



Communications Plan (2025-2026)

Category Description

Submit a detailed copy of your local government’s strategic communication and marketing plan. This document should outline the goals, objectives, target audience, key message and strategies employed, metrics and outcomes. Submitted plans can focus on a single aspect, such as social media strategy.

Judges will assess criteria such as overall strategic planning, clear messaging, measurable impact, adaptability and innovation.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION SUGGESTIONS: A compelling summary of your plan, including samples of the content generated from the plan, ways it’s been used for cross-departmental collaboration and citizen response, if any.

Name of Individual Submitting Entry

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Entry Title

Horizon West Bay Communications Plan

Social Media

<https://www.facebook.com/CityofLargo/>

Video Link (YouTube or Vimeo)

<https://www.youtube.com/largotv1>

Supporting Documentation

Horizon Brand Kit.pdf

Horizon West Bay FMCA Award.pdf

Horizon West Bay Presentations_compressed.pdf

What are the goals and objectives of the communications plan (include target audience)?

The Horizon West Bay Communications Plan was developed to support a multi-year, \$81 million mixed-use redevelopment project that includes a new City Hall, public plaza, and downtown retail space. The primary goal of the plan was to ensure clear, consistent, and transparent communication throughout all phases of planning and construction, while building understanding, trust, and long-term support for downtown redevelopment.

Key objectives included:

- Keeping residents and businesses informed about project milestones, timelines, and impacts through accessible, easy-to-understand messaging.
- Preparing and engaging more than 200 City of Largo team members transitioning to a new, modern workplace by addressing questions related to operations, workspace design, parking, and readiness.
- Incorporating community and team member feedback into project decisions through surveys, focus groups, and ongoing engagement.
- Positioning Horizon West Bay as a catalyst for economic development, sustainability, and a more walkable downtown.
- Maintaining momentum and public interest across a multi-year construction timeline by balancing regular updates with future-focused storytelling.

Primary target audiences included Largo residents and businesses, City of Largo team members, elected officials, community stakeholders, and potential private development partners. Communications were tailored by audience, using public-facing digital platforms for residents and stakeholders and internal tools such as SharePoint, webinars, and training resources for team members.

Describe the supporting documentation submitted with this entry.

The supporting documentation submitted with this entry demonstrates how the Horizon West Bay Communications Plan was executed across multiple audiences and project phases using a cohesive, in-house storytelling approach.

Materials include the full Horizon West Bay communications and branding toolkit, which outlines the strategic framework, visual identity, key messages, engagement tactics, and evaluation methods used throughout the project. This comprehensive submission shows how communications supported a complex, multi-year redevelopment effort from early planning through active construction.

Also included are a series of targeted presentations developed to meet the needs of specific audiences and milestones, including:

- A Workplace Philosophy presentation to prepare City of Largo team members for the transition to a modern, flexible work environment.
- New City Hall and Construction Update presentations used to provide clear, timely information to internal and external stakeholders as the project progressed.
 - A Community Presentation focused on explaining the project vision, timeline, and public benefits while incorporating resident feedback.
- The Horizon Mural Design Commission presentation, which highlights how public art and placemaking were integrated into the project through community input and creative collaboration.

What is new, innovative or creative about this communications plan?

The Horizon West Bay Communications Plan is innovative in how communications was embedded directly into the project management process for a complex redevelopment effort. Rather than serving in a supporting role, the Communications and Engagement team worked alongside project leadership, allowing messaging, engagement, and feedback to evolve in real time as the project progressed.

A key innovation was the use of dual digital hubs tailored to distinct audiences. HorizonWestBay.com served as a public-facing resource focused on transparency, progress updates, and long-term vision, while Horizon.TeamLargo.com functioned as an internal hub for City of Largo team members preparing for relocation. This structure ensured information was relevant, timely, and accessible without overwhelming either audience.

The plan emphasized experiential and two-way engagement to build understanding and trust. Mock workstations, interactive webinars, construction site tours, surveys, and focus groups allowed team members and residents to actively engage with the project and directly influence design and decision-making, including public-facing elements such as the plaza and mural commission.

Creatively, the Horizon brand itself became a storytelling tool. Inspired by Largo's natural environment and sustainability goals, the brand unified technical updates, internal readiness materials, public presentations, and placemaking elements under a consistent visual and narrative framework. This approach helped transform a complex construction project into a shared community story focused on place, pride, and long-term impact.

Finally, the communications plan reflects the strength of in-house leadership supported by cross-departmental collaboration. Communications strategy, messaging, and collateral were developed and executed by the City of Largo Communications and Engagement team, with essential input from an interdepartmental project team. This integrated approach ensured communications remained accurate, timely, and aligned with evolving project decisions while allowing the City to respond quickly to team member and community needs.

Describe how the communications plan was successful (include your evaluation process and metrics).

The Horizon West Bay Communications Plan was evaluated through a combination of digital analytics, engagement metrics, media coverage, and qualitative feedback from residents and City of Largo team members. Success was measured across public awareness, internal readiness, and sustained engagement over a multi-year project timeline.

Public-facing success was tracked through website analytics, social media performance, and media coverage. The HorizonWestBay.com website served as a central information hub, with strong page views and time-on-page indicating sustained public interest. Horizon-related social media content consistently generated high reach and engagement, including one of the project's most successful posts featuring the

Horizon mural collaboration, which achieved more than 8,000 organic impressions and over 600 engagements. The project also received consistent, positive coverage across regional outlets, reinforcing public understanding and confidence in the redevelopment effort.

Internal communications success focused on preparedness and engagement among more than 200 City team members transitioning to the new City Hall. Metrics included visits to the Horizon.TeamLargo.com SharePoint site, attendance at live webinars and Q&A sessions, participation in site tours, and completion of move-in readiness activities. An early internal survey rated the project an average of 4 out of 5 stars, with strong scores related to sustainability, wellness, and connection to the community, indicating growing confidence and buy-in.

The evaluation process also emphasized adaptability. Feedback gathered through surveys, focus groups, and direct engagement informed ongoing updates to messaging, design features, and internal resources. By combining quantitative analytics with qualitative input, the Communications and Engagement team was able to adjust tactics in real time, maintain transparency, and sustain momentum throughout construction. These results demonstrate a communications plan that effectively informed, engaged, and prepared audiences while supporting a complex, high-impact redevelopment project.

Recognizing the diversity of our communication departments across the state, in the space below, discuss the factors that set your community and submission apart i.e, department size, overall budget spend, innovative and creative techniques utilized, impact on community and size of city/county as examples.

The City of Largo's Horizon West Bay Communications Plan stands apart due to the scale and complexity of the project and the City's ability to deliver a comprehensive communications strategy with a lean, in-house Communications and Engagement team. As the fourth-largest city in Pinellas County, Largo is advancing an \$81 million redevelopment project while continuing to support daily municipal operations and public communications.

The plan required balancing the needs of diverse audiences, including residents, businesses, elected officials, regional stakeholders, and more than 200 City team members transitioning to a new City Hall. Communications were intentionally audience-specific, using public-facing platforms to promote transparency and internal tools to support operational readiness and organizational change.

A defining factor of this submission is the strong cross-departmental collaboration that supported effective communication. While communications strategy, messaging, and collateral were developed and executed by the Communications and Engagement team, close coordination with administration, engineering, facilities, and project leadership ensured information remained accurate, timely, and responsive throughout the project. This integrated approach allowed communications to evolve alongside the redevelopment rather than react after decisions were made.

The plan also reflects responsible stewardship of public resources. By prioritizing in-house strategy, content creation, engagement tools, and media relations, the City maximized impact while maintaining budget discipline. Engagement efforts emphasized accessibility, sustainability, and two-way communication, ensuring the community had meaningful opportunities to inform and shape the project.

Together, these factors demonstrate how a mid-sized city communications team can lead a complex redevelopment effort with clarity, collaboration, and accountability while building long-term community trust.