
CITY OF LEE'S SUMMIT

Communications Strategic Plan

2026 — 2028

Department of Communications & Public Information

Prepared in partnership with Torres Communications Management

What we'll cover today

01

Why now

The moment Lee's Summit is in

02

What we learned

Discovery, stakeholder insights, and where we stand

03

The plan

Vision, governance, and priorities for 2026–2028

04

In practice

Crisis readiness, audience reach, and storytelling

05

What's next

Roadmap, measurement, and how we move forward together

A growing city deserves a growing communications function

107K

Current residents

140K

Projected growth

2026

Ballot measures,
major capital projects

As Lee's Summit grows, so does the demand for clear, consistent, and proactive communication. This plan positions the City to communicate at the scale of its ambition, building public trust, supporting civic engagement, and telling the story of a city that is growing well and governed with care.

This plan is grounded in research and engagement

Over two months, we conducted a multi-phase discovery process to evaluate the City's communications structure, capabilities, and opportunities for improvement.

01 Stakeholder Interviews

City leadership, CPI team, management team, and PIOs

03 Peer City Benchmarking

Comparable municipalities (100K–250K) across the U.S.

02 Tools & Channels Audit

Current platforms, workflows, website, and social media

04 Needs Assessment

Operational capacity, governance, and structural gaps

Four themes emerged consistently

01

Strong creative foundation

Talented team, high-quality video and design, trusted brand

02

Reactive operating model

Request-driven workflow limits proactive planning and strategy

03

Missing governance structure

No formal PIO leadership, no Communications Council, no intake system

04

Alignment to modernize

Broad consensus across leadership and departments that change is needed

From reactive to proactive

TODAY

Request-driven

- Driven by urgent, last-minute requests
- Limited time for strategy or campaign planning
- Inconsistent messaging across departments
- No coordinated approach to crisis or major initiatives



BY 2028

Strategy-led

- Planned campaigns tied to City priorities
- 50/50 proactive-to-reactive work balance
- Unified messaging across all departments
- Crisis-ready with pre-approved protocols

Five strategic goals guide the plan

1

Strategic Leadership & Governance

Reposition CPI as the City's communications authority

2

Proactive, Planned Communications

Move from request-driven to campaign-led

3

Transparency & Public Trust

Explain decisions with context, not just announcements

4

Reach Every Audience

Match channels to the people they actually serve

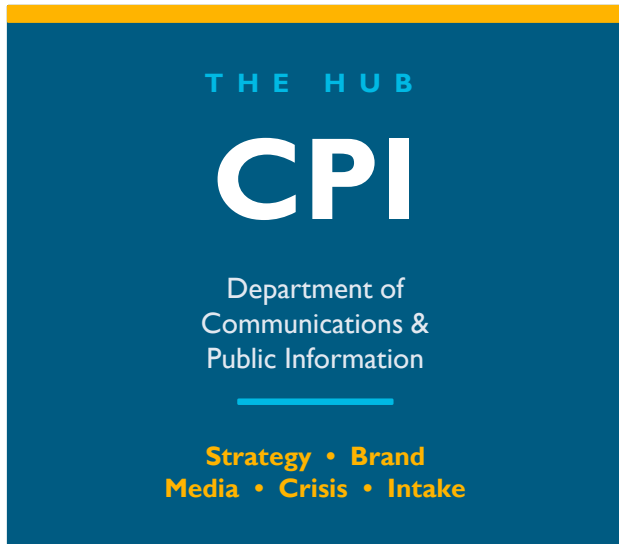
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Capacity, Measurement & Sustainability

Build the systems that make excellence durable

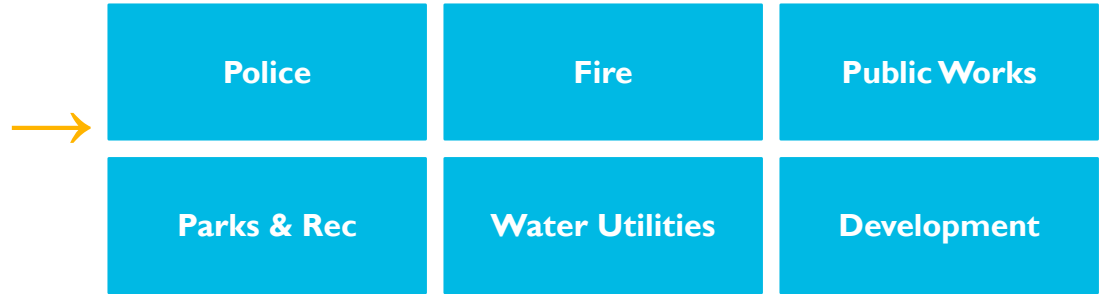
How we'll work together: hub-and-spoke

CPI is the strategic hub. Departments are subject-matter spokes. Each retains what they do best.



THE SPOKES

Departments bring subject-matter expertise



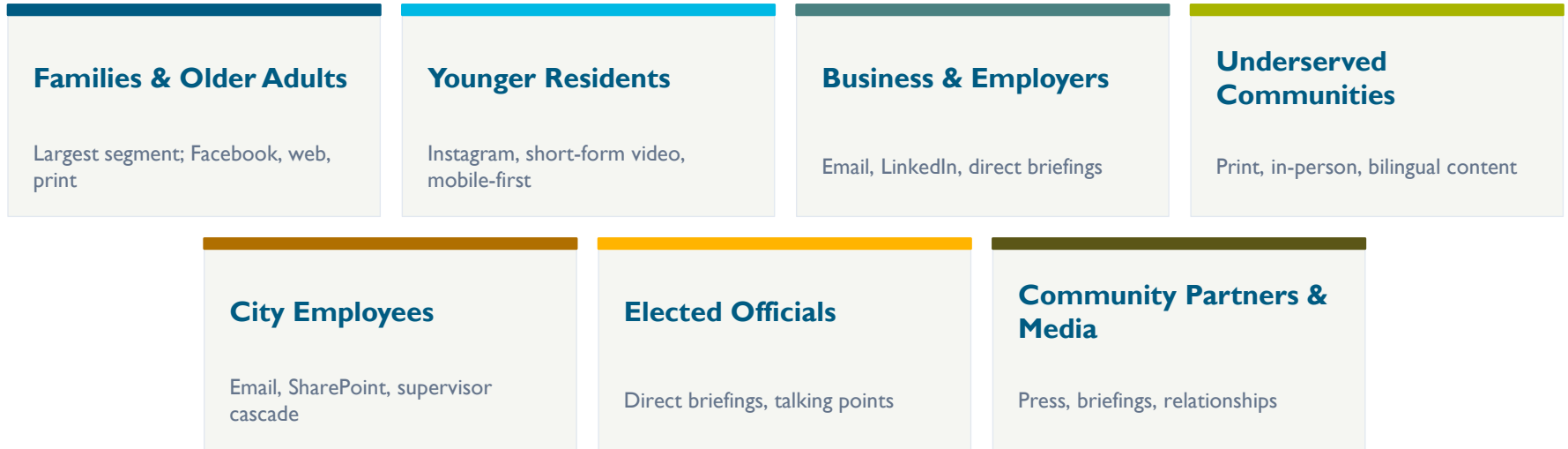
+ all other City departments

Crisis communications

The plan incorporates a framework for responding to crises that aligns with the existing protocols already in place across Police and Fire.

It equips the City to respond to emergencies in a coordinated, consistent, and timely way with clear roles, shared messaging, and unified leadership across departments.

We don't communicate to one resident. We communicate to seven.



A one-size-fits-all approach won't reach a city this diverse. Channels are matched to audiences, not the other way around.

Becoming storytellers for a growing city

Five messaging pillars give every piece of City communication a consistent narrative thread from a social post to a press release.

- 01** Trust, Transparency & Accountability
- 02** Quality Services That Improve Daily Life
- 03** Planning for Growth with Purpose
- 04** A Community That Works for Everyone
- 05** Modern, Capable & Forward-Thinking

Year I: building the foundation 2026

1 Activate Governance

Department renamed; Director elevated as Chief Communications Officer and primary PIO.

3 Stand Up Communications Council

Monthly cross-department meetings to align campaigns and messaging.

5 Build Editorial Calendar

Annual calendar aligned to City priorities, ballot measures, website updates.

2 Launch Intake System

Single Microsoft Forms portal for all department requests; trained citywide.

4 Adopt Crisis Plan

Plan developed, chain of command defined, first tabletop exercise held.

6 Roll Out Messaging Framework

Five pillars adopted citywide; brand voice guide distributed.

Three-year roadmap

2026

BUILD THE FOUNDATION

- Governance & PIO structure
- Intake & Communications Council
- Crisis plan adopted
- Editorial calendar live
- Messaging framework rolled out

2027

DEEPEN STRATEGIC CAPACITY

- 50/50 proactive-to-reactive balance
- Analytics dashboard operational
- Bilingual content for priority topics
- Second crisis tabletop exercise
- Audience expansion to under-reached

2028

SUSTAIN & ADVANCE

- Hub-and-spoke fully embedded
- Plan benchmarked against Year 1
- Evidence-based staffing case
- Digital platforms in steady state
- Next 3-year plan developed

How we'll know it's working

Measurement isn't about reports. It's about learning, adapting, and demonstrating value.

- 1 Intake & Workflow** Request volume, turnaround time, on-time delivery, proactive-to-reactive ratio
- 2 Output & Production** Content volume by channel, campaign completion, revision cycles
- 3 Engagement & Reach** Website traffic, social engagement, video performance, follower growth
- 4 Strategic Outcomes** Campaign lift, public understanding, crisis response effectiveness, resident satisfaction
- 5 Internal Communications** Internal reach, employee feedback, training participation, Council attendance

What this means for City Council

For the City Council

A communications function that matches the scale of the city. As Lee's Summit grows, the City's communications grow with it, building public trust and supporting civic engagement.

A clear approach to managing risk. A coordinated crisis framework, aligned with Police and Fire, that equips the City to respond when it matters most.

The City's story, told well. Proactive, consistent communications that reflect a city growing well and governed with care.

LOOKING AHEAD

A communications function worthy of the city we're becoming.

Built on stakeholder engagement, peer-city best practices, and a shared vision for a Lee's Summit that communicates with clarity, confidence, and purpose.

Questions & Discussion