

DRAFT

City of Shakopee

2021-24 Strategic Communications Plan



SHAKOPEE | MN

INNOVATING. ENTERTAINING. THRIVING.

City of Shakopee | 485 Gorman St., Shakopee MN 55379 | 952-233-9300 | www.ShakopeeMN.gov

CITY OF SHAKOPEE 2021-24 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The purpose of the strategic communications plan is to provide the city with a targeted approach to communicating with residents, businesses and visitors. As part of the city's 2020-24 Strategic Plan, the City Council identified Communication as one of its top four priorities. To achieve its key outcomes, the council established a strategic initiative to develop and implement a strategic communications plan.

WHAT IS A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN?

A communications plan is essentially a road map for how an organization delivers its message to targeted audiences in a clear and consistent manner. A communications plan can:

- » Clarify an organization's purpose
- » Affirm organizational messaging
- » Align elected officials, staff and stakeholders to ensure everyone is on the same page
- » Define and measure success

Essentially, a communications plan ensures an organization is communicating a consistent message to necessary audiences through appropriate channels. It also provides communications staff a plan for prioritizing strategies to best meet the organization's communications goals and objectives.

The main components of this communications plan are:

- » Plan Context
- » Goals and Objectives
- » Audiences and Key Publics
- » Communication Channels
- » Key Messages
- » Strategies
- » Evaluation
- » Resources

HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

The 2021-24 Strategic Communications Plan was developed by the city's communications division with the collaboration of the city's brand and imaging team. Led by the city's communications manager, this 10-member team met virtually three times between January and April 2021 to offer feedback on various components of the plan. This same team was also involved in developing the city's new brand and tagline, "Innovating. Entertaining. Thriving."

HOW THE PLAN WILL BE USED

The communications plan will be used to guide the City of Shakopee in its communications initiatives over the next three years. This includes establishing priorities to ensure the city is working to achieve the communications goals identified as part of the city's 2020-24 Strategic Plan.

The communications division will use the plan to develop a tactical work plan to track the plan's progress. It is recommended the branding and imaging team continue as a communications advisory team to assist the communications division in moving forward the strategies identified in this plan.



ABOUT THE CITY OF SHAKOPEE

OUR VISION

Shakopee is a place where people want to be! We are a distinctive river town, with a multitude of business, cultural and recreational opportunities in a safe, welcoming and attractive environment for residents and visitors.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to deliver high quality services essential to maintaining a safe and sustainable community. We commit to doing this cost effectively, with integrity and transparency.

OUR VALUES

- » **Integrity:** We say what we mean, and we do what we say
- » **Best for the Community:** We work on behalf of community interests, not individual interests
- » **Accountability:** We are committed to achieving results and accountability for our actions
- » **Innovation:** We strive to creatively improve our services and our community
- » **Welcoming, Open to Difference:** We are receptive, we listen, and we are open to the differences of others
- » **Fair and Consistent:** We are fair, consistent, and respectful in our service to the public
- » **Fun:** We enjoy what we do, and we have fun doing it

OUR BRAND

INNOVATING.

- » Shakopee has a deep and diverse group of innovative businesses and organizations with a supportive community behind them.
- » The city is an innovative organization that thinks forward creatively to improve all our business lines – public safety, infrastructure, development and recreation.

ENTERTAINING.

- » Shakopee has a unique variety of options for entertainment, enjoyment and relaxation. We are an active, family focused community with something for everyone.
- » The city is an organization that works to build community, bring people together and support our entertainment destinations.

THRIVING.

- » Shakopee is a safe, diverse, welcoming, growing and economically strong community.
- » The city supports growing community-oriented employers, innovative industries and building community.



2021-24 COMMUNICATION GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The 2021-24 City of Shakopee communication goals were identified through the 2020-24 Strategic Plan process. The Shakopee City Council identified communication as a top strategic priority, laying out three main goals as stated below in blue.

The objectives were pulled from a variety of recent guiding documents including the city's Strategic Plan, 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan. These documents included consistent themes for how the city can improve its communication and engagement efforts within the community.

MORE VOICES ENGAGED IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.

- » Expand community engagement among all residents and partners.
- » Increase engagement with targeted populations.

INCREASE COMMUNITY TRUST OF THE CITY.

- » Create proactive, consistent communications that address community's concerns and needs.
- » Respond to public appropriately and timely.
- » Ensure information and tasks are easily accessible to the public.

CREATE A POSITIVE IMAGE OF THE CITY & COMMUNITY.

- » Develop a consistent, one Shakopee community identity and city brand.
- » Increase promotion of positive Shakopee messages beyond city organization.
- » Expand city staff involvement in communications and marketing initiatives.



AUDIENCES

The audiences were identified through a brainstorming session of the branding and imaging team, as well as using data from the city's 2018 Community Survey. In particular, the targeted resident audiences were populations that provided the lowest ratings of the city in the community survey. These audiences appear to feel a disconnect with the city and may benefit from more targeted communication efforts.

RESIDENTS

People who live in Shakopee (e.g., single-family homeowners, townhome owners and renters) or own residential property (e.g., landlords). Residents represent a diversity of household makeups and a mix of new and established residents.

TARGETED RESIDENT AUDIENCES:

- Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)
- Non-English speakers
- Young adults (under age 35)
- Renters

BUSINESSES

Existing companies and contractors who do business in Shakopee, as well as prospective businesses, developers and entrepreneurs looking to locate in the community.

TARGETED BUSINESS AUDIENCES:

- Greater Minneapolis-St. Paul region
- Entrepreneurs

RECREATION

People who play and recreate in Shakopee. This includes existing and prospective park, facility and amenity users; Parks and Recreation program users; visitors to the city's big entertainment attractions; and youth and sports leagues/associations that regularly use the city facilities.

TARGETED RECREATION AUDIENCES:

- Regional park tourists

KEY PUBLICS (INFLUENCERS)

INTERNAL STAFF

- City employees
- City Council

MEDIA

- Shakopee Valley News
- Greater Twin Cities television, print and digital media

PARTNERS

- Chamber of Commerce/Downtown Shakopee (corporate)
- Scott County/CDA (residents, corporate)
- SMSC
- Shakopee School District (residents)
- Utility companies/SPUC/Xcel (residents, corporate)
- Non-profit organizations (residents, recreation)
- Churches (residents)
- Home associations/neighborhood groups (residents)
- Facility managers (residents, corporate)

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

DIGITAL	Examples	Targeted Audience & Key Publics	Frequency
WEBSITE » Central hub for city news and information	» News and human interest stories » After Council Report	Residents, Businesses, Recreation, Media, Partners	Daily
ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION EMAIL & TEXT (SMS) » Distribute news and information » Promote city organization » Provide public safety alerts	» GovDelivery	Residents, Businesses, Recreation, Media	Daily to Weekly
SOCIAL MEDIA » Distribute news and information » Promote city organization » Interact with community » Provide public safety alerts	» Facebook » Twitter » Nextdoor » Instagram » LinkedIn	Residents, Businesses, Recreation, Media	Daily
VIDEO » Promote city organization	» YouTube	Residents, Businesses, Recreation	Monthly
SHAKOPEE GOVERNMENT TV » Distribute news and information » Provide access to city meetings	» Comcast Cable 16 » Swagit Livestream	Residents	Ongoing and/or as needed
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION » Distribute news and information	» CityNet » City Scoop	Employees	Weekly

TRADITIONAL	Examples	Targeted Audience & Key Publics	Frequency
PRINT PUBLICATIONS » Distribute news and information » Promote city organization	» Hometown Messenger » Shakopee Public Utilities Flyers » Publications: Welcome Brochure, Police Department Annual Report, Parks and Trails Map	Residents, Businesses, Recreation	Ongoing and/or as needed
DISPLAY BOARDS » Distribute news and information	» Electronic: In-building; Downtown, Community Center » Bulletin: Lewis Street Parking Lot, Holmes Street Tunnel, Community Center	Residents, Recreation	Ongoing and/or as needed
IN-PERSON EVENTS » Distribute news and information » Interact with community	» Open Houses » Public Meetings » Special Events	Residents, Businesses, Recreation, Partners	Ongoing and/or as needed
MEDIA RELATIONS » Distribute news and information » Promote city organization » Provide public safety alerts	» Press Releases	Media	Ongoing and/or as needed



KEY MESSAGES

- » Shakopee is a safe, diverse, growing and economically strong community.
- » The city values its diversity and the contributions of all our community members and businesses.
- » Shakopee offers a variety of business, cultural and recreational opportunities in a safe, welcoming and attractive environment.
- » We are a distinctive river town that honors its past while looking toward the future.
- » Shakopee proudly partners with innovative businesses and community organizations to ensure all residents, employers, employees and visitors thrive.
- » The City of Shakopee plans and develops strategically to build a diverse and stable tax base.
- » Shakopee takes pride in its reputation as a regional entertainment destination by supporting opportunities for the community to gather and recreate.
- » The city is committed to maintaining a safe and sustainable community by delivering high-quality services and excellent customer service in a cost-effective manner.

STRATEGIES

MORE VOICES ENGAGED IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.

EXPAND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AMONG ALL RESIDENTS AND PARTNERS.

- » Evaluate current communication channels and use data to identify most effective tools.
- » Adopt a community engagement policy to guide public engagement efforts across all city initiatives.
- » When seeking engagement, offer multiple options for feedback.
- » Identify community influencers to assist in sharing city information.

INCREASE ENGAGEMENT WITH TARGETED POPULATIONS.

- » Hold meetings and events off-site at various places in the community.
- » Provide communication materials for non-English speaking populations.

INCREASE COMMUNITY TRUST OF THE CITY.

CREATE PROACTIVE, CONSISTENT COMMUNICATIONS THAT ADDRESS COMMUNITY'S CONCERNS AND NEEDS.

- » Develop department-specific key messages.
- » Maintain proactive news presence on city website, including human interest stories.

RESPOND TO PUBLIC APPROPRIATELY AND TIMELY.

- » Implement a 48-hour response rule.
- » Encourage departments to work with communications staff to develop talking points for potential issues.
- » Invest in social media archiving software to increase transparency of social media interactions and be in compliance with Minnesota's public data laws.

ENSURE INFORMATION AND TASKS ARE EASILY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC.

- » Upgrade cable programming software to increase reliability and ease of use.
- » Create materials that support plain language and inclusive language.
- » Use technology to streamline resident access to service information.
- » Develop ADA communications accessibility plan.

CREATE A POSITIVE IMAGE OF THE CITY & COMMUNITY.

DEVELOP A CONSISTENT, ONE SHAKOPEE COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND CITY BRAND.

- » Roll out new "Innovating. Entertaining. Thriving." brand.
- » Create a City of Shakopee brand manual.
- » Improve consistency across city communication channels.

INCREASE PROMOTION OF POSITIVE SHAKOPEE MESSAGES BEYOND CITY ORGANIZATION.

- » Focus more programming, articles and stories about groups/individuals from the community.
- » Develop a corporate marketing initiative to better promote business opportunities.

EXPAND CITY STAFF INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING INITIATIVES.

- » Train department staff to assist in communications processes.
- » Create video marketing campaign to better highlight city staff and their work.
- » Build brand ambassadors and utilize imaging and branding team as internal advisory committee.

NEXT STEPS & EVALUATION

The next step in the communications plan process is for the communications division to develop a tactical work plan to implement these strategies. The work plan should break down the strategies into smaller steps over the next three years in line with the division's resources.

Each year, the communications division should provide the city administrator a progress report on the status of the identified strategies. After three years, the City Council will receive a full report regarding the city's overall communications plan.

RESOURCES

As improved communication becomes an increased emphasis in the City of Shakopee, these initiatives will require additional resource support. The City Council has been supportive of the city's communications efforts over the past decade, expanding the city's communications division and investing in technology that helps the city better connect with residents, businesses and visitors.

The current challenge in local government communications is reaching and engaging audiences where they are. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to communications. Our audiences have a diverse mix of needs and preferences, and it's important to continue investing in print and digital communication channels. Finding that balance is the key.

Some of the strategies included in this plan will require additional financial investment over the coming years, e.g., investing in social media archiving software. Other strategies can be done with little cost by making simple adjustments to how we operate. For example, hosting public engagement activities outside of city hall can be accomplished at no cost by using city facilities available to us geographically throughout the community. The City Council has already supported several projects in recent months to complete these strategies, including a corporate marketing campaign, "Make it in Shakopee," and council chambers broadcasting equipment upgrade.

In addition, all these strategies require time and effort by city staff. That includes training, soliciting community feedback, responding to public questions and establishing new outreach efforts. A common theme throughout the communications plan development was the request by departments for additional communications support, particularly an increased demand for a consistent brand and more graphic design assistance. In December 2021, the communications department added a third team member who will focus heavily on graphic design and maintaining the city's several social media channels.

This addition will allow the communications manager and existing communications specialist to focus on projects that advance strategic initiatives while simultaneously leveraging the graphic designer's skillset to enhance the city's already strong brand.