

INDIAN WELLS CITY COUNCIL

JULY 18, 2024



To: City Council
From: City Manager Department
Prepared by: Micaela Wilkey, Senior Management Analyst
Subject: **Communication Plan Update**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Council **RECEIVES** and **FILES** the Communication Plan Update from the City's communication consultant Tripepi Smith; and

FINDS the action exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review under Guidelines section 15061(b)(3).

BACKGROUND:

At the April 2, 2024, City Council Strategic Planning Session, the City Council provided the recommended goals and activities for 2024. These goals and activities are in addition to the goals from 2023 that were presented at the May 16, 2024, City Council meeting. Part of the council's goals are to update the communications plan that was last updated in 2018.

The purpose of the communication plan is to proactively educate the public on community issues, inform its citizens by delivering efficient and effective communication, understand the community and how they want to receive their information. It is also the intent to deliver clear, concise messages to bridge any communication gaps.

The City originally had a Communications Assessment completed in 2018. It was identified that communications are a critical component of informing the public and seeking community feedback on an array of City activities and policies. In Indian Wells, communication takes on an enhanced purpose with a need to promote the City's resorts as destinations, while also promoting City venues such as the Indian Wells Golf Resort. It was identified that the City has distinct audiences, residents and visitors, that require different emphasis for information that is conveyed.

The city communication efforts perform way above industry standards and have been the catalyst that other cities follow. Evidence of this was in the communication efforts for Tropical Storm Hillary. The city acted swiftly and created a one stop shop on its website and helped in cross communication to all valley cities. Additionally, the City boasts a

significant volume of posts and engagements on social media compared to other cities with similar geography or population.

Since 2018, the City has completed most of the recommendations made in the original report. These include:

- Implementation of a resident-based email platform
- Designation of resident focused social media platforms'
- Designation of tourism facing social media platforms
- Written social media policies
- Completion of user-friendly website updates

A highlight is the City's huge advantage with the use of email communication with residents. This is mainly due to the Indian Wells Resident Benefit Card program. In the last year, the City sent 279 emails garnering 801,109 opens and 38,450 clicks. The City's 59% open rate is 15% above the industry average. While the City has a great foundation of communications, it is ever evolving. This assessment provides an update on the next steps to move the City forward.

It is important to note that some recommendations from the 2018 report are ongoing and continue to be in progress. Items such as establishing a budget for social media advertising and revisiting/updating the brand for Indian Wells will continue yearly. This will be done in partnership with Visit GPS.

The updated Communication Assessment Report is provided (**ATTACHMENT 1**). The city will use this document to guide future enhancements and changes. Tripepi Smith has provided recommendations for possible future enhancements to include:

- Policy for updating pages and content
- Design refreshes
- Resident Portal
- Evergreen articles for homepage
- Share more video content and organic content on social media
- Work on YouTube Channel with updated video highlights
- Increase clicks on emails with button back to website
- Apply Digital Governance to GenAI
- Collaboration efforts

These enhancements will continue to be monitored to optimize current communication platforms and further engage the community.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This staff report is informational only; there is no additional fiscal impact.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA):

The action is not a project within the meaning of Section 15378 of the State of California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") Guidelines, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change in the environment, directly or indirectly; and that the action is nonetheless exempt from the requirements of CEQA in that the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. (15061(b)(3).)

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Communication Assessment Update Report 2024