

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel lines. The top section features three grey lines and three white lines, while the bottom section features three red lines and three white lines. These lines are arranged in a way that they appear to meet at a point on the right side of the page, creating a large, stylized 'V' or corner shape.

COMMUNICATIONS MASTER PLAN 2012

This document was approved by Mississauga's City Council on May, 9, 2012 and is intended for internal use; it provides staff with a new Communications vision and framework that will assist in setting priorities and resources.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the first Communications Master Plan for the City of Mississauga and it serves as a municipal model of how best to support the delivery of two-way communications between the City of Mississauga and its citizens.

The main objectives for developing a Master Plan are: to provide a framework for the Corporation on how the City can best exchange information with the public; to maximize the use of technology and build upon the explosion of social media, new media channels (digital, web, mobile); and align communication protocols with the way citizens prefer to communicate with their local government.

Based on industry benchmarks, market research, and current communications trends, as well as input from both internal and external stakeholders, the Communications Master Plan outlines a new vision, framework and implementation plan that will guide communications at the City of Mississauga for the next 10 years. This plan will ensure the Communications Division is well positioned with the skills, talent, training and development, and organizational structure for the future.

VISION

The new Strategic Framework outlined in the Master Plan aligns communications to the City's strategic vision, values and supports a positive internal culture, while at the same time, turns the stakeholder feedback collected throughout the master planning process into actionable items. The framework is designed to be aspirational but also achievable.

This diagram illustrates the core communications tenets that will guide Mississauga's Communications Master Plan. They are interconnected and build on each other.



The vision and its seven core principles frame and guide the Communications Master Plan; it will shape internal culture and form a promise to the citizens of Mississauga. The vision will also be used to influence external reputation.

1. Vision

The City of Mississauga is a two-way communications organization. Communication defines the very character of our City.

2. Corporate Culture

Communication is driven internally by values and standards; it is transparent and authentic.

3. Capacity

Communication is led by specialists, but it is everybody's responsibility.

4. Consistency

Communication is consistent and constant.

5. Citizen-focused communications

Communication is interactive and engaged. Communication is done on the citizens' terms, not the City's.

6. Continuous feedback and improvement:

Communication is informed, measured and refined by research.

STANDARDS AND VALUES

Since communication is driven by values and standards, the City of Mississauga asked its stakeholders to assist in choosing words that will describe communications at the City of Mississauga. From this point forward, the Corporation will aspire to deliver Communications that are:

Respectful

User-friendly

Helpful

Accessible

Factual

Timely

Clear

Comprehensive

Relevant

Memorable

KEY THEMES

As part of the master planning process, a series of consultations were held with extended staff; the City's Leadership Team and Members of Council; a targeted stakeholder consultation; interviews with the news media; and a broad-based public survey, hosted on the City's website. More than 700 individuals fully participated in the process and a number of consistent themes and opportunities emerged, including:

Communication to build reputation.

A proactive form of communications focussing on promoting the vision and position of Mississauga locally, in Canada and abroad is needed.

Creativity and innovation.

More innovative communications practices need to be adopted.

Branding and standardization.

There is an opportunity to adopt corporate branding principles in designing the communications infrastructure over the next 10 years. This would involve consistent messages, templates and tools and a more centralized communications structure.

Research.

Planning, effectiveness, measurement. There is a need to provide information that enables effective decision-making when it comes to communications planning and evaluation; this was raised on numerous occasions throughout the process.

Thinking from the customer's perspective.

At times the City was taken to task for its approach to engagement: "It is a nine-to-five culture." To help shift to a more customer-centric communications model, it is important to think like a customer and consider how to design and deliver communications that reach residents where, when and how they live. Customized, audience-specific communications and a more robust media relations program are necessary.

Social media: Education and implementation.

There is no question: social media is here to stay. However, not everyone has a clear understanding of how best to use these digital media. Education and training for the City's councillors, communications and marketing staff should be incorporated into the plan.

RE-ALIGNMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS RESOURCES

To effectively address these themes and feedback, a re-alignment and re-focusing of Communications resources (both staff and budget) is necessary. As part of the master plan process, a skills audit was conducted to determine the experience and skills of the City of Mississauga's Communications Division staff, as well as to identify any gaps in the capabilities of the team. The following change was determined:

A broader mandate.

The City's reputation is the key to its long-term economic growth and well-being. The skills audit identified a gap in terms of the Communications Division's mandate, which focuses exclusively on program promotion and does not allow for the management and promotion of the City's reputation.

Subject matter experts.

There is an opportunity to organize the Communications team based on functional groups; to create teams of subject matter experts, such as media relations, issues management, protocol, social media and web design, to name a few. Currently, there is a resource gap in the area of digital online content. Together, these functions would work collectively to promote both City programs and the City itself.

Communications in the Mayor's Office.

There is an opportunity for the City of Mississauga to augment its Communications team by establishing a role for a communications specialist in the Mayor's Office who can act as a liaison and work collaboratively with the Communications Division.

Technology and training.

Multiple technology platforms are required to communicate effectively with citizens today and in the future, from using Twitter to drawing attention to a blog that includes a video about a new program on its website, to discussions taking place about City programs on Facebook. From a communications skills point of view, it is important that a communications team stay abreast of the latest developments in communications from technology tools to platforms.





OUTCOMES AND PRIORITIES - WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT IN 10 YEARS?

The goals for the Communications Master Plan are clear:

Envision

Develop a vision to guide Mississauga communications over the long-term that is aligned with the City's Strategic Plan, the City's Business Plan, and other City master plans.

Communicate

Build an effective, accessible system of two-way communications between City officials, stakeholders and residents, using effective, research-tested tools and methods.

Engage

Promote citizen participation among all publics - both online and off.

Lead

Employ the right blend of best practices and innovative communication methods to become a leader in municipal communications.

With a clear new vision, communications framework, and measurable values and standards in place, the key to success will be to invest in people and technology as well as focus resources on:

- Proactive, reputation-building communications - A proactive form of communication focusing on promoting the vision and position of Mississauga locally, in Canada and abroad.
- Two-way information sharing - Communication is interactive and engaged and is done on the citizens' terms, not the City's.
- Standardization and consistency - Communication coming from the City has a similar design and comes from "one voice."

VISION

**THE CITY OF MISSISSAUGA
IS A TWO-WAY COMMUNICATIONS
ORGANIZATION.**

**WE ARE COMMITTED TO ENGAGING
OUR CITIZENS AND MEASURING OUR
EFFECTIVENESS IN COMMUNICATION
TO ENSURE A BROADER AWARENESS
AND UNDERSTANDING OF CITY
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.**

MISSION

**TO ENHANCE CITIZEN SELF-SERVICE AND
ACCESS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT. TO INVEST
IN OUR PEOPLE AND TECHNOLOGY TO ENRICH
WHAT AND HOW WE COMMUNICATE.**

**To do this, the Communications
Master Plan sets out six priorities:**

1. Articulate a communications vision
2. Integrate that vision into the City's internal culture
3. Build capacity within the Communications Division
4. Deliver a consistent communications program which is based on research and promotes the City's reputation
5. Shift from City-focused to citizen-focused communications
6. Build a program of continuous feedback and improvement

The Communications Master Plan clearly sets out a communications road map and direction for the City for the next 10 years. To bring the Master Plan to life, the Four-Year Implementation Plan includes 40 action items to ensure these priorities become a reality. In four years (2016) the Communications Division will measure its success, re-assess and re-validate priorities based on needs within the Corporation, the community, and current communication trends. The Communications Master Plan and Business Plan documents will be reviewed and updated annually as part of the City's business planning process.

With the 10-year Communications Master Plan as a guide, the City will improve its two-way public communications practices and measure its effectiveness in communication; this will result in a more engaged citizenship with a broader awareness and understanding of City programs and services.

COMMUNICATIONS MASTER PLAN 2012



*This publication is available in
alternate formats upon request*

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