Merritt

FLOURISH UNDER THE SUN

COMMUNICATION PLAN

2020 - 2025

CREATING A CULTURE OF COMMUNICATION REQUIRES AN INVESTMENT IN PEOPLE, TIME AND TECHNOLOGY.

Developed by Steven Bauwens (Special Project Coordinator) and Will George (Communications Manager)

CONTENT

OVERVIEW

Introduction 4
The Mission 4
How is Municipal Communication Evolving? 5
Current Communication Management 6
Audiences 7
Key Features 7

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

ANALYSIS

Historical External Communication 10
Communication References from Master Plans 16

STRATEGY

External Communication 19

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

ANALYSIS

Historical Internal Communication 25

STRATEGY

Internal Communication 27

MEDIA RELATIONS

ANALYSIS

Historical Media Relations 30

STRATEGY

Media Relations 32

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Timeline 34
Phase 1 | External Communication 35
Phase 1 | Internal Communication 39
Phase 1 | Media Relations 39
Phase 2 | External Communication 41
Phase 2 | Internal Communication 43
Phase 2 | Media Relations 43
Phase 3 | Overall 44

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Review of Communication Channels as of July 3rd, 2020 ..... A
Appendix B: Communication Flow Proposal ..... B

INTRODUCTION

Council envisions a community where, through a variety of mediums, residents have the opportunity to be informed of City initiatives and have the ability to engage with the City.

To accomplish this vision, the City of Merritt established the Communications Department in 2019. Council determined that a top priority of this newly formed department would be the creation of a Communication Plan to identify how the City can increase, enhance and unify municipal communication.

In the development process, staff analyzed more than 20 communication plans from communities across North America. Staff incorporated the best elements of these documents, in addition to developing original content, to produce a plan tailored to the City of Merritt.

City staff conducted a survey with City council, staff & the local media, of which the results were taken into consideration for the creation of this document.

The City of Merritt has traditionally relied on local media as the primary mechanism to deliver information to community members. To reach citizens of all demographics, the City will continue relationships with local media, while enhancing and utilizing new media channels that support the City's goal of providing more first-party information.

This Communication Plan will also assist the flow of information between City departments and Council.

MISSION

The City of Merritt will build trust with its Citizens by communicating in a timely, engaging and transparent manner, reaching all demographics using a wide variety of communication channels.

HOW IS MUNICIPAL COMMUNICATION EVOLVING?

Citizens have a growing expectation that municipal business will be conducted in an open and transparent manner. Internet plays an ever increasing role to provide the ability to search, research and make decisions based on multiple sources of information.

The trends of municipal communication can be broken down into 3 categories:

TRANSPARENCY

Municipalities have always needed to be open and transparent with the public about their procedures and decisions. The Internet plays an ever-increasing role in searching, researching, and making decisions based on multiple sources of information. Good communication using new tools and channels provided by the internet can aid transparency, helping to build public trust in the City.

TECHNOLOGY

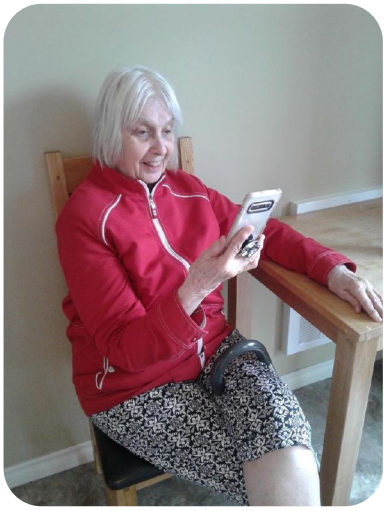
Communications channels have changed dramatically over the last two decades, with the widespread adoption of social media, smartphones, tablets, and other tools that allow people to access information immediately from wherever they are. The need for visibility and engagement has driven an increased use of still and moving images; and, more recently, videos that can be served over high-speed mobile connections. By embracing these changes, Merritt's communications can remain relevant and attractive to consumers.

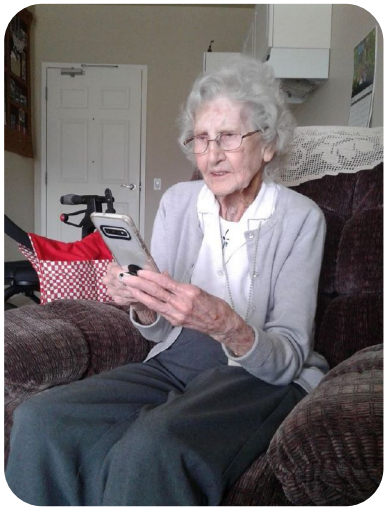
"[...] it's important to note that marketing factors that include social media are growing faster than other types of marketing positions. Digital marketing has grown about 30% faster than other marketing positions. This aligns with Forrester Research's predictions, which protected that digital marketing will tip $100 billion and account for a total of 35% of all marketing spending by the end of 2019."[1]

TIMING

Residents have come to expect that municipalities will release information promptly and strategically. This allows residents to be fully informed of municipal initiatives and essential information while that information is relevant. Timely communication can help avoid misinformation caused by assumptions and unreliable sources predating the official communication.

Current technology allows us to send out information at any given time, and allows for increased engagement as citizens can respond immediately.





Credits: Frank Rizzardo

[1] Source: www.socialmediacollege.com/blog/social-media-career-growth-in-2019

CURRENT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

STRENGTHS INVOLVING CURRENT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

City Council, the CAO and the Communications Department have committed to increasing and improving communications, and are implementing measures to meet this objective.

ISSUES INVOLVING PAST AND CURRENT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

In 2019, the City decided to take concrete steps to increase and improve communications. To that end, a Communications Department was created and added to the Economic Development and Tourism Department. Prior to this, communications had been managed independently by each City department, leading to inconsistencies in materials and duplicated efforts. This contributed to a poor external image of the City and its communications efforts. Currently, there is one part-time staff to assist in communications.

The City of Merritt has a history of battling with an overall negative image. To continue to address this, additional staff time will be required. (*See section: Communication References from master plans > Economic Development Plan (2014-2015)*)

PROPOSAL FOR THE COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

Execution of this Communications Plan and maintaining positive relationships with all audiences will require additional staff time. Additional in-house staff members could lead to decreased outsourced external communication costs and more efficient internal communication with decreased overhead costs.

AUDIENCES

A local government has a distinctive variety in its audiences, which can be categorized into three areas:

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

External communication will be tailored to the following audiences:

- Citizens: Current & Prospective
- Businesses: Current & Prospective
- Tourists

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Internal communication involves communication with:

- Staff
- Council
- City Volunteers (e.g. Committee Members, event volunteers, etc.)

MEDIA RELATIONS

The City of Merritt recognizes different media relationships between:

- Local Media
- Media outside of the Nicola Valley

KEY FEATURES

The City will strive to meet the following goals in all its communications:

ACCESSIBLE

Communication is clear, relevant to intended audiences, uses plain language, and accommodates auditory or visual disabilities wherever possible.

AUTHORITATIVE

The City embraces its role as the central entity responsible for providing municipal information to its citizens.

CONSISTENT

Information is written, designed, and communicated in ways that are aligned with branding, the channel's audience and intentional management of reputation.

TIMELY

Content is distributed promptly, proactively and with sensitivity to the urgency of information.

ACCURATE

Audiences can rely on information produced by the City to be accurate.

CREATIVE

Content is purposeful, captivating and memorable in order to be effective in reaching the target audiences.

MEASURED

Communication is evaluated for effectiveness and efficiency based on metrics, goals, and public feedback to improve future communication.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

ANALYSIS

HISTORICAL EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Activity Guide

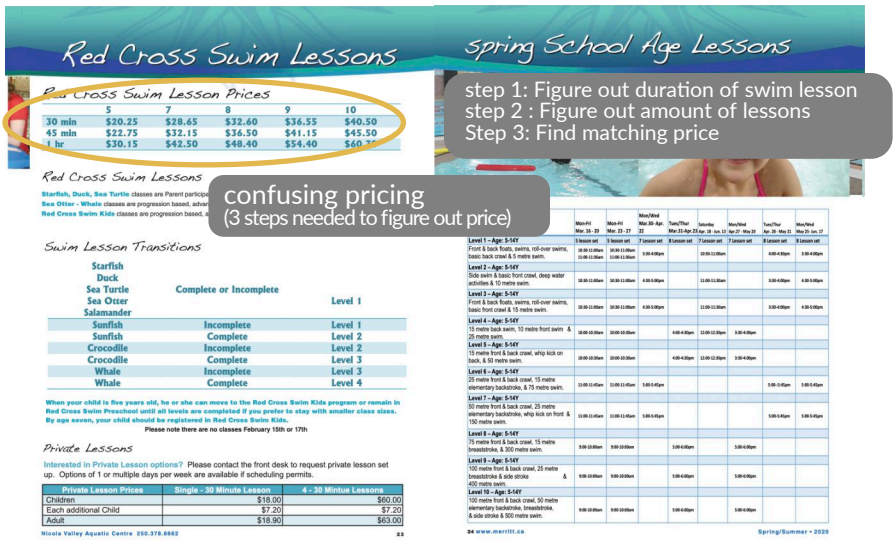
ISSUES

- Layout difficult to read and find information
- Overall layout design outdated
- Guide available as a digital magazine, but lacks a proper digital channel, which can be navigated to easily find the required information

MAIN AUDIENCES

- Citizens

EXAMPLES



City Website

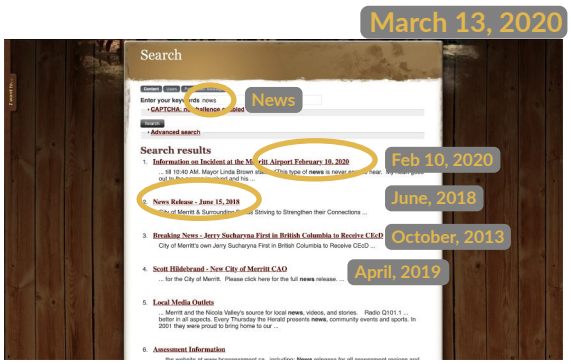
MAIN AUDIENCES

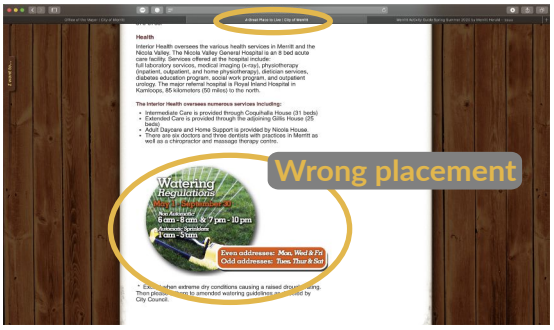
- Citizens
- Prospective Citizens
- Businesses
- Prospective Businesses

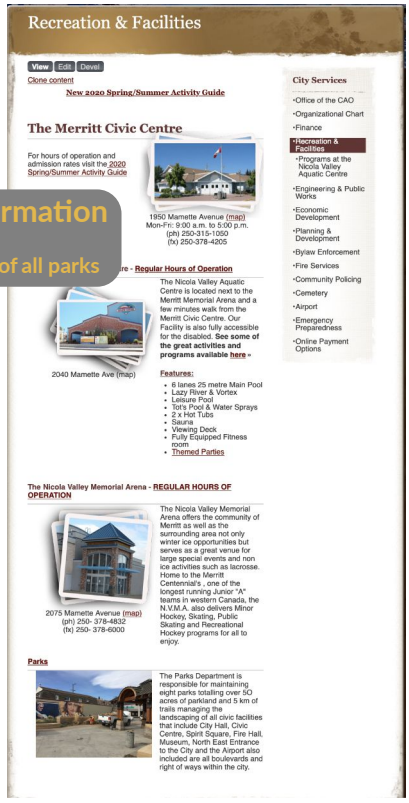
ISSUES

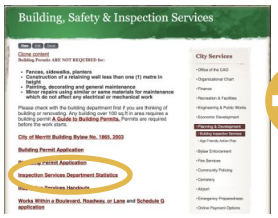
- Scattered and outdated information
- Difficult to navigate
- Not fully compliant with modern standards and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)
- Data-heavy website
- Hidden pages
- Broken links
- Limited information on speciifc topics
- Information posted on non-related pages
- Search function not user-friendly
- Visually outdated
- Expensive web hosting & maintenance

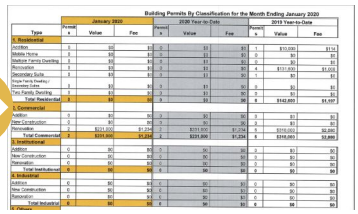
EXAMPLES











Extensive page layers

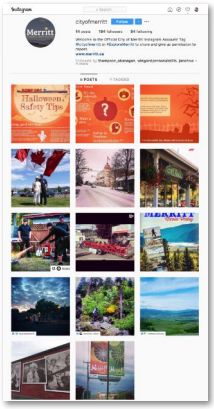
Social Media

ISSUES

- Lacking a social media strategy and social media policies
- More engagement needed

MAIN AUDIENCES

- Citizens
- Prospective Citizens
- Businesses
- Prospective Businesses
- Tourists



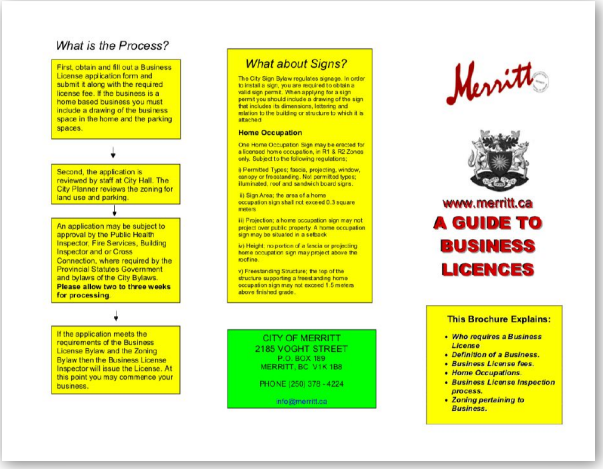
Business License Guide

ISSUES

- Text-heavy
- Visually outdated
- Limited information

MAIN AUDIENCES

- Current & Prospective Businesses



What is the Process?

First, obtain and fill out a Business License application form and submit it along with the required license fee. If the business is a home based business you must include a drawing of the business space in the home and the parking spaces.

Second, the application is reviewed by staff at City Hall. The City Planner reviews the zoning for land use and parking.

An application may be subject to approval by the Public Health Inspector, Fire Services, Building Inspector and or Cross Connection, where required by the Provincial Statutes Government and bylaws of the City Bylaws. **Please allow two to three weeks for processing.**

If the application meets the requirements of the Business License Bylaw and the Zoning Bylaw then the Business License Inspector will issue the License. At this point you may commence your business.

What about Signs?

The City Sign Bylaw regulates signage. In order to install a sign, you are required to obtain a valid sign permit. When applying for a sign permit you should include a drawing of the sign that includes its dimensions, lettering and relation to the building or structure to which it is attached.

Home Occupation

One Home Occupation Sign may be erected for a licensed home occupation, in R1 & R2 Zones only. Subject to the following regulations:

i) Permitted Types: fascia, projecting, window, canopy or freestanding. Not permitted types: Illuminated, roof and sandwich board signs.

ii) Sign Area: the area of a home occupation sign shall not exceed 0.3 square meters.

iii) Projection: a home occupation sign may not project over public property. A home occupation sign may be situated in a setback.

iv) Height: no portion of a fascia or projecting home occupation sign may project above the roofline.

v) Freestanding Structure: the top of the structure supporting a freestanding home occupation sign may not exceed 1.5 metres above finished grade.

CITY OF MERRITT
2185 VOGHT STREET
P.O. BOX 189
MERRITT, BC V1K 1B8
PHONE (250) 378 - 4224
info@merritt.ca

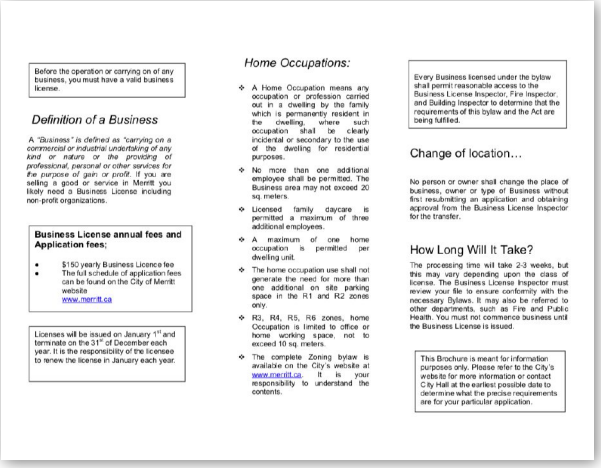
Merritt

www.merritt.ca

A GUIDE TO BUSINESS LICENCES

This Brochure Explains:

- ***Who requires a Business License***
- ***Definition of a Business.***
- ***Business License fees.***
- ***Home Occupations.***
- ***Business License Inspection process.***
- ***Zoning pertaining to Business.***



Before the operation or carrying on of any business, you must have a valid business license.

Definition of a Business

A "Business" is defined as "carrying on a commercial or industrial undertaking of any kind or nature or the providing of professional, personal or other services for the purpose of gain or profit". If you are selling a good or service in Merritt you likely need a Business License including non-profit organizations.

Business License annual fees and Application fees;

- $150 yearly Business Licence fee
- The full schedule of application fees can be found on the City of Merritt website www.merritt.ca

Licenses will be issued on January 1st and terminate on the 31st of December each year. It is the responsibility of the licensee to renew the license in January each year.

Home Occupations:

- A Home Occupation means any occupation or profession carried out in a dwelling by the family which is permanently resident in the dwelling, where such occupation shall be clearly incidental or secondary to the use of the dwelling for residential purposes.
- No more than one additional employee shall be permitted. The Business area may not exceed 20 sq. meters.
- Licensed family daycare is permitted a maximum of three additional employees.
- A maximum of one home occupation is permitted per dwelling unit.
- The home occupation use shall not generate the need for more than one additional on site parking space in the R1 and R2 zones only.
- R3, R4, R5, R6 zones, home Occupation is limited to office or home working space, not to exceed 10 sq. meters.
- The complete Zoning bylaw is available on the City's website at www.merritt.ca. It is your responsibility to understand the contents.

Every Business licensed under the bylaw shall permit reasonable access to the Business License Inspector, Fire Inspector, and Building Inspector to determine that the requirements of this bylaw and the Act are being fulfilled.

Change of location…

No person or owner shall change the place of business, owner or type of Business without first resubmitting an application and obtaining approval from the Business License Inspector for the transfer.

How Long Will It Take?

The processing time will take 2-3 weeks, but this may vary depending upon the class of license. The Business License Inspector must review your file to ensure conformity with the necessary Bylaws. It may also be referred to other departments, such as Fire and Public Health. You must not commence business until the Business License is issued.

This Brochure is meant for information purposes only. Please refer to the City's website for more information or contact City Hall at the earliest possible date to determine what the precise requirements are for your particular application.

Notice Sheets

ISSUES

Notice sheets hung up in facilities are only able to communicate a message once people are on site. This form of communication is often necessary, but should be supported with information accessible from other locations.

MAIN AUDIENCES

- Citizens

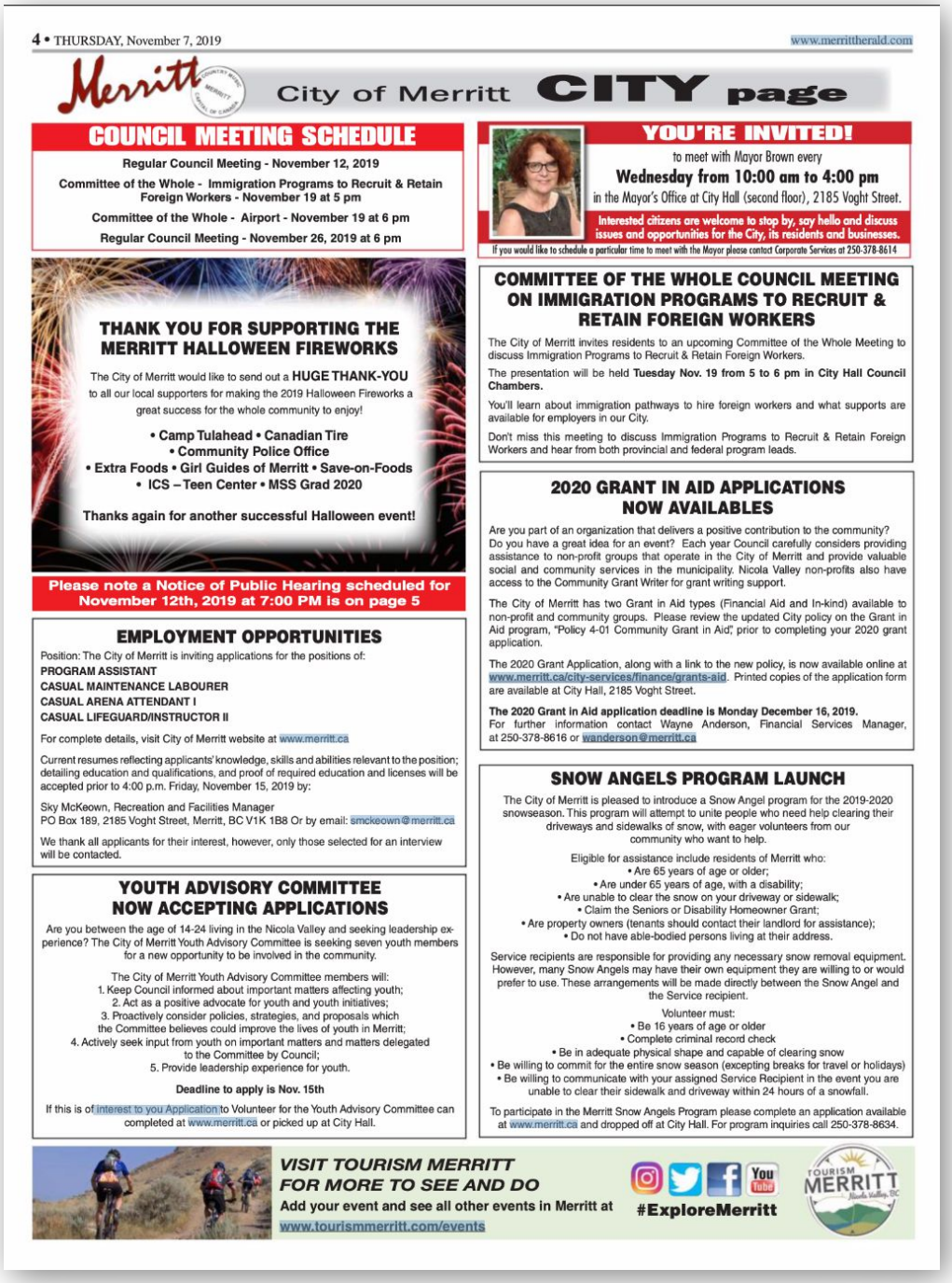
The Merritt Herald: City Information Page

MAIN AUDIENCES

- Citizens

ISSUE

Information is text-heavy and does not provide enough visual appeal to attract audience members.



4 • THURSDAY, November 7, 2019 www.merrittherald.com

Merritt City of Merritt CITY page

COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

Regular Council Meeting - November 12, 2019

Committee of the Whole - Immigration Programs to Recruit & Retain Foreign Workers - November 19 at 5 pm

Committee of the Whole - Airport - November 19 at 6 pm

Regular Council Meeting - November 26, 2019 at 6 pm

YOU'RE INVITED!

to meet with Mayor Brown every

Wednesday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

in the Mayor's Office at City Hall (second floor), 2185 Voght Street.

Interested citizens are welcome to stop by, say hello and discuss issues and opportunities for the City, its residents and businesses.

If you would like to schedule a particular time to meet with the Mayor please contact Corporate Services at 250-378-8614

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE MERRITT HALLOWEEN FIREWORKS

The City of Merritt would like to send out a **HUGE THANK-YOU** to all our local supporters for making the 2019 Halloween Fireworks a great success for the whole community to enjoy!

• Camp Tulahead • Canadian Tire
• Community Police Office
• Extra Foods • Girl Guides of Merritt • Save-on-Foods
• ICS – Teen Center • MSS Grad 2020

Thanks again for another successful Halloween event!

Please note a Notice of Public Hearing scheduled for November 12th, 2019 at 7:00 PM is on page 5

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE COUNCIL MEETING ON IMMIGRATION PROGRAMS TO RECRUIT & RETAIN FOREIGN WORKERS

The City of Merritt invites residents to an upcoming Committee of the Whole Meeting to discuss Immigration Programs to Recruit & Retain Foreign Workers.

The presentation will be held **Tuesday Nov. 19 from 5 to 6 pm in City Hall Council Chambers.**

You'll learn about immigration pathways to hire foreign workers and what supports are available for employers in our City.

Don't miss this meeting to discuss Immigration Programs to Recruit & Retain Foreign Workers and hear from both provincial and federal program leads.

2020 GRANT IN AID APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLES

Are you part of an organization that delivers a positive contribution to the community? Do you have a great idea for an event? Each year Council carefully considers providing assistance to non-profit groups that operate in the City of Merritt and provide valuable social and community services in the municipality. Nicola Valley non-profits also have access to the Community Grant Writer for grant writing support.

The City of Merritt has two Grant in Aid types (Financial Aid and In-kind) available to non-profit and community groups. Please review the updated City policy on the Grant in Aid program, "Policy 4-01 Community Grant in Aid", prior to completing your 2020 grant application.

The 2020 Grant Application, along with a link to the new policy, is now available online at www.merritt.ca/city-services/finance/grants-aid. Printed copies of the application form are available at City Hall, 2185 Voght Street.

The 2020 Grant in Aid application deadline is Monday December 16, 2019.
For further information contact Wayne Anderson, Financial Services Manager, at 250-378-8616 or wanderson@merritt.ca

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Position: The City of Merritt is inviting applications for the positions of:
PROGRAM ASSISTANT
CASUAL MAINTENANCE LABOURER
CASUAL ARENA ATTENDANT I
CASUAL LIFEGUARD/INSTRUCTOR II

For complete details, visit City of Merritt website at www.merritt.ca

Current resumes reflecting applicants' knowledge, skills and abilities relevant to the position; detailing education and qualifications, and proof of required education and licenses will be accepted prior to 4:00 p.m. Friday, November 15, 2019 by:

Sky McKeown, Recreation and Facilities Manager
PO Box 189, 2185 Voght Street, Merritt, BC V1K 1B8 Or by email: smckeown@merritt.ca

We thank all applicants for their interest, however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Are you between the age of 14-24 living in the Nicola Valley and seeking leadership experience? The City of Merritt Youth Advisory Committee is seeking seven youth members for a new opportunity to be involved in the community.

The City of Merritt Youth Advisory Committee members will:
1. Keep Council informed about important matters affecting youth;
2. Act as a positive advocate for youth and youth initiatives;
3. Proactively consider policies, strategies, and proposals which the Committee believes could improve the lives of youth in Merritt;
4. Actively seek input from youth on important matters and matters delegated to the Committee by Council;
5. Provide leadership experience for youth.

Deadline to apply is Nov. 15th

If this is of interest to you Application to Volunteer for the Youth Advisory Committee can completed at www.merritt.ca or picked up at City Hall.

SNOW ANGELS PROGRAM LAUNCH

The City of Merritt is pleased to introduce a Snow Angel program for the 2019-2020 snowseason. This program will attempt to unite people who need help clearing their driveways and sidewalks of snow, with eager volunteers from our community who want to help.

Eligible for assistance include residents of Merritt who:
• Are 65 years of age or older;
• Are under 65 years of age, with a disability;
• Are unable to clear the snow on your driveway or sidewalk;
• Claim the Seniors or Disability Homeowner Grant;
• Are property owners (tenants should contact their landlord for assistance);
• Do not have able-bodied persons living at their address.

Service recipients are responsible for providing any necessary snow removal equipment. However, many Snow Angels may have their own equipment they are willing to or would prefer to use. These arrangements will be made directly between the Snow Angel and the Service recipient.

Volunteer must:
• Be 16 years of age or older
• Complete criminal record check
• Be in adequate physical shape and capable of clearing snow
• Be willing to commit for the entire snow season (excepting breaks for travel or holidays)
• Be willing to communicate with your assigned Service Recipient in the event you are unable to clear their sidewalk and driveway within 24 hours of a snowfall.

To participate in the Merritt Snow Angels Program please complete an application available at www.merritt.ca and dropped off at City Hall. For program inquiries call 250-378-8634.

VISIT TOURISM MERRITT FOR MORE TO SEE AND DO

Add your event and see all other events in Merritt at www.tourismmerritt.com/events

#ExploreMerritt

TOURISM MERRITT Nicola Valley, BC

(Published on Nov 7, 2019)

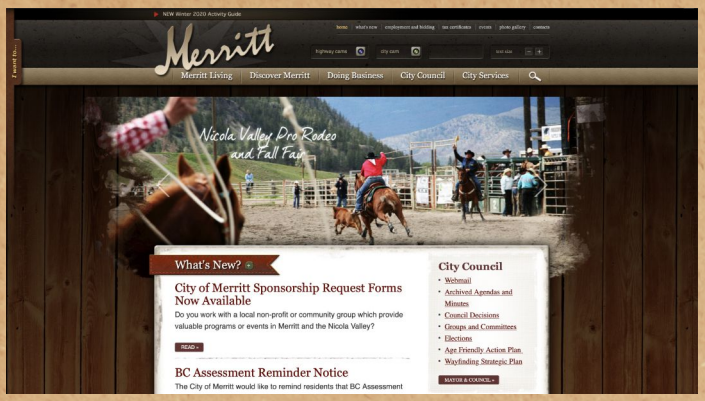
REVIEW OF HISTORICAL COMMUNICATION

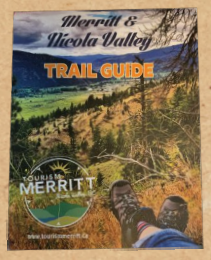
The City's historical communication had no distinct brand identity or style, so communication did not stand out and was not easily identified as being from the City of Merritt. In addition, communications were often text-heavy and did not utilize enough channels to reach the diverse range of residents.

Therefore, the City's communications should have a consistent style that can be easily recognized, in order to effectively explain the type of message being shared and to maximize reach. Where relevant, communications should be distributed across multiple channels and platforms to spread the message as widely as possible.

EXAMPLES OF HISTORICAL EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Below are examples of different types of City media, lacking visual consistency or brand recognition. For examples of proposed visual communication, please view p. 22.





COMMUNICATION REFERENCES FROM MASTER PLANS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2014-2015)

SWOT analysis - Weaknesses (p. 17)

First Impression

Merritt does not currently provide a positive first impression for visitors or investment. The entrance signage is dated, faded and does not provide any sense of a community brand. Once inside the community signage or way-finding is lacking.

Communication

There is lack of communication and cohesiveness within the community. Stakeholders are not collaborating or sharing information with each other. There is little communication between stakeholders, groups and local council.

Poor Local Perception

Respondents to the online survey felt that both in the community and out that Merritt does not possess a positive image. - The entrances into the community are unattractive, Merritt is not open for business and there is a perceived notion that goods and services are more expensive or not available.

SWOT analysis - Threats (p. 18)

Dissatisfaction

Residents are dissatisfied with some of the current conditions within Merritt - lack of direction, level of communication, Council's lack of involvement at the local level and community branding. These issues threaten to separate and divide the community.

Lack of Awareness

Respondents felt there was a lack of awareness of Merritt as a place to do business or to visit. There needs to be an improved effort to attract new residents and investment.

Competitive Advantages for Attracting Investment (p.20)

Merritt will need to begin to make a concerted effort towards marketing the strengths of community [...]

Making it Easier To Do Business (p. 34)

[...] Furthermore, a streamlined understanding of the various approval processes involved within the City may encourage new business and investment to locate in Merritt, [...]

Marketing the Tax Exemption (p. 35)

[...] In discussion with the local businesses through individual drop ins and during focus groups, it was discovered that some businesses were not even aware that the program existed. [...]

Website (p. 40)

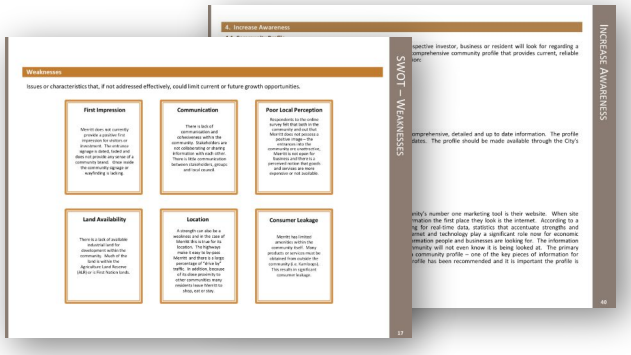
In today's changing economic development marketing world, a community's number one marketing tool is their website. When site selectors, investors, potential businesses and residents are seeking information the first place they look is the internet. According to a recent study, site selectors go to community websites and are looking for real-time data, statistics that accentuate strengths and challenges, property searches, GIS analysis and social media. [...] A review of the current economic development website pages show a lack of demographic information and target industry specific information. The information currently available is out of date or not relevant. A thorough review of the existing pages needs to be completed. At this time, utilizing the existing City website for economic development is sufficient but it is recommended that discussions take place in year two of the plan to investigate the option of establishing a standalone, dedicated economic development website.

External Awareness (p. 41)

Many of the recommendations in this Action Plan centre on retaining and expanding local business. Although this is viewed as a priority for Merritt, there is also a need for the City to market itself to attract new companies and investment. Respondents felt that Merritt has a negative image both internally and externally. They also expressed the desire for Merritt to market themselves as a viable place to do business.

Signage (p. 44)

During the public consultation process, the quality of signage into the City was severely criticized and did not provide a positive impression of the community. It was also noted the signage within the community to inform visitors was extremely poor and lacking.



AGE FRIENDLY ACTION PLAN (2016)

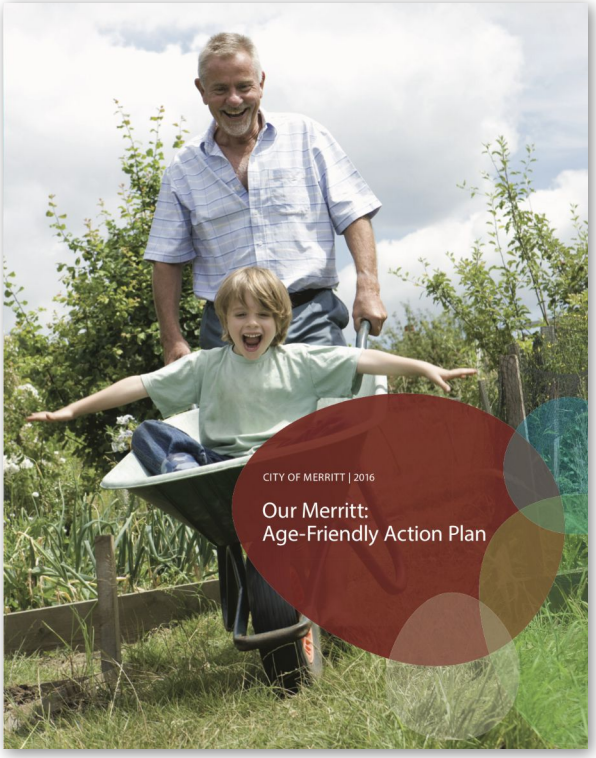
Communication + Information (p. 5)

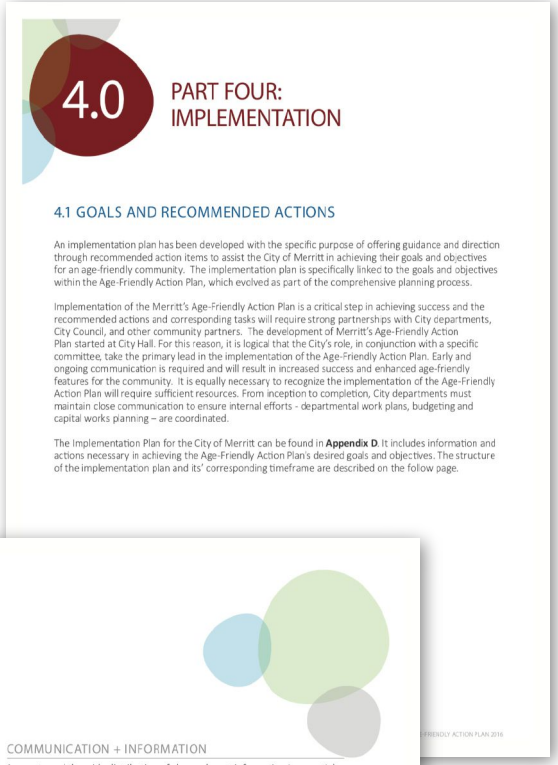
Access to and the wide distribution of clear, relevant information is essential for aging residents to be able to maintain strong social ties and community connections.

Proper communication and information is essential to ensuring that Merritt's aging population is aware of programs, services and opportunities available to them within the community. Is information about Merritt programs and services readily available and easy to access? Are members of City staff friendly and helpful to aging residents? Do aging residents have access to public computers? Is the information that the City distributes easy to read and printed in legible font sizes? These questions and many more were considered when assessing Communication and Information in Merritt.

Goals and Recommended Actions (p. 20)

[...] Early and ongoing communication is required and will result in increased success and enhanced age-friendly features for the community. It is equally necessary to recognize the implementation of the Age-Friendly Action Plan will require sufficient resources. From inception to completion, City departments must maintain close communication to ensure internal efforts - departmental work plans, budgeting and capital works planning – are coordinated.





4.0 PART FOUR: IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 GOALS AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

An implementation plan has been developed with the specific purpose of offering guidance and direction through recommended action items to assist the City of Merritt in achieving their goals and objectives for an age-friendly community. The implementation plan is specifically linked to the goals and objectives within the Age-Friendly Action Plan, which evolved as part of the comprehensive planning process.

Implementation of the Merritt's Age-Friendly Action Plan is a critical step in achieving success and the recommended actions and corresponding tasks will require strong partnerships with City departments, City Council, and other community partners. The development of Merritt's Age-Friendly Action Plan started at City Hall. For this reason, it is logical that the City's role, in conjunction with a specific committee, take the primary lead in the implementation of the Age-Friendly Action Plan. Early and ongoing communication is required and will result in increased success and enhanced age-friendly features for the community. It is equally necessary to recognize the implementation of the Age-Friendly Action Plan will require sufficient resources. From inception to completion, City departments must maintain close communication to ensure internal efforts - departmental work plans, budgeting and capital works planning – are coordinated.

The Implementation Plan for the City of Merritt can be found in **Appendix D**. It includes information and actions necessary in achieving the Age-Friendly Action Plan's desired goals and objectives. The structure of the implementation plan and its' corresponding timeframe are described on the folow page.

COMMUNICATION + INFORMATION

Access to and the wide distribution of clear, relevant information is essential for aging residents to be able to maintain strong social ties and community connections.

RESPECT + SOCIAL INCLUSION

Aging residents should continue to be respected for the roles and contributions to the community. The provision of outreach to aging residents and opportunities to participate in community life can help to mitigate isolation.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION + EMPLOYMENT

Aging residents offer a variety of skills, knowledge and experiences that can provide benefits to the community. Aging residents should be able to contribute to their communities through paid and unpaid employment for as long as they would like to or are able to do so.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS + HEALTH SERVICES

In order for aging residents to successfully age in place, the community should offer sufficient good quality and accessible healthcare and community programs and services. Doing this will allow residents in the community to receive appropriate care.

STRATEGY

OBJECTIVES

Proactively share information and news with the City of Merritt's diverse audiences.

Increase awareness and share information on the City of Merritt's services.

Gain increased engagement and input from the public.

Present a consistent image, messaging, and branding. Share information in a timely, professional manner.

Increase participation in public consultation and dialogue.

Communicate Council decisions with the public and stakeholders.

Ensure the visibility of Council members.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

VISUAL STANDARDS AND BRANDING

- Create new branding for the City of Merritt, including a new logo and brand colours.
- Adopt the tagline, "Flourish under the Sun" and incorporate it into branding.
- Create a Visual Standards Guideline to ensure a consistent look and branding throughout the organization.
- Implement the new logo and branding in all locations where the previous City of Merritt logo exists for both promotional and legislated material, through a phased approach.
- Departments will direct all requests for external uses of the City of Merritt logo to the Communication Manager for review.
- Identify ways to incorporate multiple forms of media into communications, such as video and images, and adapt to changing environments and audience needs.
- Purchase branded promotional items as giveaways to strengthen brand visibility.
- Develop and procure reusable City of Merritt branded functional items, e.g.: Banners, pins, etc.
- Departments will utilize photo releases for all submitted images, and model releases when clearly identifiable people appear in pictures, excluding photos from public events.
- Expand the library of owned visual assets, including photos and graphics.
- Continue to hold regular photo contests, open to residents throughout the Nicola Valley, to increase awareness of the City of Merritt and build the City of Merritt photo library.

GET TO KNOW MERRITT - CAMPAIGN

- Develop a high-level document explaining the City of Merritt's purpose, its services and functions; presenting a work-life-play balance, including business opportunities.
- Create a targeted Communications Plan for the campaign to promote the services and purpose of the City of Merritt to reach New Citizens and Prospective Businesses.
- Explore opportunities to distribute the "Get to know the City of Merritt" document to new residents, along with a welcome package and online material.
- Consider a specific campaign focused on businesses that Merritt residents desire, in cooperation with Economic Development.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Ensure social media channels for the City of Merritt are following the graphics guidelines and use consistent messaging.
- Enact a social media policy with guidelines and internal procedures.
- Create campaigns to educate Citizens about the City of Merritt's bylaws.

AUDIENCE

- Define audience groups based on communication channels.
- Match communication channels to the target audience for each campaign or promotion.

ADVERTISING

- Review advertising contracts for efficiency and value.
- Update current promotional and legislated advertising in line with the updated branding.
- Create a short and long-term media creation and advertising plan.

WEBSITE

- Create a new website design based on branding, ease of navigation and modern web practices.
- Establish the www.merritt.ca website as the main communications tool. Whenever possible and appropriate, information should be posted to the City of Merritt website before being spread across additional channels.
- Bring the website into compliance with modern standards and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 compliance. WCAG compliance ensures that the website is accessible to people of all abilities and ages.
- Present all information from the City of Merritt from one, consistent voice.
- Build in opportunities for users to provide feedback.
- Implement a website policy and procedures.
- Develop a plain language guide to increase understanding and readability of the website.
- Create a library of industry-specific definitions on the website and link to it when it is not possible to avoid a technical term.
- Merge all department specific websites, as subdomains, with the main City website: www.merritt.ca.
- Display all available communication channels on the website.

ISSUES MANAGEMENT/CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

- Create and implement an issues management procedure and develop tools to be used across the organization (risk analysis template, Crisis Communication Plan, standby messages, key messaging template).
- Staff and Council will notify the Communications Manager immediately of public relations issues. The Communications Manager will work with the affected department to create and implement a response strategy.
- Monitor media and the broader environment for mentions of the City of Merritt and identify existing and emerging issues.
- Debrief after the issue has been mended to identify tactics that worked well, and opportunities for improvement.
- Develop communication guidelines and a template for major event organizers in the Nicola Valley.

PUBLICATIONS / NEWSLETTERS

- Identify, analyze and adapt ongoing City publications.
- Collect and compose information materials then distribute to the relevant channels.
- Create e-newsletters, for Citizens to opt-in.
- Collect department notices to communicate in the News section on the website, publications and newsletters.
- Explore options to share updates, bylaw changes and City events in an attractive print form (e.g. Mini-magazine/booklet)

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Create guidelines and resources for planning engagement activities, after exploring best practices in public engagement.
- Promote opportunities for feedback with the audience's communication preferences in mind.
- Clearly display options for providing feedback on the City website, as well as legislated processes (public hearings) and optional/additional processes (open houses/forums).
- Create more informal opportunities for feedback.
- Research the need for an online community engagement platform, e.g.: A forum or rotating survey.
- Consider hosting occasional consultation activities at external venues convenient to the public when possible and appropriate.
- Have staff attend trade shows/expos and promote awareness of the City of Merritt's services, functions, and ongoing projects when possible and appropriate.
- Include opportunities for feedback on communications at all public engagement activities.
- Produce an annual review of communication channels (see Appendix A)

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

- Create specific implementation plans for items listed in the Communication Plan.
- Create communication plans customized for City priority projects.
- Develop key messages, fact sheets, and background information when appropriate.
- Departments will inform the Communications Manager of upcoming projects with as much time as possible to create a project-based communication plan.
- Seek opportunities to provide updates to Council throughout City projects. Memorandums are an encouraged method of communication.

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

- Continue to produce an annual document with services listed, summaries and the past year's budget and present it to the public, after presenting it to Council.
- Provide research and drafting support in writing speeches for the Mayor, or their designate, when representing the City of Merritt at events to ensure key messages are captured.
- Encourage Council Members to attend and participate in community events as representatives of the City of Merritt.
- Share media material and highlights from the events involving Council through the City of Merritt's communication channels as appropriate.

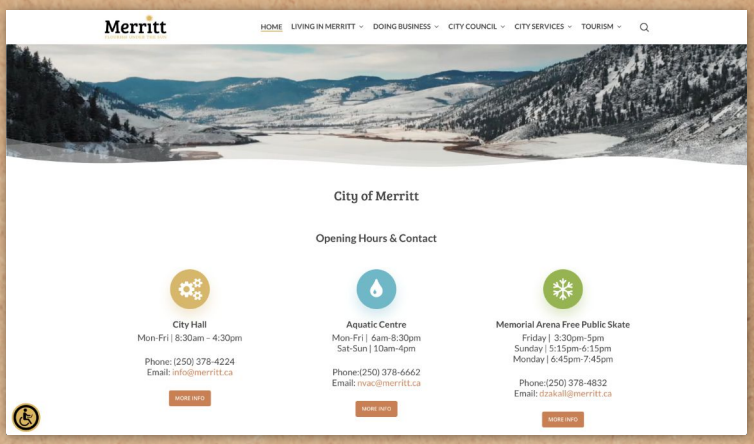
TOURISM

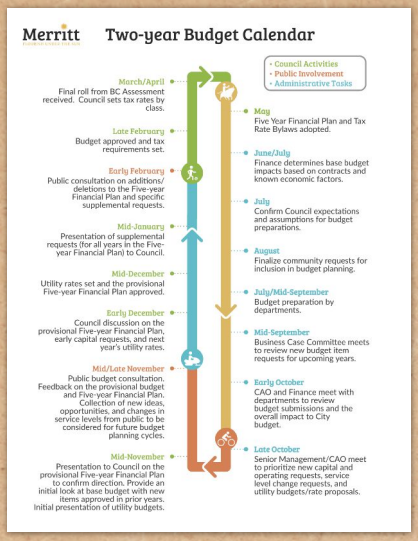
- Create a Tourism Communication Action Plan based on the goals and priorities set in the Merritt and Nicola Valley Tourism Plan, that aligns with this Communication Plan.
- Continue to provide promotional information with the Merritt Visitor Centre and Mobile Visitor Info Kiosk. This includes City information and information from non-profits and event organizers.

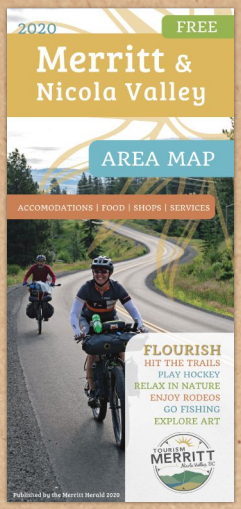
TOURISM
MERRITT
Nicola Valley, BC

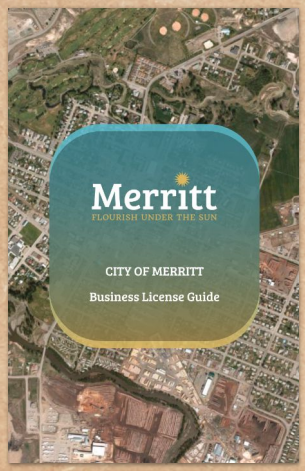
EXAMPLES OF CURRENT EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

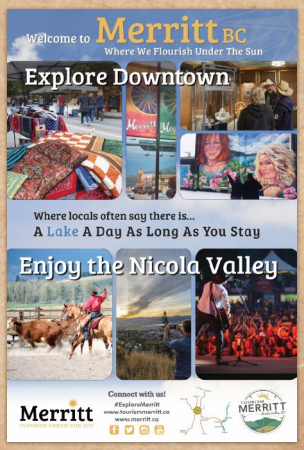
Below are examples of different types of City media, with an overall consistency and brand recognition.











INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

ANALYSIS

HISTORICAL INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

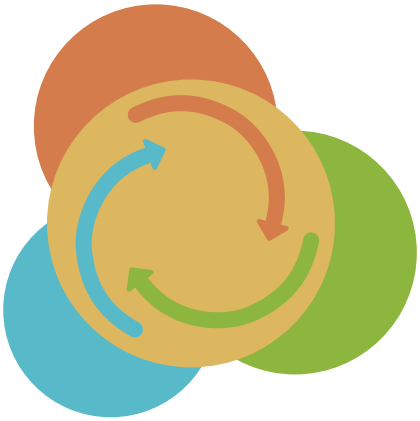
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

Staff

1. Inter-departmental communication is largely dependant on email, phone and face-to-face communication.
2. Responsibility for external communication and advertising is not centralized.

Council

1. Email is a primary communication method
2. Council Meetings and Committee of the Whole Meetings
3. Regular staff and Council communications via CAO updates
4. Status updates on City projects and announcements are sent to Council prior to the community at large



STRENGTHS INVOLVING THOSE PLATFORMS

Inter-departmental Communication

The centralized location of offices allows staff to easily communicate with each other. This allows for quick follow-ups, spontaneous meetings and overall good relations between staff.

ISSUES INVOLVING THOSE PLATFORMS

Inter-departmental Communication

It has been identified that information does not move freely between departments. More automated processes and tools could be implemented to further improve internal communication.

External Communication

The lack of centralized communication results in inconsistent messaging, for both quality and style.

STRATEGY

OBJECTIVES

Foster an environment where the value of communication is recognized.

Create a flow of communication, where City Departments communicate to the public, with and through the Communication Department.

Create a culture where the website is the primary source of information regarding the City of Merritt.

Communicate Council decisions with the public and stakeholders.

Develop efficient communication policies for Committee members.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

- Provide communications reports with analytics to the CAO and Council as required.
- Encourage Council to follow all City communication channels.

STAFF COMMUNICATION

- Create a guideline for the flow of communication content. (See Appendix B for a visual proposal of the communication flow)
- Schedule quarterly meetings with City departments for updates or questions on the communication flow.
- All communication content will be collected by the Communications Department through the email address: communications@merritt.ca
- Support the Human Resources Department in their communication flow for hiring and welcoming new staff.
- Implement a single digital source of information for internal communication.

COMMITTEE COMMUNICATION

- Compile information for new Committee members, providing general information about all committees and detailed information about the committee they have joined, while including Council's strategic priorities and connected City Master Plans.
- Create a platform for efficient communication between Committees and Council.

PUBLICATIONS / NEWSLETTERS

- Share publications and newsletters with all City staff and Council.
- Create a recurring newsletter specifically for all front-line employees to ensure they are aware and informed of any City updates.

MEDIA RELATIONS

ANALYSIS

HISTORICAL MEDIA RELATIONS

1. Media Meeting with Mayor Brown, Communications Manager, Director of Corporate Services and the local media, covering the agenda for the upcoming Council meeting
2. Press releases sent to local media
3. Local media is tagged on City social media posts
4. Approved Council items and CAO updates from Council meetings are presented to the local media and general public
5. Regular communications with media
6. Media is present at Council Meetings, Committee of the Whole Meeting and City events

Zoning Bylaw Headed for Expanded Public Consultation

Written by Michael Reeve Published: 06 July 2020

Merritt
FLOURISH UNDER THE SUN

The City of Merritt is in the midst of a massive overhaul of the zoning bylaw. Last week, the newly formed document was presented to the City Council for debate on first and second reading.

If passed, city staff would then schedule a public hearing, however, the Council felt more consultation was needed before the public hearing.

"I think this document is immensely important. I would like (the public) to have the opportunity to look at this document and question it," said Coun. Kurt Christopherson.

The statement from Christopherson was backed by the rest of the table with Council passing a resolution to hold two open house style sessions before the document heads to a public hearing.

Those wishing to have their voices heard can also provide input and ask questions through email with staff.

The dates of the open houses have not been set.

For additional information on the zoning bylaw visit https://www.merritt.ca/agendas-minutes/ and click on the agenda for Tuesday, June 30, 2020. The zoning bylaw information runs from page 16 – 226.

STRATEGY

OBJECTIVES

Foster good working relationships with the media.

Ensure that the City of Merritt has a consistent image and voice.

Share accurate information with the media.

MEDIA RELATIONS

PROACTIVE MEDIA RELATIONS

- Prepare backgrounders, fact sheets, frequently asked questions, or other appropriate documents for the media.
- Identify newsworthy stories and present them to the media in a compelling way.
- Amplify select articles about the City of Merritt by sharing links on the website landing page and social media.
- Encourage staff to share milestones and good news stories with the Communication Manager, for distribution to the media.
- Departments will ensure inquiries from the media are given high priority and responded to in a timely and efficient manner.
- Send out a message to local media when a new staff member is hired.

MEDIA/PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

- Redesign the media/press release template to align with best practices.

MEDIA MONITORING

- Utilize media monitoring software efficiently and respond or notify administration and Council as necessary to keep them informed of major coverage and trends.
- Promptly address typos, misinformation, and misquotes.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS

- The Mayor, or their designate, is the authorized spokesperson for all Council business and decisions. The Communications Department will assist the Mayor or their designate in preparing for media interviews.
- The CAO, or their designate, is the authorized spokesperson on all operational and administrative matters. Designated City of Merritt employees may be called upon to speak to the media regarding specific areas of responsibility or subject matter. The Communications Department will assist staff with media interviews.
- If departments receive media interview requests, they will notify the Communication Department.

MEDIA TRAINING

- Provide media training to Council, staff and subject matter experts in the organization.
- Create a media standards booklet for all trained spokespeople.

MEDIA POLICIES

- Distribute the media relations policy with staff.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

TIMELINE

The timeline below proposes a quick overview of the 3 phases in which the City of Merritt will implement the Communication Plan.

A detailed Implementation Plan can be found on the following pages.

PHASE 1

Initial Strategy Implementation

- Create & develop a structured system to implement the Communication Plan.
- Create more specific implementation plans for items listed in the Communication Plan.
- Begin implementation of the Visual Standards Guideline, the new City website and continue with existing communication channels, following the new guideline.

AUG 2020 - JAN 2021

PHASE 2

Strategy Implementation and Refining

- Commence implementing the Communication Plan as a whole.
- Refine the newly structured system.
- Follow up with departments on the communication flow and overall plan.

FEB 2021 - JAN 2023

PHASE 3

Planning Ahead

- Review the progress, based on metrics, goals, and public feedback.
- Follow up with departments on the communication flow and overall plan.
- Begin analyzing changes in external factors, such as technology, for updating the Communication Plan.

FEB 2023 - JAN 2025

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN | PHASE 1 | EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

	RECOMMENDED ACTION	OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE
VISUAL STANDARDS AND BRANDING	Create new branding for the City of Merritt, including a new logo and brand colours.	Fresh and revitalized City branding	Communications	Completed
	Adopt the tagline, "Flourish under the Sun" and incorporate it into branding.	The City connects with its historical identity	Communications	Completed
	Create a Visual Standards Guideline to ensure a consistent look and branding throughout the organization.	Consistent branding material, including use by 3rd party contributors	Communications	Completed
	Implement the new logo and branding in all locations where the previous City of Merritt logo exists of both promotional and legislated material, through a phased approach.	Consistent image of the City in a cost-effective way	Communications / All departments	1 year
	Departments will route all requests for external uses of the City of Merritt logo to the Communication Manager for review.	The City logo will be properly presented on 3rd party channels	Communications	Ongoing
	Identify ways to incorporate multiple forms of media into communications, such as video and images, and adapt to changing environments and audience needs.	Drawing viewers attention with video and imagery	Communications	Ongoing
	Purchase branded promotional items as giveaways to strengthen brand visibility.	Increased number of City branded promotional items	Communications	Ongoing
	Build a stock of reusable City of Merritt branded functional items, e.g. Banner, pins, etc.	Additional City branded material for exposure	Communications	1 year
	Departments will utilize photo releases for all submitted images, and model releases when clearly, identifiable people appear in pictures excluding public events.	Approved use of shared images	Communications / All Departments	Ongoing
	Expand the library of owned visual assets, including photography and graphics.	Easy access to visual content	Communications	Ongoing
	Continue with regular photo contests open to residents throughout the Nicola Valley to increase awareness of the City of Merritt and build the City of Merritt photo library.	An expanded photo library	Communications/ Tourism	Annual
SOCIAL MEDIA	Ensure social media channels for the City of Merritt are following the graphics guidelines and are consistent with messaging.	Streamlined City social media channels	Communications	Completed
	Enact a social media policy with community guidelines and internal procedures.	Consistent social media messaging	Communications	3 months
	Create campaigns to educate Citizens about the City of Merritt's bylaws.	Citizens will have a better understanding of City bylaws	Communications / Corporate Services	1 year

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN | PHASE 1 | EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION (CONT.)

	RECOMMENDED ACTION	OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE
AUDIENCE	Define audience groups based on communication channels.	Increased City understanding of target audience groups	Communications	1 month
	Match communication channels to the target audience for each campaign or promotion.	Enhanced communication towards target audience groups	Communications	Ongoing
ADVERTISING	Review advertising contracts for efficiency and value.	Higher quality and lower cost of City communication	Communications / Corporate Services	Ongoing
	Update current promotional and legislated advertising in line with the updated branding.	Consistent City branding within advertising	Communications	1 year
	Create a short and long-term media creation and advertising plan.	Ability to execute effective City advertising	Communications	1 year
WEBSITE	Create a new website design based on the branding, ease of navigation and modern web practices.	Improved City website utilization	Communications	3 months
	Establish the www.merritt.ca website as the main communications tool. Whenever possible and appropriate, information should be posted to the City of Merritt website before being spread across additional channels.	Improved website functionality	Communications	Ongoing
	Bring the website in line with modern standards and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 compliance. WCAG compliance ensures that the website is accessible to people of all abilities and ages.	Online platform accessible to all abilities and ages	Communications	3 months
	Focus on presenting information as one voice rather than as information from various departments.	Unity of information	Communications / All Departments	Ongoing
	Build in opportunities for users to provide feedback.	Increased feedback from the public	Communications	Ongoing
	Implement a website policy and procedures.	Organizational understanding of the website policy and procedures	Communications	3 months
	Develop a plain language guide to increase understanding and readability of the website.	Increased accessibility of the City website	Communications	3 months
	Create a library of industry-specific definitions on the website and link to it when it's not possible to avoid a technical term.	Increased understanding and readability of the website	Communications	3 months
	Merge all department specific websites, as subdomains, with the main City website: www.merritt.ca.	Ease of access to all City websites	Communications	3 months
	Display all available communication channels on the website.	Citizens are aware of all opportunities to stay connected with the City	Communications	3 months

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN | PHASE 1 | EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION (CONT.)

	RECOMMENDED ACTION	OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE
PUBLICATIONS/ NEWS LETTERS	Identify, analyze and adapt ongoing City publications.	Refinement of City publications	Communications	Ongoing
	Collect and compose information material, then distribute accordingly to the required channels.	Higher quality of City communication	Communications	Ongoing
	Collect department notices to communicate in the News section on the website, publications and newsletters.	Citizens are informed about City updates	Communications	Ongoing
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	Create guidelines and resources to plan engagement activities after exploring best practices in public engagement.	Improved public engagement resources	Communications	3 months
	Promote opportunities for feedback with the audience's communication preferences in mind.	Additional public engagement and feedback	Communications	3 months
	Clearly display options for providing feedback on the City website, as well as legislated processes (public hearings) and optional/ additional processes (open houses/ forums).	Additional public engagement and feedback	Communications	3 months
	Create more informal opportunities for feedback.	Additional public engagement and feedback	Communications	Ongoing
	Research the need for an online community engagement platform, e.g a forum or rotating survey.	Additional public engagement and feedback	Communications	1 year
	Consider bringing consultation activities occasionally outside of City Hall to places that are convenient to the public when possible and appropriate.	Additional public engagement and feedback	Communications	Ongoing
	Have staff attend trade shows/expos and promote awareness of the City of Merritt's services, functions, and ongoing projects when possible and appropriate.	Additional public engagement and feedback	Communications	Ongoing
	Include opportunities for feedback on communication at all public engagement activities.	Additional public engagement and feedback	Communications	Ongoing
	Produce a review of communication channels (see Appendix A)	Increased understanding of public engagement	Communications	Annual

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN | PHASE 1 | EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION (CONT.)

	RECOMMENDED ACTION	OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	Create specific implementation plans for recommended action items in the Communication Plan.	Detailed plans for recommended action items	Communications	1 year
	Create communication plans customized for City priority projects that follow the values, principles and objectives of this Communications Plan.	Improved public communication Regarding City projects	Communications / All Departments	Ongoing
	Develop key messages, fact sheets, and background information when appropriate.	Improved public communication Regarding City projects	Communications	1 year
	Departments will inform the Communications Manager of upcoming projects with as much time as possible to create a project based Communication Plan.	Improved public communication regarding City projects	Communications / All Departments	Ongoing
	Seek opportunities to provide updates to Council throughout a City project. Memorandums are an encouraged method of communication.	Council is aware and efficiently able to communicate to the public about City projects	Communications	Ongoing
TOURISM	Create a Tourism Communication Action Plan based on the goals and priorities set in the Merritt and Nicola Valley Tourism Plan, in line with this Communication Plan.	Improved communication tailored for City tourism initiatives, in line with City branding	Communications / Tourism	1 year
	Continue to provide promotional information with the Merritt Visitor Centre and Mobile Visitor Info Kiosk. This includes City information and information from non-profits and event organizers.	Increased City Tourism communication	Communications / Tourism	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN | PHASE 1 | INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

	RECOMMENDED ACTION	OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE
STAFF COMMUNICATION	Encourage Council to follow all City communication channels.	All Council members following City communication channels	Communications	1 month
	Create a guideline for the flow of communication content. (See Appendix B for a visual proposal of the communication flow)	Coordinated public information published in a timely manner	Communications	Proposal included
	Schedule quarterly meetings with City departments for updates or questions on the communication flow.	Improved Internal City communication	Communications / All Departments	Ongoing
	When new staff is hired, send out an email to all City Staff welcoming them onboard.	City Staff are aware of new colleagues	Communications / Human Resources	Ongoing
	Implement a single digital source of information for internal communication.	A simplified platform for internal communication	Communications / IT / Human Resources	3 months
	Encourage Council to follow all City communication channels.	City Council is aware of the external communication material	Communications / CAO	1 month
	Support the Human Resources department in their communication flow for hiring and welcoming new staff.	Enhanced communication to new staff and current staff	Communications / Human Resources	3 month

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN | PHASE 1 | MEDIA RELATIONS

	RECOMMENDED ACTION	OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE
PROACTIVE MEDIA RELATIONS	Prepare backgrounders, fact sheets, frequently asked questions, or other appropriate documents for the media.	Efficient information for media purposes	Communications	1 year
	Identify newsworthy stories and present them to the media in a compelling way.	Additional positive City news are circulated	Communications	Ongoing
	Amplify select articles about the City of Merritt by sharing links on the website landing page and social media.	Additional positive City news are circulated	Communications	Ongoing
	Encourage staff to share milestones and good news stories with the Communication Manager in order to share the information with the media.	Additional positive City news are circulated	Communications / All Departments	Ongoing
	Departments will ensure inquiries from the media are given high priority and responded to as quickly and efficiently as possible. Send out a message to local media when a new staff member is hired.	Positive relations with the media are beneficial in the media output	Communications / All Departments	Ongoing
	Send out a message to local media when a new staff member is hired.	Shared information to media and residents on new City staff	Communications / All Departments	Ongoing
MEDIA RELEASE TEMPLATE	Redesign the media/press release template to fit with best practices.	Improved resources for media purposes	Communications	3 months

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN | PHASE 1 | MEDIA RELATIONS (CONT.)

	RECOMMENDED ACTION	OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE
MEDIA MONITORING	Utilize media monitoring software efficiently and respond or notify administration and Council as necessary to keep them informed of major coverage and trends.	An improved understanding of the City image in the media	Communications	Ongoing
	Promptly address typos, misinformation, and misquotes.	Enhanced community trust	Communications Department	Ongoing
MEDIA INTERVIEWS	The Mayor, or their designate is the authorized spokesperson for all Council business and decisions. The Communications Department will assist the Mayor or their designate in preparing for media interviews.	Better prepared media interviews will lead to more correct information being circulated in a fashion that will improve the City image	Mayor / Communications	Ongoing
	The CAO, or their designate, is the authorized spokesperson on all operaRonal and administrative matters. Designated City of Merritt employees may be called upon to speak to the media regarding specific areas of responsibility or subject matter. The Communications Department will assist staff with media interviews.	Better prepared media interviews will lead to more correct information being circulated in a fashion that will improve the City image	CAO / Communications	Ongoing
	If departments receive media interview request, they will notify the Communication Department.	Better prepared media interviews will lead to more correct information being circulated in a fashion that will improve the City image	Communications / All Departments	Ongoing
MEDIA TRAINING	Create a media standards booklet for all trained spokespeople.	Enhanced prepared messaging	Communications	1 year
MEDIA POLICIES	Distribute media relations policy with staff.	Enhanced prepared messaging	Communications	1 year

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN | PHASE 2 | EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

	RECOMMENDED ACTION	OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE
GET TO KNOW MERRITT CAMPAIGN	Develop a high-level document explaining the City of Merritt's purpose, its services and functions, presenting a work-life-play balance, including business opportunities.	New Citizens are fully aware of the City's purpose, services and functions.	Communications	By the end of 2021
	Create a targeted Communication Plan for the campaign and promote the services and purpose of the City of Merritt to reach new Citizens as well as Prospective Businesses.	New Citizens will be able to easily find the "Get to know the City of Merritt" document	Communications	By the end of 2021
	Explore opportunities to distribute the "Get to know the City of Merritt" document with new residents, along with a welcome package and online material.	New Citizens will be able to easily find the "Get to know the City of Merritt" document	Communications	By the end of 2021
	Consider a specific campaign focused on the businesses that the Citizens of Merritt are in need of or desire, in cooperation with Economic Development.	Higher chance of successful businesses and more useful amenities available for Citizens	Communications / Economic Development	By the end of 2021
ISSUES MANAGEMENT/ CRISIS COMMUNICATION	Create and implement an issues management procedure and develop tools to be used across the organization (risk analysis template, Crisis Communication Plan, standby messages, key messaging template).	Communication issues can be addressed in a more timely manner	Communications	By the end of 2021
	Staff and Council will notify the Communications Manager immediately of public relations issues. The Communications Manager will work with the affected department to create and implement a response strategy.	Communication issues can be addressed in a more timely manner	Communications	Ongoing
	Monitor media and the broader environment for mentions of the City of Merritt and identify existing and emerging issues.	Communication issues can be addressed in a more timely manner	Communications	Ongoing
	Debrief after the issue has been mended to identify tactics that worked well, and opportunities for improvement.	Improved preparedness communication for future issues	Communications	Ongoing
	Develop communication guidelines and a template for major event organizers in the Nicola Valley.	Improved communication with major festival organizers, which improves communication towards Citizens	Communications / Economic Development / Tourism	1 year

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN | PHASE 2 | EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION (CONT.)

	RECOMMENDED ACTION	OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE
PUBLICATIONS/ NEWSLETTERS	Create e-newsletters, for which citizens can opt-in.	Additional information channel	Communications	Ongoing
	Explore options to share updates, bylaw changes and City events in an attractive print form (e.g. Mini-magazine/booklet).	A City managed print communication material	Communications	Ongoing
COUNCIL COMMUNICATION	Continue to produce an annual document with services listed, summaries and the past year's budget and present it to the public, after presenting it to Council.	The public is aware of City operations and budget	Communications	Annual
	Encourage Council Members to attend and participate in community events as representatives of the City of Merritt.	Increased Council community engagement	Communications	Ongoing
	Share media material and highlights from the events involving Council through the City of Merritt's communication channels as appropriate.	Increased awareness on Council's involvement in community events	Communications	Ongoing
TOURISM	Execute the Tourism Communication Action Plan based on the goals and priorities set in the Merritt and Nicola Valley Tourism Plan, in line with this Communication Plan.	Improved communication towards towards tourism attraction in the City	Communications / Tourism	Ongoing
	Create more visual material to highlight the City of Merritt's activities.	Additional City visual material assets	Communications / Tourism / Recreation & Facilities	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN | PHASE 2 | INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

	RECOMMENDED ACTION	OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE
COUNCIL COMM.	Provide communications reports with analytics to the CAO and Council as required.	Council and the CAO are updated on City operations and residents feedback	Communications	Ongoing
COMMITTEE COMM.	Compile information for new Committee members, to inform about Committees in general and about the Committee they joined specifically, while including Council's strategic priorities and connected City Master Plans.	Improved communication to Committee Members	Communications / Corporate Services	1 year
	Create a platform for efficient communication between Committees and Council.	Improved communication between Council and Committees	Communications / Corporate Services	1 year
PUBLICATIONS/ NEWSLETTERS	Share publications and newsletters with all City staff and Council.	Staff and Council are better prepared to respond to inquiries	Communications	Ongoing
	Create a recurring newsletter specifically for all front line employees to ensure they are aware and informed of any City updates.	Improved communication at the front desks of all City facilities	Communications	Ongoing

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN | PHASE 2 | MEDIA RELATIONS

	RECOMMENDED ACTION	OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE
MEDIA TRAINING	Provide media training to Council, staff and subject matter experts in the organization.	Improved media training for City spokespeople	Communications / Council / Staff	Annual

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN | PHASE 3

RECOMMENDED ACTION	OUTCOME	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT	ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE
Review the progress, based on metrics, goals and public feedback.	Enhanced understanding the City Communication	Communications	By 2025
Follow up with departments on the communication flow.	A more efficient communication flow	Communications	By 2025
Begin analyzing changes in external factors, such as technology, for the follow-up Communication Plan.	A smooth transition into the new Communication Plan	Communications	By 2025

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: REVIEW OF COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AS OF JULY 3RD, 2020

WEBSITES

MEDIUM	DETAILS	TARGET AUDIENCE	LINK
Websites			
City of Merritt	All City Information	Citizens	www.merritt.ca
Tourism Merritt	Activities & Events for Locals & Tourists	Citizens & Tourists	www.tourismmerritt.ca
Fire Rescue Merritt	Fire Rescue Information & Safety Awareness	Citizens	www.firerescue.merritt.ca
Claybanks RV Park	Information on the City operated RV Park	Tourists	www.claybanksrv.ca

SOCIAL MEDIA

MEDIUM	FOLLOWING	DETAILS	TARGET AUDIENCE	LINK
Facebook Pages				
City of Merritt - Municipal Government	1984	All General City Information	Citizens	www.facebook.com/CityofMerritt/
Tourism Merritt	2251	Touristic Updates, Activities & Events	Tourists	www.facebook.com/tourismmerritt/
City of Merritt - Department of Recreation & Facilities	697	City Programs & Facility Information	Citizens	www.facebook.com/Merritt.Civic.Centre/
Merritt Fire Rescue Department	3138	Fire Rescue Department Updates	Citizens	www.facebook.com/MerrittFire/
Instagram Accounts				
City of Merritt	174	City Updates	Citizens	www.instagram.com/Cityofmerritt/
Tourism Merritt	507	Touristic Activities and Tourism Outreach	Tourists	www.instagram.com/tourismmerritt/
Merritt Fire Rescue	194	Promotion of the Fire Rescue Department & Safety awareness	Citizens	www.instagram.com/merrittfirerescue/
Twitter Accounts				
City of Merritt	335	City Updates	Citizens	www.twitter.com/Cityofmerritt/
Tourism Merritt	643	Upcoming Events & Amenities	Tourists	www.twitter.com/tourismmerritt/
YouTube Channels				
Tourism Merritt	70	Promotional Videos	Tourists	www.youtube.com/user/tourismmerritt
City of Merritt	6	City Information	Citizens & Prospective Citizens	www.youtube.com/channel/UCQ9kB7UheX4XFPeEOYduFaQ
LinkedIn Accounts				
City of Merritt	85	Employment Opportunities	Citizens & Prospective Citizens	www.linkedin.com/company/City-of-merritt/

PRINT MATERIAL

MEDIUM	FREQUENCY	DETAILS	LINK
Downtown Merritt Visitor Info Map	As Required	Food & Attractions Downtown	www.tourismmerritt.ca/images/visitor_guide/Merritt-Downtown-Map-2019.pdf
Merritt & Nicola Valley Trail Guide	As Required	Trails in the Nicola Valley	www.tourismmerritt.ca/images/visitor_guide/Merritt-Trail-Guide-2019.pdf
Community Map	As Required	City Services & Facilities	www.tourismmerritt.ca/images/Images/38262_city_of_merritt_tear_away_map_11x17_PROOF-REV4.pdf

LOCAL MEDIA

MEDIUM	FREQUENCY	DETAILS	LINK
Activity Guide	Seasonal	Recreational Info, Programs & Facilities	ssuu.com/merritt-herald/docs/winter_activity_guide_2020_lr
Merritt & Nicola Valley Visitor Guide	Annual	Tourism Activities	issuu.com/merritt-herald/docs/merrittvg-2019
Merritt & Nicola Valley Area Map	Annual	Accommodations, Food, Shops & Services	tourismmerritt.ca/images/Images/Regional_Map_of_Nicola_Valley.png
Merritt Herald pg. 4 Info page	Weekly	City Information Updates	www.issuu.com/merritt-herald
Merritt Herald Advertisement	As Required	Support Organizations & Causes	www.issuu.com/merritt-herald
Q101 (radio)	As Required	Campaigns & City Updates	www.q101.ca
Merritt Connector Phone Book	Annual	General City Ads	www.issuu.com/merritt-herald/docs/connector_2019?e=9313076/68037206
Merritt Morning Market	Weekly	City Info Updates	www.merrittmorningmarket.com
Community Boards	As Required	Event Posters	

3RD PARTY PRINT MEDIA

MEDIUM	FREQUENCY	DETAILS	LINK
Invest in BC	Annual	Promoting Merritt	www.issuu.com/canadawidemedia/docs/investbc_lowres
Backroad Map Books	Annual	Promoting Merritt	www.backroadmapbooks.com
BC Business	Annual	Promoting Merritt	www.bcbusiness.ca/Magazine
Right Sizing Magazine	Annual	Promoting Merritt	www.rightsizingmedia.com/magazine/
BC Living	Annual	Promoting Merritt	www.bcliving.ca/magazines.php

3RD PARTY ONLINE CHANNELS

MEDIUM	FREQUENCY	DETAILS	LINK
Destination BC	As Required	Promoting Merritt	www.destinationbc.ca
Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association	As Required	Promoting Merritt	www.thompsonokanagan.com
BC Living	As Required	Promoting Merritt	www.bcliving.ca

IN PERSON

MEDIUM	FREQUENCY	DETAILS
CAO Council Updates	Bi-weekly	Department Info
Open Houses	As Required	Project Based
Council Meetings (Regular & Committee of the Whole)	Bi-weekly	City Info
Media Tours	As Required	Promoting Merritt
Business Exploratory Visits	As Required	Promoting Merritt
Events (Canada Day, Kid's Triathlon, New Year Fireworks, etc.)	As Required	City Info
Mobile City Kiosk (Summer)	As Required	Promoting Merritt Events & Tourism

VISUAL REPRESENTATION

MERRITT.CA

TOURISM MERRITT.CA

FIRE RESCUE. MERRITT.CA

CLAYBANKS RV.CA

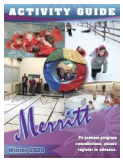
SOCIAL MEDIA

- City of Merritt
  Tourism Merritt
  Recreation & Facilities
  Merritt Fire Rescue
- City of Merritt
  Tourism Merritt
  Merritt Fire Rescue
- City of Merritt
  Tourism Merritt
- City of Merritt
  Tourism Merritt
- City of Merritt

MERRITT VISITOR CENTRE BAILLIE HOUSE

PRINT MATERIAL

Activity Guide (Seasonal)



Merritt & Nicola Valley Visitor Guide (Annual)

Maps & Guides

LOCAL MEDIA

Newspaper

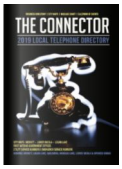
Info Page Merritt Herald pg. 4 (weekly)

Merritt Herald Advertisement

Radio

Q101

Merritt Connector Phone Book



Community Boards

3RD PARTY PRINT MEDIA

Invest in BC

Backroad Mapbooks

BC Business

Right Sizing Magazine

BC Living Magazine

3RD PARTY ONLINE CHANNELS

Destination BC

DESTINATION BRITISH COLUMBIA

Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association

THOMPSON OKANAGAN

BC Living

BCLiving

RADIO

Star 98.3

98.3 STAR

Country 107.1

107.1 COUNTRY

IN PERSON

CAO Council Updates
Open Houses
Public Council Meetings

Media Tours
Business Exploratory Visits

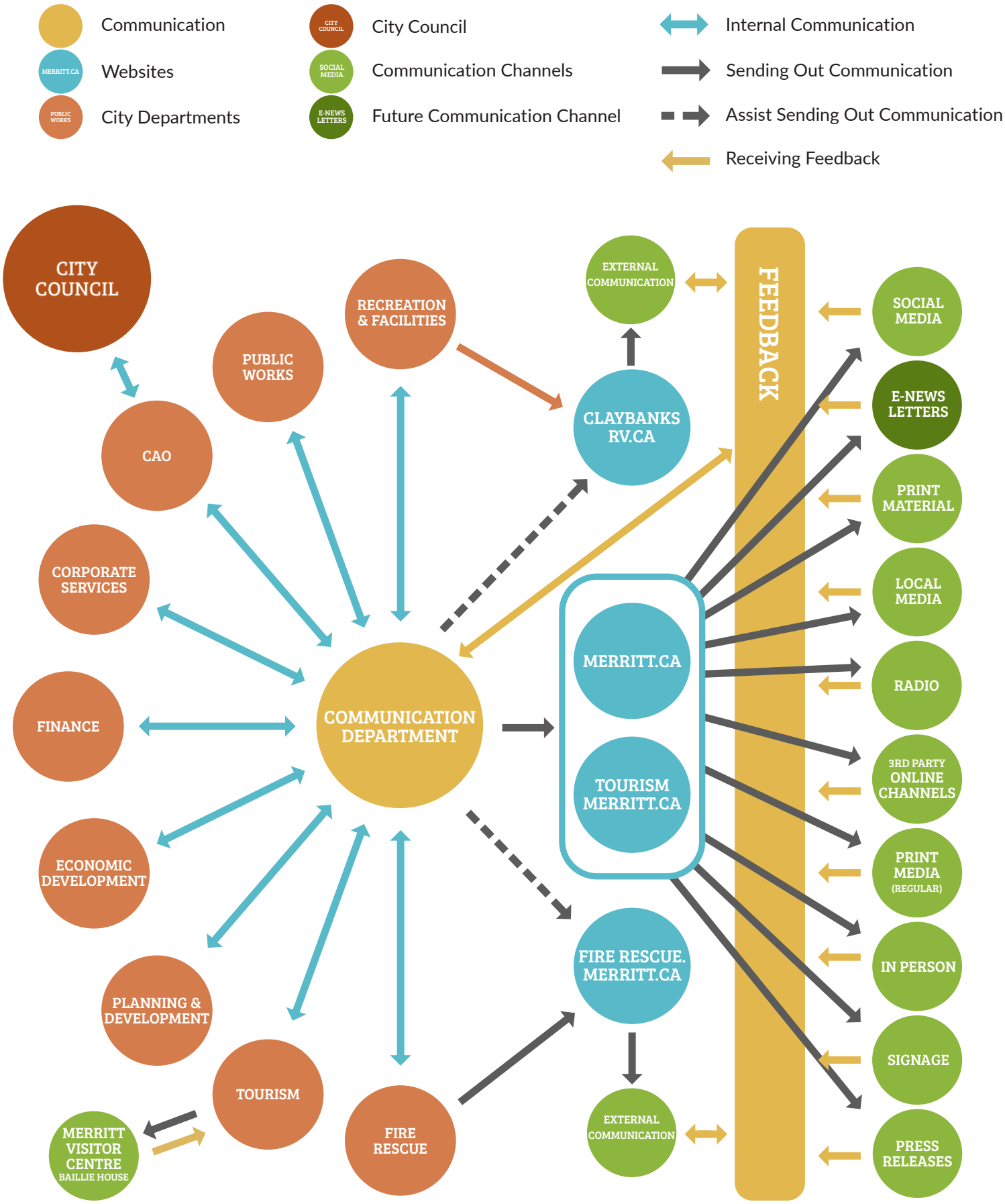
Events

Mobile City Kiosk (summer)

PRESS RELEASES

Local / Regional / Provincial / National

SIGNAGE

Traffic Signs
Banners
Billboards
Posters
Re-zoning Signs

APPENDIX B: COMMUNICATION FLOW PROPOSAL