



2027-2028 COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



Redmond
WASHINGTON

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Introduction

Background

The City of Redmond, home to over 82,000 residents, is entering a pivotal period of transformation marked by population growth, rapid changes in technology, and increased community demand for transparent, accessible, and responsive government communications. As Redmond advances toward the long-term vision outlined in Redmond 2050, communications must strengthen public trust through transparent and timely communications, improve civic participation through meaningful community engagement, and support overall community resilience.

The 2027-2028 Communications Plan lays out citywide strategy for how Redmond communicates, engages, listens, and builds relationships with residents, businesses, community partners, and employees. Through actionable tactics, brand standards, and implementation priorities, the City will continue to modernize communications operations in alignment with the mayor's vision, organizational values, budget priorities, and alongside emerging trends and technologies.

By implementing the strategies in this plan, the City will be positioned to communicate consistently, proactively, equitably, and effectively across many platforms and audiences, fostering an informed community with a sense of ownership and involvement, and ensuring that city initiatives truly represent the needs and desires of the community.

Framing and Goals

Through this plan, we intend to:

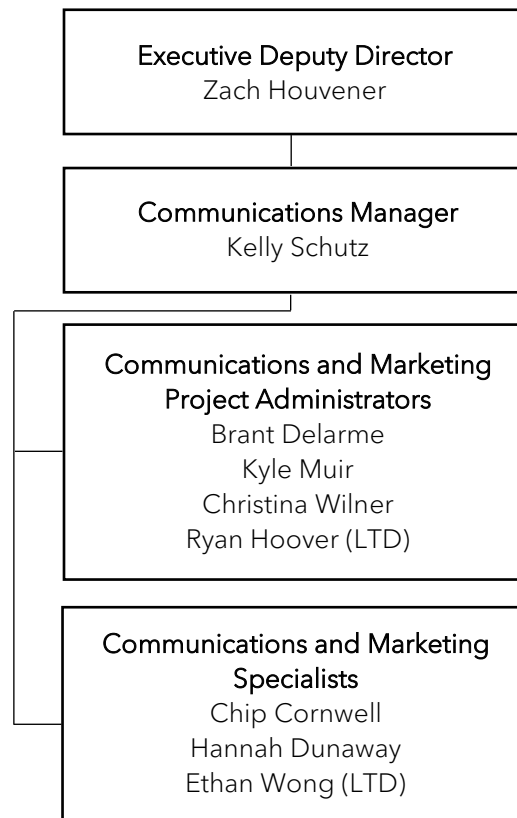
- Reinforce the City's priorities outlined in the [Mayor's vision](#), [budget](#), and [Redmond 2050](#), the City's Comprehensive Plan.
- Maintain and increase public trust through proactive, transparent communication: providing the right information at the right time.
- Deliver consistent and coordinated messaging across all City departments and communications channels, including emergency communications.
- Expand multilingual, culturally responsive, and ADA-accessible communications.
- Inform city decision-making with measurable results from community participation and input, using feedback to continuously improve communication effectiveness.
- Modernize digital communications infrastructure and responsibly leverage emerging technologies.
- Refresh and standardize the City's brand.

Executive Department – Communications Division Roles and Responsibilities

Name	Title	Responsibilities
Kelly Schutz	Communications Manager Lead Public Information Officer (PIO)	Oversees communications staff and guides overall communications strategy; serves as primary point of contact and lead spokesperson for media inquiries related to City business and emergency/incident communications

Brant DeLarme	Communications and Marketing Administrator Backup PIO	Serves as primary liaison for communications work serving Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments; serves as a backup PIO
Christina Wilner	Communications and Marketing Administrator Backup PIO	Serves as primary liaison for communications work serving Executive and Planning Departments; serves as backup PIO
Ryan Hoover	Communications and Marketing Administrator Backup PIO	Serves as primary liaison for communications work serving Police, Fire, Human Resources, Finance, and TIS; serves as backup PIO
Hannah Dunaway	Graphic Design and Social Media Specialist	Social media lead across all City platforms and supporting graphic designer
Kyle Muir	Graphic Design and Web Administrator	Creative lead and primary graphic designer for principal City projects, responsible for project management of all creative work; additionally serves as primary webmaster for redmond.gov
Ethan Wong	Graphic Design Specialist	Primary graphic designer for daily work and supporting projects
Chip Cornwell	Multimedia Production Specialist	Primary video content producer and video platform manager

Communications Organizational Chart



Guiding Principles

As all Redmond programs, projects, and planning support one or more of the City's guiding documents, city communications should endeavor to directly support the principles of these documents, which include:

City Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision – A connected community that enhances livability and sustains the environment, and that places Redmond as a leader locally, regionally, and nationally.

Mission – Fusing compassion and ethics with innovation to champion a thriving, resilient, and inclusive community.

Values – Service, Integrity, Accountability, Belonging, Stewardship

Effective communications will reinforce the City's commitment to its vision, mission, and values, helping to build trust and strengthen relationships between the City and community by promoting meaningful engagement and providing timely, clear, accessible, and relevant information.

City Budget

Redmond is committed to being a good financial steward of the community's tax dollars and demonstrates this by using the Budgeting by Outcomes process to shape its biennial budget – connecting community values directly to how public dollars are invested. In 2020, the community reaffirmed Redmond's four core budgeting priorities that continue to guide every City budget today:

- A **healthy and sustainable** environment that supports an active community.
- A **strategic and responsive** community that is welcoming, service-oriented, and fiscally responsible.
- A **safe and resilient** community where all people feel safe.
- A well-planned and supported community that is **vibrant and connected** and that provides a sense of place.

Communications efforts should explicitly support and advance these priorities whenever possible. Effective communications will promote transparency, accountability, and trust by connecting investments, services, and accomplishments to the priorities identified by the community.

Redmond 2050 Comprehensive Plan

Redmond adopted the Redmond 2050 Comprehensive Plan in 2025, providing a 25-year vision for how the City will grow and develop through the year 2050.

Redmond 2050 is a guide for making wise decisions that ensure steady progress in areas including: land use; housing; transportation; the natural environment; climate resiliency and sustainability; capital facilities; utilities; parks, arts, recreation, culture, and conservation; economic vitality; annexation and regional planning; human service; community development and design; neighborhoods; the Shoreline Master Program; and participation, implementation, and evaluation.

Effective communications will ensure that Redmond 2050 remains a living framework that guides decision-making and helps the community understand and contribute to Redmond's future.

Brand Strategy

The Communications Division develops and stewards the overall City brand design and strategy with the goal of promoting a consistent and authentic identity that reflects Redmond's mission, vision, values, and overall character. By reinforcing a clear and recognizable brand, communications endeavors to ensure consistent, authentic, and engaging messaging across all channels and touchpoints.

The City's brand strategy focuses on the following elements:

- **Clear** – Present information in a straightforward manner to quickly communicate key messages.
- **Concise** – Deliver essential information efficiently.
- **Simple** – Use plain language and intuitive design.
- **Easy to Understand and Translate** – Write and design with readability and accessibility in mind, supporting comprehension across literacy levels and facilitating accurate translation into multiple languages.
- **Image-Focused** – Leverage photography, graphics, video, and other visual elements to improve understanding, increase engagement, and reflect the people, places, and experiences that make Redmond unique.

Target Audiences

With a multitude of city projects underway at any given time, not all projects require the same level of communications and community involvement. It is one of the responsibilities of the Communications Division to work with City Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to develop communications plans for any given project and determine which target audience(s) are appropriate.

Audience segments generally considered are listed below.

Primary Audiences (need to know information first)

Internal

City leadership
City staff
City Council

External

Redmond residents
Redmond businesses
Redmond employees
Community partners
Boards/Commissions

Secondary Audiences (may need to know the information)

Neighborhoods
OneRedmond
Tourists, visitors, shoppers
Commuters
Other government entities/agencies/tribes
King County
Lake Washington School District
Neighboring communities and businesses
Media

Communications Platforms

Redmond uses a variety of communications platforms to share information. Conversation styles and content often vary based on the type of communication; how we would write for the City website is not always how we would write for social media, which is not always how we would write for a news release, and so on. It is important to curate communications with an understanding of which platforms are being utilized. This will result in content that is more creative, engaging, resourceful, and in better alignment with the goals of this plan.

Print Materials

Despite the proliferation of online communication forms, print materials remain our number one form of communication, providing an important way to share detailed, accessible, and audience-specific information. While the City aims to balance outreach needs with sustainability goals, print materials should still be considered a foundational tool for ensuring important information reaches community members directly, particularly those impacted by specific projects, policy changes, or initiatives. Printed materials also remove an accessibility barrier by reaching populations where they live instead of relying on internet access with digital communications.

Focus Newsletter: The City's Focus newsletter is produced quarterly and mailed to every residence in Redmond. Focus routinely leads the rankings for where community members find City news as recorded by the statistically valid annual community survey.

Primary Goals:

- Provide broad access to City information for all residents in an attractive and engaging, readable format
- Increase awareness of major City initiatives, projects, services, and resources
- Foster community connection and engagement by telling community stories and highlighting opportunities for participation
- Reinforce key City messages and values
- Reach residents who may not engage with digital communication channels

Best Practices:

- Prioritize information that has broad community relevance and long-term value
- Focus on major projects and impacts rather than time-sensitive announcements
- Use plain language and avoid jargon
- Balance informational content with storytelling
- Incorporate high-quality photography, infographics, maps, and other visuals
- Include clear calls to action and pathways to finding additional information or resources

Other Print Materials: In addition to Focus, the City routinely uses a variety of other print tools including but not limited to direct mailers; flyers, postcards, rack cards, and posters; signage; and utility bill inserts.

Primary Goals:

- Deliver targeted information to specific audiences, neighborhoods, or stakeholder groups
- Increase awareness of City services, programs, projects, events, and engagement opportunities
- Support broad outreach by reaching community members through multiple touchpoints
- Provide timely information when location-based or issue-specific communication is needed
- Expand accessibility by providing information in formats that do not require digital access

Best Practices:

- Keep messaging concise, focused, and action-oriented
- Provide pathways to additional information through websites, QR codes, or phone numbers
- Use strong design and clear visual hierarchy
- Match the tool to the audience, objective, and message
- Ensure branding, tone, and messaging are consistent with City standards
- Consider language access, accessibility, and cultural relevance
- Coordinate timing with related digital and community outreach efforts for maximum impact

Digital Media

In addition to social media – which has been separated into its own section for the purposes of this plan – the City also maintains a variety of other digital media platforms for communications.

City Website: redmond.gov serves as the primary digital home for all City material, providing a visitor with easy and intuitive access to information and services.

Primary goals

- Provide a centralized, trusted source of accurate and up-to-date City information
- Enable residents, businesses, and visitors to quickly find information and complete tasks
- Improve transparency by making programs, projects, decisions, and resources easy to understand
- Support community engagement by connecting users with opportunities, events, news, and ways to participate in government

Best practices

- Keep information concise
- Use headers to organize information rather than multiple offshoot pages
- Information should be simple and written without jargon
- Integrate visuals to provide a balance of text and images
- Regularly review and update content to ensure accuracy and relevance
- Use consistent language, formatting, and navigation across all pages

Digital Newsletters and Publications: The City of Redmond offers a variety of opt-in digital newsletters for residents, including: City eNews, a weekly publication covering all areas of City news; Parks eNews, a weekly publication covering news specific to Parks and Recreation; Economic Development eNews, a monthly publication covering news specific to the business community; Planning, Policies, and Regulations eNews, a monthly publication covering news specific to the Planning and Community Development Department; Sustainability eNews, a monthly publication covering news specific to the City's environmental sustainability programs and initiatives; Volunteer Monthly, a monthly publication detailing volunteer opportunities and efforts within the City of Redmond; Green Redmond, a monthly update from the Green Redmond Partnership; and Mayor's Regional eNews, a monthly update from the office of the Mayor.

The Communications Division leads production for City eNews and the Mayor's Regional eNews and serves as the primary editor and support staff in production of all additional digital newsletters.

The City also produces several internal digital newsletters for city staff, including Our Redmond Stories, a weekly all-staff internal newsletter, a monthly newsletter specific to Employee Transportation Services (ETS), and internal departmental newsletters for Redmond Fire Department and Redmond Police Department. The Communications Division leads production for Our Redmond Stories and serves as primary editor and support staff for production of additional internal newsletters.

In addition to weekly and monthly newsletters of different varieties, the City also publishes a digital version of its Focus newsletter quarterly.

While these publications reach different and/or overlapping audiences, the goals and best practices are similar.

Primary Goals:

- Keep subscribers informed about important news, initiatives, programs, and upcoming events specific to each subscriber base
- Increase awareness of City services, resources, and opportunities available to the community
- Drive traffic to the City website for more detailed information

- Encourage community participation through public meetings, events, surveys, and engagement opportunities
- Build trust and transparency through consistent and reliable communication

Best Practices

- Use clear headlines and brief summaries, incorporating strategic use of bolding, italics, and underlining when necessary to draw a reader's attention to key information
- Include direct links for additional details
- Use plain language, avoiding jargon and unexplained acronyms
- Include clear calls to action that encourage readers to take next steps
- Maintain a consistent publication schedule and format

Video Programming: The City's recurring video news programs – City News Now and Here in Redmond – provide engaging, visual storytelling that informs the community about services, projects, events, and people behind local government.

Primary Goals:

- Increase awareness and understanding of City programs, projects, services, and priorities
- Provide context and behind-the-scenes perspectives on City operations to build trust and transparency
- Reach audiences who prefer video content and may not engage with traditional communications
- Highlight community impacts, success stories, and opportunities for engagement

Best Practices:

- Keep segments concise and focused
 - Prioritize strong visuals, including real footage of topics being discussed, graphics, and interviews
 - Feature a variety of voices, including community partners and community members when appropriate
 - Include captions / scripts for all video elements for accessibility
- Repurpose content into shorter clips for social media when possible

Social Media

Social media has become one of the most powerful and effective ways to reach a wide variety of community members. Unlike traditional communications channels, social media supports shorter, more conversational, and more engaging content that invites two-way engagement with the community.

The City of Redmond's social media strategy focuses on:

- Building community trust
- Increasing awareness of City services and initiatives
- Improving community participation
- Strengthening Redmond's identity as an innovative, inclusive, and connected city

Social media platforms are not intended to simply function as bulletin boards for announcements, but should also serve as active tools for storytelling, education, timely information, and relationship building. These platforms present a unique opportunity to engage with the community and receive feedback, often in real time.

Social media content should feel approachable and human but must still adhere to the conduct expected of a government agency. Humor and participation in trends on various social platforms may be appropriate when aligned with the City's brand but will be determined on a case-by-case basis and should never undermine professionalism or public trust.

Key Principles and Areas of Focus

The City of Redmond's social media strategy is guided by the following key principles:

1. **Inform** – Provide timely, accurate, and accessible information about City services, projects, programs, events, and more.
2. **Engage** – Encourage interaction rather than relying on one-way informational posting; ask questions, conduct polls, reshare user-generated content when appropriate, and respond to pressing comments / direct messages.
3. **Educate** – Simplify complex topics and increase civic literacy by familiarizing community members with City processes, initiatives, and available services.
4. **Story Tell** – Use a narrative and/or visual approach to tell the stories of the community and the staff behind the work of City government; this approach helps make government feel human, approachable, and community-centered.
5. **Prepare** – Support emergency preparedness and incident communications and help combat misinformation.

The City's social media content should generally fall into one or more of five areas of focus:

1. **Public Information** – Core operational information surrounding City services, projects, programs, spaces, meetings, or other related activities.
2. **Community & Events** – Human-centered content that showcases the City's spirit.
3. **Quality of Life** – Celebrating and spotlighting Redmond's livability and development.
4. **Economic Development** – Supporting local commerce and growth, highlighting Redmond's investments, and perpetuating the City's place as a hub of innovation.
5. **Emergency Preparedness** – Building trust, readiness, and resiliency.

Current Social Media Channels

Facebook:

- CityofRedmond
- RedmondWAFire
- RedmondWAPolice
- RedmondParks
- GoRedmond

X:

- RedmondWaPD
- CityofRedmond
- Go_Redmond

Instagram:

- RedmondWaPolice
- CityofRedmond
- RedmondParks

Nextdoor:

- CityofRedmond
- RedmondWAPolice

YouTube:

- CityofRedmond
- RedmondWAPolice

LinkedIn:

- City of Redmond, WA

Threads:

- CityofRedmond

Platform Strategies

The purpose and general target audience of each social platform should be considered when developing content. However, the overarching goal across all social platforms should be messaging that is clear, concise, and accessible.

Facebook: Facebook serves as the City's primary social media platform for broad community outreach and engagement. Content can include slightly longer or more in-depth copy.

Primary goals

- Community engagement
- Event / Project / Program awareness and promotion
- Storytelling

- Receiving feedback
- Emergency preparedness

Best practices

- Prioritize visuals and short-form video; posts should rarely if ever be text-only
- Use accessible language and avoid jargon
- Encourage engagement with polls and interactive posts whenever possible

Instagram: Instagram focuses on visual storytelling and growing community identity. Content should highlight Redmond's people, places, programs, and culture through high-quality photography, graphics, and video clips.

Primary goals

- Showcase Redmond as a thriving community
- Reach younger audiences
- Increase community pride
- Humanize government

Best practices

- Produce high-quality authentic and value-driven content and imagery
- Prioritize video/Reels for discovery and still image carousels for engagement
- Drive interaction with games, quizzes, challenges, or other interactive post formats
- Use short captions
- Highlight behind-the-scenes moments

X: X functions as a real-time information platform for quick updates, notices, reminders, and emergency communications. While the City has expanded word-count available on X, posts should remain as concise as possible and utilize links to direct users to more robust information.

Primary goals

- Timely updates
- Emergency preparedness
- General awareness

Best practices

- Keep messaging direct and concise
- Post timely updates and make use of threading related posts
- Use appropriate imagery or graphics to catch attention
- Link to official sources for details

LinkedIn: LinkedIn supports organizational reputation, recruitment, economic development, and focused storytelling.

Primary goals

- Organizational branding
- Employee recruitment
- Visibility for economic development
- Leadership positioning

Best practices

- Highlight employees and achievements
- Promote career opportunities
- Share select initiatives that promote economic growth and partnerships
- Maintain a professional tone

NextDoor: NextDoor provides a hyper-local social experience that targets community members who tend to already be the most engaged and interested in City happenings.

Primary goals

- Event / Project / Program awareness and promotion
- Emergency preparedness

Best practices

- Keep content local and neighborhood-specific
- Messaging should be concise and avoid jargon
- Avoid over-posting

YouTube: YouTube provides a home for the City's video content that exists outside of short-form social media reels. It is a reliable place to find regular video content such as Council and Commission recordings, weekly video news programs, and more.

Primary goals

- Improve accessibility of information through offering video formats
- Provide serial video programming that the public can come to expect
- Simplify complex topics
- Humanize government

Best practices

- Have select number of expected, serial video series
- Post exclusive longer-form content to complement short-form content found on other platforms
- Organize videos in a user-friendly way

Other: The City maintains an active Threads account and continues to monitor other emerging social platforms. Resource investment in these newer platforms remains limited until level of value grows.

Communications Equity and Accessibility

Strategic Overview

The only effective communications are those that ensure all residents – regardless of language, ability, income, age, cultural background, or access to technology – can receive, understand, and engage with city information and services. The City of Redmond's goal is to meet people where they are by utilizing multiple communications channels, including digital platforms, printed materials, in-person outreach, community partnerships, and multilingual communications.

Equity-focused communications prioritize historically underrepresented communities, ensuring that public information is not only timely and available, but also culturally responsive. This approach builds trust, increases civic participation, and strengthens transparency between the City and the community.

Likewise, accessibility should be embedded throughout the communications process rather than treated as a final compliance step. This includes using plain language, offering translations and interpretation services,

ADA-accessible digital content, captioned and translated video, screen reader compatible materials, and mobile-friendly design standards.

Strategies to Prioritize

In 2027-2028, the following strategies will be prioritized to continue to improve equitable and accessible communications:

- **Plain Language** – City communications should be clear and easy to understand for the broad public audience, avoiding technical or governmental jargon and overly complex language whenever possible.
- **Expand Multilingual Capacity** – Translation and interpretation services should be considered early in project planning and, while prioritized for high-impact public information, these services should not be limited to those situations and should be more broadly incorporated when possible.
- **Robust Communications Plans** – Different community members access information in different ways. Communications plans should use a mix of channels and methods to improve visibility and reach.
- **Community Partnerships** – Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are critical to helping expand reach and effectiveness of City communications and engagement efforts. Working with CBOs to get information into the hands of community members who might not otherwise access City channels is imperative to effective communication in Redmond going forward.
- **Increase Visual Content** – Short-form video, graphics, and photography improve a message's reach via digital platform algorithms. Whenever possible, City communications should consider how to include video or other visual elements in messaging.
- **Gather feedback** – Surveys, analytics, engagement metrics, and community input should be used to identify communication gaps and refine strategies over time.

Digital Accessibility

Accessibility is both an equity issue and a legal requirement for municipalities. The City must provide equal access to government services to all community members. If a community member can't apply for a permit, pay a bill, read a public notice, fill out a form, or otherwise actively participate in their government systems, then we are not providing equitable access.

The City's digital communications should adhere to the **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Version 2.1, Level AA**. WCAG marks the internationally recognized standard for digital accessibility. It defines how websites, documents, and digital tools must be designed so that people with disabilities can use them.

Under current federal law, all cities with over 50,000 residents must comply with WCAG 2.1, Level AA by April 26, 2027. The City of Redmond is well placed for compliance given our pre-existing focus on accessible elements such as alt-text, captions, transcripts, contrast, and more. However, accessibility is a continually evolving field and with new communications being produced by the City daily, remaining up to date on compliance is a perpetual goal.

Communications should keep POUR in mind when creating any digital content: **Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, Robust**.

Perceivable – Users must be able to perceive the information

- Images have alt text
- Videos have captions
- Audio has transcripts
- Color is not the only way information is conveyed
- Text has sufficient contrast

Operable – Users must be able to operate the interface

- Everything works with a keyboard (not just a mouse)
- Links and buttons are clearly labeled
- No flashing elements
- Navigation is consistent and predictable

Understandable – Content must be clear and predictable

- Forms have clear labels and instructions
- Errors on a form are explained and shown how to fix
- Language is plain and clear
- Navigation behaves consistently

Robust – Content must work with assistive technologies

- Websites work with screen readers
- PDFs are remediated
- Code follows technical standards
- Content works on mobile devices

To support compliance with WCAG accessibility standards and improve public access to information, the City employs a program called **DocAccess** to help identify and remediate accessibility issues within online documents and digital content.

This tool transcribes PDFs into responsive HTML with correct reading order, headings, and alt-text. Readers can also keyword search or ask a question about a document and documents are able to be translated into over 250 languages with live interpreter assistance for up to 30 minutes if a user needs further clarification. DocAccess helps ensure that screen-reader users, non-English speakers, and mobile visitors all get equal access to the City's web information.

Implemented in spring of 2026, within its first three months of use DocAccess identified and provided fixes for over 93,000 accessibility issues across nearly 15,000 documents housed on the City's website.

The Communications Division will continue to monitor developments in accessibility spaces and review possible tools to best position the City for success.

Emergency Communications

Emergency communications are a critical function of the City's Communications Division and are essential to protecting life and property during incidents that impact the community. Effective community communications ensure that the public receives timely, accurate information during emergencies such as severe weather, public safety incidents, utility disruptions, natural disasters, or other urgent situations requiring coordinated City response.

Unlike daily communications, emergency communications prioritize speed and clarity over depth and narrative. Information must be rapidly verified, clearly communicated, and continuously updated as situations evolve.

The Communications Division works closely with the City's Office of Emergency Management during periods where official emergency communications are necessary.

Public Information Officer (PIO) Function

The Public Information Officer (PIO) is the designated lead responsible for coordinating all public-facing communications during emergencies and major incidents. In the City of Redmond, the Communications Manager serves as Lead PIO, with designated Backup PIOs supporting departmental coverage and surge capacity as needed.

The PIO function is the central coordination point between City departments, elected officials, emergency management personnel, regional partners, and the media. The PIO ensures that all external messaging is accurate, aligned, and delivered in a timely manner.

Primary PIO responsibilities include:

- Serving as the official City spokesperson during emergencies and major incidents
- Coordinating with City leadership to confirm verified information before public release
- Developing and distributing public information updates across City communications channels
- Managing media inquiries and supporting press briefings as necessary
- Ensuring message consistency across all platforms
- Supporting rumor control and correction of misinformation during active incidents
- Advising City leadership on public messaging strategy during incidents

Incident Command System (ICS) Alignment

City emergency communications align with the Incident Command System (ICS), a standardized national framework used by emergency response agencies to manage incidents. Within ICS, public information functions fall under the PIO, who is responsible for developing and releasing information to the public, media, and partner agencies.

During large-scale or multi-agency incidents, the City may activate a Joint Information System (JIS), which is a coordinated structure used by responding agencies to ensure consistent public messaging. When appropriate, the City may also participate in a Joint Information Center (JIC), a physical or virtual location where staff from multiple agencies – including PIO representation – coordinate response and messaging during complex events.

Key ICS principles that help guide City emergency communications include:

- **Unified Command:** Messaging and response are coordinated to ensure a single, consistent public voice, even when multiple agencies are involved.
- **Chain of Command:** Information flows through an established operational structure to ensure accuracy and accountability before public release.
- **Common Terminology:** Plain language is used whenever possible to ensure clarity for the public, avoiding government jargon or technical terms.

Emergency Communications Tools

The City may use a variety of communications tools to communicate information to the public. Below is a non-exhaustive list of possible tools that may be employed depending on the nature and severity of the incident:

- **City Social Media:** Provides rapid ongoing updates and immediate public awareness.
- **City Website:** A primary hub for updates and more detailed information than what can be provided elsewhere; information can live on a dedicated incident page and/or use of Newsflash tiles, alert banners, etc.
- **AlertRedmond:** Official emergency alert system implemented by City Office of Emergency Management (OEM) in 2026. AlertRedmond is an opt-in system that allows community members to receive text, email, and/or phone updates about major incidents. In cases of imminent threat to life, AlertRedmond can also work similarly to Reverse 911 in reaching community members regardless of opt-in status.

- **AM 1650:** Emergency radio messaging system that can be used by the City to broadcast emergency information; the station is available on AM radio and streaming over the internet.
- **Print Materials:** When necessary or appropriate, the City may use print materials and signage to communicate with residents during an emergency incident.
- **Media Briefings and News Releases:** When necessary or appropriate, the City may work with local news agencies to disseminate important information through media briefings and/or news releases.

Not all incidents require the same level of public communication. City leadership – including OEM staff – determine the appropriate level of response in emergency situations, with messaging then developed by PIO staff, approved, and disseminated. As situations evolve, communications may escalate or de-escalate based on direction from leadership.

Following major incidents, the Communications Division / PIO staff support recovery communications, including public updates on restoration of services, information about recovery resources and assistance, after-action summaries, and documentation of lessons learned to improve future communications response.

Emergency Communications Guidelines

When developing appropriate emergency messaging, the following principles help guide effective communications:

- **Accuracy Above All:** All information must be verified with appropriate Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) or Incident Command before release. Unconfirmed information should never be shared publicly from official City channels.
- **Timeliness:** Information should be released as quickly as possible once verified, with regular updates provided as new information becomes available.
- **Clarity:** Messages should be concise, direct, and written in plain language. The community should clearly understand what is happening, what actions to take, and where to find additional information.
- **Action-Oriented Messaging:** When applicable, messages should explain what actions the public should take during an incident (e.g., avoid an area, shelter in place, evacuate, etc.).
- **Consistency:** Messaging should remain consistent across City platforms to ensure that the community receives all necessary information no matter where they received the news.
- **Use Multiple Platforms:** Emergency information should be distributed broadly and simultaneously across available and appropriate communications channels to maximize reach.
- **Accessibility:** Emergency communications must be accessible to all community members, including timely translation of high-priority messages into commonly spoken languages.
- **Manage Misinformation:** Communications staff must actively monitor external platforms for misinformation or rumors, providing timely corrections or clarifications when necessary.

Measuring Success

The City's Communications Division should regularly evaluate how communications platforms and tools are performing and adapt overall communications strategy accordingly. Communications are evaluated through a combination of performance metrics, community feedback, and organizational outcomes. Each campaign and communication are unique, and results will vary from project to project.

2027-2028 Key Performance Indicators

Increase City eNews subscriptions by 2% YOY – City eNews is one of the primary ways that the City can communicate a wide breadth of information to residents. Increasing these digital subscriptions should be an area of focus with focused, designed campaigns to drive sign-ups.

Increase AlertRedmond opt-ins – Encouraging the community to opt-in for AlertRedmond is critical to the City’s overall emergency communications. The system stands at nearly 900 opt-ins since implementation in April 2026; Communications and OEM have set a goal of bringing the opt-in total to 1,200 in 2027.

Perform quarterly social media review – While individual metrics rarely tell the full story, tracking performance of social posts across the City’s channels plays a key role in analyzing trends and keeping up with developing community preferences. Quarterly reports will be evaluated both individually and against historical reports to tailor overall social strategy.

Annual Community Survey

One of the most reliable ways to measure the effectiveness of our communications is through the City’s annual community survey. While analytics such as open rate, clicks, followers, and views are useful operationally, the survey’s statistically valid results help answer the important question of whether community members are receiving and understanding City information. For local government, this is the strongest measure of overall communications effectiveness.

Performance Measures from the annual community survey include:

- Rankings of City information sources.
- Percentage of community members responding that they feel the City keeps community members informed regarding City programs, initiatives, projects, and issues.
- Percentage of community members who feel the City is utilizing community feedback on priority project decision making.

Other Platforms

When considering other communications platforms used by the City, the following metrics are helpful for measuring success and evaluating next steps.

Print Materials

- **Response Rate:** The number of people who take a requested action after receiving a printed communication.

Response rate helps measure the effectiveness of a printed material in spurring action – such as visiting a website, scanning a QR code, registering for an event, completing a questionnaire, or contacting a staff member. Because print materials are often used to increase awareness or encourage participation, response rates can provide insight into message relevance.

- **Participation and Attendance:** The number of people who attend events, participate in programs, provide feedback, or engage in the public process promoted through printed communications.

Participation helps evaluate whether printed materials successfully connected community members with opportunities for involvement. Increased participation may indicate that information is reaching audiences who might not otherwise engage through digital channels.

- **Website and QR Code Traffic:** The number of website visits or QR code scans generated from printed materials.

Tracking visits to dedicated webpages, campaign URLs, or QR codes provides a measurable way to evaluate the performance of printed communications to drive audiences to additional information. This metric can help assess the effectiveness of specific campaigns and/or messaging strategies.

Digital Newsletters

- **Open Rate:** The number of recipients who opened an email compared to the number who received it.

Open rate is an important indicator, should be considered in relation to other equally important metrics. Open rate can be negatively influenced by seemingly unrelated elements of a message, such as images that slow loading times before a message is tracked as “opened.”

- **Click Rate:** The number of recipients who clicked on a link within an email compared to the total number who received the email.

Today, effective communications invite readers to participate or act on information presented. Because of that, the frequency at which a link in a digital message is clicked becomes an important metric for gauging the effectiveness of a specific communication. Understanding the desired outcome of a campaign helps dictate expected click rates. If the goal is for an audience to take action, a higher click rate is desired. However, if a campaign is strictly informational, click rates might be lower and a less reliable indicator of effectiveness.

- **Engagement Rate:** The number of people who open or click a message over a 90-day period, providing a more complete picture of subscribers engaging with content.

Engagement rate goes further than open and click rates to give a better understanding of audience behavior regarding messaging. Information that is useful or that users will want to refer to again shows both engagement and value. As the size of the audience grows, a stable or growing engagement rate indicates successful digital communications strategies.

Social Media

- **Followers:** The number of users who subscribe to or follow a social media account.

Follower growth indicates the ability to build and maintain an audience that has voluntarily chosen to receive information directly through social media. While follower count can demonstrate the potential size of an audience, it should not be viewed as a standalone measure of success. A smaller but highly engaged audience may be more valuable than a larger audience with limited interaction.

Additionally, most major platforms have moved away from purely chronological, follower-based feeds and toward algorithmic recommendation systems. These systems decide what each user sees based on signals of interest and engagement, rather than who they have chosen to follow.

- **Engagement Rate:** The number of interactions with content, such as reactions, comments, shares, saves, clicks, and video views, compared to the number of people who saw the content.

Engagement rate helps measure how relevant and compelling content is to the intended audience. Higher engagement often indicates that content resonates with users and encourages participation or action. Because different types of content and communication objectives generate different levels of expected interaction, engagement should be evaluated in the context of overall campaign goals.

- **Reach:** The number of unique users who see content.

Reach measures the extent to which messages are distributed throughout the community and provides insight into overall visibility and awareness. Reach is particularly valuable when communicating important public information, service updates, or emergency notifications. Because algorithms and platform behavior can influence content distribution, reach should be considered alongside follower growth and engagement to provide a complete picture of communication effectiveness.

Website

- **Visitors:** The number of unique individuals who visit a website during a specific period.

Visitors provide insight into the size of the audience accessing City information and services online. Growth in visitors may indicate increased awareness of City resources, successful outreach efforts, or community interest in specific topics. However, visitor numbers should be considered alongside other metrics to better understand how users engage with website content.

- **Total Visits:** The total number of sessions on the City's website during a specific period, including multiple visits by the same user.

Total visits measure how frequently the website is being used as a source of information and services. A higher number of visits can indicate that community members are returning to the website to access information or stay informed about activities. Comparing total visits and visitor counts can provide insight into repeat usage and ongoing engagement.

- **Pageviews:** The total number of pages viewed on the website during a specific period.

Pageviews help identify which content and topics are generating the greatest interest among visitors. This metric can help inform content priorities, website improvements, and overall communication strategies.

- **Session Duration:** The average amount of time users spend on the website during a visit.

Session duration provides insight into how users interact with content. Longer sessions may indicate that visitors are engaging with information and fully exploring resources. However, the ideal session length depends on the purpose of the webpage. For some pages, success may mean quickly providing information that allows a visitor to find what they need and leave.

Video Programming

- **Views:** The number of times City-produced video content is played.

Views provide a baseline measure of how widely video content is being consumed. While views indicate exposure, they do not necessarily reflect whether viewers watched the full message or retained information. Views are most useful when compared across topics, formats, and distribution channels to understand overall audience interest.

- **Watch Time:** The total amount of time viewers spend watching video content.

Watch time provides a stronger indicator of engagement than views alone. Higher watch time suggests that content is holding viewer attention and effectively communicating its message. This metric is especially important for longer-form programming, where sustained attention is a key indicator of content value.

- **Audience Retention:** The percentage of a video that viewers watch before stopping.

Audience retention helps assess how effectively video content maintains viewer interest. Drops in retention at specific points may indicate where content is losing relevance or clarity. This can allow adaptation of message structure and pacing.

- **Engagement Rate:** The number of interactions with video content, such as likes, comments, shares, saves, and click-throughs, compared to total views.

Engagement rate measures how compelling and relevant video content is to viewers. Higher engagement often indicates content that resonates with the audience. Engagement should be evaluated in the context of a video's purpose – whether informational, explanatory, or promotional.

Looking Ahead

With a constantly shifting communications landscape, the City of Redmond's Communications Division is committed to innovation and flexibility as we provide the community with timely, transparent, and accessible communications. We aim to proactively monitor emerging trends and adapt communications strategies and tools accordingly.

Embracing New Platforms

The Communications Division will continually evaluate changes in how community members prefer to consume and engage with information. Traditional print, digital, and social media will remain important platforms for communication, but as audience preferences shift so must the City's strategies for reaching those audiences.

To assist in this, the Communications Division will:

- Monitor emerging digital platforms and communication technologies.
- Expand the use of short-form video, visual storytelling, and multimedia content where appropriate.
- Tailor communications strategies to specific audiences and platforms.
- Maintain a diversified communications approach so that information does not rely on any single platform.

Community Partnerships

Community members often rely on trusted voices for information, including community organizations, business associations, cultural leaders, and content creators. The Communications Division will actively explore opportunities to work with trust community ambassadors and influencers to expand awareness of public programs, events, engagement opportunities, and emergency information.

This may include:

- Partnering with local organizations and leaders whose audiences align with communications goals.
- Building relationships with cultural organizations.
- Supporting community storytelling.
- Expanding outreach through those who can help reach underrepresented audiences.

Expanding Accessibility

Communications efforts must allow all residents to access and understand City information, regardless of language, ability, age, technology access, or communication preference.

To support this, the Communications Division will:

- Continue to improve digital accessibility and compliance with evolving accessibility standards
- Continue translation of all priority communications documents, with expansion into secondary documents

- Develop communications approaches that address digital access barriers
- Incorporate accessibility considerations at the beginning of all communication planning

Leveraging Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming how information is created and consumed. The Communications Division may use AI as a tool to support efficiency, accessibility, and delivery of services, consistent with the City's AI policy, and must maintain a responsible approach that puts human judgment and accountability first.

Potential AI applications might include:

- Increasing reach and support for community outreach and engagement
- Translation and multilingual content support
- Accessibility enhancements such as captioning, transcriptions, and alt-text generations
- Audience analysis and sentiment monitoring
- Information management

However, to maintain public trust, the Communications Division will ensure:

- Human review of any public-facing content
- Compliance with legal, records retention, privacy, and accessibility requirements
- Transparency
- Protection of sensitive and confidential information

The Communications Division will monitor the AI space for possible tools and applications that can best serve residents and assist the Division in its communications goals. By remaining adaptable and community-focused while being open to innovation, the Communications Division will continue to provide trusted, transparent, and effective communications that support civic engagement and community trust.

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