



DATE: March 2, 2020

TO: Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers

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*City Manager's Office*

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SUBJECT: Technology to Improve Communications and Customer Service

Staff will update Council on the progress toward one of the Council priorities under High Performance Government, to "Identify and implement technologies that improve customer service with the City of Bellevue."

### **Website growth**

Since the launch of the redesigned BellevueWA.gov three years ago, improvements and efficiencies continue to be made that are resulting in increased use of the site as well as increased stability and accessibility. Those improvements include upgrading the search engine, updating department sites to be more intuitive and increased use of analytics to track the sites effectiveness. In 2019, website analytics show cased the following highlights:

- During 2019 unique visitors increased by 31 percent and 32 percent of those were from within the region.
- Multilingual users increased significantly over 2018 by the following percentages:
  - Chinese - 25 percent
  - Korean - 5 percent
  - Russian - 21 percent
  - Japanese - 9 percent
  - Spanish - 11 percent
- Mobile device access increased by 28 percent.

### **Social media audience gains**

The City's social media channels are a valuable tool for informing and engaging with residents. Bellevue's digital presence includes Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor and Instagram. Additional department-specific channels (Fire, Police, Transportation, Parks) can also be found on these platforms. Over the last year, the City's audience has grown significantly. Highlights include a 25 percent gain in Facebook followers, a doubling of our Instagram audience and a 300 percent boost in reach on Nextdoor.

	2019	2020
Facebook Followers	5,465	6,812
Facebook Reach	1,217	1,669
Facebook Engagement	87	120
Twitter Followers	9,302	10,473
Twitter Reach	1,592	2,042
Twitter Engagement	30	39
Instagram Followers	692	1,470
Instagram Likes	45	21
Nextdoor Members	34,412	38,612
Nextdoor Reach	720	2,935

A critical benefit of this growth can be seen during major events, like this January's winter weather blast. Clear messages conveyed in real-time help ensure the public is accurately informed. Regular plow progress and garbage updates give residents an opportunity to avoid time-consuming phone calls. Bellevue was also proactive in pointing residents to winter weather tips, thanks to [pre-translated messages](#) in the community's top six languages (English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese).

The expansion and success of these online platforms, advances the City's work on Council Vision Priority #22 and the creation of a "comprehensive communication plan." This document, currently in the planning stages, will incorporate the strategies that are effectively working now and target areas for additional development.

## Maps

With strong partnerships between the Information Technology Department and a variety of other internal departments, staff have produced interactive maps and mapping applications that support customer service and communications with residents and businesses. These maps include:

- **Building Bellevue** is an interactive mapping application that showcases permit information about major development projects in town and allows the public to see the status and permit information for a variety of projects.  
<https://buildingbellevue.bellevuewa.gov/>
- **Fire Community Risk Assessment web application** provides an interactive map for viewing and identifying trends of response incidents, risks, and fire protection systems mapped together with community information.  
<https://www.bellevuewa.gov/firerisk>
- **NORCOM Integrated Event Mapping application** allows ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems) staff to have a streamlined process to access the NORCOM incident data, the location information on a map, and the video footage. While this map is not public facing, it is used by staff to help improve transportation corridors. This work also supports the Smart City priority for Council.
- **Illegal Fireworks Reporting** application enables residents to report illegal fireworks through MyBellevue App (an existing application) and law enforcement to respond to hot spots using the heat map. MyBellevue app was downloaded 386 times during the July 4th holiday period.

- **Small Wireless Facility Map** allows carriers to see which Bellevue owned street lights are eligible for small cell or 5G deployment and will eventually also show which have already been reserved. This work also supports the Smart City priority for Council.

<https://www.bellevuewa.gov/smallwireless>

### **Applications and Services**

Bellevue staff have also partnered to build and/or deploy both custom and hosted applications, improving a variety of services.

- The Fire Inspection application provides tenants with an immediate, electronic report of fire inspection findings. Tenants can self-correct small issues without requiring a re-inspection.
- The Accounts Payable Automation project enables vendors to submit invoices electronically and verify payment status via an online portal.
- The Qualtrics survey tool enables Development Services to gather feedback from customers at meaningful touchpoints, analyze their comments to know what to do, then act on the things that deliver measurable impact.
- The Power BI Water Quality dashboard provides Utilities with real-time data to inform decisions regarding water operations, which also supports the Smart City priority for Council.
- Onboarding three new jurisdictions (SeaTac, Edmonds, Woodway) to the MyBuildingPermit program, which supports builders across the region having a consistent and predictable permitting experience.