

# STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS + ENGAGEMENT PLAN



**TOWN OF CARBONDALE**

## PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES

Given the changing landscape of traditional media as well as the responsibility and growing scope of communications needs, long-term strategic communications and engagement planning is crucial to our success. We are committed to finding new ways to share information and engage the community by strengthening our delivery and communication channels, becoming better listeners, and engaging in community conversations. Our aim is to bolster Carbondale through the highest standards of openness via clear, complete, inclusive, and timely messages.

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The Town of Carbondale has a strong tradition of community engagement and residents who are involved, educated and enthusiastic about making a difference. Our primary audiences are residents (English- and Spanish-speaking), local businesses, youth, volunteer boards and committees, employees, and the news media.

Our communications team works to effectively and accurately communicate relevant news, information, achievements and successes of the Town of Carbondale. We support Town leaders and staff in communication efforts, manage crisis communication, build connections with community members and organizations, and work to further the image and identity of the Town of Carbondale among internal and external audiences.

Carbondale's strategic communications plan aligns with the Town's comprehensive plan by supporting the organizational belief that effective communication is key to success and recognizing that communications and community engagement lie at the heart of good governance, transparency, and accountability.



## Town of Carbondale Mission Statement

To maintain and enhance an environmentally sensitive, culturally diverse, family-oriented small town, with town government providing quality service to the Carbondale community.

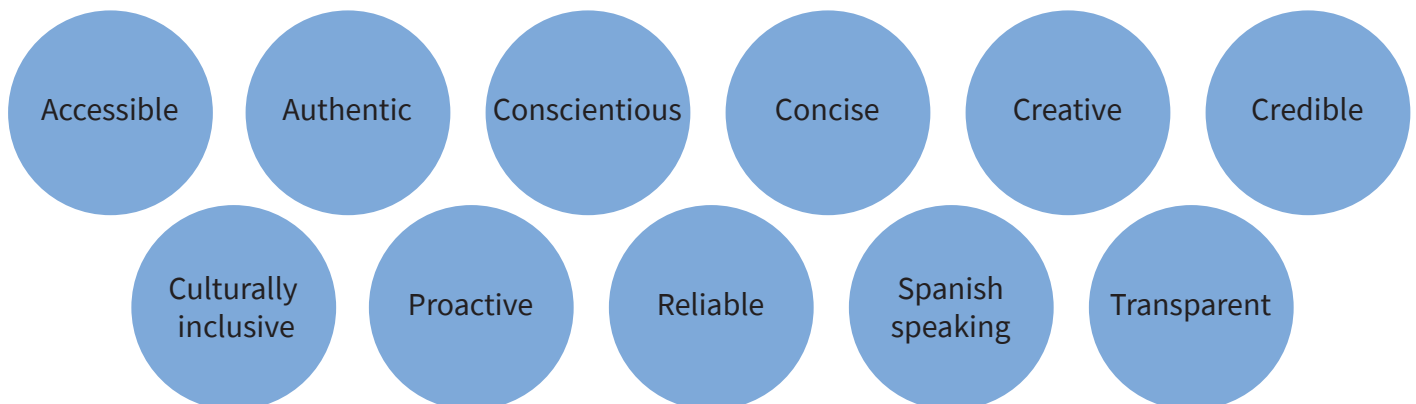


### TOWN OF CARBONDALE COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH VALUES:

The Town of Carbondale embraces a culture of collaboration and innovation and encourages the development of leaders and citizens who think systemically and work collaboratively to produce effective outcomes for the advancement of the organization and community.

The Town's organizational commitment to communication and transparency includes sustaining an informed public by seeking to understand a broad range of perspectives and tapping into the collective experiences and intelligence of the community. The public should have readily accessible information about Town events, processes, actions, and proceedings. When people clearly understand facts about town functions, actions and processes, they can engage with a higher degree of confidence and effectiveness.

### VALUES





## TOWN COMMUNICATION + ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES:

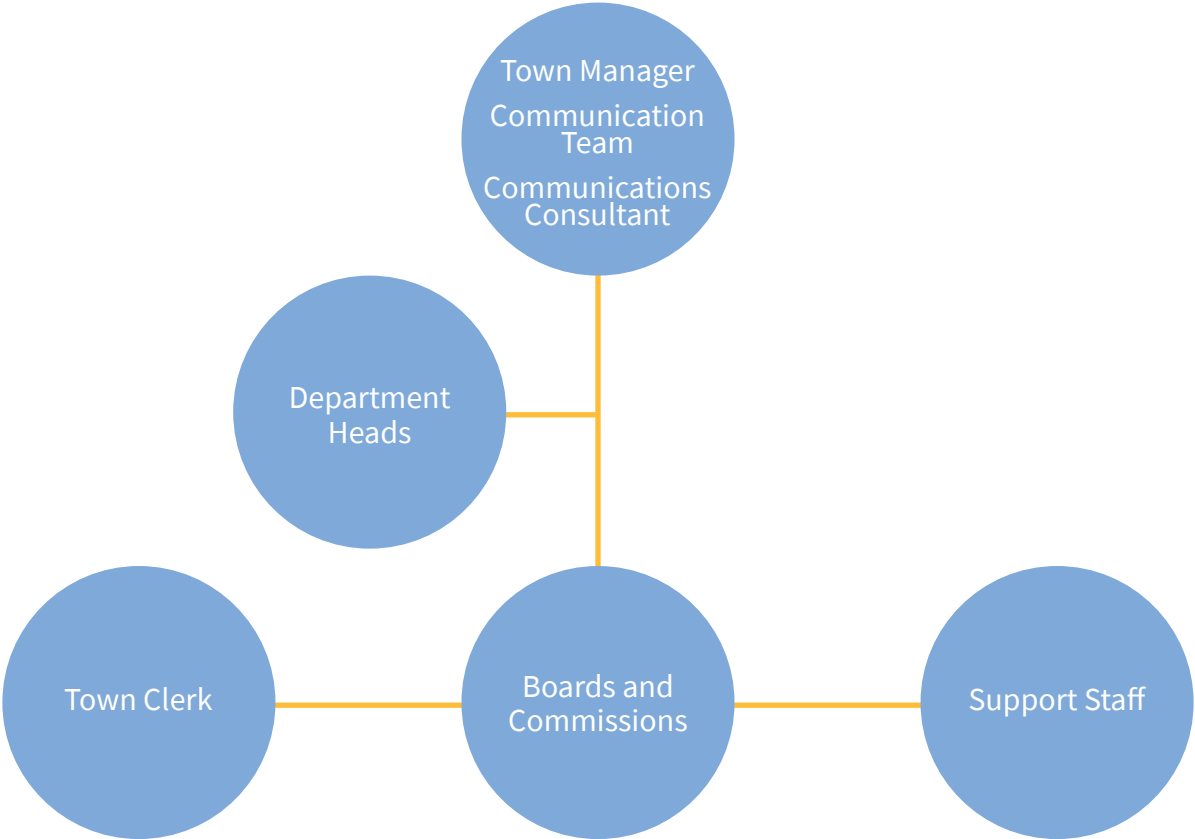
1. Increase opportunities for direct contact with the public
2. Increase awareness of Town programs and services
3. Increase public awareness of and participation in Town decisions
4. Express appreciation for public participation and demonstrate their contribution to policy-making
5. Maintain accurate and accessible public records
6. Respond in a timely manner to requests for public information
7. Hone the ways in which the community is provided with timely and accurate information before, during and after emergency situations
8. Experiment with new tools for civic engagement and information
9. Increase efforts with other units of government, business and civic groups and non-profits to develop information on joint projects and shared interests
10. Ensure all Town communications are made available to the public in English and Spanish



COMMUNICATION TEAM MEMBERS:

Including representatives from relevant Town departments.

- Communications Consultant
- Town Manager
- Parks & Recreation ..... Jessi Rochel
- Public Works..... Laurie Lindberg
- CPD PIO..... Anna Rameriz
- Utilities..... Jon Nell Loux-Reeds



## INTERNAL Responsibilities of Communication Team

- Website administration, content oversight and design + Carbondale Kaleidoscope support
- Social media administration, including Facebook + YouTube
- Internal communications (interdepartmental)
- Social media monitoring
- Public information planning and message development
- Tracking Council meetings and hearings
- Planning and identifying communications needs across departments
- Materials needs
- Messaging content needs

## EXTERNAL Responsibilities of Communication Team (PRS)

- On-call and strategic direction leadership
- Media relations guidance
- Media relations, including news releases, story pitches and media calls
- Monitoring and analysis of press and social media coverage
- Website administration, including overseeing content and design + Carbondale Kaleidoscope support
- Social media administration, including Facebook + YouTube
- Video production
- Photography
- Graphic design
- Production of bi-weekly Sopris Sun ads
- Assisting the media during Council meetings
- Brand management
- Editing
- Special projects on behalf of the Town Manager
- Public information planning and message development
- Public outreach and relationship-building at special events



# SWOT ANALYSIS: STRENGTH, WEAKNESS, OPPORTUNITY, THREATS

## STRENGTHS

- Teamwork and collaboration with community partners
- Staff institutional knowledge
- Recognitions and awards
- A small but efficient staff
- Innovative thinking and creative approaches

## WEAKNESS

- Is the volume of meetings detracting from actual progress?
- Cross-departmental coordination for responses
- Non-English-speaking communications
- Web content management
- Workload needs exceeds staff bandwidth

## OPPORTUNITY

- A more user-friendly website
- Communications policy/media process
- Utilizing Carbondale Kaleidoscope for input + strategic projects
- Web content purge (how/when to retire content)
- Sharing stories more widely
- A more engaged community

## THREATS

- Not keeping up with social media
- Not reaching Spanish-speaking citizens
- Community expectations for communications
- Personalized messaging takes away from general messaging
- The shrinking of traditional media

## AUDIENCES

- Residents (neighborhoods)
- Spanish-speaking community
- Business owners
- Visitors
- Garfield County
- Schools
- Non-profits





## GOALS FOR CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION MESSAGES & OUTREACH STRATEGIES

There is an increasing role for faster responses and visual communications. The public are accessing information in more diverse ways, and we need to find where they are and communicate through these channels.

### PREPARING MESSAGES IN ADVANCE

We are focused on pre-drafting messages and scheduling content on all communication channels year-round. Messages should include stories, photos, infographics and videos.

Our message types are as follows:

#### Seasonal

- Events and service information that occur around the same time every year

#### Evergreen

- Messages about services and engagement opportunities

#### Strategic

- Messages and stories in support of Council and community goals or special projects

#### Human Interest

- Stories about people including residents, employees, businesses & local organizations

#### Crisis

- Messages about how to connect with emergency resources, public safety tips, and best practices

#### Spanish-speaking strategies

- All Town communications duplicated in Spanish with additional plans for stakeholder outreach and Spanish-specific outreach events

### Steps to Consider:

- Identify the issue or message
- Determine the communications team lead
- Determine the appropriate distribution channels





## ADDENDUM: CHANNELS FOR COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK 2021 [to be reviewed and updated yearly]

Category	Communications Channel/Tool	Frequency	Performance Indicators	Key Target Audience
Internal Communications	Town manager Summary Email Newsletter	Weekly	Number of SS stories, employee interaction?	Town employees Sopris Sun
Internal Communications	(Intranet)	Daily	Town employees	
Internal Communications	Printed publications – posters, brochures	Ongoing	Number of printed materials distributed Feedback and response	Town employees
Online Communications	Kaleidoscope	Ongoing	Analytics Interactions Feedback and response	Residents, visitors, businesses, and community partners
Online Communications	Town Hall, Police and Public Works VMS boards – Programmed with messages, calendar and job postings.	Daily	Feedback and response	
Online Communications	Town of Carbondale website carbondalegov.org/	Daily	Website analytics	Residents, visitors, businesses, vendors and community partners
Online Communications	info@townofcarbndale.com	Daily	Number of emails	Residents, visitors, businesses, vendors and community partners
Online Communications	Council (and Some Advisory Boards) Videos Available Online: - Council meeting/hearing videos - Planning Commission meetings	Daily	Views	Residents, visitors, businesses, and community partners
Online Communication	Social Media Facebook pages	Daily	Fans/Followers Likes Facebook Shares Comments Views	Residents, visitors, businesses, and community partners



## ADDENDUM: CHANNELS FOR COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK 2021 [to be reviewed and updated yearly]

Category	Communications Channel/Tool	Frequency	Performance Indicators	Key Target Audience
Print Communications	Print Communications – A variety of brochures, newsletters and flyers, designed in-house	Ongoing	Number of printed materials	Residents, visitors, businesses
Resident Communication/ Media Relations	News Releases – News releases and PSAs are distributed monthly to the local newspaper and area media – and directly to resident subscribers.	Ongoing	Number of news releases Media coverage	Residents, visitors, businesses and community Sopris Sun KDNK
Public Engagement	Citizens Academy	Biannually	Number of participants Evaluation from participants	
Public Engagement	Boards and Commissions – The Town has eight boards and commissions that advise the Town Council.	Ongoing	Vacancy rate on boards Evaluation from participants	Residents
Public Engagement	Public Meetings – In addition to Council and advisory board meetings and hearings, departments and programs routinely hold public input sessions and public information meetings to gather input, ideas, and suggestions.	Ongoing	Attendance	Residents, businesses

