



10-Year Communications Master Plan

K. Campbell, Northumberland County
A. Montgomery, Redbrick Communications





OBJECTIVE -

To build more inclusive and effective public services, and greater trust in local government, by fostering a community that is informed about County Services, and engaged in shaping municipal priority, policies, and programs

Why Now?

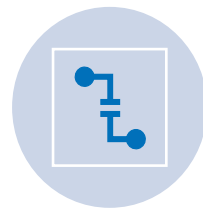
Current Landscape



Trust in government continues to decline.



Decline – and growing distrust – of traditional media.



Greater polarization, mis/disinformation, information overload.

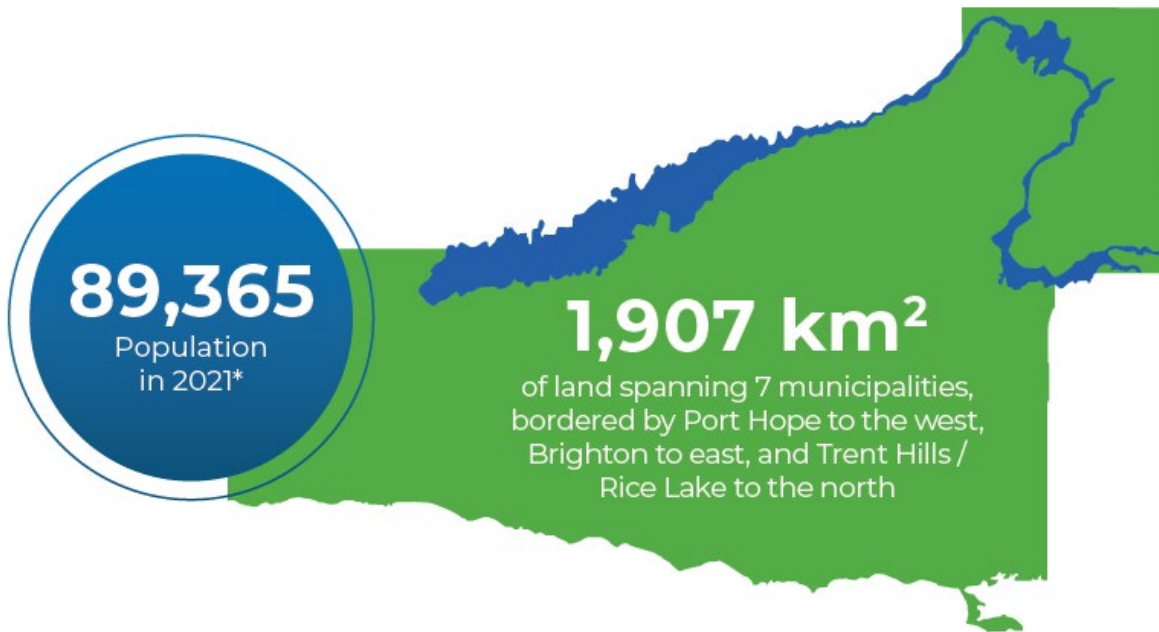


Pace of technology change – AI tools, evolving social media channels, customer service expectations.



Broader cross-section of skillsets required for municipal communicators – data management & analysis, digital marketing, accessibility tools, change communications.

At Home in Northumberland



Population at a glance

29%

of population are seniors¹

77%

increase in New Canadians
moving to Northumberland
from 2016 to 2021²

94%

of residents know English¹

27%

increase in population
projected by 2051

44.7%

of populations has a
post-secondary degree,
certificate or diploma²

Community Strategic Plan Direction

- Northumberland County's 2023-2027 Community Strategic Plan centres on a clear mandate:

Guide this growth with intention

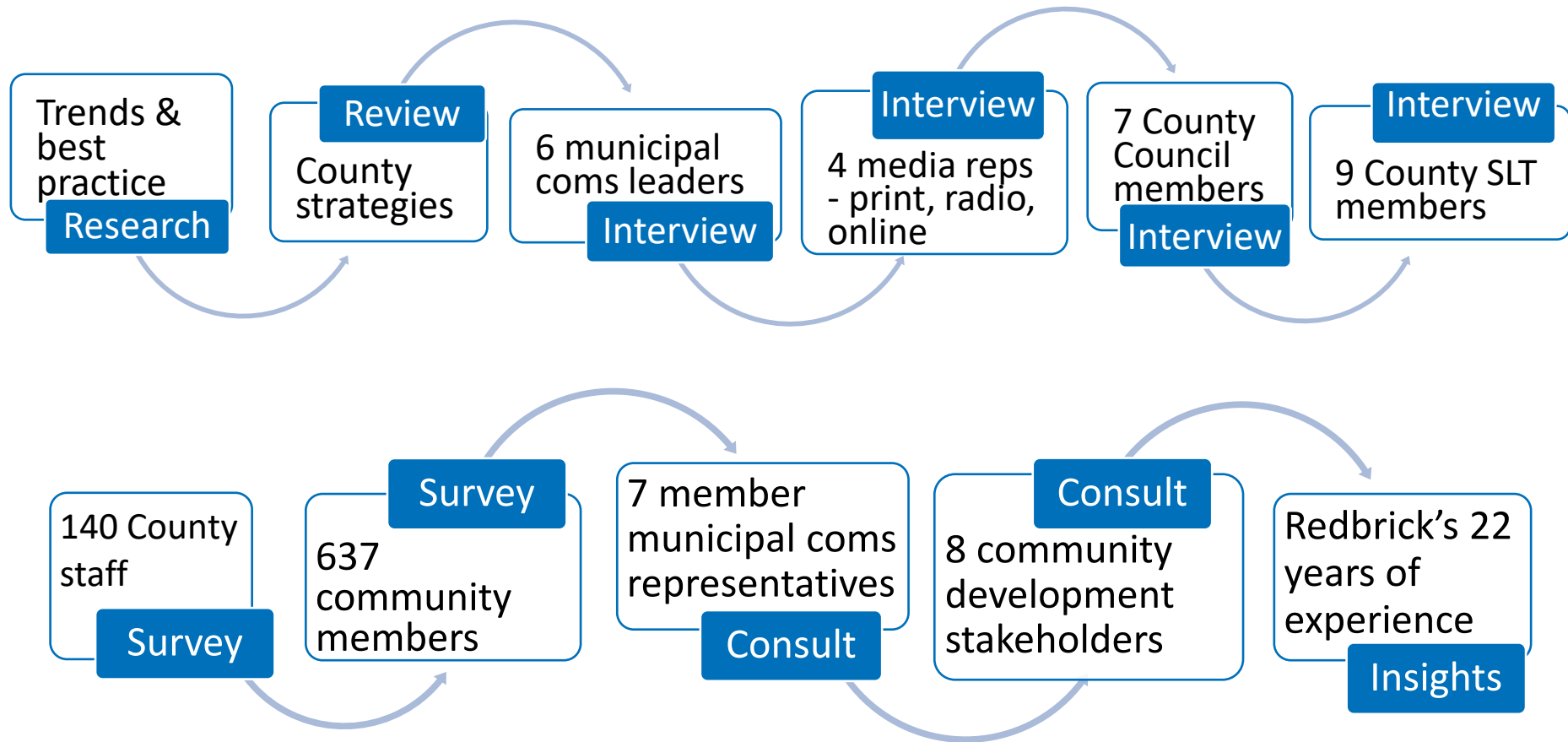
- Key Action: Development of Communications Master Plan



Plan Methodology



Scope of Research



Findings

Key Themes

Coms teams must be adaptable & innovative

- Keeping up with changing landscape/tools
- Finding new ways to reach audiences
- Staying current on changing social media algorithms

Authentic storytelling builds trust

- Strengthening community's connection with local government
- Engaging audiences, broadening reach
- Combatting negativity/misinformation through human stories
- Differentiating municipal from other levels of government

The County can't do it alone

- Needing to partner and collaborate
- Drawing in and inviting other voices to help tell and spread important information and good news

Key Themes (continued)

Meaningful listening & engaging matters

- Meeting residents' growing expectations to have a voice
- Focus efforts for better decision-making

Demands on communicators are increasing

- Strengthening internal processes, protocols and visibility
- Building capacity and competency
- Focusing on highest-value strategic work

Assessing Corporate Communications Maturity

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Redbrick's Municipal Communications Maturity Index

Maturity Indicator	1. Side Hustler	2. Doer	3. Ally	4. Strategist	5. Partner
1. Organizational structure & competency				●	
2. Strategic business purpose				●	
3. Organizational accountability & processes				●	
4. Operational investment & backing				●	
5. Community building, accessibility & inclusivity			●		

Final Plan

A Vision for County Communications

Vision

An informed, engaged, and welcoming community.

Mission

Enhance resident experience with municipal government through exceptional communications that build trust, encourage participation, and promote inclusion.

Guiding Principles

- People First
- Excellence
- Agility
- Integrity
- Partnership

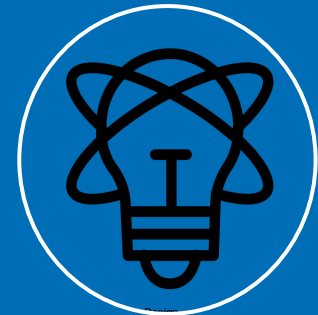
Strategic Communications Pillars



Focus



Partner



Innovate



Goals and Actions - Focus

Goal 1: Embed an organizational communications mindset

Goal 2: Build Strategic Communications Capacity

Goal 3: Align all communications to the County's strategic business purpose

Goals and Actions - Partner

Goal 4: Engage networks for shared insight

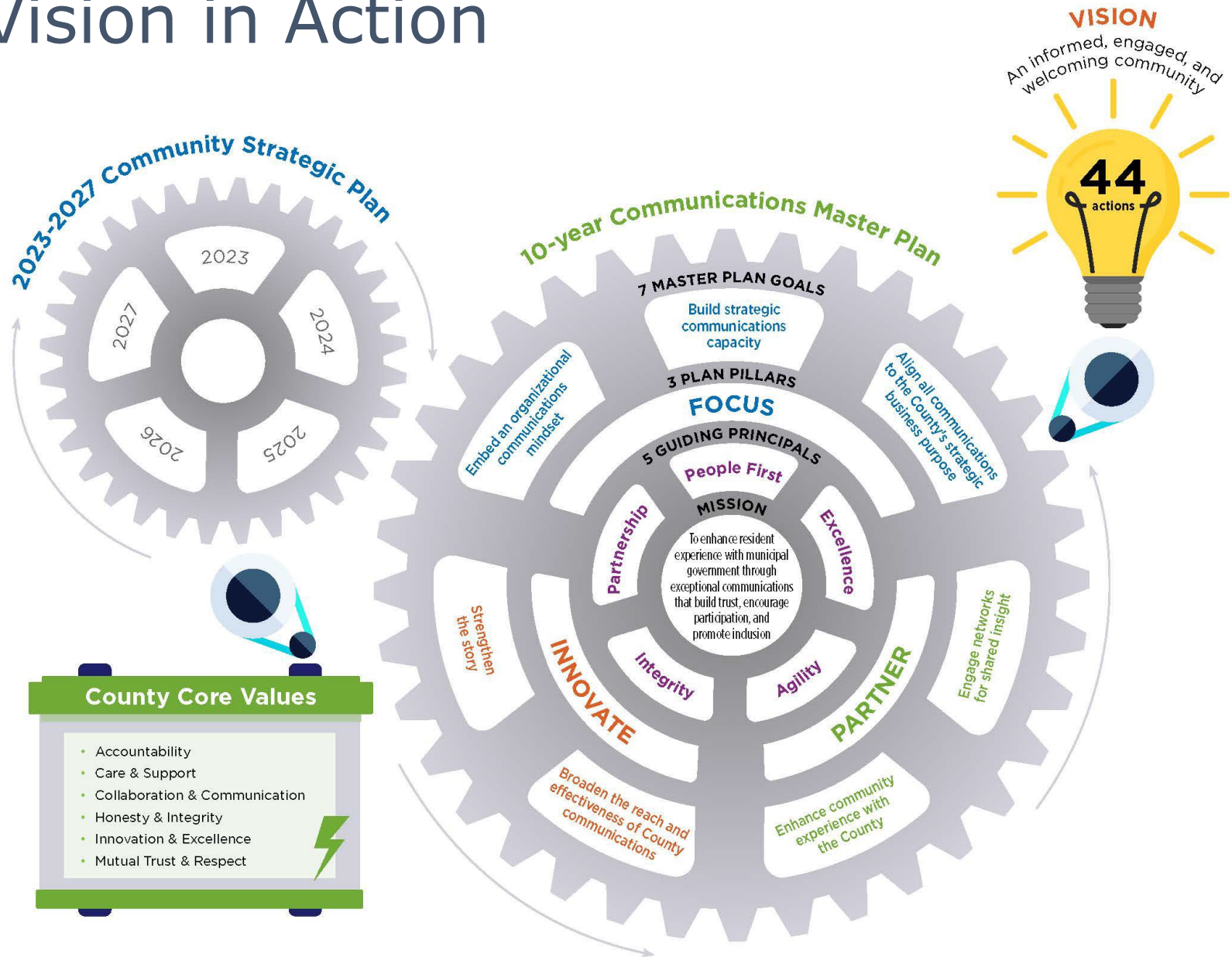
Goal 5: Enhance community experience with the County

Goals and Actions - Innovate

Goal 6: Broaden effectiveness and reach of County communications

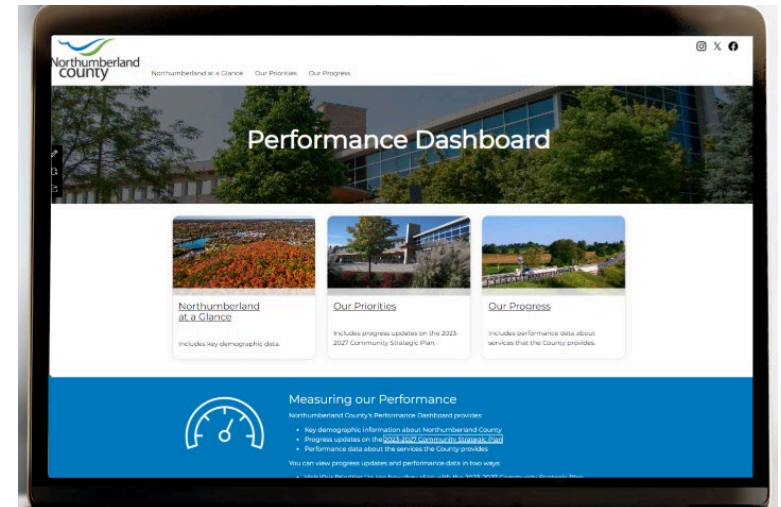
Goal 7: Strengthen the Story

Vision in Action



Sample Actions

- Improve inter-departmental coordination of public consultation efforts to make it easier for residents to engage
- Enhance tracking of KPIs with public dashboard
- Expand digital marketing and content management practices
- Formalize an Inter-Municipal Communications Network for sharing lessons learned and joint project planning



Measuring Outcomes



Reporting & KPIs

- Continued quarterly and annual reporting to Council, capturing completed actions & outcomes.
- Key performance indicators:
 - ✓ Residents who say the County has communicated well about its services, programs, policies, and plans
 - ✓ Residents who say that information provided by the County is clear and easy to understand
 - ✓ Media tonality (per cent of positive and neutral media coverage)

Ask of the Committee





Endorse a Communications
vision for the County by
recommending Council
approve and adopt the 10-
year Communications
Master Plan



Thank you

Questions?

