

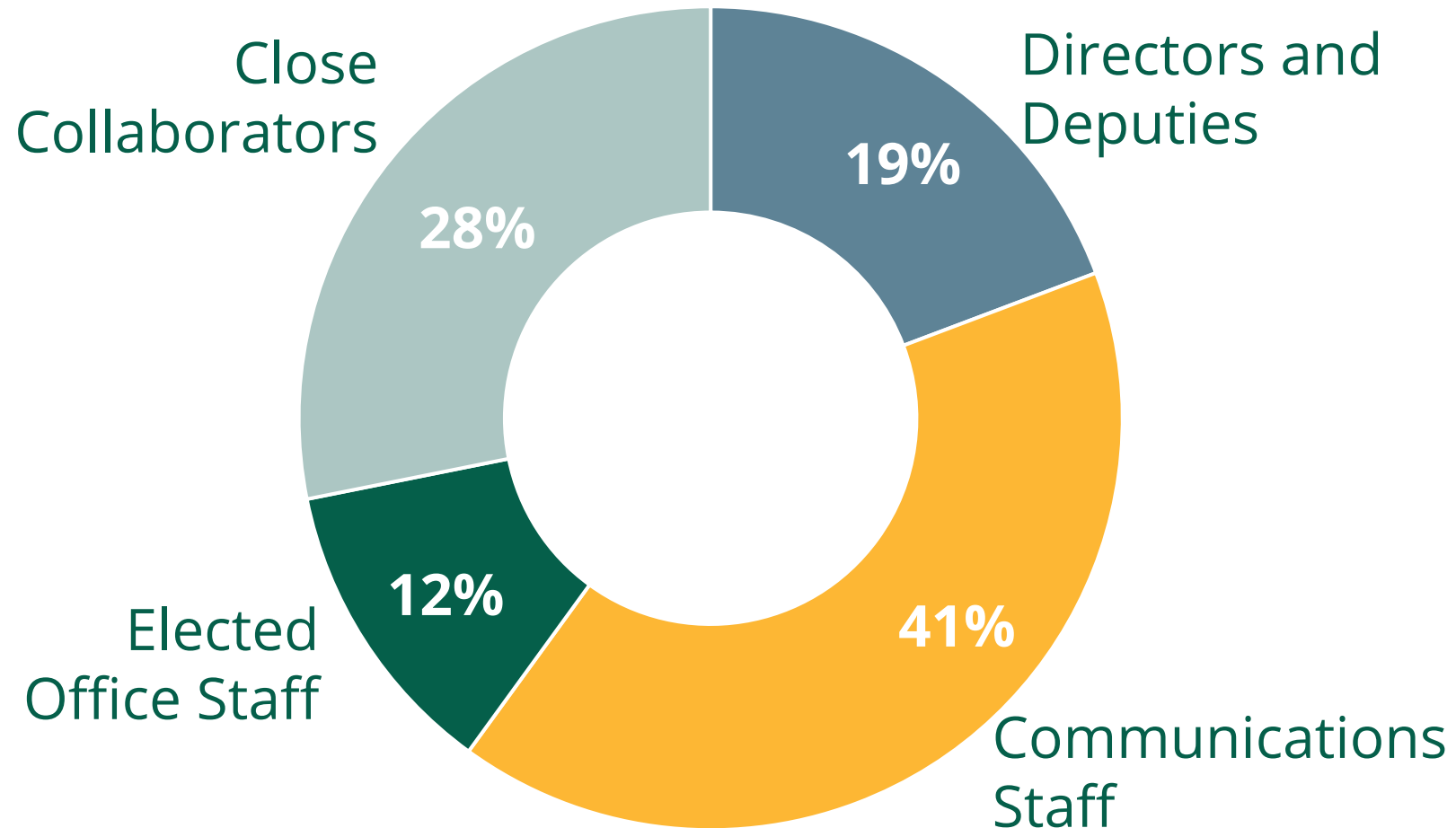


# Future of Communications

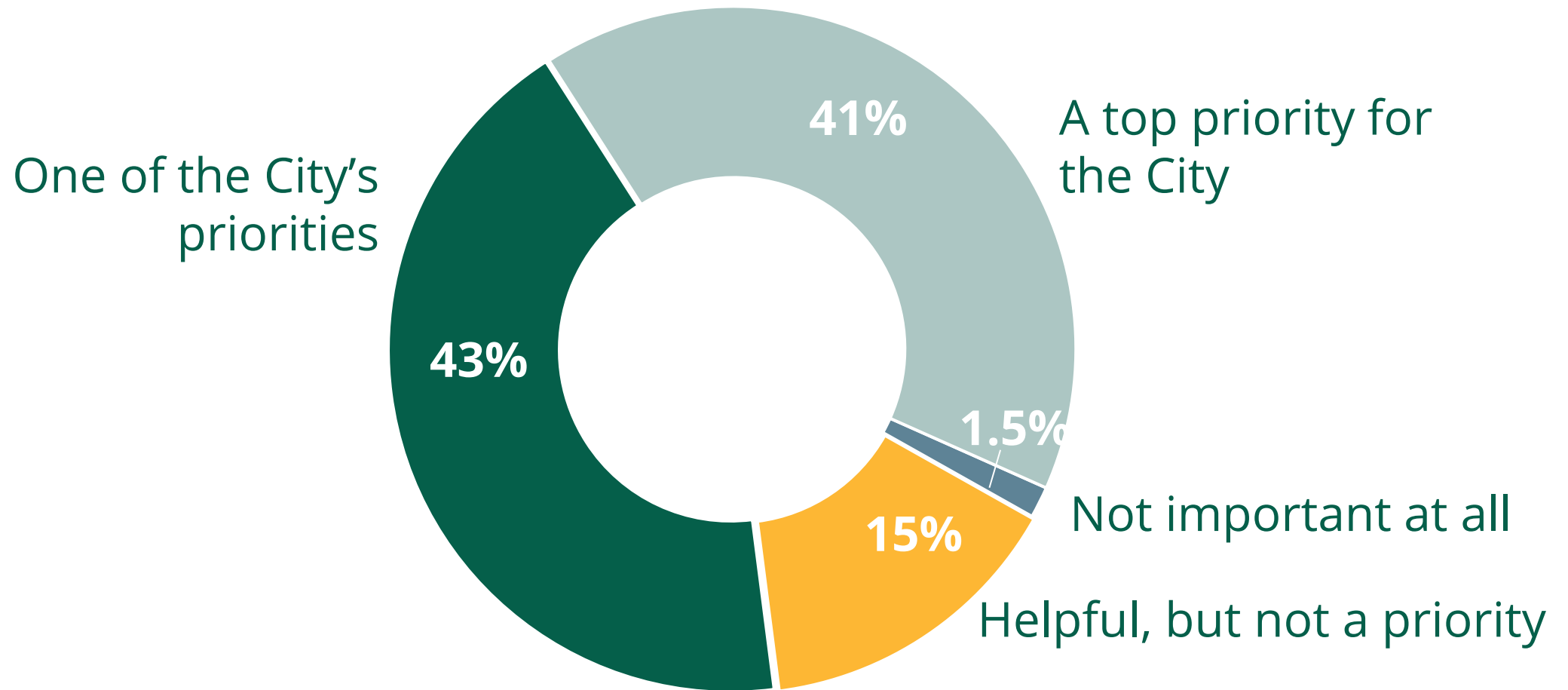
**Survey of Internal Stakeholders | August 2023**



# 135 Participants



# Importance of Unified Approaches



# Breakdown: Importance of Unified Approaches

	Not important	Helpful	A priority	A top priority
Communicators	2%	25%	42%	31%
Collaborators	0%	5%	37%	58%
Directors	0%	0%	65%	35%
Council	6%	25%	25%	44%

# Value of Central Functions for Community

<div><div>4</div><div>Essential</div><div>3</div><div>Very helpful</div><div>2</div><div>A little helpful</div><div>1</div><div>Not needed</div></div>	3.5	Messaging and media strategy for cross-bureau priorities
	3.5	Crisis communications leadership, strategy and management
	3.5	Language access and digital accessibility services during content creation
	3.3	Strategic communications planning: citywide vision and direction
	3.2	Consistent approach to website content
	3.1	Cohesive brand identity across city services
	2.9	City of Portland social media channels: original content, bureau boosting
	2.8	Internal communications strategy and core products
	2.7	Content creation for website, social media and newsletters
	2.4	Copy editing for website, social media and newsletters

# Breakdown: Top Citywide Functions by Role



## COMMUNICATOR

1. Language access
2. Messaging & media strategy for cross-bureau priorities
3. Crisis communications



## COLLABORATOR

1. Language access
2. Messaging & media strategy for cross-bureau priorities
3. Crisis communications



## DIRECTOR

1. Crisis communications
2. Messaging & media strategy for cross-bureau priorities
3. Strategic planning



## COUNCIL

1. Messaging & media strategy for cross-bureau priorities
2. Crisis communications
3. Language access

A citywide comms group should focus on citywide things – topics that cross bureaus. Many bureaus have very specific missions and communications needs, and a citywide comms group should not try and take over or perform that work.



There are a lot of people working on comms throughout the city – would be interesting to see what folks are working on or would be working on if they had time, staff and funding. How can we work as a cohesive team to better serve the community and be more effective?

The City should have a single logo with all bureaus being able to add their name underneath. That should be the only variation of the single logo used for the whole City.

Creating a consistent look, feel, and voice for city comms is essential, as is ensuring digital accessibility and language access for all, and robust internal comms. However, I worry a centralized system slows external comms down and could dilute the long-term branding work some bureaus have already done and do well.

# Value of Bureau Supports

4 Essential	3.5	Language access and digital accessibility capacity
	3.2	Shared subscriptions to media outlets
	3.1	Graphic design templates that meet accessibility standards
	3.1	Shared subscriptions to communications software
	3.1	Updated local media directory
	3.0	Best practices guidance for media outreach, social media, other areas
	3.0	Photography and videography capacity
	2.9	Citywide contracts for creative services
	2.9	Graphic design capacity
	2.9	Central budget for citywide and shared communications needs
3 Very helpful	2.9	Communications trainings in media interviews, design, photography, etc.
	2.8	Shared equipment such as cameras, microphones, event supplies
	2.7	Daily media digest with links to civic news
2 A little helpful		
1 Not needed		



# Breakdown: Top Bureau Supports by Role



## COMMUNICATOR

1. Language access and digital accessibility capacity
2. Media subscriptions
3. Software subscriptions



## COLLABORATOR

1. Language access and digital accessibility capacity
2. Design templates
3. Best practices guidance



## DIRECTOR

1. Language access and digital accessibility capacity
2. Media subscriptions
3. Software subscriptions



## COUNCIL

1. Media subscriptions
2. Media directory
3. Language access and digital accessibility capacity

A citywide comms budget is essential here. Bureaus should not be asked to pay in to receive services like these, as that is more likely to continue the status quo of some bureaus having more comms resources while others receive less. Additionally, many of these things are completely unnecessary for my bureau but may be helpful or essential for others. That's another reason why citywide comms should take an opt-in, capacity-building approach to providing comms services to specific bureaus.



I want to expand on language and disability access capability. Above all other things, this needs to be TOP PRIORITY and on call on evenings and weekends so that emergency management can access it.

Do not create contracts for creative services that can be done better and more cheaply in-house with staff. Provide more training on comms to teach staff how to fish. There are specialists in the various bureaus for a reason who have gained important, institutional knowledge of the functions of their bureaus and much better equipped to handle this work in-house.

As a community engagement coordinator who also works with accessibility and language access, this is honestly a dream list to appropriately resource our work. Hard yes to all!

# Executive Communications Leader Functions

4 Essential	3.5	Advance equity and anti-racism through the City's communications.
	3.2	Lead the development of an organization-wide communications strategy.
3 Very important	3.2	Improve the consistency and quality of communications products.
	3.2	Serve as a strategic advisor to the city administrator and other leaders.
2 A little important	3.1	Serve as a bridge between bureau and elected office communications.
	3.0	Hire, mentor and lead a central communications team.
	3.0	Serve as a public spokesperson for high-profile, cross-bureau issues.
	3.0	Build relationships, culture and morale for communication staff citywide.
1 Not needed	3.0	Lead the development, management of central communications budget.
	2.9	Build relationships with communications leaders at other agencies.

# Breakdown: Top Leadership Functions by Role



## COMMUNICATOR

1. Equity and anti-racism
2. Strategic advisor to executive leaders
3. Citywide strategy



## COLLABORATOR

1. Equity and anti-racism
2. Improved consistency and quality
3. Bridge between elected offices, bureaus



## DIRECTOR

1. Equity and anti-racism
2. Citywide strategy
3. Improved consistency and quality



## COUNCIL

1. Citywide strategy
2. Central budget
3. Hire and manage a central team

In my opinion, there should be no question about hiring an executive communicator for the City. It should be a requirement on day one of the new structure.



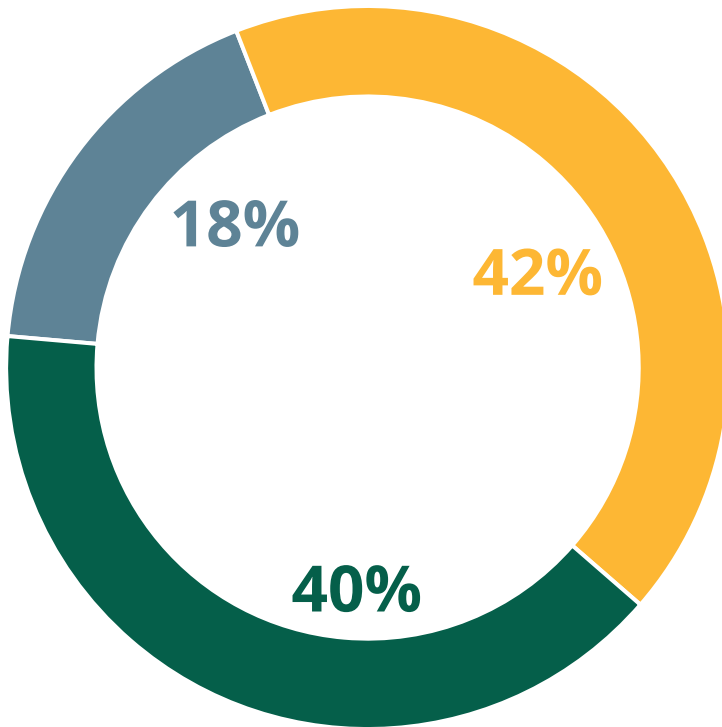
Any one of the items in the questions above will be more than a fulltime job. To be effective, we need someone (s) to connect the dots and people that are already doing comms and public engagement, ensure sustainable funding for comms, THEN the centralized work can happen.

A citywide comms executive leader position should not be "in charge" of or have direct control over bureau-specific communications. So many bureaus have very specific missions and thus very specific communications needs and goals that may require very specialized knowledge of the bureau's work to perform well.

It would be very unrealistic to expect one person to understand all those nuances and direct all communications effectively. Leadership should focus on citywide things.

Let's make sure it is not another bureaucrat that gets the bigger/higher position and authority but who doesn't know much of the substance of communications, know the city organization (new and old), best practices, public records and public meetings obligation, intellectual property knowledge.

# Elected Official Communications Support

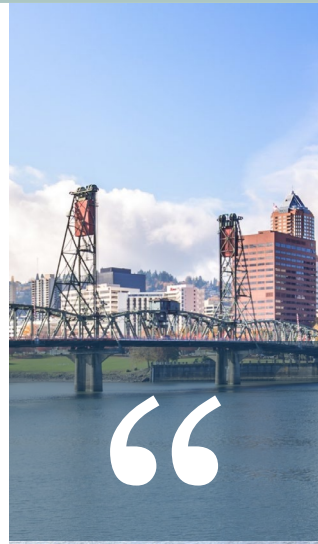


	Central Team	Elected Staff
Integrated	Strategy, tools, resources, messaging and content, aligned with adopted priorities	Political communications, such as speeches and advocacy campaigns
Hybrid	Strategy, tools and resources, including some specific to elected officials	Political communications, media relations and day-to-day products such as district newsletters
Limited	Same communications resources available to all City staff	All strategies, resources, tools and products specific to elected offices

# Breakdown: Elected Official Support

	Integrated	Hybrid	Limited
Communicators	17%	38%	45%
Collaborators	11%	53%	36%
Directors	24%	32%	44%
Council	25%	50%	25%

This is a difficult one. It is important that the City is able to find and maintain a strong alignment of overall goals, so centralizing some aspects of the overall comms strategy is going to be incredibly important with this many cooks in the kitchen. However, we need to leave some room for individual communications from electeds.

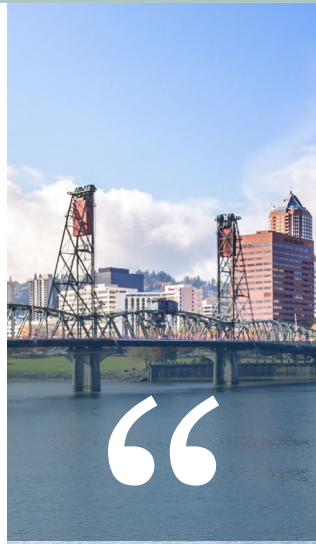


Anticipating the limited budget capacity to hire a full-time staff that can feasibly manage the City's service needs, the focus should be on ensuring that the central comms team's valuable time be protected from the ever-changing needs of elected officials and staff. Clarity in roles and reporting is important.

This may be our only opportunity to begin to speak as one city, with one voice – this includes the elected officials leading the strategic policy decisions for the city. They too must be able to speak as one voice on their policy choices. Those who are in the minority can have separate political communications but not be provided the elevated platform of a citywide communication structure. We cannot continue with the million communication fiefdoms we currently possess and expect to be achieving the goals of charter reform.



With 12 city councilors, I don't think it makes sense to ask Portlanders to fund individual communications staff for each councilor. In fact, I think councilors themselves should be expected to handle much of their own communications work, since they will no longer be tasked with administration of bureaus. The central comms team could offer the resources, training, and capacity-building to elected officials to help support their comms work.

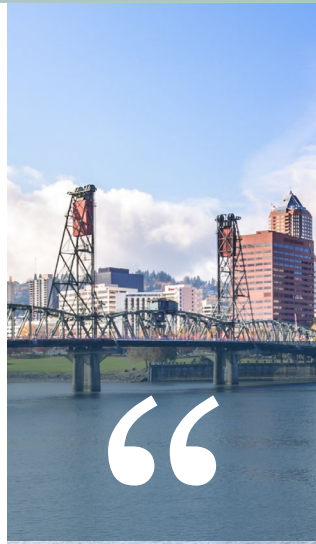


If central communications were available to councilors, the rest of the city would become less of a priority. Staff have needed help for a long time now, it would be hard to see that newly created support immediately reduced in order to support the large councilor group. Councilors should perhaps have additional, separate support that coordinates with the Central Comms Team.

Whenever possible, civil servants should not be put in the position of having to communicate political messages. What happens when the same communications office/person is given contrary instructions by elected officials who disagree with each other? What happens when strategies for one elected official run contrary to city wide efforts or strategy?

Councilors will likely want to have staff that can specifically focus on the needs and issues concerning their individual districts but will need guidance and tools from the unified comms team to be successful. The unified communications team can also help depoliticize some projects or showcase how projects will benefit the entire city, rather than just individual districts.

The mayor and councilors should NOT drain the other bureaus of resources.



Public trust in local government is eroding. That is partly the city's fault because its communications are styled differently depending on which bureau the communications comes from. This approach is unsophisticated and outdated.

I can see a centralized communications role in explaining adopted policies/investment strategies - especially those that are citywide. I would not want the communications team to become political though.

There should be consistency among the whole city government.

# Overall Themes

- Strong alignment about the need for central communications leadership and capacity
- Need to define the role of central communications – don't duplicate or micromanage bureau communications
- Specific priorities differ depending on a person's role
- Lots of passionate, conflicting opinions about elected official communications

