COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY · IMPLEMENTATION

A Phased Implementation Plan for the City of Victor, Idaho

Media Arts for Mountain Towns

DATE

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TETON COUNTY
CHAMBER OF CULTURE

A Phased Approach

Victor's communications challenges are real, but so are its constraints. The City Administrator is also the de facto PIO. The newsletter already falls on a two-person team. Council has previously supported communications infrastructure and then stepped back from it. Building a communications architecture on a foundation that can't hold its weight isn't a strategy. It's a liability.

This document sequences the full framework into three phases, ordered by staff burden and political lift rather than strategic importance. Each phase is designed to be functional on its own, not a precursor that requires the next phase to matter. The goal is to build something sustainable first, then expand it as capacity and confidence grow.

> ***All seven tactics are designed to fill the same void: the information vacuum that manufactured outrage and corrosive cynicism rush to occupy. The question is not whether to fill it, but how to start, and where the floor is strong enough to build on.***

Phase I starts with what is already there. Victor has a Mailchimp list, a track record of accessible writing (the Wastewater Matters series is proof of concept) and a community that responded to it. A lighter, more frequent newsletter built on that model is a different product than the polished quarterly that proved unsustainable. It fails more gracefully when a week gets missed. It builds a habit rather than a monument. And it requires a modest budget line for a part-time content writer rather than a production contract.

The other Phase I tactics (the Media Relations Policy, Ask Victor, and En Dos Idiomas) are either one-time governance efforts or infrastructure that, once stood up, runs largely without ongoing staff time. They are the foundation the heavier lifts need beneath them.

Phase II and Phase III remain in the plan. They are not deferred indefinitely; they are sequenced honestly, so that when the time and capacity are right, the infrastructure to support them is already in place.

Phase I

Foundation Tactics · Low Staff Burden · Start Now

02 The Media Relations Policy

One Voice. No Loopholes.

WHAT IT IS

A governance framework that establishes a clear circuit for how information is verified and shared when media inquiries arrive. It protects elected officials, staff, and outside contractors by ensuring everyone is working from the same facts, protecting the institution from the confusion that results when they are not.

WHAT IT REQUIRES

One-time drafting effort to produce the policy document and contract language for outside vendors. Ongoing commitment from the PIO to route and respond to inquiries. No recurring budget required.

WHY NOW

The current environment, with multiple media touchpoints independently sourcing council members, staff, and legal counsel simultaneously, is exactly the condition this policy is designed for. It is the lowest-lift tactic with the highest immediate return.

01 Ask Victor

A Smarter Front Door

WHAT IT IS

An AI-powered chatbot on the City's website that answers plain-language resident questions from existing public documents, meeting records, and staff reports. Handles informational triage so staff can focus on conversations that require human judgment.

WHAT IT REQUIRES

Platform selection (several exist at low or no cost for municipalities). Initial content setup from existing documents. One staff member responsible for keeping source material current. Setup cost; minimal ongoing burden.

WHY NOW

Reduces the single most common driver of resident frustration (the inability to find basic information) without adding to staff call volume. Once deployed, it runs. It is the door that stays open even when staff are stretched.

03 The Email Newsletter

Consistent Cadence. Plain Language.

WHAT IT IS

A regular, plain-language newsletter through the City's existing Mailchimp list. Modeled on the Wastewater Matters series: specific, accessible, and direct. Not the polished quarterly that required production time the team no longer has. A lighter product, sent more frequently, written the way the City actually talks.

WHAT IT REQUIRES

A modest budget line for a part-time content writer and staff time for review and distribution. A committed cadence (biweekly or monthly) and a simple template that makes each issue producible in hours, not days. The infrastructure is already there.

WHY NOW

The Wastewater Matters series demonstrated the model works. Residents responded to plain-language, specific, accessible writing. The barrier is not appetite; it is production burden. This version is designed to clear that bar.

06 En Dos Idiomas

Spanish and English

WHAT IT IS

A commitment that Phase I communications (the newsletter, key website pages, and the chatbot) are produced in both English and Spanish as a standard, not an add-on. Translation after the fact signals accommodation. Bilingual production signals belonging.

WHAT IT REQUIRES

A reliable translation resource. The Hispanic community in Victor almost certainly includes residents with professional translation capacity who would welcome the invitation to contribute. That conversation is worth having before hiring outside. Built into Phase I from the start, it adds minimal friction.

WHY NOW

A communications strategy that Phase I Spanish-speaking residents out is not a communications strategy for Victor. It is easier to build this in from the beginning than to retrofit it later.

Phase II

Relational Tactics · Requires Elected Official Buy-In · When Ready

04 Vote Club

In-Person, Informal, Intentionally Accessible

WHAT IT IS

A recurring informal gathering (monthly or quarterly) hosted by one elected official and one staff member at a local Victor business. One topic, no agenda, no podium, no public comment timer. A conversation, not a hearing.

WHAT IT REQUIRES

An elected official willing to show up. A staff member alongside them. A local business willing to host. Communication through the newsletter. The newsletter built in Phase I is what tells people it is happening.

WHY NOW

Not Phase I: it requires an elected official's commitment, which is a political lift. But once the newsletter is running and residents know how to find the city, Vote Club is the next natural step: from informed to engaged.

05 The Victor Voice

A Community Media Platform

WHAT IT IS

A community media platform covering Victor's civic life: how decisions get made, what the tradeoffs are, who is showing up, what the land is doing, told with specificity, honesty, and an evident point of view: that this community is worth the intention it requires. Starts small: a monthly long-form piece distributed through the newsletter.

WHAT IT REQUIRES

An editorial commitment and someone with the writing authority and genuine knowledge of Victor to do it well. The newsletter built in Phase I is the distribution channel. This is the content that makes the channel worth opening.

WHY NOW

Phase II because it requires editorial infrastructure and a consistent content commitment the city needs to be ready to sustain. But the newsletter makes it possible — the audience and the channel are already there.

Phase III

The Long Game · Measured in Years · Start the Conversation Now

07 Monuments to Meaning

Public Art as Civic Infrastructure

WHAT IT IS

A long-term public art framework: murals, sculpture, interpretive installations at trailheads. It makes Victor's identity and values physical and permanent in the public realm. The oldest form of civic communication and one of the most durable.

WHAT IT REQUIRES

A policy commitment that public art is civic infrastructure. A volunteer or staff liaison to begin the community conversation. A long-term funding framework (grants, percent-for-art policies, community fundraising) that does not depend on a budget the City does not currently have. And patience.

WHY NOW

The conversation starts now, not the construction. Beginning the policy and community dialogue in Phase I or II means the framework is in place when funding becomes available. This is the tactic measured in years, not months. But years pass.

All Seven Tactics at a Glance

#	Tactic	Subtitle	Phase	Lift
01	**Ask Victor**	A Smarter Front Door	I	Low
02	**Media Relations Policy**	One Voice. No Loopholes.	I	Low
03	**The Email Newsletter**	Consistent Cadence. Plain Language.	I	Low–Med
04	**Vote Club**	In-Person, Informal, Intentionally Accessible	II	Medium
05	**The Victor Voice**	A Community Media Platform	II	Medium
06	**En Dos Idiomas**	Spanish and English	I	Low
07	**Monuments to Meaning**	Public Art as Civic Infrastructure	III	Long-term