



City Council Meeting & Public Hearing

DECEMBER 18, 2023

OFFICIAL MINUTES

Office of the City Clerk

ALPHARETTA CITY HALL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS | 2 PARK PLAZA | 6:30 PM

OFFICIAL MINUTES

The public is advised that the following minutes are not a verbatim transcription of business presented at the Council Meeting of the date shown; but are a synopsis of pertinent information. The public is further advised that the video recording for said meeting is a matter of public record and is available to be viewed at the City Clerk's office during normal business hours or viewed online at <https://www.youtube.com/user/alpharettagov>.

1. CALL TO ORDER

- Mayor Gilvin called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

• Council Members

- Mayor Jim Gilvin
- Mayor Pro Tem Dan Merkel
- Donald F. Mitchell (late)
- Douglas J. DeRito
- John Hipes
- Brian Will

• Council Members Absent

- Jason Binder

• Staff

- Chris Lagerbloom, City Administrator
- Molly Esswein, City Attorney
- James Drinkard, Assistant City Administrator
- Kiersten VanHorn, Assistant City Clerk
- John Robison, Director Public Safety
- Kathi Cook, Director of Community and Economic Development
- Morgan Rodgers, Director Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services
- Pete Sewczwicz, Director of Public Works

3. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

4. PRESENTATIONS & PROCLAMATIONS

- Life Saving Award presentation to Eli Haverdink and Adam Penn by Chief John Robison of Alpharetta Public Safety and Lindsey Ross of the American Red Cross of Georgia.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- **City Council Meeting Minutes (Meeting of 11/13/2023)**

Consideration of approval of the City Council Minutes from November 13, 2023.

- **City Council Meeting Minutes (Meeting of 11/27/2023)**

Consideration of approval of the City Council Minutes from November 27, 2023.

- **Alcoholic Beverage License Applications**

Consideration of approval of the following alcoholic beverage license applications:

1. **PH-23-AB-28 The 2ofus@Cutters LLC d/b/a Cutters Cigar and Spirits, 4915 Windward Parkway, Alpharetta 30004**

Change in Ownership

Cigar Shop

Consumption on Premises

Distilled Spirits, Beer, Wine & Sunday Sales

Owner: The2ofus@Cutters LLC

Registered Agent: Michelle Pimentel Paz

2. **PH-23-AB-29 Mediterranean Bistro LLC d/b/a Creation Social House, 11500 Webb Bridge Way #A7 145, Alpharetta, GA 30005**

Change in Ownership

Eating Establishment

Consumption on Premises

Distilled Spirits, Beer, Wine & Sunday Sales

Owner: Mediterranean Bistro LLC

Registered Agent: Jessica Conlon

3. **PH-23-AB-30 Jangsujang at Avalon LLC d/b/a Jangsujang, 35 Milton Avenue, Suite C, Alpharetta, GA 30009**

Change in Ownership

Eating Establishment

Consumption on Premises

Distilled Spirits, Beer, Wine & Sunday Sales

Owner: Jangsujang at Avalon LLC

Registered Agent: Jenny Hyun

- **Financial Management Report (Month Ending October 31, 2023)**

Consideration of approval of the Financial Management Report for the month ending October 31, 2023.

- **Ratification of Consent Order and Final Judgement: Parcel 32 of McGinnis Ferry Road Widening Project**

*Council Ratification of Consent Order and Final Judgment regarding Civil Action File Number 2022CV364158 in the amount of \$37,400.00 regarding **Parcel #32** of the **McGinnis Ferry Road Widening Project (PI #0004634)** (Owners: Myriam Denis, Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems Inc. & Windward HOA).*

- **Conflict Waiver: City of Milton and City of Alpharetta for Big Creek Greenway Connection Project**

Consideration of approval of a Waiver of Conflict between the City of Milton and the City of Alpharetta, Georgia for the purposes of the Big Creek Greenway Connection Project and with authorization for the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.

- **Partnered Athletic League Facility Use Agreements & Partnership Renewals**

Consideration of approval to renew annual agreements with the City of Alpharetta's Recreation, Parks and Cultural Services Department five partnered athletic associations (Alpharetta Ambush Youth Soccer Club, Inc., Alpharetta Youth Baseball Association, Inc., Alpharetta Youth Girls Softball Association, Inc., North Atlanta Football League, Inc., and Alpharetta Phoenix Rugby (Atlanta Youth Rugby), Inc.)

1. **Partnered Athletic League Facility Use Agreement: Phoenix Rugby**

2. **Partnered Athletic League Facility Use Agreements & Partnership Renewals: AMBUSH**

3. **Partnered Athletic League Facility Use Agreements & Partnership Renewals: AYSA**

4. **Partnered Athletic League Facility Use Agreements & Partnership Renewals: NAFL**

5. **Partnered Athletic League Facility Use Agreements & Partnership Renewals: AYBA**

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.

❖ **Mayor Pro Tem Merkel offered a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.**

- **Council Member DeRito seconded the motion.**

- **The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).**

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Invitation to Bid 24-007: Douglas Road Drainage Improvements**

Consideration of approval of the award of Invitation to Bid 24-007 for Douglas Road Drainage Improvements to Tri Scapes Inc. with Funding in an amount not to exceed \$417,112.80 and with authorization for the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.

- Director of Public Works, Pete Sewczwicz, came forward to present this item.
- The award of this bid is for the construction of drainage improvements along approximately 900 linear feet of Douglas Road. The construction location will be along the west side of Douglas Road approximately 175 ft. north of Caney Creek to approximately 230 ft. south of Newport Bay Passage.
- Currently, the drainage along this section of Douglas Road traverses down the existing beauty strip due to the absence of any curb and gutter, causing mud and gravel to frequently wash into Douglas Road and collect on the vehicular bridge. The project will also address pedestrian safety by adding additional separation between vehicles and pedestrians.
- The project will consist of the installation of curb and gutter, storm pipe, storm water collection structures, a 5' wide sidewalk, and the addition of a 2-foot beauty strip.
- The Public Works Department prepared plans and specifications for the project and advertised for competitive bids in September and received responses on October 19th, 2023. The City received a total of 6 bids.
- The apparent low bidder, Tri Scapes, Inc. is an experienced contractor and has completed several other projects with the City. The City reached out to several references included in Tri Scapes bid submittal. Staff received positive feedback regarding Tri Scapes project management, knowledge/experience of the scope of work, and Tri Scapes ability to work within the contract schedule and budget.
- Once approved, construction will begin and be completed within 150 days of the date of the notice to proceed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Council Member DeRito offered a motion to approve the award of Invitation to Bid 24-007 for Douglas Drainage Improvements to Tri Scapes Inc. with Funding not to exceed \$417,112.80 and with authorization for the Mayor to execute all documents.
 - Council Member Mitchell seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).
- **Invitation to Bid 24-008: Fiscal Year 2024 Bridge Maintenance**

Consideration of approval of the award of Invitation to Bid 24-008 to Massana Construction, Inc. for the performance of the FY 2024 Bridge Maintenance project in an amount not to exceed \$441,402.00 and with authorization for the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.

- Director of Public Works, Pete Sewczwicz, came forward to present this item.
- The award of this bid is for repair and maintenance activities at six bridges within the City based upon a Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) State Bridge Inspection Report. The six bridges are: Windward Parkway Westbound Lanes over Camp Creek, Windward Parkway Eastbound Lanes over Big Creek, Mansell Road Westbound Lanes over Big Creek, Haynes Bridge Road over Big Creek, Windward Parkway over Big Creek Tributary, and Kimball Bridge Road over Big Creek.
- The City contracted with Pond engineering firm to perform visual inspections of the bridges and prepare plans and specifications for the needed maintenance and repairs.
- The project was advertised for competitive bids on Sep 21, 2023, and the deadline for bid submission was originally scheduled for Oct 19, 2023, which was later extended to Oct 26, 2023. During the public advertisement process, as well as the time extension, representatives from Public Works and the Finance contacted several bridge contractors inquiring if they would bid on the project. A total of one bid was received for the project on October 26, 2023 from Massana Construction, Inc.
- The one bid submitted was from Massana Construction Inc. at a cost of \$441,402.00. Public Works is confident the City received a competitive bid. Massana Construction is an experienced contractor and has worked on numerous projects with similar scopes for several agencies in Georgia and other states. Staff met with Massana on Nov 1st to review the scope of work and the City's expectations.
- The anticipated completion date is no more than 180 days from notice to proceed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Council Member DeRito offered a motion to approve the award of Invitation to Bid 24-008 to Massana Construction, Inc. for the performance of the FY 2024 Bridge Maintenance project in an amount not to exceed \$441,402.00 and to authorize the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.
 - Mayor Pro Tem Merkel seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).
- **Resolution: Water Efficiency Model Findings**

Consideration of adoption of a resolution authorizing transmittal of the model findings resolution and local amendments to the plumbing code to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

 - City Attorney, Molly Esswein, read the Resolution title aloud.
 - Director of Community and Economic Development, Kathi Cook, came forward to present this item.

- Staff is recommending that Mayor and Council Approve a resolution authorizing the transmittal of the Model Findings Resolution and local amendments to the Plumbing Code to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).
- The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District was created by the Georgia General Assembly in 2001 in order to preserve and protect water resources in the 15-county metropolitan Atlanta area. As part of that mandate, the District has created a series of required measures each city, county, and utility in the 15-county metropolitan Atlanta area must adopt and follow.
- One of the revised measures (WSWC-8) requires each local government to adopt and enforce water efficiency code requirements. This ordinance is adopted as a local amendment to the Georgia State Minimum Standard Plumbing Code and is required to be presented to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) by prior to local adoption. The specific updates pertain to indoor plumbing fixtures and outdoor landscape irrigation efficiencies.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Mayor Pro Tem Merkel offered a motion to adopt a resolution authorizing transmittal of the model findings resolution and local amendments to the plumbing code to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).
 - Council Member Will seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).
- **Intergovernmental Agreement: Fulton County Animal Services**

Consideration of approval of an Intergovernmental Agreement for the provision of animal control services between Fulton County, Georgia and the City of Alpharetta, Georgia and with authorization for the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.

 - City Administrator, Chris Lagerbloom, came forward to present this item.
 - The City of Alpharetta currently contracts with Fulton County to provide Animal Control Services in the City. The current agreement is set to expire on December 31, 2023, and if approved, the county would provide the same level of services for an additional five-year period, beginning on January 1, 2024, with the terms provided in the attached Intergovernmental Agreement.
 - The City of Alpharetta currently contracts with Fulton County to provide Animal Control Services in the City. The current agreement is set to expire on December 31, 2023, and if approved, the county would provide the same level of services for an additional five-year period, beginning on January 1, 2024, with the terms provided in the attached Intergovernmental Agreement.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.

- ❖ Mayor Pro Tem Merkel offered a motion to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement for the provision of animal control services between Fulton County, Georgia and the City of Alpharetta, Georgia and with authorization for the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.

- Council Member Will seconded the motion.
- The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).

- **Resolution: City of Alpharetta Communications Plan**

Consideration of adoption of a resolution that adopts the City Communications Plan.

- City Attorney, Molly Esswein, read the Resolution title aloud.
- Assistant City Administrator, James Drinkard, came forward to present this item.
- The City of Alpharetta Communications Plan is attached hereto as Exhibit "A."
- During its 2023 strategic planning retreat, the Mayor and City Council identified as one of its ten priorities creating "communications that connect." Further, the Mayor and Council set a goal to create a new communication strategy and crisis communications plan. In response, Staff undertook a process to create a plan consisting of four components: Communications and Engagement Plan, Crisis Communications Plan, Media Guidelines, Brand Standards and Style Guide.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.

- ❖ Council Member Mitchell offered a motion to adopt the City Communications Plan.

- Council Member DeRito seconded the motion.
- The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).

- **2024 Fulton County Arts & Culture Grant**

Consideration of approval for the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Services Department to apply for the 2024 Fulton County Arts & Culture Grant in the amount of \$20,000 and with a match of \$12,000 in City of Alpharetta funding from the FY2024 and FY2025 operating budgets, and with authorization for the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.

- Director of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Services, Morgan Rodgers, came forward to present this item.
- For the 2024 Fulton County Grant Cycle, staff would like to request \$20,000 in Grants Funds from Fulton County. In turn we will agree to support the Alpharetta Music Match program with \$12,000 from our operating budget for a goal of 60 Live Music Performances from Jan-Dec 2024. We will split the City funds: \$6,000 in FY2024 and \$6,000 in FY2025.

- Alpharetta Music Match has provided live music in Alpharetta with 50 performances in 2023 (4-5 per month). Performances are held in varying venues, restaurants, and outdoors spaces throughout the City of Alpharetta.
- The Music Match program provides a mutually beneficial process for musicians, venues, producers, and residents. For each live music booking: musicians are paid \$150 up to \$300 per performance depending on their level of experience; the venues pay a \$25 fee to process the online application; a music producer matches, schedules & supervises the musicians & venues for \$150 per show; and residents enjoy year-round free music throughout the City of Alpharetta.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Council Member Hipes offered a motion to approve the application for the 2024 Fulton County Arts & Culture Grant in the amount of \$20,000 and with a match of \$12,000 in City of Alpharetta funding from the FY2024 and FY2025 operating budgets, and with authorization for the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.
 - Council Member Will seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).
- **Request for Proposal 24-104 and Contract Award: Mid-Broadwell Park Playground**
Consideration of approval of the award of Request for Proposal 24-104 and corresponding contract to Kompan, Inc. for the construction of the playground at Mid-Broadwell Park in the amount of \$159,953.26 and with authorization for the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.
 - Director of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Services, Morgan Rodgers, came forward to present this item.
 - In 2016 the citizens of Alpharetta passed a bonded referendum that provided the funding to the City of Alpharetta to purchase park land for future development. Two adjacent properties totaling 4.10 acres located at 1480 and 1490 Mid-Broadwell Road were purchased. In 2018, staff were given guidance by City Council to begin developing a concept that would build a Community Park for residents in the area. Once completed, the concept would be presented for public input for the purpose of receiving input from the public meeting.
 - Mayor and Council approved a contract with Pond and Company to design this park in January 2020. During the design phase it was determined that the development of the park would be a phased approach. Phase 1 would provide the restroom using the existing parking area. When funding became available, phase 2 would complete the parking area, and Phase 3 would develop the playground and trail.
 - In November of 2021, the citizens of Alpharetta passed another Parks Bond that provides the funding to complete the development of Mid-Broadwell Park.

- In August of this year, an RFP was published by our Finance department seeking proposals to provide a playground for a cost of \$160,000.00 with the following criteria: Inclusivity that encourages playing together, a standalone water play table, components for ages 2-5 and ages 5-12 (Do not include Horizontal bars), components that are made of natural materials (50% wood materials) with a Tree House look, Swing bays to accommodate belt swings, a toddler swing, and inclusive play, and signage designating appropriate ages for play space and general playground rules.
- RFP 24-104 was closed to submissions on September 21, 2023. The City received a total of five (5) responses.
- The review committee agreed that the proposals determined that one playground company, Kompan, Inc., best met the criteria intent in overall design, materials, necessary durability and construction timeline.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Council Member Hipes offered a motion to approve the award of Request for Proposal 24-104 and corresponding contract to Kompan, Inc. for the construction of the playground at Mid-Broadwell Park in the amount of \$159,953.26 and with authorization for the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.
 - Council Member Will seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).
- **Memorandum of Understanding: Home by Dark**

Consideration of approval of a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Alpharetta and Home by Dark Productions, LLC for talent, production, sound, lighting, public relations, and marketing for the 2024 Brooke Street Park Concert Series and with authorization for the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.

 - Director of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Services, Morgan Rodgers, came forward to present this item.
 - Since 2018, the City has hosted an annual concert series in Brooke Street Park. Originally, talent for these performances was recruited individually. Early on, however, the network of musicians provided by James Casto with Home by Dark proved to be hugely successful and well-embraced by the Alpharetta community. By 2020, the City of Alpharetta could not deny that the performances fit perfectly with the City's vision for the concert series, and a strong working relationship was formed and formalized with Home by Dark.
 - In subsequent years, the City has continued to enter into an annual agreement in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Home By Dark for provision of talent, production, sound, lighting, public relations, and marketing for the Brooke Street Park Concert Series.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Council Member Hipes offered a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Alpharetta and Home by Dark Productions, LLC for talent, production, sound, lighting, public relations, and marketing for the 2024 Brooke Street Park Concert Series and with authorization for the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.
 - Council Member Will seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).
- **Memorandum of Understanding: Parks Without Borders for the City of Johns Creek and City of Alpharetta**

Consideration of approval of the 2024 Parks Without Borders Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Alpharetta and the City of Johns Creek and with authorization for the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.
- Director of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Services, Morgan Rodgers, came forward to present this item.
- The cities of Alpharetta and Johns Creek offer exceptional recreation programs and, throughout the years, have each experienced a high level of citizen engagement in recreational youth softball, baseball, soccer, and lacrosse. As resident participation continued to grow, eventually exceeding either city's bandwidth, the adjoining cities discovered that sharing certain programs and facilities would permit both cities to meet the increased demand.
- Formalized as the "Parks Without Borders" Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the agreement permits residents in either city to enjoy the neighboring city's recreational youth softball, baseball, soccer, and lacrosse programs at the respective city's resident rates, provided space is available. Residents of each city would have priority to register for their city's programs, after which residents of the other city will have priority. Lastly, an open registration period for non-Alpharetta and non-Johns Creek residents will begin. Additionally, the MOU has permitted full-time employees of each partner city and their immediate family members living in the same household to be considered residents of the city in which they are employed, granting access to youth softball, baseball, and lacrosse programs at the respective city's resident rates. It is important to note the MOU is limited to recreational sports programs only and does not include travel programs.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- There were no public comments.
- ❖ Council Member Hipes offered a motion to approve the 2024 Parks Without Borders Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Alpharetta and the City of Johns Creek and with authorization for the Mayor to execute all necessary documents.
 - Mayor Pro Tem Merkel seconded the motion.

- The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

- There were no public comments.

8. REPORTS

- Mayor Pro Tem Merkel announced the Golden Corral Restaurant is returning.
- Council Member DeRito thanked Council Member Binder for his service on Council.
- Council Member Will recognized FAA Shawn Webster who retired after 19 years with Alpharetta. He also mentioned the recent Firefighter Graduates.
- Council Member Hipes thanked Council Member Binder for his service on Council.
- Council Member Mitchell thanked Council Member Binder for his service on Council.
- Mayor Gilvin offered a thank you to all who make the City of Alpharetta great and for more to come in 2024.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF NECESSARY)

- There was no an executive session.

10. ADJOURNMENT

- ❖ Council Member Will offered a motion to adjourn the meeting.
 - Council Member Mitchell seconded the motion.
 - The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).
- With there being no further items to consider or discuss, Mayor Gilvin adjourned the meeting at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lauren Shapiro, City Clerk

EXHIBIT A



CITY OF ALPHARETTA

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN



ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA GUIDELINES BRAND STANDARDS

WHAT IS A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN?

A communication plan is a living, breathing document used to align public information activities with the goals, objectives, and key communication messages of the organization. The plan prioritizes needs, identifies audiences, determines the message and how it is delivered, and measures whether or not the effort was successful. In the simplest terms, a communications plan coordinates ways to deliver information to people who are important to an organization.

WHY IS A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN IMPORTANT?

An effective communications plan will help the City of Alpharetta:

- Link organization priorities and communications activities;
- Ensure that messages and activities are not controlled or driven by the parts of the organization that can “shout the loudest” or have the biggest budget;
- Maintain consistent brand identity;
- Maintain continuity of voice and message; and
- Ensure communication is based upon effective insight and a good understanding of our local population and target audiences.

Efficient communication is more than a simple transfer of information: it must be bi-directional, open to exchanges and feedback. For a local government and the community to *survive*, the organization must inform everyone it is in contact with. But if it wants its relationship with citizens and the community to *grow*, the organization must also listen to all these people and adapt itself in reaction to what it hears. This is why we refer to public communication and engagement, to ensure that the City of Alpharetta never loses sight of the importance of the full conversation.

To be truly effective and efficient, communications must be a fully integrated aspect of a municipality’s strategy, not an afterthought. This means not only having an overall communications plan for the City but also having a specific communications strategy planned for each significant City initiative or program prior to that initiative or program being launched.

In the past, our communications were more tactical than strategic, and activities were decentralized throughout the organization.

Achieving this requires a departure from the informal manner in which the City of Alpharetta has traditionally undertaken its communications and engagement activities.

In the past, communications were more tactical than strategic, and activities were decentralized throughout the organization with decisions made by individual departments, often by staff members who were well-intentioned but lacked the training and skills to develop and execute effective

and efficient communications and engagement programs. Although this was better than nothing, it sometimes led to the wasting of time, energy, and money on communication activities that were no longer relevant, contradicted one another, or were not aligned with the City's larger goals and objectives. The contradictory messages and lack of clarity can also harm citizen trust.

Trust is the essential fuel of local government, yet a recent Gallup survey of US adults found that citizen trust in local government is at its lowest level since 1997 with only 66%

indicating they trust their local government to do what is right.

Strategic, frequent, and open communication can create and strengthen trust among the citizens we serve. It will help foster better relationships, and over time, the number of citizens who feel that their concerns matter to us and who are engaged in community issues will increase. Citizens will feel more assured and have a higher level of confidence in the City, our ability to handle issues and emergencies, and the accuracy of the information that we provide.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

In developing this communications plan, the City was guided by five key principles that have been foundational to our communications efforts over the past few years.

- We will communicate what we know when we know it
- We will go beyond providing information to the public and foster opportunities for meaningful public engagement;
- We will consistently foster open communication that is inviting, engaging, and encourages productive discourse that builds community;
- We will creatively and effectively engage the public where they are physically, emotionally, and informationally; and
- We will not fear the unknown or uncomfortable.

First adopted in 2018, these principles have resulted in more open and engaging communications with Alpharetta citizens and the larger public and enhanced our trust and reputation among those audiences.

LEGAL AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the aspirations we have for the quality of our communications, several other considerations also guide our tactics and strategies. We are very careful to ensure that we know and implement all legal requirements. We also are careful to execute our communications within the established

policies of the City of Alpharetta. Lastly, we strive to meet the highest ethical standards of both government agencies and the communications profession.

GEORGIA OPEN MEETINGS AND OPEN RECORDS

ACTS:

Trust in the actions of elected officials is critical to the continued success of our representative form of government. A key factor in fostering this trust is the ease of access to meetings and records of local governments and other public agencies. Georgia's open meetings and open records laws support this concept. In fact, the opening paragraph of the Georgia Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. 50-18-70) begins, "The General Assembly finds and declares that the strong public policy of this state is in favor of open government; that open government is essential to a free, open, and democratic society."

We will make sure that all of our communications efforts uphold both the letter and spirit of the Georgia Open Meetings Act (O.C.G.A. 50-14-1 through 6) and the Georgia Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. 50-18-70 through 77).

ACCESSIBILITY:

We will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the information about City programs, initiatives, and policies is available to all of our audiences, despite the many potential barriers to communication. These potential barriers include access to media, language, cultural differences, and physical disabilities or special needs.

PLAN OBJECTIVES

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS:

The primary objective of this communications plan is to elevate the public credibility and trust of the City of Alpharetta by:

INFORMING VS. PERSUADING:

One of the many challenges of communicating emerging issues is providing complete and unbiased information to residents on issues that are coming to the City Council before the Council has had the opportunity to deliberate and establish the City's official position or vote on a specific decision.

While we firmly believe that we best serve the public interest by acting as responsible advocates for the Council's policy decisions - providing the City's perspective in the marketplace of ideas, facts, and viewpoints to aid informed public debate - we also recognize the potential for criticism that the City has been selective about information provided to the public with the goal of attempting to persuade residents to come to preferred conclusions. Any appearance of "spin" in our communications will work against the ideals of transparency and inclusiveness and reduce our credibility with the public.

Ultimately, we aim to provide the data and reasoning behind the policy decisions so that citizens and the general public can understand how and why those decisions were made so that they can, in turn, shape their own informed opinions. Our goal is to inform rather than to persuade.

- Improving access to facts and information;

- Increasing awareness of initiatives, projects, events, opportunities, and matters soon to be considered;
- Creating opportunities for and encouraging meaningful public engagement; and
- Increasing transparency into the business and processes of the people's government.

By carefully planning our communications to meet this objective, we will realize three primary goals:

- Amplify and extend the reach of the City's key communication messages to increase awareness and improve access to community events and government news, facts, and information
- Foster a sense of community by increasing community engagement among Alpharetta residents and current/potential business owners both on and offline
- Continue to cultivate awareness around Alpharetta as the highest

quality environment for residents and businesses to live, work, and thrive

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Internal audiences, the City's employees and elected and appointed officials, are critical to the success of our organization, so attention and resources must be focused on strengthening communications and relationships with those individuals. The primary objective of our internal communications program is to elevate each individual's engagement and understanding of the value that their efforts have in the success of the community, thereby encouraging them to be proud brand ambassadors. To do this we will:

- Increase awareness of initiatives, projects, events, opportunities, and matters soon to be considered;
- Create opportunities for and encourage meaningful conversations and engagement with senior leadership, among peers, and between departments; and
- Improve access to facts and information to increase transparency into the City's business and processes.

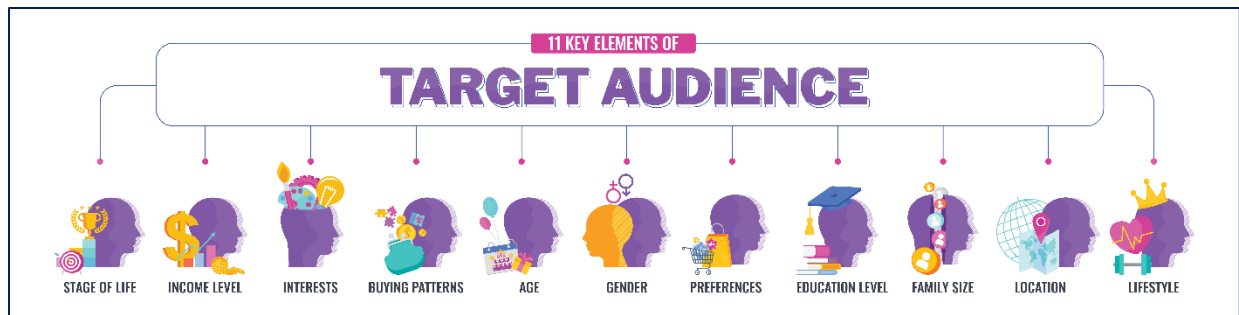
TARGET AUDIENCES

The communications plan addresses both external and internal communications, so target audiences have been identified for each of these purposes. It should be noted that the audiences identified in this plan are intended to apply to the City's overall communications program, while different and/or more specific audiences may be identified for particular communications campaigns.

EXTERNAL AUDIENCES:

As our external audiences are more broad and numerous, they have been separated into primary, secondary, and tertiary groups. Because our primary external audience, Alpharetta residents, represents a broad and

diverse population, market segmentation techniques have been used to create personas that will help our communication team better understand the audience and shape messaging to effectively reach audience members. Additionally, some special groups



within the primary audience have been identified for whom special tactics, methodologies, or mediums will need to be employed to foster effective communication and engagement.

- Primary Audience
 - Current Alpharetta residents
 - Special resident groups
 - Asian – Indian residents
 - Senior residents (*65 years and older*)
 - Student residents (*17 years and younger*)
- Secondary Audience
 - Businesses and employees currently located in the City of Alpharetta
 - Corporate decision-makers of target business and industry clusters
- Tertiary Audience
 - Potential residents of the City of Alpharetta
 - Tourists / visitors currently in Alpharetta
 - Potential employees of target businesses and industry clusters

An old saying teaches us, “If you run after two rabbits, you will catch neither.” So, how effective a rabbit catcher will we be if we run after 70,000?

While all residents of the City of Alpharetta are important and included in our primary audience, it is at best difficult to craft and deliver effective communication and engagement programming to such a large and diverse audience. To better understand and shape messaging to effectively reach such a broad group, communications and marketing professionals use market segmentation to narrow the targets within.

Market segmentation is the practice of dividing your target market into approachable groups. Market segmentation creates subsets of a market based on demographics, needs, priorities, common interests, and other psychographic or behavioral criteria used to better understand the target audience. The result is the creation of a few personas or identities that are representative of the whole, allowing us to approach a total audience of 70,000 people as two or three individuals to better reach and engage a high percentage of the total audience.

As an example, one of the personas that market segmentation techniques enable us to create for our primary audience is an

individual between the ages of 45 and 55 with the following characteristics:

- Is a homeowner with kids living in the home
- College educated, likely with a graduate degree
- Is employed in a management or professional field
- Has an income over \$100,000
- Is a heavy user of the latest technology
- Tends to drive vehicle brands like Audi and BMW
- Places importance on manicured lawns and brand-named goods
- Frequents fast-casual dining concepts like Chipotle and Shake Shack
- Enjoys travel and attending sporting events or concerts
- Reads publications like the Wall Street Journal and Garden & Gun

For comparison, another persona we have created is between the ages of 25 and 39 with the following characteristics:

- Lives in a rental property
- Is college educated or currently completing their degree
- Has an income under \$75,000
- Burdened by student loan debt
- Does not have kids
- Heavily uses social media such as Snapchat, Instagram, or TikTok
- Uses internet banking
- Spends money at restaurants like Qdoba and retailers like Nordstrom Rack

This type of information helps us humanize our audience, allowing us to understand their pain points, goals, desires, and needs. That not only helps us figure out the best ways to approach and communicate with audience members, it also guides us to create better experiences and engagements that build lasting relationships.

In short (forgiving a bit of an exaggeration), this approach allows us to catch 70,000 rabbits by chasing one.

INTERNAL AUDIENCES:

In many ways, our internal audience, the City's employees and elected and appointed officials, is our most important. This is because truly effective internal communication and engagement have the power to inspire these individuals to ensure resident and customer satisfaction, remain with the organization longer, and advocate for the organization as brand ambassadors.

Actions always speak louder than words. What we do has more impact than what we say, and nothing erodes trust more than if what we say and what we do are not aligned.

- Primary Audience
 - City of Alpharetta employees
- Secondary Audience
 - Mayor and City Council
 - Appointed members of City boards and commissions
- Tertiary Audience
 - State and federal elected officials
 - Partner agencies and organizations

Why are our employees the primary internal audience? Why is it not the Mayor and City Council?

Consider that every time a City employee interacts with a member of our community, that interaction shapes the community member's perceptions, trust, and relationship with the City of Alpharetta. That experience is our most powerful and meaningful communication tool.

The interaction of City employees with residents and customers is our most powerful and meaningful communication tool.

If the employee understands and believes in our core values, mission, and goals and if they know about our programs and initiatives and how they contribute to their success, the employee is more likely to have a positive perception about the organization and the

community. That positive feeling will be reflected in their interactions with Alpharetta residents and other customers, and the employee becomes the living, breathing embodiment of our brand.

But, if the employee feels disconnected, does not know or believe in our values, and does not understand what we are doing and how their work contributes to it, that is what will be reflected in their interactions. And that will overpower every other aspect of our communications and engagement efforts.

Now, consider that the Mayor and City Council define our mission, set our goals, and decide what our priorities are. As a result, they fully understand and believe in them, and they know how their efforts impact the community. Of course, it is important that we effectively and frequently communicate with the Mayor and City Council, but because they are directly making those decisions and because of the information that they already have as a result of their role in the organization, the Mayor and City Council are not the primary internal audience for this communications plan.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES:

- Lack of coordinated communications planning, process, and structure
Historically, the City of Alpharetta did not approach communications, either internal or external, as a strategic priority. The general view was that there was no need to discuss proposed plans or projects as they were considered tentative, and there was little emphasis on highlighting completed projects. Consequently,

there was no centralized communication plan, leading to different City departments creating their own messaging without aligning with the City's overarching brand and voice. As a result, communication strategies, tactics, and messaging have been fragmented, diluting the overall brand and reducing the effectiveness of our messaging.

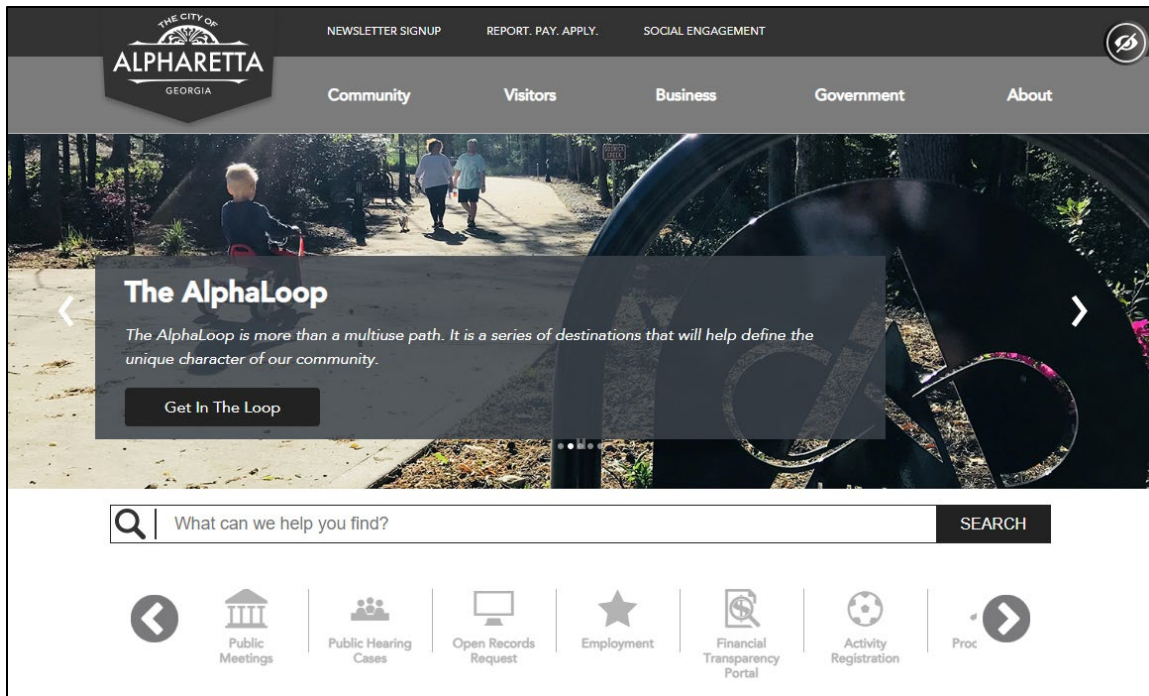
The most recent comprehensive survey designed to gain insight into the needs and concerns of Alpharetta residents was done in March 2007.

- Limited insight into citizen needs, perceptions, and opinions
The most recent comprehensive survey of Alpharetta residents aimed at understanding their needs and opinions about community issues dates back to March 2007. While there have been efforts to gather opinions related to specific projects, there has been a lack of comprehensive insight into citizens' overall priorities, concerns, or their satisfaction with city services.
- Poor internal communications
While external communications have been decentralized and fragmented, strategic internal communications have been lacking. This has led to departmental isolation, with many employees unaware of key initiatives taking place both within and beyond their departments. As a result, many personnel are not fully informed about how their efforts contribute to the city's success.
- Limited staffing and resources
In comparison to neighboring municipalities and cities of similar size, the City of Alpharetta has historically allocated fewer resources

to its communication efforts. Until recently, the city had only one full-time employee dedicated solely to citizen and public communication, with other employees juggling communication responsibilities alongside their primary duties. In 2021, the communication budget of the City of Alpharetta, excluding payroll, was only a fraction of that of neighboring cities, which had multiple employees solely dedicated to public communication and engagement.

- Outdated website
In an era of ever-evolving technology, websites have become the digital face of organizations, but the average website lifespan has become remarkably short. Rapid advancements in design trends, technological innovations, security enhancements, and user expectations render older websites obsolete, demanding constant adaptation to stay relevant and effective. In fact, as of March 2023, the average lifespan of a commercial website is 2 years and 4 months. The general consensus within the digital communications and marketing industry is that an organization's website can last 2 to 5 years before it needs to be rebuilt.

The current City of Alpharetta website was developed ten years ago. While it was based on the latest technology and web design trends at that time and included features that were largely unseen outside of the websites of leading-edge marketing and technology companies, technological innovations have advanced beyond those our current website can offer.



Features that users now view as common or expected on modern sites cannot be made available on ours.

- Media environment

A recent unscientific poll of Alpharetta residents indicated that the majority rely on social media for information on issues and events taking place in the city. This is consistent with recent data from Pew Research that indicates approximately 71% of Americans now get at least some of their news input from social media platforms and a 2023 study that indicates that 48% of Americans use social media as their only source of information on news and current events.

Locally, Alpharetta is one of a shrinking number of communities that is served by a local newspaper. This is fortunate, as the United States has lost more than one-fourth of its newspapers since 2005 and is on

track to lose a third by 2025. The local newspaper being a weekly publication, however, can present challenges in terms of communicating information to the public quickly.

Alpharetta is, of course, served by the largest daily newspaper in the Southeast and multiple regional television and radio stations. Those outlets, however, are heavily focused on stories occurring in the City of Atlanta unless they are negative or of regional significance.

Additionally, there is a collection of small specialty publications such as free lifestyle magazines and newspapers targeting specific audiences such as one focused on the region's Asian-Indian population.

This environment increases the challenge of placing information into the hands of Alpharetta residents and

overcoming the volume of misinformation and disinformation that pervades social media.

STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES:

- Improved understanding of the importance and prioritization of internal and external communications and engagement

During their most recent annual planning retreat, the Mayor and City Council identified improving internal and external communications as one of ten strategic priorities for the City. The City's current elected and senior staff leadership has also demonstrated an increasing understanding of the importance of consistent and strategic communication, engagement, and brand management.

- Alpharetta has a good story to tell
There are a lot of positive things happening in Alpharetta that provide opportunity for great messaging.
- Generally positive community reputation
Alpharetta has enjoyed a sizable volume of positive organic media attention in recent years and also benefits from earned media attention due to the efforts of strategic partners like the Alpharetta Convention and Visitors Bureau and Tech Alpharetta. That has increased positive awareness of the community locally, regionally, and nationally.

Locally, a combination of sound fiscal policies, consistent delivery of municipal services and amenities, and

The City enjoys a good relationship with area media outlets because of our responsiveness and how we work with media sources.

investments in infrastructure and park projects bring favorable attention to the city. While there is no hard data available to indicate citizen perceptions or satisfaction levels, anecdotal evidence such as social media comments and comments during public meetings and project surveys points to residents having a generally positive view of the community and City government.

- Generally positive relationship with area media outlets
While the Metro Atlanta media market has recently gone through a period of extensive turnover in reporters and editors, the City continues to enjoy a good relationship with area media outlets because of our responsiveness and how we work with media sources.

IDENTITY AND BRAND

The concept of *identity* for a city can be confusing because the word is often used interchangeably with terms like branding, marketing, and design. Identity is not about having a slogan, logo, or sales pitch to attract companies and visitors, rather it is the foundation for these things and the essence behind them. A city's identity can be thought of as its very DNA: a unique, inherited collection of assets, history, traits, and culture that distinguishes it internally and externally and has the potential to unite people and place.

A city's *brand* is really how it communicates that identity to the world through the stories it tells, the images and media channels it uses, and the icons, colors, and design aesthetics in which it clothes its messages. Done well, identity and brand come together to influence how the city is perceived by the public and form a strong, positive *reputation*.



Branding and brand positioning for cities can be somewhat different than for corporate entities, particularly in that cities do not have the level of near-complete control over the brand enjoyed by corporations. Rather, a city's brand is heavily influenced by various stakeholders from residents to businesses to agencies such as chambers of commerce and tourism organizations.

Still, it is imperative that a city clearly defines its brand and stakes its brand position. Doing so provides clarity and direction for the city's own communications and engagement efforts, and it provides a foundation from which it can work with stakeholders to try to achieve brand consistency.

PRIMARY BRAND MESSAGE AND PROMISE:

The primary brand message of Alpharetta as “Georgia’s Connected City” is a strong one that has the potential for broad audience appeal. Unfortunately, the potential of that concept has not been fully explored or

realized. This plan envisions addressing that and building our communications program around the “Connected City” message and a simple brand promise:

“Alpharetta is a city connected through technology and infrastructure, places and experiences, commerce and culture, and above all as families, neighbors, and friends creating a community where all can thrive.”

The beauty of that brand promise is that it clearly reflects the community that we are while still offering an aspirational element. That aspiration, however, remains focused on our people and the lifestyle and experiences that are core to our city’s roots.

It is important that our brand message reflect the point at which we are in Alpharetta’s evolution. While we have passed the period when Alpharetta was a small, quiet enclave and now stand on the national stage as a modern, metropolitan city, much of what makes our community special is found in those small-town values and personal connections that we work to retain. As a community, we are both optimistic and pragmatic, taking a realistic view of what we can accomplish while, simultaneously, carrying a desire to do more.

We have residents who fondly remember the Alpharetta of thirty years ago, residents who look forward (sometimes with apprehension) to the city we are becoming, and some who do a bit of both. It is important that our brand promise and the messaging it supports, recognizes, empathizes, and embraces all of

those views so that we remain connected and Alpharetta’s *identity* and its *brand* are aligned and honest.

LOGO:

A logo is more than just a graphic element; it is the face of a brand and should encourage awareness, discovery, and recognition of an organization. For a logo to do this effectively, however, the organization it represents must invest time and resources to inject it with significance and its use must be consistent and frequent.

In 2015, following an exhaustive process, the City of Alpharetta adopted a logo that intended to convey a community that is marching into the future while retaining our heritage and small-town values, one that is a place to build connections and make a home. It is a logo that aligns with the brand identity and promise noted earlier in this plan document.

In addition to the primary logo, two secondary logos have been developed for use in specific circumstances. The first is what is referred to as the “shield banner” and is

simply the primary logo in a solid pentagonal field that is intended for use primarily in digital applications but can also be applied to certain print publications such as brochures. The second is a more simplistic version intended solely for use with approved tag lines.

How these logos are to be used is thoroughly defined in the brand standards that are included as an addendum to this document.

BRAND EXPERIENCE:

Brand experience is the sum of all the sensations, thoughts, feelings, and reactions that individuals have in response to a brand. Brand experience is not specific to a channel or media type. Rather, it's the result — or the lasting impression — that remains after someone encounters or engages with the City in any environment. Brand experience is important because positive experiences facilitate deeper connections, inspire audiences, and ultimately deliver results.

Take Nestlé Toll House for example. When most people think of them, they think of cookies. You may even remember baking cookies using Toll House chocolate chips, the

smell as they baked, and finally, savoring every last bite. You may even associate the brand with moments of bonding with family as you baked cookies together. The Toll House brand experience has moved beyond just the consumption of chocolate chips. It is an emotional connection built over time with

Every interaction, big or small, affects how a consumer feels about a brand and feeds into their brand experience.

consumers and how their products integrate into the lives of the people who buy them.

While the topic of brand experience and the investments and strategies that the City employs to create amazing experiences for our citizens and customers exceeds the scope of a communications plan, it cannot be stressed too much or too often how brand experience can amplify or negate all of our communications strategies, tactics, and programs.

STRATEGIC MESSAGES

MESSAGE IDENTIFICATION AND SAMPLE BIAS:

Typically, strategic messages would be developed based on a deep understanding of the issues, needs, and perceptions of residents and other target audiences as gleaned from citizen surveys, focus groups, and other data sources. As previously noted, the City of Alpharetta has not performed an in-depth citizen survey since 2007, so we have limited data with which to work.

In the absence of qualitative or quantitative data, Staff is challenged with using anecdotal evidence as a basis for deciphering likely citizen issues, needs, and perceptions.

The primary problem with this is the issue of sampling bias creating false impressions of the views of the larger population. Sampling bias occurs when certain groups of individuals are more likely to be included in a

sample than others, leading to an unrepresentative sample. This limits the generalizability of your findings because findings from biased samples can only be generalized to populations that share characteristics with the sample. Thus, the results from the research cannot be used to express the ideas and thoughts of the majority.

For example, if we ask the members of the City's boards and commissions if they feel they are well-informed about a given community issue, their responses would likely not be a good indication of how the general population would respond. Why? The members of our boards and commissions are generally much more engaged in the community than most residents, they have more frequent interaction with elected officials and professional staff, and their roles on our boards and commissions require them to read and hear information that most citizens are less likely to pay attention to.

For another example, consider the audience of a public hearing on a rezoning application. Citizens who are opposed to the application are much more likely to attend the public meeting than those who support it. They are more passionate and motivated. So, while the views of those opponents are important and need to be considered, it is also important to remember that they may not be representative of the majority of residents.

In using anecdotal evidence to decipher the issues, needs, and perceptions of our target audiences, we cannot completely overcome sample bias. The best that we can do is to be aware of the problem and attempt to mitigate it by looking for commonalities in the views expressed across multiple channels and by focusing on more general issues.

All that to say it will be important to revisit our strategic messages as qualitative and quantitative data provide better insights into the issues, needs, and perceptions of residents and other target audiences.

KEY CONCEPTS AND THEMES:

We have identified four major themes that will be used to direct messages and communications to ensure alignment with organization priorities as identified by the Mayor and City Council during their annual strategic planning retreat.

- Alpharetta is a safe and welcoming community
- Alpharetta is connecting neighbors and neighborhoods
- Alpharetta is planning and investing in the future
- Alpharetta is where business innovates and thrives

These four themes encompass each of the ten strategic priorities that were identified by the Mayor and City Council, are consistent with our brand promise, and can embrace diverse messages to advance the City's communication and engagement objectives.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

While a broad and constantly evolving set of tactics will be developed, executed, and assessed as the City's overall communications strategy is pursued, a set of broad initiatives has been identified that will be critical to forming a foundation for the plan's success.

- **Alpharetta University**
This is Alpharetta's version of a "citizens academy" and is intended to:
 - Provide participating citizens with a better understanding of their local government and community.
 - Build relationships between residents and government leaders that encourage and result in increased citizen engagement.
 - Identify and begin developing residents who have an interest in serving on citizen boards, will act as ambassadors and information conduits to the larger community, and may in the future pursue local elected office.
- **Community Pop-Ups**
A pop-up public engagement series intended to increase connections between citizens and their local government, gain insights into citizen opinions and interests, and provide intentional opportunities to meet citizens where they are in the public sphere. Pop-ups will be held in public parks, community events, and other locations where members of the public are already gathering and the opportunity to engage is amplified by what is naturally occurring in the space.
- **Community Town Hall**
Held annually or semi-annually, depending upon the preference of the Mayor and Council, the Community Town Hall features a traditional town hall format but also leverages technology to provide for remote participation by Alpharetta residents. The Community Town Hall would feature a brief presentation by City representatives to highlight current initiatives and strategic messages but would primarily be focused on fielding questions from the public in a moderated setting.
- **Minute With The Mayor**
This monthly video message is distributed via the City's social media channels and provides an opportunity for the Mayor to speak directly to Alpharetta citizens and stakeholders on a timely topic. Videos are three minutes or less in duration. The initiative was quite popular with citizens when active before the pandemic.
- **Coffee With Chris**
Intended as a tool to improve our internal communications, the initiative provides a monthly opportunity for the City Administrator to speak directly with City employees in an informal setting. Each session would begin with an update from the City Administrator on current projects,

initiatives, or important management topics but would also include time for general questions from employees. The sessions would be live-streamed and recorded to provide the broadest possible reach across the organization.

- **City Website Build**
Design, build, and launch a new City of Alpharetta website based on the latest technologies and featuring a suite of public communications tools including an integrated mobile application, mass notification system, and other features.

Rapid advancements in design trends, technological innovations, security enhancements, and user expectations render older websites obsolete, demanding constant adaptation to stay relevant and effective. In fact, as of March 2023, the average lifespan of a commercial website is 2 years and 4 months. The general consensus within the digital communications and marketing industry is that an organization's website can last 2 to 5 years before it needs to be rebuilt.

The current City of Alpharetta website was developed ten years ago. While it was based on the latest technology and web design trends at that time and included features that were largely unseen outside of the websites of leading-edge marketing and technology companies, technological innovations have advanced beyond those our current website can offer. Features that users now view as common or expected on modern sites cannot be made available on ours.

- **City Podcast Series**
Envisioned as a semi-monthly series, the podcast will focus on current City projects and initiatives, upcoming events, and general education about City services and processes. The program will have a cast of regular hosts who are joined for each episode by one to two guests who are experts in the episode topic. The goal is to deliver informational content in an entertaining format.
- **Growth Of Video Content**
People want to be informed, but they are reading less than ever. Video, especially short-form videos of 4 minutes or less, is increasingly the primary way in which citizens are consuming information online. Consider the following statistics:
 - Only 16% of visitors to a webpage or social media site actually read the content; 79% skim it for keywords.
 - Most people are visual learners, retaining 95% of information presented in video form versus 10% of information in printed form.
 - Online video accounts for 82% of all online traffic.
 - Videos are shared 1,200 percent more times than text.

By increasing our use of video content, we will better engage and inform residents and expand the reach of our messaging.

- Improved Social Media Management

Over the past two years, a conscious effort has been made to reduce the number of social media accounts affiliated with the City of Alpharetta so that consumers can more easily find information and we can better manage the City's brand identity. While that effort will continue, there will always be a need for certain accounts that target specific functions (e.g. public safety or recreation), marquis events (e.g. Taste of Alpharetta), or very specific audiences (e.g. economic development decision-makers).

Because of the need to maintain multiple accounts within some social media channels, we must improve our management and coordination across accounts. This will be achieved through the use of social media management tools that allow our account managers to have a shared social media scheduling calendar, track analytics, and cross-pollinate accounts.



CITY OF ALPHARETTA

CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN



A COMPONENT OF THE CITY OF ALPHARETTA COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

PURPOSE

The City of Alpharetta Crisis Communications Plan outlines the roles, responsibilities, and protocols that will guide the City in promptly sharing information with the City's audiences during an emergency or crisis.

All emergencies are not created equal. As such, and because it is not possible to anticipate every incident or emergency that may require a heightened response, the document is designed to provide a framework from which members of the City's Communications Team will tailor a communications strategy and plan that is appropriate to a given situation.

How To Use The Document

Develop a tiered response plan that offers an appropriate response level based on the scope of the threat using the chart below as a framework. In the Scope column, explain what circumstances would trigger the associated level response. In the Stakeholders column, identify departments that will be stakeholders in the community's response.

LEVEL	SCOPE	STAKEHOLDERS
LEVEL 1	Level one is the highest level of crisis escalation and reflects the broadest risk of citizen and operational disruption. Examples include a severe natural disaster, a pandemic, or a cyber-attack that cripples operations.	
LEVEL 2	Level two represents a moderate potential risk to citizens or an impact on government delivery. Examples include a mild natural disaster, an active shooter event, infrastructure damage (e.g., collapsed bridge), or a local business crisis (e.g., hotel fire).	
LEVEL 3	Level three represents a situation that requires a coordinated municipal response, but that is unlikely to pose a health risk to citizens or severely disrupt operations. Examples include a political controversy or a scandal that involves a highly visible public figure.	

Determining the appropriate Incident Response Level in accordance with the chart above is dependent upon answering the following questions:

- What happened?
- Where?
- Who was affected and how?
- When did we learn about the incident?
- What future risk is there to the safety of the public?
- What government service delivery operations, if any, will be affected and for how long?
- What City department or other stakeholders need to be involved or engaged in order to effectively develop and execute effective messaging and communications in response to the incident?

PLAN OBJECTIVES

The guiding principle for this plan is to communicate facts as quickly as possible, update information regularly as circumstances change, to keep the Alpharetta community safe, and to ensure the continuity of essential services.

To achieve these goals, updates should be simultaneously accurate and delivered as quickly as possible. In many crisis situations, this may mean that the official information that is shared is incomplete as events unfold. Reacting swiftly with accurate information about what is known for certain during an emergency or crisis is key to avoiding lasting damage and spreading misinformation.

The City of Alpharetta will use multiple platforms to reach all audiences with accurate, timely information with the goal of being accessible to all decision-makers, community members, and interested parties. The City will do this while being mindful of legal and privacy concerns.

AUDIENCES

Broadly, there are several important audiences for the City of Alpharetta to reach during crisis situations; City staff, City elected officials, other government agencies and officials, community members, businesses, and those in surrounding areas. The specific audiences will vary depending upon the level and nature of the crisis incident and may expand or contract as the specific incident evolves. It is essential, then, that the members of the City Communications Team who are engaged in the incident response define, review, and redefine the target audiences throughout the crisis response.

PROCEDURE

In the instance that a crisis occurs, conveying critical information is essential to ensuring community safety and allowing for appropriate decision-making. Crucially, the information that is conveyed must be coordinated within the City organization to ensure that information is accurate and that all messaging is consistent to avoid confusing the public, undermining confidence in the City's response, and countering misinformation that may be generated by other parties. This is the primary responsibility of the City Communication Team during a crisis response.

The tables on the following pages define the base procedure for each incident level. Keep in mind that these are intended to form the foundation for response, and it is imperative for the Communications Team involved to constantly evaluate the situation to determine the additional strategies and tactics that need to be recommended or employed.

LEVEL 3 INCIDENT RESPONSE BASE PROCEDURE

1	Briefing or conference call with: • City Administrator: Lead coordinator of the crisis response, liaison to City elected officials, liaison to other government agencies • Assistant City Administrator: Primary communications officer, crafts and distributes messages, central point of coordination for media and resident inquiries • City Attorney: Ensures legality of response, advises on limiting potential liability from statements and communication • Mayor: CEO of the organization, secondary liaison to City elected officials • Other staff as needed, depending on the nature of the incident Purpose is to ensure individuals have all available information, formulate response strategy, and define key messages
2	Establish the spokesperson and key point of contact for all statements
3	Establish a point of origin and coordination with City Administrator for all outgoing communications
4	Compose initial statement and speaking points
5	Advise/coordinate with Mayor and elected officials
6	Distribute statement/messaging through existing channels with audiences prioritized as follows: • City Council • City staff • City residents • Local media • Regional and national media, if appropriate
7	Craft media releases and/or hold press conference as appropriate
8	Monitor situation, media coverage, and public response. Build and adjust strategy and response accordingly.

LEVEL 2 INCIDENT RESPONSE BASE PROCEDURE

1	Emergency Management Coordinator activates the Emergency Operations Center
2	Briefing or conference call with: • City Administrator: Lead coordinator of the crisis response, liaison to City elected officials and City Attorney, liaison to other government agencies • Emergency Management Coordinator: Operational coordinator of the crisis response; primary liaison to the City Administrator • Assistant City Administrator: Primary communications officer, crafts and distributes messages, central point of coordination for media and resident inquiries • Mayor: CEO of the organization, secondary liaison to City elected officials
3	Communications Team members are alerted and placed on standby if not already activated by the Emergency Management Coordinator
4	City Communications Team designates primary and alternate team leads to coordinate the communications response and to meet the responsibilities assigned under Emergency Support Function 15 of the City's emergency operations plan
5	Activate and staff public information hotline, as needed, to offload non-emergency calls from 911 Dispatch.
6	Compose initial statement and speaking points
7	Advise/coordinate with City Administrator and Emergency Management Coordinator
8	Distribute statement/messaging through existing channels with audiences prioritized as follows: • City Council • City staff • City residents • Local and regional media • National media, if appropriate
9	Craft media releases and/or hold press conference(s) as appropriate
10	Build, execute, and adjust strategy, messaging, and communications activities as appropriate based on evolving incident. Monitor situation, media coverage, and public response.

LEVEL 1 INCIDENT RESPONSE BASE PROCEDURE

1	Emergency Management Coordinator activates the Emergency Operations Center
2	City Communications Team is activated and primary and alternate team leads are designated to coordinate the communications response and to meet the responsibilities assigned under Emergency Support Function 15 of the City's emergency operations plan.
3	Briefing or conference call with: • City Administrator: Lead coordinator of the crisis response, liaison to City elected officials • Emergency Management Coordinator: Operational coordinator of the crisis response; primary liaison to the City Administrator and Mayor • Assistant City Administrator: Primary communications officer; directs all communications activities • Mayor: CEO of the organization, secondary liaison to City elected officials
4	Communications Team members are divided into shifts (sub-teams) to sustain 24-hour operations throughout the incident response and recovery. A primary and alternate team lead will be designated for each shift.
5	Activate and staff public information hotline to offload non-emergency calls from 911 Dispatch. The hotline serves as primary number for public to call for information and guidance during the incident response.
6	Compose initial statement and speaking points
7	Advise/coordinate with Emergency Management Coordinator
8	Distribute statement/messaging through existing channels with audiences prioritized as follows: • City Council • City staff • City residents • Local and regional media • National media, if appropriate
9	Craft media releases and/or hold press conference(s) as appropriate
10	Build, execute, and adjust strategy, messaging, and communications activities as appropriate based on evolving incident. Monitor situation, media coverage, and public response.

OTHER GUIDING DOCUMENTS

This document is intended as a supplement to the City of Alpharetta Communications Plan, and the principles and tenants of that plan shall guide the communications strategies and tactics employed in response to any crisis or incident.

The City of Alpharetta Emergency Operations Plan is the overarching document that guides all City activities when the Emergency Management Coordinator activates the Emergency Operations Center. This includes all communications activities under the Level 2 and Level 3 Incident Response Categories as defined in this Crisis Communications Plan.



CITY OF ALPHARETTA

MEDIA GUIDELINES



A COMPONENT OF THE CITY OF ALPHARETTA COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

GOALS

The goal of the City of Alpharetta's Media Guidelines document is to ensure that all city employees and elected officials are familiar with best practices that will guide their interactions with the news media.

All city officials should aim to have a healthy relationship with the local media and be prepared for effective media interaction so that Alpharetta residents, business owners, and other stakeholders are equipped with accurate information on all topics covered by the press. Accordingly, the plan will provide guidance on how to inform and empower all stakeholders to become more engaged members of the community. These topics include:

- City of Alpharetta policies, views, and activities
- New developments being proposed within Alpharetta
- City programs and services
- Ways the City is trying to attract new businesses, residents, and visitors
- Crisis situations (weather, fires, derailments, terrorism, property damage, etc.)
- Situations that could impact the City's integrity or reputation

THE BASICS

The remainder of this document provides more detailed guidelines and best practices for interacting with the media, but three basic guidelines form the foundation of the rest of this document.

- Information provided to the media should reflect the consensus opinion of the Mayor and City Council or the City Administration's interpretation of the City Council's policy, and should not reflect the personal views of a City employee.
- When contacted by the media, elected officials and employees should contact the Assistant City Administrator before the interview. Staff from the City's Public Communications and Engagement Team will assist with developing key messages for the interview. If circumstances prevent an elected official or employee from contacting the Assistant City Administrator before a media engagement, that contact should be made as soon after the interaction as is possible and practicable.
- When speaking with any member of the media, assume that anything and everything that you say is on the record and will be made public.

MEDIA INTERVIEW BEST PRACTICES

You never get a second chance to make a first impression. Once you are on tape or quoted in the paper, you can't take it back. And it's even more challenging now due to the Internet. Your comments are not just out there for a day, they are out there forever in the speed of a few clicks of a mouse. However, there is an art to making media coverage work in your favor.



WHEN A REPORTER CALLS:

Depending on your role with the City of Alpharetta, an occasion may arise when a reporter calls you directly seeking answers to questions or just comments on a topic. Many of them will say they are on a tight deadline and just need a minute of your time to confirm a couple of points or so that the City's perspective can be included in their story.

Never engage in an immediate interview.

When that call came in, you were busy working on something, so be honest about that. Tell the reporter that you are busy at the moment and want to give them the attention they deserve. Then do four things:

- Get the reporter's name, telephone number and/or email address, their deadline for completing their story, and a summary of what the reporter wants to know so that you can confirm relevant information.
- Arrange a time when you will initiate a second call or follow-up email.
- Contact the Assistant City Administrator or another member of the City's Public Information and Communications Team.
- Work with our Public Information and Communications Team to prepare for the interview or to draft a response statement.

PREPARING FOR A MEDIA INTERVIEW:

Reporters are neither your friends nor your enemies. They have a job to do, and sometimes that job means they will report on the City's actions, decisions, and initiatives; the good and the bad. The best reporters do this in a fair, balanced, and unbiased manner, but this is not always the case. Keep in mind that a reporter's assignment editor may direct them to approach a news story from a specific angle or the reporter may have a personal perspective that they allow (knowingly or unknowingly) to influence their reporting.

With proper preparation, however, you can influence the outcome of a news story.

- Know who is conducting the interview or writing the story. Is the reporter one who routinely covers the City and comes into the interview with a good bit of background on who we are and how we operate, or is he or she doing a story on Alpharetta for the first time? Is the person a news reporter, feature writer, or investigative journalist? What do we know about previous stories the reporter has covered involving local governments and are there any patterns in the way those stories were reported?
- Be aware of any current City strategic priorities and communications campaigns that may integrate with or influence the topic of the interview.
- Do your homework on the topic. Review any relevant documents like staff reports, memorandums, ordinances, policies, and applications. If the topic has been discussed in a City Council meeting, read the meeting minutes or, better yet, watch the video of that discussion.

- Before you walk into the interview, identify two to three primary points about the interview topic that the City wants to communicate. Keep those in mind and keep coming back to and speaking about those points throughout the interview. They should form the foundation for your answer to any question the reporter asks.
- Practice your "pause language." Pause language is what you will use if the reporter asks a question that catches you by surprise. It stalls the conversation while you collect your thoughts to deliver the response you want rather than the reaction the reporter hopes you will have. Watch a show like "*Face the Nation*" or the interview of a US Senator on the nightly news and you will frequently hear responses to questions begin with pause language like, "You know, that is a great question, and I am glad you asked it because . . ." Pause language is just a cliché that you can say without really thinking while your brain is focused on how to direct the response back to your talking points.

Regardless of the topic, you have a single mission during any interview, get the City's message across. Meet the reporter's news needs *if you choose to*, but only if it does not interfere with getting the City's message across.

If all of this preparation seems overwhelming, do not be concerned. Our communications team is ready to help, which is why you should contact them before agreeing to a media interview.

MEDIA INTERVIEW PREPARATION CHECKLIST

There is an art to making media coverage work in your favor, and it all begins with how you prepare. Before doing any media interview, answer the following questions:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Which reporter or anchor will do the interview? | ☐ When will the story be published or broadcast? |
| ☐ Why do they want to talk with me? | ☐ How will the interview be used? |
| ☐ What kind of story are they doing? | ☐ Who else is being interviewed and supplying information? |
| ☐ What publication, station, or website is represented? | ☐ How much time will the interview take? |
| ☐ What kind of information do they want? | ☐ Where and when will the interview be held? |
| ☐ Do they want to shoot video or take photos? | ☐ Should I record the interview? |

Now, ask yourself, "Have I prepared by"

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Defining my communications objectives and key messages? | ☐ Gathering evidence to support my assertions? |
| ☐ Organizing and identifying the support I will need from my staff? | ☐ Identifying a human example that will illustrate my points? |
| ☐ Developing sample questions? | ☐ Preparing important numbers or statistics for the reporter in written summary, table, charts, or graphs? |
| ☐ Developing sample answers? | ☐ Preparing notes I can put in front of me as I interview (radio and phone only)? |
| ☐ Determining the ground rules (mine and theirs?) | |
| ☐ Conducting an interview rehearsal? | |

If all of this preparation seems overwhelming, do not be concerned. Our communications team is ready to help, which is why you should contact them before agreeing to a media interview.

KEY MESSAGES:

Key messages are one to three important points about a subject that you want to convey in an interview. Those messages must have value to a reporter's readers, listeners, or viewers, so it is important to think about the topic from their perspective.

It takes time and critical thinking to boil down everything you know about the subject into three points or less, and even more time and critical thinking to articulate them in 5-to-10-second sound bites. On top of that, the words used must meet four criteria:

- They must be true;
- They must be memorable;
- They must sound like something said by a person, not an institution; and
- They must influence your audience.

Oftentimes, a reporter will begin an interview with a general question like, "What can you tell me about this project?" This is the perfect

opportunity to recite all of your key messages as your answer, as doing so begins to set the direction of the interview.

As the reporter asks additional questions, logically connect your answers to one of your key messages. This is a bit trickier because the reporter will likely ask at least one question that you will not want to answer. This is when you fall back on "pause language" to buy time, collect your thoughts, and decide how to tie your response back to one of your key messages.

Throughout the interview, repeat the key messages as often as you can. Do not worry about sounding like a broken record. Connecting your answers to your one to three key messages and repeating those messages gives the reporter context and makes it more likely that those messages will be included in the reporter's story. Repetition makes it more likely that the reporter and their audience will remember your message.

CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW:

For a good reporter, their job is to tell the story well; not to hurt the City and make you look bad (nor to help the City and make you look good). The City does not view the media or reporters as adversaries, and you should not treat them as if they are. Rather you should approach your interactions with reporters as you would with any other professional, in a friendly manner but not as friends.

Just as we hope that reporters who are covering the City will do so in a fair, impartial manner, we expect representatives of the City to interact with the media in an honest, impartial way. Do not allow yourself to be affected by a reporter's charm, aggressive demeanor, or apparent sympathy (or lack thereof) for your point of view. Focus on the content of the reporter's questions and deliver your key messages.

Following are a few rules of thumb to follow during a media interview:

- Be brief, simple, clear, and deliberate in your answers
 - Use short sentences
 - The less complex you are, the less room there is for error
 - Avoid using jargon, acronyms, and technical language
 - Make your point at the beginning of your response, and do not beat around the bush
- Keep in mind and deliver what you want to say
 - Logically connect your answers to one of your key messages
 - Repeat your key messages as often as possible
- Support your points
 - Use relatable human anecdotes, comparisons, and examples
 - Choose two or three compelling statistics



- Do not “over answer” the question
 - Answer questions as directly as possible
 - When you have said what you want to say, stop talking.

- If there is a pause in the conversation, do not fill the silence. Use the moment to collect your thoughts, recenter your emotions, and reflect on your key messages.
- Do not go off on tangents.
- If a reporter asks several questions at once, choose one to answer
 - If two related questions are asked, answer them in the order you choose
 - If a barrage of questions is asked, choose the one that you like best or that best fits your key messages
- Answer the questions, even the tough ones, truthfully
 - Do not try to dodge a tough question.
 - If a program or project has not gone as intended or the results have not been what the City hoped for, say so but explain why and what we learned that can be applied in the future.
- If you do not know the answer to the question, say so
 - Do not try to bluff your way through the answer.
 - State that you will need to look into or research it and get back to the reporter, and then do it.
 - Get back to the reporter with the correct answer as quickly as possible.
- If you are not going to answer a question, explain why
 - Never say things like, “No comment.” That just makes it appear that you are hiding something.
 - There are legitimate reasons for not answering a question, so state the appropriate reason and move on.
 - Policy or direction not yet established by Mayor and Council
 - Pending litigation
 - Internal review or study not yet complete
 - Proprietary information
- Correct the reporter’s mistakes or misunderstandings tactfully
 - If a reporter’s question is based on faulty information or a false premise, say so simply, matter-of-factly, and politely.
 - Be gracious and do not condescend.
- Do not try to speak to the reporter – speak to the audience

- The reporter is not your audience. The people who will read, listen, or watch the reporter's story are your audience. Answer every question with them in mind, and speak to them.
- When being interviewed on camera, do not look at the camera. Look at the reporter.
- When speaking on camera, use your hands as you would in any other conversation.
- Remember, anything you say when a reporter is around – even if you are not speaking to them directly – may be quoted or used by a reporter in developing their story.

SPECIAL ADVICE FOR BROADCAST NEWS INTERVIEWS:

- Make your point in 5 to 10 seconds.
- Viewers and listeners remember two or three main points if they are listening and watching attentively. When they are cooking dinner or chatting about school with the kids, chances are they will only vaguely recall what the story was about.
- What you say can be easily overshadowed by video in television stories. Your non-verbal cues and the video can have a greater impact than what you actually say. Keep this in mind when agreeing to an interview location and allowing cameras access to your facility.
 - Be aware of your posture and facial expressions.
 - Pay attention to the lighting in the room or outdoor location. If you are in shadow, you may be perceived as untrustworthy. If you are squinting due to harsh light or the sun in your face, you may be perceived as confused.
 - Minimize accessories. Avoid wearing a lot of jewelry or dangling earrings. Do not wear scarves or sunglasses.
 - Check your hair and trim beards and mustaches.
 - Be aware of the colors and patterns of your clothing and not just because of how they may look on you. Colors trigger psychological responses, and certain patterns can cause issues with television cameras.
 - Blue generally conveys warmth, sincerity, compassion, and being communicative.
 - Red attracts attention more than any other color and conveys strength, power, and determination. It can, however, also convey aggression.
 - Green is generally associated with tranquility and calmness and can convey piety and sincerity. Be aware, however, that certain shades of green do not work well with television cameras.
 - Brown is generally associated with dependability, reliability, and resilience.
- Any interview is publicity for our City and the community we serve. Whether that publicity is positive or negative, even when we are facing a tough situation, can be determined by you and how you handle the interview.

EFFECTIVELY ENDING A MEDIA INTERVIEW

The interview is wrapping up or has concluded, and you made it through the experience. But, wait! Your work is not quite done.

- If a reporter has failed to ask a key question that will help convey the City's perspective or deliver one of your key messages, raise the question yourself.
- If you have provided statistics in response to any questions, review them with the reporter to ensure they have noted them accurately and understand them. Offer to email her or him with any additional facts to ensure accuracy.
- Offer to be available for clarification as the reporter writes the story.
- Never ask for pre-approval of statements attributed to you. The reporter will not agree to it, and your credibility will plummet for asking.
- Remember that just because the camera is off or the reporter has put their pen away does not mean that something you say will not end up in the story. Be careful what you say until the reporter has left.



CITY OF ALPHARETTA

BRAND STANDARDS AND STYLE GUIDE



A COMPONENT OF THE CITY OF ALPHARETTA COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

WHAT ARE BRAND STANDARDS

Brand standards are the set of rules that define the overall look and feel of an organization's brand. They help build a brand identity that our audience can recognize across all platforms.

A comprehensive brand style guide outlines everything from typography and color palette to tone of voice and mission statement. By doing so, it provides the core instructions needed to communicate the right messages in the right manner every time we create new marketing materials for the City of Alpharetta. To ensure consistency across all marketing touchpoints, the standards and style guide is provided to stakeholders who use our brand elements to create communications material. As a result, no matter who's responsible for a given communications or marketing campaign, whether it's an external supplier or an internal member of the team, everyone will have a universal understanding of how the City of Alpharetta brand should be perceived.

WHY DO BRAND STANDARDS MATTER

If we are being completely honest, brands get sick of their message long before their customers do. Since we see our own branding and messages every day, it is tempting to tweak things a little bit here and there to keep it fresh. The problem is our citizens, customers, and potential customers don't see our brand nearly as much – and all those little adjustments could easily confuse and alienate them.

Building a brand's visual identity takes a great deal of time and effort. Logos, websites, digital communications, and marketing campaigns can be months in the making. Subconsciously, standards will exist, even without physical brand guidelines. As organizations focus their attention on day-to-day business activities, however, all too often those once consistent brand elements start to fall out of step.

Beyond ensuring consistency, there are a few other reasons that having and sticking with a set of brand standards is important:

- **Brand standards help our team work faster**

If you love a tool that does half the work for you, you will love a brand style guide. Setting brand identity guidelines is an easy way to send communications efforts in the right direction before the ideation even starts. When the brainstorming does begin, these brand standards can quickly help weed out the "wrong" ideas and narrow down our best options, all while avoiding an opinion-based debate with your team members.

- **Standards make our brand more tangible**

Every organization has a brand, but some are much more clearly defined than others. If our brand is not concrete, we will end up being defined by our projects or services, and that does not resonate with people or create a strong emotional impression. Brand guidelines help pull together all the elements that make up who we are, so we can build an identity beyond what we do. Our citizens and customers will be able to visualize what we stand for when they hear our name.

- **It helps us stand out from the crowd**

The modern media environment has become a blur of information, with too much data and offers for consumers' tastes. 3.5 quintillion bytes of data were created each day in 2023 (there are 18 zeros in a quintillion if you are counting). Consumers feel overwhelmed and cannot escape the data or offers that marketers dish out without consequence in order to reach them at their most vulnerable state, leading them into a state where their attention span can barely last two seconds before moving on to something else. But when we are pushing a clearly consistent brand time and time again, we can cut through all the noise to reach our citizens and customers.

- **Great branding boosts loyalty**

When people become loyal customers, it is usually not just because of a product or service. Think about ridesharing companies, for example. Uber and Lyft provide nearly identical services—often sharing the same drivers—and yet many users have a preference. Branding plays a strong role in that. Consumers develop emotional connections with organizations that share the same core values, and our brand guidelines help translate the City of Alpharetta's values to our audience in a unique way.

OUR BRAND MESSAGE AND PROMISE

The primary brand message of Alpharetta as "Georgia's Connected City" is a strong one that has the potential for broad audience appeal. It is built around a simple brand promise, "Alpharetta is a city connected through technology and infrastructure, places and experiences, commerce and culture, and above all as families, neighbors, and friends creating a community where all can thrive."

The beauty of that brand promise is that it clearly reflects the community that we are while still offering an aspirational element. That aspiration, however, remains focused on our people and the lifestyle and experiences that are core to our city's roots.

DESIGN AESTHETIC INFLUENCED BY BAUHAUS PRINCIPLES

The Bauhaus Movement is a modern art movement of the 1920s and 1930s that combined a wide array of art mediums, materials, and disciplines. It was based on the philosophy that "Form Follows Function," dictating that designs and products created following the Bauhaus principles are sleek, minimal, and feature a no-frills attitude that favors utility over aesthetics. That philosophy is quite reflective of our organization, as are many of the principles that define Bauhaus-influenced graphic design.

- **Form follows function**

Create elegant design layouts using geometric shapes but maintain the focus on the function of all the elements holistically. Functionality does not need to be boring.

- **Simplicity and effectiveness**
Bauhaus artists celebrated pure forms, clean designs, and the main characteristic of function. They were looking for the organic design and the nature of the objects by avoiding the use of additional ornamenting elements that they felt were unnecessary.
- **Emphasis on new materials and new techniques**
The Bauhaus artists focused on looking for new materials, techniques, and a new attitude for their design work. Their designs were focused on the use of negative space, avoiding extra elements and ornamentation.
- **Constant development**
Central to the Bauhaus movement was the artist's and craftsmen's constant evolution of their style. The Bauhaus artists were very experimental with graphic design layouts, and it is very common to see them using "broken" grids. Designs emphasized geographic shapes, shape psychology, and the use of minimalist typography.

Graphic designers influenced by the Bauhaus Movement embrace elements from both art and industry, resulting in geometric shapes, strong lines, color blocking, and sharp corners. Drawing on elements of retro design, the Bauhaus trend has a minimal, modern, and functional feel – making it a perfect and versatile choice for branding, where you want your identity to take center stage.

CITY OF ALPHARETTA PRIMARY LOGO

The right logo says everything without saying a word. It connotes feelings of honor, trust, pride, excellence, and integrity. It conveys a series of virtues and a set of values without pages of copy and a team of copywriters. It evokes a sense of connection between the City and the public, establishing a bond between our organization and our community of fans, friends, critics, allies, and champions.

The City of Alpharetta's primary logo is a classic and clean design that still offers touches of a modern aesthetic. It is timeless, intended to connect us to our historic roots and Southern charm while hinting at a window to an exciting and dynamic future. The design includes an artistic scroll element juxtaposed with the Bauhaus components.



ALTERNATIVE LOGOS

Alternate logos are a variation of your main logo. They should not be completely different – they should be an extension of the current primary logo. They should use the same fonts and even the same colors within our brand color palette. A logo variation is simply a rearranged version of your primary logo design that gives your brand the flexibility to show up consistently, and recognizably, in different placements.

The City of Alpharetta has three variations on its primary logo.



ALPHARETTA

GEORGIA'S CONNECTED CITY

The first, and most similar to the primary logo simply replaces the word “Georgia” with other words, most commonly the name of a City department or facility, for use on signs, vehicle decals, and uniforms. The words can be stacked in two lines of text.

The second alternative logo is sometimes referred to as the “shield banner.” Originally intended for use mainly in digital settings such as the City website and social media, the shield banner has also been approved for use in other applications in which a more uniform shape is needed rather than the more horizontal orientation of the primary logo. This variation places the elements of the primary logo into a solid, five-sided polygon.

The third alternative logo is intended solely for use with approved taglines and reflects the most graphic departure from the primary logo. The elements that tie this alternative to the primary design are typography and the scroll design in the center, which is based on the scroll at the top of the primary logo.

COLOR PALETTE

Color palette branding is important because it is a tangible component of our brand that people notice first and foremost. Color psychology, the study of how color impacts the way we perceive the world, provides a framework for understanding how and why we interact with the brands in our lives. It is a powerful tool that can be used to design more meaningful—and memorable—brand experiences. In fact, research has shown that color can increase brand recognition by up to 80%.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF COLOR

Color psychology is a powerful tool in branding, marketing, and design in general. This chart provides a quick glimpse at the psychology behind 12 of the world's most popular colors. While context and culture matter, research has shown that these are the emotions most often associated with each color. Whichever medium you're working in, this quick reference guide will help you pick the color that best communicates the meaning behind your design.

RED POSITIVE Power Passion Energy Fearlessness Strength Excitement NEGATIVE Anger Danger Warning Defiance Aggression Pain	ORANGE POSITIVE Courage Confidence Warmth Innovation Friendliness Energy NEGATIVE Deprivation Frustration Frivolity Immaturity Ignorance Sluggishness	YELLOW POSITIVE Optimism Warmth Happiness Creativity Intellect Extraversion NEGATIVE Irrationality Fear Caution Anxiety Frustration Cowardice	GREEN POSITIVE Health Hope Freshness Nature Growth Prosperity NEGATIVE Boredom Stagnation Envy Blandness Enervation Sickness
TURQUOISE POSITIVE Communication Clarity Calmness Inspiration Self-expression Healing NEGATIVE Boastfulness Secrecy Unreliability Relicence Fence-sitting Aloofness	BLUE POSITIVE Trust Loyalty Dependability Logic Serenity Security NEGATIVE Coldness Aloofness Emotionless Unfriendliness Uncaring Unappetizing	PURPLE POSITIVE Wisdom Luxury Wealth Spirituality Imaginative Sophistication NEGATIVE Introversion Decadence Suppression Inferiority Extravagance Moodyness	MAGENTA POSITIVE Imaginative Passion Transformation Creative Innovation Balance NEGATIVE Outrageousness Nonconformity Flippancy Impulsiveness Eccentricity Ephemerality
BROWN POSITIVE Seriousness Warmth Earthiness Reliability Support Authenticity NEGATIVE Humorlessness Heaviness Unsophisticated Sadness Dirtiness Conservativeness	BLACK POSITIVE Sophistication Security Power Elegance Authority Substance NEGATIVE Oppression Coldness Menace Heaviness Evil Mourning	GRAY POSITIVE Timelessness Neutrality Reliability Balance Intelligence Strength NEGATIVE Unconfident Dampness Depression Hibernation Lack of energy Blandness	WHITE POSITIVE Cleanliness Clarity Purity Simplicity Sophistication Freshness NEGATIVE Sterility Coldness Unfriendliness Elitism Isolation Emptiness

Our emotions directly influence our behavior, and as outlined above, color is one of the most powerful and reliable ways to evoke specific emotions in the minds and hearts of your target audiences. While our primary colors are black and white, the City of Alpharetta's approved color palette has been curated to provide flexibility in design, provide the ability to leverage color psychology, and ensure continuity across applications and mediums.

Colors Defined



TRUE BLACK

PMS: BLACK
HEX: 000000
RGB: 0, 0, 0
C 0.00
M 0.00
Y 0.00
K 100



TRUE BLUE

PMS: 19-4057
HEX: 1F4477
RGB: 31, 68, 119
C 0.74
M 0.43
Y 0.00
K 0.53



DEEP BLUE

PMS: 19-3847
HEX: 44377B
RGB: 68, 55, 123
C 0.45
M 0.55
Y 0.00
K 0.52



LOVE BIRD

PMS: 13-0443
HEX: C1DB3C
RGB: 193, 219, 60
C 0.12
M 0.00
Y 0.73
K 0.14



EQUESTRIAN RED

PMS: 19-1755
HEX: 9E1528
RGB: 158, 21, 40
C 0.00
M 0.87
Y 0.75
K 0.38



IBIZA BLUE

PMS: 17-4245
HEX: 007CB8
RGB: 0, 124, 184
C 1.00
M 0.33
Y 0.00
K 0.28



SPECTRA YELLOW

PMS: 14-0957
HEX: F7B718
RGB: 247, 183, 24
C 0.00
M 0.26
Y 0.90
K 0.03



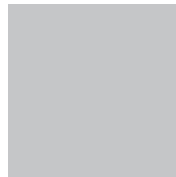
CLASSIC GREEN

PMS: 16-6340
HEX: 39A845
RGB: 57, 168, 69
C 0.66
M 0.00
Y 0.59
K 0.34



PERSIMMON

PMS: 16-1356
HEX: F47327
RGB: 244, 115, 39
C 0.00
M 0.53
Y 0.84
K 0.04



GLACIER GRAY

PMS: 14-4102
HEX: C5C6C7
RGB: 197, 198, 199
C 0.01
M 0.01
Y 0.00
K 0.22



SALTED LIME

PMS: 17-0232
HEX: 60843C
RGB: 96, 132, 60
C 0.27
M 0.00
Y 0.55
K 0.48



AQUARIUS

PMS: 16-4530
HEX: 3CADD4
RGB: 60, 173, 212
C 0.72
M 0.18
Y 0.00
K 0.17



PURPLE MAGIC

PMS: 19-3540
HEX: 663271
RGB: 102, 50, 113
C 0.10
M 0.56
Y 0.00
K 0.56



TILE BLUE

PMS: 18-4735
HEX: 008491
RGB: 0, 132, 145
C 1.00
M 0.09
Y 0.00
K 0.43



FORMAL GARDEN

PMS: 19-6350
HEX: 1F5129
RGB: 31, 81, 41
C 0.62
M 0.00
Y 0.49
K 0.68



MAGNETA

PMS: 17-2036
HEX: D23C77
RGB: 210, 60, 119
C 0.00
M 0.71
Y 0.43
K 0.18



VERY PERI

PMS: 17-3938
HEX: 6667AB
RGB: 102, 103, 171
C 0.40
M 0.40
Y 0.00
K 0.33



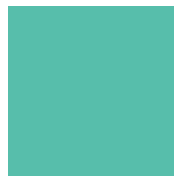
BLAZING YELLOW

PMS: 12-0643
HEX: FEE715
RGB: 254, 231, 21
C 0.00
M 0.09
Y 0.92
K 0.00



RED ORANGE

PMS: 17-1464
HEX: F05627
RGB: 240, 86, 39
C 0.00
M 0.64
Y 0.84
K 0.06



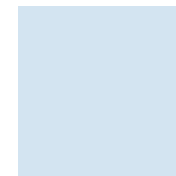
FLORIDA KEYS

PMS: 15-5416
HEX: 57BEAB
RGB: 87, 190, 171
C 0.54
M 0.00
Y 0.10
K 0.25



QUIET SHADE

PMS: 18-4006
HEX: 66676D
RGB: 102, 103, 109
C 0.06
M 0.06
Y 0.00
K 0.57



ICE MELT

PMS: 13-4306
HEX: D3E4F1
RGB: 211, 228, 241
C 0.12
M 0.05
Y 0.00
K 0.05



LATTE

PMS: 15-1220
HEX: C5A582
RGB: 197, 165, 130
C 0.00
M 0.16
Y 0.34
K 0.23



SWEET PEA

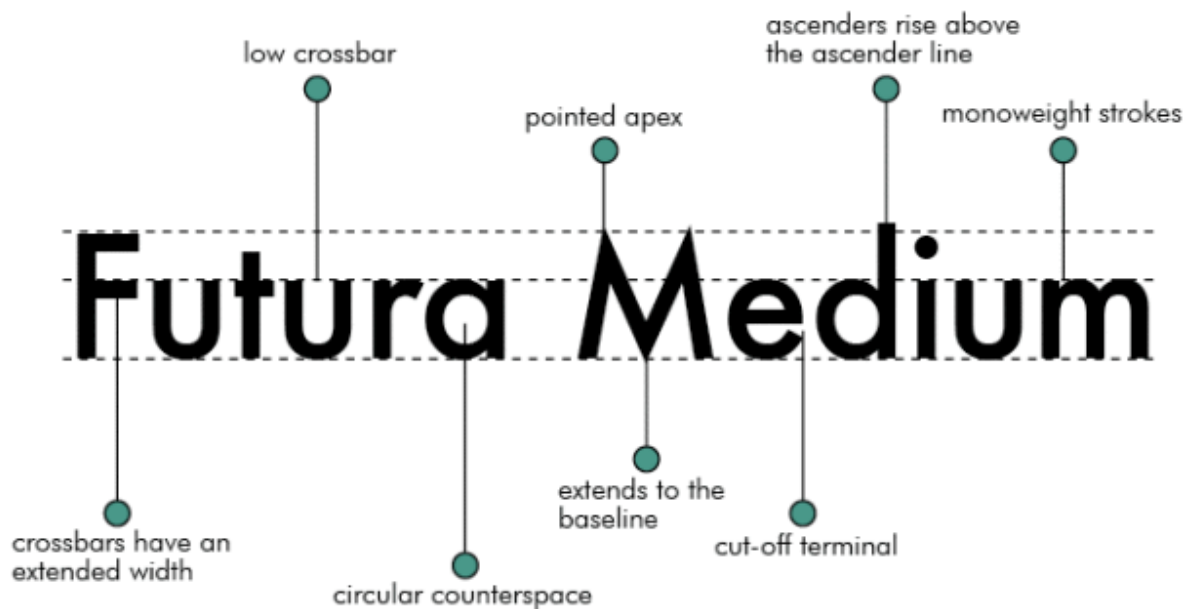
PMS: 15-0531
HEX: A3A969
RGB: 163, 169, 105
C 0.04
M 0.00
Y 0.38
K 0.34

Colors Defined



TYPOGRAPHY

Fonts are a key visual component to building a consistent, powerful brand. The Futura, a geometric sans serif design that is consistent with Bauhaus concepts, is the primary font for the City of Alpharetta. It is part of a group of fonts that work well both as body copy and display and includes an extensive family of different fonts and weights, making it incredibly versatile for any project. Designed in 1927, Futura is simultaneously classic and modern, inspiring thoughts of progress and the future.



The typeface is characterized by simple geometric shapes, such as circles, squares and triangles, and low-contrast, even strokes. Minimalist in nature, the font is devoid of decorative elements and embellishments and features proportions similar to classical Roman capitals in the upper-case characters and firm, clean forms.

Futura LT Book is the primary body font for documents such as letters and memoranda, while Futura PT Heavy is the go-to for titling. Other members of the Futura font family may be used in graphic design with approval from the Office of Communications and Public Engagement.

Trebuchet, a common system font, may be substituted for Futura for the purpose of electronic presentations that are shared with outside partners who do not have access to Futura. No other typefaces should be substituted, no matter how similar they appear.

DOCUMENT APPLICATION EXAMPLES

Following are examples of the standard form for a variety of common documents.



2 Park Plaza
Alpharetta, GA 30009
Phone: 678.297.6000
www.alpharetta.ga.us

Insert Date

Recipient Name
Recipient Organization
Recipient Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Recipient Name:

This template is intended for use for official written communication to all external individuals and organizations. When using this template, please do not alter the font or format that has been setup for the first page of the document.

Simply replace the text displayed, which is provided to illustrate how a letter finished with our formatting standards should appear, with that of your correspondence.

The template is setup so that subsequent pages will not feature the logo or other embedded information and will feature uniform 1-inch margins. This will happen automatically if your correspondence flows to a second page.

Respectfully,

Your Name Here
Your Title Here

MAYOR
JAC GUIN

MAYOR POC TIA
DAN MENCH

COUNCIL MEMBERS
JACOB B. WILK
DOUGLAS J. DUBOIS
JOHN P. HERR
DONNA E. MITCHELL
BRIAN WILK

CITY ADMINISTRATOR
CHRIS J. AMERICKSON

Standard Letter



2 Park Plaza
Alpharetta, GA 30009
Phone: 678.297.6000
www.alpharetta.ga.us

OFFICIAL MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE PAGE 1 OF 1

INSERT DATE HERE

ENTER SUGGESTED TITLE / HEADLINE – MUST FIT ON ONE LINE – DO NOT ALTER FONT

Replace this text with the desired text of your press release. Do not alter the font or paragraph structure. Remember to write your story using the inverted pyramid style, placing the most important details first and working your way to the least important information. The first one to two sentences of the article should answer the questions what, where, when and sometimes who.

Quotations from an elected official or person directly involved with the subject of the article add interest and are a great way to call special attention to an important detail.

If you are including photos with your press release, this should be noted at the bottom of the page using the words, "Attached Photo 1", numbering each photo and using the same verbiage to title the electronic photo file. If the photo is of one or more people, be certain that you have permission to use the person(s) image before releasing it. Also, note the name of the people in each image under the image title using the language, "(Pictured L to R: John Doe, Suzy Smith, and Jane Smith)".

All releases must be sent to James Drinkard or Michael Riddle for review and approval prior to distribution to the media or public.

- END -

ATTACHMENTS:
Place photo information here
Delete this section if no photos are included

Media Release



2 Park Plaza
Alpharetta, GA 30009
Phone: 678.297.6000
www.alpharetta.ga.us

TO:
FROM:
DATE:
RE:

This template is intended for use for official communication to individuals inside the City of Alpharetta organization. When using this template, please do not alter the font or format that has been setup for the first page of the document.

Simply replace the text displayed, which is provided to illustrate how a letter finished with our formatting standards should appear, with that of your correspondence.

The template is setup so that subsequent pages will not feature the logo or other embedded information and will feature uniform 1-inch margins. This will happen automatically if your correspondence flows to a second page.

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CITY ADMINISTRATOR
CHRIS J. AMERICKSON

Internal Memo

From: [Linkan James](#)
To: [Linkan James](#)
Subject: [Parrish Project](#)
Date: Wednesday, November 6, 2025 5:35:00 PM

This template is intended for use in official email communication to all internal and external individuals and organizations. When using this template, please do not alter the font or format that has been setup for the document.

Simply replace the text displayed, which is provided to illustrate how a letter finished with our formatting standards should appear, with that of your correspondence.

Thank you,

James



JAMES T. DRINKARD
ASSISTANT CITY ADMINISTRATOR
PHONE: 678.297.6014
CELL: 770.632.1748
FAX: 678.662.3283
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Email



OTHER LOGO USE EXAMPLES

Following are examples of common uses and applications of the City of Alpharetta logo.



