



CITY OF TACOMA

University of Washington
Urban Design and Planning
CEP 460: Planning In Context
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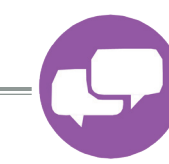
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PDS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN IMPLEMENTATION: SOCIAL MEDIA



Introduction

As social media becomes an increasingly prevalent form of communication, it offers a new opportunity for government agencies and departments to engage with the public.

The Social Media report offers a handbook for Planning and Development Services (PDS) staff, based on a survey of peer city social media accounts, the City of Tacoma's Social Media guidelines, and social media best practices.

By establishing a new social media presence, PDS can expand their communications strategy to deliver updates on city-related projects, provide help and support to residents, and learn about community priorities.



Tacoma PDS @TacomaPDS · 43s

Last night, we had this lovely group of [#urbanplanning](#) students from [@UWTacoma](#) do a meet and greet with our employees! Thanks for coming!



Photo Credit: Social Media Team
An example of posting a photo on Twitter and tagging another account in the tweet.

Methods

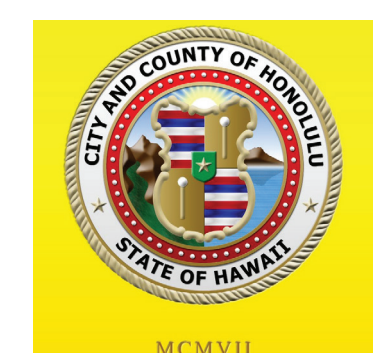
Through a review of peer cities and their social media operations, as well as a review of social media demographics and reach, we focused on two social media platforms for PDS to use as they engage with Tacoma residents: Facebook and Twitter.

The report offers case studies of other jurisdictions' official social media accounts: Seattle, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and Honolulu. We also examined a local account, Tacoma Untapped.

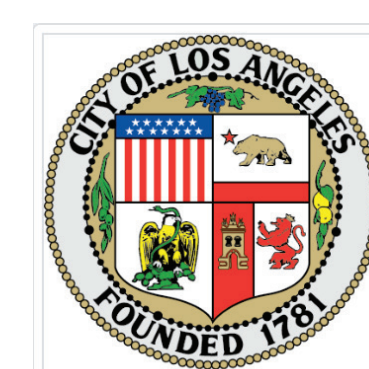
With effective use of social media, PDS can actively market Tacoma as a forward-thinking city and share the important work that PDS is performing for the city.



Seattle's Office of Planning and Community Development:
610 Facebook followers,
936 Twitter followers



The City and County of Honolulu:
4167 Facebook followers,
734 Twitter followers
(Planning and Permitting Department)



Planning4LA:
1880 Facebook followers, 1060
Twitter followers



Tacoma Untapped:
4865 Facebook followers,
3419 Twitter followers



City of Las Vegas:
71,364 Facebook followers

Recommendations

The Social Media Plan serves as a handbook for PDS staff to use as they launch and maintain a regular online presence, including graphic mockups to demonstrate how Facebook and Twitter can be used most effectively.

We conclude by recommending that staff dedicate time to social media in order to expand the department's outreach capacity. With effective use of social media, PDS can better connect with Tacoma residents, keep them engaged in city government, and promote a more livable city.

Some of the key recommendations of our handbook include:

- **Maintain a social media audience** through frequent, coordinated, visually interesting posts.
- **Post a diverse array of content related to local planning issues** — not only those related to City projects.
- **Ensure that all posts are aligned with citywide goals and guidelines.**
- **Respond to messages** in a timely manner.
- **Use analytics** to track and guide PDS social media posts.