



CITY OF BELLEVUE

COMMUNICATIONS PLAYBOOK

*Connecting with Community.
Communicating with Clarity.*

This playbook is a practical guide for City staff, elected officials, and community-facing partners to improve how Bellevue communicates with the people it serves. It is designed to foster public trust, improve transparency, and encourage meaningful participation in local government.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS & PURPOSE

The goal of the Communications Playbook is to provide simple and transferable skills and tools that lead to effective communication.

Methods to Achieve Goal:

- Improving the community's access to timely, accurate, and helpful information about the City and its services
- Providing accessible, meaningful ways to engage
- Promoting transparency into the decision-making process

Focuses

Encouraging informed participation in local government

Helping us understand the community's values, ideas, and expectations

Improving our decision-making process

Building more trust in local government

Encouraging community participation in programs and events

Demonstrating the value and importance of City services

WHY THIS MATTERS

Audiences

PRIMARY

- Bellevue Residents
- Local Business Owners
- Community Groups
- Local Media
- Bellevue City Staff
- Mayor & Council
- Developers

SECONDARY

Visitors and residents from neighboring cities are a priority for community events and messaging. These cities include:

- Hailey
- Ketchum
- Sun Valley
- Carey
- Fairfield
- Shoshone
- Twin Falls

INFORMED DECISION-MAKING

When residents are included in shaping projects, policies, and programs, the City's work reflects the community's actual needs.

OWNERSHIP AND TRUST

When residents see their voices reflected in action, they feel greater ownership and connection to the end product of a project.

STRENGTHENING ENGAGEMENT

Consistent two-way communication boosts involvement and makes people more likely to participate.

ENHANCING TRANSPARENCY

Opening up City processes reduces confusion and speculation, creating clarity around decisions.

IDENTIFYING BLIND SPOTS

Community input surfaces concerns, ideas, and opportunities that City staff may not have seen.

FOSTERING FRESH THINKING

Public feedback brings new ideas and creative solutions based on lived experience.

ADVOCACY AND ADVOCATES

Engaged residents become ambassadors for Bellevue, helping share accurate information and supporting City initiatives.

LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

Involved citizens may become future Staff, Committee members, or elected officials, ensuring long-term sustainability and stability of the City.

COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

Everyone who represents the City of Bellevue in an official capacity is considered a City communicator. This includes all staff, council members, citizen committee members, and contracted support teams.

Responsibilities

Communicate clearly, concisely, and proactively

Ensure meaningful opportunities for public feedback

Help plan and promote City events

Support community education around City decisions

Partner with local organizations to promote engagement

Ensure that communications are published in English and Spanish

Additional Responsibilities

- Serve as trusted advisors during projects and incidents
- Coordinate and evaluate internal communication efforts
- Develop tools (templates, FAQs, signage) for team-wide use
- Maintain consistent branding, tone, and message across platforms
- Oversee digital presence, including website, social media, and email
- Build relationships with local press and respond to inquiries
- Train appropriate staff to serve as media spokespersons
- Use communication to support economic development, highlight City services, and increase public confidence

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS & PURPOSE

Prioritize quality communication by managing a few effective channels rather than spreading your efforts too thin. Start with platforms where your audience is active and where your team can consistently post and engage.

CHANNEL	FREQUENCY	USE & PURPOSE
Facebook	1-2x per week	Community updates, events, photos, reminders
Instagram	1-2x per week	Scenic or story-based visuals, business spotlights
Email Newsletter	Bi-monthly	City news, updates, events, promote input
Website Updates	As needed	Central hub for news, FAQs, meeting notes, alerts
Flyers/Print	Quarterly or per-event	Utility bills, public boards, storefronts
Press Releases	Per milestone/project	Major updates, initiatives, invitations
Town Halls	Quarterly or as needed	Community feedback, transparency, collaboration

TIP

Use a program that allows you to schedule posts ahead of time so you can focus on this content once a month, minus any emergency alerts.

GENERAL SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

- Participate and respectfully interact with your audience, even if there are disagreements.
- Respond to comments — even the negative ones. Responding shows you're listening and humanizes the City.
- Don't alter previous posts without indicating that you have done so.
- Aim for quality, not quantity. Content should be planned out in advance with the help of an editorial calendar to keep on top of content creation.
- Share links or sources to ensure the validity of the content.
- Permission and credit must be given when using photos or graphics from an outside source.

RESPONSES & UNIFORMITY

Responding to Negative Comments

Acknowledge, Don't Argue

"Thanks for your comment. We understand your frustration and are looking into this."

Stay Calm, Brief, and Respectful

Keep responses short and fact-founded. Avoid mirroring the tone of the negative comment.

Move the Conversation Offline When Needed

If the conversation escalates or complicates, don't be afraid to invite the respondent to call or meet.

Know When NOT to Respond

If the same person is repeatedly posting in bad faith, do not engage. Respond once if necessary, and then let it be.

If a respondent posts hate speech, threats, or personal attacks, document and then delete it.

Channel Uniformity

Communication Templates

Use templates specific to each channel of communication. This will help differentiate your messaging and make work more efficient.

Newspapers

Submit a personal letter from the Mayor, Common Council, or department head promoting an event, project, or initiative. Such a letter acts as an invitation for involvement and awareness, and should be submitted 2-3 weeks in advance.

SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS

Sample “Letter from the Mayor”

Unveiling of Memorial Park’s New Look

Bellevue Community,

We believe a thriving community’s heart lies within its shared spaces. As we begin work on a plan to enhance Memorial Park, we invite each of you to join us as we unveil a space that has been upgraded based on your input! You’re shaping our city and it’s time we celebrate!

What Your Input Built:

[Describe the event and how the process of asking for input shaped this space]

How to Be Part of It All:

[event/meeting details including the date, time, and what to expect]

Transparency and Progress:

[Explain the commitment to collecting community input and how that transformed a space for the use of the entire community]

Mark Your Calendar:

[Summary of schedule, date, time, etc. Written as an invitation.]

Thank you for your dedication to making Bellevue a place we’re proud to call home.

Sincerely,
Mayor

[contact information for inquiries]

Sample Media Alert

MEDIA ALERT
For Immediate Release
Date: [August 28, 2025]
Contact: [Your Name]
[Your Title]
[Your Phone Number]
[Your Email Address]

Our Favorite Place to Play is Getting Even Better: Bellevue’s Memorial Park is Set to Unveil an Enhanced Gathering Space

What: Unveiling of Memorial Park Enhancement
When: [Date]
Time: [Time]
Where: Memorial Park, [Address], Bellevue, ID

Bellevue residents and the media are invited to witness the exciting upgrade of Memorial Park, a project shaped by extensive community input and feedback. This enhanced gathering space will be a vibrant reflection of the community’s spirit and values.

Key Features of the New Gathering Space:

- [feature and use]
- [feature and use]
- [feature and use]

Join us as we celebrate this milestone, made possible through the collaboration of Bellevue residents, local businesses, and government officials. Mayor Giordani will attend and share his thoughts on this exciting project. Please arrive promptly to capture the grand unveiling, and stay for photo opportunities and interviews with key project leaders.

For more information, please contact
[Your Name] at
[Your Phone Number] or [Your Email Address].
About [Project]:

[Description of how this was made possible]

[City Logo] [City Hall Address] [City, State, Zip Code] [City Website] [Social Media Links]

Sample Social Media Post



Bellevue Idaho

August 20, 2025

Our favorite place to play in Bellevue! Walk through Memorial Park with Mayor Giordani. Your input built this enhanced space and we’re so excited to share it with you!

See translation

[insert new graphic]

3

Like

Comment

Share

Sample Maintenance Notice



Street Sweeping – Main Street

The City of Bellevue will be conducting street sweeping on Main Street:

Friday, August 29th, 2025

2:00 AM – 6:00 AM

Between Kirtley Street and Clover Street

This sweeping is being done to prepare our downtown for the annual Labor Day Parade and celebration on Monday, September 1st. Every year, this event brings residents, visitors, and families together to celebrate our community, and we want Main Street to look its very best for the occasion.

To allow the sweepers to move through the full length of Main Street and ensure the roadway is clear of dirt and debris, we are asking for the community’s help:

Please do not park along Main Street between 2:00 AM and 6:00 AM on Friday, August 29th.

Any vehicles parked along the route — including cars, trucks, or vehicles parked “for sale” — must be moved before the sweeping begins.

The City of Bellevue thanks everyone in advance for your participation. With your help, we can keep our streets clean and showcase the pride we all have in our community.

CRISIS COMMUNICATION

A guide for clear, calm, and coordinated communication when a crisis occurs. (weather emergency, infrastructure failure, public health notice, etc.)

1 *Assess & Confirm*

- Designate a point person to collect verified information
- Connect with emergency services or partners
- Document the facts: what happened, where, who is affected, and the responses being taken.

2 *Determine Channels*

- Use only the platforms that support quick, clear, and frequent updates:
 - Facebook
 - Website Alert Bar
 - Local Newspaper
 - CodeRED/Paws
 - Newsletter

3 *Create Clear, Calm Messaging*

- Stick to the facts.
- Use bullet points and stay concise.
- Respectfully acknowledge community concerns.
- Provide updates frequently, even if the situation is unchanged.

4 *Assign Roles*

- Spokesperson: *Mayor or Designee*
- Writer/editor for all public messaging: *City Clerk*
- Monitor of comments & questions: *Community Services*
- Liaison to emergency responders and partners: *City Clerk*

5 *Follow-up & Debrief*

- Spokesperson: *Mayor or Designee*
- Writer/editor for all public messaging: *City Clerk*
- Monitor of comments & questions: *Community Services*
- Liaison to emergency responders and partners: *City Clerk*

Reminder

Be the calm in the storm. Even when there are unknowns, Bellevue's residents want to know and that someone is watching and working on the problem.

MAINTENANCE COMMUNICATION

A guide for timely and transparent communication about scheduled city maintenance activities (street sweeping, pothole repairs, snow removal, park upkeep, etc.) This plan ensures Bellevue residents are informed about when and where maintenance will occur, helping the community prepare, plan ahead, and stay connected to ongoing city services.

1 Identification of Maintenance

- Identify maintenance activities for streets, parks, and other public areas
- Review Schedules monthly or seasonally (depending on the type of maintenance)

2 Determine Channels

- Use only the platforms that support clear information and can provide updates if necessary:
 - Facebook/Instagram
 - Website
 - Newsletter
 - CodeRED

3 Create Clear Messaging

- Clearly communicate where maintenance will occur and when.
- Include expected duration and any impacts (e.g., temporary parking restrictions, road closures).

4 Update if necessary

- If plans change due to weather or other issues, share updates using the same channels.

5 Follow-up & Review

- Gather feedback from residents periodically.
- Adjust communication methods and timing to better meet community needs.

Each department will have a color coded template for notice of maintenance:
Streets-Orange
Building-Yellow
Water-Blue

Thank you for your application of the strategies contained in this Playbook.

Your efforts to communicate with, educate, and inform the people of Bellevue are valuable and appreciated.