

1. Agenda

Documents:

[BOMC-8-1-18-SCM-AGENDA.PDF](#)

2. Meeting Called To Order/Adoption Of Agenda

3. Resolution Setting Tax Inducement Criteria

Documents:

[DRAFT TAX INDUCEMENT RES 7.20.18.PDF](#)

4. Resolution To Approve Vote On Sunday Brunch Bill

5. Resolution To Approve Communications Plan

Documents:

[COMMUNICATION PLAN RES.PDF](#)

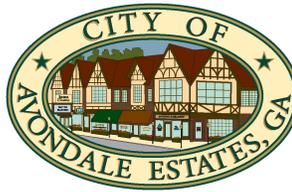
5.I. Communications Plan

Documents:

[AVONDALE ESTATES COMMUNICATIONS PLAN.PDF](#)

6. Public Comment

7. Adjournment



**BOARD OF MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
August 1st, 2018
5:30 p.m.**

AGENDA

- Item No. 1 Meeting Called to Order
- Item No. 2 Adoption of Agenda
- Item No. 3 **Resolution Setting Tax Inducement Criteria**
With development becoming more common in the City, the Board of Mayor and Commissioners (BOMC) wishes to formally establish criteria for how tax inducement (also referred to as bond for title or tax abatement) is considered should a developer request it.
- Item No. 4 **Resolution to Approve Vote on Sunday Brunch Bill**
The State of Georgia now allows cities to regulate alcohol consumption in restaurants on Sundays from 11:00 am until 12:30 pm. For this to be included in a referendum here during the November 6th election, DeKalb County requires a resolution be passed.
- Item No. 5 **Resolution to Approve Communications Plan**
The communications plan, along with the public comment policy, was first discussed at the April 18th work session. The BOMC has received input and comments on several occasions since then. The City Attorney has also reviewed the draft. The public comment policy was approved at the July 24th regular meeting.
- Item No. 6 Public Comment
- Item No. 7 Adjournment

RESOLUTION NO. _____

BY THE CITY OF AVONDALE ESTATES BOARD OF MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS SETTING FORTH CRITERIA THAT THE BOARD WILL CONSIDER IF REQUESTED TO APPROVE ANY TAX INDUCEMENT IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROPERTY

WHEREAS, from time to time, the Board of Mayor and Commissioners may be asked to approve a tax inducement to facilitate a development of real property; and

WHEREAS, such inducements include, but are not limited to “bond for title” transactions approved by Downtown Development Authority; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Mayor and Commissioners wishes to express its policy regarding tax inducements through this Resolution.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City of Avondale Estates as follows:

1. In considering any request for tax inducement, the Board of Mayor and Commissioners will base its decision on the best interests of the City’s residents and businesses.
2. In order to consider a tax inducement request, the Board of Mayor and Commissioners require that the developer engage a reputable third-party analyst to conduct a Fiscal and Economic Impact Study and provide such study to the City. Such study should clearly indicate whether or not the subject development project would or could occur in the absence of the requested tax inducement and should include a *pro forma* financial statement for the proposed development, including the return on investment anticipated for the project, with alternative assumptions that the requested tax inducement is or is not approved.
3. No developer shall ever assume that a tax inducement will be approved by the City. In considering a request for tax inducement, the Board of Mayor and Commissioners will consider the Fiscal and Economic Impact Study, the City’s financial and cash flow requirements, the timing of anticipated tax revenue payments, and the short and long term impacts of the proposed development on city services and public infrastructure.

SO RESOLVED, this ____ day of _____, 2018.

BOARD OF MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF AVONDALE ESTATES

By: _____
Jonathan Elmore, Mayor

(SEAL)

ATTEST:

Gina Hill, CITY CLERK

A RESOLUTION

ADOPTING A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

WHEREAS, effective and timely communication with residents and beyond is of vital importance to the Avondale Estates leadership; and

WHEREAS, a written and adopted Communications Plan provides the benefit of increasing citizen involvement, effective two-way communication, and relationship building both inside and outside the City’s boundaries; and

WHEREAS, a Communications Plan should provide for open two-way communication, community problem-solving, and strong and consistent messages, as well as be proactive and inclusive; and

WHEREAS, a Communications Plan is represented in Exhibit A.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Mayor and Commissioners of the City of Avondale Estates that the Board hereby adopts the Communications Plan as show in Exhibits A.

SO RESOLVED, this 1st day of August, 2018.

THE CITY OF AVONDALE ESTATES

Attest:

Jonathan Elmore, Mayor

Gina Hill, City Clerk

City of Avondale Estates
Communications
Proposed
Policy and Plan

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Communications Plan

Introduction

A good communication strategy is essential for any municipality to get important information out to its residents and other stakeholders/audiences. Understanding what communication channels and tools are available to a municipality, and which are used or preferred by community members, is essential for making sure that word gets out to all audiences. The way people get their news varies from traditional forms of media, to word of mouth, to social media and other online sources. Municipalities need to be where the people are in order to provide information as seamlessly as possible.

So much happens within every municipality that needs to be shared: upcoming events, new programs, sustainability initiatives, important updates, celebrations of success, changes in leadership, etc. Municipalities have an opportunity to share such happenings as a means of promoting the good things they are doing, as well as to inform residents of timely news.

The City of Avondale Estates recognizes the value of citizen involvement and the wealth of information and resources that citizens of Avondale Estates possess. It is important to increase the City's understanding of citizen concerns, ideas and values so that they can be utilized to make better decisions. The City must identify, create and budget adequate resources to engage citizens and citizen groups to enable them to effectively become a part of the City's decision-making process.

Communication with the City of Avondale Estates' citizens, businesses, and visitors is critical for encouraging understanding of the value of living and working in the City and surrounding community.

Public engagement and communication plays a vital role in the overall health and well-being of the community, and this Communication Plan formalizes the purpose of the City of Avondale Estates' public engagement and communication efforts. It provides a foundation for the most effective methods of two-way communication with respective audiences which includes the messages, tools and processes necessary to ensure the delivery of effective communication by the City of Avondale Estates.

This proposed communication strategy and plan will aid in relationship building and restoring or maintaining trust between residents and their local government through strategies that engage the public in determining which channels should be used and what information is most necessary.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the City of Avondale Estates to foster and encourage an atmosphere of openness with the public. Coordinating timely communication with the public about City programs and information is to be regarded as an important consideration in maintaining good public relations. Further it is the policy of the City of Avondale Estates to:

- Provide the public with timely, accurate, clear, objective and complete information about its policies, programs, events, services and initiatives.
- Ensure that the City of Avondale Estates is visible, accessible and accountable to the public it serves.
- Employ a variety of ways and means to communicate and provide information to the public.
- Identify and address communication needs and issues routinely in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs, services and initiatives.
- Consult the public, listen to and take account of people's interests and concerns when establishing priorities, developing policies, and planning programs and services.
- Deliver prompt, courteous and responsive service that is sensitive to the needs and concerns of the public and respectful of individual rights.
- Encourage City Staff to communicate openly with the public about policies, programs, services and initiatives they are familiar with and for which they have responsibility.
- Market the City's name and logo on all forms of communication with the public.

AVONDALE ESTATES NON-GOVERNMENTAL NEWS AND INFORMATION PUBLICATION POLICY

The City's communication resources are typically used to publish announcements by the City government or other local government announcements that are relevant to City residents. However, the City recognizes that many local businesses and organizations provide public events that offer a broad benefit to residents. Therefore, local businesses and organizations may request that City communication resources be used to publish announcements.

The City will only publish announcements by non-governmental organizations or businesses that pertain to a specific event that is open to the general public and meets the following additional criteria:

- The event is funded or aided by the City or the DDA either through a financial or "in kind" contribution; and/or
- The event will take place within the City limits of Avondale Estates.

When the City publishes notice of a non-governmental event, the notice will clearly designate the City as the "distributor" of information on behalf of the business or organization putting on the event. To this end, businesses and organizations seeking to have an event notice published by the City should provide their "banner identifier" along with the notice. If a banner identifier is not provided, the City will add text to the announcement to clarify that the City is merely a "distributor" of the information on behalf of the business or organization hosting the event.

The City will not publish any announcement that the City deems to constitute defamation, an invasion of privacy, trademark or copyright infringement, or otherwise violative of applicable local, state or federal law or regulation.

Targeted Audiences

The identification of target audiences is a key component of the City's Communication Plan.

- **Citizens of Avondale Estates.** The Citizens of Avondale Estates are the highest priority targeted audience. Strengthening the relationship between City government and the 3,000+ residents of the City is the starting point of a sound communications plan. There are numerous subsets to this audience which includes, but is not limited to: homeowners' associations, businesses, schools, not-for-profit organizations, and local clubs.
- **City Employees.** Personnel employed by the City of Avondale Estates in its various departments and agencies are an integral part of the success of the communication plan. Each individual reflects the organization in their daily work. Subsets to this audience include elected officials, temporary/part time employees, event volunteers, and members of City boards and committees.
- **News Media.** The media are important because their coverage of City events and activities can have significant influence on the image of government by the public.
- **Residents of DeKalb County and the surrounding region,** including those who work and do business in Avondale Estates.
- **New or prospective residents and businesses**

Guiding Principals

1. **Open Two-Way Communication:** Ensure that information is shared throughout the community and the organization emphasizing two-way informational flow.
2. **Community Problem-solving:** Provide citizens with complete, accurate and timely information enabling them to make informed judgments. This will help the City to make the best decisions on their behalf.
3. **Proactive:** The plan attempts to give the City the opportunity to tell its story rather than rely exclusively on others to interpret the City's actions, issues and decisions.
4. **Inclusive:** including everyone in the process builds teamwork and a feeling of belonging, breaking down feelings of us vs. them, which are common in many city governments and in many relationships of city government with citizens. The goal is to include everyone who cares to participate and to motivate those who are not currently engaged.
5. **Strong and Consistent Messages:** A successful communication plan is built on strong themes and is more effective than one with unrelated and scattered messages. The communication plan should support, reinforce and reflect the goals of the. These goals were established by the Board of Mayor and Commissioners and City Staff, thus underscoring the idea of an organization with one common purpose: the citizens, businesses, and visitors of Avondale Estates.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. The Mayor shall be the official staff spokesperson for the City and shall act as such in response to questions, requests, and concerns on all all issues concerning the Board of Mayor and Commissioners and operation of the City. The Chief of Police or his designee shall handle inquiries concerning criminal investigations that are of a sensitive nature. The media shall contact the Mayor or be put in contact with the Mayor concerning the administration or affairs of the City including but not limited to:
 - specific actions taken at official Board of Mayor and Commissioners meetings, work sessions, or other board meetings;
 - clarification and interpretation of City policies and administrative rules and regulations;
 - actions pending or under consideration by the Board of Mayor and Commissioners, or other board or committee that have not yet been made official policies;
 - inquiries concerning City employees; and
 - routine inquiries regarding departmental operations.

2. It is the responsibility of:
 - the Communications Manager to maintain the City's official web presence via social media/networking and the internet. The Communications Manager will also maintain the media distribution listings to include: media contacts, local organizations, business, residents, and visitors.
 - all City Departments and employees who want to engage in social media/networking in an official capacity for their department to coordinate this activity with the Communications Manager and City Manager prior to dissemination of information.

The responsibility for assuring complete compliance with the provisions of this policy rests with the supervisors and individual employee involved. It is the responsibility of social media users and those engaged in social networking to stay informed regarding City policies related to this activity.

Communication Tools

- **Official City Website (www.Avondale Estates.org):**

The City maintains an active presence on the internet at www.Avondale Estates.org. This site is the primary communication vehicle for the City and functions as a transparent, information portal, providing a convenient manner for the public to obtain current information, contact staff, and use on-line services. The City's website is designed as the City's communication portal, containing all elements of communications tools at the City's disposal.

- **Static Information:** The Avondale Estates City Government and each department of the City, with a listing of services and resources provided, are represented on the City's website. In addition, services that are most utilized also have a page to provide information for the public to make informed decisions. This information generally does not change, but will be updated as changes occur.
- **Dynamic Information:** It is important that the public receives information in a timely and convenient manner. Below are tools that Avondale Estates uses to communicate to the public, all of which are immediately posted on the website.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ✓ News Releases | ✓ Activity Reports (FAST FACTS) |
| ✓ Residential Notifications | ✓ Council Agenda / Minutes |
| ✓ Community Events Calendar | ✓ Upcoming Events |
| ✓ Emergency Operations | ✓ Social Networking |
| ✓ Miscellaneous Reports | ✓ Public Event Flyers |

- **News Releases:**

The City produces news releases as a part of its ongoing pursuit of transparency for specific areas of interest such as City successes, business accomplishments, or promotional events. The City may also use news releases as an instrument to communicate human interest stories to convey positive emotion about ongoing City activities.

- **Preparation:** News Releases shall be written by the subject matter expert and forwarded to the Communications Manager for formatting and final review prior to being released to the media. All news releases shall be routed for comment to any department that would be affected by the release prior to final approval by the Communications Manager with consultation of the City Manager. This requirement will ensure that information is current and

correct.

- Occurrence: News Releases will be published on a case-by-case basis.

- Distribution:
 - Email: News releases will be distributed electronically through the City's email server via the media distribution lists that includes regional media contacts. The public may request to be added or removed from the email distribution list on the City Website, which allows updated information to be sent automatically to subscribers (see below).
 - City Website: News releases will be posted on the City's website at www.AvondaleEstates.org. News release announcements will appear on the website homepage and on the dedicated news release page for easy access. Each news release page will contain a "widget" which allows for easy printing, or further publishing to social media websites.
 - Social Network Websites: News releases will be linked from the City's website to the City's Facebook and Twitter websites to reach a more diverse audience and encourage feedback.
- Identification. All news releases will have a header banner identifying the organization responsible for the information. The City's banners will be specially made by the Communications Manager to ensure easy identification and consistent use of the City's marketing brand.
- Exception. The Police Department responses to emergencies in the City may be reported directly to the media by a designated department spokesperson with the approval of the Police Chief. Police Department releases concerning traffic advisories, investigations and routine community relations activities may also be reported directly to the media. All releases should also be copied to the City Manager or his designee.
- Special consideration. News releases of controversial or sensitive materials and/or matters relating to public safety shall be distributed to the Mayor and members of the Board of Mayor and Commissioners prior to release to the media.
- **Avondale Estates E-News:**

The City continually promotes public events and information through the dissemination of two electronic newsletters that include events that are open to the public, are community oriented, and are held in Avondale Estates or held by an Avondale Estates organization. E-news are distributed every Monday afternoon and Friday morning.

Deadlines for each are listed on the e-news and website. Avondale Estates has the ability to send an E-Blast to bring an upcoming event to the public's attention, but cannot do this for every single event.

- Occurrence: E-News will be published on a case-by-case basis and are limited at the Communication Manager's discretion as not to "spam" or overwhelm the accounts of members of the distribution list.
- Distribution: E-News will be distributed via email through the City's Constant Contact account via the community relations distribution lists that includes regional media contacts, employees, local organizations, business, residents, and visitors. The public may request to be added or removed from the email distribution list on the City Website.
- Identification. Avondale Estates E-News are identified in the email subject line as "Avondale Estates E-Blast", followed by the event title.
- Exception. Due to the large of amount of events posted on the City's Events Page on the website and included in E-news, E-News are limited to those events held by the City or city-partnered organizations. Exceptions can be made when residents will be affected by traffic or other inconvenience.

- **Residential Notifications:**

The City produces a Residential Notification when road maintenance, utility maintenance, power outage, traffic occurrence, or any other unforeseen event targets a specific area of the City. The notification is used when information may not warrant a full news release and notifies only a specific group of people affected by an event short in duration.

- Preparation: Residential Notifications shall be written by the subject matter expert in each Department and forwarded to the Communications Manager for formatting and final review prior to being released to the media. If initial notification is made by an employee onsite, the Communications Manager will prepare the Residential Notification based on the information provided. This will ensure timely dissemination of the information. The Residential Notifications will be prepared so that they may be easily printed and used as a hand bill.
- Occurrence: Residential Notifications will be published on a case-by-

case basis.

- Distribution:

- c. Email: Residential Notifications will be distributed electronically through the City's Constant Contact account via the community relations distribution lists that may include regional media contacts, employees, local organizations, business, residents, and visitors. The public may request to be added or removed from the email distribution list on the City Website. The email will contain only the text of the notification with the subject line identified by "Residential Notification" followed by the subject line.
 - d. Hand Bill: Residential Notifications may be printed by the Department responsible for the information and distributed to residents and businesses directly affected by the project.
 - e. City Website: Residential Notifications will only be posted on the website if service interruption has the potential to affect a majority of the public in and around Avondale Estates in excess of a 24-hour period. An example would include a traffic interruption due to a water main repair lasting several days. Posting of Residential Notifications on the City website will be at the City Manager and Communication Manager's discretion.
 - f. Social Network Websites: Residential Notifications will be posted directly on City's Facebook and Twitter websites in text only form.
- d. Identification. Activity reports will be identified the City's Logo with "RESIDENTIAL NOTIFICATION" in the header, followed by the date.

- **Nextdoor:**

The City is currently researching the best ways to use the technology of the social networking site Nextdoor. Many other municipalities and law enforcement agencies are using the site to promote events, alert residents about emergencies, and provide real time updates. Protocols and standards are being developed so as not to overpromise a level of interaction or present problems. More information on this will be forthcoming.

- **Social Media:**

The City of Avondale Estates will make every effort to use current technologies to communicate with the public, including social networks, blogs, video sharing, podcasts, wikis, message boards, and online forums. Technologies include: picture-sharing, wall-postings, e-mail, instant messaging, and music-sharing to name a few. Examples of social media applications include but are not limited to Wikipedia (reference), Instagram and Facebook (social networking), YouTube (social networking and video sharing), Flickr (photo sharing), Twitter (social networking and microblogging), LinkedIn (business networking), and news media comment sharing/blogging.

- Social Networking tools serve as a quick and easy way to obtain public opinion and keep citizens updated and informed. Social networking benefits include the following:

- Ability to build trust, relationships, and establish open lines of communication.

- Ability to allow the City of Avondale Estates to be proactive and not reactive to citizens needs and concerns.

- Ability to create better overall brand awareness for the City of Avondale Estates.

- Ability to engage citizens, introduce new services, publicize upcoming events, reach a new demographic, and more.

Wherever possible, links to more information should direct users back to the City's official website at www.AvondaleEstates.org for information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the City.

- Guidelines

- All official City of Avondale Estates' presence on social media sites or services are considered an extension of the City's information network and are governed by this policy. The Communications Manager will review department requests to use social media sites and will be given administrative access for those departmental social networking sites.
- The Communications Manager will advocate using social media to help departments reach their stated goals by assisting departments in developing appropriate uses for social media, assisting the selecting of appropriate social media outlets and helping departments define a strategy for engagement using social media.
- The Communications Manager will monitor content on each of the City's social media sites to ensure adherence to the Social Media Policy for appropriate use, messaging, and branding consistent with the goals of the City.

- Department Guidelines
 - Use of social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, in an official capacity, must be authorized by the employee's Department manager, director, and coordinated with the City Manager and Communications Manager.
 - All Departments that use social media sites must be approved by the City Manager and provide the City Manager with administrative access. Existing sites must still be approved in order to continue and re-establish in accordance with these guidelines.
 - Departments that use social media are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and City laws, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding Georgia's Public Records and Open Meeting Laws, copyright, records retention, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), First Amendment, privacy laws and information security policies established by the City.
 - Employees representing the City government via social media outlets must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the City. Employees that fail to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner shall be subject to the disciplinary action outlined in the City's Personnel Manual.
 - Violation of this policy may result in the removal of department pages from social media outlets. The City Manager retains the authority to remove information or provide corrections or clarifications.
- Board of Mayor and Commissioners Guidelines.
 - Board of Mayor and Commissioners Members may become fans/followers of City social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, but should refrain from posting comments on these sites, as interaction with other elected officials could give the perception of an official statement from the City. Further, Board of Mayor and Commissioners Members are cautioned that interaction with City elected officials on personal social media pages that could create a similar perception.
- Rules for Posting and Comments (City Staff)
 - Responses to comments shall be limited to providing factual information. Moderators shall not argue with customers or post comments relating to City policies and practices. Moderators will not express opinions relating to City policies and practices.

- Comments must be within the scope of the City’s post, weblog, tweet, etc. New postings must be relevant, current, and appropriate.
- Keep comments short and to the point.
- Do not include personally identifiable information within your comment, such as addresses, phone numbers, social security numbers, or other sensitive information.
- Responses must be civil. They must not contain malicious, offensive, threatening, profane, or insulting language. Above all else, respect others. No references to the personality of other participants or individuals, or attacks on individual character will be permitted.
- Self-promotion and personal advertising are not allowed.
 - Rules for Posting and Comments (Public Users).
- Anonymous comments will not be accepted. Depending on the functionality of the site, users must be registered to post comments.
- Users cannot represent themselves as another person.
- User comments must be civil and must not contain the following:
 - Profane language or content.
 - Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation.
 - Sexual content or links to sexual content.
 - Threats of violence.

- Solicitation for political or charitable purposes.
- Solicitations of commerce (advertisements).
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
- Content that violates proprietary information of any other party.

Failure to comply with these rules shall result in the removal of the comment and the possibility of being barred from accessing the City's Social Networking sites.

- **Emergency Management:**

In the event of emergency due to severe weather or that which threatens the overall health and welfare of the City of Avondale Estates, all communications tools listed in this plan will be utilized to communicate with the public and other governmental entities to ensure the welfare and safety of its citizens.

- **Organization / Corporate Communication**

Face-to-Face communication on City matters is preferred many as a more personable form of interfacing with the public because body language and eye contact amplifies trust. The Board of Mayor and Commissioners and all Avondale Estates employees are representatives of the City and should always be available to communicate with the public in this matter.

Communication may include, but is not limited to:

- Board of Mayor and Commissioners Meetings / Executive Sessions
- One-on-one Meetings / Office visits
- Client group meetings
- Conferences
- Public events
- Board meetings
- Home owner association meetings

Guidance on Speaking to the Print and Broadcast Media

1. The Mayor and City Manager or designees shall be notified immediately of any contacts or requests for information from television, print, or radio media. Questions concerning new programs and policies that are under consideration by the Board of Mayor and Commissioners shall be referred to the Mayor or his designee. At his discretion, the Mayor and City Manager may designate a person to serve as spokesperson on a particular issue.
2. In the case of formal written news releases, all such releases will be disseminated from the City Manager's Office or with the prior review and approval of the City Manager or his designee. If a particular employee wishes to bring some information to the attention of the media, that matter should be coordinated with the City Manager or his designee.
3. When deemed appropriate by the Mayor, department supervisors, or designated departmental representatives, may handle routine requests from the media that are within their area of expertise. Other employees who may be asked questions should refer the reporter to these designated representatives or the Communications Manager for clarification. If there is any question as to whether or not a request constitutes a "routine request", clarification should be obtained from the City Manager or his designee prior to responding to the request.
4. Department Superintendents may address questions from the media on sensitive issues relating to their area of expertise, including topics that may affect City policy and/or matters that may ultimately result in Council action only after obtaining authorization from the City Manager or his designee.
5. Unless otherwise required under applicable law, reports prepared by City staff for submission to Board of Mayor and Commissioners shall not be shared with the media or the general public until the agenda packets have been delivered to Board of Mayor and Commissioners and authorization has been provided by the City Manager or his designee.
6. News releases shall not contain information which is confidential pursuant to provisions of State or Federal law, or has which been received by the City pursuant to a representation of confidentiality. Documents or information exempt from disclosure shall not be contained in any news release without City Manager approval.

Monitoring & Evaluating City Communications

The effectiveness and impact of communication activities in the Avondale Estates Communications Plan must be continually monitored and evaluated to ensure that clear and timely information is provided to the right audience using the right communication method.

The Communications Manager will be responsible for evaluating the needs and communication methods and address their relevancy and value. Evaluation tools include:

- Website Analytics
- Polls & Surveys
- Social Networking Site Analytics
- Technological Trend Monitoring
- Public Feedback (one-on-one, email, social networking)

Changes as a result of identified communication improvement may result in a restructuring of current communication method(s), implementation of new communication method(s), increased / decreased budgeting, and/or a modification to the Avondale Estates Communication Plan.

GOALS

This communications plan is designed to accomplish the following goals:

1. Increase local, regional, and national awareness of the benefits of living, working, visiting, and investing in Avondale Estates.
2. Enhance communication with Avondale Estates target audiences about City issues, projects, and services.

STRATEGIES

1. Enhance City of Avondale Estates' image and brand.
2. Promote and market Avondale Estates' assets, signature projects, programs and services.
3. Expand community engagement and partnerships.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Enhance City of Avondale Estates' image and brand

A Citywide positioning strategy and corresponding messages will be refined and updated to create a unified voice for Avondale Estates. The Communications Manager will coordinate with elected officials, City departments and key opinion leaders to create a positioning strategy and the messages to support it. The elements of the positioning strategy and messages will be developed from themes in the existing research and tested among key stakeholders. For example, the theme of revitalization could be used as the focal point of the positioning strategy. These messages will be woven into all City communications, including news releases, the website, collateral and social media. The messages also will be shared with stakeholders so they can help communicate on behalf of Avondale Estates. The following findings will continue to be incorporated into messages.

- First class resident services
- One of the safest cities in the country
- Leader in conservation, greenspace, and environmental stewardship
- Major development projects underway
- Re-emerging downtown
- Quality business opportunities
- Mix of housing opportunities
- Beautiful City that demonstrates the benefits of planning and development

A proactive media relations program is imperative to creating a solid enhancement of brand and image. The Communications Manager will explore creating a media portal on the City's website that can be updated to provide consistent media information and responding to media calls on numerous City projects and developments, policy and resident issues. This page will include headshots of key officials, elected persons, and committee/board chairs. The City's media relations protocols should be committed to providing media with fast, accurate information in order to meet deadlines. In addition, Communications staff distributes press releases on a variety of topics including finance and budget items, public works and recreation activities, events, services, Board of Mayor and Commissioner information, emergency information/notifications, and more. To further enhance these efforts, a media response plan will be prepared to establish a protocol for interacting with the media and include aspects such as a designated spokesperson (the Mayor), speaking points, prepared quotes from elected officials, approved social media posts and a response time allotment. City message points will be incorporated into all speaking points and quotes. Being prepared to provide the media with the information they need on a timely basis will foster solid relationships with reporters who can help share the City's messages with residents and visitors.

Coordinate editorial calendar and social media calendar – The Communications Manager coordinates an editorial calendar to ensure key information is distributed to audience. The calendar provides the opportunity to focus on key times such as the holidays when local media is looking for news stories. It is updated every six months to promote the positive stories occurring in Avondale Estates.

The Communications Manager implements a robust social media program on Facebook and Twitter that focuses on generating engaging content that users will want to "Like," comment on, share, retweet and/or favorite to more widely disseminate information about Avondale Estates. Online access to meetings is emphasized on social media in order to encourage public participation in the decision-making process. Additionally, economic development, recreation, construction and other updates are included. The regional research states that social media is also the number one communications channel locals use when looking for things to do in the county. A monthly social media update calendar will highlight upcoming events, promote attractions and arts and culture activities, provide development updates and engage with residents and visitors. The Communications Manager proposes to explore community partnerships to generate new content for this channel. Social media also will be included as part of the media response plan. In addition to planned posts, the Communications Manager monitors social media closely in order to respond to resident concerns, visitor questions and stay abreast of potential problems that may require attention.

Continue News From City Hall Print and Biweekly E-news – The Communications Manager produces a six times a year print publication in order to provide news and information to residents, visitors, and City staff. City message points will be woven throughout the content. Going forward, the Communications Manager proposes

moving from more of a calendar blurb sort of format to a more magazine/feature format that would include profiles of residents/business owners and non-time sensitive content that would drive people to learn more about the City. The newsletter is promoted on the City website and through social media channels.

E-news would remain as it is with twice weekly distribution and maintaining or attempting to increase its 40% readership/open rate. Currently the distribution list includes 1,400 emails. Promotion and online advertising will be implemented to expand the distribution list.

Create dynamic marketing collateral – The Communications Manager collaborates across departments to produce high quality and inspired materials including newsletters, advertisements, brochures, signage, photography, websites, videos, e-news and fliers. The Communications Manager will continue to manage the production of these collateral pieces to support City developments, services and initiatives. Working closely with project managers to ensure accuracy, the Communications Manager will incorporate the City’s position and messages into all materials. The City also provides graphic design support for departments working with external stakeholders to promote collaborative efforts.

Conduct Public Opinion Surveys – Conduct public opinion surveys with City residents as well as with those outside of the City. The research will be used to track gains in awareness of City attractions and events as well as to secure feedback to inform efforts to market and promote the City.

2. Promote and market Avondale Estates’ assets, signature projects, programs and services

Create master list of assets and projects – Each year the City will identify which assets, projects, programs and services should be highlighted in communications. The list could be prepared based on a number of factors, including key milestones occurring in that year, elections or regulatory decisions, anniversaries or special events. This effort will help to inform development of the editorial and social media calendars.

Collaborate with community and business partners – Collaboration with regional and local organizations is essential to Avondale Estates’ goal of improving business and economic development. The list will be expanded to include the key organizations in the region. The City will partner within its ranks to communicate with these groups on a regular basis to provide input, lend support and promote key milestones and community events. City staff will create a list of existing and potential partners to approach for cross promotional efforts.

Offer regular updates on major developments/issues – The City’s website, Intranet, newsletters, social media channels, etc. will be used to provide regular updates on pressing issues and community developments. News releases detailing progress on these fronts are

prepared at key milestones to increase public awareness and knowledge of continued revitalization.

3. **Expand community engagement and partnerships**

Enhance Civic Engagement Program - The Communications Manager proposes to build on the momentum of current engagement by creating a civic engagement program to regularly obtain feedback from residents and other stakeholders on life and business in Avondale. A civic engagement program will coordinate various City activities (e.g., asset management, healthy communities, development projects, input opportunities, community events) and provide the opportunity to promote and raise awareness for these efforts. Additionally, the Communications Manager will partner with the City Clerk to promote notices of upcoming projects, community meetings, and public hearings.

Improve the City's ability to anticipate and respond to issues by enhancing the issue management capacity of communications. This will be done through:

- Conduct boundary and environmental scanning to be reviewed at regular intervals to identify emerging issues, top issues, etc. Weekly or monthly reports will be developed and kept accessible for review.
- Develop templates to be used across the City, including risk analysis, key messages, etc.
- Prepare staff and elected officials to be ready and accessible with messages and information about key issues to be used in responses to public inquiries.
- Cultivate internal experts who can speak to City issues with confidence.

Incorporate Micro Bios of City Staff and Key Leaders into Social Media – Based on the City of Kennesaw's Behind the Badge (#BehindTheBadge) campaign that aims to portray police officers in the positive and relatable light, photographs of City staff, volunteers, elected officials, etc. will be taken with white boards and written answers to questions like:

- What's your favorite sports team?
- Where do you go to think?
- What are you afraid of?
- Who inspires you?
- What's your favorite pizza topping?

Coordinate a speakers bureau – A speakers bureau is an effective way to reach, engage and inform audiences about City issues. The City offers speakers for small groups, conference workshops, trade shows and other meeting formats. The Communications Manager will coordinate with the appropriate speakers (elected officials or staff). Information about the speakers bureau will be posted in the City's communications channels and promoted through media outreach.

Prepare easy-to-understand communications materials – The Communications Manager prepares brochures, flyers, web pages, and other materials in a variety of formats using easy-to-understand language and concepts. This ensures that residents and visitors are able to access Avondale Estates services and assets, as well as take part in the decision making process. Materials are prepared in other languages as needed.

EVALUATION

Progress made on the Actions in this plan will be used to evaluate the plan's success. The Communications Manager will submit a quarterly progress report on each strategy to the City Manager. Budget expenditures and timeline also will be reviewed.