

# CITY OF SAN RAFAEL



## ESSENTIAL FACILITIES

## COMMUNICATIONS PLAN





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## I. INTRODUCTION

The City's General Plan 2020 includes several key elements in the Governance Section that prioritize the community engagement covering broad-based involvement, community stakeholders, community participation, city and community communication, information about community issues, a contact database, the San Rafael website, and empowering residents to take responsibility. In addition, the City Council accepted a Community Engagement Action Plan in January, 2015. The five primary strategies contained in the Community Engagement Action Plan are to demystify local government, engage earlier, translate information in Spanish, enhance technological tools, and close the feedback loop.

The Essential Facilities Strategic Plan and the resulting future design and construction work is the first major project that the City of San Rafael has embarked upon since the development and acceptance of the Community Engagement Action Plan. In response to the findings of the Community Engagement Action Plan, a specific Communications Plan for the Strategic Plan process and future Public Safety Facility Improvements program was created to describe the means, methods, processes and tools that City Staff, consultants, elected officials and all others working on this project will utilize to in order to increase engagement and transparency within the community as it relates to the Essential Facilities Strategic Plan projects.

This Communications Plan is arranged in order to mirror the five primary strategies contained in the Community Engagement Action Plan listed above. Within each section, specific communication details are identified to be used throughout the Essential Facilities projects in order to comply with the Community Engagement Action Plan and increase engagement and transparency within the community.

## II. COMMUNICATION GOALS

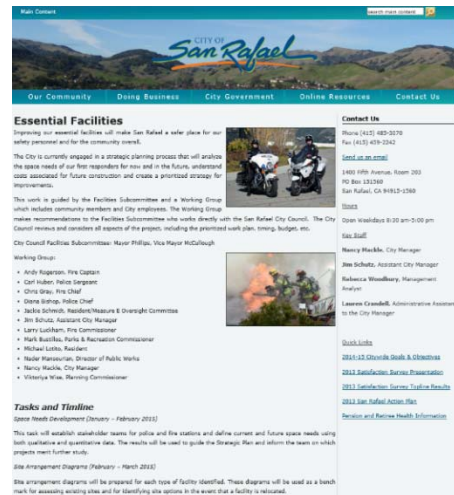
- 1. Demystify Local Government.** Clarify City processes and how to best participate in civic affairs. The subject matter related to the improvements to the City Essential Facilities is very technical in nature and can be confusing to the lay person so all efforts will be made to simplify the language when communicating to the public. Use clear language within any form of communication issued to the public/community. The Communication Tools described below will all be created or conducted in a simplified and easy to understand manner so anyone with little or no design and construction experience will understand the information being shared.



- 2. **Engage Earlier.** Get the word out early to the community on projects and programs, including items on board and commission agendas, to increase participation prior to City Council meetings and decisions. Identify early opportunities to provide information and receive input on alternatives and options and reach out to residents and businesses early in the process.
- 3. **Hable Español.** Improve communication and soliciting feedback from our Spanish speaking community. Translate key materials into Spanish and utilize community partners in the Spanish-speaking community to disseminate information and receive input.
- 4. **Enhance Technological Tools.** Utilize technology for improved communication, tracking, and online resources and engagement. Provide information in a variety of online ways including the City website, e-newsletters, and social media whenever appropriate and possible.
- 5. **Close the Feedback Loop.** Communicate better about the engagement process and the feedback that was received. Let people know about decisions and any follow-up actions or next steps.

### III. COMMUNICATION TOOLS

- **City Website** – The City’s website has been in use for many years and is the ideal location and starting point for seeking information about anything that is going on at the City. Specific information about the Essential Facilities Strategic Plan and subsequent design and construction activities can easily be located on the City homepage for easy access. The URL <http://www.cityofsanrafael.org/facilities> directs to a detailed webpage with specific project related items. These methods are a quick and efficient way of updating the community on the program, as well as provide information regarding any on-going construction. There will be a communication forum that will allow the public to express their opinions of the current active projects. In addition, a link will be provided to those who would like email updates on the projects. As the process moves to the design and construction phase, individual project web pages for the Police Department and the various Fire Stations can be created and links provided on the Essential Facilities page.



Essential Facilities Webpage on City Website





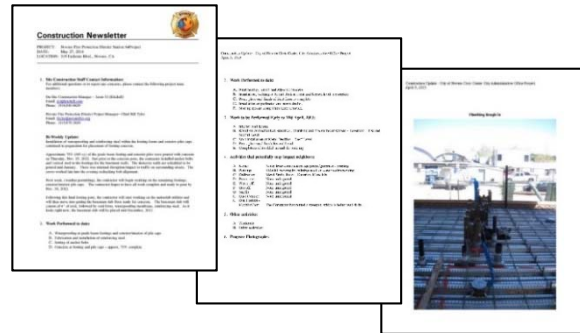
- **Workshops** – During the planning and design phase, workshops will be held periodically at respective fire stations to relay and receive vital information to/from the community. Community members will be able to attend to receive updated information regarding each active project and provide their comments. The need for workshops will diminish once the project enters the construction document phase as the design is set. From this point forward, information will be shared with the community more effectively through a number of different tools listed in this section.

- **Snapshot** – One method by which the City currently reaches out to large numbers of community members and local residents is via “Snapshot” (the City Manager’s e-newsletter). The e-newsletter currently has approximately 10,000 subscribers. A segment of this newsletter can periodically provide information on the Essential Facilities Strategic Plan process as well as future design and construction phase progress. This communication tool will be actively used throughout every phase of the projects.



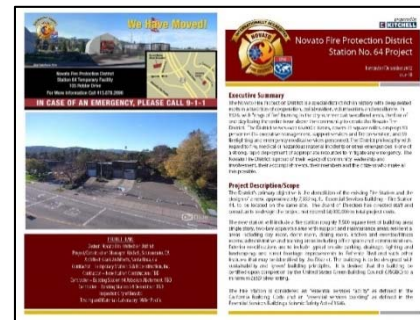
City Manager's Blog, "Snapshot"

- **Project Newsletters** – Construction progress on specific stations as part of the future Public Safety Facility Improvements program will have individual Newsletters for each specific project that will be available on the project webpage. This tool will be used throughout the construction phase of the project and distributed on a regular basis to the community. A bilingual version of the newsletter will be prepared so it can be shared with the Spanish speaking community.



Sample Project Newsletters

- **Monthly Status Reports** – Construction progress on the entire Essential Facilities Strategic Plan and future design and construction activities will be summarized in a Monthly Program Status Report. This report will provide a status on the program as a whole as well as the status on the individual projects within the program. This report will focus on the schedule and budget status of the program and individual projects. This tool will be used throughout every phase of the projects and distributed on a regular basis to the community. A



Sample Monthly Status Report



bilingual version of the status reports will be prepared so it can be shared with the Spanish speaking community.

- **Public Meetings** – Community meetings and workshops will be scheduled and conducted in the early evenings and weekends and at times that are convenient to all community members. Key meetings can be held during the week and then repeated during weekend to allow convenience and options to the community. During the planning and design phase, Public Meetings will be held periodically to relay and receive vital information to/from the community. Community members will be able to attend to receive updated information regarding each active project and provide their comments. In addition, the above information can be presented to other established local organizations and Homeowner’s Associations in the communities around the specific Fire Station projects. For example, organizations that should be included are the Federation of San Rafael Neighborhoods and the North San Rafael Coalition of Residents, which represent and serves a number of HOA’s in the local San Rafael area. This sort of two-way communication will allow interested parties to disseminate information through their own means such as through NextDoor, neighborhood newsletters, and social media. Once in construction, if approved in advance by City Staff and the General Contractor, small groups of community members may be allowed to tour the construction site at various intervals during the construction phase.

- **Construction Site Cameras** – Once in construction, cameras will be set up at each construction site with a link on the respective project web site page so community members can see what is happening on the site at any time. The camera and the accompanying web link will remain in operation throughout the construction phase.



Sample Project Site Camera

- **Social Media** – The City of San Rafael uses many social media tools, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. These tools can be put to use in sharing the information related to the Strategic Plan and future planned activities at the Public Safety and Fire Station projects. The Police and Fire Departments’ Twitter accounts combined have over 8,800 followers. Thousands more can be reached by periodically using the social media accounts of the various community centers and Library.



San Rafael Police Twitter Account



- **Postcards/Mailers** – To increase community outreach, vital information will be distributed using standard U.S. mail for the percentage of the population that does not have continuous access to the City’s website. These Mailers/Postcards will be distributed at periodic intervals throughout the planning, design and construction phases of each of the projects.



Sample Postcard/Mailer

- **Project Milestone Celebrations** – The City realizes that none of the projects in the Essential Facilities Strategic Plan and future construction and renovation process would have been possible without the approval and continued support of the local community. Therefore, the City plans to celebrate key project milestones for the various projects such as Groundbreaking and Grand Openings with the members of the local community. At various milestones, the City may also choose to promote the projects through press releases or “Marin Voice” type submissions to newspapers.



Sample Community Groundbreaking Invitation



Sample Groundbreaking Brochure





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