The 21st Century Technology and Communication workgroup assessed the content, quality, and method of communication between the City of Frederick and the community across most departments and platforms.

The workgroup consists of volunteers with professional experience in business, marketing, content development, bilingual expertise, visual and audio/visual design, web design and development, and technology applications and infrastructure.

The team developed several broad recommendations based upon existing communications assets and from interviews with a wide range of key city staff members. Future analysis and a deeper investigation than this group were able to complete in a limited transition period should include feedback from a diverse community representing a broad geographic, demographic, cultural and educational range.
WORKGROUP

Elizabeth Cromwell

Cathy Anderson      Adam Frank      Jeff Keiholtz
Jon-Mikel Bailey    Carole Heine    Melissa Muntz
Natalie Cioffi      David Kaye      Mike Pritchard

Patrick Pierson

WORKGROUP MISSION
“Identify communication assets to determine the effectiveness and to highlight areas of success and necessary improvements.”

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS and SUMMARY
While ever-evolving communication and technology needs vie for limited funding, the workgroup believes the administration, and the community, will best be served by focusing on these three areas:

1. Organizing and increasing communications staff
2. Branding
3. Improving the city’s website

Each recommendation is discussed, with supporting materials provided in appendix format.

OBJECTIVES
● Identify current strengths and opportunities in technology and communications.
● Define strategic priorities regarding technology and communications based on current strengths and opportunities within City Hall.
● Determine where and how to best involve the community to define our priorities and identify gaps in engagement.

METHODOLOGY
To understand our current strengths and opportunities we;

● Identified City staff having a fundamental role in providing and supporting technology solutions and/or creating and disseminating communications.
● Interviewed 11 City staff utilizing a Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) questionnaire.
● Analyzed feedback to highlight common themes and explore areas for improvement.

To determine strategic priorities we;

● Ensured the workgroup had a collective knowledge base solid in communications and technology.
● Identified common areas of concern and discussed the related opportunities and aspirations.
Our report is limited by:

- Insufficient time to conduct interviews with all the City departments.
- Insufficient time to conduct surveys and interview in the community.
- Understanding that the many of the preliminary findings and primary recommendations will require more thorough research and discovery to implement effectively.
- Insufficient time to explore how the Neighborhood Advisory Councils can play a more significant role in our community to address city-wide communications issues and department conversations.
- Insufficient time to explore how we can truly serve the needs of the whole community by providing a better mix of communications methods more consistently and frequently across all portals.
The City is crystal clear on its strength:

**PEOPLE**

The City staff is highly motivated and creative while actively seeking more effective and efficient ways to communicate with the community and implement modern technology.

The City is indicating a strong desire to communicate better and engage more with the community. Data confirms the City may be lacking essential skill-sets and internal organization to address modern Communications and Technology needs.

**BRANDING**

The City is indicating a strong need to unite and connect citywide messages. Data confirms the current communications are inconsistent and disjointed. This is likely due to the lack of unique positions in Technology and Communications city-wide.

**WEBSITE**

Website usability, experience, and functionality concerns were identified by staff—for both internal administration and external audience. Workgroup confirms that reevaluating the website Content Management System (CMS) and building a more effective City website should be a top priority.
TERMINOLOGY

**Community:** Everyone outside of city hall—including residents, stakeholders, business owners, partners, etc.

**Communication Tools**

**Methods:** how information is spread—Audio, Visual, Written, Audio-Visual or Verbal

**Portals:** where information is spread—Channel 99, Website, Social Media, NAC, etc

**Formats:** how information is presented—report, agenda, brochure, PSA commercial or ad, street sign, public notices, video documentary, press release, social media post, slide presentation, website etc

**Apps:** where information is analyzed or created—ESRI (GIS), NEOGOV, CivicPlus, Outlook, Word, Powerpoint, Excel, Constant Contact, AdobeCS, Tableau, etc.

When considering communication tools, consider its effectiveness. These factors are relevant across all methods and include:

**Optimizable:** Producing the intended result with the least use of time, effort, and investment

- **Affordable:** Provides for easy production and maintenance to protect the city’s bottom-line
- **Modifiable:** Considers how the vehicle can be easily modified and shared to multiple portals
- **Maintainable:** Utilizes processes, materials and technologies to ensure government efficiency

When creating communication formats, it’s essential to consider a number of factors to ensure its effectiveness. These factors are relevant across all methods and include:

**Accessibility:** Ensures the delivery meets American with Disability Act (ADA) requirements and addresses the physical, financial, and technical limitations of the intended audience

**Usability:** Provides ease of use and intuitiveness while minimizing steps and removing roadblocks

- **Understandable:** Provides relevant content in plain language
- **Factual:** Provides accurate information and easy access to open government data
- **Navigable:** Guides the user to useful information and provides search friendly and intuitive flow
- **Shareable:** Encourages engagement and integrates with social media platforms

**Usefulness:** Gives the user what they want and need and leaves them with a positive experience while providing intended results for the City

- **Trustable:** Reinforces the source of the information is reliable
- **Valuable:** Makes tasks meaningful and provides a positive connection
- **Visual:** Provides simple, engaging layout and elements to clarify the message
When discussing general communications consider;

**Communications**: Spreading of information

**Conversations**: Informal exchange of ideas

**Data**: raw, unorganized facts — it must be analyzed and distilled to form reasoning

**Dialogue**: conversation to resolve the challenge

**Information**: data processed and organized to make it useful and usable

**Message**: communication created to meet a specific objective—including Audio, Visual, Written, Audio-Visual or Verbal

**Taxonomy and Lexicon**: how information is organized - citywide classification system, including departments, boards, committees, commissions, as well as the processes, terms, topics, and types of communications the City

**Touchpoint and Experience**: Any point of contact and the feeling left behind — from a conversation to a public notice sign

When discussing general communications consider;

**Efficient and Effective**: Creating with minimal effort or expense while producing the desired result

**Feasible**: realistic or achievable

**Practical**: something useful

**Unify and Integrate**: Citywide across all communication tools

**Straightforward**: clearly interpretable to avoid confusion and conflict—utilizing visuals to reinforce the message

**Optimized**: Same as efficient and effective
FINDINGS

People are our Primary Asset

It is undeniably clear—people are our biggest communication and technology asset. The City is hiring smart, dedicated, and inspired people—in all departments. While not everyone always has a positive experience with the city, it's clear the vast majority of staff reflects the city positively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEOPLE</th>
<th>QUALITY</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Creative and skillful</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proactive and engaging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledgeable and passionate</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborative and open-minded</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decisive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supportive and responsive</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognizers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appreciators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Available and transparent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business - Non-profit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OPPORTUNITIES

Give City staff a focused and direct role in planning communications and building the city brand.

City employees are passionate about their jobs and have smart insights into what their roles are in regards to communications and how the city could improve in this area. See Communication and Technology Highlights in Appendix A and Planning Communications on page 11.

Ensure a Communications Department is sufficiently staffed with a mix of essential communications skill sets.

The demands on our AV and Tech department is astonishing and there is a true appreciation—across departments—for the work they do and how they collaborate with others. But they are very overtasked and the City is lacking a few essential skill-sets on staff. See Organizing and Increasing Staff on page 9.

Ensure City staff has the resources they need to approach their responsibilities in the most efficient and effective manner.

Support the health and well-being of city employees by creating opportunities to learn, ensuring their work responsibilities align with their innate skills and ambitions and alleviating redundancy in tasks. See Unifying Communications and Integrating Technology on page 22.
Priorities Identified through interviews and workgroup discussion

- **Organizing and Increasing Staff** - Better serve the City staff and the community with a city-wide priority focused on optimizing communications.
- **Branding** - Capitalizing on the strengths and distinctive image of the City through the careful development of a cohesive message.
- **Planning Communications** - Create a cohesive City image and strategically plan communications by tapping the knowledge and passion we have within our City staff.
- **Improving the Website** - Reevaluating the website and the current Content Management System (CMS) to measure its true value and improving the overall look, feel, functionality and usability.
- **Opening Information** - Engaging staff to provide the baseline for effective communications and brand development and making communications easier to understand.
- **Unifying Communications and Integrating Technologies**
- **Tapping Knowledge and Diverse Ideas** - Document and catalog processes and ideas while encouraging creative problem-solving.
- **Utilizing the NACs** - Evaluate and put into process how each department and the community can mutually benefit from feedback through NAC meetings.
- **Educating** - Evaluate and put into process how each department and the community can mutually benefit from PSAs and other educational messaging.

Aspirations Identified through interviews and workgroup discussion

☐ A communications department that is staffed to reflect the need and desire to provide clear, open and effective messages.

☐ A proactive think-tank and planning committee focusing on optimizing messages, unifying communications and integrating technologies.

☐ Cohesive and clear messages designed to engage, build loyalty and advocacy and instill trust through the subtle integration of core values and ideals in every touchpoint (experience)—Brand

☐ A communications library to help the City uncover what’s working well and what needs to be strengthened.

☐ A fundamental visual assets library to support a City framework for consistent and clear communications.

☐ Informed and engaged community becoming our strongest brand champions while working collaboratively with the City towards positive solutions to reach other opportunities.

☐ Clarity about what the City is, what it does, who it does it for, why it’s unique, and why it matters to our community.

☐ Communicate in plain language and document common City terms to ensure clear and consistent communications from this point forward.

☐ Leadership and management encouraging data collection and supporting honest evaluation.

☐ A website built on an agile and modern platform with a focus on efficiency and functionality for all users.

☐ An intuitive, user-friendly web portal—easy to navigate and find relevant information, complete desired tasks and reflecting an engaging brand.

☐ Proactive actions and innovative solutions supplementing the City budget.
Organizing and Increasing Staff

OPPORTUNITY
Better serve the City staff and the community with a city-wide priority focused on optimizing communications.

City staff is indicating a strong desire to communicate better and engage more with the community. Their responsibilities serve our community in many essential areas—but without communications support, they lack the tools and resources required to deliver the most effective messages.

ASPIRATION
A communications department that is staffed to reflect the need and desire to provide clear, open and effective messages.

The City’s ability to engage with the community is directly related to its ability to provide the essential skill sets required to create strategic, consistent and effective messages. The minimal innate skills include:

- Direct and strategize communications tools/resources and manage unified messaging/branding.
- Coordinate and deal with media relations/public-emergency information/media spokesperson in plain language.
- Produce and manage audio/visual content including live broadcasts, PSAs, and slide presentations.
- Create visual content including infographics, chart, graphics and clean design layouts for digital and print use.
- Maintain website content and usability-noting this a not a technology requirement but a communication need.

GOAL TIME
SHORT
DETERMINE
HIGH
F+P

CHALLENGE
BUDGET
OVERSIGHT
LEADERSHIP
WITH
LEADERSHIP

RECOMMENDATIONS

☐ Evaluate the current technology, audio-visual and communications staff to identify their workload, innate skills, and ambitions.

☐ Identify skill gaps to take the necessary steps to fill the voids—initial research shows the City is seriously understaffed in communications and technology. See Skill-set Comparables in Appendix B.

☐ Determine the need for a Communications Department and reconsider why Technology Department is in Budget and Purchasing.

☐ Make optimizing communications an organizational initiative by establishing measurable metrics in all departments within the budget.

BENEFITS

- Building trust, increasing engagement and expanding opportunity—with solid communications in all methods
- Supporting departments and City staff with skillfully executed communications—across all portals and in multiple formats
- Managing, documenting and organizing communications efficiently and effectively—to strategically plan and implement communications
Branding

OPPORTUNITY
Capitalizing on the strengths and distinctive image of the City through the careful development of a cohesive message

City staff is indicating a strong need to unite and connect citywide messages. Insights including—“Internally we lose sight that the world is looking to the City as a whole, not as individual departments” or “visually we should reflect the nature of the community” are evidence of the desire to project a cohesive City image.

ASPIRATION
Cohesive and clear messages designed to engage, build loyalty and advocacy and instill trust through the subtle integration of core values and ideals in every touchpoint (experience)—Brand

The City has an opportunity to make greater strides by elevating the visual quality and written consistency of its communications with thoughtful branding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL TIME</th>
<th>SHORT-ON GOING</th>
<th>DESIRE</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>F+P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHALLENGE</td>
<td>STAFF BUDGET</td>
<td>OVERSIGHT</td>
<td>COMMUNICATION LEADERSHIP</td>
<td>WITH CTCC COMMUNITY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Ensure the brand reflects a shared community sense of place—the City’s brand belongs to the city at large. Fostering deep community roots from the start of the branding process is essential to achieve authenticity, sustainability, and acceptance—across all audiences.
- Ensure there is an immediate and clear plan to align all current and future departments and their touchpoints with the brand.
- Ensure appropriate staff and other resources are allocated to maintaining the brand standards.
- Educate all City staff on the value of “branding” and the proper use of elements to ensure continuity of the message.
- See additional recommendations on branding pages Build, Understand, Discover, and Experience.

BENEFITS
- Operating the City under a single authentic voice, with a clear and consistent message
- Controlling the message(s) and articulating that message more clearly — giving the community better access to the City and understanding of our services
- Authentically representing our City with our core values and ideals as the foundation
  - Increasing opportunity for new business, tourism, and other things that expand our tax base
  - Increasing opportunity to protect public health and safety and increase civic engagement
  - Increasing opportunity to build economic resilience and ensure effective and efficient city operations
Planning Communications

**OPPORTUNITY**
Create a cohesive City image and strategically plan communications by tapping the knowledge and passion we have within our City staff.

Who better to provide insights and specific recommendations for how the City can improve communication with the community than the individuals who interact with our audiences on a daily basis?

**ASPIRATION**
A proactive think-tank and planning committee focusing on optimizing messages, unifying communications and integrating technologies.

Take the opportunity to synergize communications, optimize technology, and understand the true needs, desires, and attitudes of the various City audiences with a Comm-Tech Collaboration Committee (CTCC) led by a Communications Director that;

- Drills into more specific audiences and their needs.
- Identifies communication concerns, barriers, and bottlenecks.
- Collects and updates Communications Library—See Communications Audit.
- Assesses the value of single items in the Communications Library.
- Collects details about priority departmental initiatives.
- Uncovers opportunities to maximize messaging, unify communications, and integrate technology.
- Establishes a shared Master Content Calendar and Strategic Communications Plan.
- Ensures brand adherence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL TIME</th>
<th>SHORT-MID</th>
<th>DESIRE</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>F+P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHALLENGE</td>
<td>ORGANIZATION</td>
<td>OVERSIGHT</td>
<td>COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY</td>
<td>WITH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
- Create the basic guidelines for the committee—the purpose, mission, vision, goal(s), measurements.
- Determine the frequency of the meetings—once a month at the very least.
- Identify and create the fundamental processes and tools for collecting, organizing, and cataloging the ideas and information being shared at committee meetings.
- Reach out to each department to identify the individual most passionate about and familiar with the external communications priorities and practices within their departments. All department should be represented.

**BENEFITS**
- Getting a clearer idea about “what is really going on” to improve messaging citywide
- Giving staff—at all levels and from the beginning—the opportunity to be part of a communications and branding initiative is the best way to ensure continuity and future support
- Giving staff the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience to improve City operations
OPENING COMMUNICATIONS: PLAIN LANGUAGE AND TAXONOMY

OPPORTUNITY
Making communications easier to understand

The City's increasing diversity makes explicit messages more challenging. This challenge provides the opportunity to create modern communications that are easier to understand by all—by focusing on plain language.

ASPIRATION
Communicate in plain language and document common City terms to ensure clear and consistent communications from this point forward

A Writing Style Guide is a vital tool for reaching any communication goal—indicating the basic rules of writing within the City. It simplifies communications and consistent messaging.

The Plain Writing Act of 2010 was signed on October 13, 2010. The law requires that federal agencies use clear government communication that the public can understand and use. While the City is not required to follow the Plain Writing Act—the City will benefit from the guidelines it provides.

GOAL TIME
NOW-ON GOING
DESIRE
HIGH
F+P
CHALLENGE
STAFF
OVERSIGHT
COMMUNICATION
WITH
ORGANIZATION CONTRACTOR?

RECOMMENDATIONS

☐ Establish a Writing Style Guide to provide the familiar and consistent language for City communications.
  o Guidelines for reader-centric language; terms familiar to our audience
  o Guidelines for plain language
  o Common City terms including acronyms with definitions - the City lexicon
  o Grammar guidelines and preferences

☐ See Checklist for Plain Language on plainlanguage.gov.
☐ Define and document a City taxonomy to provide a straightforward vocabulary and structured navigation.
  Creating a taxonomy from scratch is a big commitment both in time and/or budget. There are two ways to approach it. Start from scratch using the card sort method or consider the WAND Local Government Taxonomy at wandinc.com to give you a jump start.

BENEFITS

• Reduces the complexity of the overarching message and communicates to a more diverse population
• Decreases the cognitive load on the reader
• Creates consistent communication cues to improve comprehension
• Aid company messaging and simplify content writing
• Provide designers, writers, and developers with information to create better-converting Formats
• Assist content discovery, integration, and consistency across all touchpoints
• Help the reader make sense of the relationships between individual concepts
Opening Communications: Organize Digital Files

**OPPORTUNITY**
Make information more manageable and easier to find

Much of the City staff and the community rely heavily on the Technology Department to locate and access information. This task can be alleviated by ensuring documents are being named in a consistent, logical and predictable way—at the point of creation.

**ASPIRATION**
Proactively implementing underutilized techniques to manage and organize information

An FNC is a systematic method for naming files. An effective and efficient FNC describes what a file contains. It is important that folders and files are named in a consistent and logical manner. This ensures that information can be located, identified and retrieved as quickly and easily as possible.

The FNC is created by identifying the key elements of the information. Elements could include information about the creation date, department identifier, project name, file version, document type etc.

---

### GOAL TIME

- **MID**
- **DESIRE**
- **HIGH**
- **F+P**

### CHALLENGE

- **STAFF**
- **OVERSIGHT**
- **COMMUNICATION with TECHNOLOGY**
- **WITH**

---

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- After full Communications Audit and Taxonomy Development.
  - Determine and document the File Naming Convention (FNC) system requirements by analyzing how and why files are created and accessed, what the most essential information is, and how long files need to be retained and why.

- See [Best Practices for File Naming](library.stanford.edu) at library.stanford.edu for more insights to the FNC process.

- See [Getting Organized: Great Tips for Better File Names](pcmag.com) at pcmag.com for additional tips.

- Ensure everyone creating files is aware of the FNC and knows how to apply it.

- Regularly monitoring files to ensure consistency.

- Determine an effective solution to address file naming of archived files.

**BENEFITS**

- Make administrative task more efficient by providing clear guidelines
- Ensure that files will work on multiple platforms to provide accessibility
- Enhances digital search efforts and makes it easier to identify the file(s) containing relevant information
- Helps staff and community identify, understand and navigate digital records more efficiently and effectively
Opening Communications: Communications Audit

OPPORTUNITY
Engaging staff to provide the baseline for effective communications and brand development

Many City staffers are passionate about educating and communicating more effectively with the community. This is evident in the initiatives they take to provide a number of essential communications, utilizing various methods, portals, and formats. These items provide the baseline for discovery in creating the brand and a strategic communications plan.

ASPIRATION
A communications library to help the City uncover what’s working well and what needs to be strengthened. A sortable and searchable database to catalog;

- **Methods:** how information is spread—Audio, Visual, Written, Audio-Visual or Verbal
- **Purposes:** why the information is spread—legal, general, promotional, public service, etc
- **Portals:** where information is spread—Channel 99, Website, Social Media, NAC, etc
- **Materials:** how information is presented—web page, report, agenda, brochure, PSA commercial or ad, video documentary, press release, social media post, slide presentation, etc
- **Apps:** where information is analyzed or created—ESRI (GIS), NEOGOV, CivicPlus, Outlook, Word, Powerpoint, Excel, Constant Contact, AdobeCS, Tableau, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL TIME</th>
<th>SHORT-ON GOING</th>
<th>DESIRE</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>F+P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHALLENGE</td>
<td>STAFF ORGANIZATION</td>
<td>OVERSIGHT</td>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>WITH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CTCC CONTRACTOR?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create a sortable and searchable database of communication methods, portals, formats and apps through a coordinated effort with City staff.
- Determine the database requirements and design a simple, easily accessible, and effective long-term database—a cloud solution like Airtable or Google Drive would reduce the initial burden on the Technology Department. Considering an IT project for the long-term.
- Document how the audit process will work and engage City staff—See CommTech Collaboration Committee and provide detailed instructions like what should be collected, how to access and input.
- Proactively improve and/or modify portals and formats by documenting engagement metrics.

BENEFITS

- Provides clarity on what types of communications are being created and shared and how effective they are for the City and community
- Identifies communication assets and liabilities—the most/least effective and efficient
- Highlights communication and consistency gaps, barriers and misunderstandings
- Provides the foundation for strategically restructuring and planning communications
- Provides a visual cohesive hierarchy of citywide services and departmental branding and co-branding
Branding: Build

**OPPORTUNITY**

Begin “branding” through a subtle and trickling integration of core identity assets

The biggest influence of a brand is in the design and implementation of every touchpoint (experience). Branding will only be successful if the City can consistently provide and manage a positive experience across departments and over all communication portals.

**ASPIRATION**

A fundamental visual assets library to support a City framework for consistent and clear communications

Historically extensive plans have been challenging for the City to implement, mainly due to financial limitations. Initially investing in a comprehensive Expanded Style Guide and Brand Roll-out Plan may not serve the City's best interest. But providing essential visual assets and a blueprint for positioning and creating all touchpoints within any City department will.

- City logo — size, colorization, and proper usage
- Basic color and typography guidelines
- Primary department signatures with relationship to the city logo including size, colorization, and proper usage
- Basic design samples and templates for core city identity assets including business cards, letterheads, email signatures, PowerPoint and video, press releases, and City social media pages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL TIME</th>
<th>SHORT-ON GOING</th>
<th>DESIRE</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>F+P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHALLENGE</td>
<td>STAFF</td>
<td>OVERSIGHT</td>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>WITH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Identify core identity high-level assets - primary city logo, department logos, taglines, email signatures.
- Develop, refresh and/or create various digital files for core city identity assets including clean up of various digital files for all city department signatures to ensure continuity until additional brand direction is determined.
- Begin the development of a Visual Style Guide to be designed as a dynamic document, to edit and update as needed.
- Create a Brand Management database.
- Introduce the Visual Style Guide and Asset Management database to staff and provide detailed instructions for its proper use.

**BENEFITS**

- Establishing the foundation for more strategic and branded communications by facilitating consistency across a variety of touchpoints
- Maintaining visual consistency helps the audience comprehend messages quicker and make better decisions
- Presenting information with consistency is one of the most effective techniques to engage, build loyalty and advocacy, and instill trust
Branding: Understand

**OPPORTUNITY**

Identifying our primary external audience and understanding what matters most to them

The desire to establish a cohesive City image is challenged by the needs of each department to send more targeted messages—resulting in what has been described as "siloed" communications. The City has a diverse community to serve and our audiences are many. Accurately determining our primary external audience(s) is one of the most important steps to ensuring effective communications and establishing a cohesive City image.

**ASPIRATION**

An informed and engaged community becoming our strongest brand champions while working collaboratively with the City towards positive solutions to reach other opportunities

Key messages will differ for each department but establishing the City brand around a strategy that focuses on our primary external audience(s) will ensure a cohesive message citywide. In our community, the audiences contributing a significant role in the positive dynamics of the City include:

- Residents
- Small Business
- Visitors
- Corporate Business
- Staff
- Interns
- Volunteers (Boards, committees, etc)
- Non-profits and Partners

**GOAL TIME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHALLENGE</th>
<th>SHORT</th>
<th>DESIRE</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>F+P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATION</td>
<td>OVERSIGHT</td>
<td>LEADERSHIP</td>
<td>WITH</td>
<td>CTCC CONTRACTOR?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Determine the 3 Primary Audiences - a mind-mapping tool may help to organize your thinking and establish this priority.
- Clearly document findings for future use, to ensure value and a clear path forward.
- Make the 3 primary audiences the focus of primary branding, messaging, and web design-development strategies. Understanding that more strategic brand, communications, and web development will build on the primary audiences needs and desires because they are the core community that the City serves and play a significant role in our sense of place.

**BENEFITS**

- Provides the brand building foundation for the research and discover necessary to understand;
  - audience needs and desires from the City - Our Purpose
  - attitudes and experiences with the City - Our Image
  - guiding principles dictating behavior - Our Core Aspiration
  - value of our history, landscape, attractions, amenities, diversity, and lifestyle on a broad and visceral level - Our Allure
  - general voice, tone, and personality of the City - Our Identity and Style
Branding: Discover

OPPORTUNITY
Uncovering the gaps in perception and the opportunities to position and differentiate

Uncovering the City’s “brand” is a leadership initiative – informed by internal and external stakeholders and enhanced by the community (residents, volunteers, and local businesses) and city employees.

ASPIRATION
Clarity about what the City is, what it does, who it does it for, why it’s unique, and why it matters to our community

The City’s brand belongs to the city at large. As Frederick evolves and diversifies, the brand must reflect a shared community sense of place. Fostering deep community roots from the start of the branding process is essential to achieve authenticity, sustainability, and acceptance—across all audiences.

City officials, directors, staff, and stakeholders traditionally lean towards intellectual communications and ideas—while people (regardless of the opportunities they seek) overwhelmingly engage on a more visceral level. For that reason, it’s essential to interview and document the 3 Primary audiences to;

- Identify what people are actually ‘saying’ about Frederick
- Uncover similar perceptions, shared across the community—big or small, good or bad, real or perceived
- Pinpoint the effective, ineffective and untapped touchpoints utilizing the Communications Audit
- Understand audiences and audience triggers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL TIME</th>
<th>SHORT</th>
<th>DESIRE</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>F+P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHALLENGE</td>
<td>STAFF</td>
<td>OVERSIGHT</td>
<td>COMMUNICATION with LEADERSHIP</td>
<td>WITH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BUDGET</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CTCC CONTRACTOR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS

☐ Clarify what City leadership and the 3 primary audiences think the city is and wants to be.
  - Internal workshops and interviews

☐ Clearly identify what individuals actually experience within the city and what contributes to their sense of place.
  - External workshops and interviews utilizing the NAC to ensure we are reaching a broad spectrum of individuals

☐ Research and discovery in social media and website analytics to identify “real-time” experiences

☐ Clearly document findings for future use, to ensure value and a clear path forward.

BENEFITS

- Clarifying who Frederick is and what Frederick will be known for—to uncover our uniquely attractive personality.
- Determining how we outwardly express the City of Frederick—to connect with the community at large.
- Identifying overlooked opportunities—to connect with the world at large.
Brand: Experience

OPPORTUNITY

Reevaluating communications and the portals to measure their efficiency and effectiveness

It is essential for the City’s to utilize what may be considered “negative” remarks or “poor” engagement as an opportunity to identify where communications and technology efforts can improve. The City will benefit from documenting “real experiences” — big or small, good or bad, real or perceived.

ASPIRATION

Leadership and management encouraging data collection and supporting honest evaluation

The City is going to make mistakes—not every idea works. Not every message can be crystal clear. But to improve, to be innovative, to keep talent, to provide opportunity, and to create a vibrant and engaged City—an environment of curiosity, collaboration, and change must be supported in all departments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL TIME</th>
<th>SHORT-ON GOING</th>
<th>DESIRE</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>F+P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHALLENGE</td>
<td>STAFF</td>
<td>OVERSIGHT</td>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>WITH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Deliver all essential communications on all the social platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor, etc) at least two times
- Begin analyzing requests for public information to identify where concerns, barriers, and bottlenecks exist.
- Begin monitoring social media, media outlets, and blogs for articles and comments related to the City.
- Catalog and organize the social media and other information as
  - negative, neutral, or positive
  - comment, article, social media posts
  - resident, visitor, business, media
- Ensure solid analytics are in place on the current website—at least 6 months before branding initiatives or website redesign take place.
  - Search statistics and top landing/exit pages to understand user priorities
  - Heat maps to identify where users are focusing attention

BENEFITS

- Provides Real Experience input—because while interviews and polls are helpful, they don’t provide the full picture
- Helps the City understand better how individuals—who are unable to engage in interviews, polls, and public meetings—really “experience” the City
- Guides strategic design and messaging decisions
- Highlights opportunities to reach out to the community and explore how individuals can contribute positively to the Brand Image of the City
Improving the Website: Functionality

**OPPORTUNITY**
Reevaluating the website and the current Content Management System (CMS) to measure its true value

The efficiency and effectiveness of the current website Content Management System (CMS) is questionable. Website functionality concerns were identified for both internal administration and external audience. Some key features and functions perceived to be of value may not be providing value to the end-user.

**ASPIRATION**
A website built on an agile and modern platform with a focus on efficiency and functionality for all users;

- Ensuring the deployment Infrastructure meets the objectives of a citywide technology plan
- Ensuring the back-end administration reduces administrative demands on the Technology Department
- Providing flexible content labeling (taxonomy) and templating that will display content in a more dynamic and useful fashion
  - Ex. one news post tagged Current Planning, NAC 6, Planning Commission, would show up in the news feed as well as in the in the current information section of each of the relevant pages.
- Providing basic good CMS features including search accuracy, scalability, design flexibility, security, admin user roles, essential integrations and other necessary functionality the City may find value in including translation and multi-site management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL TIME</th>
<th>SHORT</th>
<th>DESIRE</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>F+P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHALLENGE</td>
<td>STAFF</td>
<td>OVERSIGHT</td>
<td>TECHNOLOGY</td>
<td>WITH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUDGET</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>COMMUNICATIONS CTCC CONSULTANT?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Provide the necessary training to ensure staff understands the functionality.
- Identify and fix broken links—a tool like [ScreamingFrog](https://screamingfrog.co.uk) makes the process more efficient.
- Evaluate for ADA compliance and confirm the usability and functionality of PDFs vs. HTML.
- Evaluate the current CMS and assess the current value the website has for the City and staff.
  - Describe and document all single website functions (ex. Adding Content, Integrating Technologies, Paying water bill, Creating an account, Applying for a Job, etc)
  - Test all functionality to ensure usefulness and usability
  - Identify the most/least useful functionality for users and administrators
  - Identify the Return on Investment (RO) associated with a modern website redesign

**BENEFITS**

- Ensures easy to share content and data across several portals and pages without requiring the redundant content creation
- Identifies the value of functionality
- Provides the data required to effectively and efficiently redesign the City website
Improving the Website: Redesign

**OPPORTUNITY**

Improving the overall look, feel, functionality and usability of a primary communications portal

The usability of and the experience with the current website is questionable. Concerns were identified by the City for an external audience.

The navigation and organization of the website may be well understood internally, but overwhelming requests for information indicate improvement is necessary. There are many departments with multiple needs and most cities tend to design sites thinking it’s best to put everything right up front and around government structure. This makes navigation, organization, and usability a challenge.

**ASPIRATION**

An intuitive, user-friendly web portal—easy to navigate and find relevant information, complete desired tasks and reflecting an engaging brand

The City website is a true reflection of the City, how the City functions and all it has to offer the community. It is the main point of contact between City government and our community. For these reasons it is essential to;

- Understand what the community wants from the website and identify what the City needs to communicate.
- Prioritize development and design improvements to focus on features and content that the community most wants, followed by what the City needs including a design reflecting the brand.
- Design the website to ensure the information most desired is easy to find.
- Ensure the features most desired are easy to find and fully functional.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL TIME</th>
<th>MID</th>
<th>DESIRE</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>F+P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHALLENGE</td>
<td>STAFF BUDGET</td>
<td>OVERSIGHT</td>
<td>COMMUNICATION with LEADERSHIP</td>
<td>WITH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Evaluate the current website and rate the usability and value the website has for the community.
  - Perform usability studies, focus groups and community surveys
  - Clearly document findings for future use, to ensure value and a clear path forward
- Evaluate and refine all webpages—consolidating information, eliminating thin pages (pages with little content), simplifying language and adding visuals to clarify messages.
- Tap the extensive knowledge and experience in the Technology department while introducing new skill sets into the planning and redesign—branding, UI/UX design and graphic design.
- Perform community end-user beta testing to identify usability challenges and provide feedback prior to the relaunch.

**BENEFITS**

- Ensures easy to share content and data across several portals and pages without requiring the redundant content creation
- Identifies the value of functionality
Supplementing the Budget

OPPORTUNITY
Utilizing the technology talent within the community and other opportunities nationwide to address challenges and move forward

There is a very large group of talented and enthusiastic tech individuals in the City ready and willing to support the City’s technology needs. All it will cost is the time and effort it takes the City to clearly identify challenges, outline goals, and engage in projects.

In addition—there are a number of national organizations helping cities optimize technology, data, and facts and address communication and technology challenges. These untapped or underutilized resources provide a significant opportunity to move forward.

See Case Study - Frederick Tech Meet-Up and What Works Cities - Putting the data in ChattaData in the Appendix

ASPIRATION
Proactive actions and innovative solutions supplementing the City budget

Benefit from underutilized resources including talent and funding by proactively documenting processes, collecting information, and keeping a watchful eye on potential opportunities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL TIME</th>
<th>MID</th>
<th>DESIRE</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>F+P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHALLENGE</td>
<td>STAFF</td>
<td>OVERSIGHT</td>
<td>TECHNOLOGY and/or COMMUNICATIONS</td>
<td>WITH CTCC LEADERSHIP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Actively document departmental processes for creating and disseminating information.
- Actively document departmental requests for unifying or improving current processes or technology.
- Actively document individual request or voiced frustrations in finding specific information.

BENEFITS

- Provides the information required to strategically improve internal processes
- Gives the City an opportunity to complete desired projects and provide more efficient and effective services and communications
- May provide opportunities for funding to complete desired projects
Unifying Communications and Integrating Technology

OPPORTUNITY
Unifying communications and integrating technology to optimize our City employees’ time

Citywide efficiencies can be supported by alleviating redundancy and automating some basic daily tasks. Automation of simple communications responsibilities gives City staff more time. How that time is used has endless possibilities, but more collaboration and strategic planning would likely be one of the benefits.

ASPIRATION
Leadership and management supporting a culture of collaboration and innovation to utilize technology through its continuous, and rapidly evolving nature and provide more optimized;

- Access to current information and resources
- Methods of spreading messages
- Methods of collecting, organizing, and analyzing data
- Ways to collaborate and communicate internally and externally

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL TIME</th>
<th>MID to LONG</th>
<th>DESIRE</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>F+P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHALLENGE</td>
<td>BUDGET</td>
<td>OVERSIGHT</td>
<td>TECHNOLOGY</td>
<td>WITH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS

☐ Clearly, document the different email lists being maintained within all departments. Clarify their purpose and identify if and how the list could be consolidated.

☐ Consider whether an app like Sendy at sendy.co which utilizes Amazons SES could save the City dollars.

☐ Identify automation apps that can optimize workflows and messaging—begin by analyzing the usefulness and functionality of simple apps that;
  o Move info between multiple web apps automatically— Zapier at zapier.com
  o Spread messages across multiple platforms at one time while providing scheduling, monitoring, and analytics— Hootsuite at hootsuite.com, Buffer at buffer.com, and Sendible at sendible.com

☐ See The Pros and Cons of Unified Communications at inc.com for more insights on unifying communications at a higher level

BENEFITS

- Enables the City to communicate in a more flexible and intuitive way
- Increases staff productivity, improves collaboration and provides time for strategic development
APPENDIX A
Communication and Technology Highlights

Notables

Audio-Visual

Planning and producing high-quality content.

Additional Notables

- Establishing an award-winning internship program
- Broadcasting up to 18 live meetings a month

General Communications

Utilizing social media city news and announcements.

Frederick Community Action Agency
Providing a clean and tidy space for the most vulnerable in our community.

This sends a critical unspoken message to their clients—"you are respected and we care".

**Additional Notables**

- Understanding the unique communications needs of their audience
- Communicating in plain language and keeping things simple

**Human Resources**

Utilizing social media for job opportunities, specifically Facebook-Sponsored posts—a much more cost-effective solution than alternatives.

**Additional Notables**

- Upgrading to online payroll (happening now)
- Upgrading to online open enrollment (happening soon)
- Upgrading to online onboarding (early next year)
Planning

Expanding use of technology to better address the questions and concerns of the community.

Additional Notables

- Creating a Development Review Database
- Being available and transparent–Current projects questions and concerns are always addressed within the confines of our current policies and codes.

Police

Reaching community members through untraditional, effective and efficient outreach methods.

Additional Notables

- Establishing focused partnerships within the community
- Understanding the unique communications needs of specific neighborhoods in the City
Collaboration between departments in identifying technology needs and leveraging technology use.

A personal note from the resident. This gentle reminder was impressive and very much appreciated. Kudos to all involved in making this happen.

iSpires App to give residents a direct line to the correct department to report issues, address concerns, or request services.

Additional Notables

- Updating and improving technology, server infrastructure, and redundancy to ensure reliable disaster recovery
- Spires GIS a mapping application allowing residents and employees to identify property zoning, plats, traffic and road closures, historical properties, NAC boundaries, code enforcement cases, flood zones and other data
APPENDIX B

Organizing and Increasing Staff

Skill-set Comparables

Purpose
To better understand the multitude of skill sets required to provide clear, cohesive, and relevant communications to the people living, working, serving and investing in a city.

Methodology
1. Identify 5 cities in Maryland with populations close to that of Frederick
2. Identify the departments in each city whose primary responsibility revolves around Technology and/or Communications
3. Identify the positions in each department and review job descriptions to better understand the roles and responsibilities as well as the underlying skills required for the job.
4. Identify the primary skill sets a city invests and determines where Frederick may be lacking

Sources
• City websites
• Governmentjobs.com (individual city accounts)

Challenges
• Data on all city websites was not entirely clear
• City directories including full staff and title are not found on any site

Observations
• Creative, analytical and/or critical thinkers with solid people skills and software specific knowledge are common to all skill sets.
• Relationship building and management of time, people, projects, and budgets and ownership were common to many positions, primarily upper management.
• Standards adherence was a requirement for visual communications, content creation, social communications, and technology positions.
• 9 common skill sets were identified with the skills highlighted in Skill Sets
• 3 cities have dedicated Communications Departments as seen in Departments
• 1 city has fewer unique positions than Frederick. That city also has almost ½ the population of Frederick. See Total Unique Positions
Skill Sets

- 6 cities have positions requiring Tech and GIS skill sets
- 6 cities have positions requiring a Communication skill set
- 4 cities have positions requiring a Video Communications skill set
- 4 cities have positions requiring a Content Creation skill set
- 2 cities have positions requiring a Visual Communications skill set
- 1 city has positions requiring a Print Production skill set
- 1 city has positions requiring a Social Communications skill set
- 3 of 6 cities have a department or dedicated office for communications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Skill Sets</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Com</td>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Writing-Editing-Grammar Storytelling Office-Drive</td>
<td>Writing-Editing, Public Speaking, Marketing, Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com-Social</td>
<td>Social Communications</td>
<td>Web Writing-Editing-Grammar Social Media Platforms - Apps</td>
<td>Content scheduling, monitoring, analytics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com-Video</td>
<td>Video Communications</td>
<td>Scriptwriting-Storyboarding Granicus - AdobeCS (Pr, Ae)</td>
<td>Content scheduling, monitoring Producing, editing, sound engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com-Visual</td>
<td>Visual Communications</td>
<td>Basic Writing-Editing-Grammar AdobeCS (Ai, Id, Ps), Office-Drive, Tableau</td>
<td>Graphics Design and layout including data visuals and presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Content Creation</td>
<td>Web Writing-Editing-Grammar Social Media Platforms - Apps AdobeCS (Ai, Id, Ps), Office-Drive, Tableau, Code (CSS, HTML), UX/UI</td>
<td>Web Design and Maintenance to Visual Ideation and Graphic Designing to Web Writing-Editing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print</td>
<td>Print Production</td>
<td>Technical Writing Office-Drive, Version Control, Back-end Code (Server-side Languages) Tableau, Front-end Code (CSS, HTML, Javascript)</td>
<td>Traditional Technical, Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech-Data</td>
<td>Data Technology</td>
<td>Technical Writing - Data Preparation Office-Drive, Tableau, Code (SQL, etc)</td>
<td>Database Design and Development Data Identify-Analyze-Manipulate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech-GIS</td>
<td>Geographic Information Systems Technology</td>
<td>Technical Writing - Data Preparation ESRI, ArcGIS, ArcIMS, ArcSDRE, and ArcServer related software</td>
<td>Mapping and Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Departments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frederick</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaithersburg</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockville</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowie</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hagerstown</td>
<td>Technology and Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annapolis</td>
<td>Management Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office of Communications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Total Unique Positions

Number of Unique Positions in Technology and Communications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Total Unique Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frederick</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaithersburg</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockville</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowie</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hagerstown</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annapolis</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frederick

| POPULATION | 70,060 |
| DEPARTMENTS | Information Technology |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Position Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Com</td>
<td>Public Information Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com-Video</td>
<td>Lead Video Producer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Helpdesk Technician I (Full-Time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>IT/GIS Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Network Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech-GIS</td>
<td>GIS Technician</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frederick

| Frederick | Tech-GIS 16.7% | Com 10.7% |
| Tech 50.0% | Com-Video 16.7% |
### Gaithersburg

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>67,776</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| DEPARTMENTS         | Community and Public Relations  
|                     | Information Technology |
| Com                 | Communication Specialist |
| Com-Visual          | Graphics Artist |
| Content             | Web Administrator |
| Content             | Web Administrator Assistant |
| Tech-GIS            | GIS Planner |
| Tech-GIS            | GIS Division Manager |
| Tech-GIS            | GIS Specialist |
| Tech-GIS            | GIS Technician |
| Com-Social          | Digital & Com-Social Media Specialist |
| Com-Social          | Digital Content Specialist |
| Tech                | IT Director |
| Tech                | IT Business Systems Division Manager |
| Tech                | Helpdesk Technician (Part-Time) |
| Tech                | Helpdesk Technician I (Full-Time) |
| Tech                | Network Operations Division Manager |
| Tech                | Network Operations Specialist I |
| Tech                | Network Operations Specialist II |
| Tech                | Project Manager/Systems Analyst I |
| Tech                | Project Manager/Systems Analyst II |
| Tech                | Project Manager/Systems Analyst III |
| Com-Video           | Television Production Specialist |
| Com-Video           | Television Productions Manager |
| Com-Video           | Video Production Assistant |

![Gaithersburg Department Pie Chart](image)
### Rockville

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>66,940</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEPARTMENTS</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com</td>
<td>Communications Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com-Visual</td>
<td>Graphic Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Web Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Web Administrator Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech-GIS</td>
<td>GIS Planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech-GIS</td>
<td>GIS Division Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech-GIS</td>
<td>GIS Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print</td>
<td>Print Specialist 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print</td>
<td>Print Specialist 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print</td>
<td>Printing Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Chief Information Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Telecommunications IT Operations Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com-Video</td>
<td>Television Production Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com-Video</td>
<td>Television Productions Manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Bowie

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>58,393</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEPARTMENTS</td>
<td>Communications Technology and Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com</td>
<td>Communications Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Communications Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Communications Analyst II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech-GIS</td>
<td>GIS Planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>IT Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>IT Assistant Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Webmaster Business Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com-Video</td>
<td>Audio Visual Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com-Video</td>
<td>City Hall Studio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Hagerstown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>40,452</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEPARTMENTS</td>
<td>Communications Technology and Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com Communications Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com Communications Assistant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com Customer Support Supervisor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content TV Production/Web Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech-Data Data Analyst</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech-GIS GIS Planner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech IT Director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech Computer Research &amp; Development Specialist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech Network Engineer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech IT Police Technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech IT Systems Administrator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Annapolis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>39,418</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEPARTMENTS</td>
<td>Office of Communications Management Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech IT Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech-GIS GIS Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Webmaster/Web Developer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Com Communications Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

Supplementing the Budget

Case Study - Frederick Tech Meetup groups and City IT partnership for the Amazon Web Services City on a Cloud Innovation Challenge

What is the Amazon Web Services (AWS) City on a Cloud Innovation Challenge?

https://aws.amazon.com/stateandlocal/cityonacloud/

The Frederick Tech Meetup groups and the City’s IT team look at the City on a Cloud Innovation Challenge as an opportunity for the members of the Meetup groups to practice their skills in a real-world situation and for less experienced members to get real-world experience.

This year our team is passionate about this solution because it gives the City an Open Source alternative to meet their needs as well as allow the AWS Frederick Meetup group to give back to the City. Meetup members are challenged to increase their knowledge and collaborate to provide a solution in a short period of time that solves a specific, taxing problem for the City.

What is the problem we are trying to solve?

City employees need to share documents between internal departments and other employees as well as externally with residents and outside organizations.

The system we built for the City allows document sharing using an approved and secure platform. This system will also scale according to user load. Storage is tied to the Simple Storage Service and will scale seamlessly to handle the sharing of hundreds to thousands of files with sizes ranging from 100KB to 10GB.

Prior to our implementation, the City’s IT department utilized an internal unsecured FTP server with external access being granted through manually configured FTP accounts on a per request basis. Management of these accounts occurred outside of the existing Active Directory domain which allowed for duplicate accounts and password issues to plague the IT department and end users. At times, City employees would use Google Drive and Dropbox to share files. This ended up being a huge problem for the City’s IT department because they were unable to recover or track accidentally shared documents from the external sharing mechanisms. The end result required a network-wide blockage of Dropbox and Google Drive.

How are we solving it?

The Meetup groups investigated, implemented, and tested hosting NextCloud (https://nextcloud.com) on AWS and connecting it to the City’s Active Directory service. NextCloud is an open source, self-hosted file share and communication platform. We built it on AWS to utilize autoscaling and unlimited storage resources to allow for the City to automate the scaling of the new file-sharing platform and handle every possible user at any moment. Lastly using a federated login with the City of Frederick Active Directory and connecting it via IPSec tunnel VPN allows for all City employees to use it without needing additional access.
We utilized Troposphere (https://github.com/cloudtools/troposphere) to generate Cloudformation templates (https://aws.amazon.com/cloudformation) and deploy our infrastructure on every commit. Packer (https://www.packer.io) was used to build an AMI that was then deployed to the Autoscaling group. Source control for the whole project is located in Github at (https://github.com/AWSFrederick/Spires-Infra) deployed via Codebuild in AWS. All aspects of our infrastructure are in source control and completely repeatable on any AWS network. We specifically did it this way so that at any point the City's IT team should be able to take our code and deploy it with no changes required.

Following are screenshots of the application in action as well as the phone app:
Themed for the City to look like a product supplied by the City’s IT team. Login uses City employee’s Active Directory login.

Access operates like any other file share utility. Individual files and whole folders can be uploaded, downloaded and shared.
Sharing is tied to Active Directory. Users are able to share with individuals or whole groups. Users are also able to share with the outside world using a link. This link can be password protected or open wide for the external users.

Some documents like PDFs are able to be viewed via the UI.

City devices are also able to access the file share via published NextCloud apps.
Costs:
AWS costs depend on usage. One month of testing with 16 volunteers from the Meetup groups cost the group approximately $5 a day or $150 a month. The group organizers are happy to take on these costs because it ultimately benefits the group and makes it easier for the City to participate. If at the end of the project the City decides to implement it that is the point at which the City would take on the cost.

Total man hour cost was approximately 80 hours. Implementation of the infrastructure was one full-time engineer for a ½ week. Implementation of the application was one full-time engineer for a ½ week. Lastly the during the Meetup groups joint workshop the team expanded by 14 additional volunteers for one hour to test the application “at scale”.

How does the benefit the City?
This benefits the City because a file sharing platform has been on the City’s radar for a while but with all of the other ongoing IT projects the team found it hard to give an investigation, it’s due diligence. Using the rapport built from the year before on the MapFrederick.City (https://www.mapfrederick.city) project (2017’s City on a Cloud Challenge submission) the group organizers were able to identify a problem that truly caused the IT team issues but had a scope small enough to be completed in a short period of time. The end state of this for the Meetup groups is two fold:

1. Provide an application that the City will potentially use and solve a problem for them.
2. Submit an application with the City for the challenge.

The 2nd point is a big deal but the Meetup groups are much more interested in the 1st point. The reason is that if the City decides to use the application we built for them we have provided a service to the City. If the City decides not to use the application we built for them we have provided information for the City to use to make a decision on another application (Dropbox Enterprise, Google Drive for Teams, etc). Either way, it is a win for the Meetup groups and the City.

What Works Cities - Putting the data in ChattaData
Source: whatworkscities.bloomberg.org/works-city-feature-chattanooga-tn/

The opportunity
Chattanooga has a strong history of using data to inform decisions. In 2014, Mayor Andy Berke set up an Office of Performance Management and Open Data to create an open data policy, launch a portal for residents to access this data, and facilitate the city’s monthly performance management meeting, ChattaData. The city also has embraced a performance-based budgeting model, ensuring that the budgeting process is collaborative, transparent, and efficient. Chattanooga was looking for a way to connect this work and elevate its data and performance practices. Mayor Berke was interested in bringing these initiatives together to embed outcomes and outcome-based decision-making into city culture in a sustainable way that also advances Chattanooga’s service delivery and connection to the community.

Setting the stage
Chattanooga has had dramatic success in using available information to improve life in the city. Named one of the dirtiest cities in America in the late 1960s, Chattanooga made a concerted effort to revitalize its downtown and waterfront, attracting new jobs and national recognition for the turnaround. As a part of this renaissance, the city was one of the first in the United States to leverage residents’ voices through a citizen visioning process that helped to set key priorities.

Mayor Berke came into office with a vision for Chattanooga that focuses on creating safer streets, growing the economy, building stronger neighborhoods, educating smarter students, and creating a high-performing government that works effectively for all residents. These five clearly articulated strategic goals frame the Mayor’s vision, which has been brought to life by incorporating data and evidence into the conversation from the beginning—extending from his team’s approach to city budgets to its strategic planning of ChattaData.
Our work together

With a strong commitment from Mayor Berke and enthusiasm from his team, What Works Cities (WWC) identified three ways for Chattanooga to partner with the experts at the Behavioral Insights Team (BIT), the Center for Government Excellence at Johns Hopkins University (GovEx), and Results for America.

First, Chattanooga worked with GovEx to strengthen its open data program and improve its systems, policies, and procedures by standardizing processes and reducing the amount of manual effort involved in liberating civic data. This work is enabling the city to:

- identify opportunities—such as rebooting Chattanooga’s Open Data Advisory Committee—to create new structures that more deeply integrate open data and engage open data coordinators across all city departments; and
- save staff time and taxpayer dollars by automating the uploading of data to an open data portal and consolidating this into one seamless, centralized system.

At the same time, the city worked with the GovEx team to elevate awareness of data-driven performance management and to make performance management an integral part of the city’s day-to-day operations and departmental decision-making. This work is enabling the city to:

- make better, data-based decisions on resource allocations by focusing on connections between Budgeting for Outcomes (an internal process to collaborate across departments on budget priorities) and citywide priorities measured through ChattaData; and
- breakdown silos and build collaboration across departments by establishing a set of training sessions that ensure city agencies and community partners alike are prepared to submit meaningful budget offers.

Chattanooga also worked with BIT to test opportunities to improve its services using low-cost evaluation practices. City staff learned how to design and implement randomized control trials, ensuring that key stakeholders are informed about the process and can support a sustained investment in low-cost evaluations. The team then identified three areas that were ripe for testing:

- improving sewer billing by testing new letters to increase collection of outstanding fines;
- assessing the effectiveness of postcards sent to property owners with prior code enforcement violations on winning compliance during spring and summer months; and
- increasing the number of applicants to the police academy by assessing (1) the impact of different postcards encouraging a sample of registered voters to apply and (2) the effect of different email messages on boosting past candidates’ reapplication to the force.

Each evaluation helped the city to better integrate low-cost evaluation tools into city processes and positions the city to deliver more effective services and programs.

Key accomplishments

Together, the low-cost evaluation, open data, and performance management work help the city break down departmental silos and incorporate data and evidence in all aspects of decision-making, ultimately reorienting government culture toward those best practices. As a result, the city and WWC have:

Elevated the city’s use of open data by

- introducing and validating the concept of open data to staff throughout city government and publicly announcing the commitment of the city and Mayor to open data;
- engaging the city’s governance committee in key foundational decisions designed to ensure that Chattanooga’s open data practices are sustainable and tied to citywide priorities designed to improve residents’ lives; and
● reviewing data sets and choosing candidates for automation that meet the highest needs for Chattanooga, including ones related to specific mayoral priorities and general data sets typically prioritized by cities.

**Advanced the city’s use of data to make decisions by**

● turning Budgeting for Outcomes performance indicators into cascaded key performance indicators linked to the ChattaData initiative;
● setting up a series of trainings to establish understanding of performance measurement among city departments and community partners;
● beginning development of department-level indicators and dashboards that link to the overall goals for ChattaData; and
● starting to automate data sets that have been identified through this process.

**Increased the effectiveness of city services by**

● recovering sewer debt worth approximately $22,000 through courtesy letters enclosed with customer bills;
● redesigning the police recruitment process, thereby improving the department’s targeted outreach efforts and increasing the number of applications received by the force;
● educating property owners with code violations about available assistance;
● supporting city staff in training for their first independent low-cost evaluation; and
● engaging residents by presenting key aspects of evaluations work.
APPENDIX D

Website Redesign

The basic start of any new website or mobile app project consists of:

1. Defining the audience
2. Outlining the needs of that audience
3. Outlining the communication priorities of each web property
4. Identifying where 2 and 3 intersect
5. Prioritize the UX deliverables for the website property based on the information outlined above.

If each website property is approached through this process, all priorities will either be met or redefined to fit within the budget, time, and UX priorities. It is for that reason this workgroup recommends that website redevelopment, redesign, or refresh begin after;

Organizing and Increasing Staff ....................................................................................................................................... 9
Branding.......................................................................................................................................................................... 10
Planning Communications ............................................................................................................................................... 11
Opening Communications: Plain Language and Taxonomy .......................................................................................... 12
Opening Communications: Organize Digital Files .......................................................................................................... 13
Opening Communications: Communications Audit ........................................................................................................ 14
Branding: Build................................................................................................................................................................ 15
Branding: Understand ..................................................................................................................................................... 16
Branding: Discover ......................................................................................................................................................... 17
Brand: Experience .......................................................................................................................................................... 18
Improving the Website: Functionality .............................................................................................................................. 19
Improving the Website: Redesign................................................................................................................................... 20

Monitoring and regular review of Google analytics (as recommended in Brand: Experience) is essential. Pages that are not visited frequently may need to be moved, redesigned, or made easier to interact with.

Google analytics may provide deeper insights on visitor search and page flow patterns. This information is a clear indicator of what people are actually looking for.

It’s also important to note that website usage from mobile devices has become greater than website usage from a desktop computer. Responsive and “mobile-first” must be upfront in the design mindset.

Other Challenges

- City sites using CivicPlus CMS are challenging to navigate across the board. Too many choices. Too much information. Structured for internal government ideas and not external public needs.
- City sites using CivicPlus CMS feel outdated, lack usability, and present information poorly designed for optimal online reading habits.
- Prototypicality in city government websites is typically high visual complexity - designed around government ideas and not community needs
- Readers form an opinion about the website in about 50 milliseconds (that’s 0.05 seconds) according to Google. The conclusion from their research titled “The role of visual complexity and prototypicality regarding first impression of websites: Working towards understanding aesthetic judgments” — Readers
prefer websites with low visual complexity and high prototypicality (how similar a design looks for a certain category of websites.)

Helpful Resources

- Six Inspiring City Website Designs at civicplus.com
- Center for Digital Government - Government Experience Awards 2017 at govtech.com
- Design Thinking 101 at nngroup.com
- Usability 101: Introduction to Usability at nngroup.com
- The Distribution of Users’ Computer Skills: Worse Than You Think at nngroup.com
- UX Research Cheat Sheet at nngroup.com

Sites with attractive features

- Personal workgroup insights are influenced by minimal Brand Understanding and Brand Discovery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>CMS</th>
<th>Primary Menu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Danbury, CT</td>
<td>danbury-ct.gov</td>
<td>Wordpress</td>
<td>Government Parks&lt;br&gt;Arts &amp; Culture&lt;br&gt;Business Education Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver, CO</td>
<td>denvergov.org</td>
<td>Adobe CQ</td>
<td>Neighborhood Business&lt;br&gt;Visiting&lt;br&gt;Government Online Services A to Z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisville, KY</td>
<td>louisvilleky.gov</td>
<td>Drupal</td>
<td>Resident Business&lt;br&gt;Government&lt;br&gt;City Services Visitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Rochelle, NY</td>
<td>newrochelleny.com</td>
<td>CivicPlus</td>
<td>Government Department&lt;br&gt;City Services&lt;br&gt;Our Community&lt;br&gt;How Do I?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portsmouth, NH</td>
<td>cityofportsmouth.com</td>
<td>Drupal</td>
<td>Departments Government&lt;br&gt;Residents&lt;br&gt;Business Visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewiston, Maine</td>
<td>lewistonmaine.gov</td>
<td>CivicPlus</td>
<td>Government Business&lt;br&gt;Services.&lt;br&gt;Visitors&lt;br&gt;Departments&lt;br&gt;Find It Fast..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village of Bayside</td>
<td>bayside-wi.gov</td>
<td>CivicPlus</td>
<td>Connect Explore Government Environment&lt;br&gt;Your Home&lt;br&gt;Living In&lt;br&gt;I Want To...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>