

CITY OF VALDEZ

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

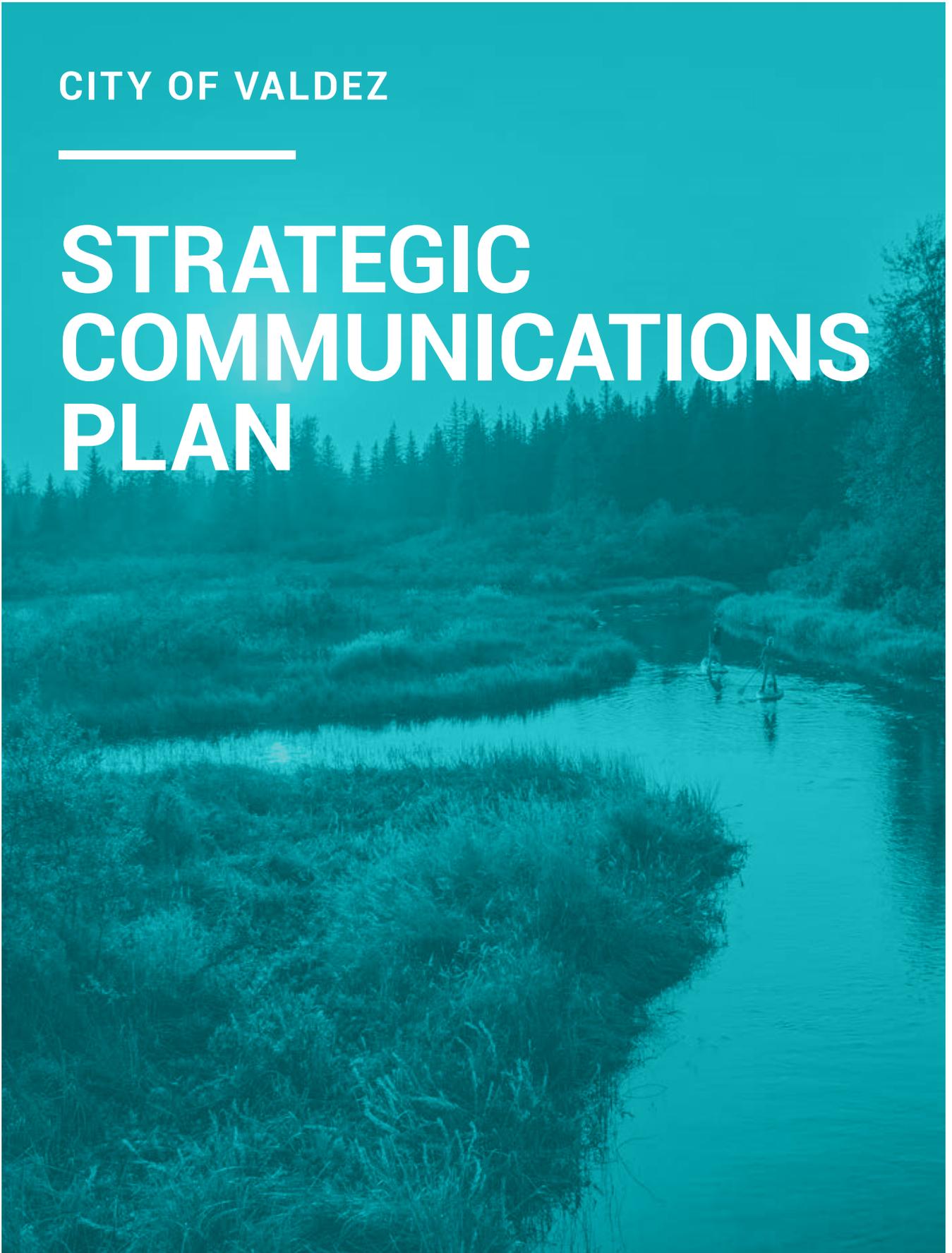




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DISCOVERY REPORT



ABOUT VALDEZ

The City of Valdez is located in Southcentral Alaska on the northeast tip of Prince William Sound. Accessible by land, air, and sea, Valdez has evolved into a small, tight-knit community with ample amenities.

In 1970, Valdez was selected as the terminus for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS). The pipeline is one of the world's largest pipeline systems. Oil and gas remain the largest industry in Valdez, followed by tourism, fishing, and government services.

The City was founded just prior to the turn of the 20th century as a gateway to the "All-American Route" to interior gold and copper fields. Incorporated in 1901, a number of significant events has marked the community's first hundred years, the most notable of which are the 1964 Alaska Earthquake, being chosen as the terminus of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, and the 1989 Exxon Valdez Oil Spill.





AT A GLANCE



POPULATION
3,907



SIZE
271.9
SQUARE MILES



MEDIAN AGE
42



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD
INCOME
\$93,281





MISSION AND VALUES

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the City of Valdez is to cultivate an environment of opportunity, sustained prosperity, and well-being for all people of Valdez.

VALUES

INTEGRITY

We do the right thing even when no one is watching. We are open, honest, and accountable and demonstrate fiscal responsibility.

STEWARDSHIP

We manage available human, fiscal, and environmental capital resources to meet community needs.

SUSTAINABILITY

We demonstrate forward-thinking and long-term planning. We challenge boundaries, make tough decisions, build on successes and failures, and encourage creativity.

SERVICE

We are entrusted with the care of our community and one another and will work selflessly to meet the needs of both.

CELEBRATE

We are committed to creating an enjoyable workplace. We reward excellence and celebrate each other and the work we do.



GATHERING THE DATA

Every community is different, so Slate Communications traveled to Valdez in July to experience the city firsthand. Slate made sure to spend time speaking with staff, residents and stakeholders to understand their priorities and concerns regarding Town communications. A handful of conversations were also conducted via Zoom.

6

STAKEHOLDER
MEETINGS

14

MEETINGS
WITH STAFF

76

EMPLOYEE SURVEY
RESPONSES

149

FLASHVOTE
RESPONSES

1

PUBLIC FORUM AND
COUNCIL MEETING

44

EXTERNAL SURVEY
RESPONSES





CURRENT COMMUNICATION TOOLS

INTERNAL

Email	Staff celebrations and gatherings
Department/staff meetings	City's Multi-Department Communications Team
Microsoft Teams	

EXTERNAL

City of Valdez Facebook (primary)	Email notifications
City of Valdez Police Department Facebook	Emergency alert notifications
City of Valdez Fire Department Facebook	Emergency sirens
City of Valdez Animal Shelter Facebook	Electronic message board signage
City of Valdez Parks & Recreation Facebook	Text message alerts
Valdez Consortium Library Facebook	Radio
Valdez Cinema Facebook	Paid advertising
City of Valdez Twitter	Public meetings
City of Valdez YouTube	News releases
City of Valdez LinkedIn	Online polls and surveys
City website	Partnership collaboration
Flyers	Event participation
Direct mail	DAK Boards



AUDIENCE PROFILES

COMMUNITY

The Valdez community can be segmented in various ways. Demographically, Valdez is diverse. Roughly 25% of the population is under the age of 18. Approximately the same percentage are over 65 (Baby Boomer and Silent generations), and this age group is growing quickly. The remaining 50% fall somewhere between the ages of 19 and 64, comprising both the Millennial and Gen X generations.

AUDIENCE SEGMENTS



SILENT GENERATION (78-95)

- Have a strong need for financial security and comfort
- Are typically very thrifty, appreciate simplicity, and have a strong sense of patriotism
- Hold fast to traditional values such as hard work, loyalty, and high productivity
- Often pursuing traditional forms of media such as newspaper ads, television, and direct mail



BABY BOOMERS (59-77)

- Relatively tech savvy and utilizes social media
- Prefers more information and transparency
- Appreciates the convenience and customization of the Internet
- Desire to feel they are contributing to a greater cause
- Welcomes information presented in terms of categories and options (i.e., simple facts with which to make decisions)
- Prefer face-to-face interactions or phone calls



GENERATION X (43-58)

- Grew up in a world without social media but have adapted to it
- Email is the preferred mode of communication
- The only generation who regularly consumes advertising and marketing messages from all key media channels, including social media, print, mobile and cable
- Prefers initiatives that will make things more useful and practical
- Welcomes an informal communication style and is skeptical of modern advertising



MILLENNIALS (27-42)

- Digital natives that are used to having access to large amounts of information at their fingertips
- Prefers to receive information electronically and use social media to communicate
- Responds to content that is conversational and authentic
- Expects speed, convenience and flexibility
- Reacts strongly to real-life examples and favors the truth and what's real
- Peers often guide product and brand choices





GENERATION Z (11-26)

- Look for instant gratification and are used to having access to large amounts of information at their fingertips
- Utilize all social media platforms and are early adopters of new technology
- Prefer short format video and compelling photography
- Peers often guide product and brand choices. Peer acceptance is very important and they need to feel like they belong
- Value security, authenticity and "realness"
- They want to make a difference in the world and lead a life with purpose



SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION HABITS OF VALDEZ COMMUNITY*



FACEBOOK

- Three-fourths or more of both Millennials and Gen Xers now report using Facebook (84% vs. 74%, respectively)
- Boomers and Silents use it less frequently, but the percentages have been increasing from year to year. 60% of Boomers and 37% of Silents (those over 77) report using Facebook



INTERNET USE

- Almost all Millennials (nearly 100%) now say they use the internet, and 19% of them are smartphone-only internet users
- Large shares of Gen Xers (91%) and Boomers (85%) use the internet, compared with just 62% of Silents
- When it comes to smartphone-only internet users, 17% of Gen Xers go online primarily via a smartphone, as do 11% of Boomers and 15% of Silents



TECHNOLOGY

- Baby Boomers continue to trail both Gen Xers and Millennials on most measures of technology adoption, but adoption rates for this group have been growing rapidly in recent years
- Members of the Silent Generation are less adaptable to new technology

*Pew Research Center



NATIVE POPULATION

The Alaska Native population comprises 14% of all Valdez residents, for a total of nearly 550 Alaska Native residents, up from 10% in the 2000 Census. The Valdez Native Tribe counts 210 tribal households in Valdez, 14% of all households.

ENGAGED VS. DISENGAGED

Another helpful way to segment audiences is by their level of engagement with the City.

ENGAGED

There is a significant portion of the population that is very engaged in City decisions, programs, and events. If they are younger (under 60), they tend to be online, on social media, and looking for additional ways for the City to provide them with information. If they are older, they still want the City to proactively provide them with information; however, they aren't traditionally online.

DISENGAGED

This group of people, for a variety of reasons (lack of time, lack of resources, lack of permanent residency), are still involved in the community, but not to the same level. They want information to be easily accessible and easy to find but do not need or want the same proactive frequency or depth of information. About 10% of the Valdez population moves in or out of the area annually.

EMPLOYERS

Valdez is home to several large businesses where there is an opportunity to communicate with residents through their employers. These businesses include Alyeska, the Coast Guard, and Providence Valdez Medical Center.

STAFF

Generationally, City employees break down as follows:

BOOMERS
13%

GEN X
46%

MILLENNIAL'S
39%

GEN Z
2%

More notably, many City employees are not office employees and, therefore, don't have regular access to a computer/email. Additionally, many work shifts and are not always available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

COMMON THEMES

The Valdez community is tight-knit and genuinely cares for one another.

Word of mouth is very prominent in Valdez.

Staff generally wants to improve communications across the organization.

Residents generally fall into two categories - "those who engage" and "those who don't engage," and that isn't likely to change.

COMMON CHALLENGES

Educating and informing residents about topics related to childcare, housing, property valuations, and the City's cash position is particularly difficult and complicated.

There is a general lack of understanding among residents about what the City's roles and responsibilities are.

Many people within the organization are involved in the communication process at some point, but they aren't all on the same page.

There are no city-wide tools for internal communication.





SURVEY RESULTS

The City of Valdez recently concluded several surveys. An internal staff survey resulted in 44 responses and an external community survey included 149 participants. Top trends and key takeaways are outlined below.

INTERNAL STAFF SURVEY

FAVORABILITY

FEEDBACK

84%

THE CITY'S BENEFITS MEET THE NEEDS OF EMPLOYEES AND THEIR FAMILIES

84%

EMPLOYEES FEEL ACCEPTED BY THEIR IMMEDIATE COWORKERS

74%

EMPLOYEES FEEL THEIR IMMEDIATE MANAGER CARES ABOUT THEM

72%

EMPLOYEES HAVE THE TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT TO DO THEIR JOB WELL

68%

EMPLOYEES ARE PROUD TO WORK FOR THE CITY OF VALDEZ



OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

FAVORABILITY	FEEDBACK
49%	TEAM GOALS AND ACCOUNTABILITY ARE CLEAR
34%	EMPLOYEES FEEL LIKE THEY ARE INCLUDED IN DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEIR WORK
34%	TRUST IN SENIOR LEADERSHIP
33%	EMPLOYEES UNDERSTAND THE ORGANIZATION'S PLANS FOR FUTURE SUCCESS
25%	EMPLOYEES UNDERSTAND WHY ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES ARE MADE



EXTERNAL COMMUNITY SURVEY

OVERALL CITY COMMUNICATION

42%

"GOOD" OR "EXCELLENT"

36%

CITY COMMUNICATION IS "OK"

TOP WAYS RESIDENTS CURRENTLY GET CITY INFORMATION

75%

CITY WEBSITE

49%

RADIO

62%

CITY FACEBOOK PAGE

32%

ELECTRONIC NOTIFICATIONS
(push alerts by SMS message or email)

62%

WORD OF MOUTH

32%

DIRECT MAIL

HOW RESIDENTS WOULD LIKE CITY INFORMATION IN THE FUTURE

60%

ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

51%

EMAIL

57%

CITY FACEBOOK PAGE

34%

TEXT MESSAGE

52%

CITY WEBSITE

CITY TOPICS RESIDENTS ARE MOST INTERESTED IN

88%

CITY EVENTS

51%

PUBLIC SAFETY
(crime, policing, etc.)

66%

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS AND DECISIONS

48%

HELPFUL TIPS ON CITY TOPICS

53%

CAPITAL PROJECTS

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMUNITY

I really like the idea of an email newsletter or news blast. I read the KVAK newsletter each week and find it really helpful. Adding to that, or a separate newsletter would be great.

Everything should be accessible in COV website. Everything should drive back to website. Website should be easy to navigate, intuitive, comprehensive.

Not everyone goes to Facebook/internet all the time. But we all check our mail. I'd love a printed monthly newsletter!

[Host] Town Hall forums, [have] City Manager/key staff video messages.

Use Facebook page to let community know about grants and show how money was spent (pictures). Engage with the community, try to get people and businesses involved, if you do a survey tell us the results as well.

I think it's important for a government to use every communication tool available, because people of the community are reached in a variety of ways. The messages created should be clear and simple to understand.



DIGITAL AUDIT

BY THE NUMBERS

WEBSITE

65,960*
WEBSITE VISITORS



236,649*
PAGEVIEWS



TOP SEARCH TERMS:

- Pool
- Property Taxes
- GIS
- Pool Schedule
- Movies

COMMON CHAT BOT THEMES:

- Newsletter sign up
- Property taxes
- Building permits
- Housing availability
- Elections

EMAIL SUBSCRIPTION

55%
OPEN RATE



500
SUBSCRIBERS



TOP 5 TOPICS AMONG SUBSCRIBERS:

- City News & Announcements
- News Releases
- Parks & Rec News
- Public Notices
- Bid Postings

*Data from January 1 – October 1, 2023

SOCIAL MEDIA

VALDEZ POLICE DEPARTMENT FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS	5,624
VALDEZ ONLINE BULLETIN BOARD FOLLOWERS	5,200
CITY FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS	5,057
PARKS & REC FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS	2,378
VALDEZ CINEMA FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS	1,710
VALDEZ FIRE DEPARTMENT FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS	1,217
ANIMAL SHELTER FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS	856
VALDEZ CONSORTIUM LIBRARY FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS	689
NUGGET THE VPD COMFORT DOG INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS	205
CITY OF VALDEZ ANIMAL SHELTER INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS	24

WEBSITE ANALYSIS



USER EXPERIENCE

Pages load quickly and are easy to access. The website is mobile-friendly and includes accessibility features.



ORGANIZATION

Top-level navigation is well-organized and easy to use. Most top-searched terms are quickly identifiable within the main navigation and can be reached with two clicks.



SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

The website ranks high in search results, and the top pages are listed as rich results, making it easier for visitors to find the information they are looking for. The website has fast upload and download speeds.





BRAND ANALYSIS

EVALUATION OF CURRENT BRAND

To strengthen the City of Valdez's brand identity, we examined existing communication materials to understand how the current brand is used and where improvements could be made. We also spoke with several staff members and stakeholders to understand how the City's two brands work together and what could be improved. Evaluations were made based on these materials and discussions with staff.



LOGO

The City logo is recognizable and has the potential to meet the City's needs. As it stands, it lacks flexibility and comprehensive guidelines about its use and purpose. The recent addition of a horizontal version and the option to use the mark without the City name or tagline has improved flexibility. However, staff still does not have versions of the City logo with department names and have not been adequately trained on how to use the logo and brand consistently.



BRAND

There is inconsistent use of the City brand and the community brand. Staff has expressed confusion about when to use which brand and have differing opinions about how and when to use them. It is recommended that the City adopt specific guidelines for the use of each brand and that these guidelines be enforced by City leadership and shared during onboarding and training.



TONE

The City of Valdez prides itself on being a family-friendly community and an organization that is approachable and practices good stewardship. This messaging isn't always reflected in communication materials, as there is sometimes a disconnect across departments. To improve its tone, it is recommended that the City of Valdez adopt a Brand Platform that is organization-wide and considered when communicating with the public.



City of Valdez Logo



Valdez Community Brand Logo



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

Many residents live in Valdez temporarily and are therefore less likely to be invested in the City. Long-term residents often tend to be unsupportive of government services, making it difficult for the City to educate them about projects or the many services it provides.

2

City staff lack the tools or opportunities to communicate well with each other and departments are very siloed. This makes it difficult to show a united organization externally or identify communication roles internally.

3

Staff generally like where they work and have good relationships with their immediate coworkers and supervisors. They value communications and are willing to assist the communications department.

4

City residents generally prefer traditional communication tools to receive information, including word of mouth, radio and direct mail. Some residents have indicated that an electronic or printed City newsletter would be helpful.

5

There is an opportunity for the City to help educate residents about the role of local government and the City's responsibilities to the community.

An aerial photograph of a mountain valley. A winding river flows through the center of the valley, surrounded by green fields and forests. In the background, there are large, rugged mountains with snow-capped peaks under a clear blue sky. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



PLAN PURPOSE

The City of Valdez is committed to providing honest, clear and transparent communication to its stakeholders. A well-planned strategic communications program supports the City's efforts in building an informed and engaged community.

This plan provides a roadmap for all City staff to move forward toward the common goal of improving internal and external communications. It is designed with non-communicators in mind because every staff member, regardless of position or department, plays an important role in sharing information on behalf of the City.

The success of this plan is strongly dependent on the support and involvement of the City Council, City leadership and all City of Valdez employees. Once in place, this plan is intended to be a living document reviewed at least annually as priorities, projects, and goals change.





PLAN GOALS

Align communication efforts with citywide goals and priorities.

Build trust across all levels of the organization.

Provide tools and processes that enable staff members of all departments to participate effectively in City communication.

Increase community understanding of City services, initiatives and resources.

Enhance engagement opportunities with community partners.

Provide direction and tools to assist staff across the organization when using the City's various brands.





COMMUNICATION GOALS

The following communications goals have been identified as priorities for 2024.

<p>Create an annual report to celebrate the accomplishments of 2023.</p>	<p>Develop and implement an enrollment strategy for 'Valdez Alerts,' the City's emergency notification system.</p>
<p>Enhance the City's website content to ensure complete and accurate information is present for all departments.</p>	<p>Develop an annual event calendar and plan to have City staff present at community events throughout the year.</p>
<p>Develop a crisis communications plan that can be quickly implemented in an emergency.</p>	<p>Create promotional materials that educate the community and strengthen the City's brand recognition.</p>
<p>Utilize FlashVote to obtain resident feedback on City initiatives, projects and programs.</p>	<p>Implement a residents request tool to track complaints and route requests to the appropriate City department to address the issue.</p>
<p>Launch a City intranet to improve internal communication and organize shared files.</p>	<p>Create a 'Connect with the City' campaign to encourage residents and businesses to proactively stay connected to the City and sign up to receive City news.</p>



FOUNDATIONAL MESSAGING

1

VALDEZ IS STRATEGIC ABOUT DECISIONS AND THOUGHTFUL ABOUT LONG-TERM PLANNING INITIATIVES.

2

THE CITY PROVIDES SERVICES TO RESIDENTS IN AN EQUITABLE, FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE, AND TRANSPARENT MANNER.

3

THE CITY BRAND AND THE COMMUNITY BRAND ARE IMPORTANT TOOLS TO POSITION THE ORGANIZATION AS A PROFESSIONAL AND REPUTABLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION.

4

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION REQUIRES BUY-IN FROM ALL LEVELS OF THE CITY ORGANIZATION.

5

CITY LEADERSHIP AND EXECUTIVE STAFF VALUE EMPLOYEES AND ENCOURAGE TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF THE ORGANIZATION.



DEPARTMENTAL ROLES

The Communications Department is responsible for delivering accurate and timely information to City of Valdez stakeholders and staff. The city's communications staff coordinates external and internal activities and works closely with City Council and city departments to provide information to residents, businesses, visitors, and media outlets. The department also helps foster public outreach efforts to strengthen ties between the city and community members.

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS: Implements City Council's strategic goals and aligns communication efforts with the organization's guiding documents, work plans, strategic initiatives, and large-scale projects.

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER/SPOKESPERSON: Serves as one of the city's designated spokespeople and assists with message development, talking points and media coordination as needed for other spokespeople, including city council members, the city manager and department directors.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: Develops and carries out successful strategies to engage the public in their local government through participation at events, through digital platforms, and with city services.

BRAND MANAGEMENT: Ensures the city brand is being used consistently and brand messages are used appropriately and often in all communication efforts.

DEPARTMENT-LEVEL COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT (as needed): Works with city department representatives to provide communication strategy or helps produce content or visual collateral with communication best practices in mind.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION: When a crisis occurs, communications staff will develop and position emergency messages, correctly and effectively disseminate information, work with department leaders and emergency responders, and help manage media relations.

CITY MANAGER

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS: Serves as a sounding board for communications staff and provides direction for implementing City Council’s strategic goals. Supports communication goals and helps set expectations for communication responsibilities at the department level.

SPOKESPERSON: As needed, serves as a spokesperson on topics related to the city organization.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS: Plays a key role in communicating to city employees. The city manager may assign internal communication tasks to other staff or work alongside departments like communications and human resources to help reach employees.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS

DEPARTMENT-LEVEL COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT: City departments are empowered to create content and visual collateral for projects, initiatives, events and general education pertaining to their department. Department directors should work with their staff to keep communication efforts top-of-mind and work with the communications director to implement communication best practices.

SPOKESPERSON: As needed, department directors may serve as the spokesperson for their department on topics related to their area of expertise.

MULTI-DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

This team consists of representatives from various city departments who work together to support the Communications Director and serve as communication liaisons for their department. Members of this team meet regularly and are responsible for:

- Identifying communication needs across the organization.
- Working collaboratively to support internal and external communication efforts.
- Overseeing content creation for social media, website and other print and digital collateral.
- Assisting with community outreach and engagement as it relates to department projects and initiatives.





COMMUNICATION PRIORITIES

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

PRIORITY

#1 Improve the City's credibility and build trust among citizens.

#2 Deliver consistent, proactive, strategic communications quickly and nimbly.

#3 Increase stakeholder engagement and community understanding of City services, initiatives, and resources.

#4 Align communication efforts with citywide goals and priorities.

ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES

PRIORITY

#1 Improve communication, collaboration and efficiency across City departments.

#2 Strengthen the City's brand.

#3 Find opportunities for employees to feel valued and be part of the decision-making process.



STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

PRIORITY #1

IMPROVE THE CITY'S CREDIBILITY AND BUILD TRUST AMONG RESIDENTS.

STRATEGY #1: Report accomplishments and challenges both accurately and openly.

TACTICS:

- In City reports and project overviews, share both positive and negative results, lessons learned or opportunities for improvement. Aim for consistent transparency surrounding projects, news, and accomplishments.

STRATEGY #2: Share early and often.

TACTICS:

- For large projects or initiatives of high interest to residents, plan to share information regularly throughout the process. Sharing information as early as possible keeps residents informed.
- Create project-specific FAQs or 'Fact vs. Fiction' info sheets to help dispel rumors.
- Create project-specific pages on the City website to use as a repository for important project information and milestones.



STRATEGY #3: Have a consistent City presence at community events.

TACTICS:

- Be present at local events and utilize tools to engage with residents face-to-face.
- Prepare City staff with speaking points and City-branded signage, banners and collateral.
- Find opportunities to partner with local community organizations and businesses to expand the City’s reach and increase engagement opportunities to connect with residents of diverse backgrounds and interests.

STRATEGY #4: Strengthen collaboration with community partners.

TACTICS:

- Host an annual meeting with communication professionals who represent major employers (Valdez City Schools, Prince William Sound College, Valdez Convention and Visitors Bureau, Alyeska Pipeline, etc.) and local nonprofits and find ways to coordinate communication efforts.



DELIVER CONSISTENT, PROACTIVE, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS QUICKLY AND NIMBLY.

STRATEGY #1: Utilize FlashVote for quick public polling.

TACTICS:

- Poll the community at least quarterly, and more frequently if needed, to quickly gather input from stakeholders about important City initiatives or projects. Use the feedback received to help inform future decisions.

STRATEGY #2: Create a Crisis Communications Plan.

TACTICS:

- Plan, develop and implement a crisis communications plan to prepare for a variety of situations that may arise.
- Ensure police and fire departments review the plan and there's consensus around emergency response.

STRATEGY #3: Create a monthly e-newsletter.

TACTICS:

- Develop a monthly electronic newsletter that's easy to print and distribute to residents. Topics may include City project highlights, upcoming events, opportunities for public participation, and public meeting schedules.



STRATEGY #4: Develop an enrollment strategy for ‘Valdez Alerts.’

TACTICS:

- Create a marketing and outreach campaign to promote Valdez Alerts.
- Utilize existing City communication channels to share information about the platform and encourage sign-ups.
- Partner with the economic development and ports and harbor departments to market the program to tourists and visitors to Valdez.

STRATEGY #5: Allocate money in the annual budget for a print and mail campaign each year.

TACTICS:

- Two to four times annually, print and mail City communication to Valdez households. This funding may be used to educate residents about upcoming City initiatives or projects, encourage residents to get involved, share annual report or budget information, etc.



INCREASE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING OF CITY SERVICES, INITIATIVES, AND RESOURCES.

PRIORITY #3

STRATEGY #1: Simplify and explain City finances and budget information.

TACTICS:

- Develop an annual budget brief. This tool should be mailed to each household annually and promoted digitally on social media.
- Develop an annual report that outlines big projects and accomplishments for the year, tying them back to the City's long-term goals.

STRATEGY #2: Provide insight into City and City Council decision-making.

TACTICS:

- Send a recap summary of council agendas and decisions following each meeting. This could be in the form of an email, video or podcast.
- Host quarterly 'Coffee with Council' events and invite residents to chat or ask questions with the city manager, a council member, or department heads. These events should be planned in various locations and at different times during the day to reach different audiences.

STRATEGY #3: Maximize the City website.

TACTICS:

- Expand department pages and information available to residents. All forms, maps, and contact numbers should be easily accessible.
- Current forms on the website should be converted into electronic and fillable forms. Conduct an audit of existing forms and prioritize which ones should be converted to fillable forms based on how frequently they are used.
- Prioritize having content directly on the website, as opposed to linked in PDFs or other documents, to ensure accessibility for non-English speaking residents. In this format, web browsers can automatically translate web content.

STRATEGY #4: Connect with new residents.

TACTICS:

- Send a 'Welcome' postcard to all new residents every six months. Include information about City services, how to connect with the City, basic organizational details on the City Council and city manager, highlights about upcoming projects, etc.
- Create a 'Connect With Us' campaign to encourage new and existing residents to follow the City on social media, sign up for emergency alerts, subscribe to email alerts, attend City Council meetings, and learn how to get involved.
- Design a take-home flyer that can be inserted into kids' backpacks at school each year. Promote events, ways to get involved and ways to connect with the City.

STRATEGY #5: Implement a resident request tracking tool.

TACTICS:

- Utilize the resident request tool to streamline service requests and track concerns and issues across the City.
- Use data from the tool to help inform residents about the services the City provides and highlight the City's responsiveness.



ALIGN COMMUNICATION EFFORTS WITH CITYWIDE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

PRIORITY #4

STRATEGY #1: Develop big-picture stories that connect projects and key messages.

TACTICS:

- Create a video series summarizing big projects and connecting them with the City's goals.
- Release a short (less than 10 minutes) State of the City video that recaps City goals and how various projects for the year will contribute to each goal.

STRATEGY #2: Integrate citywide mission, vision and goals into communication efforts.

TACTICS:

- The City's mission, vision and goals should be present in all forms of communication. By sharing these points with residents, the City can regularly articulate how services and actions are related and help achieve the City's goals.

STRATEGY #3: Standardize communication processes and procedures.

TACTICS:

- To help ensure consistent communication across the organization, the City should establish well-defined processes for how, what and when to communicate.
- Clearly define who helps share information on behalf of the City and how that person keeps the communications director informed of their communication efforts and needs.

STRATEGY #4: Develop a comprehensive media strategy.

TACTICS:

- Clearly define the City's marketing vs. public relations goals annually.
- Create a comprehensive media distribution list and set standards for when a press release will be used versus a news story on the website versus a social media post, etc.

ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES

PRIORITY #1

IMPROVE COMMUNICATION COLLABORATION AND EFFICIENCY ACROSS CITY DEPARTMENTS.

STRATEGY #1: Arm public-facing staff with the tools they need to be helpful resources to residents.

TACTICS:

- Create one-page 'hot sheets' with information about large or controversial projects. Each hot sheet should include a project goal, information about funding sources, an estimated timeline, FAQs, and a City contact.

STRATEGY #2: Strengthen the internal network of City communicators.

TACTICS:

- Incorporate brand training and introductions to the communications director and department communications liaisons. Create a non-communicator toolkit and educate them about the importance of communication when new staff members are onboarded.
- Host an annual communications meeting with all staff. Include a refresher for branding best practices, how to effectively work with the communications department, review communication tools and policies, etc.

STRATEGY #3: Create an intranet website platform.

TACTICS:

- Use the intranet to house important organizational information, policies, and procedures in one place. Include helpful links to third-party platforms like payroll, health benefits, PTO requests, etc. Rely on communications liaisons from the largest departments to manage their section of the intranet site.
- Find fun and engaging ways to keep employees coming back. Examples include hosting contests like a photo scavenger hunt or trivia questions and rewarding the winners with City swag or gift cards to local businesses.

STRATEGY #4: Create an internal employee newsletter.

TACTICS:

- Share internal news via an email newsletter monthly. Work with communications liaisons to develop article ideas and write copy.

STRENGTHEN THE CITY'S BRAND

STRATEGY #1: Develop clear guidelines for the City and community brands.

TACTICS:

- Create a one-page mini-brand guide for all staff to quickly refer to each brand’s brand colors, fonts, and logos. The mini-brand guide should also outline when to use which brand.
- Provide brand training for new staff and communications liaisons.

STRATEGY #2: Standardize visual communication tools.

TACTICS:

- Create templates and standards for letterhead, business cards, PowerPoint presentations, email signatures, agendas and memos, press releases, posters, flyers and social media graphics.
- Compile logo files, templates, and guidelines in a commonly accessible location for all City staff.
- Create a suite of City logos with department names.



FIND OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYEES TO FEEL VALUED AND BE PART OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.

PRIORITY #3

STRATEGY #1: Increase internal communication from the top down.

TACTICS:

- Create a city manager periodic update emailed to all staff, keeping them apprised of upcoming projects and City Council decisions.
- Ensure all staff can attend organization-wide meetings by offering overtime pay, closing City Hall for the duration of the meeting, or offering two meeting times.

STRATEGY #2: Find informal ways to connect with employees.

TACTICS:

- Host employee appreciation events and team-building opportunities.
- Create an Employee Appreciation Committee of interested employees who will help brainstorm ideas and spearhead activities.

STRATEGY #3: Conduct an annual employee satisfaction survey.

TACTICS:

- Ask questions that help leadership understand employee concerns and benchmark the results each year to gauge satisfaction and shifts in morale.

STRATEGY #4: Develop an employee appreciation initiative.

TACTICS:

- Publicly celebrate City employees by featuring them in City communication and highlighting their work and accomplishments. Share employee profiles on social media and in news stories.
- Create an employee recognition program where employees nominate their peers and host an annual or quarterly informal celebration for the award recipients.



BRAND RECOMMENDATIONS



BRAND PLATFORM

WHAT IS A BRAND?

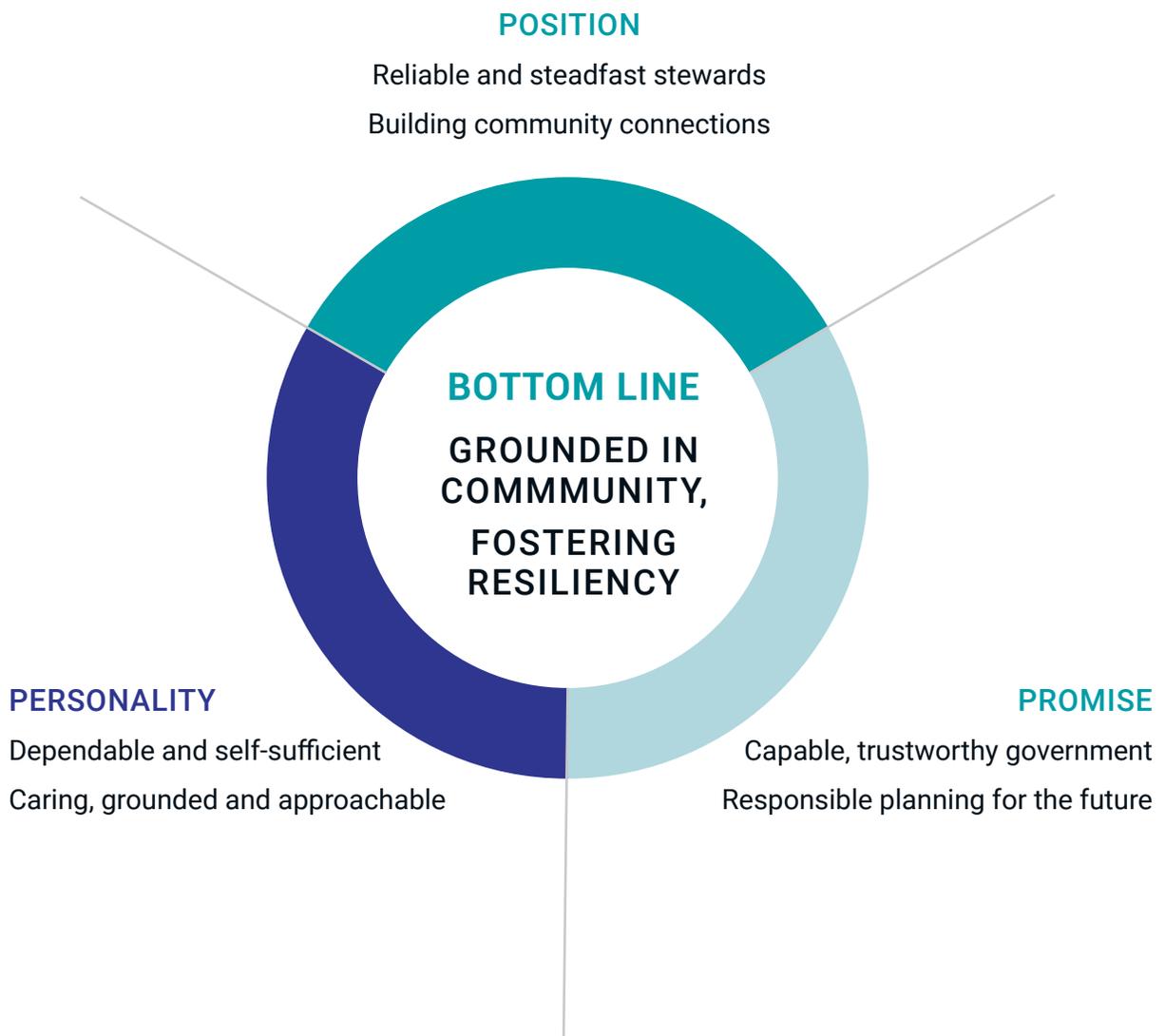
A brand is a collection of thoughts and feelings about experiences with a product/service/organization.



BRAND PLATFORM

A brand platform is the foundation to direct the organization's identity, strategies for messaging, and the overall image.

- **POSITION:** How the brand is perceived in the context of competitive alternatives
- **PERSONALITY:** The human characteristics associated with a brand
- **PROMISE:** Long-term commitments a brand makes to their target audience



BRAND VOICE

WHAT IS A BRAND VOICE?

A brand voice is a critical component of any organization's identity and is pivotal in conveying its values, personality, and positioning in the community. The tone of voice refers to how the brand communicates with the audience, including word choice, communication style, and emotional tone. This means the tone of voice can change somewhat based on the most appropriate situation. Establishing a consistent and compelling brand voice is crucial for the City to position itself as an approachable and innovative organization.

WHO IS OUR AUDIENCE?

- Current and future residents
- Current and future businesses
- Current and future employees
- Non-profit organizations located within Valdez who serve our community
- Other local, state and federal government agencies

HOW TO USE A BRAND VOICE

ADAPT TO DIFFERENT PLATFORMS:

Tailor the brand voice to suit the platform or channel. For instance, a brand voice on social media may be more casual and engaging, while the brand voice in formal communication, such as press releases, might be more professional.

TRAIN YOUR TEAM:

Ensure everyone on your team understands and embodies the brand voice. Provide training, examples, and ongoing support to ensure consistent implementation across all interactions and communications.

STAY AUTHENTIC AND GENUINE:

Above all, be authentic and genuine in all communications. The brand voice should reflect the true essence of the City organization and resonate with the designated audience in a sincere and relatable manner.

MESSAGING PILLARS

APPROACHABLE

Highlight the organization's accessibility and welcoming nature to encourage community engagement and involvement.

DEPENDABLE

Showcase actions taken to address problems or concerns voiced from the public. Celebrate wins and accomplishments or when goals and deadlines are met.

CAPABLE

Emphasize the day-to-day work and skills of City employees.

TRUSTWORTHY

Demonstrate transparency in communications and everyday activities. Highlight projects from inception to fruition.

RESPONSIBLE

Communicate the organization's commitment to timely and effective responses, ensuring the community feels heard and valued.

PILLAR KEY PHRASES

APPROACHABLE

- We take pride in being accessible and friendly
- We are open and welcoming to _____
- We are willing to engage
- We are ready to listen
- We are here to assist

DEPENDABLE

- Can I follow up with you on ...
- We are reporting back on ...
- This goal was met by doing ...
- You asked about _____

CAPABLE

- We will solve this by ...
- Forward-thinking solutions to ...
- With resourcefulness, we ...
- We have experienced this before

TRUSTWORTHY

- Here is our work plan for completing this project
- Council decided _____, resulting in ...
- We acted in this way because ...
- Next time, we will do _____ better

RESPONSIVE

- We are prepared
- We understand that it's important we are attentive to ...
- We are aware
- We anticipate

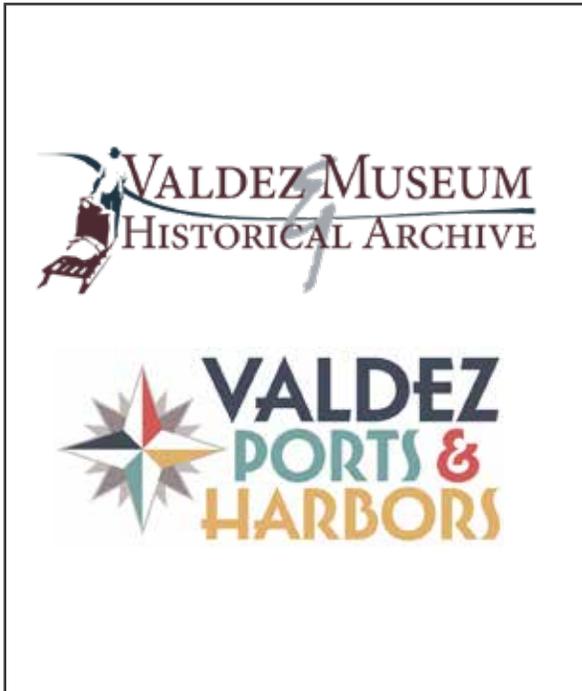




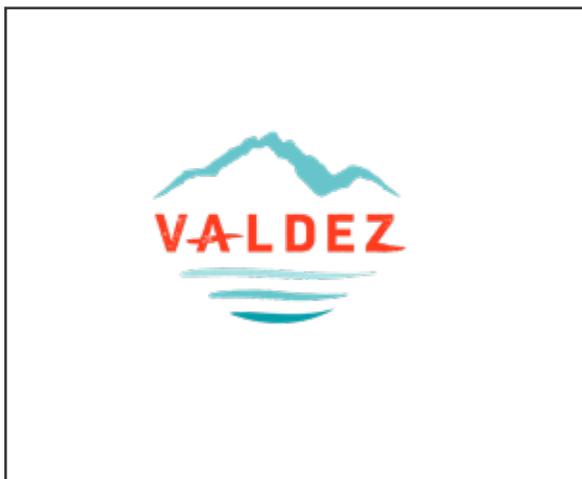
OUR BRAND RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Valdez has many departments, divisions, related tourism organizations, and service providers. Many of these have developed their own brands over time or modified the City's brand. It has resulted in inconsistent use of the City brand and confusion around how separate brands should be used.

REVENUE GENERATING BRANDS



TOURISM AND MARKETING BRANDS



SAFETY SERVICE BRANDS



CITY BRANDS



DEFINING BRAND GOALS

A brand is important to demonstrate consistency across City services. Visitors and residents alike should be able to identify communication that comes from the City organization versus other entities. Branches of the City government that are revenue generators, such as the Ports and Harbors Department, need to stand out from the competition. For this reason, Slate has categorized the types of brands to help the City of Valdez determine which brands should remain the same, which should be absorbed/modified by the City, and which should operate as standalone brands.

These categories include:

- Revenue Generating Brands
- Tourism and Marketing Brands
- Safety Service Brands
- City Brands

They are outlined and defined in the table below.

CATEGORY	REVENUE GENERATING BRANDS	TOURISM AND MARKETING BRANDS	SAFETY SERVICE BRANDS	CITY BRANDS
DESCRIPTIONS AND GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue generating • Will exist for a long time • More outward-facing • Need to stand out from the competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not long term: brands are refreshed often • Broader audience reach than just Alaska • Goals: Attraction and retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-established brands that won't change much • Public services • Separate identity and brand from the City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City brand • City services that won't change over time • Must be identifiable by residents and visitors • Must be most flexible • Goals: Show cohesion of services
BRAND EXAMPLES	Ports and Harbors, Valdez Museum, Historical Archive	Economic Development, Visitor's Bureau, Community Brand	Public Safety, Police, Fire, Valdez Alerts	Parks and Rec, Convention Center, Animal Shelter



BRAND OPTIONS

Moving forward, Slate recommends changing how the City brand is currently utilized. The following are three different options to consider that will help maintain brand consistency across brand categories.

OPTION 1: REBRAND

The existing brand is not very flexible and doesn't reflect the character of the City and the community. A new brand should be created that can be applied across various non-revenue generating departments.

IN PRACTICE:

A rebrand would result in a logo and brand guide that ...

- Has vertical and horizontal options of the City logo
- Has logo options for digital and print, dark and light backgrounds, local use and national use
- Reflects the character and personality of the City and community
- Identifies a brand voice and personality
- Outlines the use of the logo on apparel, vehicles, communications templates, social media, etc.
- Has department-specific versions of the logo

OPTION 2: MODIFY CURRENT BRAND

A less drastic option compared to Option 1, this recommendation involves simply modifying the current City brand to make it more flexible and consistent-looking. It would be more reproducible for different applications. In this option, we recommend removing the word 'Alaska' from the logo.

IN PRACTICE:

- Develop a more unique typeface
- Remove 'Alaska' from the City logo (this only needs to be used in Tourism and Marketing Brands)
- Create versions of the logo that work better for horizontal, vertical, digital, print, dark and light backgrounds, etc.
- Compile logo versions and the brand guide in one easily accessible location
- Include versions of the logo with and without the tagline

OPTION 3: STANDARDIZE THE BRAND

Perhaps a good starting place, this option is a good first step to improving the brand. It involves providing specific brand guidelines to City departments that fall under the 'City Brands' category.

IN PRACTICE:

- Standardize all fonts across departments
- Standardize the style of artwork within the main logo's porthole that changes for departments (i.e., Animal Shelter and Parks and Recreation)
- Create versions of the City logo that have other department names included for department-specific use





TOOLKIT



FUTURE STAFFING RECOMMENDATIONS

A well-staffed communications team is essential to provide day-to-day communications support to the City organization and for tackling long-term, strategic communication initiatives.

Slate Communications reviewed current communication goals for the City of Valdez and evaluated anticipated future needs of the City.

The following recommended positions are in addition to the Communications Director and may be added or modified as budgets and staff needs dictate.

STAFFING GOALS

- Ensure the City's communications program is appropriately supported to meet the needs of the community and organization.
- Provide a path to long-term success focused on transparency and engagement for the department as it grows.

CONSIDER ADDING IN THE NEXT 1-3 YEARS



DIGITAL/MULTI-MEDIA COORDINATOR

- **Video:** Production, script development, graphics/b-roll
- **Graphic Design:** Using graphic design software, maintain the visual brand of the City when creating posters, flyers, ads, social media graphics, etc.
- **Presentation Development:** Maintain brand consistency when creating organization-wide presentations in PowerPoint and other applications
- **Photography:** Include photo editing and cataloging on Flickr
- **Content Creation:** Draft content for news releases and website
- **Social Media Management:**
 - Content calendar management and creation
 - Post to Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, LinkedIn, YouTube or other social sites
 - Write and schedule content, create Reels and Stories, monitor comments
- **Website Management:**
 - Content management and creation
 - Post news stories, announcements, calendar events, etc.
 - Assist other departments with content development and advise on website best practices



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH COORDINATOR

- **Community Outreach:**
 - Develop and implement strategies to engage with diverse community groups and stakeholders
 - Organize and attend community events, meetings and forums to promote open communication and gather feedback
- **Public Relations:**
 - Serve as a liaison between the City and community members to address concerns and disseminate information
 - Create and distribute press releases, newsletters and other communication materials to keep the community informed
- **Collaboration:**
 - Work closely with various City departments and appointed boards to ensure coordinated and effective outreach efforts
 - Collaborate with local organizations, businesses, schools etc. to enhance community partnerships

CONSIDER ADDING IN THE NEXT 3-6 YEARS



INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

- **Strategic Communication Planning:**
 - Develop and implement comprehensive internal communication strategies aligned with the City's goals and objectives
 - Collaborate with department heads to understand communication needs and ensure consistency in messaging
- **Content Creation:**
 - Write, edit, and create engaging content for various internal communication channels, including newsletters, intranet, emails and announcements
 - Produce visually appealing and informative materials to convey key messages
- **Intranet Management:**
 - Oversee and maintain the City's intranet platform, ensuring it serves as a central hub for internal communication
 - Regularly update content to keep employees informed and engaged
- **Intranet Management:**
 - Work closely with various departments to gather information, share updates and ensure a cohesive flow of communication throughout the City organization
 - Work with an internal team of employees to plan and implement opportunities for staff engagement (employee recognitions, celebrations, all hands meetings, etc.) and feedback (employee surveys and goal-setting)

WAYS TO EXPAND THE TEAM NOW

Contractors may be considered in the case of special projects when additional equipment, skills or staff are needed beyond what the current communications team has available. As needed, and as funds allow, the City may hire contractors for special one-time or ongoing projects, including:

- Photography/Drone Support
- Videography/B-roll
- Graphic Design
- Website/Webmaster Support
- Social Media Management and Support





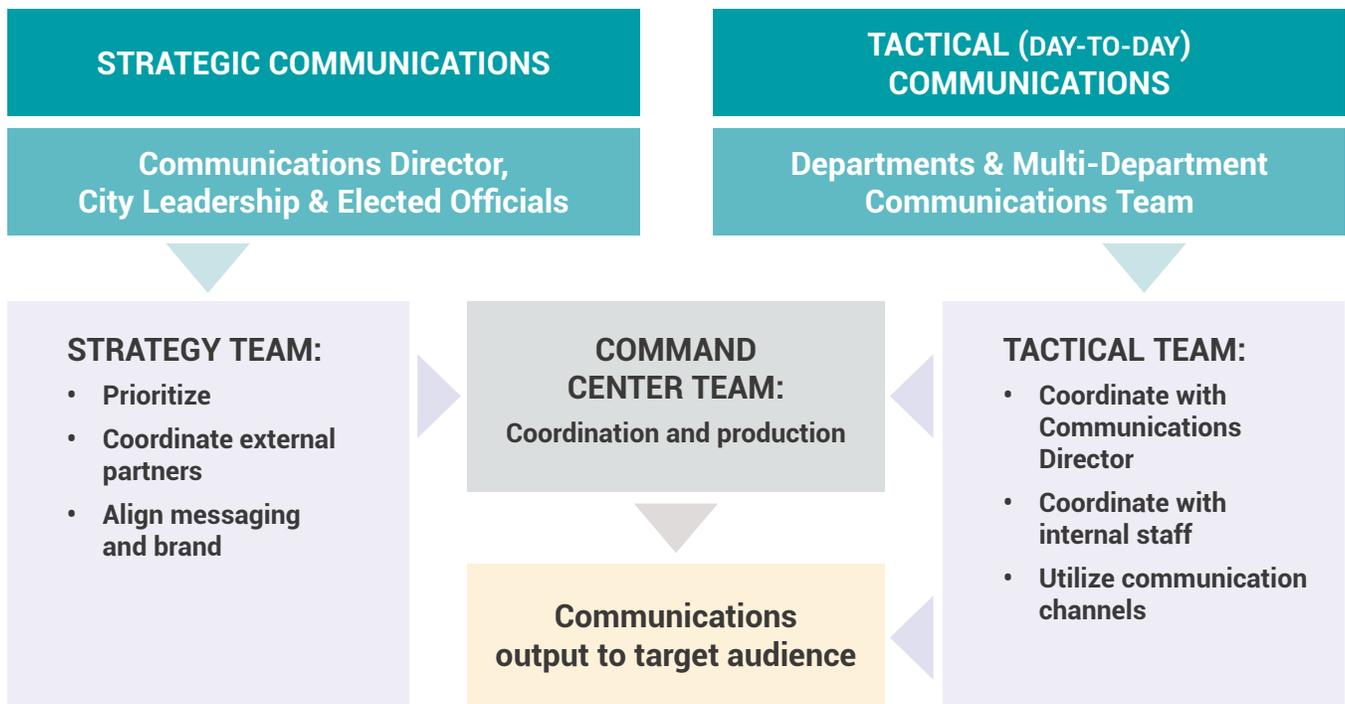
COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH PROCESS

COMMUNICATIONS PROCESS

The City's communication needs fall into two buckets:

- Strategic Communications
- Tactical Communications

Depending on what type of communication is needed, and who should be involved in the decision-making process, City staff should follow the flow chart below in order to share information with your target audience.



COMMUNICATION NEEDS

- **STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Focus on long-term communication needs and strategic messaging that supports City Council's goals and priorities and ties back to organizational mission, vision and values.

- **TACTICAL (DAY-TO-DAY) COMMUNICATIONS**

Focus on short-term communication needs and day-to-day communication efforts.

STRATEGY TEAM (NEW):

Comprised of Director-level staff, the team meets regularly to prioritize communication resources and focus. Aligns messaging of major projects and initiatives with brand themes. Discusses strategies to best share information that supports the City's communication goals. Coordinates with other community partners and stakeholders to maximize communication reach.

TACTICAL TEAM (EXISTING):

Consists of the Multi-Department Communications Team who meets regularly to share information about City events, programs, and happenings. Distributes information among each other to maximize reach. Spearheads department outreach efforts including press releases, social media posts, web page content, and occasional print material.

COMMAND CENTER TEAM:

Consists of the Communications Director and is supported by other staff as needed. Maintains central editorial calendar; organizes output to reinforce brand themes. Produces content for centralized tools such as the city-wide newsletter. Supports content creation for projects prioritized by Strategy Team. Coordinates with Tactical Team to distribute messaging.



VIDEO & PHOTO CHEAT SHEET

PRO TIPS FOR TAKING AWESOME VIDEOS ON YOUR PHONE

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

Think about the end goal for your video – where will it be watched, and who will watch it? Generally, a good rule of thumb is:



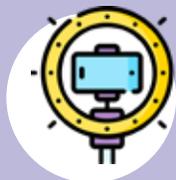
Shoot vertically if it is intended for social media

Shoot horizontally for anything else

USEFUL TOOLS

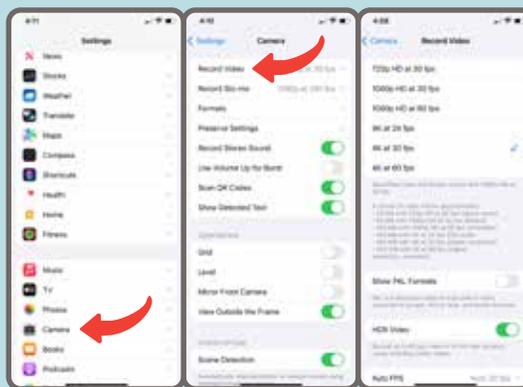
It may be worth investing in a few tools to help take your photos and videos to the next level. Consider purchasing:

- Microphones that plug into phones
- Tripods
- Ring lights



WORKING WITH YOUR EQUIPMENT

Set your photo and video settings to shoot in the highest quality



Video should be shot in 4k at 30 fps

Rest your phone on a solid surface or tripod (if you have it)

Use back facing cameras



WORKING WITH YOUR ENVIRONMENT

- Shoot outside when possible for best lighting



SIDE NOTE:

If there is harsh sunlight, try to place the subject in the shade, facing the sun

- Don't let the sun backlight the subject
- If shooting inside, find a well-lit room or place your subject near a window
- Watch out for heavy shadows on the subject's face or body – these can be distracting
- Find a background that isn't distracting
- Place your subject slightly away from a wall or tree to add more depth between them and what is behind them
- Capitalize each word in hashtags to improve readability



VIDEO & PHOTO CHEAT SHEET

PRO TIPS FOR TAKING AWESOME VIDEOS ON YOUR PHONE

COMPOSITION OF YOUR SHOT

For interviews, position the subject just off to the side of the center of the frame, not right in the middle



Types of shots:

Medium close-up



Wide shot



Medium/mid shot



Long shot



CAPTURING THE BEST SOUND

- Be aware of other sounds in the room like an air conditioner, traffic, or background conversations
- Isolate your subject to have minimal background noise
- If shooting outside, find a quiet location
- Use large landmarks like trees or buildings to help block background sounds
- When possible, use audio recording equipment



OTHER RESOURCES



Film Settings
shopmoment.com/reviews/top-5-iphone-camera-settings-for-filmmakers

Guide to Camera Shots and Angles
enchanted.media/beginners-guide-to-camera-shots-and-angles/



MARKETING VS. COMMUNICATIONS

Marketing and communications are essential for effective governance and community engagement. Use this chart as a guide to determine the best approach to meet project and department goals.

TYPE OF COMMUNICATION	COMMUNICATIONS	MARKETING
DESCRIPTIONS AND GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convey a message Educate the audience Share information Goal: Build overall trust and understanding between the City organization and the community, fostering a positive relationship over the long term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage a desired behavior or action Sell a product or service Goal: Build relationships with the community to enhance support and participation in specific initiatives
AUDIENCE TARGETING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus is on audience Addresses a broader audience and includes stakeholders such as residents, businesses, employees and the media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus is on customer Specific segments of the community based on demographics, needs or interests
QUESTIONS TO ASK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is the target audience? Ask Who, What, When, Where, Why 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do we want our audience to do? How will we get them to act?
MESSAGE TONE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasizes transparency, accuracy and clarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often involves a persuasive and promotional tone Aims to create a favorable perception and drive action
TOOLS AND TACTICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Press releases or official statements Newsletters Community meetings or public forums These tools are used to disseminate information, address concerns and foster two-way communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media Advertising (paid and unpaid) Events These tools are used to promote specific services or programs
TIMING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing Includes day-to-day interactions, updates and announcements Not limited to specific campaign periods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often involves specific start and end dates

TYPE OF COMMUNICATION	COMMUNICATIONS	MARKETING
EXAMPLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing residents about a new construction project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing a new business why Valdez is the place they should consider opening a new storefront
DEPARTMENT FOCUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration • Animal Shelter * • City Clerk • Code Enforcement • Communications & Engagement * • Facilities • Finance • Fire • Human Resources • Information Technology • Library * • Parks and Recreation * • Planning • Police • Public Works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal Shelter * • Communications & Engagement * • Convention and Civic Center • Economic Development • Library * • Parks and Recreation * • Ports and Harbors • Valdez Museum Historical Archive

** Some departments fall into both categories on a frequent basis.*

Other departments may use one or both types of communication on a one-time basis depending on a specific project and the desired outcome goal(s) of that project.





IAP2 CHART

IAP2 developed a Spectrum of Public Participation designed to help communicators determine what the public's role should be in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally and is considered best practice for determining public engagement levels, especially in public sector work.

Refer to this Spectrum to determine the most appropriate and effective level of public engagement based on the scope and impact of your project.

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT

LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.



SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

FACEBOOK

How often should I post?

We recommend posting 5-7 days per week if you have a strategic content calendar set for the month.

What time should I post?

Look at when your audience is most active by using Facebook's analytics. Try to schedule posts during these windows.

How long should my caption be?

The ideal length of a Facebook update: 40-80 characters

What kind of images can I use?

- Text on images should not exceed 20%
- Pictures with faces from staff or your community
- Not overly edited images, unless your graphic designer can edit the photos properly
- Videos should not exceed 30 seconds and should use caption

What are the recommended image and video dimensions for this platform?

1200 x 630px

Other best practices:

- Tag other Facebook pages in your captions and posts when appropriate to increase your reach. Tagging council members may be appropriate if they have an official Facebook page as a council member.
- Use an emoji or two in a caption. These can be effective at grabbing attention and make your message more approachable, but be careful not to go overboard.



INSTAGRAM

How often should I post?

We recommend posting 3-5 days per week if you have a strategic content calendar set for the month. These posts in your Instagram feed should be a mix of Reels, images, and carousels. Stories can be posted more frequently.

How long should my caption be?

- Ideal length of Instagram captions: 138-150 characters
- Recommendation: testing out longer, story-driven captions that provide value to see how they work with your audience
- Only include long captions if it's valuable to your audience

What kind of images can I use?

- Try to use high-resolution photos for Instagram
- Instagram followers respond better to clear, non-blurry photos
- Instagram is about storytelling through photos and videos
- Use pictures that your staff has taken or pictures from an event where you can see their faces

What are the recommended image and video dimensions for this platform?

1080 x 1080px

Do I need to post on stories or reels?

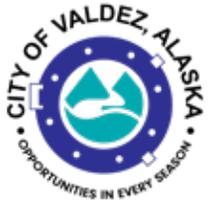
- Reels will help your audience grow
- Stories will help engage your current audience
- These are both important to include in your Instagram strategy to engage and increase your audience growth

Do I need to use hashtags?

- Yes! Whether it is the first comment or below your caption, use hashtags
- Hashtags are great for finding new followers within Instagram's hashtag search
- Recommended use of hashtags is 3-5
- You can develop custom hashtags that define your photos, or you can create a general hashtag list to add to your post
- We also recommend 1-3 hashtags that will be used for every photo
- Capitalize each word in hashtags to improve readability

Other best practices:

- Include a location tag whenever possible as this improves your likelihood of being discovered organically
- Tag other Instagram pages in your captions and posts when appropriate to increase your reach



SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONSE GUIDE



IDEAL RESPONSE TIME: 60 minutes or less – no longer than 48 hours.



ATTACK



COMPLAINT



QUESTION



COMPLIMENT

EXAMPLES

“You bureaucratic knuckle draggers can’t just paralyze our City like this without informing the affected parties.”

“Who else is sitting in traffic on Richardson Highway? 31 minutes and counting.”

“I have an idea for a new activity at the Valdez Animal Shelter, where can I submit it?”

“We wanted to give a shout-out to the City for the great job they do maintaining our roads, especially out where we live.”

IT'S OK TO SAY YOU NEED TO TAKE TIME TO FIND THE CORRECT ANSWER.

FIND THE QUESTION IN THE COMPLAINT.

ANSWER THE QUESTION.

SAY THANK YOU.



CAUTION:

Be aware of repeat offenders and judge whether a response is necessary. Correct facts, but do not create an argument. Responses to attacks are NOT required.

Provide resources and contact information for future inquiries. (Online information, survey links, meeting dates, etc.)

You may also provide additional information about the project they’re commenting on or additional resources.

TIPS

“If you have a moment, City of Valdez would appreciate your input in a brief online survey. This is one of the steps the City is taking to find solutions for delays caused by traffic.”

“Send any feedback about the Animal Shelter to Alissa. She is our Shelter Attendant and would love to hear your ideas!”

“Thank you for the compliment. We appreciate hearing that you think we do such a great job!”

POTENTIAL RESPONSE

“Thank you for your feedback! We understand your frustration and your comments have been sent to the appropriate department.”



QUARTERLY REPORT

CITY OF VALDEZ COMMUNICATIONS

Q1 REPORT – OCTOBER 23, 2023



BY THE NUMBERS

XX

Average email open rate



XX

Total email subscribers



XX

Top viewed pages on website



XX

City Facebook subscribers



XX

Valdez Alerts subscribers



XX

Welcome postcards mailed

XX

Requests received from resident request tracking tool

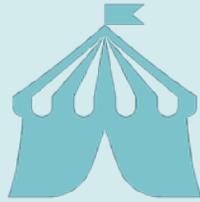
XX

Press releases distributed

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

XX

Community
events attended



Coffee with Council Events

1-2 sentences recapping how that quarter's community engagement event went.

Flash Vote Survey Results

TBD

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

List the percentage favorability of each question and measure increase or decrease from year to year.

FAVORABILITY	SURVEY QUESTION
X%	The City's benefits meet the needs of employees and their families – INCREASE/DECREASE% from year to year
X%	Employees feel accepted by their immediate coworkers – INCREASE/DECREASE% from year to year
X%	Employees feel their immediate manager cares about them – INCREASE/DECREASE% from year to year
X%	Employees have the tools and equipment to do their job well – INCREASE/DECREASE% from year to year
X%	Employees are proud to work for the City of Valdez – INCREASE/DECREASE% from year to year
X%	Team goals and accountability are clear – INCREASE/DECREASE% from year to year
X%	Employees feel like they are included in decisions that affect their work – INCREASE/DECREASE% from year to year

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS, cont.

FAVORABILITY

SURVEY QUESTION

X%

Trust in senior leadership
– INCREASE/DECREASE% from year to year

X%

Employees understand the organization's plans for future success – INCREASE/DECREASE% from year to year

X%

Employees understand why organizational changes are made
– INCREASE/DECREASE% from year to year

XX

Staff communication
liaison meetings



XX

Internal newsletters sent



XX

Open rate of internal newsletters

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS, cont.



COMMUNICATIONS GOALS AND PRIORITIES

This is a list of your department-specific goals that were accomplished or progressed in this quarter.

1. Project Priority 1
Description here.
2. Project Priority 2
Description here.
3. Project Priority 3
Description here.



STAFF APPRECIATION EVENTS

1-2 sentence recap of event(s) that were held celebrating employees this quarter.



TOPIC TITLE

Subheading/space for description

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

1. QUESTION 1

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2. QUESTION 2

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WHAT?

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WHERE?

Address.

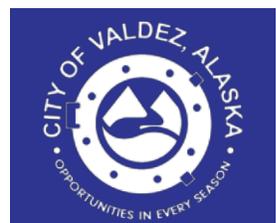
WHEN?

- DATE project starts
- DATE contractor hired
- DATE construction begins
- DATE construction phase 2
- DATE estimated completion

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

Call our [job title], [staff member name], at [contact number] or email [email].

Find additional information on [proposed changes, project timeline, etc.] at valdezak.gov [link to project landing page]



FACT vs. FICTION

Subheading/space for title of project

ABOUT THE PROJECT

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FACT vs.

1. FACT #1

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2. FACT #2

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3. FACT #3

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FICTION

1. RUMOR OR MISCONCEPTION #1

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2. RUMOR OR MISCONCEPTION #2

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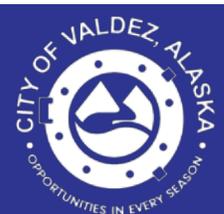
3. RUMOR OR MISCONCEPTION #3

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STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

Call our [job title], [staff member name], at [contact number] or email [email].

Find additional information on [proposed changes, project timeline, etc.] at valdezak.gov [link to project landing page]



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Subheading/space for title of project

ABOUT THE PROJECT

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QUESTION

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ANSWER

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QUESTION

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ANSWER

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QUESTION

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ANSWER

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QUESTION

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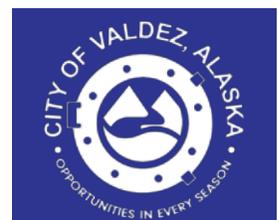
ANSWER

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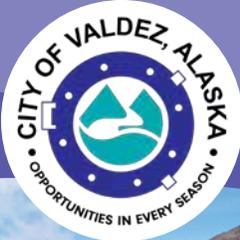
STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

Call our [job title], [staff member name], at [contact number] or email [email].

Find additional information on [proposed changes, project timeline, etc.] at valdezak.gov [link to project landing page]



CITY of VALDEZ NEWSLETTER



JANUARY 2024

H1 Header



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H2 Title for right sidebar

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212 Chenega Avenue | P.O. Box 307
Valdez, AK | 99686



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Fax: 970-835-2992
valdezak.gov

H3 Highlight Title H3 Highlight Title H3 Highlight Title



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H3 Spotlight Title H3 Spotlight Title

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H3 Featured Staff



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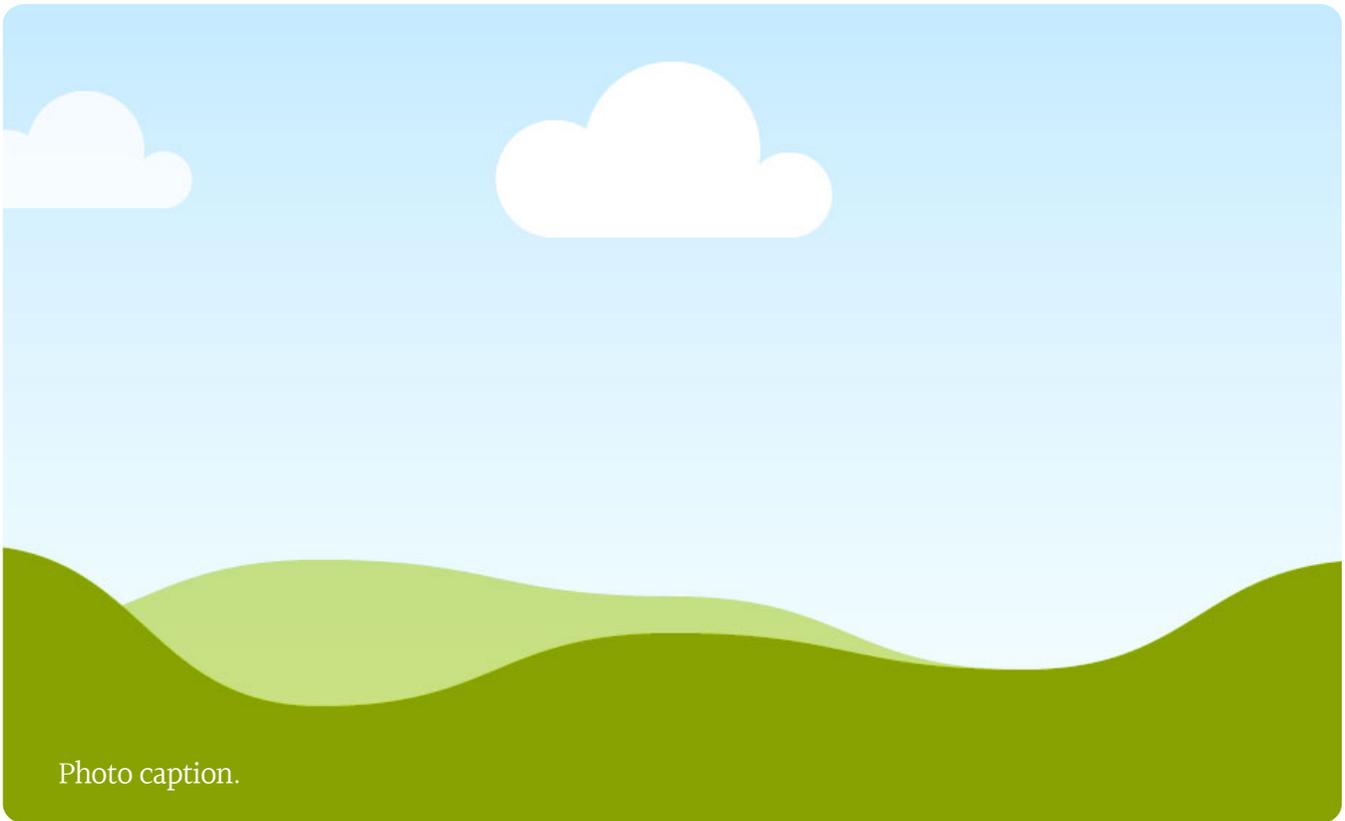


Photo caption.

H3 UPDATE from CITY COUNCIL

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EVENTS & ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

H3 Upcoming Events

Sed do eiusmod - DATE | TIME
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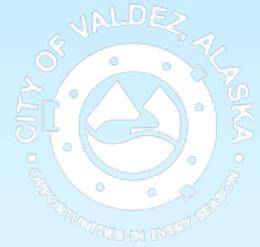


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H1 HEADER WORDS
HERE AND WORDS
THREE LINES



H2 Subhead in Upper and Lower Case

H3 Title. Here is what it looks like with two lines

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Optional
partner logo
location

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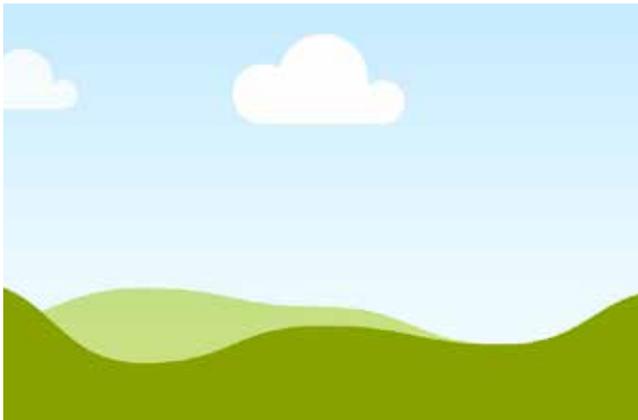
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H3 Title. Here is what it will look like with three lines page 2

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PRESS RELEASES



CONTACT:
Ana Stroup, Communications Director
907-834-3400
Email: astroup@valdezak.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Release Title

Subtitle

VALDEZ, ALASKA. (Month, Date, Year) – The introductory Media Advisory text should be 1.5-spaced, 12-point Arial Regular font. Each paragraph should be single-spaced. The text should be short, providing enough information to hook the reader to attend the event/photo opportunity. The remaining items should be single-spaced, 12-point Arial Regular font.

- WHAT:** Define the event. If there is a program, include here.
- WHEN:** TIME, DAY, DATE
Provide any details such as when shots may be available, what access/view may be offered.
- WHERE:** Provide specific location and directions to event. If there is off-site parking, denote that or special entrances.

Opportunities in Every Season



CONTACT:
Ana Stroup, Communications Director
907-834-3400
Email: astroup@valdezak.gov

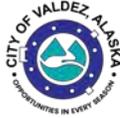
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###

Opportunities in Every Season.

FACEBOOK EVENT COVER IMAGES



SOCIAL MEDIA ALERT GRAPHICS

