

City of Lee's Summit

Communication's Audit Report

January, 2015





Contents

Audit Design	3-4
Background	
Methodology	
Summary Findings	5-27
Overall	
Strategic Organizational Communication	
Communications Alignment	
Community Information Needs	
Community Engagement	
Communication Sources	
Recommendations	28-40
Analysis	41-67
Overall	
City of Lee's Summit Communication Plan	
Demographic Analysis of 2013 Citizen's Survey	
Internal Stakeholders Interview Summary	
Communications Sources Audit	
Citizen Research Verbatims	
Appendix	
2013 Citizen Survey Demographic Cross Tabulations	



Audit Design

Background

In October 2014, the City of Lee's Summit commissioned an independent audit to determine the effectiveness of existing communication methods and processes and best practices for communicating with citizens, customers and partners. The City of Lee's Summit understands the importance of communications and *strives daily to increase and enhance public awareness, interest and understanding in the community in a responsive, accurate and easily accessible manner* (Communications Vision Statement).

Communications for the City reach a variety of targets including residents, media, government entities, community organizations, partners, local business, visitors, neighboring communities, educational systems, employees and elected officials. Communication tools are as diverse as the audiences served.

The City has utilized various measurement tools to gauge the effectiveness of external communications which indicate that citizens in general are satisfied with the City's efforts but which also showed that it is difficult to determine how much information is being pursued and acted upon by the community. The City recognizes that a core group of citizens have been vocal about their needs but is interested in hearing the voice of "the quiet citizen" to determine if their message is being received.

The ultimate goal for the City of Lee's Summit is to optimize communication methods to both **inform** and to **engage** its citizens.

Specific goals for the audit include:

- Assess the effectiveness of existing communications methods
- Assess the communication process to build on strengths and identify opportunities
- Determine how best to communicate with residents, customers and partners
- Provide recommendations for improved communication methods and processes
- Assess current communications staffing for the City



Methodology

Both primary and secondary research were utilized in the audit. Research includes:

- A review of the City’s communication plan, policies and procedures
- A review of available departmental reports
- A review of primary research conducted in the past 4 years including the 2013 Citizen’s Survey and the 2012 Feedback Report
- A review of marketing and communication collateral including brochures, flyers, videos, newsletters, advertising, and website
- A review of all social media platforms
- A review of the new marketing and branding standards
- Personal interviews with the City’s communications personnel
- Discussion groups and interviews with current residents (Qualitative research designed to uncover common themes and provide direction)

Internal		External
Miranda Landstra	Water Utilities	Discussion Group One: Seniors (55+, retired, no kids in household) n=1 Discussion Group Two: Young Professionals (24-35, working) n=2 Discussion Group Three: Mature Family (35-54, kids in household) n=7 Personal Interviews: Students (18-24) n=9 Seniors n=8 Young Professionals n=6 Mature Family n=1
Nigel Woodberry	Information Technology	
Caleb Casteel	Information Technology	
Jim Eden	Fire	
Beth Glover	Police	
Sarah Shore	Public Works	
Kara Taylor	Public Works	
Bob Hartnett	Public Works	
John Beaudoin	Development Center	
Jim McKenna	Administration (Chamber of Commerce)	
Shannon Gammon	Parks & Recreation	
Carol Culbertson	Parks & Recreation	
Kelli Welch	Administration	
Melissa Fears	Administration	
Barbara Moberg	Administration	
30 minute interviews conducted at City Hall on 10/17/14		60 minute discussions conducted at City Hall on 11/17/14 Interviews conducted on the Longview campus on 11/18/14 Telephone interviews conducted 11/20/14 – 12/10/14



Summary Findings

Overall

The City of Lee's Summit is committed to improving communications with residents and other key stakeholders in the city's progress. This commitment is evident when reviewing research, plans and procedures by the communications team and when listening to individual communications managers. It is also evident in the City's response to and desire to engage with residents, and in the variety of communication sources provided by the City. Past research indicates that citizen targets are satisfied with communications efforts and rate the city very highly in their efforts. However, while the City of Lee's Summit has been responsive to the community's needs, it appears that growth has been rapid and fragmented, without internal processes in place to handle the abundance of content required to feed all of the communications vehicles currently in place nor a plan to assist and ensure that communications are cohesive and collaborative between departments.

Although satisfaction with communication from Lee's Summit is high, and in fact higher than many neighboring communities, the City would like to remain a leader by continually adapting and improving their communication process. At some point, the City may experience a point of diminishing return, but it is felt and outlined in this report, that there is continued work to do to not only inform citizens but also to engage with citizens.

Success can be measured in a variety of ways contingent upon the City's specified goals of *informing* and *engaging* and their ability to implement and support recommended changes. For example:

- A significant increase in Facebook likes
- Increased attendance at City events
- Increased awareness and usage of Nixle
- Cross promotion of communications between departments
- Increased engagement with the public through the use of EngageLS or other social media
- Increased awareness of communication sources available
- Greater collaboration between departments

The City has numerous communication targets including the media, government entities, community organizations, partners, local businesses, visitors, neighboring communities, educational systems, employees and elected officials. Although the audit concentrates on *citizen* communications and recommendations, it should be noted that best practice recommendations can be applied to any target.



Strategic Organizational Communication

The development of a Communications Plan for the city should be based upon the Seven Principles of Strategic Organizational Communication (developed by Francois Basili) as outlined below:

- 1- Organizational Communication is a management process** with a specific business purpose and disciplined methods of development, implementation, and measurements. It is accomplished through a strategic communication plan reviewed and approved by senior management.
- 2- Organizational Communication is a change agent.** The purpose of communication is not just to convey information, but to influence behavior. It influences behavior by persuading people to take action toward the organization's objectives.
- 3- The primary responsibility for internal communication lies with all managers and supervisors.** The Organizational Communication unit is responsible for designing and delivering the system and tools that enable managers to play their role as communicators. Face to face communication with the immediate manager is the most effective form of communication, and is the way employees prefer to receive information relating to their job.
- 4- Communication is a social process.** Communication is a social process based on openness, sharing, and participation. Communication must recognize and leverage the human need for knowing and relating. Communication must be open, flowing vertically and horizontally throughout the organization. Communication must encourage and utilize user-created-content.
- 5- To be understood, communication must be grounded in the interests and language of the receiver.** While it seeks to achieve the organization's strategic objectives, it cannot do so effectively unless it uses a receiver-focused approach in both content and context.
- 6- To be noticed, communication must be compelling and continuous** as it must compete for the receiver's attention, communication must use highly compelling and creative ways to deliver its message. To be remembered and internalized, communication needs to be continuous and consistent. We cannot afford not to communicate.
- 7- To be influential, communication must be credible.** Without a high degree of credibility, the integrity and believability of the message will be lost, and the whole communication process will be a waste of resources. (c) 2003-2014 Francois Basili, President, HumaNext.



Development of a final communications plan for the City of Lee's Summit must have senior management buy-in including the City Council for it to be effective. This includes allocation of resources as needed and support for department managers tasked with communication. Each department should provide input to ensure the final plan can be implemented and results measured. Communications must also flow horizontally through departments before it can effectively flow vertically to the public and other key targets. Finally, once the plan is in place each communication's manager must ensure that communications are designed to:

- Influence behavior (What is the action you want the target to take?)
- Be social (two-way communication that is open)
- Speaks to your targets (What does this mean to me?)
- Be compelling
- Be continuous
- Be believable

Overall, the City of Lee's Summit is committed to ensuring strategic communications are delivered from each of the various departments. Individuals that comprise the communications "team" are extremely dedicated but are stretched too thin to accomplish all the tasks they need to complete each day. Without support from a larger centralized communications team they are left to determine the best way to disseminate information to their particular audience. In some cases, this leads to fragmented information and low awareness among citizens of available sources.

Following are Key Findings from the audit research.



Communications Alignment

A successful communication strategy must ensure that both internal and external communications are aligned. When internal sources do not fully support or are unable to support the organization's goals, it is significantly more difficult to maintain a communication plan that will inform and engage your intended audiences. The City recently adopted new internal communications tactics to ensure that the internal audience was informed and had a vehicle for feedback. These include a weekly newsletter and an upgraded Intranet which is now known as LSConnect. Research indicates that internal communication has improved significantly in the past year.

Despite improvements to the internal communication process, two areas of concern for Lee's Summit were identified in the audit. These include the current silo structure and a somewhat inconsistent roll out of the new branding standards.

Silos

The City of Lee's Summit utilizes a Silo approach with their communications team. In the past, this may have worked well, but several factors have contributed to a break down in internal information flow:

- An increased focus on communication strategies
- Rapid growth of communication sources
- New branding standards, logos and tagline
- Limited collaboration between communication silos
- An increase in expectations without an increase in staffing or time
- Departments increasingly fragmented by geography

The best communications provide the same message, in multiple ways. The City has the vehicles in place to deliver their message to appropriate targets in multiple ways. However, messaging is often fragmented by department or silo, without a communications *champion* to ensure that the flow of information is reaching intended audiences. The silo approach impedes collaboration as each department is ultimately responsible for their communication plan and how they execute that plan.

Internal interviews indicate that communications managers are frustrated with the lack of collaboration between departments. The monthly team meeting does little to promote collaboration between departments and is described as a reporting of activities rather than a planning session for future efforts. Communications managers feel there is no one guiding the process, no single voice speaking for LS, and no direction on how individual departments are to move forward.



New Branding

Internally, there are a few concerns with the new branding rollout. Responses during the internal interviews, as well as body language, indicate that the vision for the new branding may not have been adequately communicated and thus did not receive full internal buy in. Managers who do not fully understand the need for nor the vision for the new brand, tagline and logo are not likely to champion its use. Findings indicate that communications managers were given the new branding standards and left to determine how best to apply them to their communications efforts. Additionally, managers were not armed with the tools, such as templates, that were needed to make a seamless transition. Specifically:

- Some departments have a large stockpile of materials that they will continue to use until current reserves are exhausted.
- Some simply do not understand why the change was needed and how they are to implement the changes so have done nothing
- Departments with sub-brands/logos such as Fire and Police feel their shield logo is important as it alerts others that the information is urgent and from Fire or Police rather than the City. In many cases dual branding has been used in an effort to support the new branding standards.
- Some are retrofitting the new branding into old layouts, or forcing the new branding to fit which leaves them with materials and sources that do not adequately reflect the new branding standards.
- Some have had a difficult time applying the Yours Truly tagline to materials as it often does not fit with the message.

Overall, it appears that most departments have complied with the new branding standards and have done their best to incorporate them into their materials. However, some information sources are in need of updates and direction on how to apply the new brand. This includes some of the social media sites, some printed materials, press releases, letterhead and business cards.

Internally, all communication staff should understand the mission and vision for the new branding so they are able to communicate it to their external audience via materials, personal interaction, social media posts, etc. The misalignment between internal and external audiences can be seen on the City's Facebook page when citizens actively questioned the new Gateway monument. Citizens had questions about "why" this was done and if their tax dollars were used to pay for it. The City should have responded to individual comments and used Facebook as a platform to inform citizens of the reasons why.



Community Information Needs

The City of Lee's Summit expressed concern that they often do not hear from the "quiet customer" or the average citizen who does not provide feedback or voice their concerns. Primary research was designed to seek out the quiet citizen to determine if their information needs are being met.

Prior to the research, it was hypothesized that the Lee's Summit community is:

- Unaware of the various choices they have to receive information
- Ambivalent toward information sources until they need information
- Tend to use the same sources they have always used
- Have not actively sought out new sources for their information

Based on feedback from the discussion groups and personal interviews, the above hypotheses are correct in terms of how citizens view information from the City of Lee's Summit. Although differences exist among citizen groups (students, young professionals, mature families and seniors) in the types of information they seek and the sources they use, citizens in general tend to each use just a few sources to locate the information they need. Unaware of all of the communications vehicles available to them or unable to get information from sources they do not have access to, citizen targets have developed a system of locating information that is comfortable and convenient for them. For example, one respondent living close to downtown knows that Parks & Rec will hang large banners announcing upcoming events on the corner of Chipman and Douglas – she actively looks for these banners to learn about upcoming events.

"We don't watch TV and we live in a cul de sac so they won't deliver the paper. I read the newsletter I get online and follow Facebook."

"I get most of my information online or from the newspaper. Website, Facebook pages, and Parks & Rec. I used to watch LSTV but with At&t it is now an app and I don't watch it anymore – they made it a hassle."

"I want information available when I need it."

"I like getting the information but if it didn't come I wouldn't miss it."

"The best way to get me information is from different sources and during different times of the day or week."



Information Sources Selected

Respondents, when asked, were unaware of all of the communication materials and sources offered by the City. Some sources have had very limited exposure to the public such as Nixle which is a prime example of a communication source with very little awareness but high interest once respondents understood its function. The *Community Counts* newsletter is a source of information with surprisingly low awareness among participants even though it is mailed to most residents of Lee's Summit twice a year. *"It looks familiar but I am not sure I have ever received it."*

Sources with the highest awareness and usage among participants include:

- Website
- Facebook and Twitter
- Emails, eblasts and e-newsletters they have signed up for
- Direct mail such as Lee's Summit Illustrated or the water bill insert
- Local newspapers (news releases and media advisories)
- City hall
- Special events, fairs and carnivals
- Door hangers
- Word of mouth

Sources with the lowest awareness and usage include Nixle, Pinterest, YouTube, brochures, EngageLS, Community Counts newsletter, and advertisements. Sources with high awareness and low usage include LSTV, meetings and speeches. Each of these vehicles has the potential to become a valued source for information and for engagement with the citizens of Lee's Summit.

Information Sources by Target

The choice of information source varies by citizen target. Younger respondents (<35 years of age) are most likely to select an online source for information or one in which they have specifically signed up to receive information. The most important consideration with this target is to ensure that ***all communications are mobile friendly***. This includes the website, eblasts and e-newsletters and regular updates to Facebook and Twitter. As a rule, this target relies upon "need to know, right now" information such as downtown activities or weekend events. When searching for information, they are most likely to do so from their smart phone and need a website that is easy to search and social media that is updated frequently and regularly so that it shows up in their news feed.



Students in particular do not desire a lot of information from the city. They prefer to access information when they need it via the website or social media. In addition, students will go to local newspapers to locate information. Young professionals, especially those with children, are more likely to seek information out using a variety of sources, but again each must be accessed via their smart phone.

“I don’t think about it. If I want information I would go to their website I guess.”

“My phone is the best way to get information to me.”

“I use my phone for everything.”

“Usually when I need information we are out and about and I need to access it with my phone”

“I am looking for events, family friendly or a cheap date night. And we keep up with what is going on with the schools.”

Mature Families (described as those 35 to 54 with kids in the home) use a variety of sources including the website, Facebook and Twitter, local newspapers, emails, eblasts and e newsletters, Lee’s Summit Illustrated (and anything else P&R sends directly to them), posters, banners, word of mouth, city meetings and City Hall. The group is varied in their interests, but typically have one thing in common, which is family. Information directed toward this group should be focused on quality of life and family activities. This target is information hungry and although they use multiple sources to get their information, many find it a challenge to get the information they need, when they need it.

“I look for programs for the kids or events downtown, but it is hard to get information ahead of time. I don’t get information the way I wish I did. I would like an email.”

“I want information available when I need it.”

“I am just now at a point in my life where I have time to become involved.”

Seniors are more likely to take a passive role and let the information come to them through local newspapers, TV news, water bill insert and other direct mail. More active seniors will also use the website, email, eblasts and e newsletters, and City Hall to locate the information they need. Most often, seniors are interested in news from city government relative to issues that impact them such as scams, road construction and taxes. They are also interested in ways to save money and keep home repairs to a minimum such as they receive from the Water Department.

“There seems to be lots of crime. I would like some tips.”

“If you mail it to me, I will read it.”

“I read the newspaper and will go online sometimes.”



Because citizens use a select group of sources and because these sources are varied, it is extremely important to maintain a variety of communication mediums to ensure you are reaching and informing all citizens in need of information.

Generally, respondents do not feel it is difficult to find the information they need. However, several were quick to say they do not actively seek out information unless it is something they need right then or is an issue they are passionate about. Respondents claim it isn't because they do not care, but rather something they do not think about unless it is an activity or issue that specifically involves them or their family.

“Unless something has happened, something that will impact my household right now, I don't think about searching for information from the city.”

Information Desired

Respondents were asked what type of information they needed from the City and from specific city departments and how they want to receive the information. Overall, respondents asked for short, quick messages that directed them where to go for more information if desired (such as the website or a news story). Nearly all respondents felt that “breaking news” is best left to the media and claimed they would search online the local newspapers and TV stations to find the full story.

Additionally, respondents voiced a concern of information overload when considering the various departments that comprise the City of Lee's Summit. To them, it is all Lee's Summit. *“We can get information overload and we don't think about all these departments. To us it is just LS. I want to find all my information in one place.”*

Some respondents who are new residents of Lee's Summit complained that it is very hard for someone new to the area to locate all the departments, phone numbers and sources of information they need.

“As a transplant to Lee's Summit it was really hard to know where to go to get information. I didn't have a phone book and didn't know anyone yet. It was a challenge to even find out who picks up the trash. It's hard for people moving into the community.”

It is suggested that a Resident Guide be made available to citizens, and to city employees who provide customer service. The guide should be comprehensive relative to who to call for what services.

In order to improve communications, it will be important to maintain a consistent voice for Lee's Summit and streamline messages between departments. Further, it will be critical to design and maintain one clear source for all information such as the city website.



Information desired by department is as follows:

City Hall: In addition to having access to general information such as who to contact, building codes, permit information, etc. respondents would like to have information regarding:

- ✓ Council and committee meeting schedules and agendas
- ✓ Council meeting transcripts and videos
- ✓ Growth and development news/information (particularly as it pertains to their tax dollars)
- ✓ Election information
- ✓ News shared from other departments that is timely and important (such as road closures/improvements, events, or emergencies)

It is felt by most respondents that City Hall represents all departments within the City of Lee's Summit. Therefore, the city website and city offices should represent each department.

Additionally, many respondents claim to simply call City Hall or the individual departments with questions. Sometimes this is because they have been unable to find it on the website or through other searches and sometimes this is perceived as the most direct way to obtain the information. However, several respondents cited incidents where no one was able to answer their question or provided them with inaccurate information.

"I tried calling people to find out how to install a car seat and called the Police, Fire and no one could tell me who to call. It's not worth the trouble. I tried to search online first and then called but they had no idea who I should talk to."

"I needed to contact the Water department and couldn't find the number. I ended up calling the one in KC and they gave me the number."

"We had a storm sewer installed wrong and it took us weeks to find the right person to call to get it repaired. You call but no one knows who you are supposed to talk to!"

Police: In general, respondents do not desire ongoing information from the LSPD. Instead they would like to be alerted to emergencies, current scams, and crimes in their area, although they do not want to hear about "every little thing" that happens. Some desire general information and safety tips, but others feel they are past this point in life and do not require safety tips from the police department on a regular basis. Rather respondents would like to have this type of information available to them on the website to access when they need it. Some voiced a desire to hear about the positive things accomplished by LSPD

A few older respondents would like to have information about the individual officers that make up the LSPD. This is an excellent opportunity to foster engagement between the Police department and the community. *"I would love a 'get to know the officers' page on the website."*



Fire: As with the police department, respondents do not require ongoing information from the LSF. They prefer to receive information about emergencies in their area, fire safety, and when the Fire department is hosting or participating in an event. Residents would also like to know when they have done something positive within the community.

Water

Respondents who rent or own a home are aware of the water bill insert. Those still receiving a paper bill also say they will glance at the information. Generally, respondents say that *“as long as everything is okay, I don’t really want to hear from them.”* Citizens are interested in knowing when water services will impact them such as a water turn off. They also want to see good news about how their tax dollars are spent and improvements that make their life better.

Public Works

Again, respondents are interested in information that directly impacts them. They desire the following information:

- ✓ Current news or events
- ✓ Road conditions
- ✓ Road closures
- ✓ Coming improvements
- ✓ Completed improvements
- ✓ Street cleaning schedule
- ✓ Scheduled repairs in the neighborhood
- ✓ Snow routes and plowing schedule
- ✓ Information on who to contact for pot holes or suggested improvements

“This is one time I want a lot of information.”

“I like hearing a story about a road being finished. And tell me why they did it because sometimes I wonder why they went to the trouble and expense. When they explain, it makes sense.”

“If I am paying taxes for projects I want to know if the projects have been started and completed. I like to keep tabs on that.”



Parks & Recreation

By far the most popular department within the City of Lee's Summit, respondents seem satisfied with current communications from P&R mentioning online, eblasts, newsletters, Lee's Summit Illustrated, banners, posters and social media sources as current methods they use for locating information about events and programs.

"They are pretty good at letting you know what is coming up and special events."

"They do a good job of getting me the information."

"P&R is the most effective because they use multiple ways to let me know what is going on. They do Facebook and emails and newsletters."

Respondents do not mention additional types of information required from P&R other than events, programs, activities and general news regarding local parks which they currently receive. However, citizens would like a bit more frequent receipt of information as they sometimes are alerted to activities or programs at the last minute. Email and social media (Twitter and Facebook) were cited as the best way to get them urgent information such as sign-up deadlines or weekend events. Lee's Summit Illustrated is considered somewhat useful and some will hang onto the publication, but most prefer email reminders.

"P&R will send out emails when things are coming up. They are so much handier than LS Illustrated because they are alerting me to things that are happening right now."



Information Delivery

Although some slight differences exist by department, citizens desire to receive their information from a few primary sources.

Website

First and foremost, citizens want an easy to use, content heavy website that is updated regularly and consistently. Information on the site should be organized for ease of use and should be inclusive of all city departments. Citizens do not draw distinctions between the various departments that make up LS government and want their information to be contained on one site (or with links on the city site to take them directly where they need to go). The website is the one source mentioned by all citizen targets as one they use and will continue to use in the future.

Younger respondents want the website to be mobile friendly and easy to search from a smart phone or tablet.

Respondents were vocal when talking about the website and their desire for easy-to-access information. Although some information listed below is currently available on the city website, citizens either have difficulty finding it or have never run across it while searching. In addition to the general information contained on the website, specific requests include:

- ✓ Meeting schedules and agendas
- ✓ A comprehensive Community Calendar
- ✓ Easy sign-ups for newsletters, events, programs
- ✓ Information about events and activities happening in the city
- ✓ Access to information from all departments

Citizens want the website to be updated regularly and for the information to be accurate. In its current state, the website does not function optimally as an information source for the city. Citizens voice frustration with locating the information they need.

“Why should I have to come to City Hall to find information? I want it on the website.”

“It’s a giant website. It’s hard to find information.”

“It would be nice to have better access to information, easier resources.”

“I visit the website a lot but there isn’t a lot of information other than who to contact.”

“The website is hard to navigate and not mobile friendly. When I am on my phone I do not click a lot of links because it is easy to lose your place.”



“From what I remember they do not update the website very often. The need to keep their site more current. It’s not the most user friendly website. Information is hard to find and sign-ups are hard to do. You can call someone and they are happy to do it for you but in a city of 93,000 people they don’t need everyone calling them to do sign-ups when they should be able to do it online.”

As one citizen stated: *“You are either serious about communicating or you are not. The website is the first thing.”*

Email

Respondents like the convenience of information coming to them via email, especially urgent information. In addition, respondents like emails to provide links if further action is required, such as signing up for a P&R activity or program.

In general, they request short, one page emails, once per week. While the information desired varies by department, respondents agree an easier way to sign-up for emails, eblasts or eNewsletters must be applied to the website.

“They have this feature but it is very hard to find on the site. I have signed up for a few but there is no way to tell what I have signed up for and what is available now.”

“A weekly email with events for the next week, meetings and events. A short, quick read.”

Nixle fits perfectly with respondents’ desire to have information sent electronically and their desire to hear emergency alerts.

Direct Mail/Door Hangers

Many of the older citizens including seniors and mature families, prefer information that comes directly to their home such as newsletters, Lee’s Summit Illustrated, water bill insert, and other printed materials. For Public Works and Water, these respondents also prefer door hangers when information is urgent and the issue directly impacts them.

Social Media

Facebook and Twitter are definitely preferred ways to obtain information from the City of Lee’s Summit. Mature families (35-54) are the heaviest users of Facebook with younger citizens more likely to follow Twitter.

“Any of them with a Facebook page I will look to see if they have a Twitter feed because it is easier to find information.”
“I prefer Twitter because not everything will show on Facebook unless I go to their page.”



Respondents caution that both Facebook and Twitter must be updated regularly and frequently for them to see information. Infrequent posts do nothing to inform them and the pages are often disregarded if posting is not done on a regular basis. A few respondents also feel that the City is slow to release information via social media.

“I am pretty satisfied but sometimes it seems like the city is slow, like it is an afterthought. They don’t always get the stories out quickly on FB. I am getting the news after the fact rather than before when I could do something about it.”

Older respondents (55+) are not frequent users of social media and mention only Facebook as a potential source of information. While many do not have personal Facebook accounts, they do mention seeing items on other people’s news feeds.



Departmental Summary

The following summary highlights the types of information desired from each department as well as the desired way to receive or retrieve the information. Please note that most of the information requested is already being provided by each department.

<u>Department</u>	<u>Type of Information</u>	<u>Information Source</u>
City Hall	Who to contact City information (permits, codes, regulations) Meetings schedules/agendas Council meeting transcripts and videos Growth and Development news Election news/information Emergency information from various departments	Primary: Website, Social Media, eNewsletter Secondary: Newspaper/TV news, lobby screens
Police	Crime prevention Good news Emergency alerts Scams and crime in the area Safety tips	Primary: Website, Social Media, Nixle Secondary: Newspaper/TV News, eblasts, print, personal presentations
Fire	Good news Emergency alerts/Pandemics/Crisis Communication Fire safety Department activities/events	Primary: Website, Social Media, Nixle Secondary: Newspaper/TV News, eblasts
Water	Whenever water services will be impacted Money saving tips How tax dollars are spent	Primary: Door Hangers, eblasts, Social Media, Secondary: Website, Direct mail (inserts)
Public Works	Current news or events Road conditions and closures Coming improvements Completed improvements Street cleaning schedule Scheduled repairs in the neighborhood Snow routes and plowing schedule Who to contact for pot holes/suggested improvements	Primary: Social Media, Nixle, Website Secondary: eblasts, direct mail
Parks & Recreation	Activities/Programs Events Parks information	Primary: Website, Social Media, eNewsletter (weekly) Secondary: Lee's Summit Illustrated, posters, direct mail, banners, print



Target Summary

The following chart outlines potential targets, their motivators, and preferred sources of information. This summary is a compilation of the primary research conducted for the audit as well as the 2013 Citizen Survey.

<u>Target</u>	<u>Motivator</u>	<u>Information Source</u>	<u>Opportunities</u>
New residents	Who do I call? Where do I go?	Website, City Guide, Social Media Inserts and other direct mail	Better integration into community Less reliance on face to face at City Hall
Seniors	Why did they do that? What can hurt me? What can cost me?	Website, Local news, Inserts, Newsletters, direct mail, KC Star	Engage a less active segment of LS Less reliance on face to face at City Hall
Families	What's good for my family? What can my family do?	Website, Social Media, Local news, Lee's Summit Illustrated, eblasts, eNewsletters, posters, banners	Greater participation in events/programs Keep families active in Lee's Summit Engage the next generation of citizens
Students/Young Professionals	What's happening right now?	Mobile friendly – Website, Social Media, Local Newspapers (online) Lee's Summit Illustrated	Greater engagement among young leaders and business owners Greater participation in Lee's Summit
Involved citizens	"I am very interested in the operation of Lee's Summit"	All sources: up to date and accurate	Create community advocates that disseminate accurate information and serve as another source of information (word of mouth)
Business	How can I grow my business?	Website, Advertisements, Local Newspapers, Regional and National Media, Council Meetings, Social Media, Direct Mail	Enhance and assist growth and development in LS
Males	What do I need to know?	News/Media (broadcast and KC Star)	Greater engagement in community
Females	How will this impact my family, my household, my job?	Website, Social Media, eNewsletters and eblasts, Lee's Summit Illustrated, Direct Mail, Local Newspapers	Greater engagement and involvement in community Greater participation in community events



Community Engagement

One of the primary objectives of the communications audit is to determine how to create an informed and engaged citizenry. Results indicate that the sources are in place to adequately *inform* residents but additional work will be needed, internally, to *engage* the LS community.

A variety of communication vehicles are used to provide information to residents and other stakeholders. This is ideal when the goal is to inform a majority of your audience, and the audience is segmented. However, how do you get the average citizen to engage and actively seek out information?

Inbound versus Outbound Communication

Marketing efforts have traditionally been “outbound” from the supplier to the public through advertising, direct mail and telemarketing. The explosion of social media in the past few years has put a spotlight on a powerful but often untapped marketing technique called inbound marketing.

The Citizens Survey and primary research indicate that residents currently use social media and word of mouth (forms of inbound marketing) to obtain information about Lee’s Summit. Although the dissemination of information to the community is not the same as selling a widget, inbound techniques are critical to an engaged community. This involves providing value and earning loyalty rather than simply pushing out your message. The City is well positioned to take advantage of inbound communication techniques which create an environment for two-way communication, actively involved audiences, and a community that is well-informed.

The use of social media is a must have for any inbound communication strategy and the City has taken advantage of available platforms. There are currently 10 Facebook pages, 2 Twitter accounts, 1 Pinterest account, a YouTube channel and 3 departments utilizing Nixle. While the sheer number of social media outlets for the City is impressive, there is much to do to ensure they are used properly and foster citizen engagement. For instance, a recent post regarding the new gateway monument received several comments. Some good, some critical, some directly asking the City to respond:

“Apparently most of the funds were covered by sponsors. I'd like to see the City's response posted here for all.”

The lack of response to this comment is a missed opportunity to engage and inform. Two-way communication will be critical if the City truly wants an engaged citizenry. Lee’s Summit has the sources needed to inform their citizens, but have not put into place the strategies and staffing required to create engagement.



It is also noted that some managers feel there is a real fear among internal stakeholders of hearing negative or critical things from their residents. EngageLS is an information source that could provide invaluable information to the City, engage your citizens, and provide for true two-way communication. However, the site has not been active for over a year and little was shared when it was active.

*“I signed up for EngageLS but there has been nothing on it.
When it was active I made a suggestion and it was neither acknowledged nor acted upon.”*

When two-way communication is stifled through nonresponse or inactivity, citizens are left to wonder if there is something to hide. Continued inactivity will lead potential users to find other sources for their information. The danger is that they will find inaccurate sources of information and form opinions that are not based upon fact. **It is far easier to lead the discussion than to try to redirect it.**

Community Profile

Lee’s Summit is not a highly diverse community but does contain a variety of citizen targets. Demographic profiles indicate the citizens of Lee’s Summit are affluent, educated and have established roots in the community. In addition, the high proportion of home ownership, above average incomes, high graduation rates and college attendance rates indicate Lee’s Summit citizens are likely to be informed and involved in their community. This provides an opportunity to reach residents in a variety of ways as long as each target’s unique needs are taken into consideration.

For example, while social media is certainly the newest trend in communications, there are residents and targets that are highly unlikely to use this source to obtain information about the City. Like fitting a square peg into a round hole, it is not feasible to have high participation by all targets, for all sources. **The goal is not to have 100% usage of each communication source, but to have high awareness, usage and engagement through the use of all available sources.**



Community Advocates

The City has voiced concern that feedback has been limited, much of the time, to a core group of citizens that frequently voice their opinion. When policies and plans are made based upon a limited sample of citizens, communications can be skewed toward that specific segment of the population. While it is important to hear from a variety of residents in determining the proper communications mix, it should be understood that every community has a core group of citizens that will raise their voice to be heard. These are the citizens that frequently volunteer for committees, consistently know what is going on in their community, attend public meetings and provide feedback. While these citizens may not always speak for the quiet consumer, they are a valuable resource in fostering engagement and pushing information out to the proper audience.

The use of citizen advocates is a prime example of harnessing the power of your most vocal citizens and stakeholders in developing a robust inbound marketing plan. They can also help to combat misinformation that spreads through the community and direct residents to the proper information sources.

Primary research also indicates that the “quiet citizen” is doing fine. They are generally quiet for a reason – primarily because they are content with the status quo. When asked if they felt they had a voice, respondents all agreed that if they had something to say, they would be able to do so in the City of Lee’s Summit.



Communication Sources

In reviewing communications collateral, several sources stand out as those most likely to help you reach your goal of an informed and engaged community. These include: cityofls.net, social media including EngageLS and Nixle, a weekly eNewsletter, and local media. This does not negate the need for additional sources of information, but with finite resources and time, special emphasis should be given to the most popular and used mediums.

Specifically, communications materials must be:

- User friendly
- Consistent
- Easy to find
- Offer 2-way communication when possible

Primary Sources

Website

When developing a communications strategy, the website should function as the hub for all your communication efforts. This is often the first place residents will look to obtain the information they need. Once you have them on the website, you can then direct them to other sources of information which are targeted toward specific users. The current website requires a major update if it is to function as the hub for all City communication. In its present form the site is large, complicated, hard to navigate and has an outdated design. All of which lead to a bad user experience.

Various departments voiced a desire to participate in the design of their specific page(s) on the website to ensure that the most important information is presented and to direct how their information is presented.

Social Media

Social media efforts are expansive but not collaborative. In addition there is little two-way communication occurring. For social media sites to be effective there is an element of entertainment that must be present. Whether this is visual (videos, photos), humorous, or interactive (contests, questions, surveys), each post should be written to connect with the end user. Recent posts on the City's Facebook page have shown great improvement over the past two months by incorporating these engagement techniques. Continued efforts will be required to increase page likes (and therefore reach) and engagement by interacting with users of all social media sites in the form of likes, comments and shares.



Social media consists not only of Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and YouTube. EngageLS is a system adopted by the City more than a year ago. Although awareness for EngageLS is low among citizens, which is viewed as a positive at this stage, it can provide an excellent vehicle for community engagement. Because it allows citizens to ask a question and hear back directly from a city official it is viewed as a legitimate platform for discussion. As one savvy research participant stated “You won’t know if you are doing anything good unless you have a mechanism for feedback.”

Finally, Nixle provides another prime vehicle to communicate with the community. Although awareness of the system is low among citizens, interest was very high among research respondents once they became aware of it. The ability to get information out quickly and on multiple channels, especially during an emergency or urgent situation is invaluable in connecting with the community to make sure they are informed.

Internally, systems do not appear to be in place to handle two-way communication via social media sites. This may be due to limited staffing and hours in the day or a fear of actually engaging with citizens when their comments are negative. The use of social media does require a certain “letting go” of controlled communication and rather relies upon organic conversation to push your message out. While negative comments can and will surface, this should be viewed as an opportunity to educate, inform or explain the City’s position not only to the complainant but to all those following the discussion.

eCommunications

Ecommunications including eNewsletters, eblasts and emails are highly desired by citizens. Weekly updates are a good way to keep citizens informed and the use of embedded links that direct users to the city website or other online sources will encourage engagement whenever something is required of the recipient (such as watching a video on YouTube, or completing a sign-up for a P&R activity). An easy sign-up will be required to encourage use of this source.

Media Relations

It appears media relations are good between the City and local newspapers/broadcast TV. Media relations have become a key focus with the emphasis on Growth and Development in Lee’s Summit and should continue to be as the media is critical to a successful communications plan. Because several prime targets rely upon local newspapers and TV news broadcasts, it is important for the City to be proactive with local media to communicate with their many targets.



Secondary Sources

Print

Print materials are numerous among the various departments and for the most part do a good job of informing specific audiences. Citizens have come to rely upon specific forms of print including Lee's Summit Illustrated, bill inserts and banners from the Parks Department. Many departments also use print materials as handouts at community events which is an excellent way to get your message out. However, it is important to remember that most printed materials have a very short shelf-life. For this reason, information contained on printed pieces should always be available through other sources such as the website and Facebook.

LSTV

Recent changes to the cable access channel have addressed some concerns voiced by residents. Research indicates that some citizens do watch LSTV but their ability to access the channel, the lack of a programming guide and the perception that the channel simply plays the same thing over and over have kept usage of LSTV relatively low. However, this is a prime source to inform and engage the public and steps should be taken to tighten up programming, provide a program guide, and introduce collaborative pieces that span multiple departments.

Community Counts Newsletter

The *Community Counts* newsletter is an excellent example of collaboration between city departments, is well designed and provides citizens with useful information. Although the 2013 Citizen Survey shows a high percentage of citizens aware of the newsletter, audit research indicates that most do not recall receiving or reading the newsletter. This may be due to the recent name change and/or the shift to less frequent delivery (twice a year). Regardless of overall awareness, the newsletter has perhaps the greatest reach of any of your current information sources and has the potential to become a primary source of information.

Advertisements

Citizens are aware of the new campaign and despite some negative reaction toward the tagline, most citizens are aware of the ads and have renewed pride in Lee's Summit because of the campaign. Advertising can reach a broad segment of your community and is a good source for establishing the LS brand. Posting of the ads on multiple platforms including Pinterest, YouTube, and Facebook has extended the reach of traditional advertising mediums and enabled citizens to engage with the City.



Recommendations

Following are specific recommendations for consideration in the development and implementation of a new communication plan for the City of Lee's Summit. At the core of these recommendations is the need for the City of Lee's Summit to adopt a communications strategy that fosters a culture of collaboration and open communication coupled with engagement with residents and stakeholders. While past efforts have resulted in high satisfaction within the community, this will be the best way to truly foster support and build community understanding in the future. In addition, it will be the most effective way for the City to meet its objective of informing *and* engaging external audiences and stakeholders.

A new communications strategy, as recommended, must be supported by city leadership and management if it is to be successful. This will require that management understand the importance of communications efforts and view them as an essential element of every project and strategy implemented by the City. Resources will need to be allocated in order to accomplish all that needs to be done. Internal stakeholders may need to adjust how they have completed tasks in the past. And some cultural changes will be required in the development of a central communications team.

Elements that are critical to the plan include:

- ✓ A centralized communications team
- ✓ A high level of collaboration between departments
- ✓ Internal stakeholders who understand the vision and the message and are consistent in their delivery of the message (The "voice" of LS)
- ✓ Information sources and materials that are attractive and easy to use
- ✓ Information sources that are varied to ensure you are meeting the needs of all external audiences
- ✓ Communications that are regular and sustained



Centralize Communications Team

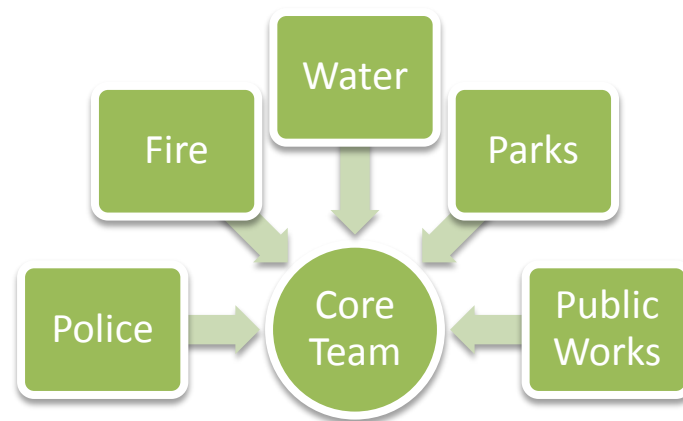
In order to truly improve communications within the City of Lee's Summit, it will be necessary to centralize your communications efforts. The departmental or "silo" approach has not been conducive to a free flow of information between departments resulting in missed opportunities, stopgaps in the process, and frustration among managers. In addition, external audiences perceive all departments to simply be "Lee's Summit" without distinctions between departments. Centralizing the communications team will provide a single voice and vision for all communications efforts.

The benefits of a centralized communications team are:

- ✓ Greater collaboration between team members which ensures that information is delivered in a timely manner and to all appropriate targets
- ✓ Provides support to individual communications managers
- ✓ Ability to communicate a single vision and keep everyone moving in the same direction
- ✓ Ability to react quickly and keep the information flowing
- ✓ Provides for greater consistency
- ✓ Assigns a champion for all communications efforts

It is recommended that a core communications team be developed which includes a Communications Director (new position), a social media manager (new position), and support staff (including a new IT assistant) in addition to the current communications managers and PIO's. Job descriptions will not change, just the way in which tasks are accomplished on a weekly basis.

The Communications Director will have responsibility to oversee and direct an internal team comprised of the City's PIO (Communications Coordinator), Marketing, Economic Development and IT/Video. The internal team will be responsible for working with each department manager or PIO including: Water, Fire, Police, Public Works and Parks. It is recommended the core communications team be located at City Hall in close proximity to each other. While not feasible for the department managers and PIO's to office at City Hall, frequent communication between the core team and the departments will be critical to a successful team effort.



A few thoughts on internal communication. Continue to seek after those things outlined in the communication plan. While this may require a shift in culture, nurturing these characteristics in your internal team is what will drive an informed and engaged community.

- Be visible
- Communicate frequently
- Be honest, open and trustworthy
- Understand that everything you say and do communicates something
- Understand that everything they do not do and say communicates something
- Answer questions before they are asked
- Be engaged in developing/planning communications
- Engage the communications function as a business partner
- Ask for input and use it



Collaborate

Regardless of whether or not a centralized communications team is adopted, it is strongly recommended that the city adopt a significantly more collaborative approach to communications efforts. Implementing a system that encourages collaboration will help ensure that communications are timely, cohesive, and accurate. A collaborative environment is one where team members share knowledge freely, learn from one another, shift workloads when needed to keep communications flowing, share resources and work together to complete the job.

As with centralizing the communications team, a truly collaborative effort will require support from city leaders and managers to be successful. This means that time and space must be allocated for communications managers to interact with one another and leadership must take the lead in fostering social relationships between team members. This means that team members must spend time together and leadership must communicate openly and honestly. Specific steps that can be taken to enhance collaboration include:

- Define the common goal and purpose of the team and set realistic expectations for each member
- Clarify the role of each team member
- Communications between team members must flow freely and frequently
 - This is a vital role for the core communications team to fulfill/This will be much easier to accomplish with a formal and centralized communications team
- Hold regular Team Meetings
 - This can be weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly as needed by the team, but they must be consistent and planned
 - Meetings should be focused upon future communications and how the team can best deliver the news versus a reporting of past communication efforts
- Provide training to team members to ensure adequate back-up and support for specific functions such as social media posting or dealing with the media
- Additional training or continuing education should be considered to stay up to date on the latest resources and ways to communicate
- Utilize content calendars and planners to plan communications for the next week, month or even year
 - Develop themes for monthly communications (if appropriate) so that all departments are aligning their messages around a central idea or theme
 - Understand that emergencies and unforeseen events will impact the calendar
- Focus upon cross communications between departments to get the information out through multiple sources and from multiple departments as appropriate
- Develop templates (specific to department) to use for all communications (i.e., press release, brochure, business card)
 - This will support the marketing and branding objectives already established and will help unify the team



Communicate your Communications

Findings from the citizen research indicate that residents are unaware of all the types of communication sources they have available to them. Nixle is an example of one source with very low participation, but very high interest when described to residents. While a few news stories were published when Nixle first became available, nothing else has been done to increase awareness of this service.

It is recommended that a plan be developed to:

- Tell residents what information sources are available
- Tell residents how to communicate with you

Specific tactics to communicate information sources available will depend upon the type of communication, but consider the following:

1. Nixle

It is noted that the City is currently utilizing many of the listed tactics below. However, it does take time and consistency in delivering the message before a substantial number of people will sign up. Because the system is based on emergency alerts, most citizens will not think to sign up until they need it. The best way to see an increase in users is to promote the service right before, during and right after an emergency event when the need to know what is going on is urgent and relevant to citizens. In addition, the messaging must be compelling and speak to the end users i.e., the benefit to them of signing up. Finally, messaging should continue to address citizens' primary concerns: Is it free? How many messages will I receive? How do I receive messages?

While the following are currently being utilized, it is recommended that the frequency increase and that particular attention is paid to the timing of the message.

- a. Seek coverage from local newspapers
 - i. identify opportunities when Nixle would provide a distinct advantage to external audiences and is relevant news for local media to increase the probability of it being published (such as a major snow storm or preparation for a major snow storm)
- b. Utilize LSTV to describe the service, benefits of the service, and how to sign up for alerts during emergency situations
- c. Use a burst on the website with a direct link to sign-up
- d. Include a description of the service and how to sign up in each issue of Community Counts
- e. Talk about it on Facebook and Twitter (with a link to sign up) at least twice a month to help boost participation and immediately around any emergency or urgent event. Nixle should be promoted on Police, Fire, City, and Public Works Facebook pages.



- f. Use the profile photo and call to action button on the city's Facebook pages to promote Nixle and easy sign up
 - i. Changing the profile photo will show the post in the news feed and help draw users to the actual page
- g. Include information about Nixle on printed information provided by Police, Fire and Public Works
- h. When Police, Fire and Public Works promote the site during events offer a freebie for signing up on the spot. This can be a low cost item such as piece of candy, an entry to win XX, or a chance to tour the fire station. Just make sure the freebie is relevant and intriguing to your audience.
- i. Utilize the school system to promote Nixle, especially when they are anticipating snow days.

2. Facebook/Twitter

- a. Make sure the Facebook and Twitter icons are always present on all printed and digital communications
- b. Incorporate "like" contests into events and activities
- c. Offer a promotional item to residents who visit City Hall and like the page on the spot
- d. Offer a promotional item or freebie to those who like the page at events or activities
- e. Pitch a story to local media regarding the use of social media within the public sector
- f. Increase frequency of posts
- g. Increase engagement by utilizing questions (simple fill in the blank posts), humor, history of Lee's Summit and photos

3. EngageLS

- a. If the service will be actively utilized, increased awareness is a must
- b. Pitch a story to local media
- c. Post information on Facebook and Twitter
- d. Use a burst on the website with a link to sign-up
- e. Utilize LSTV to describe the site, what it will be used for and how to sign-up
- f. Include sign-up information in the Community Counts newsletter
- g. Send an eblast

Communicating to external audiences what is available and how to utilize it should be continued for Nixle, Facebook and Twitter. It is also recommended for cityofls.com, EngageLS (if this will be used in the future), and ecommunications (such as newsletters and eblasts).



Target Communications

As varied as the sources of information, are the targets for that information. The audit identified several specific targets and the sources they prefer (page 21). When developing communications, always consider the desired target(s) and utilize those sources most likely to reach that target. For instance:

- Older citizens prefer local newspapers, TV news and printed items mailed to their home
- Families prefer the ease of a website, social media and printed materials mailed to their home
 - Provide items that can be kept for future reference such as refrigerator magnets, guides and calendars
 - Make sure social media posts are addressing their concerns and providing information on *upcoming* events
- New residents need to know where to go and who to contact
 - Develop a resident guide to introduce them to city services and sources of information
- Younger residents require mobile friendly sources and quick, short messages
- Businesses are concerned about how to grow their business so help them reach out to local audiences via social media
 - Recent Facebook posts highlighting new businesses is an excellent example of supporting your business targets

In addition, if an objective and a desired outcome is established for each communication, it is often evident which communication source to use. This also helps to avoid communications for communications sake and provides a strategic reason for each communications event. While communication should be strategic, they also need to break through the clutter in order to actually engage the target. Consider the following strategic communications which use less traditional methods for delivery.

If the objective is to create greater engagement with younger residents who are typically not as involved in City government, consider a Twitter account for each city council member and advertise it in places where students and young adults congregate. Use Facebook and Twitter to post teasers before a council meeting and a link to the recap of the meeting after the meeting is held.

The Police department is specifically interested in reaching 18-24 year old males as most crimes are committed against and among this group. Consider reaching this target through fun and interactive ways, as most young men do not actively seek this type of information. Examples may include:

- Presentations in high schools and criminal justice classes at local colleges
- Host a video game competition
- Sponsor a fantasy football league



- Host a Police Academy Obstacle Course Competition
- Partner with national organizations such as Beat The Heat (non-profit comprised of Police and Firefighters who use marked emergency drag cars to gain the interest of their target – beattheheatinc.org)
- Utilize nontraditional venues to communicate such as bathroom stall ads in local restaurants and bars, chalking on campus sidewalks

The Parks department can partner with the City and sponsor a “yarn bombing” or similar activity throughout the city which is designed to:

- Capture media attention
- Involve the public
- Be community focused
- Get people talking and encourage word of mouth sharing
- Build community
- And, ultimately provide a vehicle for delivering your message

(A yarn bombing is when large statues or structures are covered in a knitted item.) This could be an ideal way to celebrate the 150 year anniversary of Lee’s Summit and create excitement around upcoming events. Large scale, citywide “events” such as a yarn bombing are perfect for building community and capturing not only local media attention, but also regional and national attention.



Strengthen/Develop Major Sources

Several current sources of information require updates or a renewed focus in order to be effective vehicles for communication. These include the city website, EngageLS, Nixle, other social media sites and media relations. In addition, development of a Resident Guide and a weekly eNewsletter are considered highly desirable.

Cityofls.net

As previously discussed, the website requires major updating in order to effectively communicate with external audiences and to function as the hub for all other communications. It is recommended that the website be redesigned as follows:

- ✓ Utilize the communications team to provide input on the overall design and information to be contained on department pages
- ✓ Utilize the new branding but incorporate it into the latest web design tactics
 - Lots of white space
 - A home page that serves as a hero page (think big, beautiful photos of Lee's Summit)
 - Easy navigation tools with less important information contained in the footer
- ✓ Consider organizing the information by event or need:
 - Are you opening a business?
 - Are you new to the area?
 - Do you have a home building or remodeling project?
- ✓ Develop a community calendar for the home page
- ✓ Provide easy sign-up for newsletters, Nixle, and other communications
 - Use a burst or pop up on the home page to alert users to sources
 - Create a page or link so that users can see what they have signed up for and view new items as they become available
 - Use a side bar for email sign-ups
- ✓ Post LSTV programming guide or provide a link



EngageLS

Strongly recommended that this medium become active to create greater engagement and a sense of community involvement. City leadership will need reconcile any fear they have with negative comments and embrace the medium as a prime vehicle for communicating with external audiences, providing feedback and rationale and tapping into the wants and needs of your community. EngageLS must be actively worked, feedback must be provided to those who post questions or comments, and the system must be “advertised” to the community to increase participation.

Nixle

This system is fully in place and ready for an increase in participation. It is recommended that the benefits of Nixle be communicated to external audiences (as previously discussed) to increase sign-ups.

Facebook

Facebook posts have improved substantially in the last few months with increases in page likes occurring among all city/department pages. Continue posting daily and consider the following best practices:

- ✓ Update the profile information in the About section of each page. List the city website address and other important sites (such as EngageLS) to help increase participation and to direct users to the proper resources.
- ✓ Update your cover photo monthly. Facebook has lifted restrictions on the amount of copy you can put on a cover photo so use this prime real estate to announce events, give information about the community, or spotlight a department. Updating the cover photo puts the page into the news feed as well as creating broader exposure to the page.
- ✓ Use unique branding for each department or utilize cover photo to give personality to each department
 - City and Environmental Services use same profile logo – can be confusing
- ✓ Utilize photos of citizens (with permission), businesses and tag whenever possible
- ✓ Respond to every comment or question posted on your page. This can be in the form of a comment, a like or a share. The important thing to remember is to ENGAGE.
- ✓ Post once per day at a minimum and consider posting more frequently, up to 3-4 times per day.
 - Use humor as often as possible and when appropriate
 - Always provide a link back to sources the end user may need such as the city website or P&R department sign-ups.
 - People love contests and free stuff. Whenever possible host a contest with a prize. This can be a simple fill in blank to win to a more elaborate photo or video contest.
 - Remember that a video will get more views than a photo, and a photo will get more views than a simple text post.



- ✓ City employees should add the Facebook page address to their email signature lines and on business cards.
- ✓ Those employees with a Facebook page should share the page with their networks to increase likes.
- ✓ Be authentic and encourage interaction – pose questions, ask for opinions, and invite people to engage with you. Keep this simple. If it takes a lot of time and effort, people will not engage.
- ✓ Use first names of fans – it makes people feel heard and adds a personal touch.
- ✓ Write for your audience – let them know why this information is important to them
- ✓ Utilize the new Call-to-Action buttons to engage your audience. They can sign up for a newsletter, sign up for Nixle or visit the website

Twitter

Twitter is used by younger citizens to get the most up to date information. While it is easy to link the Twitter account to a Facebook page, they work differently and have a slightly different user base. It is recommended that Twitter be used separately from Facebook with posts designed specifically for Twitter (140 characters). It is very important to include links for more information in a Twitter post so that interested users can find more information.

Tweets should be frequent (5+ times per day) and should focus upon what is happening now or in the near future.

Best practices for Twitter include:

- ✓ Messages should be quick to write and easy to read
- ✓ If you are including a website link in your tweet use the following sites to automatically shorten the URL and save characters in your message. (www.tinyurl.com, www.budurl.com)
- ✓ Use a casual, friendly tone in your messages.
- ✓ Follow local businesses and residents.
- ✓ If you like a particular message, retweet it. People appreciate the sharing and amplification of their ideas.
- ✓ Use Twitter to drive people to your website.
- ✓ Write for your audience – let them know why this information is important to them



Pinterest

Users of Pinterest are looking for information that is important or interesting to them. Photography, Fitness, Recipes, Wedding ideas are all popular pins on Pinterest. The City's current page is lacking the type of pins a user will want to save. If Pinterest is considered important to the communications mix, it is recommended that the Pinterest account be reworked to include unique pins that others will want keep. This may include:

- ✓ Recipes that are unique to Lee's Summit
- ✓ Beautiful photographs of the town and surrounding areas
- ✓ A guide to enjoying the city's parks
- ✓ Wedding venues in Lee's Summit
- ✓ Photos of art exhibits

Remember that pins are always linked to a website, so ensure that your source material is not spam and link to the city website or local businesses whenever possible.

Although LS does not currently have an Instagram account, this may be a better vehicle to communicate than Pinterest. Instagram is based upon beautiful or unique photography and could be used to spotlight local restaurants/food, local landmarks, the people of LS, etc. Both Instagram and Pinterest are considered secondary vehicles for communication but both provide a way to engage with citizens in highlighting the best things about Lee's Summit.

eCommunications

It is recommended that eCommunications be expanded and sign-ups easier to locate on the website. eCommunications should include eblasts for urgent information, emails as currently used and a new weekly eNewsletter. A direct request from residents, the eNewsletter should contain the latest news and information, links for sign-ups or for more information, and an easy way to share with others.

Content for the eNewsletter should be short, concise, and provide an overview of the information. Sign-ups must be easy to complete with a link on the home page of the website and via social media.



Media Relations

With the reliance on local print and broadcast media among many of your external audiences, it is recommended that a formal media relations plan be developed among the communications team. Media relations strives to establish a strong relationship with local media in order to obtain free editorial. While it is not feasible to control what is published, the City can establish a relationship of trust and use local media to deliver information that is timely and of interest. Stories which are both positive and negative can be beneficial to the City, if you have a voice in how the story is told. It is also recommended that media relations be expanded to include regional and national media sources for stories that reach beyond the boundaries of Lee's Summit. It is possible as well, to create your own stories by offering a unique perspective to a larger story. For instance, media outlets routinely run stories on the "Best Places to Retire" or the "Best Vacation Value." Consider developing your own stories which can be "pitched" or submitted to regional and national outlets.

An ongoing media relations strategy requires:

- ✓ List development of relevant media publications and editors
 - Remember to include editors and reporters who may have a particular interest in your story (e.g., travel editor, education reporter)
- ✓ Prepare and distribute press releases as needed
- ✓ Keep press releases relevant to the media's focus and interest. Don't spam reporters and editors.
- ✓ Identify and pitch key editorial in select publications based upon their media calendar
- ✓ Offer opinions or information the media can use in breaking stories and establish key personnel as "experts"
- ✓ Provide media training to internal stakeholders so they are prepared to talk with the media

Resident guide

It is recommended that a Resident Guide be developed as previously planned by the City of Lee's Summit. The guide must include accurate information regarding who to call, where to go, and how to complete tasks required by the City. Consider using social media to identify the types of information residents would like in the guide by simply asking the question: What information do you need?

When printed, the guide should be something that residents and businesses will keep on hand as a handy reference guide.

It is also recommended that city personnel who interact with external audiences (i.e., customer service) use the guide as well so that callers are immediately directed to the correct department or personnel to answer their question.



Analysis

Following is an analysis of several sources of information that were used to develop key findings and recommendations. This includes both secondary analysis of key reports and findings already presented to the City as well as an analysis of primary research conducted among both internal and external audiences.

Overall

A review of the 2013 Citizens Survey, 2012 Focus Groups, and the City of Lee's Summit Communications Plan show consistency in perceptions relative to both internal and external communication.

The City's concerns are:

1. What information is needed?
2. How do they reach all citizen targets?
3. What information is actually reaching targets and being acted upon?
4. How do you engage citizenry?

Keys Themes:

In reviewing all research and materials, several key themes were identified:

- Different citizen targets have different needs and different levels of involvement with city government. While there are certainly younger citizens who take an active role in Lee's Summit, there are far more that are not looking for information from the City. Older citizens may desire more information but lack the resources or skill to take advantage of all the various information sources available. And families are busy and want what they want quickly and easily.
- People want to know "What's the impact to me?" Specifically how their tax dollars are spent, how they remain safe, how they find the programs they need, etc.
 - Consideration should be given to whether or not materials are geared toward the City rather than the citizen. Is so, the perspective needs to change in how communications are written for specific community targets.
- Citizens need to know where to go for information



- The past few years have shown strides in implementing vehicles for two-way communication. However, they have not been utilized sufficiently to truly generate the type of feedback needed.
- Easy measurements have not been put in place to determine if information is reaching the correct audience.
 - Add coupons to newsletters
 - Survey email recipients (Was this useful?)
 - Website pop-ups (Did you find what you needed?)
 - Need to utilize more advanced analytics to determine who is using the site, when they are using the site and the types of information they are searching for most often
- Many sources available but not everyone has access
 - LSTV: not everyone has cable
 - Local newspapers: not everyone takes the paper
 - Inserts: Many pay online
 - Newsletter: Inconsistent delivery
 - Website: no Internet access
- Younger citizens want everything on their phone – give me mobile access. Website is not optimized for mobile use.



City of Lee's Summit Communications Plan

The City's Communications Mission Statement:

The City of Lee's Summit strives to increase and enhance public awareness, interest and understanding in our community in a responsive, accurate and easily accessible manner.

Organizational communication was identified as an opportunity for improvement for the City of Lee's Summit. Research conducted in 2010 for the City highlighted several steps to reaching Performance Excellence for both internal and external audiences. In reviewing the Communications Plan developed from this research, it appears that strides have been made in the number of communications mediums and ways the City reaches out to both internal and external audiences. However, some of the key issues identified in the research still remain.

While the focus of this Communications Audit is not the internal audience, it should be noted that some of the issues voiced by employees then, remain a concern today. Information overload and a limited attention span are still issues with the internal audience (as noted in the Internal Stakeholders analysis). Although employees voice a desire for repetition, frequent communication and a choice of information sources, these requests can often lead to the very issues you are trying to resolve. Because internal stakeholders are an extremely important part of your external communications, continued attention to the types of information desired and the vehicle for delivering that information should be given.

External communication plans are in line with the audit recommendations. It is recommended that plans continue for the following items:

- Resident Guide (digital and print)
- Enhanced website
- New brand implementation
- LSTV enhancements
- Reorganization of weekly communications group



2013 Citizen Survey

Highlights from the 2013 Citizen Survey include:

- Among those rating communications less than satisfactory, most were neutral relative to the availability, information on the city's website, and the city's ability to keep them informed
 - Neutral ratings often indicate that those responding are unfamiliar with or do not have strong feelings either way and will require a driver to encourage greater engagement.
- 68% never watch city council meetings; 54% never watch LSTV
- Sources used most often:
 - City publications 66.5%
 - Lee's Summit Illustrated 65.2%
 - Website 44.3%
 - Broadcast news 42.1%
 - Lee's Summit Journal 50.2%
 - Kansas City Star 37.5%
 - LS Post-Tribune 13.7%
 - Community Counts 38.4%
 - Water bill insert 21.5%
- Not used: LSTV, Public meetings, Nixle, social media, streaming video
- Most preferred sources:
 - City publications 49%
 - Lee's Summit Illustrated 45.7%
 - LS Journal 39.6%
 - Website 37.2%
 - Secondarily: broadcast news, Community Counts, KC Star,



Understanding the target audience(s) is a major step in developing effective communications. Based upon demographic profiles provided in the 2013 Citizen Survey, the City of Lee’s Summit is characterized as:

- Predominately white
- Long-term residents
- Young professionals, families, and retirees
- Primarily 25-54 years of age but with a robust older population (55+)
- Home owners
- Middle class and upper middle class
- High school graduates with a majority attending college

Demographic profiles indicate the citizens of Lee’s Summit are affluent, educated and have established roots in the community. In addition, the high proportion of home ownership, above average incomes, high graduation rates and college attendance rates indicate Lee’s Summit citizens are likely to be informed and involved in their community. This provides an opportunity to reach residents in a variety of ways as long as each targets unique needs are taken into consideration.

Special cross-tabulations of data were compiled from the 2013 Citizen Survey to determine how different demographic groups feel about and use various City communication vehicles as compared to the total. (See Appendix for raw tables) Several significant differences emerge in overall ratings and sources of information used by broad demographic groupings. Highlights are shown below:

Males and Females

- Females are more likely to rate the availability of information about City programs and services as satisfactory compared to males (73.8% to 66.5%). This may be due to a higher proportion of “moms” accessing information for the family.
- Females are more likely to rate the programming in the City’s government access cable channels as satisfactory compared to males (61.6% to 47.3%).
- Females are significantly more likely to say they currently use the following sources to get information:
 - Lee’s Summit Illustrated (71.6% female/58.9% male)



- Facebook (18.1% female/9.9% male)
- eNewsletters (20% female/14% male)
- Males are more likely to use the following:
 - Broadcast news television (44.7% male/39.4% female)
 - Kansas City Star (40.6% male/34.4% female)

Years in Residence (35+ years)

- Those who have lived in Lee's Summit for 35+ years are less likely to rate the following as satisfactory:
 - Availability of information about City programs and services (58.2% versus 70.2% total)
 - City efforts to keep you informed about local issues (50.3% versus 61.8% total)
 - Information provided on the City's website (54.3% versus 62.1% total)
- However, it should be noted that those who did not rate the above as very satisfactory or satisfactory were most likely to rate the statement as neutral.
- Long-time residents also show significant differences in the types of information sources they use. Those living in Lee's Summit for 35 or more years are less likely to use the following sources:
 - City publications (54.5% versus 66.5% total)
 - Lee's Summit Illustrated (53.7% versus 65.2% total)
 - City website (34.1% versus 44.3% total)
 - Kansas City Star (25.2% versus 37.5% total)
 - Facebook (8.9% versus 13.9% total)
- They are more likely to use the following:
 - Lee's Summit Journal (58.5% versus 50.2% total)
 - Lee's Summit Post-Tribune (24.4% versus 13.7% total)

Years in Residence (Under 5 years)

- Residents who have lived in Lee's Summit for less than 5 years are less likely than all other residents to say they currently use any of the listed sources of information, with the exception of the following sources:
 - City website (50% versus 44.3% total)
 - Special message section in water bill (31.7% versus 21.5% total)
 - Facebook (13.4% versus 13.9%)



- Twitter (3.7% versus 1.6%)

Students

- Respondents who describe themselves as students are more likely to use the following sources of information:
 - Lee's Summit Illustrated (87.5% versus 65.2%)
 - Lee's Summit Journal (75% versus 50.2%)
 - City website (62.5% versus 44.3% total)
 - Lee's Summit Post-Tribune (25% versus 13.7%)
 - Facebook (37.5% versus 13.9% total)
- They are less likely to use the following:
 - City publications (37.5% versus 66.5%)
 - Special insert in water bill (12.5% versus 21.5%)
 - Community Counts Newsletter (0% versus 38.4% total)
 - Public meetings (0% versus 6.1% total)

Retired

- Residents who classify themselves as retired are more likely to use the Kansas City Star as a source of information about Lee's Summit compared to other residents (47.7% versus 37.5% total)
- They are less likely to use the following:
 - City website (24.9% versus 44.3% total)
 - Lee's Summit Illustrated (56% versus 65.2% total)
 - Facebook (4.6% versus 13.9% total)

Incomes of Under \$30,000

- Residents reporting incomes of less than \$30,000 are the least likely to use the following sources of information:
 - City publications (55.1% versus 66.5% total)
 - Lee's Summit Illustrated (55.1% versus 65.2% total)
 - Lee's Summit Journal (38.8% versus 50.2% total)
 - Community Counts Newsletter (26.5% versus 38.4% total)
 - City website (20.4% versus 44.3% total)



Internal Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews were conducted with members of the Lee's Summit Communication team including:

- Miranda Landstra Water Utilities
- Nigel Woodberry Information Technology
- Caleb Casteel Information Technology
- Jim Eden Fire
- Beth Glover Police
- Sarah Shore Public Works
- Kara Taylor Public Works
- Bob Hartnett Public Works
- John Beaudoin Development Center
- Jim McKenna Administration (Chamber of Commerce)
- Shannon Gammon Parks & Recreation
- Carol Culbertson Parks & Recreation
- Kelli Welch Administration
- Melissa Fears Administration
- Barbara Moberg Administration

Participants are all very dedicated and proud of the work they do for the City of Lee's Summit. However, interviews revealed several potential barriers to them reaching their communication goals. Key themes identified in the research include the following:

1. The lack of a centralized communications team with a communications director
2. No collaboration between departments
3. A communication system that needs to be streamlined
4. Lack of needed resources (time, training, budget)
5. Inconsistent implementation of new branding standards



The silo approach to communications has caused a breakdown in team collaboration, sharing of resources and a unified “voice” for the City of Lee’s Summit. With no master plan or vision, communications managers often feel like they have been left to their own devices to figure out how they communicate for their department. Instead, managers voice a desire to work as a team to promote Lee’s Summit and to engage its citizens.

Many feel the current communications system should be streamlined, more collaborative and as one stakeholder said “run like a newsroom.” This would enable managers to get information out in a timely manner, provide the community with the information it needs and present a unified front for the City.

However, several key issues keep managers tasked with communication for the City from truly reaching their goals, including a lack of training (specifically how to deal with the media; how to engage via social media), a lack of time to do all they need to do and a finite budget with which to do it. Frustration was voiced regarding the lack of needed updates to the website, lack of staffing, duplication between silos, the inability to add fresh thinking to the process (due to a lack of time), and no direction on how to move forward.

Communication stakeholders also speak of an internal fear of communicating too much to the public. While transparency is often espoused by City leaders, managers are unsure how much they can disclose and how they are to respond to negative comments. There is also a feeling that citizens with the loudest voices are catered to by City leaders and the City Council, creating community entitlement among a select group. Real or perceived, this feeling can dictate how information is disseminated and shared.

The new branding standards have also caused some concern among communications managers. Again, each department is tasked with implementing the new standards into their mix without sufficient guidance or rationale. While some have implemented the new logos and colors correctly, others struggle “fitting” the new standards into their mix.

Key Points and Verbatim Comments:

- No one driving the bus
- Silos left to communicate on their own
- Lack of collaboration between silos/Unsure how to collaborate
- Some do not buy into the new branding/Do not understand need
 - Need to keep own personal brands to signify when something is urgent and from their department (i.e., Police and Fire)
- Not enough time or staff to complete all they are asked to do
- Monthly meeting not enough



- No master plan
- No single voice for the city of Lee's Summit
- Some fear of two way communication
 - Do not know how to respond to negative
 - Not always transparent
- There is a need for training, both internally (media training) and external training
- Need leadership for communications team!!!!
 - Most interviewed desire a Director of Communications to provide direction, consistency, and support
- Need a more streamlined system for communications
- Duplication of effort between silos
- Same messages are being used over and over/Need to change it up
- Website is awful/Must be updated
 - Individual departments would like to help with updates to their pages to highlight the most important information
 - Far too many clicks to get to the information needed
- Community newsletter is well liked but has been cut back to twice per year/concern it is not reaching all residents
- Trust in individual departments has been an issue (city council cited as the problem)
 - Some belief that the city and the council cater to those who scream the loudest thus ignoring that quiet customer. Call it community entitlement and believe the city and the council foster this type of environment
- "City departments have gone their own ways. The new branding has helped a little to pull them back together."
- Yours Truly difficult to use in communications
- "My biggest frustration is not enough time or money. I feel we have to compromise often."
- Some push back regarding the new branding. Not well liked. Many felt the money could have been used for raises.
- Internal audiences look at money spent relative to their paycheck; external audiences look at money spent relative to their taxes
- Communications given about 15% of the day – could be a full time job!
- Training needed to help share the communications responsibility
- Want a structured communications plan and department
- Website must become a priority
 - Need to eliminate pages with one sentence
 - Need content strategy



- Must be user friendly for PC, tablet and phone; Must be fully responsive
- Fewer pages
- Need a centralized approach so that items are proofread before going live
 - Too many people posting content on site
- Some fear within the government culture that prohibits information sharing
 - Primary reason EngageLS has not really been used
- “There is not a single unified voice for our communications”
- “There are gaps in communication. Something may be in one newsletter but it is something that should be shared in other places”
- “We need to find a way to reach as many people as possible.”
- Need fun and exciting ways to reach young families who are busy and ways to reach older people that are limited on social media
- Concerns that design is not consistent with new branding standards. Different departments are not using the correct colors, fonts and logos that have been approved
- “We need to get out of the silos. Internally, no one knows what is going on at city hall.”
- “We have to build media relations and start pushing stories out – this needs to happen.”
- “Social media doesn’t have to be boring. We need to get rid of old think.”
- “There is no understanding of the importance of the website.”
- “We have no direction on how to move forward. The silos are a problem because we have no single voice.”
- “We are stretched too thin. Not enough funding to get it done.”
- “City Council is a roadblock at times to getting information out.”
- “There is a lot of information on the website. You can be 10 clicks in and still not find what you need.”
- “There are a lot of plans and objectives to fulfill on a daily basis.”
- “Communications should run like a newsroom with weekly collaboration and assignments.”
- “There has not been much stability. I have reported to 3 different people and no one with a communications background.”
- “What is the vision?”
- “When a video goes out it needs to be here, here and here. Not just placed in one spot.”
- “There is no master plan for communications.”
- “We need a citywide communications director. And we all could use help handling everything we need to do.”



Collateral Audit

The City of Lee's Summit utilizes a combination of both outbound and inbound communication sources. This is good as multiple targets require different vehicles. However, all communication should support an inbound strategy and drive traffic to the website. Outbound communications for the most part, are currently developed to inform the community with little opportunity to engage your citizens.

Current outbound communication sources include:

- ✓ Print materials
- ✓ Advertising (radio, print, broadcast)
- ✓ LSTV
- ✓ Direct mail
- ✓ Broadcast news
- ✓ Local newspapers

Inbound sources currently in place include:

- ✓ Website
- ✓ eNewsletters, eblasts and emails
- ✓ Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest
- ✓ EngageLS
- ✓ Nixle
- ✓ Word of mouth

Following is a brief recap of materials, overall thoughts and potential opportunities.



Online/Digital					
Collateral/Medium	Department	Review	Users	Branding	Opportunity
Website Cityofls.net	City/Various	Confusing Can be difficult to find information However, contains a lot of information that is useful – needs to be organized Links to all social media and ability to sign up for alerts from police Not updated regularly Outdated design Not easy to navigate	46,560	Yes	Create hub for all communications Update site to increase usability Optimize for mobile usage Add enhanced analytics Must enhance user experience for both businesses and citizens
Other Websites	Chamber, Tourism, Downtown, Truly 150 LS360	Serve specific purpose Updated regularly Updated designs Easy to use Colorful and friendly	Varies	Yes	Create engagement through citizen's specific interests
EngageLS	City	Inactive A few initial questions were asked but with no follow-up A few citizens posted comments or questions but did not receive any response	170	Yes	Create awareness to increase participation Perfect system for two-way communication and engagement Reintroduce to public via media and social media
Nixle Wire	Fire/Police/City	Excellent system to receive emergency alerts and community information instantly	3,250 to 3,377	Yes	Create awareness to increase participation High interest among citizens when aware Utilize system for two-way communication



Online/Digital					
<u>Collateral/Medium</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Review</u>	<u>Users</u>	<u>Branding</u>	<u>Opportunity</u>
LS Facebook	City	Vast improvements made over the last few months in the types and frequency of posts Engagement increasing Page likes increasing	2,306 3,600+ reach	Yes LS logo	Create engagement with users by liking and commenting on their posts Develop content calendar to ensure consistent posting Update cover photo frequently Complete profile
LSPD Facebook	Police	Receives good engagement from followers Fans have increased significantly in last few months	3,307	No Shield	Utilize cover photo to communicate important information Consider more frequent posting
P&R Facebook	Parks & Recreation	Good use of cover photo to advertise upcoming events Fans have increase in last few months	2,474	No P&R logo	Consider more frequent posting Provide links to city website and other websites as often as possible
Environmental Services Facebook	Environmental Services	Limited engagement and fans Good use of external links in posts Updated regularly	228	Yes LS logo	Develop plan to obtain more likes Utilize cover photo to communicate important information Consider more frequent posting
LS Airport Facebook	Airport	Limited engagement and fans Infrequent posting	361	No LXT logo	Develop plan to obtain more likes Develop content strategy Consider more frequent posting
Hartman Park Facebook	Parks & Recreation	Limited engagement and fans Infrequent posting	103	No Park logo	Develop plan to obtain more likes Develop content strategy Consider more frequent posting
Legacy Park Facebook	Parks & Recreation	Adequate posting but could increase Limited use of external links Use of humor in posts	1479	No P&R logo	Utilize cover photo to communicate important information Consider more frequent posting



Online/Digital					
<u>Collateral/Medium</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Review</u>	<u>Users</u>	<u>Branding</u>	<u>Opportunity</u>
Summit Waves Facebook	Parks & Recreation	Cross promotion of other P&R activities	1,558	No SW logo	Develop content strategy specific to the park Consider more frequent posting
Arts Council Facebook	City	Current cover photo Limited engagement No external links	701	No Arts logo	Develop content strategy designed to engage Consider more frequent posting
RevUp Facebook	Parks & Recreation	Limited engagement No external links Adequate posting	160	No RevUp logo	Consider more frequent posting Develop content strategy to support goals of organization (so that not all posts are directly related to organization)
City of LS Twitter	City	Tweets lead users back to website which is good	3,696	Yes	Create engagement with users Introduce city council members Develop content calendar Follow citizens and businesses Develop strategy specific to Twitter
Parks & Rec Twitter	Parks & Recreation		1,589	No P&R logo	Create engagement with users Develop content calendar Follow citizens and businesses Develop strategy specific to Twitter
YouTube	City/Fire/Police/P&R /Environmental Serv. Water Utilities	High quality production/Informative	16 subscribe 5,666 views		Continue to share videos via other social media
Pinterest – City of LS	City	Collection of videos and advertisements Does not contain content that is “pinnable” Does not have consistent or frequent pins	118		Actively work Add pins that people will want to repin Follow others/Share



Print/Broadcast					
<u>Collateral/Medium</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Review</u>	<u>Users</u>	<u>Branding</u>	<u>Opportunity</u>
LSTV	City	Not accessible by all Constant programming Not always informative/content for contents sake No idea what is coming up	Unknown	Yes	Good source to inform and engage if further enhancement made: Program guide Collaboration with all departments Richer content
Police	Police	Provides safety tips and information No issues	N/A	No	Add branding to materials while incorporating Police shield Develop materials specific to 18-24 year old males
Fire	Fire	Provides safety tips and information No issues	N/A	Varies Always use shield	Add branding to materials consistently Determine the most important pieces
Parks & Recreation	Parks & Recreation	Timely information that citizens rely upon Good use of materials and content Use many different types of print to inform	N/A	No	Add branding to materials Identify those printed pieces that work the best/Eliminate some of the printed items
Lee's Summit Illustrated	Parks & Recreation	Useful information regarding programs and events Comprehensive Hard to find on city website	N/A	No	Add branding to materials Make it easier to find online Utilize content in social media posts
Public Works	Airport Environmental Serv	Timely information Good content Have several departments and functions to cover	N/A	Yes	Consider different designs or colors by function to help organize communications
Water	Water	Timely information Well organized content Bill insert well liked but limited exposure	N/A	Yes	Consider which materials are actually being used Identify new ways to deliver bill insert Utilize door hangers



Print/Broadcast					
<u>Collateral/Medium</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Review</u>	<u>Users</u>	<u>Branding</u>	<u>Opportunity</u>
Newsletter: Community Counts	City	Excellent source of information Information sources listed for quick reference Seasonally appropriate material Relevant information for citizens Departmental collaboration	32,000	Yes	Publish consistently Expand Apply measurement tools Online sign-up for those not receiving
Lee's Summit Tribune	City	Well liked and read by citizens	5,000 print 60,000 Online 5,800 FB	N/A	Maintain and increase media relations Become experts Issue releases for all major information sharing needs
Lee's Summit Journal	City	Well liked and read by citizens	5,921 print 20,000 online 3,336 FB	N/A	Maintain and increase media relations Become experts Issue releases for all major information sharing needs
Advertisements: TV, Radio, Magazine, Newspaper	City	Primary goal is Economic Development Research scores indicate citizens aware of ads; have pride in Lee's Summit because of marketing campaign	Varies	Yes	Maintain
Press Releases	City	Well written and targeted	N/A	Yes	Increase media relations
Speeches	City	Well written	N/A	N/A	
Letterhead and business cards	All	Inconsistent branding	N/A	Varies	Need to establish consistency among departments Police, P&R, and Public Works using old designs



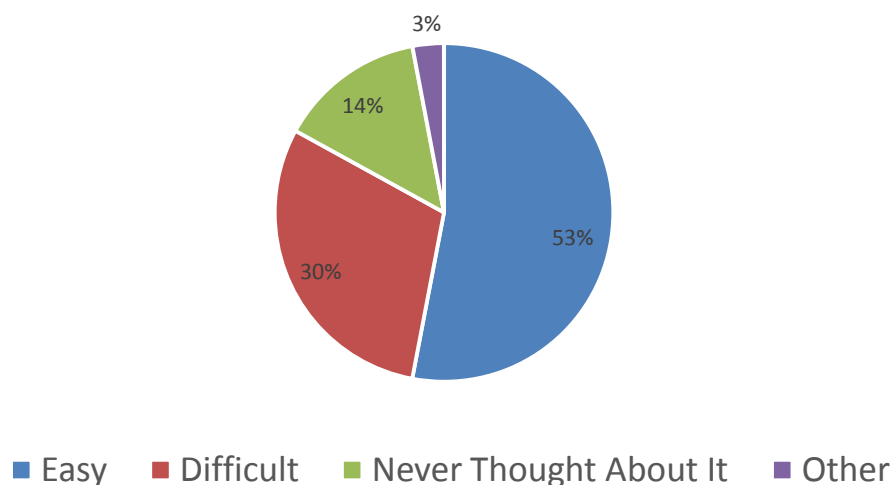
Citizen Research

In an effort to learn what information is needed from the City and how best to deliver that information, focus groups and personal interviews were conducted with residents of Lee’s Summit. Citizens were segmented by demographic factors as follows:

1. Students: 18 to 24 years of age, in school or working their first job, living at home or in their first place
2. Young Professionals: 25 to 34, working full time, married or single, kids or no kids, living in their first home
3. Mature Families: 35 to 54, with kids, homemakers or working full time
4. Seniors: 55+, may be working or retired, no kids in household

Group discussions were conducted among Seniors, Young Professionals and Mature Families. Personal interviews were conducted among all four segments. Information gathered from an online screening questionnaire used to qualify participants for the group discussions also provided some quantitative information relative to the ease of finding the information they need (sample size n=98). Overall, 53% feel it is easy to find information for the City of Lee’s Summit, while nearly one-third say it is difficult (30%) and about one in ten (14%) say they have never thought about it.

Ease of Locating Information





The full analysis from the research is presented in the Key Findings section. Following are thoughts and comments from the discussion groups:

Senior Group (male, active citizen, 60+)

- I am very interested in the operation of the city of Lee's Summit.
- Involved with Lee's Summit 360 – still trying to figure out what they do
- Has been asked to participate on marketing committee
- They do not have buy in from sub-committees for 360 and the marketing committee is really there to do advertising not marketing
- Website doesn't even approach being able to do marketing or advertising
- They don't advertise meetings, people aren't able to attend if they don't know when they are to be held
 - (Thought: Use active citizens to attend meetings and disseminate accurate information)
- Post at city hall but that is the only way to find out when meetings are scheduled. Nothing on the website
- I do believe the city wants to communicate
 - A weekly email with events for the next week (meetings, events). Short, quick read
 - (Need email sign-ups on website for those interested)
 - Currently have this feature but it is very hard to find on the site. I have signed up for a few but there is no way to tell what I have signed up for and what is available now
- There are currently about 20 city affiliated websites. I'm not sure they know how many websites they have. There doesn't seem to be a uniform policy or procedures for the websites. Some of them are hosted by the city, some are not. They need to get everything on the city website or at least have the other sites linked to the city website.
- The website is not organized in a way citizens need it organized.
- I can kind of find what I am hunting for
- Where else would you find information about the city? (referring to the website)
- Have items mailed and emailed to me - Community Counts, inserts, emails he has signed up for, emergency alerts, Arts Council
- I watch council meetings on LSTV. I will look at the agenda on the website to see if I want to come in person.
- I am signed up for Nixle
- I did sign up for EngageLS but there has been nothing on it. When it was active I made a suggestion and it was neither acknowledged nor acted upon.
- Specific information needed



- General news and information is all that is needed from Police and Fire (scams)
 - I would not want to get ongoing information from the Police department (i.e., a newsletter)
- Public works I need news, current events, road conditions, road closures, coming improvements
- I do look at the things they put in the water bill
- “Leave the breaking news to the local papers and TV news”
- How delivered
 - A good city website
 - Newspaper
 - TV news
 - eNewsletter and Newsletters
- Why should I need to come to City Hall to find out information? I want it on the website.
- What’s not working with the website
 - The website is a total shambles. Information is not updated or posted as per the City Charter (Operational Assessment Report last updated in 2010). I don’t think it is managed or organized. The Organizational Chart has been coming soon for over a year.
 - When you ask questions you sometimes get an answer, sometimes you don’t.
 - It’s a giant website. It’s hard to find information.
 - You are either serious about communicating or you are not. The website is the first thing.
- It’s hard to be satisfied when you ask a question and you are unsure if you get a correct answer. I’m not even talking about a satisfying answer. Just a correct answer. I got a wrong answer a few months ago that cost me a little money.
- We need a system that is easy to report a problem or to ask a question.
- **You won’t know if you are doing anything good unless you have a mechanism for feedback**
- (Participation is issue specific. When people are passionate about an issue they will get involved, they will search for information)
- Some issues with transparency. Some things are not always visible but that’s city government.



Young Professionals (25 to 35, kids in household, working outside the home)

- I like LS. We live close to downtown and we can walk everywhere. It's a little town but close to lots of big stuff."
- I love the heritage of the area. I feel it is a small community but it has grown.
- The core of LS hasn't changed it has just spread out.
- Jamie – we don't do TV and live in a cul de sac so they won't deliver the paper, but I read the newsletter, I get online, I follow Facebook
 - It would be nice to have better access to information, easier resources
 - I visit the website a lot but there isn't a lot of information other than who to contact
- Stef – I get most of my info online or through the newspaper. Website, FB pages, Parks & Rec. I used to watch LSTV but with ATT it is an app and I don't watch it anymore. They made it a hassle.
- Jamie – We are looking for events going on. Family friendly or a cheap date night. We try to keep up with what is going on with schools. The Our Schools newsletter usually has a lot of stuff in it.
- Stef – Mostly looking for things to do and what is going on in City Hall – growth and development, elections, road improvements. I read the Journal most often. Usually I will see something on Facebook first and then go to the paper to read more about it.
- Legacy Park, City Hall, P&R, downtown LS and truly 150 are currently FB they are on.
- Any of them that have a Facebook page I will look to see if they have a Twitter feed because it is easier to find the information.
- The website can be hard to navigate
- The website is not mobile friendly
- When I am on the phone I do not click a lot of links because it is easy to lose your place
- When you are on your phone you have to go to this big site and then start digging to find what you need.
- Usually when I need information we are out and about and I need to access it with my phone.
 - I will see a banner or flyer and then want to check out more information. A lot of times it is something that is happening that day and I want information. Hard to find on mobile.
- I usually read anything that comes in the mail
- Unaware if they have received Community Counts/Neither have received it
- Aware of LS Illustrated
 - P&R will send out emails when things are coming up. They are so much handier than LS Illustrated because they are alerting me to things that are happening right now.
- We do a lot of the P&R things with the kids. I will look online to find
- Nixle – neither have heard of it



- Do receive emails, eblasts, and enewsletters which they signed up for
- Young families like 1-2 week's-notice; those with older children require 2-4
- Police: What's going on, things to watch out for, but don't want to hear about every little thing
 - Scams, safety tips
 - As far as tips I am past that point in my life. They don't apply to me as much anymore
 - If scams pertain to this area I want to hear about it
- Fire: When they do something for the community
- Public Works: It would be nice if they would let you know when they are going to clean the streets so we can move the cars
 - When they are going to repave. We didn't know it until they were doing it and then we couldn't get out of the neighborhood
 - A simple FB or Twitter alert or a door hanger
 - Road conditions
 - Where they will be doing construction
- P&R: I enjoy their Twitter. They are pretty good at letting you know what is coming up and special events. Some things I would never know about if they didn't put a quick update on Twitter.
 - They are doing a good job to get me the information
- I prefer Twitter because not everything will show on Facebook unless I go to their page and I just don't go to the individual pages
 - They both know it requires them liking posts to see all posts
- I feel like I actively search for information when I watch Facebook because I want to know what is going on. When I go to the website it is because I am looking for a specific piece of information.
- Water: We do everything online. I don't get the bill anymore. We don't get the inserts anymore.
 - As long as everything is okay I don't really need to hear from them
- City Hall: Not usually seeking information on the city. However, when something occurs that captures their attention they will follow news from the city. Unless there is a link to let me know where to go, I can't find it. I don't want to watch the video of the council meetings, I would rather read a transcript.
 - I become aware by WOM or comments made on Facebook
 - I want to know if what they said is true. I want to form my own opinion. I will go to the city website or news. I go to Google and hope it takes me to the news.
 - Unless something has happened right now, something that will impact my household right now, I don't think about searching for information from the city.
- P&R is the most effective because they use multiple ways to let me know what is going on. They do FB and emails and newsletters

- Something that comes out twice a year is not something that is going to survive. I won't hold onto that until the next one comes.
- If they used it more it would be more effective. I would be looking for it
- "I am pretty satisfied but sometimes it seems like the city is slow, like it is an afterthought. They don't always get the stories out quickly on FB." I am getting the news after the fact rather than before when I could do something about it.
- Meetings posted at City Hall: I want to be aware of what's happening but don't necessarily need to attend
- Best way
 - Different sources and different times of the day/week
 - The website is always the best way. The information is always there as long as you can find it. With a newspaper you have to pay for it and keep it, FB is hard to search for information
 - The website is the best place to house all the information but I need links from other sources to get me there.
 - I won't just get on the website to look around/Need a reason to be there
 - Younger citizens want to access information via phone
 - If there were an issue I think it would take me so long to find the right person to talk to that honestly it just wouldn't be worth it
 - I tried calling people to find out how to install a car seat and called the Police, Fire, etc and no one could tell me who to call. It's not worth the trouble. I searched online first and then called but they had no idea who I should talk to.
 - We had a storm sewer installed wrong and it took us weeks to find the right person to call to get it repaired. You call but no one knows who you are supposed to talk to.
 - Younger respondent interested in mobile text marketing. Emergency alerts are needed.
 - Once a week text that provides a link or gives me upcoming information would be helpful.
 - Our phones are the best way to get information to me. (younger respondent)
- On social media more is better than less because you aren't going to see everything. When they put things out infrequently chances are you won't see it.
- The more information they can put out the better. It lets people know what is going on and it gives them an opportunity to put out good stories rather than the only time you hear about the city is when something bad happens
- I like hearing the little stories about a road being finished. And tell me why they did it because sometimes I wonder why they went to the trouble and expense. When they explain, it makes sense.



Mature Families (35-54, kids in household)

- How involved
 - Take advantage of P&R programs and parks
 - Try to get involved a little bit with the council with elections
 - Involved at the school level
 - Spend a lot of time in the city, shopping downtown
 - Important to support local business (several agreed)
 - Not committees, but I do get out and take advantage of what is offered
 - One watches city council meetings (became involved as she helped on of the members get elected)
 - I watch LSTV for council meetings. When something comes up in the paper that has my attention I will watch the council meetings to find out what is going on.
 - I wouldn't know where to go to watch the meetings. But I follow the news on my Twitter feed and click on things from there.
 - I wouldn't turn it on to watch it.
- Types of information needed
 - I went online yesterday to join Legacy and I looked it up on the website. P&R website
 - As a transplant to LS it was really hard to know where to go to get information. I didn't have a phone book, didn't know anyone yet. It's hard for people moving into the community. It was a challenge to even find out who picks up my trash.
 - I look for programs for the kids or events downtown but it is hard to get the information ahead of time. I don't get information the way I wish I did. I would like an email.
 - I have gotten on the LS website for a few different reasons and I didn't succeed in finding the information I needed (building codes for deck)
 - I find it a challenge to find the information I need
 - I look for hours of operation for swimming pool or hours for Legacy.
 - I needed building codes and came to city hall and found the right person to talk to and he even came over to the house to make sure the information was correct.
 - I love that everything is right here. Everyone is housed together.
 - I come to city hall because I am close and at home. Easier just to come here.
 - I want to know what improvements are happening with the streets. I like to keep track of the roads I use. I like when they explain why there are delays. Found out from the paper and some signs posted.



- I have browsed the LS website and was impressed with the job position postings. I have also been on the P&R website and found everything I was looking for.
- Do you actively seek out information?
 - I want information available when I need it.
 - I needed information from the water department but had trouble finding the number for them. I actually called KC and they directed me to LS
 - It's not that I don't care but I will most often just scan information that comes to my home.
 - I follow the journal and tribune online.
 - When I want the information I will search for it on the website
 - I like getting it but if it didn't come I wouldn't miss it.
 - If it's in my email I will read it.
 - I am just now at a point in my life where I have time to become involved.
- Sources
 - Newspaper
 - Mayor's newsletter
 - Banners downtown (live close to downtown, I like that they have the banners downtown, very visible)
 - Social media
 - Website
 - City Hall
 - Emails (P&R) – The headline needs to grab my attention
 - Community Counts – looks kind of familiar but not a lot of awareness
 - Lee's Summit Illustrated
 - Water bill insert (some look, some don't, some occasionally)
 - Nixle – I think I read something about it but didn't understand it.
 - I didn't know they had that!
 - My neighbor is a police man and he alerts us to things
 - I prefer emails rather than a text. I want to look at the headline and know if it is something I need or not
 - Most use social media
 - About half use their phones as their primary device to access information
 - Laptop



- iPad/Tablet
- Police: neighborhood alerts, (similar to police blotter), crime in my area, scams, emergency situations
 - If it is a big story or a big scam the local news will pick it up – I will find out that way
 - I typically see this information on TV
 - They do post this information on FB now
- Fire: fire safety,
- Public Works: when to move your cars, when they are plowing, when they are resurfacing, who do I call to report a pot hole
 - This is one time I want a lot of information
 - It is doesn't affect me I don't want the email. I will come find you.
- Water: Let us know when you are going to turn off my water
 - Have seen door hangers – That information does get to us
- How receive information
 - Door hangers/email
 - Email and snail mail (I want the information to come to my home)
 - City directory (reference guide),
 - City directory and social media
 - Social media and email
 - Text for serious alerts and email
- I like reading the majors pamphlet
- I think LS does a great job of getting out information. If you want it you can find it.
- It's fine. The newsletter is good information but it is fluff. There is nothing wrong with it but it is a quick read
- If I am paying taxes for projects I want to know the projects have been started and completed. I like to keep tabs on that.
- I like to make sure improvements are being made
- Is there a community calendar anywhere? If there were some kind of calendar that had all of the events and programs that would be great (a few agreed)
- I think there is room for improvement. I don't always know soon enough in advance. You have to be on Chipman and Douglas to know when events are happening.
- Room for improvement with the city's Facebook page. I searched for the city page but couldn't find it and you have to post more.
 - I will click links when I see a story that interests me
- Use of website



- A few will go to the website but not often
- Only to look for specific information
- Do you have a voice?
 - I say yes because they post your council members phone number right on the website.
 - I am not shy so if I want to speak up I will find the right person to talk to
 - I have never had the need to contact anyone
 - I haven't had the need either but I do feel that if I could get my point across if I needed to
- What to tell the city
 - A welcome pack from the city – NEED A RESIDENT GUIDE
 - I would like only one FB that had all the feeds
 - We can get information overload and we don't think about all these departments. To us it is just LS. I want to find all my information in one place.
 - I would like a master calendar for the year
 - From what I remember they do not update the website very often. They need to keep their site more current. It's not the most user friendly website. It's just ok. Information is hard to find and sign-ups are hard to do. You can call someone and they are happy to do it for you but in a city of 93,000 people they don't need everyone calling them to do sign-ups when they can do it online.
 - It's worthless to follow fire and police on Twitter when they never Tweet.



APPENDIX