

## CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION AGENDA ITEM 3

**SUBJECT:** DISCUSSION/DIRECTION – COMMUNICATIONS PRIORITIES

**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 10, 2024

**PRESENTED BY:** SAMMA FOX, INTERIM CITY MANAGER  
GRACE JOHNSON, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

**SUMMARY:**

Communications Manager Grace Johnson will provide Council an update on the work of the Communications Division including information on communication channels, community survey results, and priority areas.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

None – update only.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Discussion/Direction

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

1. Presentation

**STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT:**

|                                     |                                                                                                                                         |                                     |                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            |  <b>Financial Stewardship &amp; Asset Management</b> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  <b>Reliable Core Services</b>           |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            |  <b>Vibrant Economic Climate</b>                     | <input type="checkbox"/>            |  <b>Quality Programs &amp; Amenities</b> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  <b>Engaged Community</b>                            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |  <b>Healthy Workforce</b>                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  <b>Supportive Technology</b>                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |  <b>Collaborative Regional Partner</b>   |

Presented By:  
Grace Johnson  
Communications Manager



# COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE 2024

## Agenda

### Communications Division

- Background
- Communication Channels
- Community Survey Results
- Priority Areas

### Community Engagement

- Engagement vs. Communication
- IAP2 Model
- Community Engagement Framework

# Core Communications Team



**Grace Johnson**  
Communications Manager



**Derek Cosson**  
Senior Communications  
Specialist



**Ryan Brown**  
Media Specialist

## Citywide Communications Team

### Dedicated Communications Staff

- Parks and Recreation
- Cultural Services
- Police

### No Dedicated Communications Staff

Public Works, IT, Finance, HR, City Clerk, Recovery & Resilience, Sustainability and Community Development do not have dedicated resources for communications support.

# What we do

Our main priority is to communicate important information to our stakeholders that is *accurate, timely, consistent, and accessible* for all.



We help departments understand when, why, and how to communicate info to the public.



# Communicating to the public

## Communications

**“We’re doing a thing.”**

## Public Relations

**“The City is doing a thing and it’s awesome.”**

These are all one-way communication... we are informing people of ~the thing~

## Advertising/Marketing

**The City is doing an awesome thing! Click here to attend the thing!**



In municipal communications, our job is to leverage all strategies to inform, educate, and motivate action.

## We also...

**We utilize marketing, advertising, and public relations, but most of the time, we live in communications.**

- Manage crisis communication
- Manage internal communication
- Gather public input
- Train other departments
- Develop policy
- Record/broadcast City meetings
- Coordinate events
- Assist with special projects
- Manage translation services



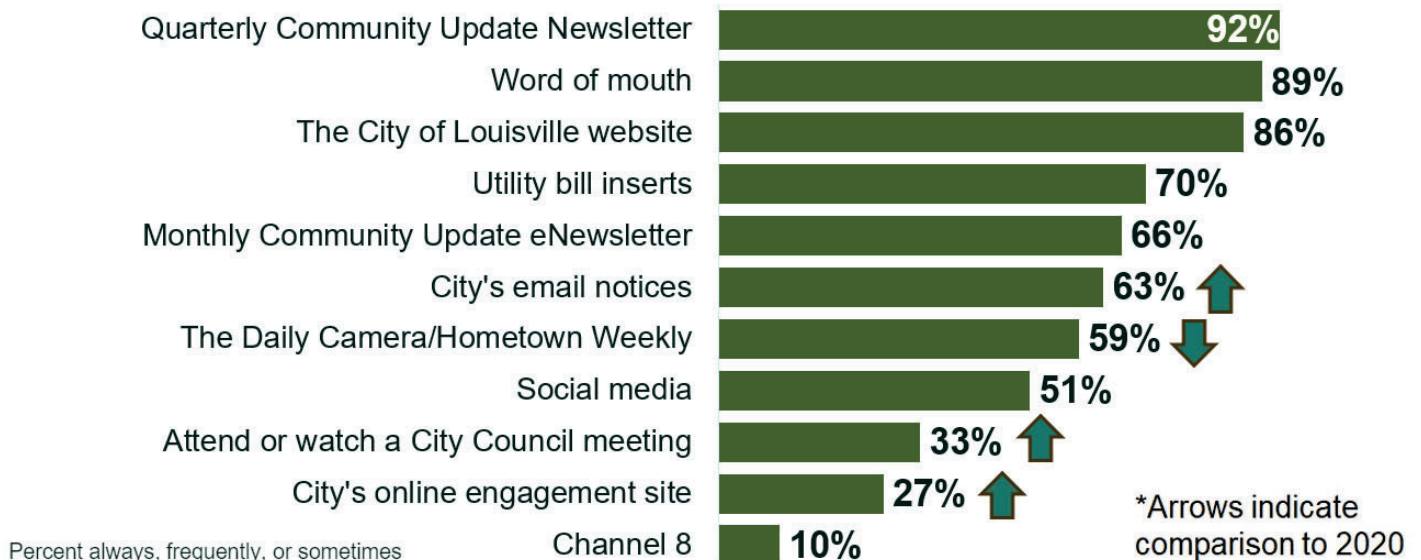
# Channels

**Multichannel approach to reach a wide, diverse audience within our community.**

LouisvilleCO.gov  
eNotifications & eNewsletters  
Social media  
Direct Mail  
Local news  
City meetings  
Broadcasting  
In-person events  
Printed materials

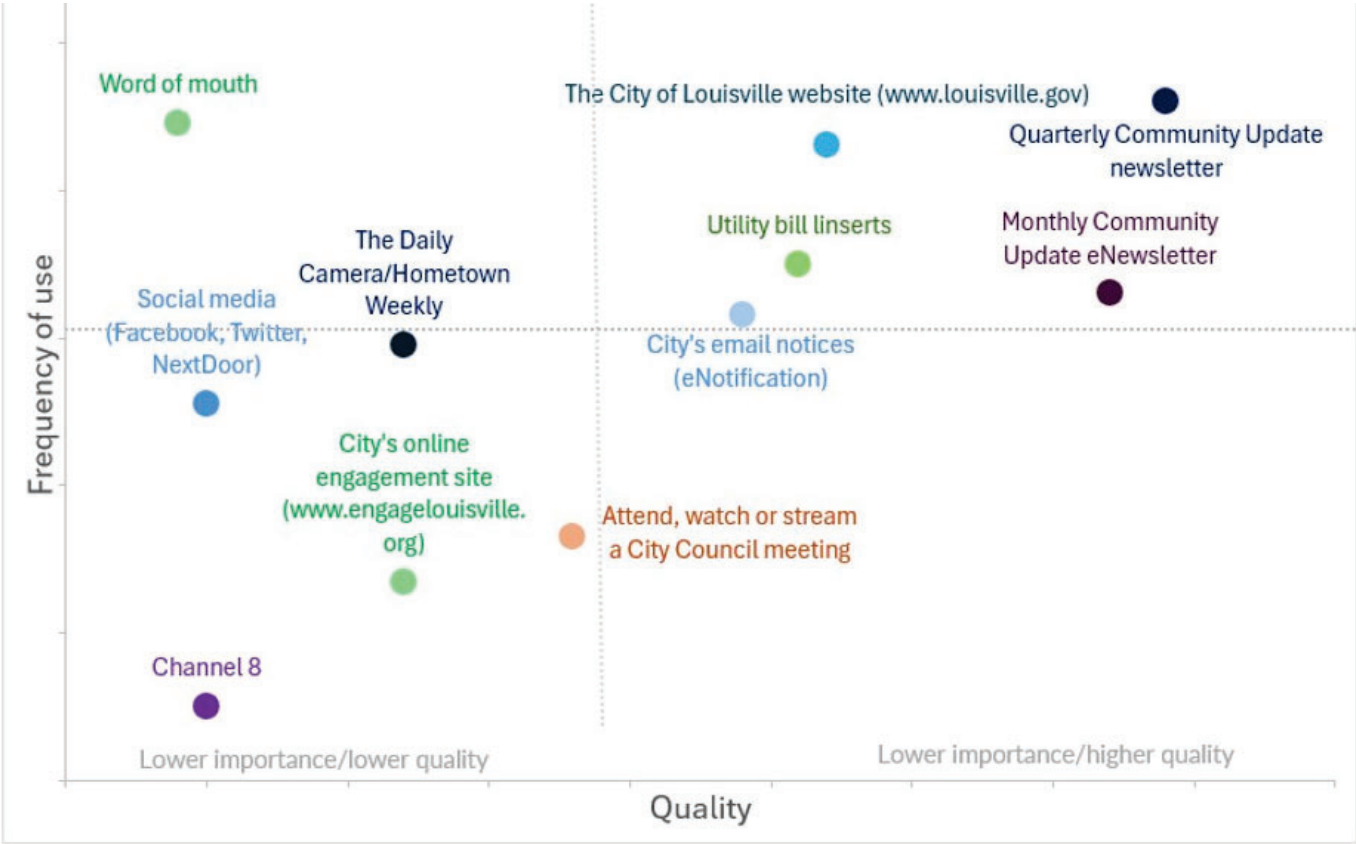
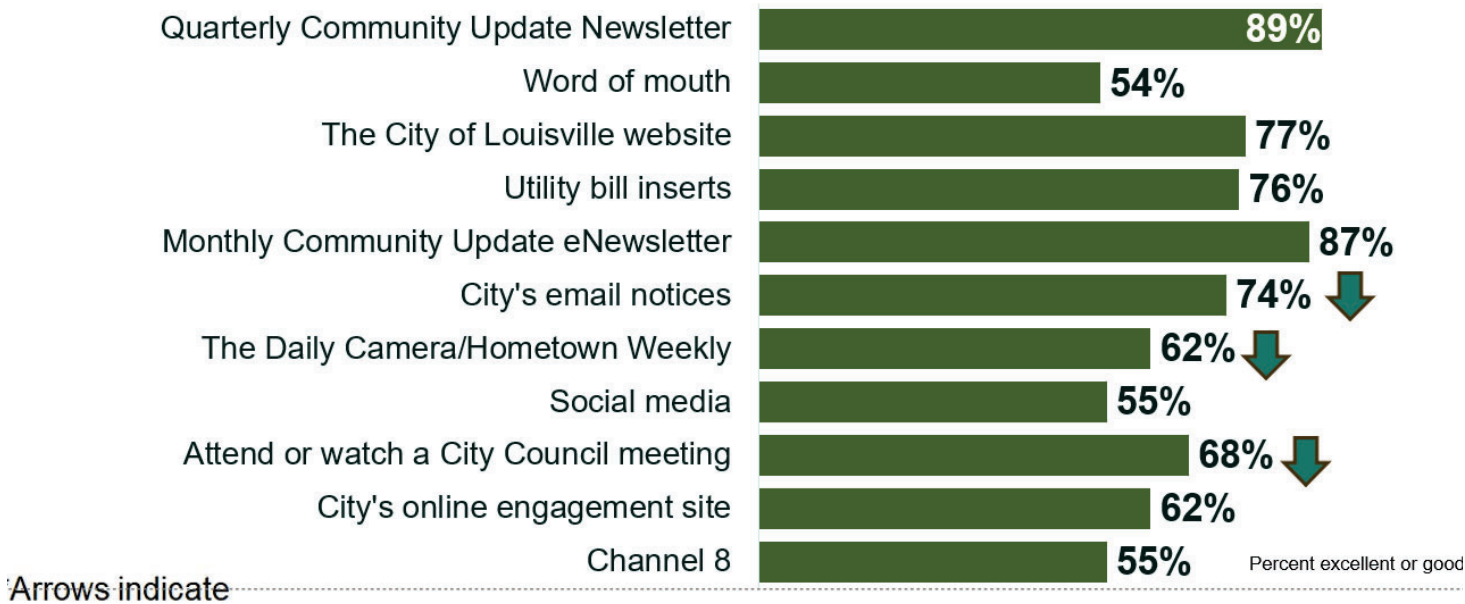
## 2024 Community Survey Results

Please select **how often** you use each of the following sources to gain information about the City of Louisville.



# 2024 Community Survey Results

Please rate the **quality** of each of the following sources to gain information about the City of Louisville.



# Communications Division Priority Areas 2024/2025

**Inform & Educate** — Provide information that is consistent, accurate, timely, and easy to access for *all* of our community.

**Build Trust** — Be transparent and consistent in how, when, and why we communicate.

**Engage** — Develop a shared approach to effective community engagement throughout the organization.

## Priority Area #1: Inform & Educate

**Objective: Provide consistent & timely information.**

- Internal process improvement to move from reactive to proactive communication
- Collaboration with decentralized communications team to ensure consistency across channels



## **Priority Area #1: Inform & Educate**

**Objective: Centralize information and reduce the noise.**

- Better utilization of existing tools (govDelivery)
- Analysis to reduce the number of channels we use to communicate
- Drive traffic to the City website for more info
- Train our audience to know where and how to find information

## **Priority Area #1: Inform & Educate**

**Objective: Ensure information is easily accessible for all.**

- Comply with digital accessibility laws
- Utilize translation services
- Meet people where they are
- Make information more readily available and easier to locate on the city website

## Priority Area #2: Build Trust

### Objective: Tell our story

- Focus on internal relationship building
- Collaborate with local partners and media
- Increase utilization of Media Specialist for videography

### Objective: Improve transparency

- Clarity on when, why, and how we communicate
- Local Government 101
- Behind-the-scenes education about processes, projects, and initiatives



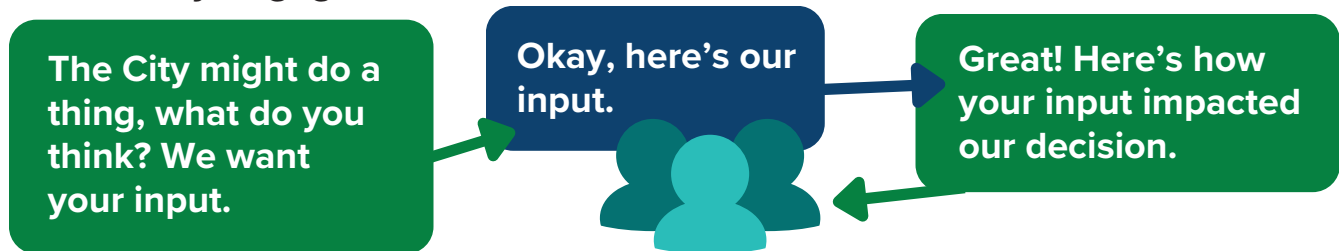
## Priority Area #3: Engage

**Develop a shared, standardized approach to effective community engagement throughout the organization.**



# Engaging the public

## Community Engagement



Community engagement is an invitation to the public to *participate* in a decision at some level.

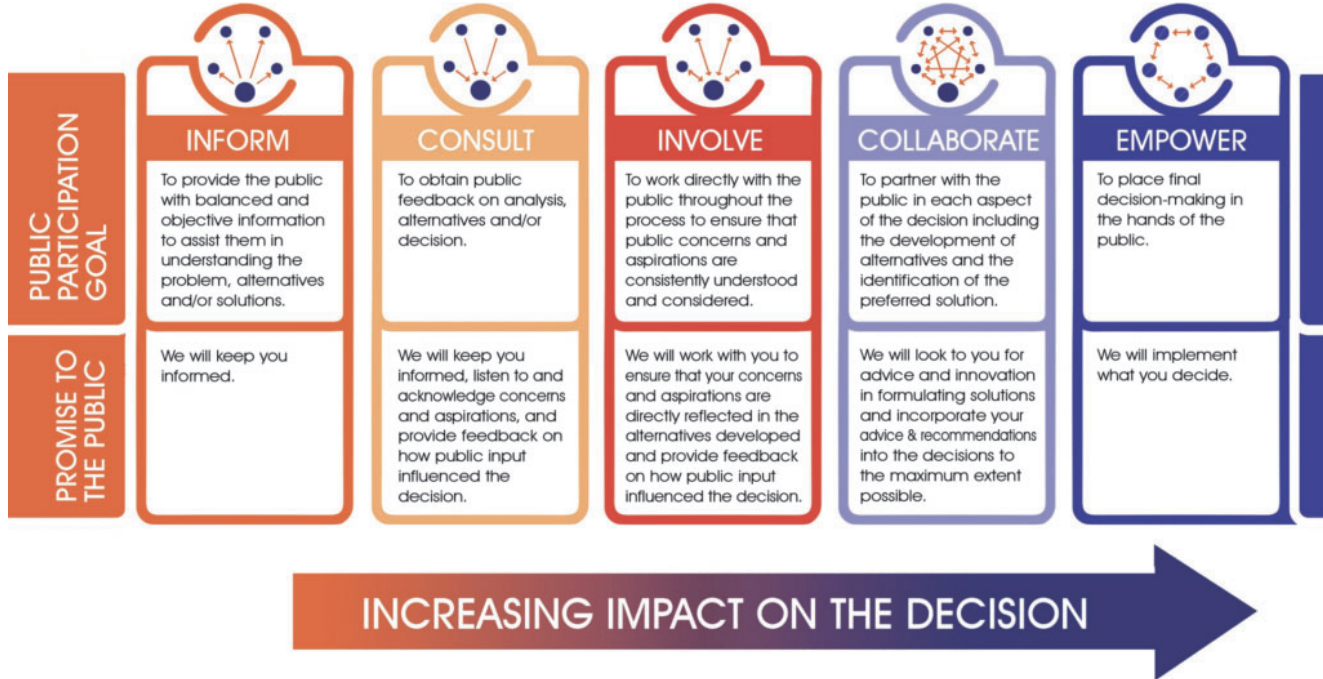
## Why should we engage the community?



## Community Engagement leads to better decisions.

- Hear from the hard to reach
- Gain new and diverse perspectives
- Identify critical issues early
- Learn as a community

# IAP2 Model of Engagement



## When to Engage

Before we engage the public, we need to consider the following:

- Is there a decision to be made?
- Do we have the authority to make the decision?
- How much influence can the community realistically have on the decision at hand?
- What exactly are we going to do with the input we receive?



# When NOT to Engage

Sometimes doing community engagement work can cause more harm than good.

- When you don't have clarity on the decision to be made
- When you don't have a plan to use the input you receive
- When you don't have the resources to reach the right people

When done well, community engagement builds trust.

When done poorly, it breaks trust.

We shouldn't ask people for input if we don't have a plan to use it.

# How to Engage

Community engagement requires strategic planning, clearly defined goals, and commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

01

Commitment & Consistency

02

Transparency & Clarity

03

Dedicated Resources

04

Closing the Loop

# How to Engage

## What does it take?

|                                                        |                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| ✓ Trained IAP2 Professionals                           | A formalized Community Engagement Framework |
| ✓ Community Engagement Platform (EngageLouisville.org) | Buy-in and training                         |
| ✓ Passion! Energy!                                     | Dedicated resources                         |

## Thinking Ahead

Things have changed a lot in just the past five years — and things will continue to change.

Communities increasingly have new expectations around:

- Access to local officials
- Transparency & accountability
- Local advocacy
- Crisis communications
- Use of emerging technology
- How information is presented

We have to constantly adapt.

# How You Can Help

## Share our messages

- Repost on social media
- Forward official city emails
- Tell people to sign up for eNotifications

## Practice civility

- Don't feed the trolls!
- Tell people to call us directly
- Ask us to clarify when necessary

## Tell us what you're hearing

- Share feedback from stakeholders
- Tell us your experiences w/ our platforms & messages

# LouisvilleCO.gov/StayConnected

The one-stop shop to sign up for  
eNotifications and newsletters and to connect  
with the City's social media channels