



COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

2025



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Executive Summary

The City of Eureka Communications Plan is a comprehensive and adaptable guide for how the City communicates both internally and with the public. It combines our goals with practical tools to ensure that all communications are clear, consistent, and aligned with our values.

This is a living document. As Eureka continues to grow and evolve, so will this plan. It is designed to help staff across all departments communicate effectively, promote transparency, and build stronger connections with residents, businesses, and visitors.

Purpose

This plan provides a unified framework for the City's communication efforts, ensuring we speak with one voice, whether we are sharing project updates, inviting public input, or celebrating community events. It supports our goal of being a trusted, timely, and accessible source of information about the City of Eureka.

Scope

The Communications Plan outlines our objectives, key messages, communication channels, strategies, metrics, and other essential components. It includes best practices to help staff deliver clear, inclusive, and effective communication across all platforms.

This plan also encompasses the City's tourism and marketing efforts, most notably through the Visit Eureka brand. The Visit Eureka website and its supporting social media channels are essential tools for promoting Eureka as a travel destination and cultural hub. They aim to boost local pride and economic activity by showcasing what makes Eureka unique.

Goals

- Promote transparency, trust, and responsiveness in all City communications.
- Establish the City as the primary source of accurate and timely for City information.
- Foster civic pride and engagement by celebrating Eureka's people, places, and projects.
- Support economic development and tourism through coordinated marketing and storytelling.
- Ensure that communication is inclusive and accessible to all members of our community.
- Strengthen brand consistency and coordination across departments and platforms.
- Equip staff with tools, training, and resources to communicate with confidence and clarity.

With this plan, the City of Eureka is committed to a proactive and thoughtful approach to public communication, one that builds trust, strengthens relationships and reflects the heart of our community in everything we share.

Objectives

The following objectives help define what effective communication looks like across departments and platforms, supporting alignment with our values, brand, and goals.

- **Promote Accessibility and Transparency**

- Ensure that residents, businesses, and visitors can easily access accurate and up-to-date information about City services, decisions, and events.
- Deliver timely updates across platforms in a clear, inclusive, and easy-to-understand format.
- Proactively communicate City initiatives and outcomes to build public trust and awareness.

- **Encourage Public Engagement and Participation**

- Provide consistent opportunities for the community to share input and feedback.
- Highlight and promote public meetings, surveys, workshops, and events.
- Strengthen relationships through two-way communication and responsive engagement.

- **Celebrate Eureka's Identity and Civic Pride**

- Share stories that highlight Eureka's people, places, history, and future.
- Use the City's brand elements—color palette, fonts, logo, tone, and photos—to present a consistent and welcoming message.
- Promote achievements, milestones, and moments that foster pride in our community.

- **Support Economic Development and Tourism**

- Collaborate with partners to showcase Eureka's cultural and economic assets.
- Promote local businesses, events, and attractions through coordinated storytelling.
- Enhance the reach and impact of the Visit Eureka brand and marketing channels to increase tourism and enhance the visitor experience.

Objectives

- **Maintain Brand Integrity and Visual Consistency**

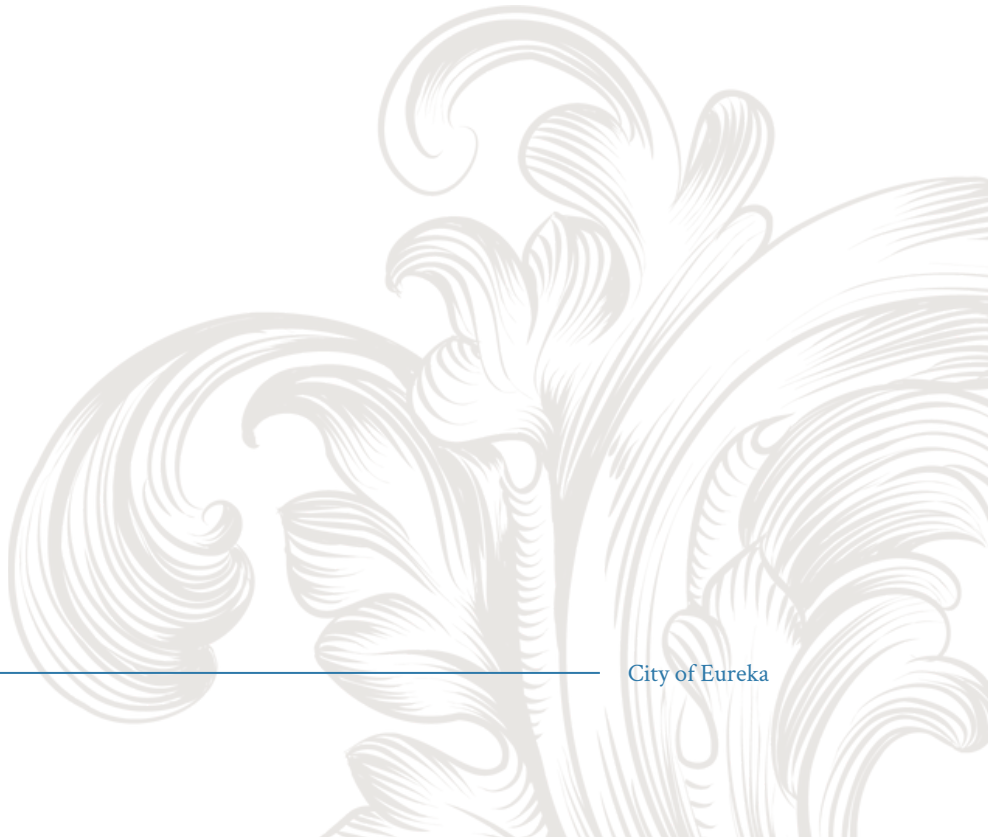
- Use the City of Eureka Brand Guidelines as the foundation for all external and internal communications.
- Apply approved design standards, logos, fonts, and colors across all channels and materials.
- Reinforce the City's identity through cohesive, professional, and visually engaging content.

- **Strengthen Internal Communication and Coordination**

- Align messaging across departments to present a unified voice.
- Equip staff with templates, processes, and training to facilitate easier and more effective communication.
- Encourage collaboration between departments on messaging, media relations, and engagement strategies.

- **Plan for Responsive and Resilient Communication**

- Prepare for emergency or time-sensitive communications with clear protocols and pre-approved messaging.
- Ensure staff are trained on how and when to communicate during critical events.



Target Audiences

The City of Eureka serves a diverse community, and our communication efforts must address the needs, interests, and experiences of all groups. By identifying and prioritizing key audiences, we will tailor our messaging, select the most effective channels, and ensure that every resident, visitor, and stakeholder feels informed, welcomed, and valued.

- **Residents:** Our primary audience consists of individuals living in Eureka, representing various neighborhoods, age groups, and backgrounds. Residents depend on the City for timely updates, access to services, opportunities for feedback, and information that supports both daily life and long-term community pride.
- **Businesses and Organizations:** The City's communication strategy aims to support a thriving local economy by engaging directly with small businesses, entrepreneurs, service providers, nonprofits, and community organizations.
- **Visitors/Tourists:** Through the Visit Eureka brand, the City promotes Eureka as a destination known for its natural beauty, creativity, and cultural richness. Targeted marketing and storytelling increase visitor numbers and enhance overall experiences.
- **Media Outlets:** Local, regional, and national media play a vital role in conveying the City's messages. Clear, timely, and professional communication ensures accurate coverage and fosters strong media relationships.
- **Internal Stakeholders:** City staff, elected officials, and board and commission members are essential messengers of the City's values and priorities. Internal communication tools and consistent branding help all departments stay aligned and empowered to serve the public effectively.

Key Messages

These core themes guide how we share updates, invite participation, celebrate our community, and promote our city. All messaging should align to reinforce a consistent tone, visual identity, and community-focused voice.

- **Eureka is transparent, trustworthy, and community-focused:** We are committed to open, honest, and timely communication. Whether it's a service update, a community decision, or an emergency response, our goal is to keep the public informed, engaged, and confident in their local government.
- **Residents are invited and encouraged to participate:** The City values civic engagement. We strive to create meaningful opportunities for residents to provide feedback, attend events, participate in conversations, and contribute to the City's decision-making processes. Community voices are essential to our success.
- **Pride in Eureka's people, places, and programs:** Our communications reflect and celebrate the individuals who live and work in our city, the unique places that define Eureka, and the programs that enhance our quality of life. We share stories that highlight community milestones, local character, and the spirit of Eureka.
- **The City supports business, culture, and tourism:** We promote a vibrant local economy by uplifting small businesses, celebrating our arts and cultural scene, and inviting the world to experience Eureka through the Visit Eureka brand. Our communications strengthen partnerships and generate interest in all that Eureka has to offer.
- **City services are accessible and impactful:** The City of Eureka is here to serve. We communicate inclusively, ensuring that our messaging is ADA-compliant and easy to understand so that all community members can access the resources, services, and support they need. Our goal is to highlight the value and impact of City programs in everyday life.
- **One City, one voice:** Consistency matters. Whether it's a social media post, press release, or flyer, all City communications should reflect our brand, values, and voice. By using approved messaging, logos, colors, and tone, we strengthen the City's identity and present a cohesive, professional image across departments.



Communication Channels

Our Tools

The City of Eureka uses a diverse set of communication tools, recognizing that different messages, and different audiences, require different approaches. Whether we're announcing a road closure, promoting a community event, or encouraging public input, we choose the channels that best fit the context. Our goal is always the same: to share information in a way that is timely and accessible. The tools outlined below each play a unique role in helping us connect with our community.

- **Digital Communication**

- **City Website and Talk Eureka:** The City's official website, eureka.gov, is the primary hub for all public information. The website provides residents with a reliable and accessible source for news, emergency alerts, project updates, and meeting agendas. It serves as the foundation of our communication system, and must reflect any updates, announcements, or outreach efforts shared through other channels. For more interactive engagement, Talk Eureka offers tools such as polls, timelines, and comment boards related to specific initiatives, which help foster greater community participation.
- **Eureka Alert! System (email/text alerts):** Community members can sign up for email and text alerts through the Eureka Alert! system, ensuring they receive timely updates on emergencies, street closures, and more.
- **Social Media:** The City maintains active accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to share updates, tell stories, promote events, and engage with the public. To ensure a consistent voice and avoid diluting the City's message, we will consolidate some departmental social media accounts under the City's primary channels. This approach strengthens brand alignment, improves reach, and makes it easier for the public to find accurate, up-to-date information in one place.
- **Social Media Policy Compliance:** All use of official City of Eureka social media accounts must comply with the *City's Social Media Policy (1.79, revised November 2024)*. This policy outlines standards for content, account management, comment moderation, public records compliance, and personal use guidance for employees.

Our Tools

Only authorized publishers may manage official accounts, and all content must reflect the City's professional standards, brand identity, and commitment to transparency and inclusion.

The Communications Division and City Clerk/Chief Information Officer (CIO) maintain access and oversight for all Official City Social Media Accounts. Departmental requests to create new accounts must be submitted for approval.

- **Key Requirements from the City's Social Media Policy:**

- Only Authorized Social Media Publishers may post or manage official content
- All official accounts must follow approved naming and branding standards
- Content must be professional, accurate, and free of political, religious, or defamatory statements
- Comments are moderated according to a clearly defined comment policy
- All posts are public records and must be archived
- Personal social media use must not be confused with official City positions
- **City eNewsletter:** The monthly eNewsletter from the City of Eureka delivers updates on City projects, services, and events directly to subscribers' inboxes. It also features stories that highlight Eureka's people, places, and programs.

- **Media Outreach**

- **Press Releases:** Official announcements are shared with local and regional media through well-crafted press releases that highlight City decisions, programs, and upcoming events.

Our Tools

- **Interviews & Press Conferences:** The Communications Division can assist in coordinating media interviews to help raise awareness and clarify important topics. During emergencies or major announcements, designated City staff may be called upon to participate in interviews and share timely, accurate information with the public. When appropriate, press conferences may also be organized to ensure consistent messaging across all communication channels.

- **Print & Visual Communication**

- **Flyers, Posters, Brochures, Banners, and Billboards:** Printed materials are distributed across City facilities and community gathering spots to share information in a visually engaging and accessible format. All designs adhere to the City's brand guidelines.
- **TV Slides (City Hall, Adorni):** Information slides are displayed on screens in public buildings to reinforce awareness of programs, deadlines, and events.

- **In-Person Engagement**

- **Tabling at Events:** City staff participate in community events, such as Arts Alive!, Friday Night Markets, and Get Out & Play Day, to share information, answer questions, and gather feedback in person.
- **Community Meetings:** Public meetings and workshops offer residents the opportunity to learn more, ask questions, and provide input on City projects and services.
- **Signage in High-Traffic Areas:** Temporary and permanent signage is placed throughout Eureka to share important information, promote programs, and draw public attention to City initiatives.

Our Tools

- **Evaluation Tools**

- **Surveys:** Online and in-person surveys enable the City to collect feedback from the community, evaluate the effectiveness of its communication, and inform future strategies.
- **Analytics:** Website traffic, social media metrics, and eNewsletter performance are regularly reviewed to assess engagement and refine content strategies.

- **Emergency Communications**

- **Timely Alerts and Updates:** During emergencies, the City will provide real-time updates through digital and physical channels, including the Eureka Alert! system, website banners, social media, signage, and media outreach, to ensure the public receives accurate and actionable information.

Flow of Information

The City of Eureka follows a structured and coordinated process to ensure that information flows clearly and efficiently, from internal teams to the public and across all communication platforms. This approach helps maintain consistency, reduces confusion, and reinforces the City's role as a trusted source for official information.

Centralized Messaging

The city website (eureka.gov) serves as the primary source for official information. All communication efforts—whether through social media, the eNewsletter, or printed materials—should reference or link back to the website as the central hub for details, documents, and updates.

Platform-Specific Use

Different messages require different formats and platforms. The Communications Division evaluates the content and its intended audience to determine the most effective channels for distribution. For example:

- Project announcements may be featured on the website, promoted through Talk Eureka, and shared via social media.
- Emergency alerts will be disseminated immediately through the Eureka Alert! system, social media, and the website homepage.
- Event promotions may be shared through flyers, TV slides, the eNewsletter, and community tabling.

Flow of Information

Internal Coordination

Departments collaborate with the Communications Division to ensure timely assistance and scheduling of content. Internal processes include:

- Submitting press releases and newsletter requests using standard templates.
- Confirming project details and timelines for accurate messaging.
- Ensuring media coordination and internal alignment for major announcements.
- Ensure social media use is consistent with the City's Social Media Policy and managed only by authorized staff.

Brand Alignment

All messaging should adhere to the City of Eureka Brand Guidelines, including the use of logos, fonts, tone, color palette, and visual elements. This ensures a consistent and professional presentation across all channels and materials.

Timeliness and Accessibility

Information should be published as early as possible to allow the community to respond, plan, or participate. All messaging should be accessible, ADA-compliant, and written in plain language, with translations considered when appropriate. Emergency updates are pushed immediately through Eureka Alert!, website banners, social media, and local signage.

Voice And Tone

All City communications should reflect Eureka's identity as a transparent, people-first city. Messages should be clear, friendly, informative, and inclusive—using plain language and a professional yet approachable tone. The City's voice should convey assurance without being overly formal, and express pride without coming across as promotional.



Content Strategy

- **City Focus:** City communications should be informative, non-political, and directly relevant to the people of Eureka. Our goal is to keep the community informed, engaged, and connected to the workings of Eureka's government. Content should focus on the projects and services we provide. All communications should be centered on Eureka, while avoiding the promotion of individuals or partisan viewpoints.
- **Content Types:** The City's messaging should include a blend of timely updates and storytelling that reflects community pride and civic life in Eureka. Core content types include:
 - **Event Notices:** Information about public meetings, City-hosted workshops, festivals, and events.
 - **Project Updates:** Progress reports on projects from different departments such as Public Works, Development Services, and Community Services
 - **Human-Interest Stories:** Features on residents, staff, volunteers, and local partnerships
 - **Historical Highlights:** Stories that connect the community to Eureka's history, heritage, and landmarks
- **Engagement Tools:** To promote two-way communication and foster community connections, the City will utilize interactive tools that invite input and participation. These tools include:
 - Polls and quick surveys to gather opinions or feedback
 - Q&A sessions to address frequently asked questions and clarify public concerns
 - Comment prompts on social media to encourage conversation and community response

Content Strategy

- **Crisis Protocols:** In the event of an emergency or rapidly developing situation, the Communications Division will coordinate closely with City leadership and public safety teams to ensure accurate and timely messaging. This includes:
 - Using pre-approved templates and messages for common emergency scenarios
 - Ensuring a designated spokesperson is available for media inquiries and public updates
 - Coordinating messages across departments and channels to avoid confusion or misinformation
- **Visuals:** All City communications must adhere to the City of Eureka Brand Guidelines to maintain consistency and professionalism. Visual content should include:
 - Branded graphics that use approved fonts, colors, and design elements such as the Victorian watermark
 - Local photography showcasing Eureka's people, places, and events (with proper photo releases)
 - Templates for flyers, social media posts, and presentations, to support staff and streamline production

Messaging Do's & Don'ts

Quick Messaging Guidelines

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ Focus on facts, services, and community impact | ✗ Do not speak for other agencies or officials |
| ✓ Use “we” to reflect the City as a whole—not individuals | ✗ Do not use political or promotional language |
| ✓ Link to official resources and avoid speculation | ✗ Avoid absolutes or promises |

Evaluation Metrics

The Communications Division will use these evaluation metrics to monitor engagement and guide improvements in how we share information. As communication tools continue to evolve, we will incorporate new ways to measure impact and adjust our strategies accordingly. The digital landscape is always changing, and we're committed to adapting alongside it to better serve our community.

- **Engagement and Reach:** Monitor public interactions with City content across digital platforms to measure interest and visibility. This includes:
 - Website activity, including traffic to key pages such as alerts, project updates, programs, and the News section
 - Performance of the City of Eureka eNewsletter, including open and unsubscribe rates
 - Social media engagement across official City accounts—likes, shares, comments, reach, and follower growth
 - Community attendance and participation at public meetings, workshops, and City-hosted events
- **Public Awareness and Satisfaction:** Utilize surveys and feedback tools to gauge the community's perception of the information and support they receive. This includes:
 - Post-campaign or post-event surveys
 - Public feedback forms on project pages and social media
 - Community sentiment expressed in comments, messages, or at events
 - Resident and business perceptions of City communications (qualitative input from stakeholders)

Evaluation Metrics

- **Media and Public Relations Performance:** Track the effectiveness of the City's media outreach and press strategy. This includes:
 - Volume and tone of media coverage in local and regional outlets
 - Press release pickups and follow-up interviews or features
 - Growth and engagement of the media contact list
 - Responsiveness and relationship-building with reporters and media partners
- **Internal Use and Staff Alignment:** Evaluate the internal use of communication tools, brand materials, and protocols to ensure consistency and alignment. This includes:
 - Staff adoption of branded templates, messaging, and visual standards
 - Cross-departmental collaboration on communication projects
 - Staff feedback on training, processes, and support resources

Evaluation Metrics

- **Tourism and Marketing Impact (Visit Eureka):** Measure the success of destination marketing and promotion through the Visit Eureka brand. This includes:
 - VisitEureka.com website traffic and referral sources
 - Engagement across Visit Eureka's social media channels
 - Coverage in travel media and tourism publications
 - Inquiries, foot traffic, and Welcome Center activity related to marketing campaigns

Evaluation is an ongoing process. The Communications Division will regularly review these metrics to refine strategies, inform decisions, and ensure that the City's messaging continues to resonate with and serve the community. These metrics may also inform broader strategic planning and collaboration across departments.

Communications Division Responsibilities

By collaborating with all departments, the Communications Division ensures that residents, businesses, visitors, and media receive clear and accurate information, presenting a unified and professional image of the City both online and in person.

Core Responsibilities

- **Strategic Communication Planning:**

- Develop and implement citywide communication strategies that align with City priorities.
- Support departments in promoting programs, projects, and initiatives to the community.
- Maintain and update the City of Eureka Communications Plan as a living document.

- **Brand Stewardship:**

- Ensure consistent use of the City of Eureka Brand Guidelines across all departments and materials.
- Manage and maintain official brand assets, templates, photo library and messaging tools.
- Provide training and support to staff on brand application.
- Ensure social media activity complies with the City's Social Media Policy, including public comment moderation.

Communications Division Responsibilities

- **Public and Media Relations:**

- Draft, review, and distribute press releases.
- Serve as the liaison between the City and media outlets.
- Coordinate media interviews, press events, and timely responses to media inquiries.

- **Digital and Social Media Management:**

- Oversee the City's primary social media accounts and support departmental platforms.
- Coordinate and schedule content.
- Monitor digital engagement and facilitate interactive communication with the public.

- **Website and Content Oversight:**

- Maintain the City's website content in partnership with departments, ensuring updates are accurate and accessible.
- Support the ongoing development and promotion of the Visit Eureka website and brand.
- Guide web accessibility, formatting, and analytics.

Communications Division Responsibilities

- **Internal Communication Support:**

- Facilitate collaboration across departments for consistent and coordinated messaging.
- Develop templates, toolkits, and processes that facilitate easier and more effective communication.

- **Emergency and Crisis Communication:**

- Coordinate timely and accurate public communication during emergencies in collaboration with City leadership and public safety teams.
- Maintain pre-approved messaging and protocols for emergency response scenarios.
- Serve as the designated Public Information Officer (PIO) as needed.

- **Tourism and Marketing Oversight (Visit Eureka):**

- Lead the implementation of marketing strategies to promote Eureka as a destination through the Visit Eureka brand.
- Manage content creation and advertising campaigns for Visit Eureka platforms.
- Track and evaluate the impact of tourism marketing and promotional efforts.

The City of Eureka Communications Plan is a guiding framework for how we engage with our community. It brings consistency to our messaging, helps us make the most of our communication tools, and ensures that what we share reflects the values at the heart of Eureka: transparency, trust, and civic pride.

This plan is designed to grow with us. As new technologies emerge and the needs of our community evolve, we'll continue to refine our approach. By communicating clearly and listening openly, we can strengthen connections and foster a more engaged and informed Eureka.

Conclusion

Appendix

- A. 2020 Brand Guideline Book
- B. Social Media Policy (1.79, Revised November 2024)

