

COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2023-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN



OVERVIEW

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

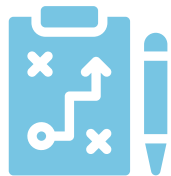
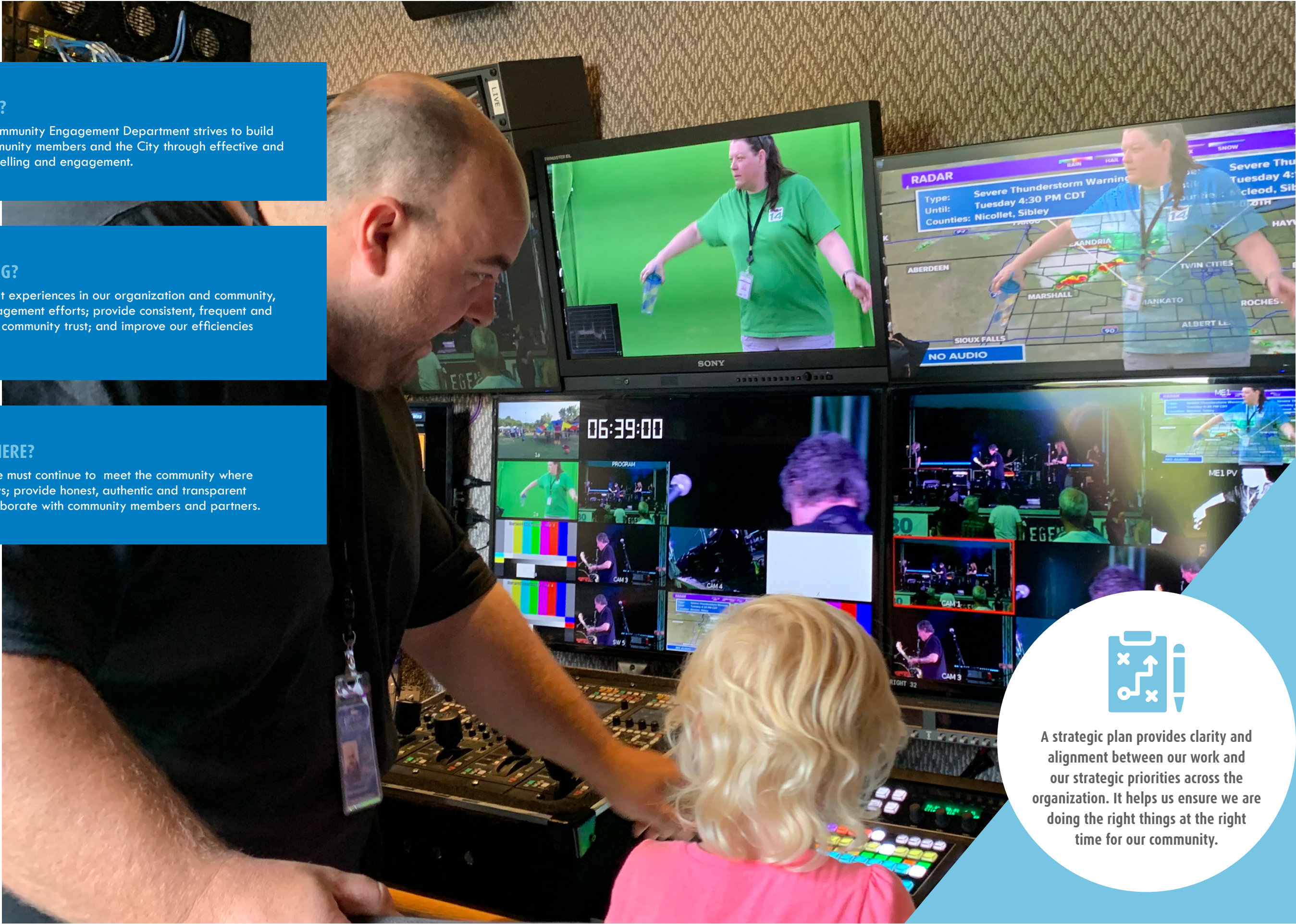
The Communications & Community Engagement Department strives to build connections between community members and the City through effective and efficient methods of storytelling and engagement.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

To continue to create great experiences in our organization and community, we must increase our engagement efforts; provide consistent, frequent and relevant outreach to build community trust; and improve our efficiencies through innovation.

HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

To achieve these goals, we must continue to meet the community where they are in innovative ways; provide honest, authentic and transparent communications; and collaborate with community members and partners.



A strategic plan provides clarity and alignment between our work and our strategic priorities across the organization. It helps us ensure we are doing the right things at the right time for our community.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The Communications & Community Engagement Department strives to build connections between community members and the City through effective and efficient methods of storytelling and engagement.

The Communications & Community Engagement Department serves Burnsville through activities in communications, marketing, engagement, events and more.

HOW DO WE SERVE THE COMMUNITY?

- Connect with the community in intentional ways around projects that are meaningful to them
- Utilize multi-channel levels of communication and engagement
- Reach diverse audiences as well as the whole community
- Communicate and engage in a variety of ways to allow everyone to connect in ways that are comfortable and meaningful to them
- Tell the City's stories through video, print, digital
- Make connections and form relationships in the City and community
- Keep residents, businesses and visitors connected to what's happening in City government and around the community
- Plan and implement events and engagement opportunities
- Create excellent customer experiences for everyone who calls or visits City Hall
- Champion and train staff on best practices for community engagement
- Ensure City messages are effective and trusted by the community
- Manage two-way communication methods between the City and community to ensure the City is listening and responding to community needs



HOW DOES OUR SERVICE ALIGN WITH OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES?

Our strategic priorities are our commitments to the community. We align our service with our strategic priorities to best meet the community's needs.



SAFETY

We create space for safe conversations, partner with public safety teams to recruit new staff and distribute safety messages, manage the City's Mobile Volunteer Network and the City's public crisis communication response.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We create connections with various community members and partners, facilitate meaningful opportunities for the community to connect, meet people where they are at, manage the City's volunteer program, encourage community-led conversations and initiatives and help highlight City services.



ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

We champion communication and engagement resources City-wide; develop recruiting messages and materials; lead "Engagement Champions" and "Brand Ambassadors" groups; provide expertise throughout the organization for messages, video, social, engagement, etc.; and serve as instructors or connect staff to experts in areas such as Language Line, EVA, photography and diverse communities.



COMMUNITY VIBRANCY

We provide sensory spaces to welcome all community members to events, manage the City's community engagement vehicle and provide SeeClickFix to allow the community to connect with staff. In addition, we support Community Development to reach businesses and developers, and to enhance education through their Neighborhood Services programs.



INFRASTRUCTURE

We work toward accessibility in City communications as well as at City events and engagement opportunities; maintain a large digital infrastructure including the City website, intranet, social media, etc.; and work with staff to determine ways to engage the community to discover infrastructure needs.



SUSTAINABILITY

We communicate the City's budget process and natural resources information to the community and invite participation, remain fiscally responsible when planning events and engagement opportunities and create sustainable engagement through partnerships.

WHAT'S GOING WELL AND WHAT ISN'T?

Communications & Community Engagement continues to enhance its outreach to the public through multiple innovative initiatives and partnerships. However, rapidly evolving communications methods, staff capacity, community expectations for 24/7 service and financial pressures are creating stress on staff.



WHAT'S GOING WELL?

- 1. Our collaboration across the organization for the organizational implementation of community engagement has grown in the last year; staff are asking questions and seeking resources.
- 2. We have enhanced our collaboration with community partners to meet the needs of the community.
- 3. We are consistently evolving messages to best reach the community.
- 4. The community is more included by providing the ability to access public meetings through Zoom.
- 5. We provide positive and welcoming experience at City Hall for community and staff.
- 6. Social media outreach and engagement has grown; we adapt to social media platforms as their features/functions change to be able to continue to get our message out.
- 7. Burnsville Bulletin continues to receive high praise from the community.
- 8. Using plain language and infographics for complicated messaging helps reach a broader audience.
- 9. Managers are actively coaching, developing and empowering staff to increase their well-being and engagement and encourage staff ownership of projects and initiatives.
- 10. Seeking feedback from the community and exploring their needs/service gaps helps us more effectively communicate.
- 11. Attending trainings/certifications around inclusion, equity and diversity to become experts. We then share that information with staff and use the knowledge to serve the community better.
- 12. We provide events and offerings to celebrate a variety of community cultures.



WHAT'S NOT GOING WELL?

- 1. Inconsistency in verbiage and visual messaging across the City creates confusion for the community.
- 2. The City website is in need of redesign to maintain user-centric philosophy.
- 3. Limited staff capacity makes it difficult to dive further into community needs.
- 4. Aging technology infrastructure (like Council Chambers equipment) makes it difficult to provide quality to community.
- 5. Community expectations around 24/7 communication continue to increase.
- 6. Rising costs of print, technology and third-party services create financial pressures.
- 7. Difficulty finding volunteers creates a challenge to keep that program running sustainably.
- 8. Staff are scattered throughout the building, and often in spaces that do not suit their needs; storage for equipment and materials is limited.
- 9. Staff expectations around turnaround time for print, video, social, etc. are increasing – we don't always have time to reflect back on what went well and if it was effective for the audience.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

To continue to create great experiences in our organization and community, we must increase our engagement efforts; provide consistent, frequent and relevant outreach to build community trust; and improve our efficiencies through innovation.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM MARKET AND ASPIRATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS?

- ✓ Adding innovative ways to reach community through video, podcasts, print, digital and engagement
- ✓ Having dedicated engagement staff to achieve innovative and small-group engagement work
- ✓ Adding staff to allow time to improve workflows and evolve output and be creative - innovation can't be accomplished without some risk, trial and permission to make mistakes
- ✓ Continuing to increase the city's reputation by showcasing new and innovative communication and engagement methods



WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?

1 Increase Engagement Efforts Across the Community

- More community conversations to better understand community needs and bring people together
- More cultural offerings
- More departments involved in connecting engagement with their work
- Engagement toolkit production and training
- Maintain and expand community relationships

2 Provide Consistent, Frequent and Relevant Outreach to Build Trust in the City

- Continue training and building relationships to prepare for crisis communication
- Create and implement brand standards; collaborate with all staff to train on the importance of standards and how to use them
- Improve visuals to amplify the City's image; reflect the vitality and variety of our community
- Personalize government through plain language, engagement, communication methods, etc.

3 Improve Efficiencies and Workflows Through Innovative Uses of Technology

- Enhance project management to create great service to other departments as well as assist our department staff on managing workloads
- Continue to evaluate existing equipment/platforms and update/replace when necessary to provide high quality video and digital offerings to community
- Work across three workgroups to ensure collaboration, fiscal responsibility, efficiency, consistent messaging, etc. across media forms
- Ensure web offerings are user friendly and optimized for visitors

HOW DO OUR THREE GOALS ALIGN WITH OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES?

	1	2	3
	INCREASE ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS ACROSS THE COMMUNITY	PROVIDE CONSISTENT, FREQUENT AND RELEVANT OUTREACH TO BUILD TRUST IN THE CITY	IMPROVE EFFICIENCIES AND WORKFLOWS THOUGH INNOVATIVE USES OF TECHNOLOGY
 Safety	Creating spaces in which the community feels safe to connect with the City and each other.	Managing crisis communication response effectively helps build trust.	Using technology helps with proactive safety education on Police, Fire, Community Development services.
 Community Engagement	Continuing to assess community needs helps us better engage with the community.	Encouraging targeted approaches to communicate with the public helps build trust through authenticity.	Meeting the community where they're at through digital methods provides the public information when they need it.
 Organizational Culture	Empowering staff and increases their comfort with interacting with a variety of people.	Continuing to build internal relationships highlights staff efforts to the community.	Managing internal communication keeps staff up-to-date on organizational happenings.
 Community Vibrancy	Assisting Community Development with business retention efforts.	Utilizing EVA will showcase City services to a wide audience.	Digitally showcasing business efforts to the community through manufacturing week, ribbon cuttings, etc. places focus on our vibrant community.
 Infrastructure	Collaborating with Engineering, Natural Resources, Parks, etc. will bring innovative engagement efforts to infrastructure projects.	Providing frequent communication to the public (particularly on projects), and finding ways for the community to share their ideas with the City helps ensure community-oriented infrastructure.	Ensure our digital infrastructure is efficient and effective for the community.
 Sustainability	Creating partnerships will grow and sustain engagement efforts throughout the city.	Amplifying the City's budget process and financial vitality builds community trust.	Exploring new digital methods will help communicate the City's sustainability efforts.



HOW DO WE GET THERE?

To achieve these goals, we must continue to meet the community where they are in innovative ways; provide honest, authentic and transparent communications; and collaborate with community members and partners.

YEAR 1 | 2023

1

**INCREASE
ENGAGEMENT
EFFORTS ACROSS THE
COMMUNITY**

- Finalize Engagement Toolkit
- Continue staff training on EVA and sensory spaces
- Continue conversations with partners
- Begin exploration on an Engagement Strategic Plan

2

**PROVIDE CONSISTENT,
FREQUENT AND
RELEVANT OUTREACH
TO BUILD TRUST IN THE
CITY**

- Continue staff training on crisis communication
- Continue to showcase staff to assist in recruiting efforts, building trust and personalizing government services
- Collaborate with other departments to strategize ways to be more proactive with communication rather than reactive

3

**IMPROVE EFFICIENCIES
AND WORKFLOWS
THOUGH INNOVATIVE
USES OF TECHNOLOGY**

- Collaborate with HR and IT on implementation of staff emergency alert platform
- Improve department workflows for photos, videos, design files, etc.
- Increase use of video on social media
- Improve staff access to a photo library

YEAR 2 | 2024

- Print and train staff on Engagement Toolkit
- Expand EVA uses throughout departments and the community
- Finalize the Engagement Strategic Plan
- Explore purchase and use of a digital town hall platform
- Grow activities at existing cultural events

- Complete website redesign
- Complete brand standards and begin to train staff
- Continue to highlight staff and services through innovative use of video

- Implement project request system
- Implement website chatbot
- Increase the number of trainings/workshops available to the public online
- Conduct a Multimedia Strategic Plan
- Update Council Chambers equipment as proposed/approved in CIP
- Update production/mobile truck equipment as proposed/approved in CIP

YEAR 3 | 2025

- Continue to expand conversations with the community
- Expand cultural event offerings
- Explore enhancing partnerships to create a formalized engagement resource

- Evolve publications and materials to meet brand standards
- Continue to coach staff on brand standards and best practices
- Replace outdoor readerboard as proposed/approved in CIP

- Continue to evaluate platforms and digital services
- Improve email subscription services

WHO WILL DO WHAT BY WHEN?

In 2023, we will accomplish the following activities to work towards our goals.

ACTION	LEAD	DEADLINE
Finalize Engagement Toolkit	Experience & Engagement Manager	December 2023
Staff training on EVA and sensory spaces	Experience & Engagement Manager	Ongoing
Continue conversations with partners	Experience & Engagement Manager	Ongoing
Begin exploration of an Engagement Strategic Plan	Experience & Engagement Manager	October 2023
Continue staff training on crisis communication	Communications & Community Engagement Director	September 2023
Continue personalizing staff and services	Communications Manager	Ongoing
Collaborate and strategize on proactive communication	Department Director and Managers	Ongoing
Finalize staff emergency alert messaging	Communications & Community Engagement Director and Communications Manager	October 2023
Improve department workflows	Communications Manager and Multimedia Manager	December 2023
Increase use of video on social media	Communications Manager and Multimedia Manager	October 2023
Improve staff access to photo library	Communications Manager	September 2023

HOW ARE WE USING OUR RESOURCES?

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

- CURRENT POSITION:**
- Communications Manager
 - Graphic Designer
 - Digital Engagement Specialist

- SERVICES:**
- Manage website and intranet
 - Manage six social media platforms
 - Manage email subscription system
 - Produce Burnsville Bulletin, Recreation Times, Community Guide and other print publications
 - Produce Focus on Burnsville, Burnsville in Brief, storymaps and other digital publications
 - Create event and initiative promotion
 - Write, proof and coach communication for all departments
 - Photograph internal and external events
 - Manage emergency communication planning, training and execution
 - Work toward ADA compliance in print and digital

MULTIMEDIA TEAM

- CURRENT POSITION:**
- Multimedia Manager
 - Videographer (2)

- SERVICES:**
- Broadcast public meetings
 - Produce video and b-roll of City promotion, event promotion/recap, new initiatives, recruitment, etc.
 - Live mobile coverage of City events, community events, school events, special public meetings, etc.
 - Manage cable franchise via Comcast and resident relationships, public access program, etc.
 - Manage cable channel and video-on-demand service
 - Produce staff training videos
 - Manage and maintain wide variety of AV equipment
 - Assist with staging, lighting and sound at events

EXPERIENCE AND ENGAGEMENT TEAM

- CURRENT POSITION:**
- Experience & Engagement Manager
 - Community Engagement Specialist
 - Community Liaison
 - Public Experience Assistant

- SERVICES:**
- Build community and staff relationships
 - Coordinate Community Partners Group and staff Engagement Champions Team
 - Serve as liaisons to community/legacy events
 - Coordinate volunteer program
 - Plan Juneteenth, PRIDE, Night to Unite, community conversations, etc.
 - Assist other departments in engagement planning and efforts
 - Research and implement best practices and new initiatives such as sensory-friendly spaces
 - Manage Community Engagement Vehicle
 - Coordinate Language Line training for all staff
 - Provide customer service, lobby management, facility reservations, payment acceptance, etc. in City Hall
 - Provide administrative support for the entire organization

HOW DO FUTURE POSITIONS ALLOW US TO BETTER MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY?

Future positions will be developed based on the needs of the community and the following objectives:

-  **Timely Communication - Meeting Expectations on Information Delivery**
-  **Evolving Technology - Choosing the Right Tools to Reach the Right People in the Right Moment**
-  **Changing Demographics - Customizing Strategies for a Variety of Ages, Languages, Abilities, etc.**

COMMUNICATIONS

POSITIONS IDENTIFIED IN ORG ANALYSIS:

Communications Specialist

SERVICE NEED:

Assist in a variety of communication efforts with a strong focus on helping tell the Burnsville story through writing and visual elements.

MULTIMEDIA

POSITIONS IDENTIFIED IN ORG ANALYSIS:

Videographer
Production Assistant (Part-Time)

SERVICE NEED:

Videographer

- Implement specialized video production that focuses on City communication strategies for informing, educating and engaging residents.

Production Assistant

- Lead efforts to provide quality broadcasting of City public meetings, and assist in the maintenance of broadcast equipment.

EXPERIENCE & ENGAGEMENT

POSITIONS IDENTIFIED IN ORG ANALYSIS:

Community Engagement Specialist

SERVICE NEED:

Partner in the development of authentic engagement to build bridges, create connections, communicate clearly and provide access to local government.



Burnsville

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