

## 2025-2026 Budget Communications Investments Update

In the 2025-2026 budget, City Council approved several financial investments to support the work of the Communications Division. These investments have directly supported the following growth:

- **Additional Focus Newsletter:** Focus regularly ranks as one of the top news formats for the community per the City's statistically significant annual survey. Council's increased investment in Focus funding allowed communications to add an additional printed Focus newsletter, going from three to four editions annually beginning in 2025. The additional edition has facilitated communications in reaching residents with greater frequency, sharing a larger number of more varied news-worthy items with the community in a format that has been proven effective.
- **Additional Limited Duration FTE (Communications Specialist):** Funding approved for the hiring of a limited duration employee to support communications efforts with predicted capacity challenges due to the World Cup workload has developed into a crucial role within the Communications Division. This position directly supports high-impact, high-visibility departments such as Police and Fire, along with internal departments in TIS, Finance, and Human Resources. With steadily increasing communications needs across the City, the role allows us to maintain a more balanced workload, improving coordination, responsiveness, and overall quality of information delivered to both the public and internal stakeholders. The employee in this role completed FEMA Public Information Officer Basic training in February, which expands the City's trained emergency communications capacity and strengthens our organizational readiness.
- **Additional Limited Duration FTE (Communications Specialist):** Funding approved for the hiring of a limited duration employee to support communication efforts with predicted capacity challenges due to the World Cup, increased FOCUS issues, and an overall increase in citywide outreach and internal and external communications. This position supports digital and print graphic design, web design, and the development of high-quality visual assets to strengthen the City's communications. The role significantly expands the team's capacity by enabling faster turnaround on design requests, increasing volume and quality of materials produced, and ensuring consistent branding across departments. The addition of another graphic design specialist has allowed communications staff to take on a greater number of complex projects simultaneously – which is especially critical as the City takes on large special projects like the World Cup while balancing the need to continue to proactively service regular City communications.
- **World Cup Communications:** With .50 of one of our additional limited duration FTE positions allocated from the World Cup budget, communications surrounding the World Cup have been a high priority of the division. Efforts have focused on proactive, coordinated outreach to ensure that community members, businesses, and visitors are all equally informed, prepared, and engaged ahead of the 2026 World Cup. Communications created a bold visual campaign called Redmond is Ready for the World to put a distinct brand on the City's World Cup messaging and programming, which has been well received throughout the community. Additionally,

Communications helped build and market the City's Soccer Stories and Fútbol for All Speaker Series programs, while also creating and maintaining Redmond is Ready for the World's web presence at [redmond.gov/Soccer](http://redmond.gov/Soccer). This webpage serves as the public source of truth for the City's World Cup activities. The division has been able to develop clear, accessible messaging across wide-ranging communications channels – including web, social media, digital newsletters, print materials, and in-person events – that supports work being done across the City in preparation for the World Cup. Communications has also partnered closely with fellow municipalities and regional agencies to align messaging and amplify key information. As activity and interest are expected to increase heading into the summer, funding for World Cup-specific communications work allows the team to scale our efforts to support community readiness, helping position Redmond as truly being ready for the world.

- **Increased Social Media Video:** Understanding that social platforms continue to push video formats over text formats algorithmically, the Communications Division has been making a concerted effort to increase use of video (Instagram Reels, Facebook Stories). This includes creating storytelling material around a wider variety of City subjects, from sharing “behind the scenes” looks at little-known groups like the Fleet Division to getting the word out about upcoming projects and programs to lighthearted, visually compelling shorts that encourage engagement. This work is possible through the addition of our newest graphic designer, which has allowed Communications' social specialist to transition design capacity to social.
- **City News Now:** Additional capacity within the department has allowed for the creation of a new weekly video news program called City News Now (CNN). This video program reaches community members with quick hits to inform and engage and has allowed the Communications Division to expand our weekly outreach beyond the limited capacity of the eNews digital newsletter. Through CNN, we're able to get more news out to residents and test formats to find the most effective way to connect with the community.
- **Increased Media Outreach:** Additional capacity has allowed for a more strategic review of media outreach practices, leading to an updated process of connecting with media more proactively ahead of City events or programming that might be of wider interest. This has been especially helpful related to World Cup and directly led to appearances by Mayor Birney on FOX 13's Good Day Seattle and World Cup-related coverage in the Puget Sound Business Journal.