

Monroe Downtown Development Authority

# Communications Plan

2017-2018

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## BACKGROUND

One of the most important things an organization can do is to tell its story and the stories of those it serves. By creating a comprehensive communications plan, the DDA can, on an ongoing basis, inform the public, property and business owners of the efforts of the DDA as well as tell the good news stories of the district it serves. The communications plan should include traditional media tools such as press releases and media alert templates, but also social media efforts and a schedule or planned and coordinated posts to various platforms.

## OVERALL OBJECTIVES

1. **To inform.** The Downtown Development Authority should become a clearinghouse for information about downtown happenings and be seen as the useful resource to keep stakeholders and constituents in-the-know.
2. **To inspire.** The Downtown Development Authority should strive to raise awareness of the downtown as a place, to elevate its own exposure in the community and to increase engagement in its activities.
3. **To build the brand.** The Downtown Development Authority should capitalize on the City of Monroe's recent rebranding campaign and correlate its activities to be complementary, from using variations of the brand language of "Raisin' Expectations" to expecting outstanding experiences.
4. **To build alliances.** The Downtown Development Authority should use its communications resources as a means to connect and to partner with stakeholders such as the City, Chamber of Commerce, business and property owners, visitors bureau, the general public and the Business Network, especially as a means to leverage funds for marketing.

## RESOURCES

| <b>Electronic:</b>  | <b>Example:</b>                             |
|---|---|
| Web Site and Web Calendar                                     |   |
| E-Newsletter  | MailChimp has no fee for <2,000 subscribers |
| Social Media  | Facebook, Linked-In, Instagram              |
| Blog  | WordPress                                   |
| <b>Print:</b>   |   |
| Printed locator maps/directories                              |   |
| Promotional materials for events - posters, flyers, postcards |   |
| Press releases  |   |
| Media alerts (condensed press releases)                       |   |
| Print ads   |   |
| <b>Other:</b>   |   |
| Multimedia  |   |
| Video   |   |

|                     |                                 |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Signage             |                                 |
| Personal Engagement | Ribbon-Cutting, Ground-breaking |
| Case Studies        | Before & After                  |

## KEY MESSAGING

**Mission Statement:** The Monroe Downtown Development Authority exists to serve as the lead organization in the **preservation** and **enhancement** of Downtown Monroe. Its mission is to provide **direction** and **resources** to businesses, property owners and residents in the downtown district. It works for the **advancement** of downtown through **promotion** of its businesses and events; the facilitation of **redevelopment** opportunities; and to increase Monroe’s unique **sense of place** and **community**. Its goal is be a **dynamic** and **innovative** organization that works with volunteers, other organizations and the City of Monroe for the betterment of downtown.

**Location Statement:** Home to nearly 300 businesses, historic Downtown Monroe is the 67.2 acre center for civic, cultural and commercial activities for the greater Monroe area. Anchored by institutions like the County of Monroe and City of Monroe office campus and the corporate headquarters of Monroe Bank and Trust, Downtown Monroe is abundant with opportunities for enjoyment of everyday life and recreation. The River Raisin, the River Raisin Centre for the Arts and the nearby River Raisin National Battlefield are amenities the afford businesses and visitors alike a unique and engaging atmosphere. In Downtown Monroe, expect an amazing experience!

## MEDIA LIST

A list of media contacts (see Attachment A) has been compiled and will be updated as needed to include those contacts or agencies with capacity to assist in disseminating news and information about the ongoing projects and programs.

## STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS, TIMELINE AND COST

| ONE-TIME ACTIONS                               | TARGET DATE OF COMPLETION           | COST |
|--|-------------------------------------|------|
| Revise logo and create style guide             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | \$   |
| Create press release and media alert template  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |      |
| Discuss the city brand and methods to align or | Oct., 2017                          |      |

|  |                                     |                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| complement   |                                     |                     |
| Retain a graphics designer   | Oct., 2017                          |                     |
| Prepare a 30-second statement about downtown as a location                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                     |
| Renew e-newsletter   | Dec., 2017                          |                     |
| Establish a second social media format, such as Instagram                          | Dec., 2017                          |                     |
| Create Downtown Monroe "company page" on LinkedIn                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                     |
| Redesign web site "skin"   | Dec., 2017                          | \$                  |
| Build a stock photo library  | Jun., 2018                          | \$                  |
| Establish and post a social media policy   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                     |
| <b>ON-GOING ACTIONS</b>  | <b>FREQUENCY</b>                    |                     |
| Establish key messages for all projects and programs                               | As needed                           |                     |
| Update web site  | As needed                           |                     |
| Update centralized calendar for internal meetings and internal and external events | Weekly                              |                     |
| Video showcase   | Quarterly                           | \$, can MPACT help? |
| Create a specialized marketing plan for promotions or activities                   | One for each promotion/activity     | \$                  |
| Interact via social media  | Daily or other                      | \$, some            |

## BEST PRACTICES FOR ON-LINE ENGAGEMENT

When utilizing web-based applications, such as a web site and /or social media, the main recommendations are to be consistent, to be aware of audience preferences and to be a practitioner (i.e. interact with audience).

General best practices for **web sites** are:

- Keep the site current
- Use key words
- Connect with social media and email platforms
- Advertise the URL
- Pursue search engine optimization by establishing internal links and meta descriptions
- Ensure the site is fast-loading
- Write engaging content

General best practices for **social media** platforms are:

- Complete your profile
- Send links to your email subscribers
- Use social share buttons
- Include your social share in your email signature
- Share original, relevant content regularly; tell stories
- Monitor your most popular posts, that is what your audience wishes to see
- Follow others, especially those relevant to your business
- Post appropriately but do not overdo; quality over quantity
- Spend *a little* on Facebook advertisements

#### **GENERAL INFORMATION AND TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

- Do not use “I” voice in communications, unless it is a direct quote. Use terms such as the DDA, downtown, “we”, etc.
- Social media interaction should be two-way communication. Manage your posts and page(s) efficiently. Selectively post, use correct spelling and grammar, etc.
- Press releases and media alerts should be cut-and-pasted into the body of an email, not sent as an attachment.
- Press releases for events should be sent out 4-6 weeks in advance; send a media alert as a reminder.

# PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
DATE:

CONTACT:  
PHONE:

TITLE

Sub-Title

(Monroe, MI) – Summarize in first paragraph, add quotes and additional information in following paragraphs. Add background. Close with contact info.

####

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# MEDIA ALERT



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
DATE:

CONTACT:  
PHONE:

TITLE

Sub-Title

(Monroe, MI) – Condensed who, what, where, when, contact

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