



City Council 2015 Communication Action Plan

FINAL DRAFT FOR REVIEW BY GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE, 16 DEC 2014

This Plan lists communication and outreach actions proposed to be taken by Councilmembers, individually or collectively, during 2015. This Action Plan is not inclusive of all City communication and outreach efforts.

Theme:

Connecting with Our Community to ...

- Learn about issues important to community members
- Converse about timely topics
- Share information and tell the City's story.
- Make informed decisions.

Target Audiences:

- Community as a whole.
- People who do not ordinarily get involved in civic affairs.
- Council appointed advisory committee members

Relevant Goals and Priorities:

Council Priority:

- Inspire Strong Relationships – Enrich public participation so that the community has a role in shaping public policy.

Draft Comprehensive Plan: (Selected Goals and Policies)

- PP2.2. Evaluate and pursue creative methods to inform and engage community members and under-represented groups who may not ordinarily get involved in civic affairs.
- PP3.4. Create structured opportunities for people to learn about city issues, share their experiences and motivations, and discuss public issues productively.
- PP3.5. Develop public participation plans when amending or updating the Comprehensive Plan or master plans. Develop public participation or communication plans for other major projects.
- PP4.2. Replace or complement the three-minute, one-way testimony format with an approach that allows meaningful dialogue between and among citizens, stakeholders, City Council members, advisory boards, and staff.
- PP4.3. Clearly define public participation goals and choose strategies specifically designed to meet those goals.

2015 Council Communication and Outreach Actions: [“Inform” and “Consult” Public Participation Methods, per IAP2 Spectrum]

Community Connections:

- **Committees in the Community** – Each Council standing committees will schedule one meeting at a site other than City Hall, with a main meeting topic related to City business that generates a conversation. Briefly share the conversation as part of “Council Reports.”
- **Connect with Council** – As a pilot effort, schedule 2 or 3 informal “Connect with Council” opportunities. Intent: Informal conversation about emerging/current policy issues/topics. Identify a theme; go the community. 2 or 3 Councilmembers at each “Connect” event. Briefly share the conversation as part of “Council Reports.”

Telling Our Story:

- **Presentations** – Seek opportunities for the Mayor, Councilmembers, City Manager to present information about City priorities/programs/services; e.g. service clubs, State agencies, etc.
- **Talking Points** – [Elevator Speech] Each Council member is encouraged to identify 2-3 key talking points about Council initiatives/ City projects they share as they are out and about in the community (staff is available to assist individual Councilmembers in developing talking points).
- **Current Issues Web Page [Hot Topics / Fact or Rumor]:** Post information about current issues in the Mayor/Council section of Olympia’s website. Executive office staff will identify issues and write content. Councilmembers may suggest topics/issues to address.
- **Annual Report** – In 1st quarter 2015, staff will produce an annual report which Council may use to highlight accomplishments and performance measures. Distribution: advisory committees, Coalition of Neighborhoods, Council interlocal committees, hand out at community functions; obtain cost to print and mail to entire community. Post on City website. Publish articles through social media.
- **Council Priorities Booklets** – Staff will work with relevant Council committees to develop information booklets about priorities and actions, similar to the 2014 Downtown Project.
- **Email to Councilmembers** – Each Councilmember is responsible for managing their own email. When staff sends a response on behalf of Council, copy all Councilmembers. The citycouncil@ci.olympia.wa.us email should be set up so that emails are automatically forwarded to each Councilmember’s email.

Issue Outreach:

- **Define Outreach and Decisionmaking Processes** – For major initiatives, Council reviews and approvals the public process; including Councilmember role; e.g. Parks Master Plan, Comp Plan Action Plan; West Olympia Alternatives. Use IAP2 (International Association of Public Participation) format. Clarify expectation for Councilmember attendance / participation at community forums organized by the City as part of the scoping.
- **Opinion Polling** - Identify guidelines for questions or surveys about current Council-level policy issues to place on OlySpeaks. [Possible 2015 General Government Committee work item]

Advisory Committees:

- **Council Liaisons** - At a minimum, each Council liaison will make contact with the Committee Chair and attend one meeting during the year to thank the committee for its work. Consider rotating liaisons every two years.