



# TOWN OF FAIRFAX

## STAFF REPORT

### March 2, 2022

**TO:** Mayor and Town Council

**FROM:** Camille Esposito, Communications Specialist

**SUBJECT:** Receive report on Town Communications in the calendar years of 2020 and 2021

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#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Receive the report.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Our Communications goal is to reach each and every community member in the way that works for them. That may be through a newsletter, social media, a poster in town with a QR code, a postcard in the mail, the website or all of the above. We have made great strides in this direction and we see the results in an engaged, informed community. Our commitment is to maintain and improve our level of communications across all platforms.

#### **Constant Contact**

We use Constant Contact to create the Town Newsletter (weekly), Age Friendly Newsletter (monthly), Recreation Newsletter (quarterly), Town Council Agenda emails, Community and Emergency updates. We have created special lists for neighborhoods and will continue to refine this. By creating lists that target certain projects we are able to increase communication and transparency about projects that might have high sensitivity in the community - such as the Cascade Striping, Parkade Repaving and the Marinda Heights proposed development.

Before March of 2020 we were sending Town Manager newsletters sporadically (monthly if possible), with a goal of increasing communication but the pandemic moved that from a goal to a necessity, overnight. Since March of 2020, we have sent a newsletter out weekly. There has been a huge shift in how we communicate internally, asking for information, sharing what is happening, thinking about what the public might like to know more about so they feel like they are part of a steady stream of information that is presented in an easy to understand format. We are a community of active participants and this shift honors our community.

We have always had a fairly high open rate - 45 to 55% and sometimes as high as 70% on special updates - because we have maintained an engaged audience and updated list. As we have added more subscribers (1034 since Jan 2020) we have maintained a high open rate because our efforts to increase engagement have been targeted to our audience. There is a subscribe button in each newsletter, every social media post has a quick link for subscribing and we add 10-15 new subscribers per post or newsletter release.

**Total Number of Constant Contact Subscribers:** 4004\*

**Lists:** (a sample of our lists, we have a total of 20 lists)

Town Newsletter: 1,417

Agenda List: 714

Public Works Updates: 412

Building and Planning Updates: 217

Cascade Neighborhood: 543

Age Friendly Fairfax: 239

Recreation: 348

\*Subscribers are only counted once even if they have subscribed to more than one list.

## **2020**

New Contacts 587

Open Rate 44%

## **2021**

New Contacts 447

59% Open Rate (Industry Average is 40%)

## **Social Media**

Our social media presence has increased over the years with a collaborative effort between staff, council members and volunteers. We post weekly across all platforms when we publish the newsletter. We also post about upcoming events including Recreation and Age Friendly events. Every Town Council meeting has a special post with links as a reminder to participate. When emergency events like the Sir Francis Drake sinkhole happen, we post updates and alerts.

### **Facebook Accounts**

- Town of Fairfax (697 Followers)
- Fairfax Volunteers (578 Followers)
- Fairfax Recreation (632 Followers)

### **Instagram**

Started: 4/27/21

Followers: 483

**Includes Linktree:** for easy link clicks from Instagram since the platform does not allow for live links in posts. Current links to: Town Newsletter, Town Meetings, Housing Element Updates, Subscribe, Fairfax Recreation Newsletter, Community Classes & Events

### **Nextdoor**

6, 677 Members

3,173 Claimed Households

16 Neighborhoods

**Mailers/Printed Material**

We have increased our communication through mailings in addition to email and social media. In the spring of 2020 we sent a postcard to encourage more residents to sign up for email communication. We did not know at the time that the pandemic was coming but the mailing ended up going out in March of 2020 which was good timing for expanding out audience. We have since created mailers to increase engagement in the Housing Element process and a flyer to educate the community and our visitors about the sensitivity of the Elliot Nature Preserve. We published a bi-annual Recreation catalog and created an Age Friendly Annual Report in March of 2021.

**Town-wide Mailing List: 2820**  
Current Resident list

**Additional Recreation List: 150**  
Some in other areas such as San Anselmo and San Geronimo Valley

**Website**

This is a primary responsibility for Communications. We update the home page, calendar, meetings (agendas, minutes, videos) as well as support each department for updates/posting information as needed. When we launched the website in late 2018, we had less than 2,000 users as we transitioned from the old site. By the middle of 2020 we had over 8,000 users. We can presume that during the height of the pandemic we had a spike in users since the website was a prime source of essential information. We are not listing all the metrics for the website at this time but can present that to the Council at a future date if requested.

**Average Monthly Users listed by year:**  
**2019:** 4,600  
**2020:** 8,800  
**2021:** 7,500

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None identified

**ATTACHMENTS**

None