



Express Communications Assessment Report

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Submitted by Ryder Todd Smith

Jon Barilone

Bria Balliet

Karen Villaseñor



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Executive Summary

Summarized Observations

- No single person owns communications on behalf of the City and there is (currently) no central plan, calendar or measurement process to determine if communications are achieving success.
- The City does not rely on official policies or guidelines related to communications.
- Local/regional media outlets generally do not cover the City or its news unless a crime has taken place.
- Website and social media metrics are rarely reviewed to better understand the impact of these channels and their role in overall City communications.
- A large cohort of the population speaks Spanish as their primary language. The City does not currently have a clear guideline on when external communications need to be translated into Spanish.
- The City has experimented with several social media platforms and currently has a reasonable toehold into the social media space, but overall execution lacks strategy and consistency.
- There is an opportunity to vastly improve direct communications with residents via digital platforms, particularly email and SMS (text messages). This includes emergency alerts, which are primarily handled by the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department.
- The City brand is inconsistent – there is no single brand/style guide in place and there is both an official city motto, (“Our Youth, Our Future”) and an unofficial one (“Little City, Big Heart”).

Summarized Recommendations

1 - Integrate a Communications Strategy

The City of Hawaiian Gardens would benefit from creating an official communications strategy to guide the City's communications efforts. A communications strategy can help define communication plans and maintain consistent communications practices across departments. Integrating a strategy internally will facilitate communications efforts with the Hawaiian Gardens community.

2 - Adopt a Social Media Policy

City staff manages multiple social media accounts, but the City of Hawaiian Gardens does not have an official Social Media Policy in place yet. A social media policy should be established to solidify the City's guidelines for social media use and provide potential legal protections.

3 - Establish a Social Media Strategy

As the City's social media audience grows, it is important to integrate an official social media strategy to ensure communications efforts via social media sites are effective and reflective of the City's efforts across departments.

4 - Leverage Additional Communications Platforms

There are a few additional platforms the City should consider leveraging and/or implementing for its communications efforts. These platforms include Nextdoor (the City has an Agency Page but it is not being used) and City eNotifications (the new Vision website will have this feature built in).

5 – Regularly Analyze Available Metrics

The City of Hawaiian Gardens should regularly analyze and report on available website and social media data. By analyzing the City’s website and social media data on a consistent basis, City staff can gather insights that can be used to improve the City’s communications efforts. This analysis can also help drive a cultural change in terms of all departments in the City recognizing the priority status deserved by communications. Measuring this data subtly tells staff that communications matter.

6 - Address Spanish Language Goals

The data suggests a large contingent of the Hawaiian Gardens population speaks Spanish primarily, but there is no guideline in place to ensure important communications are being released in languages other than English. To ensure engagement across the City’s population, a policy decision needs to be made on the degree to which engagement with the Spanish-speaking population is a priority.

About the City of Hawaiian Gardens

Incorporated on April 9, 1964, the City of Hawaiian Gardens is a community of approximately 15,000 residents. The smallest city in Southern California at just under one square mile, Hawaiian Gardens sits 20 miles south of Downtown Los Angeles on the border of Orange County and Los Angeles County. The City is a full-service, general law city, providing police and fire services as well as street maintenance and repair, building and engineering, planning, and parks and recreational activities. The City is governed by a five-member City Council, which appoints the City Manager who oversees day-to-day operations, services, and functions of the City in accordance with policies established by the City Council.

According to the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2017 Profile of the City of Hawaiian Gardens, the City’s racial makeup is:

- Hispanic: 77.9%
- Non-Hispanic White: 5.9%
- Non-Hispanic Asian: 11.3%
- Non-Hispanic Black: 3.2%
- Non-Hispanic American Indian: 0.3%
- All other Non-Hispanic: 1.3 %

Per the 2017 SCAG Profile¹, the City's median age is 30.4 years, significantly younger than the median age of 36.4 years for all of Los Angeles County. The 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Age and Sex² report indicates that the City population is fairly evenly distributed among age ranges, with the largest population being in the 20 to 29 years range (16.6%) and the next largest being the 30 to 39 years range (15.9%). There is also a significant youth population in the City, with 28.9% of the population being under the age of 18. Of those, 82% are under 15 years old.

According to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Language Spoken at Home Report³, nearly 78% of the Hawaiian Gardens population speaks a language other than English, with 22.3% of the population speaking only English. Of those who speak a language other than English, 65.5% speak Spanish, 10.8% speak Asian and Pacific Island Languages, 0.9% speak other Indo-European languages, and 0.4% speak other languages. Of the residents who speak a language other than English, it's estimated that 52.9% speak English less than "very well."

The 2017 SCAG Profile reports that the median household income in the City is \$42,758, compared to \$57,864 for Los Angeles County. For 2015, the average salary per job in the City was \$33,807, compared to \$56,700 for Los Angeles County.

The same SCAG report also notes that, of the 3,712 total housing units in the City, 3,647 are occupied as of 2016, with a 44.9% homeownership rate. The median existing home sales price is \$320,000. In comparison, Los Angeles County has a 54.3% homeownership rate and a median existing home sales price of \$520,000. The average travel time to work for City residents is 29 minutes, indicating that a large amount of the population works outside of City limits.

In summary, the Hawaiian Gardens population is younger and less affluent than average for Los Angeles County, and has a much smaller Non-Hispanic White population (5.9% vs. 26.3%) and a much larger Hispanic population (77.9% vs. 48.7%) than the rest of the County.

It is also worth noting the Hawaiian Gardens has the unique situation of being home to The Gardens Casino, a table games casino that opened in 1997. The casino is a significant source of revenue for the city, bringing in \$11 to \$13 million in gaming license fees every year and making up 73% of the city's total revenue⁴. Per City staff, it is believed that most visitors to the casino are not residents of Hawaiian Gardens.

¹ <https://www.scag.ca.gov/Documents/HawaiianGardens.pdf>

² <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml>

³ <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml>

⁴ Per "City Profile" webpage at <http://hgcity.org/hg/?p=121>

The Importance of Communications

As local government is the institution of government that is closest to the people, it is often the only point of civic engagement for constituents in a given year. It is also, on average, the most trusted form of government in America. Residents are able to interact directly with elected leaders and City staff in their daily lives; leveraging that interaction to engage residents can ultimately create a stronger community.

A strong communications strategy means the government can inform residents of upcoming initiatives, alert constituents to community meetings, and organize community members in case of an emergency. To see the most benefit from their communication efforts, cities must build trust with residents and set their expectations through regular, proactive communications efforts.

The City of Hawaiian Gardens has the opportunity to expand their current communications efforts to further engage the community. Residents and businesses alike would benefit from increased and strategic communications efforts across all departments. This report identifies current communication methods, notes where the City has seen success, and suggests areas of opportunity to help the City make the most out of its communication efforts.

Engagement Approach

Tripepi Smith was engaged to review and research the City's existing communication platforms. The goal of the City of Hawaiian Gardens Express Communications Assessment is to consider the most optimal methods of engagement and communication for the City's needs before committing to a particular communications strategy.

Tripepi Smith started the engagement by leading an onsite meeting with City Staff to discuss a variety of factors important to the City's communication efforts—including audiences, platforms, brand, etc.—then reviewed a variety of internal and external communications platforms available to the City. Additional phone calls and follow-up emails with City staff were used to round out data and verify key information.

Tripepi Smith has documented existing platforms, identified opportunities for improvement in City communications, and surfaced best practices that the City can integrate effectively into existing processes.

A Changing Communications Landscape

With a growing number of communications channels available, engaging audiences is becoming more complex. Audiences cannot be reached entirely through a single channel. From print newspapers to online news websites to social media platforms, people use a variety

of digital and traditional channels to consume information. With a population that spans all age groups and a huge portion of the population being bilingual or non-English speaking, the City needs to consider using a variety of communications channels and methods to disseminate City information so that it is easily accessible to all.

Additionally, there is opportunity to drive The Gardens Casino visitors to local establishments (restaurants, hotels, etc.), and a strong understanding of social media and advertising platforms can help the City leverage that largely untapped population.

Hawaiian Gardens by the Numbers

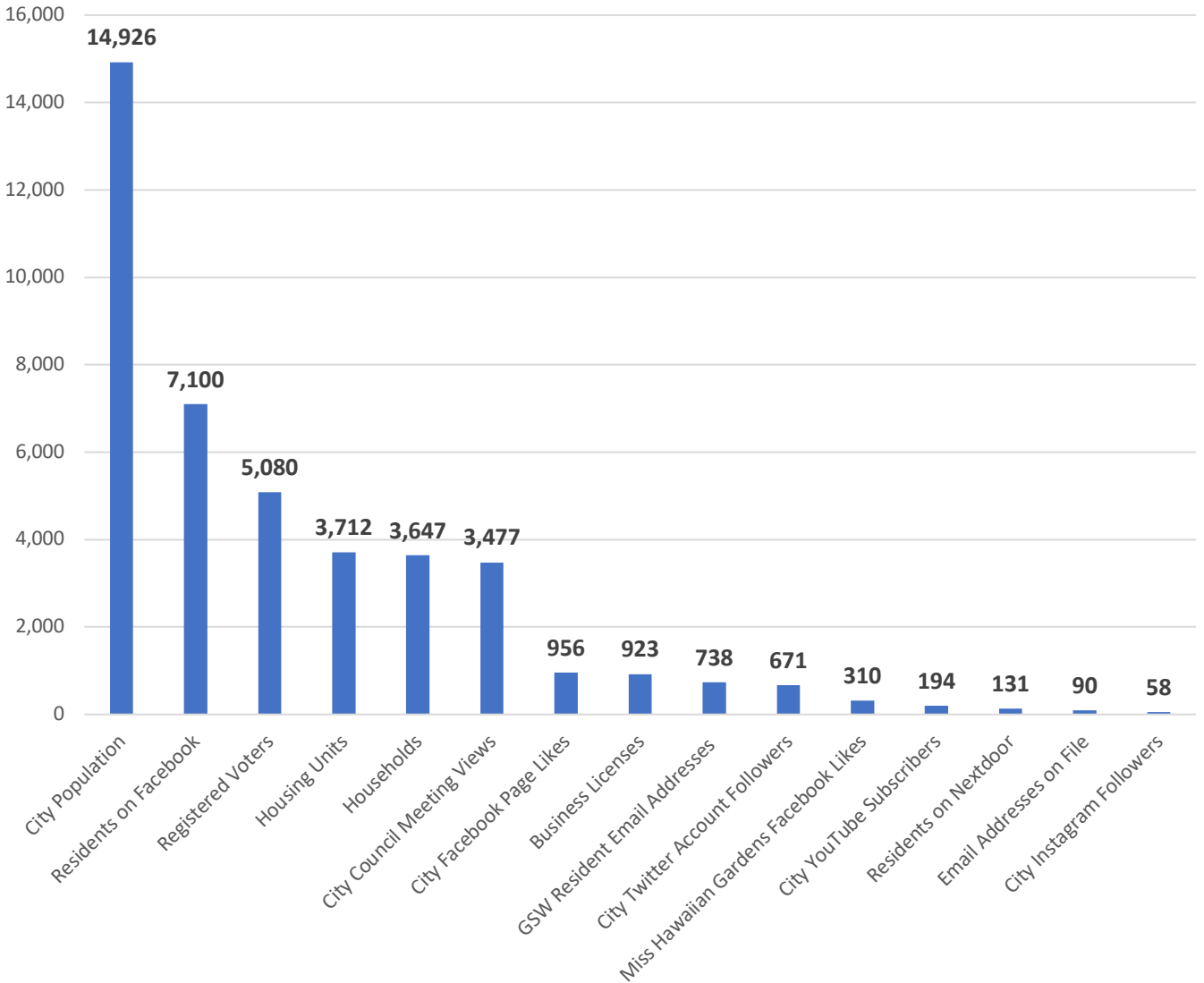
The City uses a variety of tools and methods to communicate, each means providing an opportunity to reach its audiences in a different way. An effective communications effort will involve leveraging multiple platforms to reach as many audience members as possible. Typical platforms may include websites, social media and printed collateral.

It is imperative to understand the City’s demographics in order to refine and set communication goals. The charts below depict the current audience for communications in the City of Hawaiian Gardens.

STAT	COUNT	NOTES
City Population & Racial Demographics (per SCAG Profile of the City of Hawaiian Gardens 2017)	14,926	The racial makeup of Hawaiian Gardens is: Hispanic: 77.9% Non-Hispanic Asian: 11.3% Non-Hispanic White: 5.9% Hispanic Black: 3.2% Non-Hispanic American Indian: 0.3% All Other Non-Hispanic: 1.3%.
Registered Voters	5,080	As of May 2018.
Number of Housing Units (per SCAG Profile of the City of Hawaiian Gardens 2017)	3,712	The homeownership rate in Hawaiian Gardens is 44.9%. (Housing units include occupied and unoccupied units.)
Number of Households (per SCAG Profile of the City of Hawaiian Gardens 2017)	3,647	The average household size in Hawaiian Gardens is 4.1. (Households refer to occupied housing units.)
City Council Meeting Media Views	3,477	From June 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018.
Email Addresses on File	90	As of June 2018. All email addresses are from businesses.

STAT	COUNT	NOTES
Golden State Water Hawaiian Gardens Email Addresses	738	As of August 2018.
Business Licenses	923	Total number of active business licenses as of June 2018. 90 email addresses from businesses.
Number of Residents on Facebook	7,100	Determined through Facebook Ads Manager: an ad with a "Reach" goal; targeted at Facebook users ages 13-65+; targeted at users who self-identify as living in Hawaiian Gardens, California; and excluding placements on Instagram or Facebook's "Audience Network."
Number of Residents on Nextdoor	131	As of June 2018.
City Facebook Page Likes/Fans & Follows	956 Likes; 984 Followers	As of June 2018.
Miss Hawaiian Gardens Facebook Page	310 Likes; 302 Followers	As of June 2018.
City Twitter Account Followers	671 Followers	1,277 Tweets published as of June 2018.
City YouTube Subscribers	194 Subscribers	As of June 2018.
City Instagram	58 Followers	As of August 2018. The account has 0 posts; it is not currently used.

Hawaiian Gardens by the Numbers



Current Communication Methods

Website

The City’s website www.hgcity.org is currently hosted by Smolarcorp. In July 2018, the City entered into an agreement with Vision to implement a new City website. Google Analytics is installed on the website with data ranging back to December 2012.

General Traffic to the Website

In the past 12 months (June 1, 2017 – May 31, 2018), there have been 56,506 Sessions⁵ on the City’s website— almost the same number of Sessions as the previous period (56,371 Sessions between June 1, 2016 and May 31, 2017). Sessions on the website remain steady throughout the year with a slight dip in traffic in the last week of December (likely due to the holidays) and a spike in the beginning of April. During the spike of traffic in April, the most popular page besides the homepage is the Special Events Calendar page. This spike is likely due to the annual Carnival & Parade at Furgeson Elementary in April. During April 2018, the highest spike in traffic on the website occurred the same weekend as the Carnival & Parade (April 13-15).

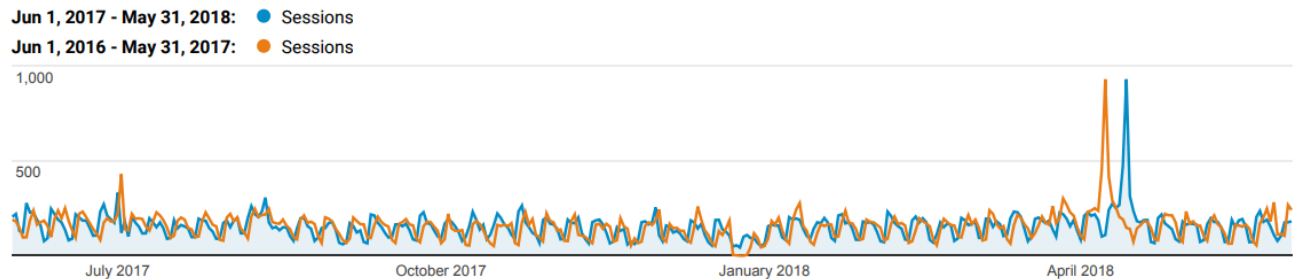


Figure 1 Comparison of daily Sessions on the City's website from June 1, 2017 - May 31, 2018 and previous period.

The website’s Sessions in the past 12 months came from 34,711 Users who viewed 165,470 pages. Of the 34,711 Users, 82.5% were New Users who had not previously visited the City’s website; 17.5% were Returning Users. Tripepi Smith notes that the City’s Google Analytics account is not configured to filter out internal traffic from City Hall, which may be artificially inflating website traffic and affecting Visitor Behavior data. Because City staff visits the City’s website frequently, it is necessary to filter out internal traffic to ensure Google Analytics data is an accurate representation of the City’s external audience.

Top 10 Most-Viewed Webpages

From June 1, 2017 – May 31, 2018, the most popular page on the City’s website was the homepage with 41,844 Pageviews. The homepage is typically the most popular page on a

⁵ A “Session” is the period time a user is actively engaged with your website.

website since it is usually the main entry point for Users. The Human Resources page is the next most popular page with 8,808 Pageviews, which is consistent with Tripepi Smith’s observations through work in various cities. Google Analytics allows users to see data from top pages with a list of URLs or Page Titles; Tripepi Smith notes that, when viewing the top pages under Page Titles option, the majority of pages appear with the title “City of Hawaiian Gardens.” Staff may need to review how pages are set up and labeled in the backend of the City’s website to ensure Google is capturing the correct page title.

Page	Pageviews	Pageviews
	165,470 % of Total: 100.00% (165,470)	165,470 % of Total: 100.00% (165,470)
1. /hg/ Homepage	41,844	25.29%
2. /hg/?p=723 Human Resources	8,808	5.32%
3. /hg/?p=136 Department & Staff Telephone Extensions	4,584	2.77%
4. /hg/?p=270 Special Events Calendar	4,485	2.71%
5. /hg/?cat=18 Activities & Events	3,785	2.29%
6. /hg/?p=287 Adult Sports	3,557	2.15%
7. /hg/?cat=28 City Council	3,385	2.05%
8. /hg/?page_id=699 News	3,038	1.84%
9. /hg/?cat=3 Departments	2,741	1.66%
10. /hg/?cat=21 City Council Agendas & Videos	2,602	1.57%

Figure 2 Top pages on the City’s website from June 1, 2017 - May 31, 2018.

Website Traffic Location and Language

Google Analytics estimates the location and language of the City website’s users by matching IP addresses with general geographic locations and noting the language settings in users’ web browsers. The majority of Sessions on the City’s website from June 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018 are attributed to Users in Los Angeles (28.60%), Long Beach (11.62%), and La Mirada (7.89%). According to Google Analytics, only 1.03% of Sessions are attributed to Users in Hawaiian Gardens—this is likely a reflection of Google’s inability to drill down on such a small geographic area rather than a true reflection of traffic from residents/the community.

For language, the majority of Sessions are attributed to users with web browsers set to “en-us” (English United States) (95.90%) and “es-419” (Spanish Latin America) (0.68%).

Most Popular Search Engine Phrases

The table below lists the keywords most searched by users to find the City’s website from June 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018. Due to [Google’s privacy updates in October 2011](#), a large majority of search queries are encrypted and show up in Google Analytics as “(not provided).”

For most websites, it is common for “(not provided)” to be at the top of the keywords list; “(not provided)” has been excluded from the table below.

1. city of hawaiian gardens – 68 users	6. amazon – 8 users
2. hawaiian gardens – 27 users	8. Hawaiian gardens california – 5 users
3. city of hawaiian gardens ca – 13 users	8. hawaiian gardens city hall – 5 users
4. hawaiian gardens ca – 11 users	9. city of hawaiian garden – 4 users
5. city of Hawaiian gardens jobs – 9 users	10. Hawaiian Gardens – 4 users

Website Analysis

Content Organization

The website’s top navigation menu is designed to help Users navigate the website easily with information logically listed below various categories: About Us, Departments, Activities & Events, Services, Contact Us, and I Want To. The Homepage offers Quick Links to various pages on the website, though these links are not necessarily reflective of the website’s most popular pages according to Google Analytics data. Tripepi Smith notes that it would be a good practice to match the Quick Links with the website’s most popular pages.

Mobile Design

The City’s website does not currently have mobile responsive design. A mobile responsive design allows users to navigate the website easily through a mobile browser. For example: on a mobile browser, all sections of the website should be viewable from the mobile screen without zooming in and out of pages. As traffic from mobile devices becomes increasingly popular, it is especially important for the City to implement a mobile-responsive website. (NOTE: The new Vision website will be mobile-optimized.)

Site Search

Google Analytics offers a Site Search report which provides data about the type of content users are searching for directly on a website. The City’s website has an active internal search engine, but data in Google Analytics reports that there were 0 searches in the past 12 months. Tripepi Smith notes that this number appears unreliable and may indicate that the internal search engine’s setup requires attention.

Security

The City’s website does not appear to have a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) certificate. An SSL certificate enables encryption of sensitive data during online transactions, which is especially important if the City collects any personal information on its website. SSL certificates improve website Search Engine Optimization since Google uses SSL certification as a signal in search ranking algorithms to ensure websites with SSL appear higher on search results. Additionally, Google Chrome warns users whenever they visit a website without SSL certification.

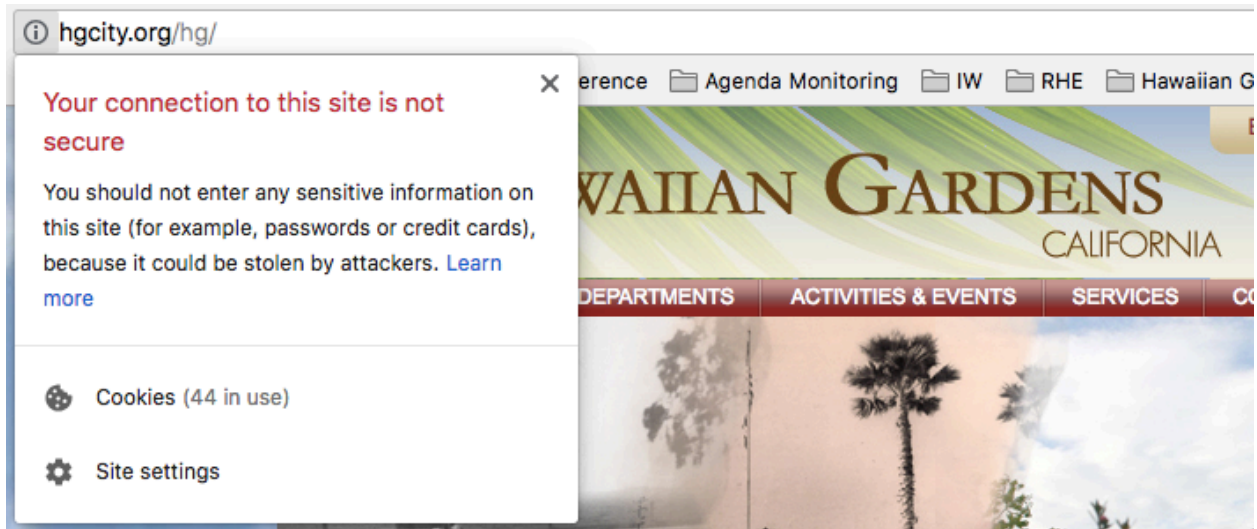


Figure 3 Screenshot of the Hawaiian Gardens website with a Google Chrome warning informing users that the site is not secure.

Privacy Policy

The Hawaiian Gardens website has a Privacy Policy and Disclaimer page at <http://hgcity.org/hg/?p=3153>. The page is easily accessible in the website’s footer – a best practice that ensures Users can easily find the page.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Notice

The City’s website does not have an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Notice. The City should consider creating a page with its ADA notice and linking to it within the website’s footer.

Social Media

Social media is a flexible, cost-effective tool that allows for two-way communication and is used regularly across a wide range of demographics. The City’s social media accounts include Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The City links to its main Facebook and Twitter accounts on the homepage of the Hawaiian Gardens website.

Account	Manager(s)	Number of Likes/Followers ⁶	Link
Facebook Page – City of Hawaiian Gardens Government	Bashir Matin	956 Likes; 984 Followers	https://www.facebook.com/HawaiianGardens1/

⁶ Data sampled in June 2018.

Account	Manager(s)	Number of Likes/Followers ⁶	Link
Facebook Page – Miss Hawaiian Gardens	Bashir Matin	310 Likes; 302 Followers	https://www.facebook.com/MissHawaiianGardens
Twitter Account - @HawaiianGardens	Bashir Matin	671 Followers	https://twitter.com/HawaiianGardens
YouTube – Hawaiian Gardens	Bashir Matin	194 Subscribers	https://www.youtube.com/user/HGCityCA
Nextdoor	Bashir Matin	131 Members	https://nextdoor.com/agency-detail/ca/hawaiian-gardens/city-of-hawaiian-gardens/
Instagram - @hgcityca	Bashir Matin	58 Followers	https://www.instagram.com/hgcityca/

Facebook (City’s main Facebook Page)

With 956 Page Likes (“Fans”), the City’s main Facebook Page (City of Hawaiian Gardens Government) has the largest audience of any City-managed social media platform. Of the 956 Page Likes (“Fans”), approximately 59% are women and 41% are men—this is typical with the ratios Tripepi Smith has observed for other California cities’ Facebook Pages. Across genders, the majority of Fans are between 25 and 44 years old.

Aggregated demographic data about the people who like your Page based on the age and gender information they provide in their user profiles.

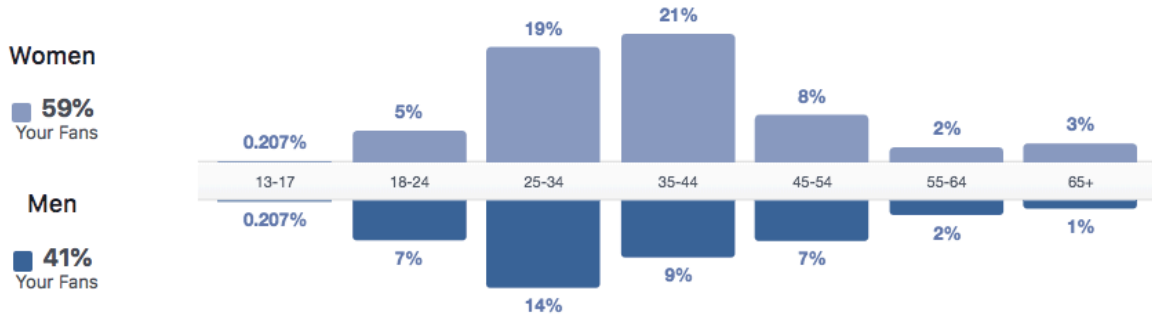


Figure 4 City’s main Facebook Page Gender/Age distribution as of June 2018.

The top five locations where Page Fans reside are Hawaiian Gardens (312), Los Angeles (86), Lakewood (67), Long Beach (62), and Norwalk (21). Per Facebook’s advertising tools, ads targeted at Facebook users (ages 13-65+) who self-identify as living in the City of Hawaiian Gardens could potentially reach 7,100 people. Another way of stating this is that approximately half of the City’s population has a Facebook account.

The majority of Page Fans use Facebook with the language set to English, with Spanish being the next most popular language.

Country	Your Fans	City	Your Fans	Language	Your Fans
United States of America	894	Hawaiian Gardens, CA	312	English (US)	791
Mexico	43	Los Angeles, CA	86	Spanish	135
Canada	4	Lakewood, CA	67	Spanish (Spain)	17
Thailand	4	Long Beach, CA	62	English (UK)	10
Pakistan	2	Norwalk, CA	21	Turkish	3

Figure 5 City's main Facebook Page Fan country, city and language distribution (top 5) as of June 2018.

Based on data from all posts on the City's main Facebook Page, Status Posts have the highest average reach⁷ and engagement⁸. On average, Status Posts reach 1,229 people and receive 93 post clicks and 34 reactions, comments & shares. The popularity of Status Posts on the City's main Facebook page is unusual, as Photos and Videos tend to perform better among most Facebook Pages. The high reach and engagement on Status Posts may be attributed to various factors, namely that there have been more Status Posts published than other post types.

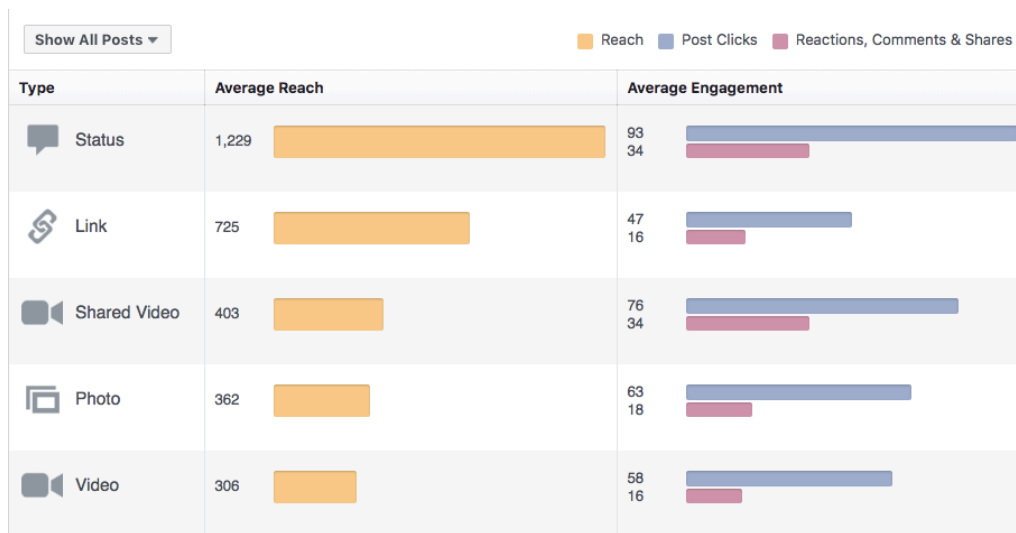


Figure 6 The City's main Facebook Page success among type of posts as of June 2018.

Content on the City's main Facebook page is primarily focused on the City's recurring events. Most posts are used to promote City events or share photos and videos from City events. Page content also includes City-government related posts such as information about local measures and City Council meeting details. Prior to this assessment, the City had previously Boosted four posts on Facebook, totaling \$70.00 across all Boosted Posts.

⁷ Reach = The number of people who saw your post at least once.

⁸ Engagement = The total number of actions that people take involving your post.



Figure 7 Examples of posts on the City's main Facebook Page.

Facebook (Miss Hawaiian Gardens Facebook Page)

The City manages a Facebook Page dedicated to the City's annual "Miss Hawaiian Gardens," a program in which young women compete to represent the City as "Miss Hawaiian Gardens" and earn an educational scholarship. The Page currently has 310 Page Likes ("Fans") with approximately 63% of Page Likes attributed to women and 37% attributed to men. The Page is most popular among people 18 to 34 years old. The Page's gender and age distribution is reflective of the program's target audience: women ages 18 to 25.

Aggregated demographic data about the people who like your Page based on the age and gender information they provide in their user profiles.

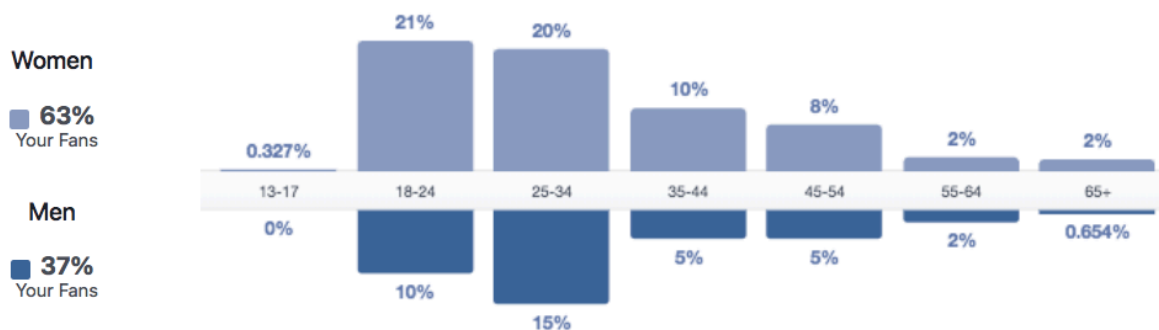


Figure 8 Miss Hawaiian Gardens Facebook Page gender/age distribution as of June 2018.

Hawaiian Gardens is the top location where Page Fans reside, followed by Los Angeles, Long Beach, Lakewood and Venustiano Carranza—a city in Michoacan de Ocampo, Mexico. The majority of Page Fans use Facebook with the language set to English. The Page's location and age distribution closely matches the City's main Facebook Page.

Country	Your Fans	City	Your Fans	Language	Your Fans
United States of America	276	Hawaiian Gardens, CA	77	English (US)	259
Mexico	24	Los Angeles, CA	26	Spanish	35
Egypt	1	Long Beach, CA	22	English (UK)	7
Cambodia	1	Lakewood, CA	20	Spanish (Spain)	5
Morocco	1	Venustiano Carranza, ...	13		

Figure 9 Miss Hawaiian Gardens Facebook Page location/language distribution as of June 2018.

Photo posts are the most popular types of posts on the Miss Hawaiian Gardens Facebook Page. On average, Photo posts reach 121 people and receive 40 post clicks and 9 reactions, comments and shares. The popularity of Photo posts is consistent with Tripepi Smith’s observations among other public agency Facebook Pages.

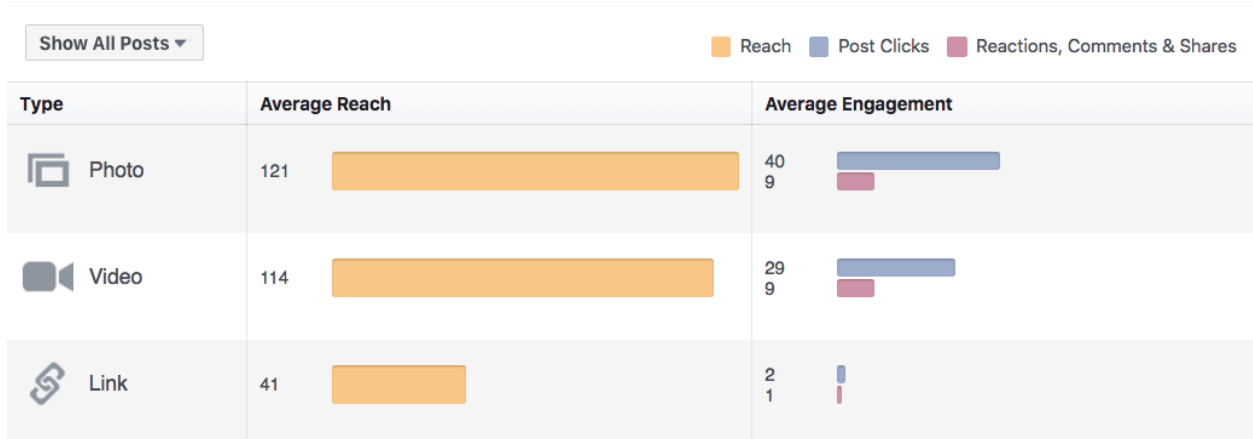


Figure 10 Miss Hawaiian Gardens Facebook Page success among types of posts as of June 2018.

The Miss Hawaiian Gardens Facebook Page is used to share information and updates related to the Miss Hawaiian Gardens program. Posts include photos and videos of the Miss Hawaiian Gardens winners at various events as well as shared posts from the City’s main Facebook Page. The winner of Miss Hawaiian Gardens has access to the Page and is able to publish posts directly. As of this writing, the City has not Boosted any Posts from the Miss Hawaiian Gardens Facebook Page.



Figure 11 Examples of Facebook posts on the Miss Hawaiian Gardens Facebook Page.

Twitter

Next to the City’s main Facebook Page, the City’s Twitter account has the second-largest social following with 671 Followers. From June 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018, the account’s Tweets averaged approximately 294 impressions⁹ and 4.5 engagements¹⁰. As of this writing, the City has not promoted any Tweets through Twitter Ads. Content on the City’s Twitter account is the same as the content on the City’s main Facebook Page. Content includes promotion of City events, recaps of City events and City-government related information.

Tripepi Smith noted that, compared to the City’s two Facebook Pages, there is little multimedia content being posted on Twitter. The auto-post feature being used (wherein posts from Facebook are automatically uploaded to Twitter) rarely pulls in the photos or videos that have been posted on Facebook.

⁹ Number of times users saw the Tweet on Twitter.

¹⁰ The number of times a user has interacted with a Tweet. This includes all clicks anywhere on the Tweet (including hashtags, links, avatar, username and Tweet expansion.), retweets, replies, follows, and likes.




	Tweets	Top Tweets	Tweets and replies	Promoted	Impressions	Engagements	Engagement rate
	HawaiianGardens City @HawaiianGardens · Oct 2	Don't forget the Gang Injunction Informational Town Hall meeting tomorrow at 6 pm. in City Hall. hgcity.org			734	7	1.0%
		View Tweet activity					<input type="button" value="Promote"/>
	HawaiianGardens City @HawaiianGardens · Nov 17	Are you a current or future student?			708	5	0.7%
		The City of Hawai ian Gardens offers scholarship opportunities to... fb.me/1QBOZ6vW8					<input type="button" value="Promote"/>
		View Tweet activity					
	HawaiianGardens City @HawaiianGardens · 5 Jul 2017	Free Pre-school for your 3 or 4 year old. Sign up now. hgcity.org/PDFfiles/presc... fb.me/GRVdwWjj			594	5	0.8%
		View Tweet activity					<input type="button" value="Promote"/>

Figure 12 Top 3 Tweets (June 1, 2017 - May 31, 2018)

YouTube

Since joining YouTube in February 2009, the City has uploaded 219 videos, which have received a total of 62,279 views. From June 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018, the City's Channel received approximately 12,000 views across all videos with an average view duration of 3 minutes and 19 seconds. Overall, the most popular video on the Channel is the "Grand Opening of Plato's Closet in Hawaiian Gardens" published on October 3, 2013. The video has 2,794 views, two comments and two Likes. The City's channel features videos related to City events, business grand openings, and City news.

Nextdoor Agency Page

The City of Hawaiian Gardens has a registered Agency account on Nextdoor.com. The account has not been set up with City branding such as a profile picture or Agency description. The last and only post on the account was created on November 3, 2014. Nextdoor reports that there are 4 Neighborhoods and 131 Nextdoor members within the City. Considering the City's population of 14,926 residents, the City's community on Nextdoor is very small.

Yelp

The City of Hawaiian Gardens has two five-star reviews on Yelp. There are 10 photos on the Yelp page uploaded by various users. The page has not yet been "claimed" by the City.

Instagram

The City has an existing Instagram account with 58 followers, but it is currently not being used and has zero posts.

Print Publications

Printed publications provide another opportunity to drive messaging to the City audience, and the City utilizes printed materials in a number of ways to connect with their residents. The City of Hawaiian Gardens produces multiple printed materials across multiple departments.

Activity Guide

The Recreation and Community Services “Activity Guide” is an approximately 22-page publication that is produced twice per year (Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter). It is mailed to residents and businesses and also available on the City website. In addition, hard copies are available at all city facilities.

City staff members in each department are responsible for compiling the information for their department. All the content is then sent to a third-party vendor (The Sauce) for layout, printing, and delivery. The guide includes information regarding youth and adult sports, clubs, classes, social services etc. The annual budget for the publication is \$13,000.

Flyers

The City produces a number of printed flyers that are distributed at various times throughout the year. They are created in-house by the Executive Assistant. Topics have included workshop flyers that primarily target the senior community; program information flyers for residents regarding specific sports, clubs, and classes; youth flyers that provide information on library activities, sports, shows, etc.; and informational/educational flyers about public safety. There is no set schedule for the flyers and they are produced as topics arise.

City Newsletter

The City previously produced a bi-monthly, bilingual newsletter called “Sunrise” (“Sonrisa”). It was approximately five pages long and included City information regarding news and events. The City ceased production following the Summer 2017 release for budgetary reasons.

Direct Digital Communications

Email

The City of Hawaiian Gardens does not currently communicate with the public via email. The City currently has 90 email addresses on file from business license applicants. Recently, the Parks and Recreation Department started requesting emails on program registration forms and is starting to build an email list from program participants. The Recreation & Community Services Department is also considering the implementation of ActiveNet, which will allow the Department to create a database of program participant contact information, including email addresses.

Nixle

The Nixle notification service allows governments to send notifications to residents via phone, email and web. The City does not currently use Nixle; Hawaiian Gardens residents receive Nixle notifications through the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's Department estimates that there are 78 phone numbers and 46 emails for residents living in Hawaiian Gardens zip code 90716. These numbers may not be entirely accurate, as the LASD is unable to pull a report of the exact subscribers in a specific city.

Local Access Channel

The City has a government-only public access channel that is available through multiple television providers (channel 36 on Spectrum Cable, channel 16 on Frontier FIOS, and channel 99 on AT&T U-verse). Content is controlled by the City's webmaster (based on guidelines from council and the City Manager) and is created with the purpose to keep residents informed of the goings-on in their city. Programming includes recordings of city meetings, special event videos, monthly updates on events and programs, and occasionally some themed programs from other cities (exercise, law, cooking, etc). Content is uploaded on a DVD and then provided to the television station. There is no access to viewership numbers.

Other Communications Materials

City Bus Ads

The City Transportation Department utilizes ads on City Transit Buses to promote special events from the Parks and Recreation department (holiday events, city celebration, etc.). Ads are placed approximately one month prior to the featured event and removed immediately after the event. The Transportation Department uses artwork from existing program flyers and the signs cost approximately \$90 each to print. The City does not place ads on the larger, public transit buses, only the City Transit buses.

Digital Marquees

The City operates two digital marquees – one located at City Hall and one at the Public Safety Center. Content is controlled by the webmaster and generally relays information regarding City services and events. They are updated as needed depending on the current frequency of events (daily, weekly, monthly, etc.).

Street Banners

Street Banners related to City events are posted on Norwalk Blvd. north of Carson St. Parks and Recreation will typically create the banners with a third-party vendor (Molimex is a frequently used one), and then Public Works will handle placement and removal.

Public Works is also responsible for pole banners which run along the light poles on Carson St. These are typically used for holiday décor or special notices (eg. promoting recycling). Vendors used for the pole banners vary.

Digital Billboard

Though not controlled by the City, The Gardens Casino operates a digital billboard that faces the 605 freeway that prominently displays the Hawaiian Gardens name.

Local Media

Newspapers

Gateway Guardian Newspaper

The Gateway Guardian is a bi-weekly print and digital newspaper that claims on its website to serve Artesia, Hawaiian Gardens and Cerritos. However, recent emails with the publisher indicate that they no longer cover stories from Hawaiian Gardens or deliver to the City due to the City not advertising with the paper. Each issue is approximately eight pages and includes ad space.

Los Cerritos Community Newspaper

Los Cerritos Community Newspaper is a print and digital newspaper serving the area surrounding and including Hawaiian Gardens, from Cypress in the South to Montebello in the North. The paper is known for breaking the story of county assessor John Noguez's alleged fraud in 2012, and recently ran an article on the homelessness plan proposed by the City's Homelessness Coalition prior to the city council special session meeting in late July 2018. According to the publication's website, 4,000 copies per issue are delivered to Hawaiian Gardens (out of 86,000 total copies).

Long Beach Press-Telegram

The Long Beach Press-Telegram is a print and digital newspaper that offers print and digital-only subscriptions. It serves the overall Long Beach area but will cover Los Angeles County events (including Hawaiian Gardens) on occasion. Their reported daily circulation is 20,432 during the week and 34,605 on Sundays. The paper serves the area from Seal Beach in the South to Downey in the north.

Partner Agencies

ABC Unified School District

The ABC Unified School District serves approximately 30,433 students across the Cities of Hawaiian Gardens, Artesia, Cerritos, Lakewood, Long Beach, La Palma, Cypress and Norwalk. There are 30 schools within the District including four located in the City of Hawaiian Gardens: Furgeson Elementary School, Hawaiian Elementary School, and Fedde Academy. Approximately 13 percent of students enrolled in the ABC Unified School District are Hawaiian Gardens residents.

Waste Hauler - Commercial Waste Services

Commercial Waste Services provides waste hauling services to the City of Hawaiian Gardens. As of August 2018, the waste hauler serves 2,430 Hawaiian Gardens households. The company reports zero Hawaiian Gardens online bill pay accounts and zero Hawaiian Gardens email addresses on file.

Water Agency - Golden State Water

The City of Hawaiian Gardens receives water services from Golden State Water. Golden State Water reports that 2,607 Hawaiian Gardens households are currently served. There are 496 Hawaiian Gardens online bill pay accounts and 738 Hawaiian Gardens email addresses on file with Golden State Water.

Communications Observations

General

- The City has a distinct communication goal: to connect with its residents to engage in traditional public outreach on municipal-related matters such as budgets, services, infrastructure and development
- The City uses a variety of platforms which could further be optimized for effective communications and has the opportunity to leverage additional platforms.
- Communications from the City are primarily directed at residents.
- The City's population is relatively young, and therefore there are many opportunities to communicate with youth.
- There is a population of visitors who come to the City for The Gardens Casino, but there is no outreach currently being done by the City to direct them to other local businesses (restaurants, hotels, etc.).

Strategy & Policy

- The City does not have an established communications strategy that defines the City's communications goals, audiences, channels and management.
- The City has not yet adopted a formal social media policy.
- There is a large Spanish-speaking population in Hawaiian Gardens, but there is a lack of formal guidelines regarding translation for communications efforts.
- There is currently no single brand/style guide for the City.
- The City does not require email addresses for business license applications or recreation class registrations.

Website

- The City's website is currently run by Smolarcorp but the City is in the process of switching to Vision/Granicus.
- The City's website has an active internal search engine, but data in Google Analytics reports that there were 0 searches in the past 12 months. This number appears unreliable and may indicate that the internal search engine's setup requires attention.
- Website traffic stays fairly consistent all year then sees a spike in April – likely due to the Easter holidays and the annual Carnival and Parade at Furgeson Elementary.
- The Quick Links on the homepage are not necessarily aligned with the site's most popular pages (per Google Analytics).
- There is potential to better leverage metrics in Google Analytics to make data-based improvements to the City's website.
- The website needs an SSL certificate across the entire website to follow Search Engine Optimization best practices.
- The City's website does not have an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Notice.

Social Media

- The City's Facebook Page has the largest audience of all social media platforms available to the City. The page's audience is primarily women in the 25-34 age range. Link Posts tend to receive the most reach and engagement.
- The city is active on its two Facebook Pages (City of Hawaiian Gardens and Miss Hawaiian Gardens), however it does not utilize all the social media pages it owns (particularly Instagram and the Nextdoor Agency Page).
- The City will occasionally Boost posts on Facebook. (NOTE: due to the Facebook algorithm, there have been some recent issues with posts being flagged as political and unable to be Boosted.)

Media/Press

- Local newspapers seem very sensitive to lack of advertisements by the City. It seems that they may not be covering or distributing to the City because of this perception.
- The City does not currently keep a centralized media list of local reporters/bloggers.

Direct Communications

- Hawaiian Gardens residents receive Nixle notifications from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. The City does not currently have an emergency alert tool.
- The City does not require email addresses from people applying for business licenses or registering for recreation classes. The City has very few email addresses on file for its residents.

Recommendations

Based on the observations above, Tripepi Smith formulated the following recommendations to help the City of Hawaiian Gardens enhance its communications and optimize platforms to further engage the community. These recommendations have been formed with both a general goal and specific actions to take to achieve that goal. They are geared around improving the execution, delivery and impact of the City's outreach and messaging efforts.

1 - Implement a Communications Strategy

The City of Hawaiian Gardens would benefit from creating an official communications strategy to guide the City's communications efforts. A communications strategy can help define communication plans and maintain consistent communications practices across departments. Integrating a strategy internally will facilitate communications efforts with the Hawaiian Gardens community.

Action Steps

- Officially assign a resource to oversee the City's communications efforts and be the central point of contact for City staff when communication opportunities arise.
- Establish a process to be followed when communication opportunities arise. This process should help define when the news will be disseminated, on which channels, and in what form.
- Establish a policy on when to disseminate information in Spanish. Ensure Spanish translation is discussed and implemented when considered appropriate.
- Include communication opportunities as a focal point in Staff meetings to ensure newsworthy stories are identified and disseminated in a timely manner.
- Create a Communications Calendar that identifies major City news throughout the year; all departments should be involved in calendar creation to ensure all major stories across the City are identified. This calendar should be updated as communications opportunities arise.
 - NOTE: Tripepi Smith worked with Staff in Fall 2018 to launch a Communications Calendar as of Fall 2018.
- Review communication efforts with department heads on a quarterly basis to determine successes and opportunities for improvement.
- Establish Press Distribution List.

2 - Adopt a Social Media Policy

City staff manages multiple social media accounts, but the City of Hawaiian Gardens does not have an official Social Media Policy in place yet. A social media policy should be established to solidify the City's guidelines for social media use and provide potential legal protections.

Action Steps

- Work with the City Attorney to develop a Social Media Policy that provides guidelines for the City's development and usage of social media platforms.
- Emphasize use of social media by City Council Members to highlight risks associated with the Brown Act.
- Identify situations where the City might mute or hide comments from the public that violate the policy.

3 - Establish a Social Media Strategy

As the City's social media audience grows, it is important to integrate an official social media strategy to ensure communications efforts via social media sites are effective and reflective of the City's efforts across departments.

Action Steps

- Define the goals and objectives the City aims to achieve through its established social media platforms: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and Nextdoor.
- Regularly review and discuss social media metrics to analyze whether goals are being met.
- Develop a social media content calendar to ensure communications opportunities across departments are identified and disseminated on the City's social media platforms when appropriate.
 - Consider using a social media management tool, such as Hootsuite, to schedule social media posts across platforms.
- Optimize the City's social media accounts to make use of beneficial platform features and regularly check for optimization opportunities.
 - Current Facebook optimization opportunities: complete About section, use Events section to promote City events, apply for a verification checkmark.
- Consider allocating funds to social media advertising to increase reach of the City's communications efforts on social media.
- Take steps to get all Facebook page administrators verified by Facebook so there are fewer issues Boosting posts.

4 - Leverage Additional Communications Platforms

There are a few additional platforms the City should consider leveraging and/or implementing for its communications efforts. These platforms include Nextdoor (the City has an Agency Page but it is not being used) and City eNotifications (the new Vision website will have this feature built in).

Action Steps

- Start using the City's Instagram profile (@HGCityCA) as a platform in the City's social media strategy.
 - Instagram is a great tool to help tell visual stories without much additional time spent. Through a platform like Hootsuite, photo posts can be directed to Facebook and Instagram simultaneously.
- Consider creating a City eNotification tool, such as Nixle, to notify residents of emergencies, road closures, police activity, and other events throughout the City.
 - Consider promoting City eNotification tool on existing social media platforms to increase subscribers.
 - Determine eNotification frequency and type of content to be distributed through City eNotifications.
 - NOTE: the new Vision website will have the capability to send eNotifications via emails to subscribers who opt-in to receive them.
- Consider using the City's Nextdoor "Agency Page" to push content directly to Hawaiian Gardens residents.

- Nextdoor is an important platform designed specifically to keep community members informed of what is happening in their neighborhoods. With a Nextdoor Agency Page, the City has the opportunity to communicate with active community members in Hawaiian Gardens.
- Unlike Facebook and other social media platforms that have algorithms for their users' content feeds, by default, the City's Agency Page posts would be pushed out to all City residents on Nextdoor.

5 – Regularly Analyze Available Metrics

The City of Hawaiian Gardens should regularly analyze and report on available website and social media data. By analyzing the City's website and social media data on a consistent basis, City staff can gather insights that can be used to improve the City's communications efforts. This analysis can also help drive a cultural change in terms of all departments in the City recognizing the priority status deserved by communications. Measuring this data subtly tells staff that communications matter.

Action Steps

- Plan to analyze and report on the City's available metrics on a regular basis.
- Determine key metrics that will be analyzed and reported on regularly. Possible metrics should include:
 - Website: Users, Sessions, Pageviews, Traffic Source, Site Search
 - Social Media: Likes, Followers, Post Reach, Post Engagement
- Optimize the City's Google Analytics account to ensure quality data is retrieved. The account should be configured to exclude internal traffic from City Hall and capture Site Search data.
- Discuss metric reports across departments to gain unique insights and develop actionable steps.

6 - Address Spanish Language Goals

The data suggests a large contingent of the Hawaiian Gardens population speaks Spanish primarily, but there is no guideline in place to ensure important communications are being released in languages other than English. To ensure engagement across the City's population, a policy decision needs to be made on the degree to which engagement with the Spanish-speaking population is a priority.

Action Steps

- Have a policy discussion as a City Council and Staff about the priority to execute communications in English and Spanish.
- Determine the additional costs associated with executing communications in Spanish language.

- Create policies within the organization that document the if and when Spanish language options are to be provided to the public.

7 – Other General Recommendations

- Obtain a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) certificate for the entire City website.
- Create a page with City's American with Disabilities (ADA) Notice and link to it within the homepage footer.
- Match the Quick Links section with the website's most popular pages.
- Update the favicon on City website.
- Require email addresses from business license applicants and recreation class registrants to help grow the City's email database.
- Highlight the many City programs on a larger scale. The City has a number of unique programs dedicated to resident care including tattoo removal programs, business and home beautification rebates, free senior programs, and free summer shuttle services. These programs are a great benefit to residents and make for good content.
- Consolidate the City's stock photo library where City staff has access.
- Consider establishing a City eNewsletter to regularly update residents on happenings in the City. Since the former print newsletter has ceased production, it is a good way to keep the public engaged at a much lower price tag.

Conclusion

There are many positive, (yet untold) stories happening in this relatively small city. It is Tripepi Smith's hope that this Assessment provides a stepping stone for establishing policies and best practices that empower City resources to better communicate these stories to residents and local/regional media.

The City is undergoing a website update with Vision (Granicus) that should make the website a much more attractive platform for the community. The City has also taken some solid steps on establishing a social media presence, but there is always room for improvement as platforms improve their feature sets year after year. Tripepi Smith also notes that the City has a dedicated resource for creating high-quality multimedia content, which is a rarity for such a small-sized public agency.

In combination with City staff, Tripepi Smith hopes to continue providing guidance on local government communication best practices, and inspiring staff to embrace more strategic, long-term planning when it comes to external communications.

Appendix A – Interview Participants

Tripepi Smith spoke to the following City Hall staff as part of this Express Communications Assessment:

- Ernie Hernandez – City Manager
- Steve Gomez – Human Services Director, Recreation and Community Services Department
- Gloria Thomas – Housing Supervisor
- Lucie Colombo – Assistant City Clerk
- Joe Colombo – Community Development Director
- Bashir Matin – Webmaster