

City of Nanaimo 2023 Communications and Engagement Plan

We respectfully acknowledge that the city boundary lies within the Traditional Territory of Snuneymuxw First Nation.



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THE PLAN

The City of Nanaimo 2023 Communications and Engagement Plan outlines how the City will endeavour to keep members of the community informed of the important issues we all face, empower citizens to get involved in what matters most to them and better understand the decisions Council makes on our behalf.

This plan builds on the structures and practices established in the 2013 City of Nanaimo Communications Plan, whose goals have largely been achieved.

The 2023 Communications and Engagement Plan supports and addresses City Council's strategic framework and the goals, policies, and values of City Plan: Nanaimo Relmagined.

REFLECTING NANAIMO'S GOALS AND VALUES

The 2023 Communications and Engagement Plan aims to enhance public trust in the City's elected leaders and staff. Guided by Council's strategic priorities and City Plan: Nanaimo ReImagined, this plan strives to improve the way we share information internally and with the public and stakeholders.

COMMUNICATIONS PRINCIPLES

Transparency, accountability, and accessibility

With transparency, accountability, and accessibility as our guiding principles, the 2023 Communications and Engagement Plan will plan, implement, and evaluate our work with the needs and views of the public at the centre of everything we do.

As a municipal government, we understand the importance of engaging with our community and stakeholders to ensure we are responsive to their needs and concerns.

Our commitment to communication is based on the principles of transparency, accountability, and accessibility, and is an essential part of our efforts to build trust and confidence in our government.

We recognize that effective communication is essential to building a strong and vibrant community, and we are committed to this in all aspects of our work.

CITY PLAN GOALS

City Plan policy areas reflect Nanaimo's values, thanks to the many people who shared their ideas and reactions online, in person, by mail and on the phone.

5 CITY GOALS



WHAT YOU SAID

The 2023 Communications and Engagement Plan aims to enhance public trust in the City's elected leaders and staff. Guided by Council's strategic priorities and City Plan: Nanaimo ReImagined, this plan strives to improve the way we share information internally and with the public and stakeholders.

In May 2023, a survey was conducted on what residents think about City communications and ways we can better reach them. The survey was promoted online through the City's social media channels, in the weekly subscription eNewsletter (My Nanaimo This Week) and on the City website. A news release was issued regarding the survey and was picked up by the Nanaimo News Bulletin. Information about the survey was also included in the annual printed newsletter, City Updates, which was mailed with property tax notices in May.

The survey could be filled out online or residents could pick up a paper copy at a City facility or request one by calling the communications department. See Appendix B for survey responses (has been edited for protection of respondent's privacy).

Top 3 channels to get City information:

- 1. Nanaimo News Now
- 2. City social media channels
- 3. City website (www.nanaimo.ca)

City social channel most followed and most preferred social channel:

Facebook

Top 3 ways the City can stay better connected with residents:

- 1. Post more up-to-date information on City website
- 2. Email updates
- 3. Mail a City printed newsletter more than once per year

Top 3 channels respondents found most useful:

- 1. City website
- 2. City social media
- 3. Newspaper

Top 3 topics of interests

- 1. Community events
- 2. Project updates
- 3. Breaking news

Preferred frequency of communication from the City

Weekly

Top suggestions for improvements

- Make accessibility a priority
- Post to the Nanaimo subreddit on Reddit
- Not everyone is on social media or online so local news sources are important
- Make the website easier to navigate
- More direct efforts to communicate with residents impacted by projects near their homes

GOMMUNICATIONS GOALS



Goal 1

Reach people where they are with the information they need.



Goal 2

Support Council in achieving City priorities.



Goal 3

Engage with the public to tell the Nanaimo story.

GOAL 1: REACH PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE WITH THE INFORMATION THEY NEED

Our primary channels are mass media outlets, social media, and the City website. Additional targeted communications reach those people who have signed up for alerts on Voyent Alert! or the Nanaimo Recycles app.

STRATEGY

Reach audiences through their preferred channels. Use market research data and citizen survey results to understand how information is accessed and determine best channels for outreach to specific market segments.

ACTIONS

Survey community members through print and digital channels to assess their preferred methods of communications. Analyze results and refocus activities accordingly.

Create channel-specific content for each topic area and market segment.

Deploy staff to disseminate information directly in face-to-face settings, and among peers,
friends, and other social contacts.

 STRATEGY Improve access to information by reducing barriers. Commit to using plain language in public materials and adopting accessive practices for written materials to ensure City communications encours engagement and participation. Expand capacity to support communication of operational information through existing and emerging tools and channels. Improve website accessibility by improving our website's navigation design, and applying best practices such as replacing PDF document web content and ensuring images have alt text. 	ion and
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ACTIONS

Educate the internal Website Users Group and provide training to improve accessibility of information for persons with disabilities and for all language levels.

Update the internal style guide to standardize gender inclusivity and gender neutrality in municipal communications.

GOAL 2: SUPPORT COUNCIL IN ACHIEVING CITY PRIORITIES

Communications resources are primarily focussed on daily operations and service delivery. To achieve Council's objectives, new approaches are required so that elected leaders have the information they need to make the best decisions possible, and to advocate with other levels of government.

STRATEGY	Assist Council in accessing the full range of information necessary for effective decision-making and awareness of current and emerging issues.				
ACTION					
Enhance the us awareness of th	e of internal communications channels to better inform Council and increase eir needs.				
STRATEGY	Maintain and enhance operational communications tools in support of ongoing city functions.				
ACTION					
	pacity to deliver more and better public engagement and consultation nd existing tools and approaches.				
STRATEGY	Provide advice and support to Council to deliver strategic priorities.				
ACTION					
-	upport and advise Council on advocacy efforts and to develop and deliver ess and information campaigns on Council priorities.				
STRATEGY	Support the implementation of City Plan: Nanaimo Relmagined and the accompanying actions outlined in the Integrated Action Plan.				
ACTION					
Allocate staff ar	Allocate staff and financial resources to support the delivery of actions related to City				

Allocate staff and financial resources to support the delivery of actions related to City communications and engagement. (Appendix A)

GOAL 3: ENGAGE WITH THE PUBLIC TO TELL THE NANAIMO STORY

On a day-to-day basis, the City's brand is created through interactions, often through responses to inquiries and complaints. How the City listens and responds defines our reputation with the people we serve. Building confidence in the City's capacity to deliver projects, services and programs relies on what we say and do every day.

There is room for improvement in the ways the City reaches out to the public, and how we react to questions and criticism. Setting and achieving performance standards, collecting and analyzing information and data about what we hear, and reporting regularly on our progress are first steps toward building a strong, positive story about our city.

Current Approach

City spokespersons are subject-matter experts, the Mayor, and staff trained in media relations or related fields. This is an appropriate practice to maintain transparency, provide clear and consistent information for official announcements and media commentary.

Customer service standards, including response to complaints, calls for service and other inquiries, vary across departments.

STRATEGY

Develop corporate standards and practices for public inquiries and complaints; report performance through business plans and the annual financial report and implement practices to improve responsiveness.

ACTIONS

Coordinate and analyze public input from all sources to improve quality and consistency of responses and maximize operational effectiveness.

Survey City departments to determine how information is received and disseminated.

Research software tools or other approaches, such as 311 service.



OPPORTUNITY

The talents, voices and vibrancy of our community present an opportunity to engage the public directly on issues that matter most to people and share their voices and stories. By amplifying voices that are not often heard, we can increase engagement with our communications tools, tell the full story and be heard.

> Invite community groups and members to share their stories on City communications channels and materials to build the authentic story about our city today, its challenges and hopes for the future.

STRATEGY Knowing what information to share, how, with whom and when, is critical to good communications. The more we understand what information people need and how they prefer to engage with the city, the better we can focus our attention on doing what works best.

ACTIONS

Provide staff training and support for engagement software.

Undertake continuous improvement in engagement practices.

Expand engagement activities to include participation in communications products by community groups and individuals.

OPPORTUNITY

Use Tourism Nanaimo's research into how Nanaimo is viewed at home and by others to guide us in articulating our unique story. At this moment the City has an opportunity to set out a clear visual identity that expresses what is important to know about today's Nanaimo. With a consistent look and feel that aligns with Tourism Nanaimo and Nanaimo Prosperity, the City can compete more effectively in recruiting staff, attracting investment, and achieving its goals.

Create and implement new graphic standards and apply to brand assets in alignment with the new Tourism Nanaimo destination brand campaign. The goal is to clearly show what City of Nanaimo values and what we aspire to become.

ACTIONS

STRATEGY

Create a coordinating visual brand and general narrative for Nanaimo in partnership with Tourism Nanaimo and the Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation.



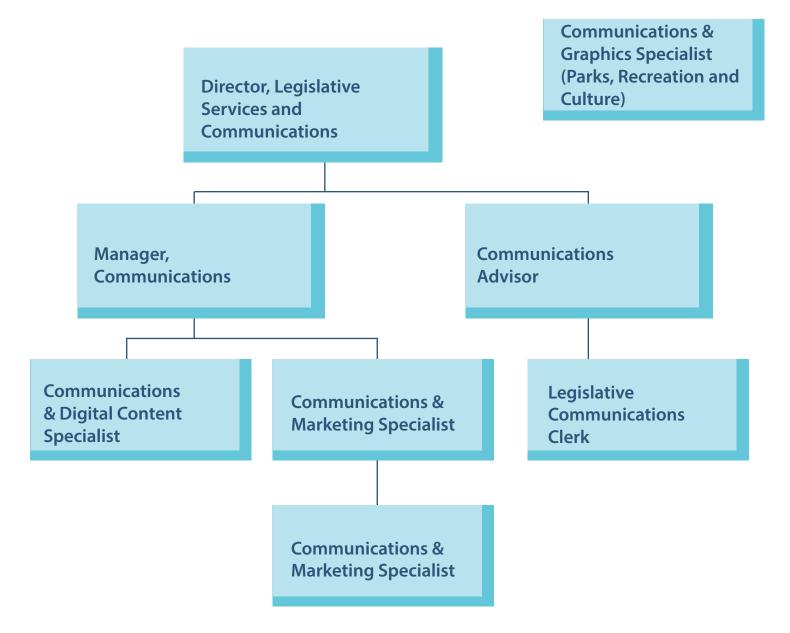
COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The City manages its corporate communications function by placing responsibility for implementing and budgeting communications activities directly within each department. This approach encourages accountability by ensuring that the people who make decisions are the same ones speaking to media, Council, and the public.

Communications staff assist in developing strategies, disseminating information through official channels, and providing consistent standards for language and design.





The 2023 Communications and Engagement Plan is intended to reflect the priorities and values of the City of Nanaimo as expressed by Council and in alignment with the goals and policies of City Plan: Nanaimo Relmagined.

Over time, priorities and values may change with the election of new Councils or as plans change to adapt to new opportunities and challenges.

The effectiveness of this plan will be evaluated annually to ensure that it meets the needs of the community and may be adjusted accordingly.



APPENDIX A

COMMUNICATIONS ACTIONS FROM THE INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

COMMUNICATIONS ACTIONS FROM INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

A Green Nanaimo

IAP Ref.	Priority Action #	Programs & Projects	Comms Lead	Comms Support
C1.5.11	24	Identify and communicate infrastructure capacity deficiencies impacting existing and future growth.		X
C1.6.1	32	Work with organizations such as the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative and Carbon Disclosure Project to promote circular economy activities related to reuse, repair, shared and recycled content.		Х
C1.6.3	33	Continue Zero Waste education campaigns such as Waste Reduction Week, Single-Use Item Reduction, and Green Giving.		Х
C1.6.8	34	Expand City services such as Reuse Rendezvous and Trunk Sale to promote Zero Waste.		Х
C1.1.5		Support energy efficiency and low carbon rebate and education programs for existing residential buildings such as the Heat Pump Rebate Program.		Х
C1.1.13		Implement a Climate Action Communications Plan, including hosting an annual sustainability event to raise awareness on sustainability issues and inspire residents to reflect on them and take actions.		Х
C1.2.1		Continue to use social media, online platforms, and other tools such as the Emergency Call Alert System – called Voyant Alert, to share seasonal hazard information related to fire, heat waves, flooding, wind, storm, or other seasonal events.	х	
C1.2.2		In partnership with community partners, carry out education and outreach activities to help residents learn about projected local climate impacts and climate adaptation measures (e.g. Cool It! Climate Leadership Training Program for schools, Agent of Change climate volunteer program, emergency preparedness, and ongoing community events).		х
C1.2.7		Undertake a community education campaign on FireSmart practices including park use fire safety and awareness, areas of higher potential fire risk, Fire Smart principles in private landscapes (balanced with tree protection and retention), and FireSmart building materials, such as non-flammable roofing, siding, and thermal pane windows.		Х
C1.3.2		Continue to market and promote information about the City's urban forestry resources and the benefits of trees and vegetation, and opportunities to encourage tree planting.		Х
C1.6.4		Explore opportunities to influence and promote zero waste behaviours including communication, engagement, and social marketing in the following subject areas: waste to resources, waste avoidance, reduction and reuse education, and health and well-being benefits.	х	

1.6.13	31	Develop Zero Waste Public events program as part of a waste reduction effort and experiential community education program.		Х
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A Connected Nanaimo

IAP Ref.	Priority Action #	Programs & Projects	Comms Lead	Comms Support
C2.2.5		Continue to support and work with other agencies and organizations on active mobility education and awareness efforts such as GoByBike, Commuter Challenge, and Active School Travel.		X
C2.3.2		Continue to promote and market the recreational trail system through hard copy and online materials, including those at bus stops.		Х
C2.3.3		Continue to educate the public about trail etiquette and expectations among growing user groups.		Х
C2.4.1		Continue to collaborate with partners (i.e., ICBC, RCMP, and School District 68) to promote and educate about road safety in Nanaimo.		Х

A Healthy Nanaimo

IAP Ref.	Priority Action #	Programs & Projects	Comms Lead	Comms Support
C3.6.20	103	Work collaboratively with the Economic Development and Tourism teams to develop and execute a coordinated marketing strategy for community wellbeing services in the city. Consider potential alignment/integration with a cultural services marketing strategy.	X	
C3.3.7		Update the City's website to promote financial assistance programs offered by others for households to make modifications to their home for accessibility (e.g. BC Rebate for Accessible Home Adaptations).		Х
C3.3.8		Research leading practices in communication and outreach of City information that is inter-generationally age friendly.		Х
C3.4.5		Facilitate, market, and promote information and resources to assist the public to grow food on public lands such as through the Partners in Parks Program.		Х
C3.4.11		Develop and maintain communication materials, protocols, and plans for food and water supply preparedness during an emergency.		Х
C3.5.4		Develop functional capability and formalize processes for public alerting via Voyent Alert.	Х	
C3.5.5		Engage with community members to provide education on personal preparedness and neighbourhood resilience.		Х
C3.5.9		Create and implement an emergency communication plan for the public.		Х

C3.6.4	Continue to publish information and facilitates registration, an example being the Activity Guide, that reflects the changing needs and identify, values, practices, and heritage of all residents.	Х	
C3.6.8	Promote Island Health's free and subsidized programs for those with chronic diseases in all Parks, Recreation, Culture & Wellness and Seniors Directories such as Mind in Motion and Heart Health.		Х

An Empowered Nanaimo

IAP Ref.	Priority Action #	Programs & Projects	Comms Lead	Comms Support
C4.1.7	113	Work with Snuneymuxw First Nation to develop content for the City website relating to the nation and land acknowledgement.		x
C4.2.10	117	Revise the internal style guide to standardize gender inclusivity and gender neutrality in municipal communications.	Х	
C4.2.13	119	Work with the Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Inclusiveness and other organizations to identify ways to create a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere in the city, including city owned facilities		X
C4.3.1	120	Continue to explore and implement existing and emerging technologies to improve access to City services online, via phone, and in person for citizens with audio-visual accessibility needs.	Х	
C4.5.13	130	Prepare a communication strategy that raises the awareness of the role culture plays through culture grants in supporting the production and delivery of arts and culture activity.		Х
C4.6.10	141	Using an equity and diversity lens, undertake a review of the City's existing culture and heritage interpretive signs, plaques, brochures, website, and other public promotion and communication sources and implement updates.		Х
C4.3.5		Maintain a public education campaign on the responsibility of property owners on maintaining clear sidewalks for universal access and mobility, including proper placement of waste receptacles and snow clearing of sidewalks.	Х	
C4.3.6		Develop an awareness campaign for local businesses to improve access to washrooms for people with mobility challenges, seniors, and children.		x
C4.4.1		Support and enhance Council-related information for the public by continuing to produce Council and Committee meeting summaries, a weekly e-newsletter (My Nanaimo This Week), and other media.	Х	
C4.4.2		Maintain and increase the use of Bang the Table as a digital engagement platform.	Х	

C4.4.3	Conduct a citizen satisfaction survey every 4 years to help each Council evaluate their progress.	Х	
C4.4.4	Utilize the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) when preparing community engagement scope and purpose.	Х	
C4.4.5	Update the City's Corporate Communications Plan to reflect existing and emerging communication trends.	Х	
C4.4.6	Implement the recommendations from the Engagement Task Force Report (2019).	Х	
C4.6.11	Implement communications projects that increase the use of innovative technology to promote and share Nanaimo's heritage, including through social media, history-based blog sites, and cell phone apps.		Х
C4.8.4	Partner with cultural organizations and other government agencies to host multi-cultural events and gatherings such as the Junior All Native Tournament (JANT).		Х
C4.8.5	Collaborate across departments for placemaking and events in streets and public places such as Parking Day, the Night Market, and the Play on Ball Hockey Tournament.		Х
C4.9.6	Promote educational programs with potential partners interested in raising the awareness of the natural and cultural features of parks and natural assets, such as monitoring and education of wildflowers and the Western Painted Turtle in partnership with the Province and the Nanaimo and Area Land Trust.		Х
C4.9.9	Continue to educate and advocate for behavioral change amongst dog owners using the park systems.		Х

A Prosperous Nanaimo

IAP Ref.	Priority Action #	Programs & Projects	Comms Lead	Comms Support
C5.1.10	177	Advocate for new and expanded health care services and an improved facility at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital that meet the service standards of similar communities in the province.		Х
C5.3.10	182	Explore the use of alternative datasets to provide new insights and make better decisions.		Х
C5.5.4	186	Support businesses involved in the production, marketing, and/or delivery of artistic or cultural products such as art, music, theatre, festivals, and special events.		Х
C5.3.4		Maintain and update Economic Development website content.		Х

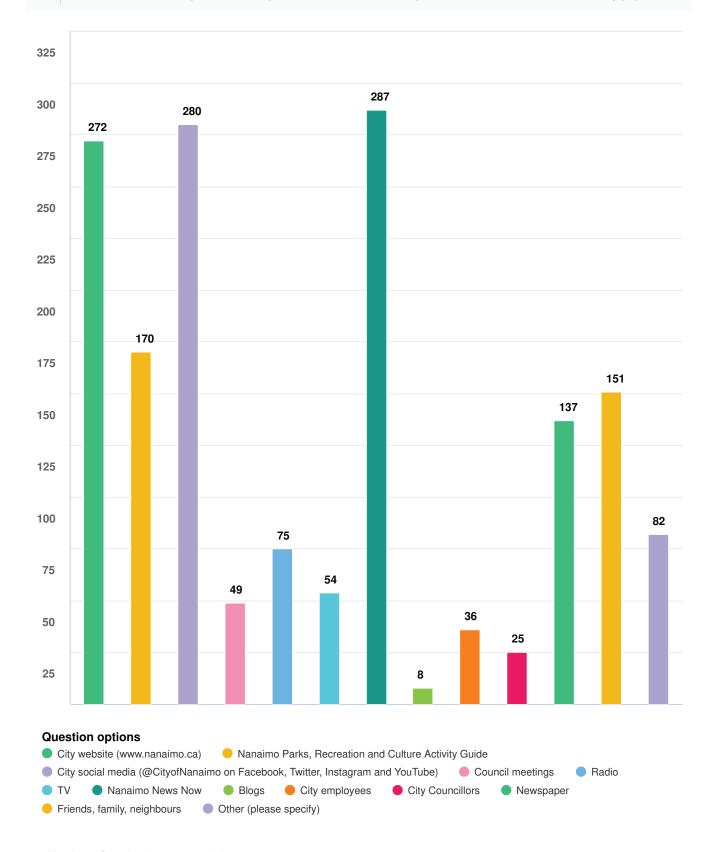
C5.4.8		Develop an Intelligent Community Plan and Broadband Strategy that identifies how the community will use digital infrastructure, information, and communications technologies.		Х
C5.5.6	187	Create a coordinating visual brand and general narrative for Nanaimo in partnership with Tourism Nanaimo and the Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation.	X	
C5.5.7		Prepare a communications strategy with Tourism Nanaimo, Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation, and the City of Nanaimo, with visual brand campaigns and social media channels.	X	
C5.6.1		Continue to market Nanaimo as a destination for Meetings and Events using a 'Team Nanaimo' approach, following the Memorandum of Understanding between the Nanaimo Hospitality Association, Tourism Nanaimo, and the Vancouver Island Conference Centre.		Х
C5.6.2		Support the Downtown Nanaimo Business Association and the Old City Quarter Business Improvement Association by programming events and marketing.		Х
C5.6.3		Promote events and offer brochures promoting tourism such as Downtown Heritage Walk and the Explore Parks.		Х
C5.6.4		Administer the Downtown Event Grant to promote arts, culture, and food that animates downtown foot traffic and pedestrian ambiance such as Downtown Night Market, Play On, and Jazz Festival.		Х

Neighbourhood Planning

IAP	Ref.	Programs & Projects	Comms Lead	Comms Support
D4	4.5	Work with neighbourhood associations to promote events, festivals, and other activities in the neighbourhood.		Х

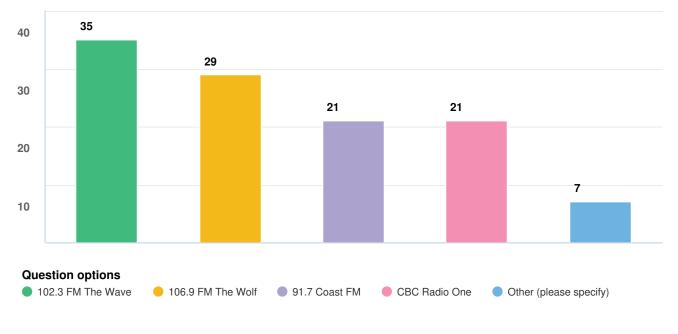
APPENDIX B

2023 CITY COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY -SURVEY RESPONSES



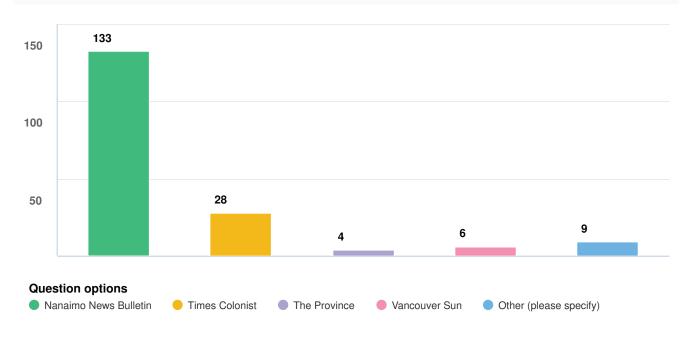
Q1 What sources do you use to get information on City business? (Check all that apply)

Q4 What radio station do you listen to in order to stay up to date with City of Nanaimo news? (Check all that apply)



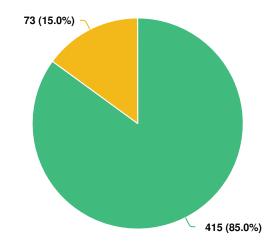
Optional question (71 response(s), 421 skipped) Question type: Checkbox Question

Q5 What newspaper do you read to stay up to date with City of Nanaimo news? (Check all that apply)



Optional question (136 response(s), 356 skipped) Question type: Checkbox Question

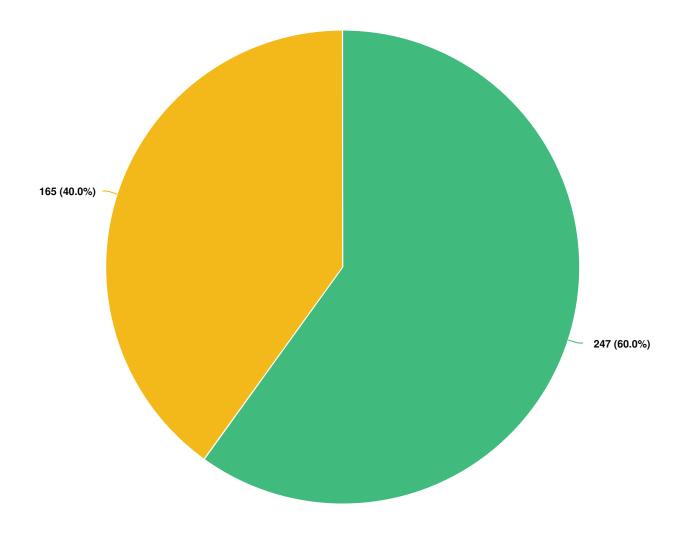
Q6 Are you on social media?



Question options

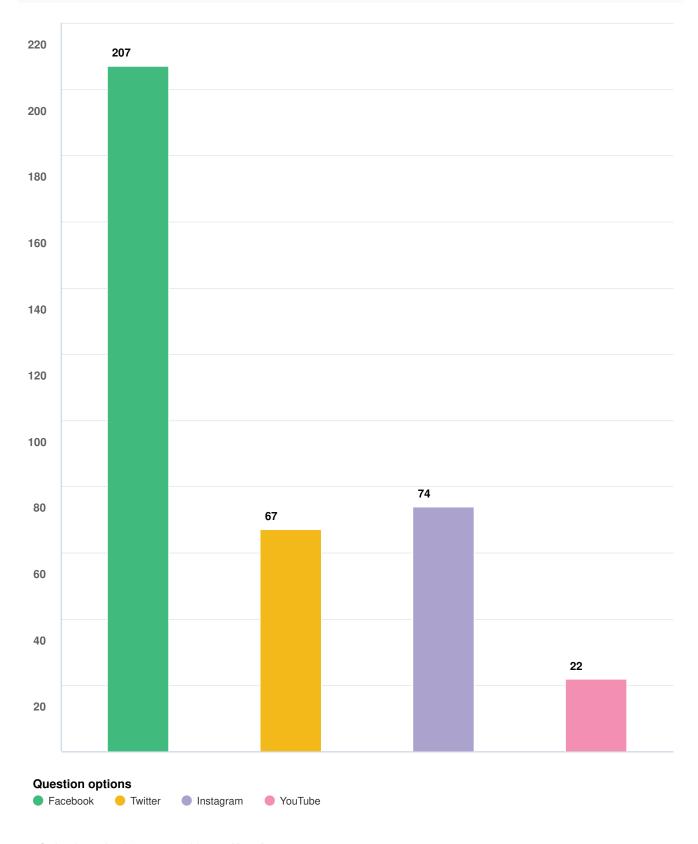
🔵 Yes 🛛 😑 No

Optional question (488 response(s), 4 skipped) Question type: Radio Button Question Q7 Do you follow the City on social media (@cityofnanaimo on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube)?



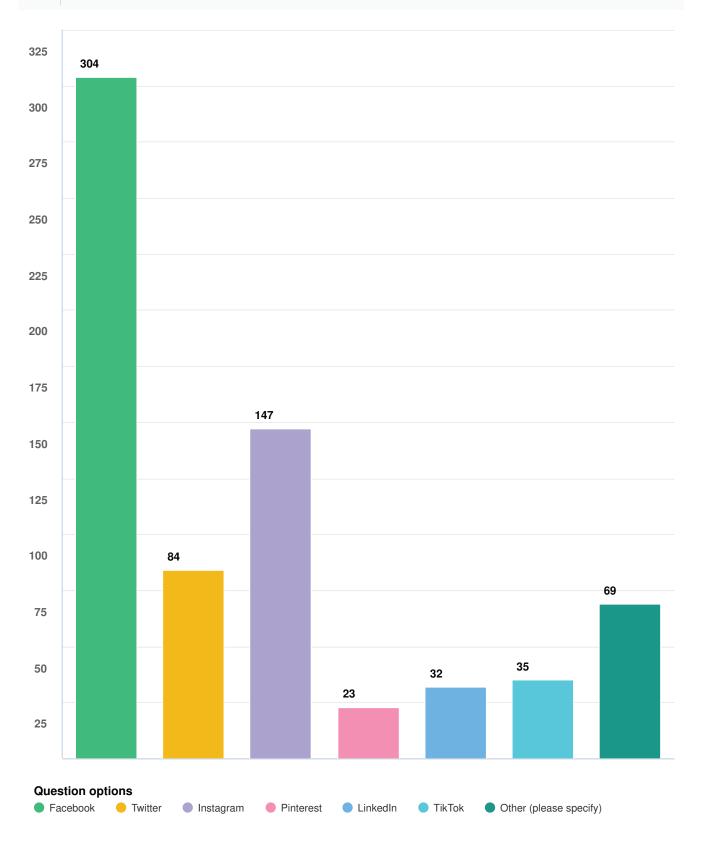


Optional question (412 response(s), 80 skipped) Question type: Radio Button Question



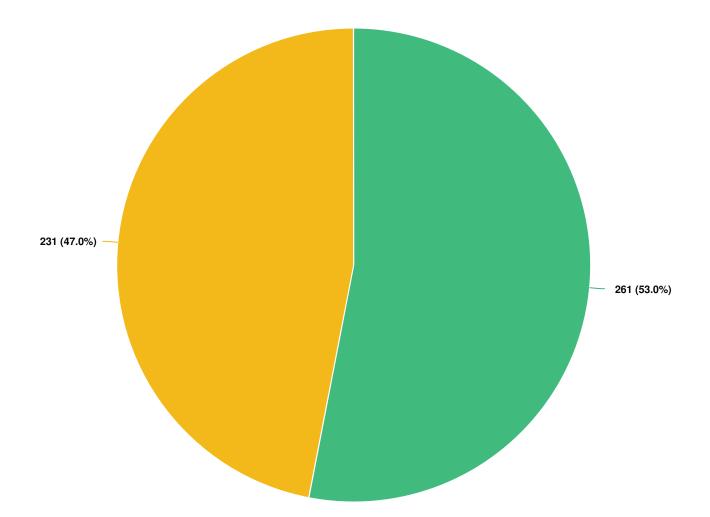
Q8 What channels do you use to follow the City? (Check all that apply)

Optional question (242 response(s), 250 skipped) Question type: Checkbox Question



Q10 What is/are your preferred social channel(s)? (Check all that apply)

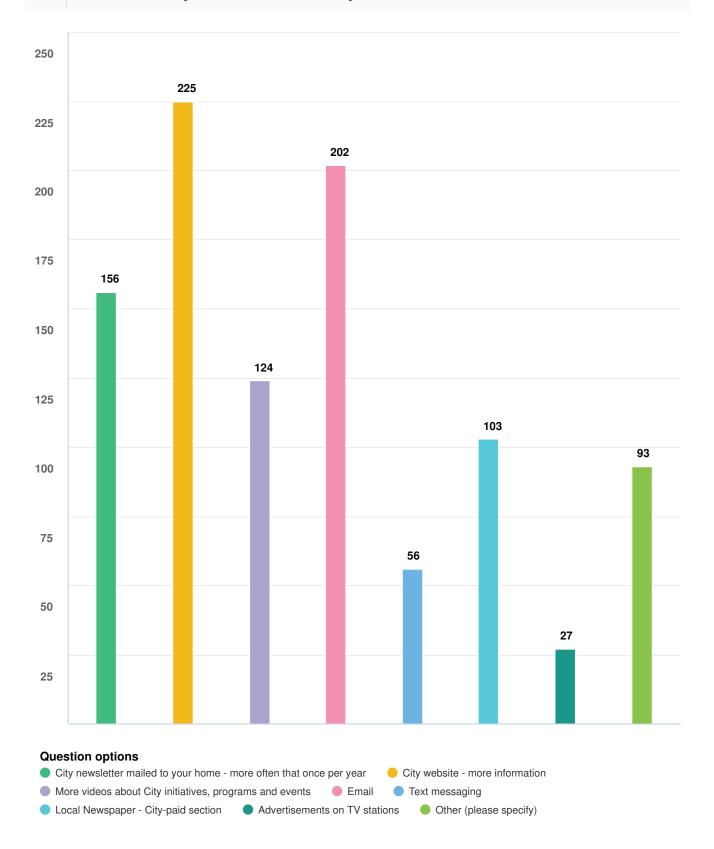
Optional question (407 response(s), 85 skipped) Question type: Checkbox Question

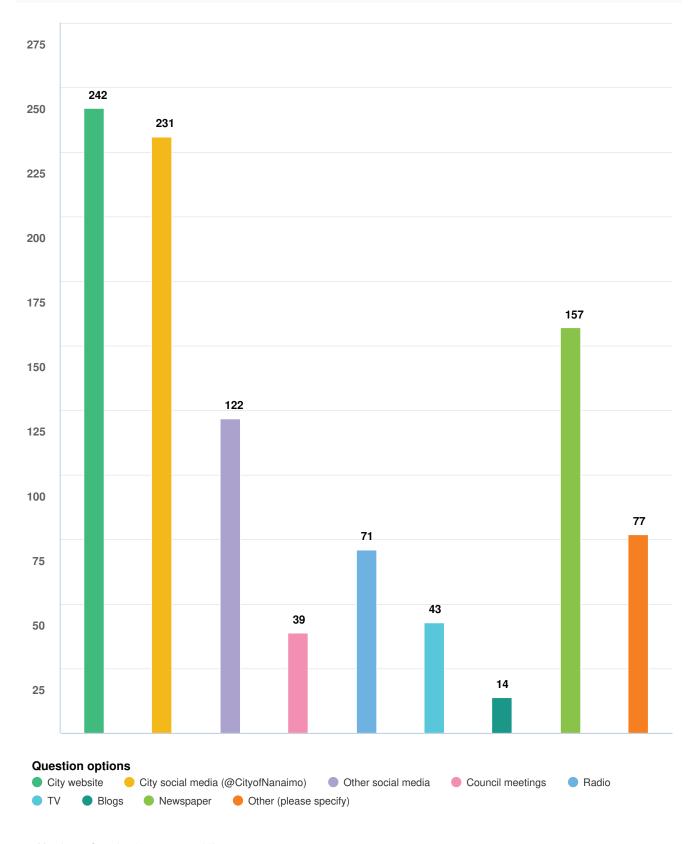


Question optionsYesNo (please specify)

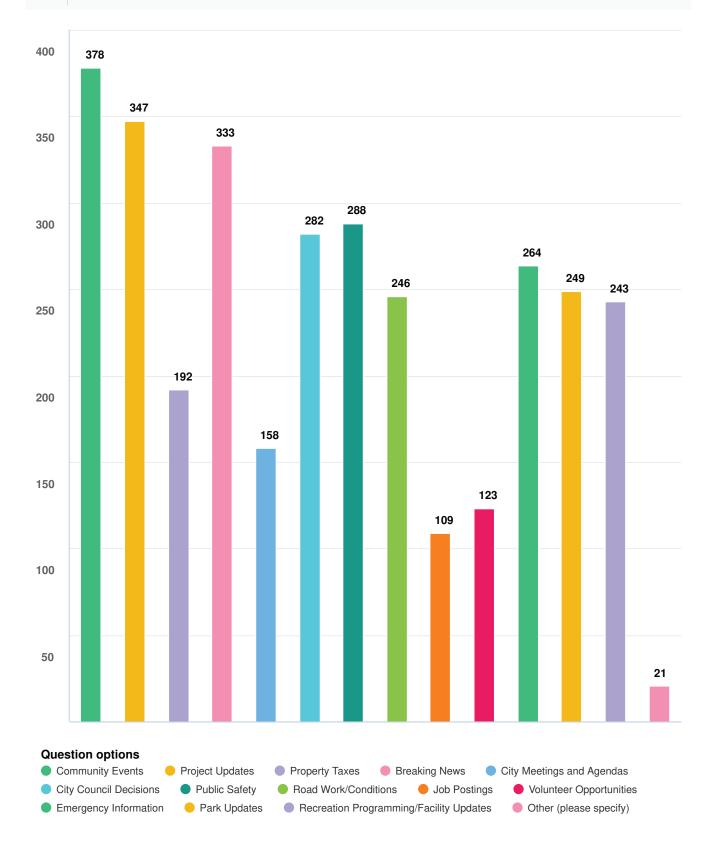
Mandatory Question (492 response(s)) Question type: Radio Button Question

Q12 How can we stay better connected with you?



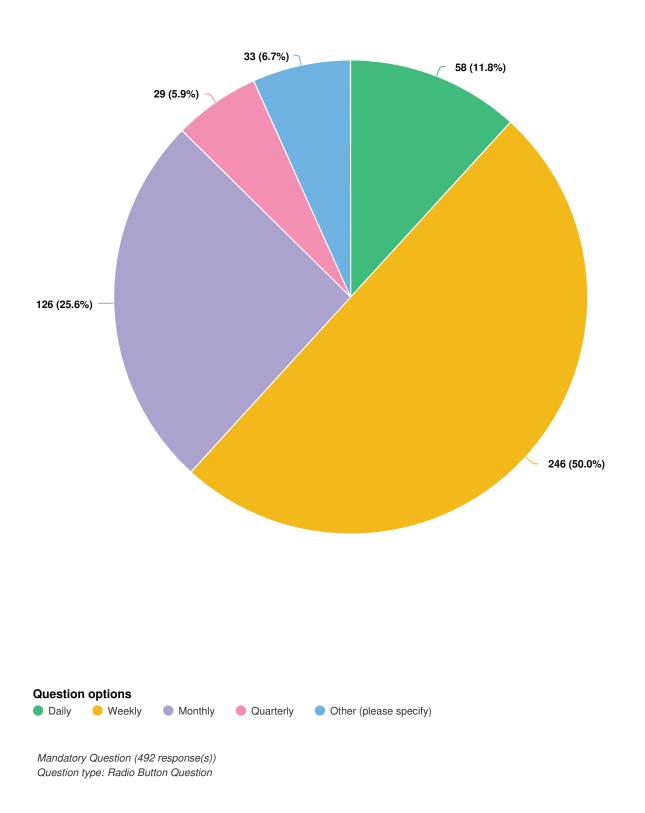


Q13 What method of communication do you find most useful? (Check all that apply)

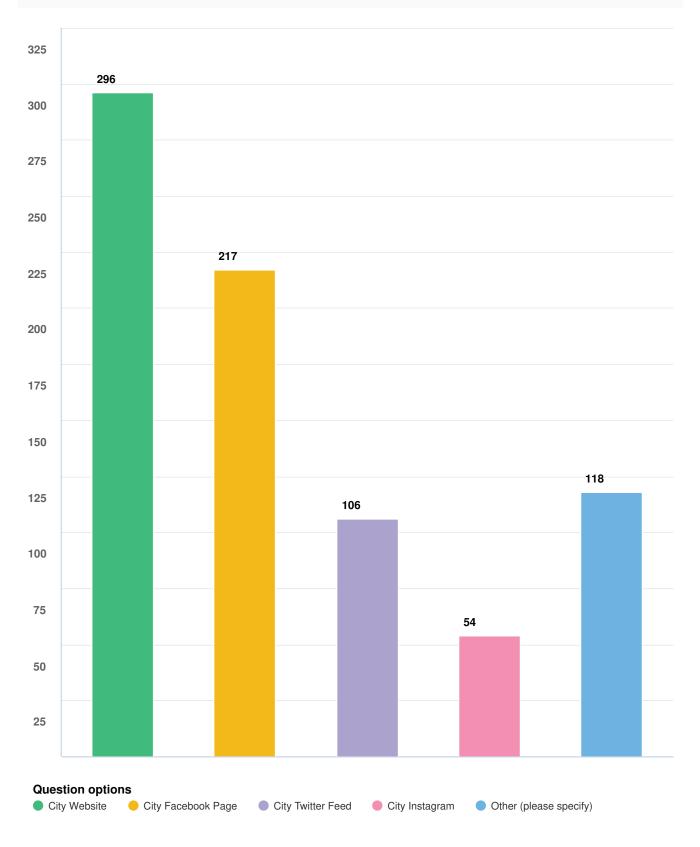


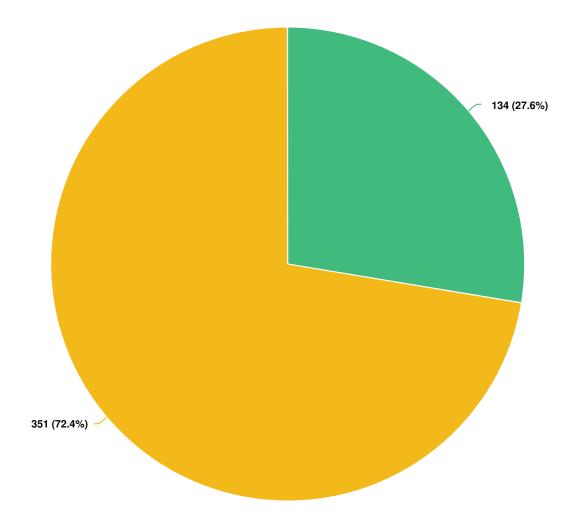
Q14 What types of information are you most interested in?

Q15 How often would you like to hear from us?



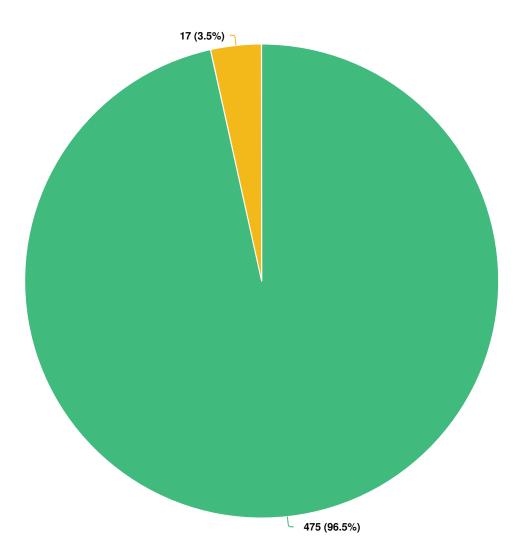
Q16 In the event of urgent news, where would you go to receive more details? (Check all that apply)





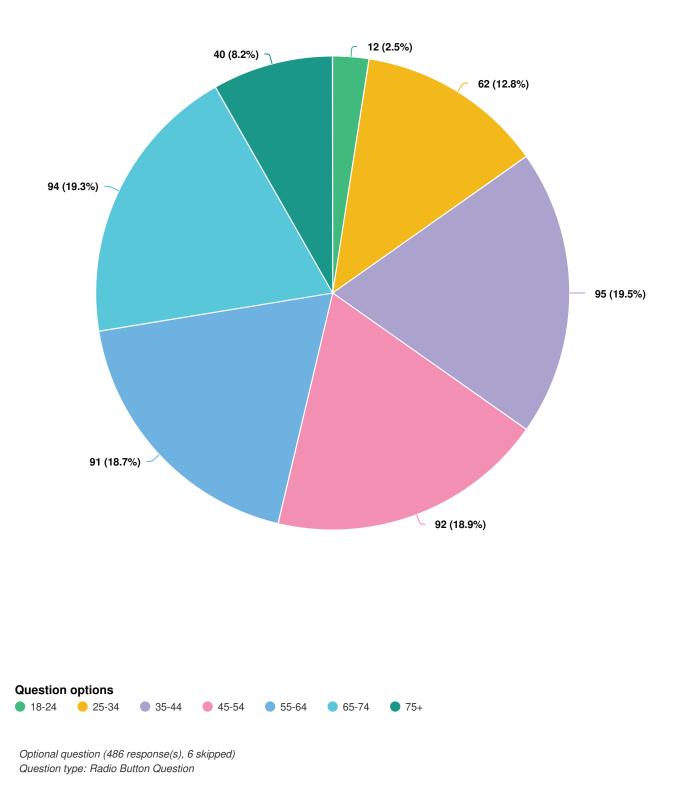


Optional question (485 response(s), 7 skipped) Question type: Radio Button Question





Mandatory Question (492 response(s)) Question type: Radio Button Question



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