



City of Fairburn Work Session Agenda

September 22, 2025
6:00 PM

The Honorable Mayor Mario Avery

The Honorable Mayor Pro-Tem Alex Heath
The Honorable Samantha Hudson
The Honorable Ulysses J. Smallwood

The Honorable Linda J. Davis
The Honorable Hattie Portis-Jones

Mr. Tony Phillips
Mr. Rory Starkey
Ms. Brenda B. James

City Administrator
City Attorney
City Clerk

I. Meeting Called to Order:

The Honorable Mayor Avery

II. Roll Call:

City Clerk

III. Agenda Items:

1. Discussion regarding the proposed Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Fairburn, Georgia and the Development Authority of Fairburn, Georgia for Downtown Development **(Economic Development)**
2. City of Fairburn Proposed Communications Policy **(Communications)**

IV. Adjournment:

When an Executive Session is required, one will be called for the following Issues:
(1) Personnel (2) Real Estate or (3) Litigation



CITY OF FAIRBURN WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT: Discussion regarding the proposed Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Fairburn, Georgia and the Development Authority of Fairburn, Georgia for Downtown Development

ITEM TYPE: Discussion

SUBMITTED: 09/17/2025 **WORK SESSION:** 9/22/2025 **COUNCIL MEETING:** N/A

DEPARTMENT: Economic Development

BUDGET IMPACT: \$250,000

PUBLIC HEARING: No

PURPOSE:

To provide background and context regarding the proposed Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the City of Fairburn and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA)/Development Authority (DA). This agreement is a significant milestone in advancing downtown redevelopment and revitalization efforts, establishing the framework for financing, property acquisition, and long-term investment in Fairburn's historic core.

HISTORY:

Downtown Fairburn has long been identified as the City's cultural and commercial heart, with multiple planning studies—including the LCI Gateway Connectivity Study, Comprehensive Plan, and Economic Development Strategic Plan—calling for targeted property acquisitions to catalyze revitalization.

The 25 Broad Street property, formerly a bank building, has been recognized as a priority redevelopment site given its visibility, size, and potential as an anchor project for downtown.

FACTS AND ISSUES:

The acquisition of the 25 Broad Street property is a cornerstone of downtown development. The site represents one of downtown's most prominent and historic structures and is central to the city's redevelopment strategy. Its restoration and reuse—whether as a multi-tenant facility, restaurant, or through redevelopment in partnership with a private developer—will serve as a catalyst project, setting the tone for future downtown investments.

The DDA/DA will take the lead in acquiring and stewarding this property, ensuring it is positioned for productive reuse that contributes to the vitality of the district. This role highlights the Authorities' function as both a development partner and a long-term asset manager for downtown properties.

- **Strategic Location:** The 25 Broad Street property is prominently located within the historic commercial core. Its acquisition gives the City and its Authorities control over a key site that can serve as a gateway for further redevelopment.
- **Catalytic Potential:** The property can be restored for tenancy (such as restaurant, office, or co-working space) or redeveloped in partnership with a private developer, creating immediate economic activity and long-term growth.
- **Role of the Authorities:** The DDA/DA will act as the acquiring entity, leveraging their statutory redevelopment powers to manage, reposition, and market the site for productive reuse.
- **Phased Structure:** The IGA establishes a multi-phase approach, beginning with this acquisition and expanding to other downtown parcels, including opportunities tied to the Fairburn City Center – Education Campus Expansion.

FUNDING SOURCE:

Following the fulfillment of all FY25 expenditures and encumbrances, the City will draw \$250,000 from the Budgetary Balance Account (reserve) to provide the required local match. This will be a one-time use of fund balance that will not affect current-year operations. The reserve will remain in compliance with the City’s fund balance policy.

- **Acquisition Funding:** The Development Authority will contribute \$250,000 toward the acquisition of 25 Broad Street and is requesting a \$250,000 match from the City of Fairburn to complete the purchase and repair.
- **Revenue Recovery:** As the Authorities acquire and redevelop properties, revenues from leases, rents, or redevelopment proceeds will help offset debt obligations.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Intergovernmental Contract (City IGA) - Fairburn - Downtown Revitalization and Redevelopment Projects - 2025(320184390.3

INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONTRACT

Between

DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF FAIRBURN

and

CITY OF FAIRBURN, GEORGIA

Dated as of _____, 2025

INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONTRACT

THIS INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONTRACT, dated as of _____, 2025 (this “**Contract**”), made and entered into by and between the **DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF FAIRBURN** (the “**Authority**”), a development authority and public body corporate and politic created and activated under the Development Authorities Law, O.C.G.A. Section 36-62-1, *et seq.*, as amended (the “**Act**”), and the **CITY OF FAIRBURN, GEORGIA**, a municipality chartered under the laws of the State of Georgia (the “**State**”) acting by and through its elected Mayor and Council.

W I T N E S S E T H:

- A. The City, by proper resolution, declared that there is a need for the Authority to function in the City, as required by the terms of the Act; the Authority has been duly created and activated pursuant to the terms of the Act, and its directors have been elected as provided therein and are currently acting in that capacity.
- B. The Act authorizes the Authority, among other things, to carry out any “project” which includes the acquisition, construction, installation, modification, renovation, or rehabilitation of land, interests in land, buildings, structures, facilities, or other improvements and the acquisition, installation, modification, renovation, rehabilitation, or furnishing of fixtures, machinery, equipment, furniture, or other property of any nature whatsoever used on, in, or in connection with any such land, interest in land, building, structure, facility, or other improvement, all for the essential public purpose of the development of trade, commerce, industry, and employment opportunities, which project may be for any industrial, commercial, business, office, parking, public, or other use, provided that a majority of the members of the Authority determines, by a duly adopted resolution, that the project and such use thereof would further the public purpose of the Act.
- C. A majority of the directors of the Authority have found and determined, and the Authority does hereby find and determine, that the entry by the Authority into the below-defined PSA and the Authority’s purchase of the below-defined Historic Bank Building pursuant thereto will promote the objectives of the Act, by increasing employment in the territorial areas of the Authority and thereby developing and promoting trade, commerce, industry and employment opportunities for the public good and the general welfare within the City and promote the general welfare of the State.
- D. The City is a governmental body as described in the Revenue Bond Law, O.C.G.A. Sec. 36-82-60, *et seq.*, and is authorized to undertake projects described therein which include the purchase of land and the construction thereon of facilities for lease to industries, so as to relieve abnormal unemployment conditions.
- E. In accordance with O.C.G.A. Sec. 48-5-350 (the millage authorized thereby, the “**Economic Development Millage**”), the City may levy and collect an annual tax to provide financial assistance to the Authority for the purpose of developing trade, commerce, industry, and employment opportunities; provided, however, that the tax for

such purpose shall not exceed three mills per dollar upon the assessed value of the taxable property in the City (such limit, the “**Millage Cap**”).

F. Article IX, Section III, Paragraph I(a) of the Constitution of the State of Georgia authorizes, among other things, any county, municipality or other political subdivision of the State to contract, for a period not exceeding fifty years, with another county, municipality or political subdivision or with any other public agency, public corporation or public authority for joint services, for the provision of services, or for the provision or separate use of facilities or equipment, provided that such contract deals with activities, services or facilities which the contracting parties are authorized by law to undertake or to provide.

G. The City and the Authority have respectively found and determined, and do hereby find and determine, that, as to each of them respectively, this Contract deals with activities, services or facilities which such contracting party is authorized by law to undertake or provide, and that hence, this Contract is authorized by said Constitutional provision.

H. In order to pay the costs of purchasing the Historic Bank Building, including transaction costs, the Authority needs funding in addition to its own funds now available to it. Accordingly, the Authority has requested that the City provide funding (the “**City Funding**”) to the Authority in the amount of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000.00).

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing and the respective representations, covenants and agreements hereinafter set forth, the Authority and the City hereby agree as follows:

ARTICLE I

DEFINITIONS; RECITALS

Section 1.01 Definitions. Unless the context clearly requires a different meaning, the following terms are used herein with the following meanings:

“**Environmental Laws**” includes any applicable federal or state law or regulation relating to health, safety or the environment, and includes, but is not limited to, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 6901 et seq., as amended, the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act of 1980, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 9601 et seq., as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986, and as further amended, the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. Sec. 1251 et seq., as amended, the Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 7401 et seq., as amended, and the Toxic Substances Control Act, 15 U.S.C. Sec. 2601 et seq., as amended, regardless of whether or not any liability thereunder or violation thereof relates to any period prior to the acquisition of the Historic Bank Building by the Authority.

“**Historic Bank Building**” means the improved real estate located at 25 West Broad Street, Fairburn, Georgia 30213.

“PSA” means that certain “Commercial Sales Agreement” dated as of September 3, 2025, for the purchase by the Authority of the Historic Bank Building from RDQ Group LLC as seller (“Seller”). A copy of the PSA is attached as Schedule I hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

Section 1.02 Recitals Incorporated Herein. The recitals set forth above are incorporated in this Contract by this reference.

ARTICLE II **HISTORIC BANK BUILDING**

Section 2.01 Purchase. In consideration of the agreement of the City contained herein to provide the City Funding, the Authority agrees to complete the purchase of the Historic Bank Building in accordance with the PSA, provided that:

- (a) The Authority may in its sole discretion terminate the PSA, such as in the event of unfavorable due diligence results regarding the Historic Bank Building.
- (b) The Authority may enter into such amendments, grant such waivers or extensions, and take such other actions regarding the PSA, its performance, and the purchase of the History Bank Building as the Authority determines to be in its best interest, upon notice to the City.
- (c) If for any reason, including action by the Authority under (b), above, the closing of the purchase of the Historic Bank Building does not occur, then the Authority shall, promptly after the expiration or termination of the PSA, as and if amended, return to the City the City Funding, less any amounts properly expended during the effectiveness of the PSA. If necessary for such purposes, expenditures shall be prorated equally between the City and the Authority.

Section 2.02 Use. The Authority’s use of the Historic Bank Building will be in compliance with the Act, including, but not limited to, O.C.G.A. § 36-62-7, which is part of the Act. In addition, the Authority might transfer ownership of the Historic Bank Building to another suitable public body, including, but not limited to, the Downtown Development Authority of Fairburn, or sell the Historic Bank Building, in each case on such terms and conditions as the Authority and such other public body or purchaser might determine at the time.

ARTICLE III **CITY FUNDING;** **CITY ASSISTANCE; CITY RESPONSIBILITES**

Section 3.01 City Funding. Pursuant to this Contract, the City agrees to provide the City Funding using funds available from the levy of its Economic Development Millage, subject to the Millage Cap, or from any other lawfully available funds of the City (including from its general funds), The City agrees to provide the City Funding to the Authority by check or other mutually satisfactory means promptly upon the execution by the City and the Authority of this Contract.

Section 3.01 Use of City Funding. The Authority agrees to use the City Funding only as contemplated in this Contract. The Authority may deposit and deal with the City Funding generally as it does its own funds, including the commingling of the City Funding with such Authority funds, and without the necessity of interest accruing thereon.

Section 3.02 Amounts Remaining from City Funding. It is agreed by the parties hereto that any amounts of the City Funding remaining after all expenditures contemplated herein have been made and all other amounts required to be paid have been paid, shall be paid to the City. If necessary for such purposes, expenditures and payments shall be prorated equally between the City and the Authority.

Section 3.03 Return of City Funding. The Authority will use reasonable commercial efforts, as determined by the Authority in its discretion, to generate net revenue from the Historic Bank Building and any other Authority projects which can be used to return to the City any amount of the City Funding not previously returned to the City, except to the extent that the Authority shall determine in its discretion that such would be inconsistent with carrying out its public purposes under the Act.. In addition, the proceeds of any future revenue bonds issued by the Authority that are secured by a pledge of the Economic Development Millage pursuant to the future agreement of the City in its sole discretion shall be a source for the return of the amount of the City Funding, to the extent allowed by the provisions governing any such revenue bond issue.

Section 3.04 Assistance with Transaction. The City agrees to provide in-kind assistance to the Authority using the City's own public works department and, should the City determine to do so in its sole discretion, using such contractors and subcontracts as the City may engage in compliance with applicable law, for the purposes of due diligence regarding the Historic Bank Building and matters relating to its rehabilitation. The scope of such in-kind assistance shall be as reasonably determined by the City.

Section 3.05 City Responsibilities. The City and the Authority acknowledge that the Authority's entering into the PSA was in contemplation of the City assuming responsibility for claims, losses, liabilities, and damages that the Authority might incur because of the PSA or because of its ownership, rehabilitation or use of the Historic Bank. Such losses claims, liabilities and damages might include, but are not limited to, those occurring under the Environmental Laws or claims by third parties. As between the City and the Authority, the City hereby assumes such responsibilities, the effect of which shall be that the City is deemed to be responsible to hold harmless, indemnify and defend the Authority and its officials, directors, members, agents, employees, officers, and legal representatives (the Authority and each such person, each, an "**Indemnified Person**") from any and all such losses, claims liabilities, and damages. The City will not be obligated to indemnify any Indemnified Person for the Indemnified Person's own gross negligence or intentional act or omission. Said indemnification shall survive the expiration or termination of this Contract as to any particular previously incurred indemnification obligation.

ARTICLE IV **TERM; MISCELLANEOUS**

Section 4.01 Term of this Contract. This Contract shall be in full force and effect from the date of delivery hereof until such time as the last of the following events has occurred: the

Authority has closed its purchase of the History Bank Building, or the PSA has expired or been terminated without such closing; if the purchase of the Historic Bank Building has closed, then its rehabilitation by the Authority has been completed. The foregoing notwithstanding, in no event shall this Contract extend beyond fifty years from its date.

Section 4.02 Notices. All communications provided for herein shall be in writing and shall be sufficiently given and served upon the Authority, the City and the Holder, as applicable, if sent by email with a copy thereof to follow by United States registered mail, return receipt requested, postage prepaid and addressed as follows:

If to the Authority: Development Authority of Fairburn
56 Malone Street SW
Fairburn, Georgia 30213
Attn: Chairman

with a copy to: Seyfarth Shaw LLP
1075 Peachtree Street, NE, Suite 2500
Atlanta, Georgia 30309
Attn: Daniel M. McRae, Esq.

If to the City: City of Fairburn, Georgia
56 Malone Street SW
Fairburn, Georgia 30213
Attn: City Manager

with a copy to: _____

Attn: _____

Any party, by notice given hereunder, may designate different addresses to which subsequent notices, certificates or other communications will be sent.

Section 4.03 Binding Effect; No Third-Party Beneficiaries. This Contract shall inure to the benefit of and shall be binding upon the Authority and the City, and their respective successors and assigns. There are no third-party beneficiaries of this Contract.

Section 4.04 Severability. In the event any provision of this Contract shall be held invalid or unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction, such holding shall not invalidate or render unenforceable any other provision hereof.

Section 4.05 Amendments, Changes and Modifications. This Contract may not be amended, changed, modified or altered except as by written agreement of the City and the Authority.

Section 4.06 Execution Counterparts. This Contract may be simultaneously executed in several counterparts, each of which shall be an original and all of which shall constitute but one and the same instrument.

Section 4.07 Captions. The captions or headings in this Contract are for convenience only and in no way define, limit or describe the scope or intent of any provisions of this Contract.

Section 4.08 Law Governing Construction of Contract. This Contract shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the State of Georgia.

[SIGNATURES BEGIN ON FOLLOWING PAGE]

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Authority and the City have caused this Contract to be executed in their respective names and their respective seals to be hereunto affixed and attested by their respective duly authorized officers, all as of the date first above written.

**DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF
FAIRBURN**

By: _____
Chairman

ATTEST:

Secretary

[SEAL]

CITY OF FAIRBURN, GEORGIA

By: _____
Mayor

ATTEST:

Clerk

[SEAL]

SCHEDULE I
PSA

(TO BE ATTACHED)

City of Fairburn – Communications Policy

City Council Work Session | September 2025

Presented by: Jacqueline Howell, Director of Communications

Why a Communications Policy is Needed



- Rapid information flow requires accuracy, consistency, and transparency.
- Builds public trust by ensuring accountability across all departments.
- Provides clear protocols for media, social media, crises, and internal updates.
- Positions Fairburn as a forward-thinking leader in municipal communications.
- Supports equity, accessibility, and inclusive engagement with residents.

Policy Purpose & Scope



- Framework for all communications: internal & external.
- Applies to Mayor & Council, staff, contractors, volunteers.
- Covers press releases, website, social media, newsletters, emergency alerts.
- Ensures communications are timely, accurate, consistent, inclusive, compliant.

Roles & Responsibilities



- Mayor & Council: strategic leadership, ceremonial announcements.
- City Administrator: oversight and compliance.
- Communications Director: lead spokesperson, strategy, crisis management.
- Department Directors: designate liaison, provide updates, ensure brand compliance.
- IT, HR, Legal: provide technical, onboarding, and compliance support.

External Communications & Media Relations



- All media inquiries directed to Communications.
- Only approved spokespersons may speak for the City.
- Press releases must follow templates and be approved.
- Annual media training for directors, staff, and elected officials.

Crisis Communications



- Three crisis levels: minor, citywide disruption, major emergency.
- Crisis Communications Team led by Communications Director.
- Pre-approved templates ensure quick, accurate messaging.
- After-action reviews completed within 30 days.

Social Media Policy



- Official accounts managed by Communications.
- Content must be clear, professional, accessible.
- Posts scheduled weekly; urgent posts require approval.
- Comment moderation logged; Open Records compliance.
- Personal use disclaimers required for employees & officials.

Internal Communications



- Daily Digest emails, intranet portal, Town Halls.
- Surveys, suggestion boxes, and pulse polls for engagement.
- Recognition programs highlight staff milestones and achievements.
- Promotes transparency, collaboration, and staff alignment.

Branding & Public Information



- Branding reflects the City's identity and professionalism.
- Governed by the City's Branding Guide: logos, fonts, colors, photography, taglines.
- All public-facing materials must be reviewed and approved by Communications.
- Accessibility is required – ADA and WCAG compliance (captions, alt-text, readability).
- Vendors and partners must follow City branding standards.

Innovation & Performance



- Exploring emerging media: podcasts, livestreams, short-form video.
- AI tools used responsibly with human review.
- KPIs measured monthly & quarterly: website traffic, engagement, media coverage.
- Annual Communications Report shared with Council & residents.

Community Engagement & Equity



- Equity-centered communication practices.
- Key materials translated into Spanish and other languages.
- Outreach reflects community diversity.
- Engagement tools: introduction of a new engagement platform (app), surveys, forums, advisory panels.

Public Feedback Strategy



- Feedback is a two-way process.
- Channels: surveys, QR codes, social media polls, forums.
- Quarterly reports integrate feedback into planning.

Implementation Schedule – Starting October 2025



- October 2025 – Council adoption & departmental liaison assignments.
- November 2025 – Citywide training for staff and elected officials.
- December 2025 – Departmental communications action plans submitted.
- January 2026 – Launch of centralized communications workflows and templates.
- Quarterly 2026 – Performance dashboards, equity audits, and feedback reports.

Closing Message



- Policy is a commitment to excellence, equity, and transparency.
- Ensures residents feel seen, heard, and informed.
- Positions Fairburn as a leader in municipal communications.

CITY OF FAIRBURN COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Prepared By:
Communications Department

Effective Date:
August 2025

2025



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

It is with great pride and purpose that I present to you the **City of Fairburn Communications Policy**—a comprehensive blueprint designed to ensure that every message we share reflects the values, priorities, and integrity of our city.

In a time when information moves rapidly and trust in government is more vital than ever, this policy serves as both a compass and a safeguard. It establishes clear expectations, strengthens accountability, and promotes transparency across all departments. From daily messaging to emergency response, from inclusive community outreach to digital innovation, this policy ensures that our communication efforts are not only professional—but intentional, equitable, and strategic.

This document is more than policy—it is a **commitment** to excellence. A commitment to telling our story with clarity. A commitment to ensuring our residents feel seen, heard, and informed. A commitment to making Fairburn a model for how municipalities can communicate with transparency, creativity, and care.

As we implement this policy, we invite each of you—elected officials, employees, partners, and residents—to play an active role in shaping how we engage with our community. Effective communication is a shared responsibility, and every word, image, and message contribute to how we are perceived and how we serve.

I am honored to lead this work and grateful for the support of our Mayor, Council, City Administrators, and every department that contributed to the creation of this document. Together, we will continue to raise the bar—not just for Fairburn, but for cities across our state and nation.

With dedication and purpose,

Jacqueline Howell

Jacqueline Howell

Director of Communications
City of Fairburn, Georgia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Fairburn Communications Policy serves as the formal framework governing all aspects of internal and external communication conducted on behalf of the City. This comprehensive policy establishes standards and procedures for maintaining clear, timely, transparent, and accurate communications that reflect the City's strategic priorities, uphold legal obligations, and build public trust.

Recognizing that communications are central to effective governance, community engagement, and service delivery, the City commits to a modernized, professionalized approach. This policy includes detailed protocols for media relations, crisis communications, social media management, internal staff communication, public engagement, digital innovation, data measurement, branding, and legal compliance.

In addition, this blueprint positions Fairburn as a municipal leader by integrating emerging technologies, equity-centered practices, and performance accountability, ensuring the City meets the diverse needs of its residents today and into the future.

Key Highlights:

- Centralized media relations and crisis management with designated spokespersons
- Professional social media governance, including archiving, moderation, and personal use standards
- Inclusive and multilingual communications practices to reach all community segments
- Data-driven reporting with clear KPIs and annual performance reviews
- Forward-thinking policies on AI-generated content, podcasts, video, and livestreaming
- Strong legal compliance protocols and open records management

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

I. Purpose

The purpose of the City of Fairburn Communications Policy is to establish a formal framework governing all communication activities, both internal and external, across all departments, elected officials, and representatives. This policy ensures that communications are timely, accurate, consistent, transparent, inclusive, legally compliant, and aligned with the City's strategic goals. Effective communication builds public trust, enhances operational effectiveness, supports community engagement, and strengthens the City's reputation as a forward-thinking, responsive government.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all communications created, shared, or published on behalf of the City of Fairburn, including but not limited to:

- Press releases, media advisories, public statements
- Official website content, newsletters, public notices
- Social media posts, videos, podcasts, and livestreams
- Internal memos, staff announcements, and operational updates
- Emergency alerts, crisis communications, and service disruptions

It covers communications initiated by City departments, elected officials, contractors, consultants, volunteers, and any individuals or entities acting on behalf of the City.

III. Applicability

All City employees, elected officials, department heads, appointed boards and commissions, contractors, interns, vendors, and authorized spokespersons are required to adhere to this policy. Compliance is mandatory as a condition of employment, appointment, or contractual engagement.

IV. Alignment with Strategic Goals

This policy supports the City's overarching strategic goals, including:

- Enhancing transparency and public trust
- Promoting equitable access to information
- Supporting economic development and business engagement
- Improving internal collaboration and operational efficiency
- Leveraging technology and innovation to improve service delivery

V. Objectives

Specific objectives of this policy include:

- Defining clear roles and responsibilities for communications activities
- Establishing procedures and approval workflows
- Providing templates, tools, and training to support consistent practices
- Setting performance measures and accountability mechanisms
- Ensuring compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, including open records, copyright, and ADA accessibility

2. DEFINITIONS

I. Communication

The process of transmitting information, ideas, or messages to a defined audience through written, verbal, visual, or digital channels.

II. Official Communication

Any message, statement, document, or content created, approved, or disseminated on behalf of the City of Fairburn that reflects the City's official positions, services, policies, or programs.

III. Internal Communication

Information shared within the City government for operational purposes, including internal memos, staff directives, HR announcements, or interdepartmental updates.

IV. External Communication

Information shared with residents, businesses, media, stakeholders, or external entities, including public announcements, press releases, social media posts, and public notices.

V. Multimedia

Content that uses a combination of text, audio, video, images, animations, or interactive elements, including livestreams, podcasts, and recorded media.

VI. AI-Generated Content

Any communication material partially or fully created using artificial intelligence tools, subject to human review for accuracy, appropriateness, and compliance.

VII. Crisis Communication

Predefined, coordinated messaging used during emergencies, disasters, or incidents that impact public safety, city operations, or the City's reputation.

VIII. Branding

The standardized visual and messaging elements that represent the City's identity, including logos, fonts, colors, taglines, and tone of voice.

IX. Citizen Listening

The proactive gathering and analysis of public sentiment, feedback, concerns, or ideas using surveys, social media monitoring, public meetings, and online tools.

X. ADA Compliance

The adherence to the Americans with Disabilities Act by ensuring all communications (written, digital, and multimedia) are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

XI. DEI Communications

Communication practices intentionally designed to reflect and engage Fairburn's diverse population, incorporating principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in both message and medium.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I. Mayor and City Council

- Provide strategic leadership on citywide priorities
- Participate in major public announcements and ceremonial communications
- Endorse official statements as needed and ensure alignment with City values

II. City Administrator

- Serve as the chief administrative spokesperson on operational matters
- Oversee execution of citywide communication strategies in partnership with the Communications Director
- Ensure department heads comply with communication policies
- Support the Communications Director in crisis situations and legal matters

III. Communications Director (Public Information Officer)

- Lead all communications planning, strategy, content development, and public engagement
- Serve as the City's primary media contact and spokesperson, or delegate as appropriate
- Review, approve, and oversee all external communications, including press releases, social media, website content, and marketing materials
- Maintain communication archives, including media logs, social media records, and public statements
- Provide regular media training for staff, elected officials, and department liaisons
- Lead the Crisis Communications Team during emergencies

IV. Department Directors

- Assign a departmental communications liaison to coordinate with the Communications Department
- Submit timely updates on programs, projects, and initiatives for inclusion in external and internal communications

- Ensure departmental messaging aligns with the City's brand and standards
- Participate in communications training and ensure team compliance

V. IT Department

- Manage secure access and technical support for communications platforms, including websites, social media, and archiving systems
- Assist with monitoring analytics and system performance

VI. Human Resources

- Integrate communications policy into employee onboarding, handbooks, and training
- Monitor adherence to social media and conduct policies by staff
- Provide support for internal messaging around personnel, benefits, and workplace initiatives

VII. Legal Counsel

- Review sensitive or high-risk communications for compliance with federal, state, and local laws
- Collaborate during crises, investigations, or litigation to ensure proper messaging

4. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA RELATIONS

I. Media Inquiry Protocols

All media inquiries—whether by phone, email, or social media—must be directed to the Communications Director or designated media liaisons. No staff member or elected official should respond to media without consulting the Communications Department. All inquiries will be logged, including reporter name, outlet, date/time, inquiry topic, and assigned response lead.

II. Spokesperson Approval

The Communications Director, Mayor and/or City Administrator serves as the City's primary spokespersons. Secondary spokespersons (e.g., Police Chief, Fire Chief) will be designated for specific topics, and only after formal approval. Spokespersons must complete media training and adhere to talking points and approved messaging.

III. Press Release Procedures

All press releases (not created by the Communications Department) must follow the approved City template and include a headline, date, contact information, body, and quote(s). Drafts should be submitted by department liaisons to the Communications Department no later than five business days before the intended release date. The Communications Director will review, edit, and approve all releases before distribution.

IV. Media Briefings & Public Statements

For major announcements or sensitive issues, the Communications Department will organize press conferences or media briefings. These will include prepared remarks, fact sheets, and anticipated Q&A. Elected officials and department leads will be briefed on key messages and may be coached on delivery.

V. Media Training & Best Practices

Annual media training will be provided to all department directors, key staff, and elected officials. Topics include on-camera interviews, crisis messaging, public speaking, and avoiding speculation. Refresher training is required following any major communications incident or leadership transition.

5. CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

I. Crisis Definition & Levels

Crisis events are defined as incidents that threaten public safety, disrupt services, damage the City's reputation, or require urgent public communication. Crises are classified as:

- Level 1: Minor, department-contained incident
- Level 2: City-wide operational disruption
- Level 3: Major emergency with regional/national media attention

II. Crisis Communications Team

The Communications Director will lead the Crisis Communications Team, which includes the City Administrator, department heads, public safety leaders, legal counsel, IT, and external partners as needed. This team is responsible for message coordination, information verification, and public updates.

III. Activation Protocols

Upon identification of a crisis, the Communications Director will:

- Notify the Crisis Communications Team and convene an immediate briefing
- Activate pre-prepared messaging templates and develop updated statements
- Determine appropriate communication channels (e.g., press releases, website banners, social media posts, emergency alerts)
- Ensure all public statements are verified by relevant departments and legal counsel

IV. Pre-Prepared Messaging & Templates

The Communications Department will maintain a library of pre-approved crisis communication templates, including for weather emergencies, public health events, cyberattacks, infrastructure failures, and public safety incidents. Templates will be updated annually and tested through simulation exercises.

V. Monitoring & Feedback

During crises, the Communications Team will monitor media coverage, social media sentiment, and community feedback. Regular updates will be provided internally, and public FAQs will be updated to address misinformation or concerns.

VI. After-Action Reviews

Following each crisis event, the Communications Director will lead an after-action review, documenting lessons learned, gaps in communication, and recommendations for improvement. A written report will be submitted to the City Administrator and Mayor/Council within 30 days.

6. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

I. Governance and Access

All official City of Fairburn social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, YouTube, LinkedIn, Nextdoor and TikTok) shall be established, owned, and managed by the Communications Department. The Communications Director will approve all platform creation, assign designated account managers, and ensure password security in coordination with the IT Department. Department-specific accounts are not permitted unless formally approved and administered through the Communications Department.

II. Content Standards

All posts must adhere to the City's brand, tone, and professional standards. Posts must be factual, grammatically correct, visually clean, and free from slang, sarcasm, or political bias. Before publishing, content must be reviewed for clarity, readability (8th-grade level when possible), and accessibility (e.g., image alt-text, closed captioning). Citations must be provided when referring to data or third-party sources.

III. Scheduling and Review Process

Social media content must be scheduled at least one week in advance using the City's designated social media management platform (e.g., Hootsuite, Buffer, Sprout Social). Each Monday, the Communications Director will review the rolling two-week content calendar with staff. Urgent or time-sensitive posts may be published outside of this schedule with approval from the Communications Director or their designee.

IV. Engagement and Monitoring

Social media is an official public-facing tool and should be used to answer citizen questions, promote services, and build public trust. The Communications Team will respond to comments, messages, and inquiries within 24 business hours whenever possible. Social media accounts will be monitored daily, including weekends, for misinformation, safety risks, or citizen concerns that require escalation.

V. Moderation and Commenting Policy

The City reserves the right to remove content from its pages that violates platform terms of use or includes:

- Hate speech, discrimination, or profanity
- Threats to public safety
- Spam, repetitive posts, or commercial promotion
- Information unrelated to the post or topic

All deleted content must be logged with the following: platform, username, time/date, reason for removal, and screenshot when possible. Comment moderation policies will be publicly posted on each platform.

VI. Record Retention and Legal Compliance

All social media content (including comments, replies, edits, and deletions) shall be archived in accordance with Georgia's Open Records Act and the State of Georgia records retention schedule. The Communications Department will use a third-party archival service for legal compliance. All social content is considered public record.

VII. Personal Use by City Officials and Employees

Employees and elected officials are encouraged to keep personal and professional content separate. Any posts made from personal accounts referencing City business must include a disclaimer:

"The views expressed are my own and do not represent the official position of the City of Fairburn."

No employee may disclose confidential or privileged information on personal accounts or use their title in a way that suggests official representation without approval.

7. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

I. Purpose and Objectives

Internal communication supports effective operations, fosters collaboration, and ensures that every staff member—from executive leadership to field crews—is informed, engaged, and equipped to serve the public. The City will maintain multiple channels to promote transparency, teamwork, recognition, and professional development.

II. Updates

- **Daily Digest:** A short email sent by 11 a.m. each weekday to highlight upcoming events, critical deadlines, internal news, and recognition.

III. Intranet and Knowledge Management

The City will maintain an internal intranet portal with secure access for all staff. It will include:

- Policy manuals, templates, and forms
- Training materials and recorded webinars
- Project dashboards and calendars
- Employee announcements and milestones
- “Ask Leadership” form for anonymous questions

IV. Meetings and Briefings

- **Suggested Quarterly Town Halls:** Led by the Mayor, City Administrator, and Communications Director. These provide citywide updates, recognitions, and an anonymous Q&A portion.
- **Onboarding Communication Orientation:** New hires will receive a communications briefing within their first 10 days, covering protocols, expectations, and platforms.

V. Staff Engagement and Feedback Mechanisms

- **Employee Surveys:** Conducted twice annually to measure satisfaction, communications clarity, and trust in leadership.
- **Suggestion Boxes:** Digital and physical options will be available to gather anonymous input on workplace improvements.
- **Pulse Check Polls:** One-question mini-polls shared monthly to track morale or reactions to initiatives.

VI. Recognition and Motivation

The Communications Department will support HR in publicizing achievements such as certifications, retirements, promotions, and work anniversaries.

8. BRANDING & PUBLIC INFORMATION

I. Purpose of Branding

Branding is more than a logo — it is the complete experience citizens, businesses, and partners have when interacting with the City. A consistent, professional, and recognizable brand builds trust, supports economic development, and reflects the City's commitment to excellence.

II. Visual Identity Standards

The City of Fairburn Branding Guide shall govern all visual elements used in official communications, including:

- Logos (primary and secondary)
- Color palette (RGB, HEX, CMYK values)
- Typography (header, subheader, body fonts)
- Photography style (e.g., natural light, candid community interaction)
- Taglines and use of the City seal

No modifications to the City logo or seal are permitted without written authorization from the Communications Director. All design projects—internal or outsourced—must use approved templates and comply with brand guidelines.

III. Approval Process for Materials

All public-facing communications—such as flyers, newsletters, event signage, advertisements, digital banners, brochures, and official videos—must be submitted to the Communications Department for review and approval at least five business days before release. Submissions must include:

- Draft copy
- Visual mock-ups
- Purpose and audience
- Distribution plan

IV. Vendor and Partner Requirements

Vendors or community partners producing co-branded materials must receive the City's branding toolkit and sign an agreement to comply with all design, logo placement, and tone standards. No unauthorized use of the City seal or logo is permitted.

V. Accessibility and Inclusivity

All materials must be designed to meet ADA and WCAG 2.1 standards, including:

- Alt-text for images
- Captioning for video
- Color contrast ratios
- Font size and readability
- Plain language usage

VI. Updates and Enforcement

The Branding Guide shall be reviewed annually by the Communications Department. Violations of the branding policy may result in the return of materials for revision, revocation of publishing access, or formal reprimand.

9. DIGITAL INNOVATION & EMERGING MEDIA

I. Purpose

The City recognizes that innovation in communication platforms is essential to meeting the expectations of a modern, tech-savvy public. This policy provides structure for responsibly exploring and integrating new technologies while maintaining transparency, accuracy, and equity.

II. New Media Platforms

The Communications Department may pilot new platforms such as:

- Podcasts (e.g., community updates, behind-the-scenes government series)
- YouTube channels for meetings, events, and educational content
- TikTok or Reels-style short-form videos for civic education
- Interactive livestreaming (e.g., town halls, ribbon cuttings)

All initiatives must align with the City's values, voice, and strategic goals and be approved by the Communications Director before public launch.

III. Proposal and Evaluation Process

Departments seeking to adopt new media or tools must submit a formal proposal including:

- Purpose and intended audience
- Content plan and production schedule
- Risks and mitigation strategies
- Staff and resource requirements
- Proposed metrics for success

Each proposal will be reviewed by the Communications Director in collaboration with IT and Legal. Pilot programs will be reviewed quarterly and evaluated for performance, compliance, and value.

IV. Use of AI-Generated Content

Artificial intelligence may be used to support drafting, translation, accessibility improvements (e.g., captions), or internal idea generation. However, all AI-generated materials must undergo full human review to ensure:

- Accuracy of information
- Appropriateness of tone
- Absence of discriminatory, biased, or misleading content
- Legal and ethical compliance

AI tools may not be used to fully automate any external communication without human intervention.

V. Transparency and Public Disclosure

If new formats or tools are experimental in nature, the public must be informed (e.g., “This content is part of a pilot to expand engagement through short-form video”). Transparency builds trust and gives residents an opportunity to provide feedback.

VI. Security, Ethics, and Data Protection

All emerging media initiatives must adhere to cybersecurity and data protection standards set by IT and Legal. Data collected from digital platforms (e.g., through surveys, comments, or analytics) must be securely stored and ethically used in accordance with privacy policies.

10. DATA, ANALYTICS & PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

I. Purpose and Commitment to Accountability

The City of Fairburn is committed to evidence-based communication. Measuring performance allows the City to improve outcomes, allocate resources wisely, and demonstrate the value of transparency and public engagement.

II. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The Communications Department shall track, analyze, and report the following KPIs on a monthly and quarterly basis:

- Website traffic (sessions, page views, bounce rate, top content)
- Social media engagement (followers, impressions, reach, shares, clicks)
- Newsletter performance (open rates, click-through rates, unsubscribes)
- Media coverage (volume, tone, reach, earned impressions)
- Public participation (event attendance, survey responses, online engagement)
- Timeliness of responses to public inquiries and media requests
- Staff participation in training, briefings, or policy compliance
- Internal communication open/read rates (for key internal updates)

III. Monthly Dashboards

Internal dashboards will be maintained and reviewed monthly by the Communications Director. Department directors will receive a summary of engagement and outreach performance as it relates to their operations.

IV. Quarterly Reporting

The Communications Department will produce a quarterly report outlining:

- Notable communication wins and challenges
- Departmental contributions and gaps
- Cross-platform performance trends
- Recommendations for refinement

These will be presented to the City Administrator and included in quarterly department head meetings.

V. Annual Communications Report

A public-facing annual report will be developed each fiscal year. It will include narrative highlights, data visualizations, lessons learned, and proposed goals. This report will be shared with the Mayor, City Council, and residents through the City's website and newsletters.

VI. Integration with Strategic Planning

Communications data will be integrated into citywide strategic planning processes. KPIs will be aligned with larger organizational goals such as community trust, equity, civic participation, and operational transparency.

11. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & DEI COMMUNICATIONS

I. Equity-Centered Communication Philosophy

The City of Fairburn recognizes that inclusive communication is fundamental to democratic governance and public trust. All messages must reflect the City's diversity in race, culture, age, language, ability, economic background, and lived experience.

II. Multilingual and Cultural Access

- Key communications must be translated into Spanish and other languages as appropriate based on Census data and community needs.
- Outreach materials must be culturally relevant, not just linguistically translated.
- When possible, bilingual staff should be used at public meetings, town halls, and community events.
- The City will explore contracting interpretation services for both live and written materials when needed.

III. Accessibility for All Abilities

All content—print and digital—must comply with ADA and Section 508 standards. This includes:

- Screen reader compatibility
- Captioning and transcripts for audio/video content
- Use of plain language at or below an 8th-grade reading level
- Alternative formats upon request (e.g., Braille or large-print materials)

IV. Representation in Storytelling and Imagery

Photos, videos, graphics, and narratives used in City communications shall reflect the demographic composition of Fairburn, with intentional inclusion of:

- Different racial/ethnic groups
- Age diversity (youth, families, seniors)
- Persons with disabilities
- LGBTQ+ residents
- Community leaders, business owners, volunteers, and frontline staff

V. Community Listening Tools

The City will deploy multiple engagement mechanisms, including:

- Surveys (paper, online, and mobile formats)
- Community listening sessions and focus groups
- Online comment portals and QR code links to forms
- Social media polls and sentiment analysis
- Street team and ambassador-style outreach at events

VI. Annual Equity Audit

Each year, the Communications Department will conduct a formal audit to evaluate:

- Who the City is reaching and who it is missing
 - Quality and frequency of translated materials
 - Visual representation across all campaigns
 - Disparities in engagement across zip codes, demographics, or languages
- The findings will be included in the Annual Communications Report and used to refine outreach.

12. LEGAL, RECORDS & COMPLIANCE

I. Legal Framework and Applicable Laws

All communications must comply with applicable federal, state, and local regulations, including but not limited to:

- Georgia Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Federal Copyright and Intellectual Property Laws
- Federal Trade Commission Endorsement Guidelines (for social media)
- CAN-SPAM Act (for email communications)
- Digital accessibility standards (WCAG 2.1 / Section 508)

II. Legal Review Process

The Communications Director will coordinate with the City Attorney to review the following prior to publication:

- Sensitive, high-risk public statements (e.g., litigation, personnel matters)
- Major media advisories or crisis communications
- Contracts, MOUs, or partnership agreements involving joint messaging
- Public notices with statutory requirements

All legally reviewed communications will be stored in a secured internal archive, with version control and reviewer notes retained.

III. Public Records and Retention

All communications—including emails, social media content, press releases, digital newsletters, videos, printed materials, and web pages—are public records under Georgia law and must be archived accordingly.

- Social media will be archived using a third-party software approved by IT and Legal.
- Website updates will be retained through content management logs.
- Email communications involving public business will be stored in the City's archiving system.

The City Clerk's Office will work with the Communications Department to coordinate responses to Open Records Requests related to communication content.

IV. Privacy and Data Protection

The City will never share or sell resident data collected through digital platforms. All data collected from surveys, newsletter subscriptions, or online forms will be stored securely and used only for civic purposes. Communications platforms must include privacy disclaimers where applicable and allow residents to opt out of communications (e.g., email newsletters).

V. Training and Compliance

Legal compliance is the responsibility of all personnel. Annual training will be conducted for all staff and elected officials on public records laws, open meetings requirements, copyright, ADA, and accessibility. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action under City personnel policies.

13. ANNUAL COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING & REPORTING

I. Purpose

To ensure that communication efforts are aligned with organizational priorities, departments are required to participate in strategic communication planning and performance reporting each fiscal year.

II. Departmental Communications Action Plans

Every department will submit an annual Communications Action Plan to the Communications Director no later than October 1st. Plans must include:

- Key messaging themes and anticipated initiatives
- Target audiences and outreach methods
- Events, milestones, or campaigns requiring communications support
- Assigned liaison(s) for coordination
- Opportunities for collaboration with other departments

Templates and guidance will be provided during the annual kickoff training each September.

III. Citywide Communications Calendar

The Communications Department will maintain a master editorial calendar that incorporates all major events, campaigns, meetings, observances, and citywide announcements. Department contributions must be submitted quarterly to keep the calendar accurate and comprehensive.

IV. Annual Communications Report

At the end of each fiscal year, the Communications Director will prepare an Annual Communications Report that includes:

- Key metrics and accomplishments (from Section 10)
- Engagement highlights and success stories
- Equity audit findings (from Section 11)
- Internal communications performance
- Crisis response evaluations
- Budget and staffing impact

- Recommendations for the next fiscal year

This report will be presented to the City Administrator, Mayor, and City Council and made publicly available through the City's website.

V. Strategic Goal Alignment

Communications planning must be tied to the City's adopted strategic plan, comprehensive plan, or departmental master plans. Communications should support long-term goals related to:

- Transparency and trust
- Economic development
- Resident engagement
- Diversity and inclusion
- Innovation and digital access

14. PUBLIC FEEDBACK & CITIZEN LISTENING STRATEGY

I. Overview

Effective communication is a two-way process. The City of Fairburn will maintain intentional, structured, and equitable opportunities for the public to provide feedback on city services, policies, and communication itself. Resident insight will be treated as a strategic asset to inform priorities and decision-making.

II. Public Feedback Channels

The following channels shall be maintained year-round for citizen input:

- Online surveys (via website and newsletter)
- Embedded social media polls
- QR-code linked forms at events and facilities
- Comment portals on major project pages
- Anonymous feedback forms (paper and digital)
- Direct messages via social media (monitored daily)

III. Community Listening Tools

The Communications Department will use structured listening tools to assess community sentiment and reach:

- Social media listening platforms (e.g., for keyword monitoring, engagement analysis)
- Sentiment analysis for public comments
- Thematic analysis of survey free-text responses
- Geographic analysis of engagement by zip code or ward

IV. Town Halls and Community Forums

At least four general public meetings (town halls or forums) shall be held each year to gather live feedback from residents. Forums will rotate across neighborhoods to ensure geographic equity. Spanish-language interpretation and ADA accommodations will be available.

V. Integration and Reporting

Public feedback themes will be documented quarterly and included in:

- Departmental planning meetings
- Quarterly performance summaries
- The Annual Communications Report
- Council agenda briefings, as relevant

Feedback will be used to refine campaigns, evaluate accessibility, improve transparency, and identify emerging concerns.

VI. Resident Advisory Opportunities

The City will explore the formation of resident advisory groups, youth panels, or community ambassadors to co-create messaging, test outreach tools, and help expand reach to underrepresented populations.

15. ENFORCEMENT & POLICY REVIEW

I. Policy Authority and Oversight

The Communications Director is the lead authority on the implementation, enforcement, and interpretation of this policy. The City Administrator shall provide executive oversight, and the City Attorney will advise on legal or ethical compliance matters.

II. Violations and Disciplinary Action

Violations of this policy—intentional or negligent—will be categorized as:

- **Minor:** Missed deadlines, branding inconsistencies, failure to submit content
- **Major:** Unauthorized public statements, failure to follow crisis protocols, misuse of social media
- **Severe:** Legal violations, privacy breaches, or public misinformation

Consequences may include retraining, written warnings, formal reprimand, removal of communications duties, or other disciplinary action in accordance with the City's personnel policies. Elected officials who repeatedly violate this policy may be subject to formal censure by Council.

III. Annual Policy Review and Amendments

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Communications Department in collaboration with Legal, IT, HR, and the City Administrator. Feedback will be solicited from departments, elected officials, and residents where applicable. Recommended amendments must be submitted for Council approval prior to implementation.

IV. Policy Distribution and Training

- All new hires must review this policy within their first 30 days
- All staff and elected officials must complete annual communications training
- Updated versions of the policy will be published on the intranet and emailed to all departments upon adoption

16. APPENDICES OVERVIEW

The following appendices will be included in the full policy document to support implementation and day-to-day use:

- **Appendix A:** ADA & Multilingual Communications Compliance Checklist
- **Appendix B:** Branding Guide (logo usage, typography, color codes, examples)

APPENDIX A: ADA & MULTILINGUAL COMMUNICATIONS CHECKLIST

- All videos have captions
- Alt-text used for all images on web and social
- Plain language review completed (reading level: 8th grade or lower)
- Font size minimum 12pt (print), 16px (web)
- Color contrast ratio tested (minimum 4.5:1)
- Primary message available in Spanish
- Translations reviewed by fluent speakers or certified vendor
- Interpretation services available for key meetings
- ADA accommodations language included in all public meeting notices

APPENDIX B: BRANDING GUIDE