

VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST

COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT SERVICES RFP – RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION

This document serves as a response to all questions that were submitted by the April 1, 2016 deadline. Answers to these questions will also be published on the Village's website no later than April 5, 2016, at www.vrf.us/government/bids-a-rfps.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE DEADLINE

Communications Strategies

Q. Is this just for external communications support, or do you need assistance with internal communications as well?

A. The Village anticipates that the communications support services will be focused on external communications. There may be a need for internal communications support from time to time, however, it is anticipated that this would be on a limited basis and not the Village's initial focus.

Q. Can we obtain a copy of the Village's current draft communications plan?

A. A copy of the draft plan is attached.

Q. Is the village prepared for work with an agency that would handle all of the duties in the RFP vs. an individual consultant that might fill more of a project manager role?

A. Yes. The Village is seeking the assistance of a consultant to review existing communications strategies and determine how to make them part of a cohesive, more "global" communications plan for the municipal organization. The Village also seeks assistance implementing the changes required as part of the new communications strategy.

Q. Has the village collected any data where resident opinions are concerned?

A. The Village conducts periodic topic-specific surveys as-needed; however, no public data has yet been collected regarding the Village's communications strategy or brand.

Q. What do you envision the role of the village's existing staff being where execution of a plan is concerned?

A. The Village expects the consultant to help identify and implement communication strategies. Staff is expected to eventually assume responsibility for the content management and basic maintenance of various communication media. Staff will be

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available to help the consultant identify key information needed to implement communication strategies and develop content/copy.

Q. Who are the existing employees that have been handling VRF's communications efforts? Would we be turning over the maintenance of the plan to these same employees?

A. Currently the Village's Administrative staff is largely responsible for overseeing the Village's communications efforts. Personnel include the Village Administrator, Assistant Village Administrator, Executive Assistant, Administrative Clerk and Graduate Intern. The Village's in-house Engineer oversees Public Works Department-specific external communications. The Village's Fire Marshal and other Police Department personnel also oversee public-safety specific external communications. It is anticipated that maintenance would be turned over to these same employees.

Interaction w/ Other Parties

Q. How many other government bodies, if any, will have input into the marketing plan and strategy?

A. The River Forest Village Board of Trustees and Staff will be the primary source of input.

Q. Are you replacing consultants that are already in place, or are you adding consultants?

A. The Village does not currently utilize a communications consultant. The Village relies on a website management consultant for regular maintenance and site improvements.

Q. If you are replacing consultants, what have you been dissatisfied with that led to the change?

A. Not-applicable.

Q. If consultants are currently doing work for you in this area, what is the scope of *their* work?

A. The Village's website management consultant assists staff with modifications to the website that Village staff is unable to perform. The Village also utilizes the services of a graphic designer from time to time for certain small projects.

Q. What type of consultants are you currently working with?

A. The Village currently relies on a website management consultant for regular maintenance and site improvements. The Village also utilizes the services of a graphic designer from time to time for certain small projects. In addition, the Village works with a broad range of consultants who specialize in various technical fields such as

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civil engineering, building regulations, traffic engineering, land use planning, and information technology support services.

Q. How much do they (current consultants) work with other government bodies (Park District, Community Center, Library, etc.)? How much will this impact the communications strategy?

A. Staff is unaware whether or not the Village's existing consultants (website management consultant and graphic designer) work with other government bodies. The Village would like to identify communication strategies that allow it to reach the broad audience that utilizes Village services in the most effective manner possible. To the extent that shared resources and collaboration with other government agencies allow the Village to efficiently and effectively accomplish its communication objectives, the Village and its consultant would be expected to interact with those agencies.

Scope of Services

Q. Under the Scope of Service section in the RFP, can you explain what the status of the village's existing consultants is?

A. The Village does not currently utilize a communications consultant. The Village currently relies on a web designer for regular maintenance and site improvements. The Village also utilizes the services of a graphic designer from time to time for certain small projects. In addition, the Village works with a broad range of consultants who specialize in various technical fields such as civil engineering, building regulations, traffic engineering, land use planning, and information technology support services.

Q. Under #3 in the Scope of Services, roughly how many "Village consultants" will we be expected to review communications strategies with?

A. The Village anticipates that the communications consultant will primarily work with the Village's existing website management consultant to implement communications strategies. Interaction with other consultants working on the Village's behalf may be required on a project-specific basis so that accurate information may be assembled and disseminated.

Q. Under #10 in the Scope of Services, do you have an idea of how many hours per month staff will be available to help with communication initiatives?

A. Staff will be available as needed and to the extent that available to develop content and copy for publication and to work alongside the consultant to publish materials in print and online media.

Q. Under #15 in the Scope of Services, roughly how many presentations need marketing input in the course of a month?

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A. The consultant will be expected to assist in the development of presentations to elected officials, community stakeholders and the public on an as-needed basis, however, it is not anticipated that this will be a very frequent need and may, on average, only occur once per month or less.

Q. Under #19 in the Scope of Services, do you already have an idea of the frequency of staff meetings?

A. The Village expects that the consultant should be available to meet with Village Staff at Village Hall and/or Village facilities on a regular basis. Initially, staff anticipates that there will be a significant amount of interaction in person, however, in-person meetings should “level off” over time and may be required only once/month, on average. To the extent possible, telephone and digital communication will be utilized to accomplish the Village’s communication objectives.

Budget

Q. We understand that you’re looking for a “not to exceed” monthly budget, which we are able to provide for our professional fees. However, expenses are typically billed separately and include items, such as public opinion research, web coding/development, mileage, etc. We can provide cost estimates/ranges for these items based on proposed scope, however until retained and scope finalized it’s difficult to provide final numbers. Is this acceptable?

A. This is acceptable to the Village, however, respondents are asked to provide their best estimates and a detailed, itemized list of reimbursable costs.

Q. What is the budget for this project?

A. The Village is in the process of finalizing its FY 16-17 budget and funds have been allocated as a placeholder in the budget document. However, as this is a new service the Village is seeking, the goal is to select a consultant that is best suited to complete the objectives identified in the RFP.

Village Website

Q. In the Scope of Services, you indicate that the selected contractor would “work with the village to redesign the existing village web site.” Are you looking for the scope to include us redesigning the web site? Or just for us to consult on the process?

A. The Village currently relies on a consultant to manage the existing website. If possible, the Village would like to explore utilizing its existing web consultant to implement design changes recommended by the communications consultant.

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Q. With respect to the village web site, does the village currently have a vendor in place for this work, or is a web site redesign expected to be part of the scope of the work? Would there be a separate bid process/RFP for work related to the web site?

A. The Village currently relies on a consultant to manage the existing website. The Village anticipates refreshing the website will be a separate project and a separate RFP may be issued for those services. In the event the Village solicits RFPs for the service the communications consultant is welcome to propose its services, however, in the event the consultant makes no proposal or is not selected it is expected that they will work seamlessly with the selected vendor.

Q. Website questions: Do you have any problems updating the website or are you happy with your current content management system?

A. The current content management system, Joomla, is open source. As with any system, it has advantages and disadvantages but, overall, it has worked well.

Q. Website questions: Are you open to changing the content management system?

A. The Village is satisfied with its current content management system; however, Staff is open to new ideas that would allow the Village to better meet its communication objectives. The Village may consider another CMS, however, staff would expect it to be cost-neutral to the Village or, if there are any cost increases, that they provide a substantial return on investment that cannot be accomplished with a comparable open source CMS.

Q. Website questions: Does the new website need to interface with any external services or databases?

A. Currently the website interfaces with various databases and external services. Staff expects that those would remain and additional services might be added.

Q. Website questions: What's your "wish list" of features and process changes that you'd like to see for the website?

A. This has not yet been determined.

Q. Website questions: What are the current problems with your communication process between website visitors and reaching village contacts?

A. There is a tremendous amount of information on the Village website as visitors and audiences have a large array of needs. The Village hopes to modernize its website and ensure that audiences can reach the information/services they need in a more efficient and manner.

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Q. Website questions: Are you open to a logo refresh? Is the logo available for download anywhere on your website?

A. The logo is not available for download on the website. The Village would like to ensure that its communication strategies are visually cohesive.



Village of River Forest
Village Administrator's Office
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Tel: 708-366-8500

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 22, 2015
To: Eric Palm, Village Administrator
From: Emily Creer, Management Intern
Subj: Communication Plan

Issue

The Village of River Forest currently does not have a comprehensive communication plan in place. At the November 18, 2013 Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting, the Village Board determined the goal of developing strategies and polices for Village Communication. Subsequently, the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget included the Village Board Goal of establishing a communication plan and examining additional communication methods.

Analysis

Staff has created a communication plan designed to outline communication policies and goals, discuss current communication tools and establish new communication initiatives consistent with overall Village Board Goals.

The communication plan includes:

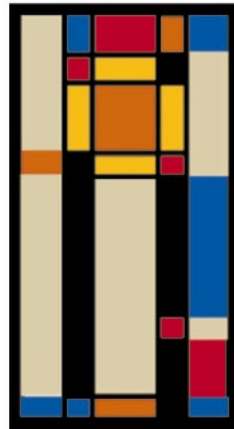
- Statement of purpose
- Administration & evaluation – who will be responsible for managing and monitoring the Plan and the basis and process for evaluation.
- Benefits of communication
- Communication plan goals
- Communication guidance – key principles and definitions upon which all Village communication will be based and guidelines for adhering to said principles.
- Audience and stakeholder assessment
- Communication tools and strategies – a comprehensive analysis of existing and possible future communication tools including a description and analysis of each.
- Recommended communication polices – policies regarding content, usage, Village meeting coverage, spokespersons and official statements.
- Next Steps/Actions Items

Requested Board Action

No formal action is required at the January 27, 2015 Village Board Meeting. Instead, Staff asks that this plan be discussed by the Village Board. Feedback and suggested changes will be incorporated and the Plan will be brought back to the Village Board for adoption at a future date.

Documents Attached

1. Draft Communication Plan
2. Communication Goals – FY 2016



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VILLAGE COMMUNICATION PLAN

January 22, 2015



INTRODUCTION

The Village recognizes the value of community engagement and the wealth of information and resources possessed by those who live, work and visit River Forest. It is important to increase the Village's understanding of constituent concerns, ideas and values so that they can be utilized to enhance decision-making by Village leaders. It is also important for the Village to periodically memorialize its existing and prospective communication tools, initiatives and policies to ensure key messages are being distributed to and received by the intended audience in the most effective manner.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to proactively identify, create and budget adequate resources needed to engage the audience that:

1. Increase open two-way communication both internally and externally.
2. Enable strong and consistent messages that reinforce and reflect the Village's goals.
3. Strengthen community interaction and provide the audience with complete, accurate and timely information.

ADMINISTRATION & EVALUATION

This plan will be managed and monitored by the Village Administrator's office in collaboration with the Village Board and management team. Evaluation will be based on both qualitative and quantitative data, input and feedback continually received throughout all levels of the organization.

BENEFITS OF COMMUNICATION

Effective communication provides a strong foundation upon which Village staff and officials can more successfully maintain and develop programs and services. Aligning communication with operating goals and plans can:

- Enhance internal and external customer service
- Strengthen bonds and relationships with the audience
- Generate community support and involvement
- Promote transparency of Village policies, procedures and decisions
- Provide a platform of strength from which to manage any crisis
- Play an integral role in developing business retention and attraction programs

COMMUNICATION PLAN GOALS

1. Ensure the Village President, Board of Trustees, Appointed Officials and Staff are an integral part of the overall Communication Plan
2. Improve communication to and from River Forest residents, businesses and organizations
3. Improve communication within the municipal organization
4. Enhance and improve community and media relations
5. Increase awareness, interest and participation of the residents of River Forest in government programs,

activities and decision-making

6. Increase awareness of and interest in participation by Village employees in the goals and activities of the organization
7. Build community pride among the residents and businesses and organizational pride among employees
8. Assess whether audience needs are currently being met and identify future resources and strategies to enhance the Village's ability to meet those needs

COMMUNICATION GUIDANCE

Key Principles

The Communication Plan has been developed based upon the following principles:

Accessible: To maintain effective communication relationships with its audience, the Village's communication media must be visible, accessible and easy to obtain.

Accurate: Information distributed must be correct with specific attention to detail.

Consistent: Messages must be consistent to build credibility. A successful communication plan requires strong themes rather than unrelated, scattered messages. Village communication should reinforce and reflect the goals of the municipality as established by the Village Board of Trustees and Village Administrator, thus underscoring the idea of an organization with one common purpose.

Evaluation: Constant evaluation of communication tools, incoming and outgoing information and other key indicators is critical in evaluating the Communication Plan's effectiveness.

Inclusive: Municipalities typically have large audiences with a variety of needs. Effective communication works to address the array of audience needs, interests and concerns and create a sense of teamwork and belonging. The intent of communication is to include everyone who wishes to participate and motivate those who are not currently engaged.

Proactive: The Plan gives the Village the opportunity to tell its story and communicate information rather than to rely on others to relay information on programs or policies or to interpret Village actions, issues and decisions.

Repetitive: Repetition of content, themes, symbols and messages breeds familiarity. A repetitive, predictable schedule should be devised for message placement to ensure it receives attention from its audience. The more a message is repeated the wider its audience will become.

Simple: The Village assumes its audience is busy, educated and appreciates honest, simple, straight-forward messages that favor brevity.

Solution-Driven: Communication can provide the audience with information that enables them to make informed judgments, enhance decision-making throughout the community and engage others in identifying solutions to community issues and issues that its audience is experiencing.

Timely: Information should be poignant and distributed at the opportune moment.

Two-Way Communication: Effective communication requires two parties—the sender and the receiver. Feedback on all issues is encouraged and processed to ensure the audience does not feel, and is not actually,

ignored.

Variety: To ensure a message is received it needs to be spread via one or more communication tools tailored to its audience. The more tools used, the wider its coverage will likely be. Further, variety keeps the message from becoming stagnant and from the audience becoming fatigued, thus resulting in the intended audience ignoring the message.

Communication Guidance

When developing key messages, the author needs to consider issues including:

- The intended outcome of the communication and whether it is intended to educate, remind, reassure, alert, challenge the audience or change behavior and/or attitude
- Who should be consulted/forewarned before proceeding with communication
- Whether the communication may lead to controversy or significant increases on particular resources/assets and how this can be managed effectively
- How and what the audience currently thinks about the topic
- Which communication tool(s) will help the message reach the intended audience
- Whether the communication is one-way or two-way (i.e. is it intended to create a dialogue or simply inform)
- The timeframe for distribution of the message and how it serves the intended outcome
- How the topic/information benefits the audience
- How the information can be communicated as clearly as possible and in a way that appeals to the audience

AUDIENCE & STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT

In any community a number of different stakeholder groups and audiences exist; all of whom likely have different interests, communication needs and expectations. While it may not be possible to meet the needs of each group all the time, the Communication Plan is intended to identify and prioritize target audiences.

Primary Audience

- **Village Residents:** This is the highest priority targeted audience. Strengthening the relationship between the Village and its residents is a good starting point for a sound Communication Plan. There are numerous subgroups including civic groups, business clubs and organizations, age groups, etc.
- **Members of Boards, Commissions and Committees:** While these people are covered under the broad umbrella of “residents”, their volunteer work on behalf of the municipality makes them a distinct and specific target audience. Communication between the elected and appointed officials, constituents and Village staff is primarily for the purpose of making and implementing key policy decisions. The information provided to this audience is often technical in nature. The Open Meetings Act regulates how some forms of communication with and between these individuals must occur.
- **Business Owners & Operators**

Secondary Audience: Working in River Forest

- **University students living on campus:** While also covered under the broad umbrella of “residents”, their age, the type of services they might use, their diverse backgrounds and short-term presence in the community makes them a distinct and specific target audience
- **Village Employees**

- Employees and Volunteers of Public, Educational or Recreational Institutions
- News Media
- Other government agencies
- Guests Visiting River Forest
 - Patrons of businesses in River Forest
 - Patrons of facilities and uses within the PRI districts
 - Students at educational institutions that do not reside in River Forest
 - Motorists who utilize Village streets for travel

COMMUNICATION TOOLS & STRATEGIES

Existing

TOOL	DESCRIPTION	COMMENTS
Village Website	An easily located online presence that contains useful information and functionality for all audience segments. Provides information about the Village, its services and the area it represents and provides the opportunity for residents to conduct business online.	The website can be and is regularly updated to keep residents informed on a daily basis. It is accessible at anytime from anywhere to anyone with internet access. The current website is a useful tool, but may need to be restructured in a more user friendly manner. The proposed FY 2016 budget will contain sufficient funds to make modifications to the site. Web content can be modified quickly and inexpensively.
Community Portal	Online community calendar designed to provide information about community events located within the Village. The goal of the calendar would be to have all taxing bodies' event information in one location.	This project will be completed in FY 2015 and should be a useful tool for cooperation among governing bodies. Will rely on participating agencies to keep its content current and relevant to the audience. Web content can be modified quickly and inexpensively.
Employee Intranet	An intranet is a network belonging to an organization and is accessible to employees or others with authorization.	This year Village staff created a new intranet designed to be easily accessible to all employees that is more user-friendly in nature. The intranet will continue to be updated as needed and is an important internal communication tool. Web content can be modified quickly and inexpensively.
E-mail	Two-way communication that is utilized heavily by Village staff and officials with all segments of the Village's audience.	This form of communication is quick, convenient and inexpensive and will continue as a key means of interaction.
Public Meetings	Formal or informal meetings that are open to the public such as Village Board meetings or meetings of Boards, Committees and Commissions.	Public meetings are a communication tool that allows the elected and appointed officials to directly interact with members of the public and often provides a barometer of the interest and opinions of the community on specific issues.

VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST COMMUNICATION PLAN

In-Person Contact	Any form of personal interaction between Village staff, officials, and members and the community.	Used during daily interactions. Two-way communication tool that allows staff to resolve concerns and provide information.
E-newsletter	The Village-wide e-newsletter is distributed monthly with information about Village Board conduct, community events, and general information to subscribers. The newsletter is available in print if requested.	This form of communication is widely received throughout the Village with approximately 2,500 subscribers being reached on a monthly basis. It provides high exposure with minimal resource requirements. This form of communication may not be as effective with individuals who lack access to the internet. The frequency of distribution, content and the length of the newsletter must be carefully weighed to avoid reader fatigue.
Mobile App	The Village currently has an app that is available on both android and IOS devices. The app provides individuals with the ability to view all business in town, contact staff and submit service requests with a pinpoint location and photograph.	Staff believes the app is currently being underutilized by the audience. The Village may wish to consider renewed marketing efforts and increased functionality. The app has the ability to send messages directly to the user. There is limited information at present about app usage overall but the app could be a more powerful communication tool with increased staff involvement.
Speeches/Presentations	Public exposure via spoken word to a select audience on a variety of occasions. The Village President implemented an annual State of the Village address designed to provide an annual update to residents. The Village also hosts periodic presentations about the history and architecture of the Village.	Provides the Village the opportunity to have a tightly managed message that can be brought to the public, which typically leads to additional media exposure. Continued public presentations will be a useful tool in ensuring direct contact with residents.
Uniforms	Any consistent clothing or body 'art' that promotes the Village or its operations.	Uniforms provide a strong conversation starter and have strong personal characteristics. They communicate with community and staff in a non-verbal manner. If used in a traditional format only (i.e. logo placement only) they may have a low impact.
Equipment	Village equipment utilized by staff contains some form of the Village logo providing a continued physical presence within the Village and communicating Village staff activity on a daily basis.	The current equipment contains a variety of logos and lacks a cohesive brand. Implementing a cohesive labeling procedure would ensure all equipment is easily recognizable as that of the Village.
Internal Meetings	Any meeting both formal and informal in which Village staff conduct business.	The Village Administrator holds regular staff meetings and each department conducts regular meetings informing employees of activity within the Village and changes in Village Policies. This ensures a staff that is well informed and reduces knowledge silos

External Meetings	Formal or informal meetings that are conducted between Village staff and external stakeholders but do not constitute public meetings governed by the Open Meetings Act (e.g. staff meetings and meetings with individual residents, developers or businesses).	within the Village. Provides an opportunity for face-to-face interaction between staff and external stakeholders in a more formalized setting. It is an excellent means of resolving specific issues or conducting business quickly and efficiently.
Signage	Visual graphics created to display information (most notably, but not only, directional) and legal notices.	Placement opportunities abound and signs typically have high longevity with little maintenance. Signs can be placed at sites that other communication forms cannot access. They offer strong stand out and awareness levels but can have space limitations for messages. Signs can be expensive to replace/update and audiences may experience “sign fatigue.”
Press Releases	The Village regularly releases information to the local press as a means to communicate Village business to the general public.	The Village Administrator and the Police Department regularly utilize this form of communication. It is an effective tool if releases are picked-up by the press, published and read by the intended audience. It is utilized primarily to promote positive Village information or alert a wider audience.
Community Events	Any activity that is open to community access (including online events).	The Village primarily assists with advertising and co-sponsoring events within River Forest. This is a good opportunity for positive interactions between Village officials and a large audience, primarily consisting of residents.
Surveys	Any request for feedback from a target audience. Primarily utilized for customer service information about Village services. Regular building permit surveys are conducted. Economic Development Commission conducted its first survey in 2014.	These surveys provide Village staff and officials with guidance about the respondents’ satisfaction with current services and ideas for future initiatives.
Village Administrator’s Twitter Feed	The Village Administrator maintains a Twitter account to inform the general public about the Village programs and activities.	This is currently the only social media utilized by the Village. Increased usage of social media could provide a better means of one and two-way communication between Village staff and its audience.
Village President’s Letter to Incoming University Students	The Village President provides a letter for all incoming students attending Concordia and Dominican University.	This form of communication reaches a population that is often not heavily involved in the Village government. This is a means to introduce students to the Village overall and begin the process of engagement.
Print Materials Brochures	Printed information insights on a variety of topics.	Village staff currently does not regularly produce brochures, but they

		<p>are available at Village Hall. There are a wide variety of topics currently covered by brochures. Brochures are relatively inexpensive to produce, but leave no room for alteration once printed and need to be manually distributed. Overall, brochures tend to have low levels of readership.</p>
<p>Stationary</p>	<p>All letterhead, envelopes, business cards etc.</p>	<p>Stationary is heavily utilized by the Village. All business cards and envelopes utilized by staff are consistent and centrally controlled. Letterhead and the formatting of letters are inconsistent across departments with some departments using outdated or department-specific logos. A centralization of letterhead would assist with providing a consistent message.</p>
<p>Water Bills & Inserts</p>	<p>Any informational materials included with water bills on a bi-monthly basis.</p>	<p>Water bills are provided to customers on a bi-monthly basis and occasionally include informational inserts and brief messages on the bill about current issues which may be of importance to the audience. This form of communication reduces the expense of print material postage.</p>
<p>Direct Mail</p>	<p>Bulk mail distribution of information via hard copy. Examples include postcards, form letters, notices etc.</p>	<p>This form of communication allows for flexible message formats and is frequently utilized for smaller, more individualized communication efforts. Direct mail is often not read leading to a lack of communication despite high costs of production and postage. This form of communication can also take extensive staff time.</p>
<p>Forms & Applications</p>	<p>Any paper work the Village requires be filled out by external stakeholders including building permit applications, liquor licenses and property transfers.</p>	<p>Forms and applications provide an opportunity to maintain a streamlined brand if all forms are centralized and cohesive. Presently, the forms vary by department but Village staff has engaged a graphic designer to standardize certain forms as a quasi-pilot project.</p>
<p>Financial Documents (Budget, CIP, CAFR)</p>	<p>Annual documents created for the purpose of budgeting or audits.</p>	<p>The budget and other financial documents provide an opportunity to include a narrative with budgetary numbers and goals. This form of communication allows for a direct dialogue between the Village Board, Administrator and stakeholders and creates a more lay-person friendly document. Currently these documents have a centralized and visually appealing theme which could be incorporated into other communication</p>

Payroll Inserts	Any print materials included with employee paychecks for informational purposes.	documents. Internal communication; no postage costs but still able to produce print materials; may be overlooked by individuals who use direct deposit; utilized sparingly.
Historic Survey	The Village engaged a professional preservation planning team to conduct a community-wide historic resources survey and inventory. The survey provided information about every property within the Village and indicates the historical and architectural significance. The survey can be updated online as needed.	The principal objective of the survey is to identify, document and evaluate properties within River Forest's existing National Register Historic District as well as inventory other historic resources located elsewhere in the community that are considered architecturally and historically significant. Both hard copy and electronic version are available and the online versions can be updated as needed. The survey provides communication to a specific portion of residents and allows for additional communication opportunities such as presentations and public engagement.
Performance Measures	Each department within the Village provides annual performance measures that are included within the annual budget and reported on monthly to the Village Board.	The performance measures are designed to assist with determining if Board goals are being completed and identifying areas where improvement is necessary. Currently little narrative is included with each performance measure and why the measurement is important. An increase in narrative would result in improved communication between staff and residents. Improved performance measurement training could also promote improved performance overall. The monthly performance measurement memo could also be separated as to make it more accessible and visible.
Promotional Items	Any physical items containing Village information that are provided to the general public including parade giveaways and magnets.	The Village does not currently provide a large amount of promotional items. They allow creativity and a message that can be tailored to the individual item. This is an expensive means to promote the Village brand.

Possible Additional Tools/Initiatives

TOOL	DESCRIPTION	COMMENTS
Annual Departmental Communication Goals	Annual documentation of communication goals for each department that promotes the overall goals of the Village's Communication Plan.	The use of annual departmental communication goals will result in increased communication throughout Village Hall and set timelines for communication efforts. The use of communication goals will also ensure

		improvement and usage of the Communication Plan. This initiative can be incorporated into the annual budgeting process.
Social Media	Computer-mediated tools that allow people to create, share or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks.	The Village solely utilizes the Village Administrator’s twitter account as the only form of social media interaction. The Village may want to participate in Facebook, Pinterest and an increased Twitter presence to promote events within the community, provide emergency information and transition toward a larger online presence. Considerations when entering into social media include increased staff time, reduced control of information and a lack of information being provide to non-internet users.
Video Content	Hosting of video content that may be of use to external stakeholders on the Village website.	Video content may provide a direct means of communication to its audience including informational videos about various topics. Currently the Village has no means to produce the content (scripting, filming, post-production, etc.) but could perhaps pursue interagency collaboration to assist with these efforts.
Branding Standards	Establishing a cohesive design for all Village communications resulting in visual continuity.	Setting branding standards will help to create a cohesive centralized identity for the Village. It will produce an overall more visually appealing and professional image for the Village.
Marketing Assessment/Analysis	Market assessment is a detailed and objective evaluation of Village communication. It is a comprehensive analysis of environment forces, market trends, entry barriers, competition, risks, opportunities and the Village’s resources and constraints.	A well-executed market assessment will enable the Village to decide where to use limited resources and to go after markets and opportunities that will provide the best returns on investments. Village staff recommend considering a marketing analysis in the next one to two fiscal years to continue the development of its Communication Plan and brand standards.
Project-Specific Communication	When the Village engages in construction projects, such as the Northside Stormwater Management Project, that are expected to generate a large call volume or create disruption to the audience, Village staff and its contractor(s) will create a comprehensive communication strategy, This strategy will identify communication tools that can be used to share information, the type of information to be shared, a regular communication schedule and the	Identify a specific phone number for customer inquiries and who will be responsible for answering the calls In the case of the NSMP, Burke Engineering will be dedicating staff to manage inquiries. Inevitably, calls will be received at the Village Hall. Whenever possible Village staff should avoid blindly transferring the caller to another line without ensuring there will be someone to receive the call. If possible, Village staff should attempt to answer basic project questions based on the FAQs or individual staff

staff that will be dedicated to expertise.
fielding audience inquiries.

Create a list of anticipated Frequently asked questions that can be distributed to the staff identified as being points of contact for the project. The key point person should update this form based on incoming questions and redistribute it as-needed. Communicate project updates on at least a weekly basis via the following communication tools:

- Utilize a designated section of the website for regular construction updates, maps, FAQs and other information of interest to the employee.
 - Consider using the NSMP as a launch-point for the Village's first foray into social media and post weekly updates to the Village's social media feed(s).
 - Create a category of e-news subscribers who can sign up to receive construction project updates.
-

RECOMMENDED COMMUNICATION POLICIES

Content

Information released from the Village of River Forest will contain accurate, objective, factual information.

Content that is prohibited for release by the Village of River Forest (including staff and elected and appointed officials) includes, but is not limited to:

- Material designed to promote or advertise the sale of commercial products or services
- Material of a personal nature of the person or group seeking access
- Any obscene, indecent or defamatory material
- Libelous or slanderous material
- Advertising by and/or on behalf of candidates for public office
- Material which advocates a particular religious belief or philosophy
- Material that violates local, state or federal law

The Village Administrator or his/her designee reserves the right to edit or reject material that is not in compliance with the provisions of this policy.

Usage

Governmental taxing bodies serving the residents of the Village of River Forest and other agencies, civic organizations, not-for-profit entities and other non-taxing/non-governmental organizations with a physical

location in River Forest that serves the Village's audience may provide materials or information for distribution via the Village's available communication tools. Such information should be of a nature that is consistent with the traditional role of the governmental body, the distributor's core mission, and appropriate for distribution by a municipal organization. The Village Administrator or his/her designee reserves the right to designate the format in which the information must be submitted as well as the date(s) and manner of distribution. He/she also reserves the right to edit or reject material that is not in compliance with the provisions of this policy.

Village Meeting Coverage

Meetings of the Village Board of Trustees and other official Village Boards, Committees and Commissions will be audio taped with recordings posted to the Village's website. The audio recording will begin when the Village President or Chair calls the meeting to order and will extend to the completion of all agenda items listed. Coverage of the meetings shall be objective and editing may only occur when removing possible recess(es) and/or to comply with standards of decency.

Public meetings are a forum for conducting the business of the Village and are not a forum for individuals who may attempt to utilize the meeting or recorded audio for the delivery of inappropriate information to the general public.

Media Spokespersons

The Village Administrator, Assistant Village Administrator and Department Heads are responsible for all official contacts with the news media during working hours, including answering of questions from the media. The Village Administrator and Department Heads may designate specific employees to give out procedural, factual or historical information on particular subjects or issues.

Official Statements

From time to time it will be deemed necessary by the Village President, Board of Trustees and/or Village Administrator to prepare and release a written statement. When this event occurs, it is the policy of the Village that official statements must be approved in advance by the Village President, Village Administrator and/or his/her designee. All statements should be written in the third person.

NEXT STEPS/ACTION ITEMS

Administration staff will conduct an annual review of the communication plan to ensure it remains current. The Village Administrator, Assistant Village Administrator and Department Heads will also work to establish annual communication goals, including the funds needed to accomplish them. Attached is a list of the goals that the Village Board of Trustees will review as part of its upcoming budget deliberations.



Village of River Forest
Village Administrator's Office
400 Park Avenue
River Forest, IL 60305
Tel: 708-366-8500

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 22, 2015

To: Eric Palm, Village Administrator

From: Lisa Scheiner, Assistant Village Administrator

Subj: Communication Goals – FY 2016

The recently proposed Communication Plan proposes that staff create annual departmental communication goals. Below is a list of new initiatives included in the FY 2016 that the Board will consider as part of their overall budget deliberations.

FY 2016 Communication Goals

- Update Village website: The Village website may need to be reorganized to make it more user-friendly. Previous budgets have included \$2,000 for miscellaneous web enhancements, but Villages staff has increased the amount to \$5,000 for FY 2016.
- Mobile App: Village staff believes the existing app is underutilized and should be evaluated to determine whether additional functionality is needed and available through the existing service provider (iCity), if the Village should consider modifying its current arrangement, or if additional marketing efforts are needed. Evaluation will be performed in-house. The FY 2016 proposed budget includes an increase from \$1,500 to \$2,000 for annual hosting fees.
- Standardization of Village logo on uniforms, vehicles, equipment: This program will gradually eliminate old or outdated logos, complementing the Village's efforts to create a cohesive, consistent and professional appearance. Staff does not anticipate that additional funds will be required for this purpose.
- Project specific communication: Create central point of contact for Northside Stormwater Management Project (NSMP) by identifying a specific phone number for customer inquiries and who will be responsible for answering the calls. In the case of the NSMP, Burke Engineering will be dedicating staff to manage inquiries. The cost of this service is yet to be determined but any additional funds needed will be programmed into the FY 2016 budget. Inevitably, however, calls will be received at the Village Hall and audiences will access the information in different ways. To aid in the distribution of

information a list of anticipated frequently asked questions (FAQs) should be created, updated periodically and distributed among key staff. This and other project information such as construction updates, maps, etc., should be posted to a designated section of the website and updated on a weekly basis. Village staff can also create a category of e-news subscribers that can receive project-specific updates. A general monthly update can also be included in the e-newsletter.

- Social Media: The NSMP can be used as a launch-point for the Village's first foray into social media by posting weekly project updates to the Village's social media feed(s). This can be accomplished using existing staff and resources. These duties can be performed in-house with no additional funding required.
- Standardization of documents: Village staff will continue to work with a resident and graphic designer to enhance the visual appeal and standardization of documents. This program is a slow, gradual plan and sufficient funds exist in the Village's miscellaneous consulting budget within the Administration department to continue this work. No additional funding is required at this time.