

Ad Hoc Committee on Communications

Scarsdale Village: Communications Assessment and Preliminary Recommendations

October 10, 2017



Village of
Scarsdale
WESTCHESTER COUNTY | NY

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Situation Analysis

- Scarsdale Village faces challenges in both communicating village news, policies and procedures, and engaging residents in local initiatives.
- There is no integrated, approach to communications, although it relies upon a myriad of public information tools. Current efforts are decentralized, which often results in inconsistent messaging (**Appendix A**).
- There also is no true “voice” within the community, as interaction is limited to notices, invoices, simple announcements and formal, structured meetings
 - Tradition of communicating with public at BOT meetings hasn’t evolved with changing times (e.g., greater transparency/informality, increased use of digital/electronic communication); and,
 - Heavy reliance upon third-party coverage (print, digital and social media).
- ***This has resulted in an immediate need to create a respectful, productive conversation within the community, build awareness of village government activities and better inform residents about the municipal function itself. Scarsdale’s existing public information program can serve as a foundation for this effort.***

Committee Purpose/Charge

On October 13, 2016, the Scarsdale Village Board of Trustees created the Ad-Hoc Committee on Communications to serve a one-year term, with the following purpose and charge:

Purpose

“To support the successful launch of website/communications platform; strengthen Village communications strategy and cultivate engagement opportunities with diversity of audiences.”

Charge

1. *“Review new website content, functionality and user-friendliness, making suggestions for enhancements;*
2. *Develop a plan to gain community usage, seeking widespread adoption. As ambassadors for the new communications platform, engage with community groups to both **increase awareness and usage of the website**, and to introduce website functionality; and,*
3. *Drawing on expertise and best practices, **provide strategies to improve village communications**. Prepare written recommendations to the Village Board identifying important community segments or audiences, linking appropriate communication methods and channels to identified segments, and suggesting prioritization of associated programmatic and investment needs within the context of existing fiscal constraints.”*

Goals

While assessing Scarsdale Village's current efforts, the committee outlined the following goals:

- Improve accessibility of information about village government and relevant issues;
- Improve efficiency/methods of communication, thereby improving appearance of transparency;
- Fill “communications void” and end reliance on third parties (media, resident blogs, etc.) to encourage discourse;
- Identify residents' preferred means of obtaining information and understand what they want from government (aside from required notices);
- Regularly and consistently provide village news and facts, regardless if issues are routine or controversial; engage residents by communicating BOT and village management views; and,
- Promote residents' involvement in issues that affect them daily.

Approach (10/16 – 3/17)

October 2016	November 2016	December 2016	January 2017	February 2017	March 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Mandate•Goals•New Website Overview (O'Brien)•Current Communications Matrix Overview (Cole)•Discussion of New Website Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Website Review (Content/Functionality)•Website Edits•Community Usage Plan/Tutorial Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Website Tutorial Filming•Website Issue Tracking/Prioritization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Website Tutorial Video Launch•BOT/Community Presentations•Press Release•Interactive Tracking System•Communications Plan Draft•Ongoing Advisory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•“Notify Me” Press Release•scarsdale10583 Article•Recreation List Transition•Village Department Head Survey (Cole)•Current Communications Typography Overview (Cole)•Comms Officer Job Description•Trustee Survey•Informal Neighbor Polling•Ongoing Advisory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Communications Survey Draft•Library Tech Assistancess•Bugzilla Tool•Revised Communications Plan•Ongoing Advisory

Approach (4/17 – 9/17)

April 2017

- Website Traffic Analytics
- Website Photos Press Release
- Photo Release Form
- Revised Communications Survey Draft
- Communications “Roadmap” Draft
- Ongoing Advisory

May 2017

- CivicSend Demo (O’Brien)
- BOT Meeting Restructure (Liaison Reports Precede Public Comment)
- Twitter Launch @TrusteeVeron
- Email Newsletter Plan/Discussion
- Final Communications Survey
- Ongoing Advisory

June 2017

- Survey Approval/Distribution
- Revised Communications Roadmap
- Revised Communications Plan
- Cable Commission Video Proposal for Email Newsletter, Other Projects
- Ongoing Advisory

July 2017

- Preliminary Survey Results
- Key Takeaways
- Research on Neighboring Municipalities’ Communications Activities
- Ongoing Advisory

August 2017

- CivicPlus Modules Overview (Vendor)
- Discussions with CivicPlus Power Users/Best Practices
- Ongoing Advisory

September 2017

- Communications Plan/Final Report Discussion
- Meetings with Trustees, Department Heads and Village Staff
- Ongoing Advisory

Progress to Date – Website Functionality

Charge 1: Review and Enhance Website

Because **scarsdale.com** is Scarsdale Village’s online communications platform, it is critical to continually review functionality, content, and “look and feel” to provide residents with an efficient, user-friendly, informative resource.

- The committee first assessed the site for basic functionality, content and appearance, and made recommendations to improve and enhance users’ experience. This included identifying and prioritizing specific issues, and tracking how/when issues were resolved.
- Committee members continue to work with village staff to classify and monitor proposed changes and upgrades to *scarsdale.com* via the Bugzilla tool. Some problems are straightforward, others are judgment calls that may be deferred to next major site update. There also is a need to coordinate and reprioritize issues to be addressed by CivicPlus (bugs vs. small fixes vs. larger fixes that require reprogramming) **(Appendix B)**.
- Constant monitoring of resident usage is important in making determinations about content and future improvements.
- As part of its review of *scarsdale.com* content, functionality and user-friendliness, the committee also requested a demonstration of CivicPlus. Conversations also were conducted with Civic Plus “power users, to help identify advanced features or potential issues the vendor has not revealed during system demos. Best practices from power users can be used to provide strategies to improve Scarsdale communications **(Appendix C)**.

Progress to Date – Website Promotion

Charge 2: Increase Website Awareness and Usage

Informing the public of the benefits of the new website and providing assistance in navigation is critical to the success of *scarsdale.com*, and provides a foundation for improved interaction between residents and village administration.

- To promote community adoption of the new *scarsdale.com*, and highlight increased user-friendliness and functionality, the committee produced a website “tutorial” video in collaboration with the Scarsdale Village and Cable Commission.
- To support the public rollout of the video, the committee developed 1) a press release, 2) a BOT meeting committee introduction, and 3) community group screenings (Scarsdale Forum, League of Women Voters, and Senior Council).
- At the request of the committee, the Scarsdale Public Library offered website tutorials for interested residents.
- The primary goals of the video and related communication efforts were to
 - illustrate the usefulness and relevance of the website to residents, village staff and officials; and,
 - Promote CivicPlus functionality as an important proactive and reactive tool in healthy, reliable and measureable municipal function.

Progress to Date – Communications Strategy

Charge 3: Provide Strategies to Improve Village Communications

In developing recommendations and prioritizing communications strategies, the committee surveyed residents, village managers and staff, as well as Scarsdale Trustees; conducted research on neighboring municipalities; and, referenced standard communications principles and tactics.

- In January 2017, Assistant Village Manager Rob Cole polled Scarsdale Village department heads on perceptions and practices characterizing Scarsdale communications (***Appendix D***).
 - 71.43 percent of respondents believed that enhanced communications of their departments' functions would result in improved relationships with residents; and,
 - When asked what communication tools not presently used would improve their department's ability to communicate with residents, most responded, "Employment of a dedicated staff person" and "Facebook."
- To obtain residents' points of view, the committee surveyed the public on their "Engagement with Scarsdale Government." Of the 231 respondents, an overwhelming majority supported an email newsletter from local government; and, a significant minority felt that information provided by the village is too little, or of insufficient quality. In addition, respondents reported that their top three sources of information were, equally, the *Scarsdale Inquirer*, *scarsdale10583.com* and village email notifications (***Appendix E***).
- Through discussions with village trustees and department heads, the committee learned more about internal processes and noted specific recommendations/action items to improve communications with residents (***Appendix F***).

Progress to Date – Communications Strategy

- The committee worked with the village manager’s office to develop a biweekly e-newsletter, *Scarsdale Official* (*Appendix G*).
 - This well-received newsletter provides a consistent, frequent summary of important topics discussed at BOT meetings, and is formatted for brevity and ease of reading, with links to more information posted to *scarsdale.com*; and,
 - Distribution is to the village “press release” subscription list, which totals 1,059.
- Scarsdale’s current communications processes were assessed, including its “Communications Matrix” and “Communications Typography,” and drafted a new Communications “Roadmap” that summarizes communications procedures in various scenarios (*Appendix H*).
- To gain feedback from residents and publicize Scarsdale’s efforts to improve the communications with the public, the committee engaged in various publicity efforts, including drafting press releases, articles and social media posts) (*Appendix I*).
- To develop recommendations, research on other municipalities’ communications programs was conducted, which covered digital media, staffing and budgets (*Appendix J*).
 - Scarsdale may very well be the only Westchester town (with similar demographics) without a social media presence (Port Chester government does not have an official FB page, but its fire and police departments do);
 - Scarsdale is among the majority of municipalities that distribute e-newsletters; and,
 - A number of neighboring towns have formal communications functions managed by staff or outside consultants/vendors.

Recommendations – Immediate Priorities

The committee makes these recommendations based on its work and successes over the past 12 months, and urges the village to build a formal communications function. Immediate priorities include:

- **Continue to publish/distribute *Scarsdale Official*.**
- **Establish a social media policy and utilize** (one way) via Facebook, Twitter, etc. to disseminate information (***Appendix K***).
- **Continue promotion, evaluation and enhancement of *scarsdale.com***, including direct mail marketing explaining features such as “NotifyMe.”
- **Develop qualitative and quantitative data** on the efficacy of all communication vehicles (website, social media, communication tools with public, etc.) for ongoing assessment.
- Re-evaluate all current communications channels.

Recommendations – Short Term Priorities

The following activities require additional preparation and effort, and should be considered once a formal communications policy is adopted and immediate priorities are addressed.

- **Digitize “New Resident Packet.”**
- **Expand content of *Scarsdale Official*.**
- **Publicize committee meetings** more frequently and efficiently.
- **Create online and print brochures** to increase interest in serving on boards and councils.
- **Renew the work of the Scarsdale Ad Hoc Committee on Communications.**

Recommendations – Medium Term Priorities

- Create FAQs for relevant village departments.
- Publicize additional department calendars and allow resident syncing.
- Publicize department-specific services that provide convenience but may not be widely known among residents.
- Revise and/or enhance structure of board of trustees business meetings to allow for more meaningful dialogue with residents.
- Create a more formal process for documenting community group activities, information and feedback (e.g., Scarsdale Neighborhood Association meetings).
- Work with Scarsdale Cable Commission Office to create/distribute boards, councils and department highlight videos.

Recommendations – Long Term Priorities

The committee has additional ideas that should be considered as Scarsdale continues to build its communications efforts:

- **Ramp up functionality of scarsdale.com** to include
 - Digitized applications (including graphics) for meetings to alert residents;
 - Transactional features (property inquiry, payments, permit status, etc.);
 - RSS feeds or email alerts – for users needing very specific updates (e.g., meeting dates);
 - Specialized access to data, such as water fee prediction, for residents who want to check assessments; and,
 - “Infographics” to enable deeper understanding of village trends and metadata.
- Create quarterly newsletter that can be distributed electronically and via mail.
- Ensure that institutional knowledge on communications is retained through key staff turnover by documenting policies and procedures for future employees.
- Decentralize social media use by department (e.g., recreation, police, fire, etc.).
- Review current staffing levels to determine if they meet communications needs/goals.

Recommendations – Long Term Priorities (cont.)

- **Improve media relations**
 - Foster relationships with editors/reporters in and beyond Scarsdale, and respond to unsolicited inquiries in a timely manner. Routinely monitor what the media and residents say about Scarsdale policies and issues. Provide official responses;
 - Get ahead of negative stories. Control the narrative by quickly releasing as much information as possible, along with clear explanations and frank commentary; and,
 - Develop press kit that includes general information/history of Scarsdale, demographics, structure of government, summaries of key village initiatives and achievements, staff bios/photos, etc.
- **Publicize community activities** in village communications and coordinate efforts when possible.
 - Actively participate in community events to promote government initiatives (e.g., highlight sustainability efforts during annual Bronx River cleanup); and,
 - **Install community bulletin boards** in select Scarsdale locations and consider producing high-quality signage for important recurring events/programs.
- **Consider increased community engagement initiatives**, such as contests, surveys, youth activities and presence at community events.
- **Develop a Scarsdale Boards and Councils “Round Robin” blog** featuring personal accounts to inform potential volunteers and **pierce the “veil”** of government.

Laying the Groundwork

While focusing on specific needs and action items is helpful, it is important for Scarsdale Village to establish a strong foundation for future communications efforts and protocols. All messaging should accurately reflect the village ideology and be consistent in content, look and feel. The committee urges the village to develop and adopt a formal communications policy that:

- cohesively brands all village communications; an effective publicity plan that defines goals, outlines specific tactics/programs, and establishes approval processes and protocols;
- executes all messaging activities and monitors effectiveness of initiatives;
- creates a centralized, dedicated management of messaging programs; and,
- supports village management in improving efficiency and meeting organizational goals.

Measurement

It is important to continually measure the effectiveness of implementing significant communications changes and programs. This will allow Scarsdale Village to tailor individual efforts to ensure effectiveness, appropriateness and value.

- Stakeholders/audiences need to be assessed before and after implementation.
- Perception and satisfaction often are most critical; surveys of village processes can capture residents' sentiments.
- For each communications program, devise/review metrics as suitable (e.g., number of subscriptions to e-newsletter, SEO data for website, social media mentions, resident participation, etc.).
- Monitor additional measures of communications effectiveness, such as routine phone calls to village departments, residents' attendance at meetings, number of issues reported via the website, number of views on cable TV, number of active village mobile app users, voter turnout, increase in signups for specific programs (RUOK/TIPS411 and Teen Academy, etc.).
- Compare effectiveness of actual and planned communication timeframes/methods (as referenced in *Appendix I*).
- Convene/maintain the Ad Hoc Communications Committee to advise, review data, propose initiatives and fine tune processes.
- Recognize that there will be "failures." After any unsuccessful initiative, conduct postmortem, update processes and implement changes.

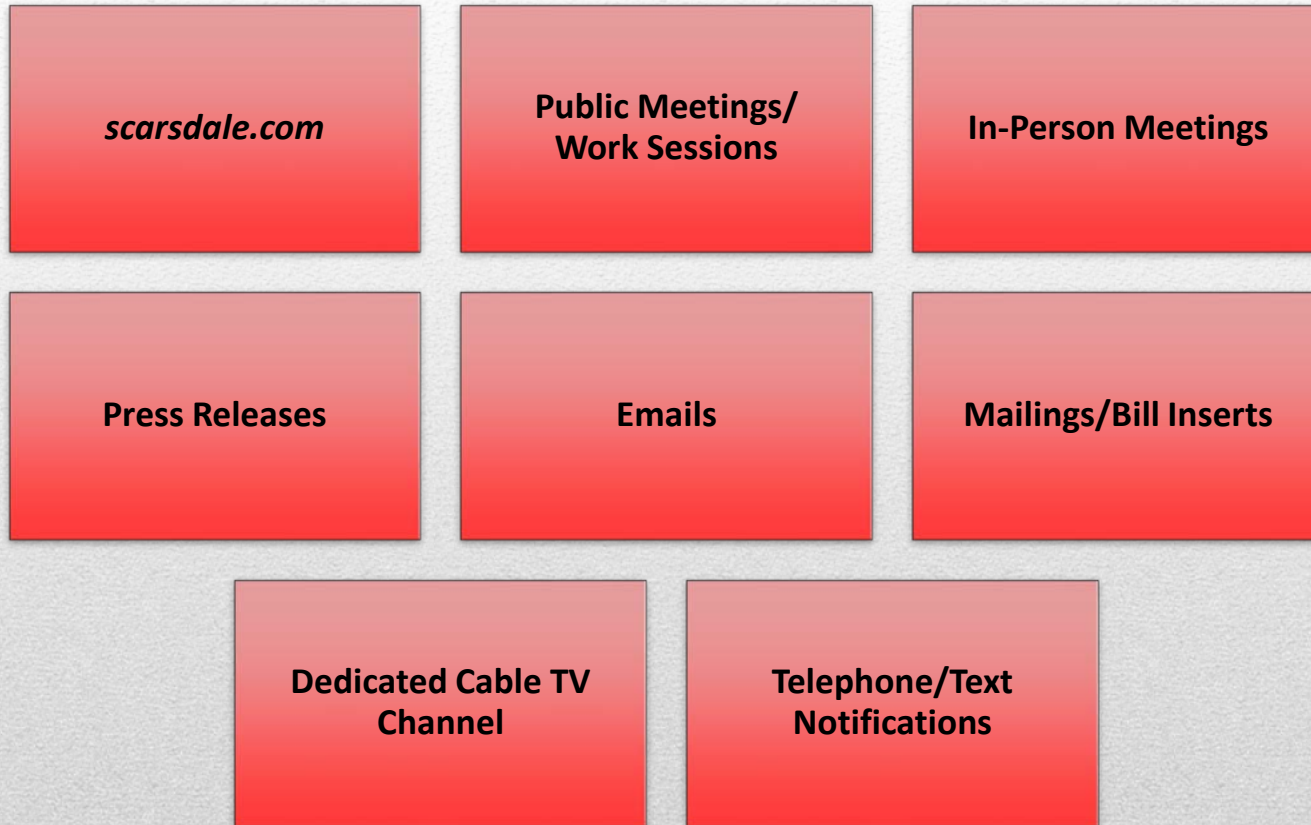
Governance

BOT and Scarsdale Village management endorsement, input and approval is necessary in implementing a successful communications program

- Responsibility for communications should be centralized to assure accuracy, consistency and efficiency.
- Examine legal requirements for existing and new initiatives. Look to best practices to resolve questions.
- Develop a consistent development and review process for new and existing initiatives.
- Once finalized, recommended strategies, approval process, timelines, etc. internal should be distributed to trustees and senior management.
- Continually assess effectiveness of communications initiatives and provide regular reporting on status of new and existing programs.

Appendices

Appendix A – Current Communication Tools/Matrix



Appendix A – Current Communication Tools/Matrix

Communication Matrix

	All	Manager	Police	Fire	PW	Treasurer	Parks & Rec	Cable Comm
Snail Mail								
Water Bill Inserts	U	R						
Target Mailings (e.g., landscapers)	U	R						
Rec Program Brochure (bi-annual)							U,R	
Door Knockers					U,R			
Annual Waste/Recycling Calendar					U,R			
Email								
SNAP		U,R	U	U	U			
Recreation Registration Listserve							U,R	
Adult								
Elementary								
High School								
Middle School								
Preschool								
Seniors								
Pool Pass Holders								
Tennis Pass Holders								
Telephone & Text								
Regular inbound/outbound calls	U,R							
Tips-411 (PD crime tips)			U,R					
Blackboard Connect		U,R	U	U	U			
Meetings								
Public Issue-based Meetings	U	R						
Village Hall Walk-ins	U							
Community Groups (Board/Staff)	U	R						

Appendix A – Current Communication Tools/Matrix

	All	Manager	Police	Fire	PW	Treasurer	Parks & Rec	Cable Comm
Press Releases								
Scarsdale Inquirer	U	R						
Scarsdale 10583	U	R						
Scarsdale Patch	U	R						
Hamlet Hub	U	R						
LoHud	U	R						
Scarsdale Daily Voice	U	R						
Social Media								
Facebook	?							
Twitter Accounts	U	R	U,R					
Pinterest	?	R						
Instagram	?	R						
YouTube/Vimeo	U	R						
Cable TV								
Governmental mtgs/pub notices	U	R						
Public Access videos/pub notices	U	R						R

U User
R Review/Approval

Appendix B – Review of *scarsdale.com*

SITE TECHNICAL

Is site indexing fully automatic, or are you able to weight certain search results?

Are site stats being kept? Of interest include: most-accessed pages, paths through site, search terms, user time on site, clicks on first page, referring sites, matrix of days and times most active by page, accessing devices, top exit pages, how many users establish accounts (conversion rate).

EDITING FUNCTIONALITY FOR SITE

Works fine, no substantive comments.

SITE LAYOUT AND DESIGN

Front Page

Do you have empirical evidence that the new site's front page provides one-click access to a very high (90-95%) proportion of the destinations/tasks that users sought in the old site? I'd recommend focusing the widgets on these tasks, adding more if necessary. Efficiency on the site can be measured by the proportion of resident needs accessed by a single click.

As site stats are gathered, the one-click widgets on the front page should be refreshed to reflect the most often requested services and information.

The image gallery on the front page is pretty but wasted space. Did you give thought to moving Village Highlights up, replacing the gallery?

The Connect with Us area is overemphasized. A simple icon would suffice and indeed already is present – in the multilink widget next to the search box. Place the Connect With Us page in a Highlight Panel?

Menu

The Volunteer panel should not be on the menu drop downs. It takes too much space and also causes more of the longer menu items to wrap onto two lines. Move the Volunteer panel to one of the "Village Highlights".

Departments drop down menu should be multiple columns; it's just one and too long.

Once the menu is open, there doesn't seem to be a way to close it without clicking on a menu link, which may result in navigation away from the current page.

Other Pages

The widgets should not be at the bottom of every page. For example, I think it's pretty obvious that if someone came to look at Written Correspondence, they don't need to see a widget for online payments.

The navigation line is not always accurate or is missing middle or category depth. For example, for the "Sustainability Initiatives & Sustainability Education" page, it shows "Home > News Flash". That bar should be something like "Home > Highlights > Sustainability" letting the user click up to the category. At other times, such as for <http://scarsdale.com/190/Board-of-Architectural-Review> the navigation line is full and correct.

All external links should open a new browser tab. This includes Pay Parking Ticket, Property Tax, Utility, and 3rd party sites shown on the Community page.

The 'View All' link is useless and should be removed from any pages that contain it.

Left side bar / Navigation

There needs to be a fixed rule governing use of the red vertical links bar on the left hand side of pages and, if there is, various links need to be fixed. The Fire Department pages seem to best indicate their use as consistently presented links within a section. Unfortunately, the Agendas and Minutes pages are not similarly well-formatted; these all show a link to the Cable TV Stream? Meanwhile, the Written Correspondence page shows links unrelated to anything in its section. The general rule seems to be, for any page, the left bar should show links for any pages within its menu section. When there are no subpages in the menu, the left bar should show all parent pages for the entire menu. An example of the latter rule would be Information Technology, which has no child pages and so (correctly) links to all other parent pages within the Departments menu. Currently, most pages follow this rule, but at least the CAC and Sanitation pages do not – they both have a left side bar containing subtopics.

Another way to consider this is in tiers. The Scarsdale site has basically 4 tiers of pages (below). Tier 2 pages should feature other tier 2 pages in their left side bar, and tier 3 pages should show only tier 3 pages. For any tier 3 page that also has tier 4 pages, those should be displayed as an expanding menu in the left side bar; in Figure 2, the mocked up "CAC Projects" illustrates this. Note that "CAC Projects" is just a placeholder for the actual tier 4 pages below.

Boards and Councils Pages

The right column for Board and Council pages should always include a link to "Volunteer to Serve On A Citizen Board"

Contact Us

As with Departments, all Boards and Councils should have a Contact Us section. Instead of emails, these should link to forms, as the CAC link now does only the resultant form should be specific to the Board or Council, not general as it now is.

Content

Community Menu

Community should feature any nonprofit supporting Scarsdale residents, for example, the Scarsdale Forum.

Explore Menu

Explore is being used for the wrong purposes. Indeed, the majority of what it covers already is within Parks and Recreation, while Community Events is covered in Community, etc. Rather, Explore is an opportunity to create better citizens through education and enlightenment with topics such as:

- Where Your Taxes Go/History of Scarsdale
- The Non-Partisan System
- Participating in Civic Life
- Sustainability

Appendix B – Review of *scarsdale.com*

- Preparedness and Resiliency
- Culture – concerts and music, etc.
- Senior Services
- Multicultural Outreach and Events

Create An Account

I don't think having an account is terribly useful at this point other than for very specific purposes. It's just another thing for users to manage. I therefore recommend it be removed from the top of the site, where it's all too prominent given the relatively minor return on obtaining an account.

Etc.

The text under Library Renovation is not official; it's the Library Board's. I recommend it be paraphrased, and I also recommend that more materials be devoted to it, such as a direct link to the plan and pictures from it - the consultant's document itself is ponderous.

The Sustainability landing page from Village Highlights has paragraphs that each start with a question; simply substitute the question marks for periods.

Some Board and Council pages list all members while others (the CAC) do not; I added the CAC members myself.

The Sanitation page should have Quick Links to all the flyer sent to residents. For example, the PDF of the Sanitation recycling list currently is impossible to find.

The Request Tracker logon page does not have header formatting consistent with the rest of the site.

The CAC submenu (see Boards and Councils pages) should move Landscape Guidance and Solar Central to its submenu.

Service requests are made by "good Samaritans". Many might be put off by having to create a site login in order to submit the request. For submitting concerns such as street light outages, tree issues, etc. there should be an option to submit a concern without having to log in.

INITIATIVES

New Resident Welcome

Add a New Resident (onboarding) section with links such as those below. This section should also be featured in the Highlights panel; I'd bet that some current residents will be enlightened too.

- Parks
- Organizations
- Recycling Info
- Signup

- Landscape Guidance
- Permits and Laws: Need to Know
- Local Neighborhood Association

Blog

Start a blog cycling through all senior staff, trustees, boards and councils. It could be updated every 2-3 weeks. The blog would permit each person their soap box, to talk about achievements and concerns, initiatives, hopes, kudos, you name it. Push the blog automatically to the press, to encourage the development of a virtuous feedback loop in which the blog's contents are continually referenced.

Volunteer Requests

Would it be possible to maintain a service that connects the community with pools of volunteers (houses of worship, voluntary organizations such as Lion Heart and VolunteerNY, etc?)

"Love Your Stuff" (Explore menu)

Provide a resource that guides residents to proper reuse and disposal of items, from Church yard sales to swaps, from medicine disposal to textile recycling and so on. This is may be the next CAC project and we will coordinate with the Village on this when ready.

Social Media

We'll have to discuss this more, but I think social media links for our purposes, at least initially, should be used strictly as additional channels to deliver messages from the Village that aren't fully delivered via email or that are less critical than Blackboard Connect. Other aspects of social media are of secondary interest at this point, particularly given Village governance issues. Anything of general interest can go out equally across all social media: alerts, road closures, surveys, etc. The purpose of social media should therefore be explained to users and provided as an option alongside other communication options. It is not sufficient to simply provide a link.

Appendix B – Review of scarsdale.com

scarsdale.com: Items for Discussion

Largely “stay the course.” Most comments concerned minor issues, often of formatting. For the committee to explore:

- How should and can village policy be updated to permit a variety of outside links and content, such as an explanation of the village non-partisan system?
- Is the **Home** page optimally designed given current constraints? This includes **Calendar, View All**, translation and bread crumbs, and whether the frontispiece image is too dominant. Are we too ‘glitz’ and insufficiently ‘portal’?
- **Menus:** Should the **Explore** menu be reinstated with more of an educational bent? For example, New Resident, Senior Citizens, Volunteering, Recycling and Reuse. Can the **Services** menu items be subsumed into the other menus? Should the ordering of menus be changed?
- The **How Do I** menu can continue to benefit from input. Ask the community?
- Can we expedite the integration of online business services, perhaps starting with arms-length payment services?

Appendix B – Review of scarsdale.com

scarsdale.com: Suggested Higher Priorities

Three individuals voted their priorities versus staff priorities. Shown are topics for which median voted priority significantly varied.

- Develop social media links
- Develop a **Newcomers** page
- More prominent links to **Sign In**, **How do I** and commonly requested features (e.g., a quick link to online payments up front rather than further down)
- Make **Select a Language** more prominent
- Front and Template Page Layout
 - Stock photos take up too much of the page
 - Design seems to struggle between the 'down the page' layout, which is more identified with creative firms, versus the standard portal layout
 - Need tighter fonts and less whitespace. Layout needs to be tighter with left to right reading
 - The logo should be tighter to the left corner – that's where people's eyes go to first
 - Interior page template is very narrow... should make use of some more of the wider space. Red bars awkwardly overlap on stock photos and are too wide
 - Mouse overs shouldn't have 'ads' or pictures in them. They distract from the purpose of using them and make it harder to find things
- Profile pages: Potential usability issues

Appendix C – CivicPlus Capabilities

On August 15, 2017, Scarsdale’s CP account manager Jerred McKee performed a remote demo and provided recommendations for enhancing Scarsdale’s use of the system. Following are items of interest for consideration by village staff.

CivicPlus Usage, Capabilities and Recommendations

- There were 164K website visits to *scarsdale.com* this past calendar year, but can't identify number of unique users in CP reporting. Google Analytics may be used to identify the number and where traffic is coming from. Easy for CP to turn on Google analytics, just need approval from Scarsdale. Complicating factor in determining unique visitors is that each device has its own IP address, so same person could access site with different desktop and mobile devices. However, data still may be useful. CP reports that, typically, mobile traffic outpaces desktop traffic across its client base; this is not the case in Scarsdale.
- It is possible for Scarsdale to post important, time-sensitive news across banner.
- Scarsdale can use the “Facilities and Reservation” module to permit users to schedule rooms in village hall.
- It is relatively easy to turn on social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, in CivicSend.
- Consider creating separate calendars for meetings and events.

Appendix C – CivicPlus Capabilities

CivicPlus Usage, Capabilities and Recommendations (cont.)

- Dan Hochvert may be interested in participating in a “Mayor’s Corner” blog, like similar government leaders.
- “Newsflash” is the best way to drive traffic to the website; Jerred recommends posting at least once each day (e.g., 10 ways to avoid mosquitoes). When asked to prioritize CP features that Scarsdale should consider, it would be to take “Newsflash” to the next level to drive traffic to the website.
- Jerred also advises to condense categories in “Newsflash,” and use “Request Tracker” to create general forms for feedback/general questions (and place at top of webpage as a separate category).
- CivicMedia can be used for live streaming of meetings and accept video uploads.
- The “Opinion Polls” module is to be “sunsetting” (discontinued), but there are free third-party polling products that seamlessly integrate with CP.
- To further assist in Scarsdale’s efforts, Jerred will 1) email CP colleagues throughout the country for “New Resident” webpage examples; 2) provide “power user” contacts throughout the country (Plattsburgh, NY, New Rochelle and Maricopa Valley/ Phoenix); and, 3) send examples of pages highlighting different businesses each month using the “Resource/Business Directory” module.

Appendix C – CivicPlus Power User Practices

MARICOPA COUNTY (PHOENIX)

- One such power user is Maricopa County in Phoenix. Carol Silverman and Barry Meiselman spoke to Karen Connelley and Chris Johnson from the IT department of Maricopa County on August 29, 2017. Below is a summary of the conversation with suggestions in **bold**. It is hoped that a similar conversation can be held with New Rochelle’s staff, as they also are long time users of the system.
- Maricopa County rolled out CP on Feb 14, 2017 to replace an old site. It since has worked with CP on needed enhancements
 - Found difficulties in publishing news events in “Newsroom.” Initially, the module listed events only in date order; now Maricopa also may choose alphabetical order; and,
 - Feel that “Notify Me” has search limitations and confusion on how searches occur (on content, title or metadata?). CP will roll out changes to address issues.

Appendix C – CivicPlus Power User Practices

Maricopa County (cont.)

- Worked with CP on Google Analytics hooks to better track specific items because it is better than CP's internal reporting tool. Now collecting great data. Leveraged advanced javascript on page to capture and report back info to Google Analytics. Google Analytics was not sufficient out of the box; Maricopa gave CP rights to its Google Analytics to accomplish changes. **Suggestion: determine what data is most desired to measure Scarsdale user activity and work with CP on developing code to capture data through Google Analytics. Ask CP what they did for Maricopa.**
- Included custom development hours in their agreement. **Suggestion: on yearly contract renewal, negotiate 5-10 free development hours, or 10 hours at an extremely reduced billing rate.**
- Working with CP on automating process of loading and retrieving thousands of county vendor contracts.
- Maricopa's building department uses Accela product for permits, with a link in CP to the Accela system.
- Working with CP to develop an intranet site for all county employees, with a consistent look and feel, and containing a robust policies library and comprehensive phone directory. CP has a designated web development team working with Maricopa. **Suggestion: Scarsdale should consider this.**

Appendix C – CivicPlus Power User Practices

Maricopa County (cont.)

- Other comments include:
 - CP has a nice agenda center, but not for larger committees; SIRE product should be used for larger groups; and,
 - “Form Center” has limitations, including no security encryption around forms, which limits certain transactions/forms that require health and credit card information.
- #1 driver for traffic to Maricopa site has been “Animal Care and Control/Finding a Pet and Adopting a Pet.” Parcel/GIS information in top five. Human services and Public Health Items (e.g., death and birth certificates) another important driver. Building permits, community development, scheduling inspections also high demand areas, along with public records requests, air quality, regulatory and water department information. Online requests for GIS data for property tax information (for development companies that purchase aerial photography) are another high traffic area, along with communications with the assessor.
- PIO often posted on social media to promote new website, along with conducting a photo campaign and contest. Maricopa still relies heavily on social media. **Suggestion: start using social media for site promotion and ongoing communications.**

Appendix C – CivicPlus Power User Practices

Maricopa County (cont.)

- Maricopa has developed a consistent look and feel for its site, including guidelines on unified theme; colors, image sizes, logo and fonts. There is a publishing owner in each of 50 departments who add content to the site; only exceptions are infrequent home page change requests that must come through the PIO. **Suggestion: consider decentralizing content additions to site by each department once standards are developed.**
- Ms. Connelley is one of six members of CP's customer advisory board, which pretty much qualifies this client as a super user. **Suggestion: Chris O'Brien and/or Rob Cole should be active in the CP user group, peruse user blogs to pose questions to experienced users. and gain insight on system functionality.**

New Rochelle

- New Rochelle is working through the second redesign of its site, and another update is planned for the first quarter of 2018. The new site will have an edgier look to complement New Rochelle's new branding program. The administration is looking to create a more vibrant, exciting look and feel, and will review navigation, drop downs content (videos) and other core elements. The hope is to reflect New Rochelle's revamped brand/image, and continue to attract new developers and business to the city. **Suggestion: check if *scarsdale.com* design is consistent with other village communications, and/or modify other communications materials as needed.**
- New Rochelle views its website as both a resource for residents and staff, and a marketing/communications tool in business development/promotion. However, local government uses Facebook and Twitter as primary means of communicating with the public, not the website. It has a social media policy that is under review and being revised as needed. **Suggestion: Scarsdale should implement a social media policy allowing for quicker communications.**

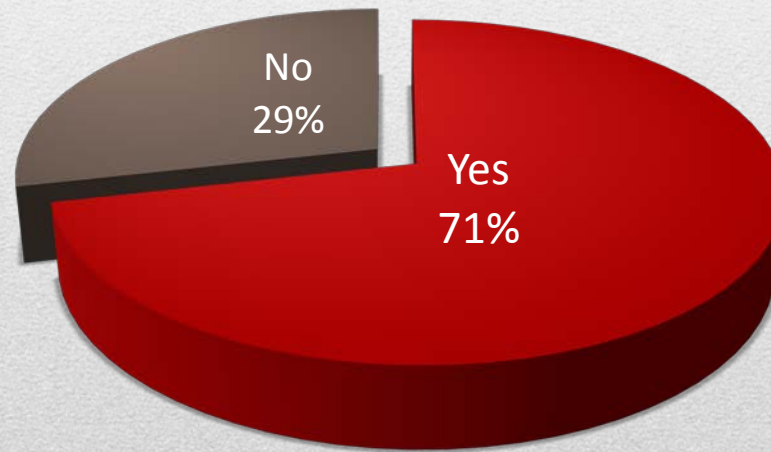
Appendix C – CivicPlus Power User Practices

New Rochelle (cont.)

- Administration is putting a lot of effort into building up intranet capabilities for employee use, to include features such as a document center, photo and video gallery, MS tutorials, administrative regulations and department information.
- Most website content for New Rochelle is not managed/administered centrally; 11 departments create/post their own content within relevant sections of site. In fact, the police department has its own subsite with a different look and feel. General information, such as items for Newsflash, is centralized. Department pages are positioned based on preferences of staff who interact with public.
- New Rochelle communications staff notes that many municipalities are designing sites for mobile access first, then desktop view. With this in mind, it is important to optimize appearance for mobile users by reviewing how new items affect mobile view and ensuring consistency in web elements (e.g., “highlights” should have a uniform height to optimize appearance for mobile users).

Appendix D– Department Head Survey on Communications

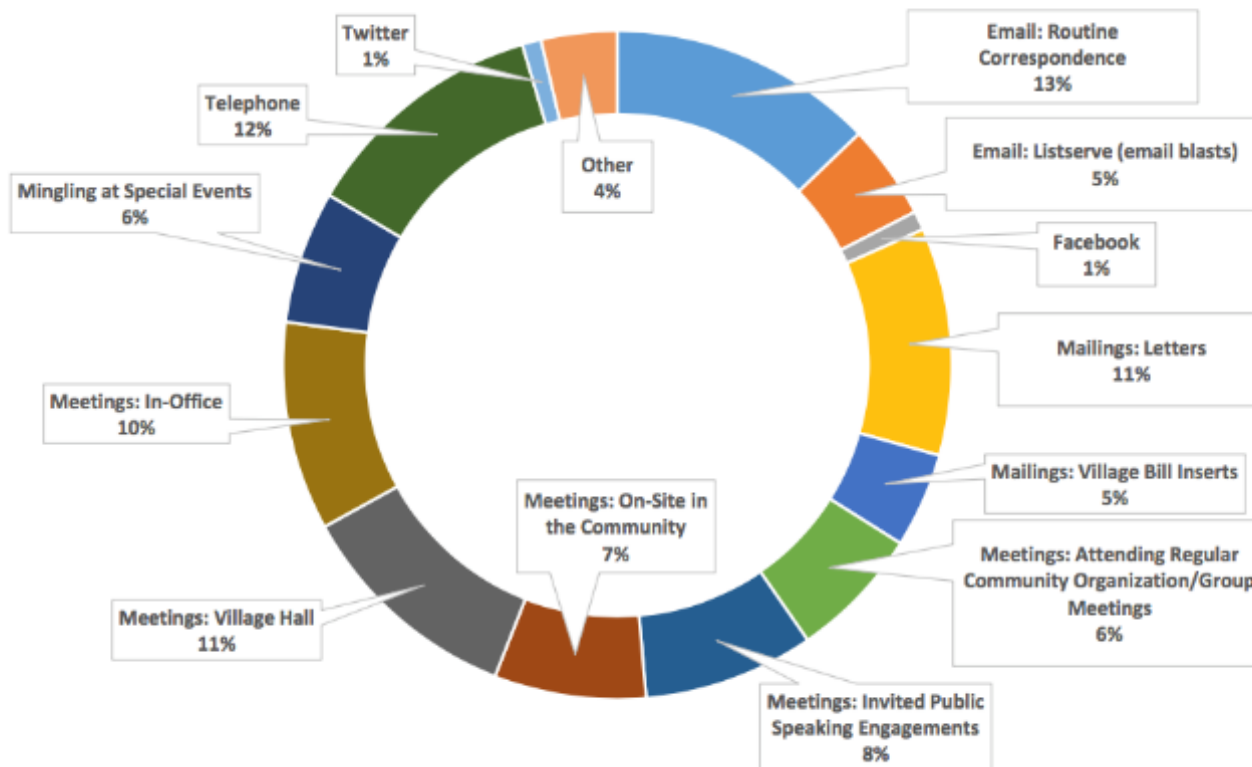
Q3: Do you believe that enhanced communication of your department's functions/activities would result in improved relationships?



Appendix D– Department Head Survey on Communications

Q1: Tools Staff Use to Communicate with the Public

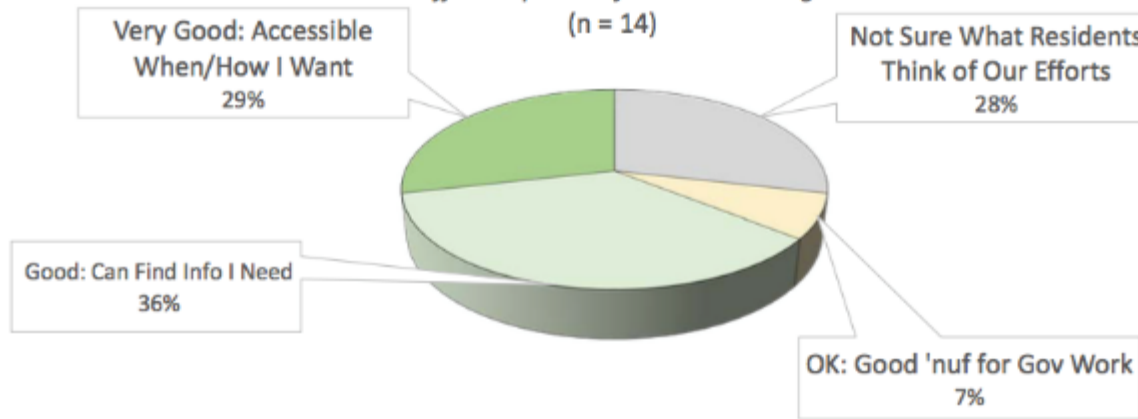
(n=14)



Appendix D– Department Head Survey on Communications

Q8: Village Communications Efforts

Staff Perceptions of Resident Ratings
(n = 14)

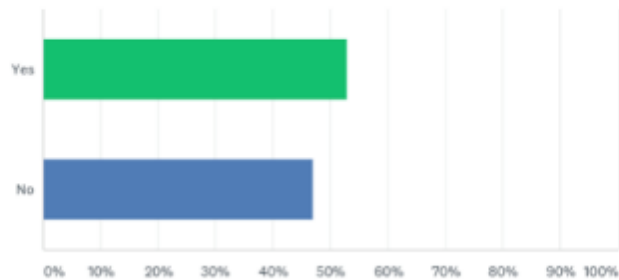


- Absolutely Abysmal: They're Clueless!
- Not Very Good: Must Ask for Help
- Not Sure What Residents Think of Our Efforts
- Good: Can Find Info I Need
- Stellar: They're the Best !
- Terrible: Staff Not Responsive
- Meh: They Seem to Try
- OK: Good 'nuf for Gov Work
- Very Good: Accessible When/How I Want

Appendix E – Resident Survey on Engagement with Scarsdale Government

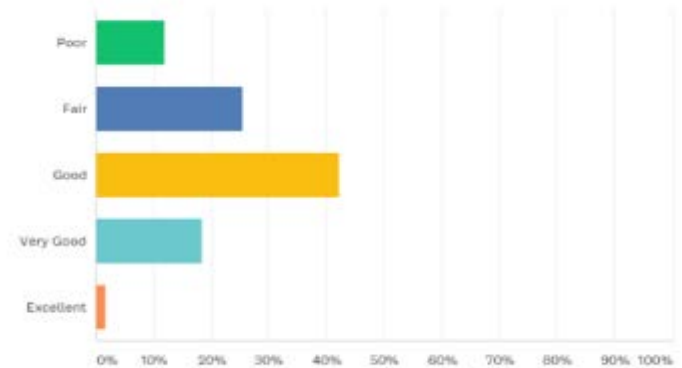
Q3: In the past 3 years, have you participated in a Village Government Board, Council, Committee, or Neighborhood Association?

Answered: 227 Skipped: 4



Q4: Rate the QUALITY of information you receive from Village government

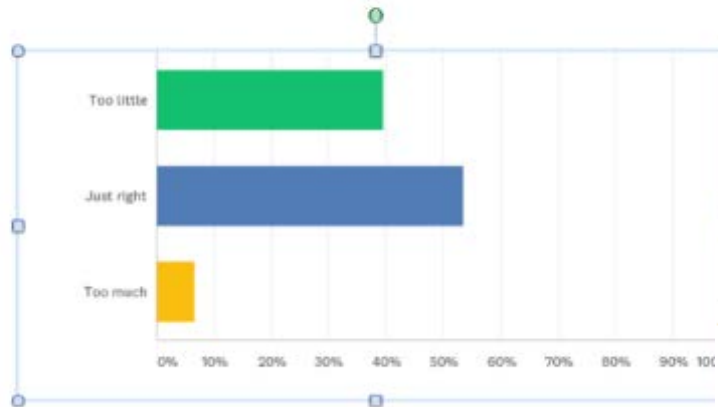
Answered: 227 Skipped: 4



Appendix E – Resident Survey on Engagement with Scarsdale Government

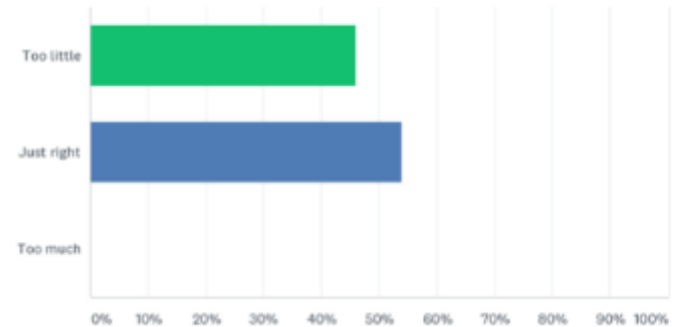
Q5: Rate the QUANTITY of information you receive from Village government

Answered: 222 Skipped: 9



Q6: Do you believe there is adequate opportunity for residents' input in major Village decisions?

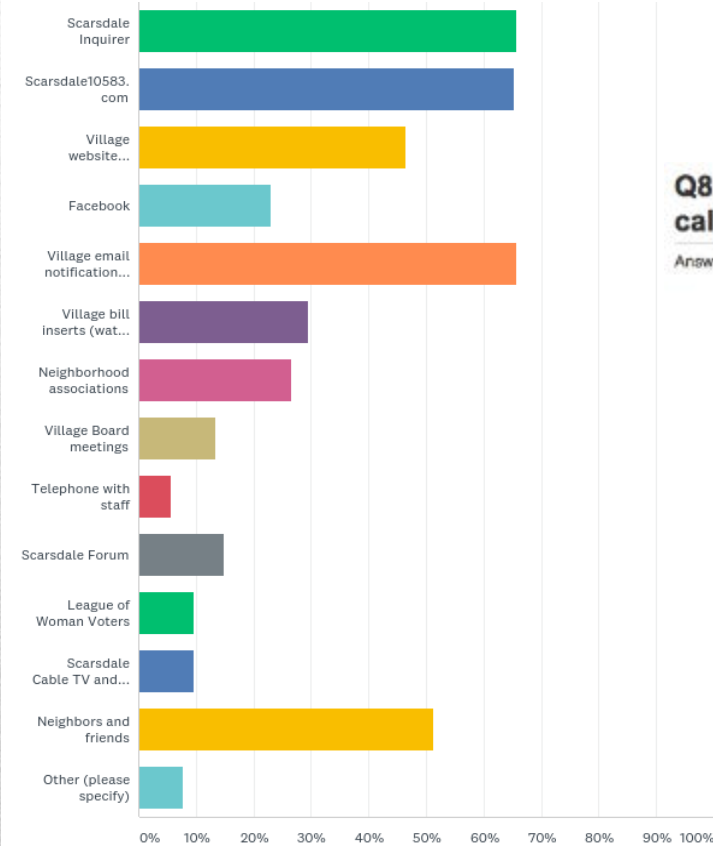
Answered: 215 Skipped: 16



Appendix E – Resident Survey on Engagement with Scarsdale Government

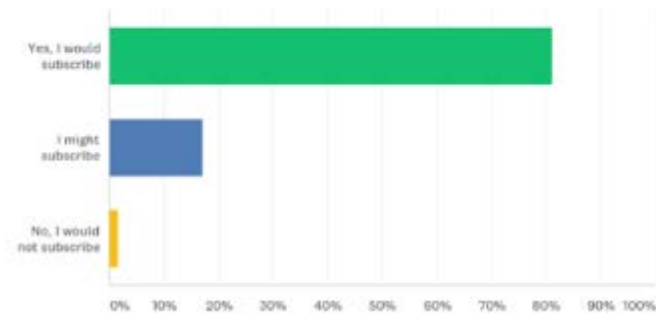
Q7: What are your top 5 sources for information?

Answered: 230 Skipped: 1



Q8: Would you subscribe to an emailed summary of Village news, calendar and highlights?

Answered: 228 Skipped: 3



Appendix F – Takeaways from Interviews with Trustees and Village Staff

Recommendations	Category	Priority/Value	Effort/Cost
Create flyer(s) to include in water bill mailings to promote “Notify Me” and other important village services	Content Creation/Distribution	High	Low
Develop guidelines/criteria for what information is distributed to public, means, frequency and priority (e.g., emergencies, construction, seasonal reminders)	Policy	Medium	Medium
Publicize committee meetings more frequently and consistently	Meetings	Medium	Low
Create print/online brochure about village boards and councils to publicize activity and engage potential volunteers	Content Creation/Distribution	Medium	Medium
Encourage departments to communicate via social media (see fire department FB page/ police department Twitter page) OK if done via VMO	Policy	Medium	Medium
When scheduling monthly meetings with trustees, include experts and department heads to discuss specific topics and allow residents to raise related concerns	Meetings	Medium	Medium



Appendix F – Takeaways from Interviews with Trustees and Village Staff

Recommendations	Category	Priority/Value	Effort/Cost
Create an opportunity for residents to have better understanding of the BOT's decision making process (e.g., host monthly "meet and greets" which will allow public to voice concerns)	Meetings	High	Medium
Create print/online FAQ documents for all departments to improve communication and efficiency, as well as reduce wasted staff time (e.g., "top 5 errors" for tradesmen, "permit conditions sheet" for residents)	Content Creation/Distribution	High	High
Draft social media policy that allows for one-way dissemination of information	Policy	High	Medium
Use Notify Me and social media, in addition to third parties, to regularly inform residents of news and important developments (e.g., police activity, road closures, etc.)	Communications Channels	High	Low
Link more information to <i>Scarsdale Official</i> , so residents who want more information are able to access it easily	Content Creation/Distribution	High	Low
Assess robocall capabilities and usage to improve efficiency	Communications Channels	High	Low

Appendix F – Takeaways from Interviews with Trustees and Village Staff

Recommendations	Category	Priority/Value	Effort/Cost
Publicize village department calendars and expand the number of departments that participate (e.g., sanitation calendar), perhaps, via Burbio	Communications Channels	Medium	Medium
Document policies, procedures and anecdotal information related to day-to-day village hall functions to provide “roadmap” for new and future staff	Policy/Administration	Medium	High
Create more formal process for documentation and proactive follow up for neighborhood association meetings (e.g., via shared Google document)	Meetings	Medium	Medium
Broadcast additional village meetings while being cognizant of possible negative impact on frank/open discussion	Meetings	Medium	Medium
Publicize R-U-OK, TIPS 411, Teen Academy and similar services	Communications Channels	Medium	Low
Create quarterly newsletter to include in water bill mailing to reach residents who prefer “snail mail”	Content Creation/Distribution	Medium	Medium
Create informational videos on various village departments	Content Creation/Distribution	Low	High
Hire/allocate staff to maintain department calendars, FAQs, etc. and answer related resident questions	Staffing	Low	High

Appendix G – Scarsdale Official




Est. 1701

Scarsdale Official

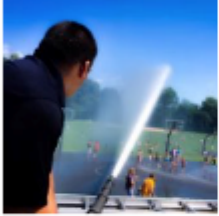
VILLAGE NEWS AND INFORMATION

August 23, 2017




And the Survey Says . . . High-Rise??

Ever think, "Wow, I should have said something when I had the chance?" Could the [Freightway Site](#) become a modern high-rise, or perhaps an outdoor concert venue -- how about both? No? Well, *now* is your chance to weigh-in on the Site's future! Complete the [Freightway Survey](#), which will only be available until mid-September. Also, consider joining the [Freightway Steering Committee](#) & the planning team for a walking tour at either 8:00 AM or 9:30 AM on Tuesday, September 12th. RSVP using freightwaystudy@scarsdale.com.



Like and Follow Scarsdale Fire

Check it out: The [Scarsdale Fire Department](#) is now on Facebook and Instagram! Please show them some love? with a [Like](#) on their Facebook page, [@ScarsdaleFire](#), and a [Follow](#) on their Instagram, [@ScarsdaleFireDepartment](#). "We hope to educate our residents on how to stay safe and what to do in an emergency, as well as provide a public window into the Fire Department's daily activities," related [Chief Jim Seymour](#). Here at [Scarsdale Official](#), we've already taken a peek and the Fire Department deserves two enthusiastic thumbs up!



Seeing the Forest Through the Trees

The Village of Scarsdale [Conservation Advisory Council](#), in collaboration with staff and [Friends of Scarsdale Parks](#), has undertaken a review of our local tree law. Following issuance of their [2013 Initial Report](#) and [subsequent updates](#) in 2014 and 2015, [proposed modifications](#) to the [Village Code](#) have been advanced and will be reviewed and discussed at a [Joint Meeting of the Village Board's Law and Sustainability Committees](#) on

Appendix H – Current Communications Typography

Communications Typology

	Critical/Emergency (Policy 308)	High Urgency	Medium Urgency	Low Urgency
Small Geography	Type 1S	Type 2S	Type 3S	Type 4S
Medium Geography	Type 1M	Type 2M	Type 3M	Type 4M
Large Geography	Type 1L	Type 2L	Type 3L	Type 4L

* Wildcards, such as scheduled versus unscheduled events, a road detour impacting transit station access rather than a small neighborhood, etc., may cause escalation from one Type to the next, higher urgency at staff discretion.

Defining Characteristics

Critical/Emergency	Think true emergency qualifying for Blackboard Connect under Policy 308; life safety may be at risk, near-term or immediate resident action required, unfolding incident.
High Urgency	Think important community news not qualifying as true emergency; community controversy present or likely, potential need for resident action.
Medium Urgency	Think important community news being delivered ahead of time; may or may not be community controversy, potential need for planned/scheduled resident action.
Low Urgency	Think public education and "hold the date" items; routine in nature and do not require immediate resident action.

Type 1S Examples

Public Safety Incident

- Mandatory Evacuation
- Major Crime Incident Unfolding
- Hazardous Material Event
- Natural Gas Leak
- Storm Impact (wind, rain, snow/ice, flooding, etc.)

Public Works Incident

- Broken Water Main with Boil Order
- Downed Wire
- Extended Utility Outage

Special Event

- Evacuation Order - Weather or Other

Type 1M Examples

Public Safety Incident

- Mandatory Evacuation
- Major Crime Incident Unfolding
- Hazardous Material Event
- Natural Gas Leak
- Storm Impact (wind, rain, snow/ice, flooding, etc.)

Public Works Incident

- Broken Water Main with Boil Order
- Downed Wires
- Extended Utility Outages

Special Event

- Evacuation Order - Weather or Other

Appendix H – Current Communications Typography

Type 1L Examples

Public Safety Incident

State of Emergency Declaration
Mandatory Evacuation
Major Crime Incident Unfolding
Hazardous Material Event
Natural Gas Leak
Public Facility Closure: Emergency
Storm Impact (wind, rain, snow/ice, flooding, etc.)
Large Structure Collapse
Local Amber Alert

Public Works Incident

Broken Water Main with Boil Order
Downed Wires
Extended Utility Outages
Widespread or Severe Storm Damage/Flooding

Special Event

Evacuation Order - Weather or Other

Type 2S Examples

Public Safety Issue

High profile Crime Incident, No Immediate Public Risk
House Fire
Multiple vehicle accident, inside neighborhood
Crime pattern
Partial Home Collapse
Localized flooding/wind damage

Public Works Issue

Broken water main with property damage, few homes/businesses
Unscheduled street work, with neighborhood closure
Unscheduled street paving, road detours in limited area

Programs and Services

Unscheduled Parks & Rec Field & Facility Closure

Type 2M Examples

Public Safety Issue

High profile Crime Incident, No Immediate Public Risk
Multiple vehicle accident, arterial/busy street
Crime pattern
Area Power Outage

Public Works Issue

Broken water main with property damage, many homes/businesses
Unscheduled street work, with arterial impacts
Unscheduled street paving, road detours in medium area

Programs and Services

Unscheduled Parks & Rec Field & Facility Closure

Type 2L Examples

Public Safety Issue

High profile crime incident
Multiple vehicle accident, Bronx River Parkway/Hutch
Emergency Parking Restrictions
Widespread power outage
Significant flooding, not impacting life or property
Multistory or Commercial Fire
Pedestrian/Vehicle Fatality
Transit accident
Bronx River Parkway Closure: Unplanned
Storm Impact (wind, rain, snow/ice, etc.)

Public Works Issue

Library Capital Project Updates
Snow Event - Major (1FT or More)
Water restrictions
Unscheduled street work, with arterial impacts during rush hour
Unscheduled street paving, road detours in medium area during rush hour

Special Event

Last minute special event cancellation

Type 3S Examples

Public Safety Matter

Traffic Safety Study Results, Neighborhood

Public Works Matter

Crane Berkley Pond Dredging
Temporary Parking Restrictions
Scheduled street paving, road detours
Schedule road work, neighborhood access issue

Special Event

Filming Event (movie/tv show)

Community Concern

Public facility closures: Scheduled

Type 3M Examples

Public Safety Matter

Traffic Safety Study Results, Arterial

Public Works Matter

Temporary Parking Restrictions
Scheduled street paving, road detours

Special Event

Road Race (15K)
Alderman Foundation Walk
Bike n' Blade

Type 3L Examples

Public Safety Matter

Police Arrest on Fraudulent ATM Charges
Traffic Safety Initiative
Confirmed rabid animal

Appendix H – Current Communications Typography

Community Concern

- Major development site updates, e.g., Weaver
- Water Billing Credits
- Revaluation controversy
- Regulatory actions, e.g., equalization rate, Tier II water notice
- Public Facility closures: Non-scheduled
- Group Facility Placement

Type 4S Examples

Public Works Information

- Scheduled street work, road remains open
- Scheduled street paving, road detours
- Scheduled street work, with neighborhood closure
- Unscheduled street work, road remains open
- Unscheduled street paving, road detours

Special Event

- Neighborhood Special Event

Community Concern

- Scarsdale Parks Concern, e.g., Youth at Night, Dog Walking, etc.
- Neighborhood Traffic/Parking Issues

Type 4M Examples

Public Works Information

- Scheduled street paving, road detours
- Scheduled street work, with neighborhood closure
- Scheduled street work, road remains open
- Scheduled street work, road remains open
- Unscheduled street work, road remains open
- Unscheduled street paving, road detours
- Unscheduled street work, road remains open

Special Event

- Car Show in Town Center

Type 4L Examples

Public Safety Information

- Everyday crime statistics
- Crime Prevention Tips
- Ped Safety Campaign

Public Works Information

- Scheduled street work, road remains open
- Unscheduled street work, road remains open
- Leaf Pick-Up Schedule
- Refuse Schedule

Special Event

- Celebrating an Anniversary, e.g., Scarsdale Sestercentennial
- Firework Information/4th of July
- Scout Government Day
- Announcing Proclamations
- Speaker at Library

PSA, General News and Deadlines

- Holiday Garbage Schedule
- Project volunteer opportunities, e.g., Secor Meadow
- Holiday office closure
- Crime Tips
- Emergency preparedness PSA
- Public education, e.g., invasive ID/control, native plantings, water conservation
- Moody's Statement on Scarsdale Bond Rating
- Safe Halloween
- Santas Mailbox
- Scarsdale Art Association Show in Chase Park
- Two Hours Holiday Parking
- Village-Involved Charity Drives: Food Drive/Fill the Boot/Toys for Tots, etc.
- Notable gifts to Village
- Parties in the Parks
- Westchester Mobile Passport Office (Downtown)
- Grant Awarded to Scarsdale
- Meeting Notices

Appendix H – Proposed Communications “Roadmap”

VILLAGE OF SCARSDALE COMMUNICATIONS MATRIX

Name/Nature of Communications	From	To	Information Source	Frequency	Format	Means of Delivery	Timing
CRITICAL/EMERGENCY EVENTS (POLICY 306)							
A. Public Safety Incident (e.g., mandatory evacuation, major crime incident, state of emergency declaration, hazardous material event, gas leak, storm impact, large structure collapse)	Village Manager's Office	All Residents All Village Staff Police, Fire and Other First Responders Village Businesses, Service and Retail Providers Village Community and Non-Profit Groups Local News Media	Will Vary With Each Scenario (e.g., village staff, police department, fire department, <u>Condition</u> , etc.) All Information To Be Verified by Relevant Stakeholders (time permitting); Village Manager Provides Final Approval/ Clearance	As Needed	Brief, "Need to Know" Announcement (social media, text and phone notifications) Notice 1: Brief Press Release Notice 2: Extended Press Release (as more information becomes available) Media Interviews	Emergency Notification System (by radio)? Phone Calls Text/E-Mail Alerts Social Media Posts Website Banners/Alerts Press Releases to Local Contacts In-Person Communications Via Staff or Site	Immediate, Per Village Emergency Protocol
B. Public Works Incident (e.g., broken water main/bell order, downed power wires, exposed utility stages, severe flooding/storm damage)							
C. Special Event (e.g., evacuation order)							

Name/Nature of Communications	From	To	Information Source	Frequency	Format	Means of Delivery	Timing
HIGH URGENCY EVENTS							
A. Public Safety Issue (e.g., high-profile crime incident with no immediate public risk, house fire, multiple vehicle accident, partial building collapse, localized flooding/storm damage)	Village Manager's Office	Residents, Community Groups and Businesses Immediately impacted, followed by Notifications To All Police, Fire and Other First Responders Local News Media	Will Vary With Each Scenario (e.g., village staff, police department, fire department, <u>Condition</u> , etc.) All Information To Be Verified by Relevant Stakeholders (time permitting); Village Manager Provides Final Approval/ Clearance	As Needed	Brief, "Need to Know" Announcement (social media, text and phone notifications) Notice 1: Brief Press Release Notice 2: Extended Press Release (as more information becomes available) Media Interviews	Phone Calls Text/E-Mail Alerts Social Media Posts Website Banners/Alerts Press Releases to Local Contacts In-Person Communications Via Staff On-Site Village Staff Presence	Within 1-2 Hours Of Incident
B. Public Works Issue (e.g., broken main/ property damage, area power outage, unscheduled street or repair work/street closures and detours)							
C. Programs and Services (e.g., unscheduled facility closures)							

Appendix H – Proposed Communications “Roadmap”

Name/Nature of Communications	From	To	Information Source	Frequency	Format	Means of Delivery	Timing
<p>LOWEST URGENCY/ "GOOD TO KNOW TODAY" EVENTS</p> <p>A. Public Safety (e.g., crime pattern, police arrest or hit study/tradulent ATM skings, confirmed wild animal, coyote sightings)</p> <p>B. Public Works Issue (e.g., temporary parking restrictions, scheduled street repairs/road work with detour/ access issues, pond dredging, water main flushing, village service disruptions)</p> <p>C. Programs, services and special events (e.g., scheduled facility closures, road closures/street fair/ parades, advance notice event cancellations, approaching deadlines for village programs)</p>	<p>Village Manager's Office</p> <p>Rec Office</p>	<p>All Residents</p> <p>Community Groups</p> <p>Businesses</p>	<p>Will Vary With Each Scenario</p> <p>All Information To Be Verified by Relevant Stakeholders; Village Manager Providing Final Approval</p>	<p>Weekly, With Push Communications Day Off/Day Aheads</p>	<p>Brief, "Need to Know" Announcement (social media, text and where notifications)</p> <p>Press Release/ Article (For "Awareness Issue," Such As Crime Pattern)</p>	<p>Social Media Posts</p> <p>Website Post</p> <p>Inclusion In E-Newsletter</p> <p>Press Release (when relevant)</p>	<p>Within Week Of Incident/ Information Becoming Available</p>



Name/Nature of Communications	From	To	Information Source	Frequency	Format	Means of Delivery	Timing
<p>MEDIUM URGENCY/ "NEED TO KNOW" EVENTS</p> <p>A. Public Safety Issue (e.g., high profile crime incident, multiple vehicle accident, snow/ice, emergency parking restrictions, isolated power outages, flooding/no property damage, building fire, pedestrian/vehicle fatality, transit accident/event, snow/ice clearing, storm impacts)</p> <p>B. Public Works Issue (e.g., major snow event, water restrictions, unscheduled street work with periodic road closures/ detours)</p> <p>C. Programs and services (e.g., unscheduled facility closures or event cancellations)</p>	<p>Village Manager's Office</p> <p>Rec Office</p>	<p>Residents, Businesses and Community Groups</p> <p>Immediately Impacted; Followed By All</p> <p>Police, Fire and Other First Responders</p> <p>Local News Media</p>	<p>Will Vary With Each Scenario (e.g., village staff, police department, fire department, ConEdison, etc.)</p> <p>All Information To Be Verified by Relevant Stakeholders (time permitting); Village Manager Providing Final Approval/ Clearance</p>	<p>As Needed For Changing Circumstances</p> <p>Daily For Public Works and Programs/Services Notices</p>	<p>Brief, "Need to Know" Announcement (social media, text and where notifications)</p> <p>Standard Press Release</p> <p>Village Staff Presence</p>	<p>Text/E-Mail Alerts</p> <p>Social Media Posts</p> <p>Message on Website Home Page</p> <p>Press Release to Local Contacts</p> <p>In-Person Communications Via Staff On-Site</p>	<p>Within 2-4 Hours Of Incident</p>

Appendix H - Proposed Communications "Roadmap"

Name/Nature of Communications	From	To	Information Source	Frequency	Format	Means of Delivery	Timing
LOW URGENCY EVENTS							
<p>A. General News (e.g., meeting notices, seasonal reminders, grievance filing deadlines, rezonulation news, election information, billing credits, scheduled street/maintenance work, budget meetings/public comment, parking permit renewals, holiday closures/schedule changes)</p> <p>B. Program News (e.g., rez department programs/registration, new programs/initiative launches, special events, fourth of July info)</p> <p>C. Community Concerns (e.g., parks/public area issues and updates, neighborhood/parking news, new parking spaces, new public facility)</p>	<p>Village Manager's Office</p> <p>Relevant Village Departments</p>	<p>All Residents</p> <p>community Groups</p> <p>Businesses</p>	<p>Will Vary With Each Scenario</p> <p>All Information To be Verified by Relevant Stakeholders, Village Manager Providing Final Approval</p>	<p>Weekly, With Path Communications if Needed</p>	<p>Brief, "Need to Know" Announcement (social media, text and above notifications)</p> <p>Press Release/Article</p>	<p>Social Media Posts</p> <p>Website Post</p> <p>Inclusion in E-Newsletter</p> <p>Press Release/ Media Calendar Updates</p> <p>Information Should Be Repeated Multiple Times</p>	<p>Will Vary With Each Scenario (e.g., seasonal reminders each quarter, deadline reminders seasonal reminders, community concerns as issues arise, etc.)</p> <p>Information Should Be Repeated Multiple Times</p>

Name/Nature of Communications	From	To	Information Source	Frequency	Format	Means of Delivery	Timing
GENERAL "HOLD THE DATE" EVENTS							
<p>A. General News (e.g., development site updates, volunteer recruitment, PSAs, seasonal reminders)</p> <p>B. Public Policy Issues (e.g., permeable surface issues, code rewrites, capital project updates, preservation laws, new village initiatives)</p> <p>C. Community Concerns (e.g., volunteer opportunities, criminal, emergency preparedness, public education)</p> <p>D. Programs and Services (e.g., beautification efforts, village staff changes, celebrating successes, new facilities and services)</p>	<p>Village Manager's Office</p> <p>Relevant Village Departments</p>	<p>All Residents</p> <p>Community Groups</p> <p>Businesses</p>	<p>Will Vary With Each Scenario</p> <p>All Information To be Verified by Relevant Stakeholders; Village Manager Providing Final Approval</p>	<p>When Relevant; Information Should Be Packaged As Features/FYI Pieces</p>	<p>Article/Announcement</p> <p>Press Release (when relevant)</p>	<p>Website Post</p> <p>Inclusion in E-Newsletter</p> <p>Press Release (when relevant)</p> <p>Media Calendar Updates</p>	<p>Will Vary With Each Scenario (e.g., seasonal reminders each quarter, deadline reminders seasonal reminders each week out, community concerns as issues arise, etc.)</p> <p>Information Should Be Repeated Multiple Times</p>

Appendix I – Press Releases/Media Coverage



Village of Scarsdale
VILLAGE HALL / 1001 POST ROAD / SCARSDALE, NY 10583
914.722.1110 / WWW.SCARSDALE.COM

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release 01.19.17
Contact: Village Manager's Office
914.722.1110

Scarsdale Announces New Website Launch

The Village of Scarsdale has launched a new version of its website, scarsdale.com, to provide the public with improved functionality when conducting business online.

To introduce residents to the site's new features and site navigation, Scarsdale's recently formed Ad Hoc Committee on Communications coordinated with the Village's Cable TV Office to release a [website introduction video](http://scarsdale.com/communications) (www.scarsdale.com/communications). The video will be featured at a number of upcoming public events, including the Scarsdale Board of Trustees meeting on January 24th (8:00 p.m., Village Hall) and the Scarsdale Forum's "State of the County" session on January 26th (7:30 p.m., Scarsdale Public Library).

Village Officials seek resident feedback on the revamped site, which is a first step in Scarsdale's initiative to improve Village communications and build a better dialogue with the public. Residents are invited and encouraged to review the redesigned scarsdale.com and provide feedback through the [online survey](http://online.survey.01.net/003/ScarsdaleComments) ([01.net/003/ScarsdaleComments](http://online.survey.01.net/003/ScarsdaleComments)).

According to Mayor Jon Mark, "The redesign of scarsdale.com represents the desire of the Village Board and staff to embrace technology in serving the public. The Ad Hoc Committee on Communications is assisting us in gaining insight into how residents want to interact with government. The Board and Staff look forward to hearing residents' recommendations during the coming year."

The Scarsdale Ad Hoc Communications Committee, formed in October 2016, is comprised of Scarsdale residents with expertise in a variety of areas, ranging from legal and IT to communications and marketing. Led by Village Trustee Jane Vernon, the Committee was charged with supporting the functionality of the new scarsdale.com, and developing a plan to introduce it to residents and encourage participation. Over the next year, it will continue work on website promotion and engagement, and develop a formal communication plan to assist Village management in future messaging efforts.

"We are delighted to have resident volunteers with extraordinary talent and experience collaborating with the Board of Trustees and Village staff," said Trustee Vernon. "Our combined efforts on the website redesign, in particular, present an important opportunity to engage our residents as we chart the future course of communications within Scarsdale."

Questions, comments, and suggestions can also be directed to communications@scarsdale.com.

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Village of Scarsdale
VILLAGE HALL / 1001 POST ROAD / SCARSDALE, NY 10583
914.722.1110 / WWW.SCARSDALE.COM

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release 04/20/17
Contact: Village Manager's Office
914.722.1110

Receive Timely Official News and Information using "Notify Me"

Scarsdale's Ad Hoc Communications Committee would like to remind all residents about the new "Notify Me" tool on the Scarsdale Village website, scarsdale.com.



The public is invited to subscribe to "Notify Me" to automatically receive email notices for alerts about a variety of services, ranging from emergency alerts and public notices, to public and recreation updates, to meeting agendas and calendars.

"Notify Me" is accessible via the scarsdale.com home page by selecting the "Notify Me" icon below the home page banner section. One can also use the powerful website search tool to locate the subscription page. To subscribe, users need only to create an account or log into their existing account, and follow the instructions provided. It is easy to unsubscribe and manage your alert settings, and, more important, stay informed about Village news, programs and service changes, and upcoming activities.

Please help spread the word about "Notify Me" and encourage neighbors, family, and friends to subscribe!

Comments or suggestions regarding official Village of Scarsdale communications can be submitted to communications@scarsdale.com.

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Village of Scarsdale
VILLAGE HALL / 1001 POST ROAD / SCARSDALE, NY 10583
914.722.1110 / WWW.SCARSDALE.COM

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release May 04, 2017
Contact: Village Manager's Office
914.722.1110

Resident Photos of the Community Wanted!

In an effort to keep its new website, scarsdale.com, up to date and increase residents' participation in online communications, the Village of Scarsdale has issued an "open call" for photography. What do you think makes Scarsdale special? Are you able to capture it in a photo or digital artwork? If so, you're encouraged to submit it for our public use.

The Village invites Scarsdale residents to donate photos that depict community activities, events, artwork, street and/or park scenes, etc. to be used in illustrating our website. "Rather than use stock photography or the usual 'landmark' images, we'd like to feature images that capture the essence of Scarsdale life, as seen by our residents," says Deputy Village Manager Rob Cole.

Cole added, "We see an opportunity for the public to become part of this process and are interested in seeing Scarsdale through their eyes." The Village also hopes to use the images in other materials, such as information and education brochures, program announcements, and similar communications.

Village Trustee and Communications Committee Chair Jane Vernon continued, "This is an opportunity for our residents to enhance the appeal and effectiveness of village communications, and share the moments and places that define Scarsdale for them. And, it allows us to showcase the talents of Scarsdale photographers and artists, which is an exciting way to build a dialogue within our community."

All interested resident photographers and artists, professional and amateur alike, are encouraged to donate digital photos for Village of Scarsdale use and potential publication. Please visit the Photo Submission Form, available at www.villageofscarsdale.com/Scarsdale-Photos for additional information, including the necessary release form.

Please note that all submissions will become property of the Village, to be used without compensation or credit to the photographer or artist.

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Appendix I– Press Releases/Media Coverage

Scarsdale Village Working to Improve Communications

SHOUT IT OUT PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 01 MARCH 2017 08:25 JOANNE WALLENSTEIN



Ad Hoc Committee Members from left to right: ML Periman, Trustee Deborah Pekarek, Deputy Village Manager Robert Cole, Scott Rompala, Andrew Seresky, Laura Halligan, Lee Fischman, Trustee Jane Veron. Not pictured: Justin Arest, Dara Gruenberg, Justin Hamill, Barry Meiselman, Carol Silverman

As many readers may know, Scarsdale Village government recently launched a new, more user-friendly version of its website, scarsdale.com, which has proven to be an easier, more functional means of conducting business online.

The revamped site is also the first step in Scarsdale's initiative to improve communications and build a better dialogue with the public. Championing this effort is the Ad Hoc Committee on

Communications, led by Trustee Jane Veron, which is charged with identifying opportunities to enhance village interaction with residents. Members were selected for their experience and expertise in pertinent subjects such as public relations, information technology and neighborhood outreach, and for their collective diversity. They include Justin Arest, Lee Fischman, Dara Gruenberg, Laura Halligan, Justin Hamill, ML Periman, Barry Meiselman, Scott Rompala, Andrew Seresky, Carol Silverman, and Ilaions, Village Trustee Deborah Pekarek and Deputy Village Manager, Robert Cole.

Formed in October 2016, the committee quickly completed its first mandate – reviewing, refining and introducing the revised website. The previous site, developed years ago, lacked functionality and wasn't responsive to the myriad of mobile devices used today. According to Cole, "The site's organization, appearance, significantly improved functionality, new engagement tools, and richer, more advanced email/SMS functions all are major improvements over the old version."

Scarsdale Moms
January 24 at 8:20pm · 🌐

Trustee Jane Veron introduces Ad Hoc Communications Committee.

You, Lena Crandall and 5 others

2 Comments

Scarsdale Moms
June 9 at 12:31pm · 🌐

Scarsdale's Board of Trustees' Ad Hoc Committee on Communications is soliciting opinions...[See more](#)

Engagement With Scarsdale Government Survey
www.surveymonkey.com

Scarsdale Moms
May 4 at 6:56pm · 🌐

Such a fun opportunity that was devised by the Village's ad hoc Communications...[See more](#)

Scarsdale, NY
www.scarsdale.com

6

1 Share

Scarsdale Moms
March 1 at 11:33am · 🌐

Thank you Joanne Wallenstein for the great write up about everything the Village is doing to...[See more](#)

Scarsdale Village Working to Improve Communications
scarsdale10583.com

You, Dara Broxmeyer Gruenberg, Lena Crandall and 4 others

1 Comment

Appendix J – Westchester Municipalities' Digital Comms Programs

	Armonk (North Castle)	Bedford	Bronxville	Chappaqua (New Castle)	Greenwich	Larchmont
Population	1201 Households 4330 Residents	6326 Households 17906 Residents	2430 Households 6407 Residents	6037 Households 18100 Residents	22083 Households 62359 Residents	2215 Households 6118 Residents
Website	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
E-News	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Facebook	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Twitter	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Community Calendar	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
E-Commerce Services	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Additional Comms	No	Yes (monthly "Supervisor's Report)	Yes (monthly "Mayor's Column")	No	No	No

Appendix J – Westchester Municipalities' Digital Comms Programs

	Mamaroneck	New Canaan	New Rochelle	Port Chester	Rye	SCARSDALE
Population	7175 Households 19356 Residents	7551 Households 20280 Residents	28279 Households 79557 Residents	9082 Households 29524 Residents	5559 Households 16000 Residents	5657 Households 17909 Residents
Website	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
E-News	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Facebook	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Twitter	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Community Calendar	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
E-Commerce Services	No	No	No	No	No	No
Additional Comms	No	No	No	No	No	No

Appendix J – Westchester Municipalities Communications Staffing/Budgets

	Armonk (North Castle)	Bedford	Bronxville	Chappaqua (New Castle)	Greenwich	Larchmont
Staffing	Dedicated “Public Information” function, managed by part-time staff and outside consultant	Communications administered by existing staff; “information” contact is FTE (\$55K salary)	Communications appears to be managed by village clerk’s office	Communications appears to be managed by supervisor and clerk’s offices, under “Special Events,” “Special Projects” and “Professional Services”	No obvious/specific communications line items in budget	Budget includes unspecified consultant/contract fees in various departments
Budget	2017 budget is \$72K, with \$50K allocated for “Consultant Fees”	“General Management Support” allocation of \$62K, some of which may cover communications	2017 budget is \$25K, including \$6K for “Advertising,” \$7.3K for “Website/E-Bulletin” and \$12.3K for “Consultant Fees”	Budget lists \$10K for “Special Events,” \$25K for “Special Projects,” \$3K for “Chamb of Comm Support,” \$6K for “Printing Town Info.” and \$12K for “Prof. Services”	Allocates hundreds of thousands for various, unspecified “Professional Services”	n/a

Appendix J – Westchester Municipalities Communications Staffing/Budgets

	Mamaroneck	New Canaan	New Rochelle	Port Chester	Rye	SCARSDALE
Staffing	Employs a communications consultant	No communications allocations/staffing listed in budget	Dedicated “Public Information Office” that includes CTV, and is supervised by communications and marketing manager	Village manager’s office is responsible for all “Public Relations” activities	Communications activities coordinated by village manager’s office	No dedicated staff or function
Budget	Budget lists \$48K for “Consultant Services” in “General Fund”	n/a	2017 budget is \$286K, \$133K of which is manager’s salary, with \$70K allocated for “Contracted Services”	One additional FTE has been budgeted for 2017-18	One additional FTE has been budgeted for 2017-18	n/a

Appendix J – Westchester Municipalities Communications Staffing/Budgets

PUBLIC INFORMATION

MISSION

THE MISSION OF THE PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE IS TO DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE, ONGOING COMMUNICATION EFFORT THAT PORTRAYS THE CITY IN A POSITIVE MANNER. THE OFFICE WRITES AND DISTRIBUTES PRESS RELEASES; WRITES, EDITS, APPROVES AND DEVELOPS CONTENT FOR THE CITY'S WEBSITE; ACTS AS CONSULTANT TO IN-HOUSE DEPARTMENTS REGARDING MARKETING, ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC INFORMATION STRATEGIES; AND MAINTAINS A WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH ALL FORMS OF MEDIA. THESE EFFORTS ALSO INVOLVE MANAGEMENT OF THE CITY'S CABLE TELEVISION ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FRANCHISE PROVIDER AND THE BROADCAST OF PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS, PUBLIC MEETINGS, COMMUNITY EVENTS AND PUBLIC SERVICE SHOWS.

2016 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Go-live with redesigned City website and subsite for NRPD.
- Expanded social media presence (YouTube and Instagram).
- Created comprehensive Community Events calendar.
- Provided graphic design services for posters, flyers and banners.
- Launched "NewRo Connect" subscription campaign.
- Finalize sound upgrade; begin lighting upgrade in public meeting rooms through PEG.

2017 OBJECTIVES

- Expand e-and print publications.
- Expand video services.
- Finalize production lighting in Council Conference Room and Chambers.
- Upgrade equipment to HD.
- Upgrade playout capabilities.

New Rochelle Public Information Office Summary 2017 Budget

OUTPUT MEASURES

<i>ITEM</i>	<i>2015 ACTUAL</i>	<i>2016 ESTIMATE</i>	<i>2017 BUDGET</i>
1. Department publications	4	4	4
2. Cable television programs produced by local government	160	180	180
3. Cable television programs produced by outside producers	30	30	60
4. Cable television still messages produced by local government	435	350	400
5. Information Requests	350	350	350

Appendix K – Why Social Media?

At 8:36pm on November 2, 2016, a resident posted to Scarsdale Moms Facebook page: *“Did anyone get an unusually high water bill from Scarsdale? Did rates go up? Ours was gigantic and not sure why.”* By November 10, there were 85 responses to this and two related articles on *scarsdale10583.com*, culminating with Village Manager Steve Pappalardo announcing that approximately 1,600 residents had been overcharged for water.

This example is one of thousands of questions about local policy addressed via social media. To increase use of *scarsdale.com* and improve overall communications, Scarsdale Village should maintain a Facebook page (not “group”) to redirect inquiries to the appropriate source(s), and keep residents abreast of news and emergencies.

- Social media engagement supports existing public engagement, it does not replace it. Any social media strategy should be carefully planned to support the goals of good governance with regard to public engagement.
- Legal considerations are important in creating social media policy, but not an impediment. Countless municipalities have successfully established an effective social media presence and engagement while appropriately conforming with legal requirements/concerns.
- Social media presence should be limited the dissemination of information (e.g., one-way communication).
- Scarsdale Village should publish a clear statement laying out how social media supports its alignment with the value of public engagement (see “What is Public Engagement & Why Should I Do It,” which follows)
- Out of 10 nearby municipalities of similar size (Armonk, Bedford, Bronxville, Chappaqua, Larchmont, New Rochelle, Greenwich, Mamaroneck, New Canaan, Port Chester and Rye) Scarsdale is the ONLY municipality that does not have an official Facebook page. Many neighboring municipalities have multiple Facebook pages for Conservation, Clerk, Fire and Police Departments, Recreation and Chambers of Commerce.

Appendix K – Why Social Media?

Hamlet Hub/Scarsdale Moms Facebook Group

The 2016 Scarsdale Tax Re-Val: The Fix Was In

Like Love In Love Like Love

Published on Scarsdale, 14 July 2016 at 9:01 AM
 Published by [Kathleen M. Kelly](#)

If the goal was to re-distribute Scarsdale's tax burden across the board, regardless of home size, age, condition, and current sales value, it has become clear that the 2016 Tax Re-Evaluation is a smashing success. And clearly, that WAS the goal.

The 2014 revaluation undertaken by Tyler Technologies was, by all accounts (including that of its paid outline, if Ryan, for obvious reasons, ignored, and transposed - human beings naturally physically entered a majority of homes in the village and saw for themselves, up-close and personal, what a potential buyer would see. For instance, although our home is an already 21' of an end building White Pine, a potential buyer would surely notice that it has not been updated or remediated since 1960, the year it was built (except for the addition of a deck), that buyer would also notice, for example, that our entire kitchen is roughly the size of many Scarsdaleans' kitchen islands, our rooms are relatively small, our heating and conditioning system on one zone, and the building materials used are considered by the village to be C grade, among other possibly observations they might make which could negatively affect the sale price of our home. I can assure you, that buyer would not want to pay more for our house if we explained that the land it sits on is where the true value lies.

Scarsdale Residents Deserve Answers from Village Personnel and Elected Officials

Like Love In Love Like Love

Published on Scarsdale, 25 June 2016 at 6:04 AM
 Published by [Village of Scarsdale](#)

In early June, numerous Scarsdale village homeowners were checked to learn that their property valuations were assessed as having increased by a range of 25-30%, or even more, from the valuations in effect following the Tyler Technologies evaluation just two years ago. Since June 1st, our team and a number of other curative Scarsdaleans have been organizing the 2nd Krumholz design, assumptions, and data. As soon as we discovered the model's selective flaws and weak model risk governance, we notified the local media and a concerned and appalled official.

As we have continued to conduct even more analysis since the June 14th Village Hall meeting, we find it increasingly troubling that we keep finding more selective and arbitrary. The Ryan revaluation mostly undid the Tyler Technologies 2014 revaluation, which cost Scarsdale taxpayers approximately \$1 million, and in the over a half billion dollars of assessed property value large Town homes, well in excess of the median size, in Scarsdale to homes that tend to be smaller and are typically occupied by the elderly, empty nesters, and young families.

Such a reversal in just two years has substantially undermined public confidence in our elected and appointed officials in the Village of Scarsdale. Moreover, substantial questions remain unanswered. On June 14th, we posed the following questions and respectfully requested a public answer from Village personnel and elected officials. We continue to wait for an answer. With the exception of Ms. Jane Moran, who only joined the Board in 2016, the mayor and trustees have been in office ranging from as early as 2010 to 2015. Village personnel and officials need to provide answers to the village they serve. View the questions to which we seek answers:

1. Who is the village official or officials who selected JT Ryan to be the monitor for the Tyler revaluation and why?

Scarsdale Moms
 August 14, 2016 at 8:03am · Scarsdale · [🌐](#)

Lost power on Brookby road....anyone else lose power? Any word from con Ed? Thx

13 Comments

Scarsdale Moms
 January 20, 2016 at 10:57am · [🌐](#)

Anybody know why the police have shut down Lincoln Road at the intersection with Crossway?! I called them and they said they were "investigating something" and couldn't tell me what. I asked them if th...

2

22 Comments

Scarsdale Moms
 November 2, 2016 · Scarsdale · [🌐](#)

Did anyone get an unusually high water bill from Scarsdale? Did rates go up? Ours was gigantic and not sure why.

16

85 Comments

Like Comment

Scarsdale Moms
 March 7, 2016 at 8:23pm · Scarsdale · [🌐](#)

Is anyone concerned about our drinking water? If you read the enclosed letter in our town water bill, it is very scary. We not only have failed to meet treatment requirements for over a year but we are...

20 Comments

Diana Catherine Mooney and 30 others

Appendix K – Why Social Media?

INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

What is Public Engagement?

There are many terms that describe the involvement of the public in civic and political life. We offer one set of terms and definitions here not because we're sure these definitions are the best or most complete – or even that most people would agree with them – but because we think it's important to draw distinctions among the various ways people can become involved. This is important because understanding these differences will help local officials "fit" the best approach (or approaches) to the issue, policy or controversy at hand. The exact terms and definitions are less important than recognizing that these distinctions exist.

Why Should I do it?

Local governments throughout California are applying a variety of public engagement strategies and approaches to address issues ranging from land use and budgeting to climate change and public safety. They are discovering a number of benefits that can result from the successful engagement of their residents in local decision making.

What is Public Engagement?



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

This is an extremely broad term that includes the many ways that residents involve themselves in the civic and political life of their community. It encompasses volunteering as a local Little League coach, attending neighborhood or community-wide meetings, helping to build a community playground, joining a city or county clean-up effort, becoming a member of a neighborhood watch group or local commission – and much more.



PUBLIC INFORMATION/OUTREACH

This kind of public engagement is characterized by one-way local government communication to residents to inform them about a public problem, issue or policy matter.

Examples could include: a website article describing the agency's current budget situation; a mailing to neighborhood residents about a planned housing complex; or a presentation by a health department to a community group about substandard housing or "bird" flu policies.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/DELIBERATION

This form of public engagement refers to those processes through which participants receive new information on the topic at hand and through discussion and deliberation jointly prioritize or agree on ideas and/or recommendations intended to inform the decisions of local officials.

Examples include community conversations that provide information on the budget and the budget process and ask participants to discuss community priorities, confront real trade-offs, and craft their collective recommendations; or the development of a representative group of residents who draw on community input and suggest elements and ideas for a general plan update.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

This is a general term we are using for a broad range of methods through which members of the public become more informed about and/or influence public decisions. Given our work to support good public involvement in California, we are especially focused on how local officials use public involvement practices to help inform residents and help guide the policy decisions and actions of local government.



PUBLIC CONSULTATION

This kind of public engagement generally includes instances where local officials ask for the individual views or recommendations of residents about public actions and decisions, and where there is generally little or no discussion to add additional knowledge and insight and promote an exchange of viewpoints.

Examples include typical public hearings and council or board comment periods, as well as resident surveys and polls. A public meeting that is mainly focused on asking for "raw" individual opinions and recommendations about budget recommendations would fit in this category.



SUSTAINED PUBLIC PROBLEM SOLVING

This form of public engagement typically takes place through the work of place-based committees or task forces, often with multi-sector membership, that over an extended period of time address public problems through collaborative planning, implementation, monitoring and/or assessment.

Appendix K – Why Social Media?

Why Engage the Public?



BETTER IDENTIFICATION OF THE PUBLIC'S VALUES, IDEAS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Elections help identify voter preferences and communication with individual constituents provide additional information to local officials about resident views on various topics. However gaps often remain in understanding the public's views and preferences on proposed public agency actions and decisions. This can especially be the case for residents or populations that tend to participate less frequently or when simple "pro" or "con" views don't help solve the problem at hand. Good public engagement can provide more nuanced and collective views about an issue by a broader spectrum of residents.



MORE INFORMED RESIDENTS - ABOUT ISSUES AND ABOUT LOCAL AGENCIES

Most residents do not regularly follow local policy matters carefully. While a relatively small number do, most community members are not familiar, for instance, with the ins and outs of a local agency budget and budget process, or knowledgeable about planning for a new general plan, open space use or affordable housing. Good public engagement can present opportunities for residents to better understand an issue and its impacts and to see local agency challenges as their challenges as well.



IMPROVED LOCAL AGENCY DECISION - MAKING AND ACTIONS, WITH BETTER IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES

Members of the public have information about their community's history and needs. They also have a sense of the kind of place where they and their families want to live. They can add new voices and new ideas to enrich thinking and planning on topics that concern them. This kind of knowledge, integrated appropriately into local decision making, helps ensure that public decisions are optimal for the community and best fit current conditions and needs.



MORE COMMUNITY BUY-IN AND SUPPORT, WITH LESS CONTENTIOUSNESS

Public engagement by residents and others can generate more support for the final decisions reached by local decision makers. Put simply, participation helps generate ownership. Involved residents who have helped to shape a proposed policy, project or program will better understand the issue itself and the reasons for the decisions that are made. Good communications about the public's involvement in a local decision can increase the support of the broader community as well.



MORE CIVIL DISCUSSIONS AND DECISION MAKING

Earlier, informed and facilitated deliberation by residents will frequently offer a better chance for more civil and reasoned conversations and problem solving than public hearings and other less collaborative opportunities for public input.



FASTER PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION WITH LESS NEED TO REVISIT AGAIN

Making public decisions is one thing; successfully implementing these decisions is often something else altogether. The buy-in discussed above, and the potential for broad agreement on a decision, are important contributors to faster implementation. For instance, a cross section of the community may come together to work on a vision or plan that includes a collective sense of what downtown building height limits should be. If this is adopted by the local agency and guides planning and development over time, the issue will be less likely to reoccur as an issue for the community and for local officials. In general, good public engagement reduces the need for unnecessary decision-making "do-over."



MORE TRUST - IN EACH OTHER AND IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Whatever their differences, people who work together on common problems usually have more appreciation of the problem and of each other. Many forms of public engagement provide opportunity to get behind peoples' statements and understand the reasons for what they think and say. This helps enhance understanding and respect among the participants. It also inspires confidence that problems can be solved – which promotes more cooperation over time. Whether called social capital, community building, civic pride or good citizenship, such experiences help build stronger communities. Additionally, when a local agency promotes and is a part of these processes - and takes the ideas and recommendations of the public seriously - a greater trust and confidence in local government often results.



HIGHER RATES OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Engaging the public in new ways offers additional opportunities for people to take part in the civic and political life of their community. This may include community members who have traditionally participated less than others. These are avenues for not only contributing to local decisions but for residents to gain knowledge, experience and confidence in the workings of their local government. These are future neighborhood volunteers, civic and community leaders, commissioners and elected officials. In whatever role they choose, these are individuals who will be more prepared and more qualified as informed residents, involved citizens and future leaders.

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About the Institute for Local Government