City of Louisville
COLORADO · SINCE 1878

City Council

September 10, 2024
Packet Addendum #1

Dear Council,

I've seen the communication presentation, and I would really like to know what the City's plan for doing crisis communications is? If there's another disaster or major emergency, what is the process by which accurate and timely communications get drafted, reviewed, and sent out to the public?

I'm not aware of anyone on the City's communications team being a PIO or having PIO- type training. To the best of my knowledge, only Scott Moore in the police department has these skills. Even our fire department doesn't have a PIO.

It would be a major mistake for the City to put people in charge of crisis communications inna disaster who don't have specialized training to do them. Please help the public understand how the city is approaching this at tonight's meeting.

Best regards,
Tawnya

Dear Council,
 Below are my comments on the communication plan.

Thank you to Grace for her work on this presentation. It is very helpful to see this plan and ways the City hopes to improve communications in the future. It is also helpful to see which departments have dedicated communications people, and which don't.

In the update under priorities, Priority #1 is to inform and educate. This is a very important priority to communicate with residents, so I am happy to see it at the top. The update recommends
-Drive traffic to the City website for more info

It is great to drive people to the website to find information, however, it needs to be easily readable and accessible, which it isn't currently. Is there a plan to update the website?For example, the info on the emergency alert test is embedded 3 or 4 layers down the website in the recovery and resiliency section. This info should be on a button prominently displayed on the front page of the website so people can just click through to the info.

I want to focus most of my comments on Priority 3- Community Engagement
The focus of this is to engage the community and to standardize the approach to communication throughout the City. This standardization is critical for the City to do. This will help the City from reinventing the wheel as has happened in previous communications as well as to improve communication to residents, especially the fire impacted community.

The point about engaging the community and then providing feedback after asking for input that is in the update is critically important. Often, emails to staff go unanswered, or staff do not respond in a way that is helpful to residents, particularly when asking for specifics on City programs or initiatives. I know that staff work hard and are often overwhelmed, but not responding to residents doesn't help to build the trust with residents that is also mentioned. Also, residents are often knowledgeable about topics the City is seeking input on, but the City doesn't ask for input from these residents informally, unless they are on an advisory board, when making decisions. And if they do, there is no follow up as to what happened with the input provided. So, I am glad this is included in the plan, and hope the City will continue to make this a priority, and to engage residents.

I am hoping this plan will help to streamline City communications, especially for the departments mentioned that don't have a dedicated communication staff. Communication staff needs to be reviewing the communications of these departments before they go out to the public for accuracy, clarity and grammar, to make sure the questions you mentioned, and specifically the Call to action part are of the communication. Often, there is information provided, but no call to action. IE- in the email that went out about the alert test last Friday it says to go to LouisvilleCO.gov/Bocotest- but when you go to that you have to scroll down

through the FAQs to actually find the link to the sign up rather than just putting it right at the top with a direct link to sign up.

Social media- what is the plan to improve communications for city events, alert testing etc through these and when will info come out? The social media post that has come out about the upcoming preparedness event this week was combined with info about emergency alerts, making it confusing to residents. Often, these come out just days before an event which makes it hard for people to plan.
Another example is to make sure the proper verbage is being used. For example, the City had an event this weekend with the open space dept that was entitled Debris Removal. This wasn't debris removal, that is what happens after a disaster, it was fuels mitigation, - cleaning up ladder fuels on the open space. This correct terminology is important so residents signing up know what to expect. This goes to my point above about residents having expertise that could be useful to the city.

I am glad to see the City working to improve it's communications both with the community and internally.

Lisa Hughes
Louisville resident

9/9/2024

Dear Louisville City Council,

I am writing to express our grave concerns about the proposed increase in the minimum wage. During the last year of economic study, I have joined members of the Louisville and Boulder County restaurant community attending group sessions and participating in surveys. And now we are pleading with you directly to consider the disastrous implications a minimum wage increase will have on our beloved restaurant community.

The people that work for us **are** our community. They are the heart and soul of our restaurants, and we work alongside them every day with pride. And yes, we understand that the high cost of living in Louisville is a challenge for all. But increasing the minimum wage will not solve that problem; it will only create challenges for our industry, which has been walloped by a pandemic, rising food costs, online delivery platforms, and an uncertain economy.

The economics of running a restaurant are complex. For full-service restaurants, workers are divided into "back-of-the-house" kitchen and prep workers and "front-of-the-house" wait staff, servers, and hosts. Very few back-of-house staffers make less than $20 per hour and the majority make over $25. Mudrock's does not have a "back-of-the-house" employee who makes less than $20 per hour. Servers and bartenders are the highest paid employees when tips are considered. If a tipped minimum wage is increased, which is inevitable based on Colorado's tip credit structure, we will be forced to raise prices giving those tipped employees a double bump in wages as tips are paid as a percentage of the check. It also prevents us from giving increases to the hard-working staff in kitchen and dish positions, hurting those who need the most help. Our servers and bartenders make between $30 and $50 an hour. For them to get a $1 raise doesn't make any sense. When you multiply that by the number of hours that we use tipped employees in a year, that turns into a huge number for us. I can't stress enough how much a tipped minimum wage increase every year impacts profitability because we use so many tipped employees.

Louisville enjoys its reputation as a great place for food and restaurants. But if Louisville follows Denver's lead and increases the minimum wage, the resulting damage to the restaurant scene would also mimic Denver's difficulties.

I've owned and operated restaurants in Boulder County for 30 years and this is the worst climate I've ever seen. COVID recovery, increased rents, property taxes, labor costs, and food & liquor costs have all contributed to the profitability battle that restaurateurs face every day. Our profit margins are paper thin to non-existent in today's environment. I would be happy to provide profit/loss statements and tax returns upon request. Many restaurants are hanging on by a thread. Please don't risk snipping that lifeline and damaging our reputation as a thriving and diverse restaurant community by increasing the city's minimum wage. We recognize the need to create a more equitable economic environment for people to afford to live here in our wonderful city. But this is not the way to do so.

Respectfully,

Charles Schmanski

Owner/Mudrock's Tap & Tavern

Dear Louisville City Council:

Thank you for considering Communications Priorities on Sept 10. I spent most of my 40-year career at NREL in Communications, so this is an area of keen interest. The presentation is a great explanation of the Communications process, tools, and goals. I applaud City staff for this well-thought out presentation. I especially appreciate the focus on engagement, trust-building, communication back to citizens who have engaged, and the IAP2 model. Louisville is a tight-knit, caring community, and engagement can help build the connected environment that we aspire to.

Some suggestions for further consideration:

1. This update only outlines the methods and purpose of communication, but doesn't include any content or messages. We need that next for key divisions. What are their 3-5 year plans, and how will they engage the public? Seeing these plans will help build trust and transparency. Council should ask for additional Comm plan updates from key departments and provide adequate funding for Communications expertise to shape and implement these plans.
2. Missing from the entire presentation is any mechanism or priority for handling public input that is not part of a formal engagement campaign. This is a huge part of trust-building. When Citizens' questions, suggestions, feedback, and volunteer offers go into a black hole, it undermines trust and transparency.
3. Slides 15 & 16 have contradictory points that are important to understand. 15 says "Train our audience to know where and how to find information." In my experience, that only works with a small subset of your audience who are motivated to spend time on your media. For most of your audience you must "meet people where they are," as shown in Slide 16. I know this takes resources and out-of-the-box thinking, but it's the only way to be successful.

As a Marshall Fire Survivor, I am particularly interested in the plans and priorities of the Recovery & Resilience and related divisions. We know now that community safety and preparedness has to be a high priority in the face of the escalating rate of disasters in our area, and the impacts on liveability and economic sustainability. I encourage the R&R division to engage residents in developing and implementing a plan that includes the principles laid out in the Communications update. The experience and knowledge gained in the recovery community since 12/30/21 is a resource that the City could tap to help shape and review messages and design programs to make us all safer.

Thank you for considering my comments,
Ann Brennan

links or open attachments unless you validate the sender and know the content is safe. Please contact IT if you believe this email is suspicious.