

# **CARSON CITY CONSOLIDATED MUNICIPALITY**

## **Communications Plan**

### **SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Our organization is dedicated to strengthening its relationship with the residents of Carson City. Through public hearings, visual preference surveys, community-wide strategic planning, public opinion surveys, focus groups, and communication workshops and numerous other public communication tools, Carson City continues to strive to engage its citizenry and increase their participation.

In March 1998, the City Manager invited nine professionals in the field of communications to look at what Carson City is doing currently, and what it should be doing to facilitate the flow of information between the citizens of our community.

Carson City's Communication Plan is the result of that session and identifies key components for a successful information and education program to positively influence both those within our organization as well as the general public.

City staff participated in a series of brainstorming sessions in the summer of 2000. From these sessions came the identification of a comprehensive communications framework, a strategy, if you will, to address the needs and concerns of the three primary audiences to be reached: citizens, employees, and the media. These three audiences drive the communications plan and direct the accompanying strategies.

### **PRINCIPLES OF THE PLAN:**

#### **Vision of the Plan**

A dynamic, innovative and proactive program that results in a greater understanding and appreciation of municipal issues and programs, and generates a greater level of citizen trust for City government, its elected officials, and employees.

#### **Mission of the Plan**

Promote the positive way the City handles the public's business; encourage citizen involvement and instill confidence and trust in the organization. Provide professional public relations, crisis communications, strategic planning, marketing, and employee communication to all City departments, and the Board of Supervisors, as well as to the community's citizens.

#### **Values of the Plan**

- Trust: Provide only accurate, factual information in working with citizens and news media. Be the best source of factual and accurate information at all times.
- People: Seek and be open to the ideas and concerns of our community, customers, employees and those whose lives we affect.
- Innovation: Seek creative solutions to community and organizational issues.

### **Administrative Philosophy of the Plan**

Maintain an environment that encourages creativity and new approaches to issues problems, fostered often through open discussion and debate. Encourage the use of new technologies in all facets of the operation, reducing administrative burdens, enhancing responsiveness, increasing citizen and employee access to information and services, and increasing the level of professionalism in the products and services the City offers.

## SECTION II: TARGETED AUDIENCES

### Citizens

#### Challenge:

From their unique perspective, the citizens of Carson City rely on direct personal experience, hearsay, and reported news stories to grade City services and personnel. Oftentimes citizen interaction is prompted by an immediate need or direct inconvenience. What they experience during these times colors their opinion of City government, for better or worse. What isn't known about their personal experience is sometimes the best barometer of their opinion. It isn't enough to have information available to citizens before an event affects them. It is important to get their reading after one occurs. It is one of the most difficult and most crucial of the citizen communication links to measure.

#### Current Status:

Although many departments offer their own public information materials and services to the citizens, the majority of community relations and public information activities are being conducted out of the City Manager's Office. There is no one "position" or staff member solely dedicated to public relations and information or its tracking.

The City Manager and his staff use communication tools to educate citizens about City government and community services provided. Employing a proactive and objective approach by giving citizens factual information about issues currently under consideration by elected officials and other city leaders, the City Manager and his staff inform the public at large, as well as targeted groups of citizens. This approach results in a more open government in which citizens actively participate in improving the quality of life of Carson City residents.

#### Current Tactics:

The City Manager's Office has been utilizing a bimonthly, eight-page newsletter in the *Nevada Appeal* to publish information concerning city business and upcoming events. The City also broadcasts, either live or through taped delay, all Board of Supervisors' meetings, budget hearings, and many other public meetings via Community Access Television. The City produces a weekly television interview program with the City Manager and one with the Board of Supervisors, and expects to expand television coverage with special call-in programs to highlight City services and to discuss controversial issues.

The City Manager's Office also commissions the production, either in-house or through a contractual relationship with an outside agency, of television, radio or newspaper ads, brochures, newsletters and other media tools to provide information on specific services. The City Manager's Office also sends out two surveys a year - one addressing leadership issues, the other direct City department services. In 1998, the City Manager's Office worked to educate citizens and get them involved in the several issues through focus groups and other public forums.

#### Changing Role:

The City Manager's Office seeks to develop a better relationship and partnership between the City and its citizens at a time when residents are generally unwilling to provide more tax dollars for City government operations. This office seeks to build trust through a more interactive relationship between the City and its citizens. These efforts have helped to educate citizens on actions the City is taking to be more effective and efficient in its service delivery. Ongoing measurements of the City's credibility by citizens experiencing direct and indirect interaction is a key element in ongoing communication.

### Influences:

The City's policies are set by the Board of Supervisors, comprised of a diverse group of individuals with their own particular talents and perspectives on issues. It is the responsibility of the City Manager and his staff to educate citizens about a variant range of issues brought before the Board, in a neutral manner which results in informed citizen input about the issues. There is a new emphasis on taking a more proactive and strategic approach to bring issues to citizens far enough in advance so that citizens can be more active participants in the decision-making process.

### External Variables:

The City has a small "vocal minority" of residents who involve themselves with issues they feel affect the future of our community. It seems at times a larger group of residents may become involved, however, during the last stages of the public process. It is imperative to gain greater involvement from citizens at the beginning of project/program planning, and to retain their involvement throughout planning, implementation and evaluation phases.

### Internal Variables:

Currently, the communications function is handled primarily by the City Manager his staff. An effective public information program relies in part upon timely information from City staff about upcoming projects, programs and services. An enhanced partnership between City staff and the City Manager's Office must be formed to enable a greater effectiveness and efficiency in informing the public. Key to the success of the program is the development of a more forward-thinking, strategic, and proactive approach to public information, as well as the rest of the City's programs. Staff support will be essential to the development of strategic communications plans.

## Employees

### Challenge:

Employees are the greatest messengers of news and information any organization possesses. They oftentimes have higher credibility with the public and the media than the organization's management, whether earned or not, proven or not. The employees' accurate perception of the City's handling of events and issues is crucial to providing accurate and complete information to other identified primary audiences. Employees are in a place to support or undermine the 'official' position and without an understanding of the communications functions of the organization, they are at a disadvantage to provide the best information available or to defer to someone else within the organization. Morale within this group is a dominant element in their handling of communication issues.

### Current Status:

The City Manager's Office currently utilizes newsletters, brochures, e-mail, flyers and other tools to provide employees with useful information concerning their jobs and City business, and also works to build morale and pride in public service.

### Current Tactics:

Monthly, the City Manager's Office has produced an employee newsletter. City Departments have often utilized the payroll system to get pertinent human resources and other employee-relevant information to employees, as well as periodically producing their own newsletters. There has been no coordinated effort to put all information through a central source for better distribution and planning. The City Manager holds two staff meetings per month, scheduled the day after Board meetings, and also produces update reports to be distributed to elected officials, middle management and department heads.

Recently, the City has made e-mail available to most employees. E-mail can be used for on-the-spot and citywide announcements, tying into the messages received simultaneously by citizens and the media or designed for internal broadcast only (it is important to note e-mail messages are fluid – they can end up anywhere).

### Changing Role:

City staff and, in particular, front line workers, have direct contact with, and, therefore, the most direct impact on customers. Ensuring customers are provided timely service and accurate information is essential to quality customer service. The City Manager's Office is charged with the responsibility of providing City staff with timely, accurate information so that staff can, in turn, provide the same to our customers, the citizens of Carson City. Staff resources and funding are limited, thus we must find innovative and effective ways to keep employees informed and involved. Due to the tremendous changes occurring organization-wide, it is essential to develop programs that enable two-way communication (feedback) and involve supervisors and managers, at all levels, in assisting in the information flow.

### Influences:

The City Manager and the Board of Supervisors have initiated a program to promote "continuous quality improvement," aimed at streamlining operations, enhancing accountability to taxpayers and providing better customer service. As part of this plan, the City is empowering employees to better serve the public through a renewed effort toward training and employee recognition. The City is committed to pursuing the principles of "pay for performance." The "Continuous Quality Improvement" initiative is an important vehicle for educating employees about their role

in affecting these changes. Further, when well-informed, City employees can serve as excellent ambassadors for the City about issues, services and current projects.

External Variables:

City staff, like other City residents, are influenced by what they read in the newspaper, hear on the radio, or see on television. Unless staff is accurately informed about important issues, they are likely to form the same misconceptions that the general public does concerning a subject. Keeping a 500-member workforce adequately informed, on a timely basis, poses a significant challenge for the City Manager's Office. Employees expect to receive timely and accurate information from City management *before* they see it in local media. Generally, employees would also like to play a role in developing programs and policies that potentially impact their working conditions and quality of life.

Internal Variables:

The City employs a very diverse group of employees, working in numerous locations, some in the field, others in the office, and still others performing shift work. This creates challenges in reaching all audiences in a timely manner. The City has a reprographics department that offers a quick turnaround for the production and materials, and there is an internal mail distribution system. In time, it is expected that the Citywide e-mail system will become effective for reaching office workers, but not those employed in field occupations.

It is difficult to gauge whether employees are receiving or reading publications and other information. A major challenge is the development of mechanisms that promote and assist in two-way communication between the workforce and management. Tools that enable information to reach employees quickly are also an imperative for the success of the organization. Finally, key to successful internal communication is the involvement of City staff and departments to help identify topics important to employees.

## News Media

### Challenge:

City messages by nature of government are diverse, ranging from recreation program sign-ups to natural disaster response. Regardless of content, local and regional news media outlets serve an important link between City services and the public. There are factors that will always impact message delivery. City understanding of and cooperation with reporters and editors is essential to accurate, timely, and useful information to readers, listeners, viewers. Ideally, a healthy rapport between the two generates further respect, understanding, and a cooperative relationship. Ultimately, it is the readers, listeners, and viewers who benefit.

### Current Status:

The objectives of the City Manager with regard to media relations are to: 1) improve the flow of information to the media covering Carson City government; 2) create a more proactive approach, providing media representatives with the resources they need to do their job well; and 3) using these strategies to improve the image of City government through accurate, effective communication to citizens. By partnering with local media we can inform the public about their local government, accurately and in a timely manner.

### Current Tactics:

While in many communities, media relations are historically performed by a public information officer, in Carson City these services are most often provided by the City Manager's Office. Over the years, the City Manager with his staff has been responsible for numerous other public relations duties, as well as media relations.

### Changing Roles:

The Board of Supervisors has established the goal for Carson City government to improve the flow of information to and from the community. The City Manager remains dedicated to promoting confidence in actions of the City and the expenditure of public funds by informing, educating, and involving citizens. The City Manager and his staff pursue this goal by ensuring the release of timely, accurate information about City government to our local area media. Reliable, independent reporting by local media will help citizens understand and participate in their local government.

In order to achieve this type of reporting, the City Manager and his staff seek to work with local reporters to increase their understanding of issues, and to provide a government staff that is open, accessible and informative to representatives of the media and, ultimately, to the reading and listening public. Increasingly essential is the identification and orientation of departmental spokespersons who can address project or topic issues on the record with the media during routine or emergency procedures.

### Influences:

The Board of Supervisors sets policy and direction for City government. The City Manager and his staff have a responsibility to keep local media and citizens informed about local government by providing objective, accurate information about issues, concerns, projects and policies through the use of identified and resourceful City and departmental spokespersons.

### External Variables:

Our external customers include local media, outside agencies and the general public. The media has worked directly with the City Manager's Office and other appointed officials, and has

expressed their desire to continue doing so. Part of the ongoing relationship is the understanding that personnel changes within the media are to be expected and an orientation process with new reporters is handled promptly to reestablish rapport with the person covering City government, as well as that writer's editors. The ultimate goal in establishing a strong media relations program is to inform the public about their local government accurately and effectively.

Internal Variables:

Internal customers include the Board of Supervisors and all City departments. An effective media relations program relies in part upon timely and pertinent information from City staff about upcoming projects, programs and services. An enhanced partnership between City staff and the City Manager's Office should encourage an information flow that ensures residents get the timely, reliable information they can use. The Board of Supervisors is another internal customer of the City Manager's Office. The two must work closely together so that Board's decisions will be properly described and explained to the public through the local news media.

## **SECTION III: TARGETED OUTCOMES**

### **Customer Service**

#### **Challenge:**

In order to appropriately respond to and serve the citizens of Carson City, customer service emphasis requires training, tools, standards, and performance measurements. The commitment to quality customer service must be present at every level and within each department within the City. Much of the high-profile service falls on those employees “out in the field”, those in utility services, public safety, and policy making. These individuals, in particular, need the support of the City through training, technology, and real tools to deal with customer dissatisfaction or crisis situations. These acquired skills must be viewed as valuable within the organization, from management to front-line personnel. Outstanding performance must be acknowledged.

#### **Current Status:**

Carson City has identified customer service as part of its organizational vision. This vision includes: 1) identifying customers; 2) responding to customer needs; 3) providing sensitive and courteous service; 4) defining services by customer needs; 5) measuring services by customer satisfaction, and 6) education customers and employees on available services.

While “Continuous Quality Improvement” is a basic value in constantly increasing the effectiveness and quality of the City’s products and services, a key to such improvement rests on the knowledge, skills and abilities of the City’s employees.

#### **Current Tactics:**

With this strong emphasis on customer service Carson City has authorized and funded a Continuous Quality Improvement program which serves a key role in addressing the six key points outlined above.

#### **Changing Roles:**

Employees will be encouraged and provided the opportunity to:

Belong to professional organizations and attend workshops, seminars and conferences within the City's available resources. With certain exceptions, the City will generally fund membership for a staff person in approved professional organizations. Individuals attending these organization's meetings will be expected to share what they have learned through their organizations with the rest of the staff.

Identify both technical and general training/professional needs to assist with current job requirements and those for the future through which both the employee and the City may benefit. Training opportunities will be identified and scheduled, through either in-house training or be “outsourced”. Where the City will benefit from such training, consistent with City policies, the City will fund such training/education courses.

#### **Influences:**

While "Continuous Quality Improvement" is a basic value in constantly increasing the effectiveness and quality of the City’s products and services, a key to such improvement rests on the knowledge, skills and abilities of the City’s employees. Training is essential. As such, it is the primary responsibility of each employee to stay current with professional state-of-the-art

tools, techniques and skills and to take the lead in developing him or herself professionally, not only to perform the job at hand, but to prepare for future professional opportunities.

External Variables:

Since 1996, the City Manager's Office conducts community surveys to assess citizen satisfaction levels with the customer service provided by Carson City, as well as their feelings on leadership issues. These surveys provide valuable information to better understand and respond to customer service expectations.

This year the City Manager has prioritized as a goal to revitalize the City's Quality Council by conducting four monthly meetings and developing a strategic plan for organizational development. This will again focus on service to both internal and external customers.

Internal Variables:

City staff members are the foundation of consistently high quality customer service. The City Manager's Office has had the opportunity to work with a number of City staff through the use of a "complaint tracking system" in addressing citizen inquiries. Overall, the quality of response to these inquiries has been high. In some cases, when customer service is not appropriate or timely, the City Manager's Office confers directly with the responsible City staff member, or his/her supervisor, offering recommendations and support. It is anticipated that with a full year of activity, more accurate assessment can be made of internal customer service resources.

## **Public Information**

### **Challenge:**

Ensuring accurate, timely, and cohesive information is collected and distributed to the general public is essential to maintaining credibility in the delivery of key messages. Since no one person or department within the City is responsible for monitoring the messages sent out, it is essential that across-the-board guidelines be developed and followed. To work, the effort should involve all departments.

### **Current Status:**

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### **Changing Roles:**

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enough in advance so that citizens can be more active participants in the decision-making process.

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Internal Variables:

Currently, the function is primarily handled by the City Manager and his staff. An effective public information program relies in part upon timely information from City staff about upcoming projects, programs and services. An enhanced partnership between City staff and the City Manager's Office must be formed to enable a greater effectiveness and efficiency in informing the public. Key to the success of the program is the development of a more forward-thinking, strategic and proactive approach to public information, as well as the rest of the City's programs. Staff support will be essential to the development of strategic communications plans.

## **Intergovernmental Relations**

### **Challenge:**

To properly represent the interests of the citizens of Carson City, lobbying efforts must be consistent and targeted. With aggressive growth in the southern part of the state, it is more important than ever that Carson City fully understand current and developing statewide issues to remain a viable influence at the state level.

### **Current Status/Tactics:**

The City has had an active lobbying program for a number of years. In 1998, the Board of Supervisors approved a contract with Walker and Associates for outside lobbying services to assist with intergovernmental relations.

### **Changing Roles:**

With sustained, rapid growth in the southern portion of our state, Carson City must remain updated and informed on statewide issues. In order for Carson City to sustain influence at the state level, Carson City and other local governments will need to increase cooperation and coordination in lobbying efforts at the state legislature. This regional approach may also prove more effective in influencing the federal legislature about northern Nevada concerns and issues.

### **Influences:**

Carson City is keenly aware that it must aggressively educate and inform legislators, citizens and other governmental entities and representatives, as well as state associations about the current and anticipated future conditions which require changes to existing state and federal laws, and/or new laws.

### **External Variables:**

Perhaps the strongest external factor which may impact Carson City may be the population growth of Clark County, which will continue to cause a shift of focus away from northern Nevada, at the state legislature. Potential reapportionment will require local governments to coordinate and cooperate in their lobbying efforts at the state level. Additionally, as increasing regional issues develop with the continued influx of people and businesses into the region, there will be a greater demand, by citizens and other government entities, for increased intergovernmental cooperation, locally, on an ongoing basis. This is also tied to the economics of doing business and providing government services cooperatively.

### **Internal Variables:**

A number of City staff currently assists the City Manager and the City's lobbyist in preparing the annual legislative program. Additionally, staff assists in evaluating proposed legislation and in providing support materials for City-sponsored legislation. Staff support must be timely and accurate in order to have a successful intergovernmental relations program.

## **SECTION IV: SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **GOAL**

#### **A. CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

##### **OBJECTIVES**

Recognize there are different audiences based on age, cultural diversity, accessibility, special interest and medium of preference.

Capitalize on the differences by developing strategies that address each audience, maximize on overlaps.

Meet the citizens on their territory with outreach programs, person to person opportunities. Utilize the departments already ranked favorably – Park & Recreation, Public Safety.

Gain citizen trust by fully informing citizens of upcoming projects.

### **GOAL**

#### **B. GENERATE PROACTIVE STRATEGY IN DEALING WITH COMMUNITY PLANNING, IMPROVEMENT, SERVICES, EXPENDITURES**

##### **OBJECTIVES**

Create a communication network operating in advance of the event.

Base strategies on survey input, recognizing the areas that need improvement and focusing energy there.

Provide citizens with easy access to officials/department heads/board members, particularly when there is a problem – real or perceived.

Create a mechanism which addresses citizen concerns, utilizing the identified media as the best vehicle.

Determine appropriate response times within each department, basing it on priority of public safety and public convenience.

### **GOAL**

#### **C. COMMUNICATE EXISTING PROGRAMS THROUGH AN ONGOING PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN**

##### **OBJECTIVES**

Promote safety of the community and a feeling of security among citizens.

Promote confidence in the expenditure of public funds by informing, educating, and involving citizens.

Create a sense of more accessible local government through the introduction of city personnel, their department's functions, responsibilities and goals.

## **SECTION V: STRATEGIES AND TACTICS**

This section contains the narrative support for Strategies and Tactics.

Action Plan Tables, designed to identify specific strategy, tasks, team, and timeline, makes up the appendix. The tables include currently employed and future recommended action steps. The Action Plan tables are designed as a planning tool for group discussion and further program development.

### **A. CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

There are many programs in place that rely on the participation of involved and committed Carson City residents. Within the framework of a vital strategic plan that provides ongoing expression of interest and commitment to improving the quality of life for all citizens of Nevada's capital city, it is important to revisit those programs currently in place. Among them: Citizens Academy, Neighborhood Watch, Redevelopment, and the Open Space Advisory Committee.

Tying existing programs to a rejuvenated, comprehensive plan maximizes the ability for citizens to participate in meaningful ways. It should capitalize on the talents of diversity, age, and special interests to create a goal that achieves accessibility within the population at large.

#### **Community Policing**

- Promotion of the Community Policing philosophy, including enrollment for the Citizens Academy and tangible involvement in Neighborhood Watch.

#### **Town Hall Forums**

- Forums presented on timely topics including gangs, crime prevention, with emphasis on consumer scams against the elderly, school safety, emergency preparedness, and neighbor helping neighbor. Aired on cable television, covered in print media and discussed on radio. Identify subjects relative to age, race, special interests. Involve youth, the elderly, minorities as well as "mainstream" residents.

Provide these forums through the Speakers Bureau and solicit involvement from all advisory committee members, City staff, public safety personnel, school administrators, and others.

#### **Capital City Beautification**

- Promote a Capital City beautification Project – *Capitalizing on Growth, Planting for the Future*.

Build a foundation which includes co-sponsorship from several special interests.  
Consider:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Nurseries
- Churches
- Service Organizations
- Youth Groups/4-H
- Volunteer Groups

Interface under the auspices of an existing group, such as Open Space Advisory Committee or Redevelopment, to:

- Identify priorities for visual enhancement.
- Work in conjunction with highway projects to landscape roadsides.
- Develop a work crew to volunteer to facelift the homes of elderly unable to undertake or finance simple landscaping, repair, and/or painting.

### **Job Fair Focus/Visibility**

- Job Fair participation using City booth backdrop, printed materials, website, videos to promote current and future projects, support the “*We’re Carson City*” campaign, introduce the concept of career opportunities in public sector work.

### **Co-Sponsorship Opportunities**

- Co-sponsor training and educational programs offered in public secondary and higher education and adult ed with guest speakers, materials, best case study resources, etc.

## **B. GENERATE PROACTIVE STRATEGY IN DEALING WITH COMMUNITY PLANNING, IMPROVEMENT, SERVICES, EXPENDITURES**

Over time, poor communication and reactive posturing creates an atmosphere in which assumptions – override all else – even when the facts are presented. It is only with constancy in the presentation of material, the anticipation of questions and concerns and a policy of full disclosure that an environment of trust can be established between leaders and those they lead.

Proactive posturing is a key element in this strategy. That and straight talk rather than doublespeak is what most people respond to positively, regardless of the content.

### **Communications Network**

- Identify and anticipate hot topics with potential for negative *and* positive impact, then determine the optimum approach for presenting information – timeframe, choice of medium, frequency of the message, messenger.

### **Surveys Using Technology**

- Address sensitive issues like growth head-on with periodic call-in phone surveys promoted in local media outlets. “*Call 777-5555 for Yes; 777-4444 for No.*” Publicize results immediately with designated officials speaking to the outcome and action steps. Explore the City Hotline as a response mechanism.

### **Advance Information/Crisis Communication**

- Create internal media/citizen response network to help the City respond in “real time” to a breaking story before it becomes an out-of-control wildfire. Review existing citizen response process for strengths and identify best case practices of parks and rec, library, fire department and sheriff’s office and translate it to departments across-the-board.
  - Utilize email technology to get urgent messages out to media outlets instantaneously or issue reminders, like road work coming up; fill-in-the-

blank formats for disseminating routine information, maintain a database on complaints and devise closure process to ensure customer satisfaction and provide space in performance reviews to include past history of complaint management, good and bad.

- Provide media relations training to all City personnel tying as key component in response program. Provide case studies, role playing, training that assists in the recognition of potential media stories – positive *and* negative – and the appropriate response in handling and reporting activities or incidents with the potential to gain public attention. A year-long program.

### **Increased Credibility of City Officials**

- Tackle the subject of credibility rating of elected officials and counter with greater exposure in areas they excel/are most comfortable/wish to venture into, with:
  - Cable television forum programming/participation/moderator position.
  - Call-in radio format on a rotating schedule.
  - Consider profile pieces in local media outlets – recognizing the control you are relinquishing and potential risks and rewards.

### **Proactive PR Strategy for Hot Button Issues**

- In issues of planning, services, zoning:
  - Put a face on the departments with “*We’re Carson City*” campaign.
  - Increase spot surveys with quick processing.
  - High risk surveys on job sites – “tell us how we’re doing” – in the midst of road construction, for example. Then follow-up with suggestions and input, using local media to communicate outcome.

### **Trained Spokespersons As Sources**

- Identify spokesperson in charge of each project. Sometimes it should come from the top, sometimes the most knowledgeable is the person closest to the work. Train those that have an interest but no experience speaking on the record.
  - Name of contact person and direct line printed on all releases and hotline tree.

### **Surveys as Measurement**

- Expand current survey functions, create spot questionnaires, internet and phone-in surveys to gather information and use in communication strategy review and revision. Postmortem hot button issues and media/public information handling as each incident occurs.

### **Branding Identification: It Works for Nike**

- Continue survey of printed materials distributed by departments independently. Consider protocol for a unified look, create an internal “review” system that is simple, nonthreatening and responsive to departmental needs. Encourage personal initiative while giving departments additional tools to do the work. Create a menu of templates with logos, headline styles, fonts and design sense that employees can log on to and use that encourages individuality within an approved choice of formats.

## **Customer Service**

- Provide customer service training to departments, taking on departments shown in surveys to rank lowest in “customer satisfaction.” Could tie in training to adult ed/community college/private enterprise customer service programs. Give stipend or pay for pre-approved classes, reward the efforts of those completing training.
- Improve the flow of information to and from the community with PR campaign.

## **C. COMMUNICATE EXISTING PROGRAMS THROUGH AN ONGOING PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN**

There are many programs and in-place vehicles for keeping Carson City citizens informed, as well as many opportunities for citizens to express their opinion and become involved in a number of City-governed projects. Some of the following strategies may already be in place, or in place in one form or another. Several of the ideas listed here have been suggested and not yet implemented. One or two are being introduced for the first time.

Together, all of these strategies and their accompanying tools will increase the current flow of information, to and from.

### **City PR Campaign**

- Carson City PR Campaign – “*Neighbor to Neighbor, We’re Carson City*” – presenting City employees as neighbors and friends. Consider bulletin board campaign as well as house ads in Nevada Appeal, Reno Gazette-Journal and PSAs on Cable Access. Rely on strong visuals/close ups of folks on the job. Begin the PR campaign with the most recognizable departments, i.e., Fire, Sheriff, Recreation, Road Crews, to establish the visibility of the message. Each employee should be portrayed as a “neighbor,” on and off the job.

### **Traveling City Booth Display**

- Design a convention-style City Booth that promotes the quality of life in Eagle Valley. It would be used at out-of-town City and business development conventions, special events in town, regional meetings, special request uses. Consider a co-sponsor like the Chamber of Commerce, which could use the display for business development efforts.
  - Carry over the City employee campaign “Neighbor to Neighbor, We’re Carson City...”
  - Promote ongoing programs including:
    - Project Impact
    - Job listings/ public sector career development
    - Recreation Center sign-ups, etc.

### **Speakers Bureau**

The bureau would be promoted through a marketing campaign – including Capital City Focus, flyers, brochures, organizational newsletters, media releases, word of mouth to special interest groups, including:

- Seniors
- Church organizations
- Service clubs, parent organizations
- Minority representatives

- Major users of city/county services, such as Carson-Tahoe Hospital
- Schools and other care facilities
  - The roster could include invitations to:
    - Board of Supervisors
    - Department heads or designated representatives
    - Selected or interested staff members
    - Advisory committee members (Redevelopment Authority, Open Space Master Plan, Disaster Resistant Community Planning...)

**State of the City Address by John Berkich**

- Annual State of the City Address by John Berkich in July. Exploration of the budget items and plans for 1999-2000.
  - Annual report supplement for Capital City Focus.
  - Air on Cable Access with repeat airing or sound bites over several months.
  - Coverage in Nevada Appeal.
  - Excerpts in Chamber Newsletter.
  - Use for Monday morning call-in radio shows during July.

**Capital City Focus**

- Over run the current printing and distribute excess at Chamber of Commerce, Senior Centers, Schools, including Community College, (for use in government/civic classes), Carson-Tahoe Hospital, all City offices and public buildings.
- Post this and other materials on reader boards installed at public facilities of high traffic areas and where job postings are located (Recreation centers, City Office lobby, etc).

## **SECTION VI: PLAN MONITORING**

### **A. HOW THE PLAN WILL BE MONITORED:**

As part of the communications planning process, specific objectives and supporting outcomes will be included in the City Manager's performance plan. Through the year, informal reviews of the performance plan will be conducted in conjunction with periodic update reports to the Board of Supervisors. Additionally, bimonthly staff meetings will also address progress on projects assigned to individual staff members and teams. Finally, timelines will also be used to schedule and track progress on major projects, and to revise estimated dates of completion, as planning, implementation and evaluation proceed.

### **B. HOW THE PLAN WILL BE UPDATED:**

The Communications Plan will be updated on an annual basis, with input received from staff about progress to date on projects. In addition, an annual strategic planning workshop will be held with all staff members, to review, and if necessary, revise other components of the Communications Plan.

Operational and Organizational goals will be prepared on an annual basis, during the current fiscal year, to reflect goals and objectives for the upcoming fiscal year.

### **C. HOW THE PLAN WILL BE COMMUNICATED:**

#### Elected and Appointed Officials:

City Manager, City Department Heads and Board of Supervisors will receive a copy of the Communications Plan, along with plans from all other City departments. Any updates/revisions of the plan will also be distributed to elected and appointed officials.

#### Internal Customers:

The Communications Plan will be made available to other internal customers on an as requested basis. Copies will be readily available in the City Manager's Office. As many of the business initiatives and programs impact the other departments in the City, major elements of the plan will be communicated to the organization's managers during biweekly staff meetings and in other communication vehicles produced by the City Manager's Office.

#### External Customers:

The Communications Plan will be made available to external customers on an "as requested" basis. Copies will also be readily available at the City Manager's Office.