a campaign roll-out for the project.

The following framework was developed as a template for communications staff to work with departments to align on key messages, timeline, etc. for their project. A single template used across departments ensures a consistent approach and organization to Town of Scarborough communications.



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**Communications Plan Framework**

| Project/Topic | Timeline |
|---------------|----------|
|               |          |

**Mission/Purpose:**

| Measureable Goals: | Target Audiences: |
|--------------------|-------------------|
|                    |                   |

**Key Messages:**

**FRONT**

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**Content Timeline**

**Evaluation / Metrics Tracked**

**BACK**