COVID-19 Communications
DRAFT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What does success look like for COVID-19 City of Aspen Communications?

- Designating a Communications Crisis Team;
- Defining Crisis Team roles and responsibilities;
- Alignment with IMT with clear channels of communication;
- Alignment with City Manager’s Office with clear channels of communication;
- Established protocol for communication with Council;
- Partner with relevant organizations to communicate to specific stakeholders;
- Accurate and timely output of messages and communications to our audience composed of: community, customers, businesses, elected officials, government partners, Council, non-profits, media, and internal audience of departments and staff that achieve the following objectives:
  - Track and consider breaking news from nation, state, region, and county;
  - Keep our audience up-to-date on Pitkin County Health, IMT and State mandates and news;
  - Keep the audience up-to-date on City specific issues and news;
  - Keep the audience informed of supportive and complimentary sources of information nationwide;
  - Keep the internal audience informed of breaking news, policy changes, work protocols, and messages from Council

This vision for success will help our organization take steps and actions to create plans and messages that keep the public and our customers informed of the immediate, mid-term, and long terms issues and policies that seek to maintain Aspen’s goals of fostering and providing the objectives below:
COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Designating a Communications Crisis Team

The City of Aspen’s Communications Crisis Team (CCT) will operate as one singular cohesive team to lead the City’s coordinated communications efforts in a response to the evolving issues associated with COVID-19. The CCT will serve as the main hub of information specific to City related programs and services. The CCT will serve as the voice of the City.

The mission of the CCT is to provide timely, accurate and proactive information to the audiences noted above who are affected by COVID-19. The CCT will coordinate with the Pitkin County IMT for information.

Crisis Team Roles and Responsibilities

Mitzi Rapkin, City of Aspen Communications, CCT Lead
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970-920-5082 o
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Alissa Farrell, City of Aspen, Administrative Services Director
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970-309-8113

Andrea Benda, City of Aspen Human Resources, CCT Internal Communications Resource
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970-920-5241
970-797-6442

Kathleen Wanatowicz, Project Resource Studio, CCT Contract Support
kathleen@prstudioco.com
970-618-5114

Wes Graham, Deputy Clerk, CCT Support
Wes.graham@cityofaspen.com
970-429-2686
970-920-5197

Mitch Osur, Director of Parking and Downtown Services, CCT Business Liaison
Mitc-osur@cityofaspen.com
970-429-1766
970-987-7081

Other Internal Resources:
Kevin Rayes, Planner, Community Development - writer
Louisa, EH Intern – writer for social media
Stacy Keating, Administrative Assistant, EH – website
Daily CCT Conference Call
Each day at 10:30 a.m. the CCT will convene on Microsoft Teams and present priorities for the day.

Agenda:
1. Update from day before
2. New information
3. Priorities for the day
4. Long-term priorities
5. Status of communication portals
6. External Messaging and Activities
7. Internal Messaging and Activities
8. Recap of Assignments - Roles and Responsibilities

Alignment with IMT/Clear channels of communications with IMT

The CCT will closely coordinate with Pitkin County IMT. Mitzi Rapkin will serve as the liaison between IMT and the CCT.

Mitzi will be on conference calls with the IMT Team Daily:
- 1:30 p.m. - General Communications Conference Call
- 2 p.m. - Tracy Trulove and Laura Armstrong - PIO and catch up
  1. Current Status of COVID-19 and IMT
  2. Brief Tracy and Laura on current status of City
  3. Upcoming News from IMT or City
  4. Alignment - IMT pushes City information and City pushes IMT information
  5. Needs from IMT from City
  6. Needs from City from IMT

Alignment with City Manager’s Office and Council

CCT Lead meet with the City Manager’s Office Representative and Administrative Services Director

Daily Check-in with Ron LeBlanc and Alissa Farrell
2:30 p.m.
Agenda:
1. Update from CCT to Ron and Alissa
2. Alissa and Ron update CCT on key messages and policy issues
3. Daily Communication Report

Established protocol for communication with Council
CCT Lead will distribute Daily Communication Report to Council Monday and Friday at 5 p.m.

Partner with relevant organizations to communicate to specific stakeholders

CCT will establish a core partner agency communications stakeholder group. The Core Partner Organization Communications Group (CPCO) will be led by the CCT (or Mitch). The Core Partner Organization Group will be established to work on issues facing the Aspen community at large with particular emphasis on different industry sectors.

Representatives from each industry shall be appointed:

- ACRA
- CCLC
- Downtown Core
- Banking
- Small Business – retail, service
- Restaurants
- General Contractors
- Real Estate
- Tourism and Travel
- Aspen Ski Company
- Non-Profit
- Schools
- Grocery
- Pharmacy
- Hardware
- Liquor/Dispensary
- Gas station
- Medical – physical and mental health
- Veterinarian

The main purpose of this group is to provide a communications network support system across the City. The function is for the liaisons to the City to serve as conduits for information back to their industry and for the City to take in questions and concerns from the industry representatives. This is a two-way communication endeavor.

This could be twice weekly conference calls augmented by an e-newsletter and other measures like a web page or other channels of communication.

COMMUNICATIONS TACTICS

Operating Principles

1. Coordinated effort
2. Be on the forefront of breaking news from nation, state, region, and county
3. Keep our audience up-to-date on Pitkin County Health, IMT and State mandates and news;
   i. Policy and tangible items like closing facilities, changing bus schedules, essential service updates, Council messages.
   ii. Behind the scenes, what we are doing to share human stories with public
5. Keep the internal audience informed of breaking news, policy changes, work protocols
   i. Policy and tangible items like closing facilities, changing bus schedules, essential service updates, Council messages
   ii. Behind the scenes, what we are doing to share human stories with public
6. Daily Communication Report

Coordinated Effort

Coordination is key for this to be successful. To that end, the following will be undertaken daily, as described above:

- Daily Communication Outlook One-Sheet (example in Appendix)
- Daily meeting with CCT – 10:30
- Daily phone call with IMT Communications Team – 1:30 p.m.
- Daily phone call with City IMT Representatives 2 p.m.
- Daily phone call with City Manager’s Office – 2:30 p.m.
- Check-in with Team at 4:30 p.m. daily for wrap-up and status of tasks

Forefront of Breaking News

A spreadsheet in Communications Team called “Breaking and Relevant News” will be updated daily with links to news stories City should follow and/or share from but not limited to:

- New York Times
- Washington Post
- CNN
- AP News
- CDC
- Denver Post
- Denver TV stations
- Colorado Sun
- Colorado Governor’s Office
- Colorado Public Radio
- Vail Daily
- GJ Sentinel
- Gunnison Times/CB News
- Aspen Times
- Aspen Daily News
- Aspen Public Radio
- Local FB and Twitter for ASD, ASC, ACRA, AVH, Pitkin County, ACF, RFTA
- Local newsletter sources and other social media accounts (Clark’s for example)
Relevant issues and breaking news will be shared on website and social media using the prioritization list in messaging section below.

Wes and Kathleen have Google alerts for national, state, regional, and local news. CCT members will also follow Aspen School District, AVH, Aspen Skiing Company, ACRA news. IMT will keep City informed of upcoming news and alerts. Team will track social media from local grocery stores and essential services.

**Policy and News from Pitkin County, IMT, State**
CCT will keep up-to-date with state, county, and IMT news via news tracking, daily meeting with IMT representatives, and City meetings with City Manager’s Office, Department Heads, and Administrative Services.

These daily meetings will be the source of external and internal content.

**City Specific News and Issues for External and Internal Messaging**
CCT will keep up-to-date with City issue and news through meetings and correspondences with City Manager’s Office, Public Works, Department Heads, Administrative Services, and individual meetings with staff. In addition, all staff and department heads can be conduits to the “inside stories” of how the City is operating and functioning from a more personal, behind-the-scenes angle.

This daily information will be the source of external and internal content.

**Daily Communication Report**
At the end of each workday after the 4:30 p.m. team check-in a report of what has been accomplished that day will be compiled and distributed to team.

**Messaging**

**Audience Identification**

External (not including CPCO mentioned above)

- Community At-Large
- City of Aspen customers
- City of Aspen vendors
- Second Homeowners
- Elected Officials
- Government Partners
- Boards and Commissions
- Council
- Media
Internal
- All staff
- Department Heads
- Emergency Teams

Key Messaging Topics

COVID-19
- Symptoms
- Wash hands
- Social distancing
- Where to get info web: city covid, pitkin, cdphe, cdc
- Local hotline
- What to do if sick

City
- Online or phone services
- Limited hours/access
- Still providing same level of service
- Go to homepage, social, covid-19 page

Amplify
- Pitkin County Public Health
- CDPHE
- Governor
- ASD, ASC, ACRA, AVH, ACF, RFTA
- Community messaging – Clark’s example

Uplifting Content for Internal and External Audiences
- Inspiring things to do in isolation
- Messages of hope
- Reinforcing community purpose

Messaging Protocol

*All messaging must be approved by Lead CCT.
Essential messages to community will go to IMT and CMO before distribution
All media inquiries go to Lead CCT

Channels for Messages

External
- Press Releases
- City Homepage
- City COVID-19 page
- Notify Me Newsletter database
- Social Media – Twitter, Facebook, Instagram
• APD social media
• Newspapers - Letters to Editor, Advertisements
• Council Email
• IMT Email
• Email to Boards and Commissions
• Email to government, business, and non-profit partners
• ACRA Newsletter
• Bulletin Board on Channel 11

Internal
• All City Email
• City Source
• Department Head Email
• IMT Internal team
• Council Email
APPENDIX

Example of Daily Communication One-Sheet

March 19

Agenda:
1. Update from day before
2. Priorities for the day
3. Long-term priorities
4. Status of communication portals
5. External Messaging and Activities
6. Internal Messaging and Activities
7. Recap of Assignments - Roles and Responsibilities

Update from Yesterday

- Web – announcement about limited services – front page and COVID page
- Press release about limited services
- All City Email limited services
- City Source limited services
- Wes – Hootsuite sign up
- Andrea – posted TRIAD
- Media questions answered

Priorities for the Day
- New Public Health Orders from Pitkin County
- Maybe more RFTA changes
- Restaurant and bar and gym etc. closure - more general positive messaging
- Business Resources and Communications - working on this
- Limited service messages on social
- Council Ideas
- What needs to be translated into Spanish
- Letter from Council to the Community - internal and external
- Message from Torre - internal
- Water messages to schedule
- Signs for City Hall
- Comcast freewifi
- Foundational messaging to tie everything on social and website back to
- Council outreach

Long Term Priorities
- For social media - tips for businesses and consumers on social channels – buy gift certificates, get takeout, etc.
- Redesign COVID-19 page
- Council outreach
- Hashtag awareness with partners
- Behind the scenes stories and photos
• Uplifting message repository
• Videos

External Communications
• Letter from Council
• Web - updates on individual pages - departments IN PROCESS
• Restaurant and bar messages on social channels
• Anything from Priorities section above
• Messages taken from limited services to post out on social media
• Messages from Water Department
• Reinforce messaging from IMT about social distancing and gathering
• Reinforce school messaging

Internal Communications
• Changing Signature
• City Source Update
• Letter from Council
• Letter from Torre
• Reinforce IMT messaging
• ICMA – retirement