



# RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

## Board Memorandum

**BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES**

**DATE: DECEMBER 9, 2024**

**SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS ANNUAL UPDATE COVERING COMMUNICATION RELATED ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES**

**ISSUE:**

Annual Marketing and Communications update related to marketing and communication activities on behalf of Riverside Public Utilities.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Board of Public Utilities receive and file the annual marketing and communication activities update by the Department of Marketing and Communications.

**BACKGROUND:**

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2017/18, the Board of Public Utilities received a report on operational improvements and efficiencies that Riverside Public Utilities (RPU) identified to maximize cost savings and revenues. During the review, RPU identified similar positions between RPU and the City Manager's Office/Office of Communications (Communications) and it was determined that Communications could provide greater and more cost-effective services to RPU. As a result of this recommendation, the decision was made to move five full-time equivalent (FTE) positions to Communications beginning in FY 2018/19, to be cost-allocated back to RPU. In the years following, RPU identified and added two additional positions that were transferred to Communications and began to pay 50% of one administrative position. RPU currently funds 6.50 FTEs within Communications, which was recently established as a standalone department, now known as the Department of Marketing and Communications.

In return for the additional positions and responsibilities, Marketing and Communications committed to providing RPU with a defined level of communications services including, but not limited to, communication management and coordination, regulatory compliance, customer/community outreach and customer communications enhancement. Initial performance measures were outlined, and Communications agreed to work collaboratively with RPU Executive Management and RPU Customer Engagement on the status of goals and objectives and provide annual updates to the Board of Public Utilities. Since then, Marketing and Communications has worked alongside RPU to meet the needs of internal and external customers.

## **DISCUSSION:**

In person, on paper, and digitally, the Marketing and Communications team is committed to constructively relay timely and factual information between various City of Riverside departments and our employees, residents, and all other parties.

As a service department to RPU and other City Departments, Marketing and Communications is currently comprised of 17 full-time staff members specializing in the areas of Graphic Design, Social Media, Email Marketing, Video/Photography, Web Development, and Project Coordination/Administration. The dedicated team works collaboratively to meet the needs of internal and external customers to provide effective communications.

Throughout numerous years of delivering communication services, the Marketing and Communications team has become an integral part of RPU. With consistent open lines of communication and weekly standing meetings, staff continues to foster and grow relationships amongst the various RPU divisions to ensure all communications needs are met. These relationships have proven instrumental in the achievement of success for Marketing and Communications in the designated service areas. Examples of these efforts consist of major campaigns, large projects, and more, include but are not limited to:

1. Communication Management & Coordination
  - Streamlined Communications Coordination
  - Interorganizational Coordination
2. Regulatory Compliance
  - Water Quality Report
  - Power Content Label
  - Drought Status
  - Emergency Communications
    - i. Everbridge/Riverside Alert Outage Communications
      1. Significant Power Outages
      2. CAISO Flex Alert
      3. CAISO Energy Emergency Alert 3 – Load Shedding
    - ii. Public Outage Map
    - iii. Flex Alert Campaign
3. Annual Reports
  - Financial Report
  - Water Quality Report
  - Mission Square Building
  - Wildfire Mitigation Plan
  - Integrated Resource Plan
4. Customer/Community Outreach
  - Residential Assistance Programs
  - Residential & Commercial Rebate Programs
  - RPU All Day Every Day Campaign
  - Riverside Insect Fair & Earth Day Event
  - Mylar Balloons Campaign

- STEM PULL
- 311 Services
- Paperless Billing Campaign
- Customer Service Appreciation Campaign
- Capital Improvement Project Communications
- Cultural Heritage and Awareness Months

5. Communication Enhancements

- Inclusive Communications - Spanish Translation
- RPU Safety Fair Collaboration
- Bill Notification Updates
  - i. Monthly Back of Bill
  - ii. Monthly Bill Insert Collateral
- Employee Spotlights & Day In the Life Videos
- Recruitment Collateral
- APPA Communications Award Submissions
- Maintenance & Standardization of Application Forms
- Management of ScreenCloud Application at RPU Customer Service Lobby TVs
- Magazine Advertorials
  - i. Riversider Magazine
  - ii. Explore Riverside

In pursuit of continuous improvement and to highlight the qualitative communication efforts put forth by the department, informational measures are presented below. These measures have been carefully monitored and incorporated into a RAG (red, amber, green) rating system, which allows for a quick analysis in comparison to targets. The RAG rating categorizes the team’s performance as follows:

- 'Red' indicates that the data shows performance at 85% or less of the target.
- 'Amber' is applied to measures achieving more than 85% but less than 100% of the target.
- 'Green' is assigned to measures meeting or exceeding 100% of their target.

Despite the importance of these measures and their potential impact on the overall goals of RPU, it is essential to recognize that the numbers alone do not provide a comprehensive assessment in accounting for the quality of work being completed.

Red (R) – KPI is significantly missing target	Amber (A) – target was missed	Green (G) – target met or exceeded
0-<85%	85%-99.9%	100% +

SUGGESTED INFORMATIONAL MEASURES EFFECTIVE FY 2022/23	FY 2023/24	FY 2022/23	TARGET	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Social Media Engagement Rate	3.5% (G)	3.2% (G)	Remain above industry average. >2.5%	Engagement rate measures the number of engagements (reactions, comments, and shares) your content gets as a percentage of your audience. The measure aims to calculate what percentage of people who were exposed to a post chose to engage with it in some way. Per Hootsuite platform, a good engagement rate is between 1% to 5%.
Email Open Rate - Residential	55% (G)	52% (G)	Remain above industry average. >29%	Produced and defined by Granicus platform annually with consideration to surrounding agencies in the region utilizing GovDelivery email platform.
Email Engagement - Residential	69% (G)	70% (G)	Remain above industry average. >51%	Produced and defined by Granicus platform annually with consideration to surrounding agencies in the region utilizing GovDelivery email platform.
Email Open Rate - Commercial	46%	N/A	Remain above industry average. >29%	Produced and defined by Granicus platform annually with consideration to surrounding agencies in the region utilizing GovDelivery email platform.
Email Engagement - Commercial	63%	N/A	Remain above industry average. >51%	Produced and defined by Granicus platform annually with consideration to surrounding agencies in the region utilizing GovDelivery email platform.

While certain initiatives can be quantified, there are also endeavors intended solely for informational purposes, without direct comparison to industry benchmarks.

Informational Only			
Graphic Design Projects	190	183	Total number of graphic design projects for RPU.

Videos Developed	34	20	Total number of RPU videos developed. Including social media reels/videos.
Social Media Posts	959 (2.6 per day)	1,400 (3.8 per day)	Total number of RPU posts on all platforms.
Hours Spent on RPU Website	528	2,252	Total hours spent on RPU web updates.
Board/Committee Meeting Videos	21	21	Total number of RPU meetings broadcasted.

In addition to the informational measures outlined above, Marketing and Communications will begin to provide updates to the Board periodically to share and report on upcoming and past communication efforts, accomplishments, campaigns, large projects and/or other communication efforts created on behalf of RPU. The Marketing and Communications team will maintain its collaboration with RPU leadership to consistently enhance utility communications and elevate customer service, ensuring that the needs of both internal and external customers are effectively met.

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 5 - High Performing Government** and **Goal 5.3** to enhance communication and collaboration with community members to improve transparency, build public trust and encourage shared decision-making.

This agreement aligns with the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – Marketing and Communications provides transparent, timely communications for RPU programs, projects, and various areas of community engagement to educate and inform the community and build public trust.
2. **Equity** – Marketing and Communications provides RPU’s ratepayers with multiple outreach efforts to ensure information about RPU’s programs and services is equally available to provide the highest public benefit.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The service level agreement brings economies of scale to RPU thus minimizing operational costs to rate payers.
4. **Innovation** – The service level agreement has proven to be collaborative and adaptable by implementing creative solutions to best meet the needs of RPU.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Marketing and Communications ensures that RPU can communicate and adapt communication methods as needed to continue providing long-lasting programs that meet the current and future needs of ratepayers.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this informational update.

Prepared by: Kaitlin Reiersen, Director of Marketing & Communications  
 Approved by: David A. Garcia, Utilities General Manager

Certified as to  
availability of funds: Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer  
Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager  
Approved as to form: Jack Liu, Interim City Attorney

Attachment: Presentation