

PDX COMMS SURVEY RESPONSES

Overview:

- 105 responses from staff including bureau staff, staff with close connections to communications, elected office staff members, and other (bureau directors, deputy bureau directors)
- Primarily responses from bureau or office communications staff (66%)
 - Of the group of respondents approx 42% were public works service area
 - 18% from the City Administrator's office
 - 10.5% from Community and Economic Development

Q1. What is your role at the City of Portland?		
Answer Choices	Response Percent	Responses
Bureau or office communications staff (such as public information officer, graphic designer, digital strategist or communications coordinator)	66.67%	70
Staff with close connection to communications (such as equity manager, community engagement coordinator or customer service representative)	15.24%	16
Elected office staff member (including communications)	7.62%	8
Other (bureau directors, deputy bureau directors)	10.48%	11
	Answered	105
	Skipped	1

Q2. What is your service area? Reference the city organizational chart if needed.		
Answer Choices	Response Percent	Responses
City Administrator's Office	18.1%	19
Budget & Finance	3.81%	4
City Auditor's Office	0.0%	0
City Operations	6.67%	7
Community & Economic Development	10.48%	11
Mayor's Office/City Council	2.86%	3
Public Safety	6.67%	7
Public Works	41.9%	44
Vibrant Communities	9.52%	10
	Answered	105
	Skipped	1

Q3. Please select one of the following for each statement below.					
Answer Choices	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
The Communications Officer should have strategic authority over establishing branding guidelines regardless of reporting structure. Day-to-day operations would remain with service areas/bureaus. (example: pre-approved fonts, templates, and other visual approaches to communications)	3	6	7	23	18 = 41
The Communications Officer should have strategic authority over editorial decisions regardless of reporting structure. Day-to-day operations would remain with service areas/bureaus. (example: being the final decision-maker on high visibility communications)	7	11	11	17	11 = 28
The Communications Officer should have strategic authority over website content strategy regardless of reporting structure. Day-to-day operations would remain with service areas/bureaus. (example: establishing guidelines for portland.gov news content)	3	10	11	21	12 = 33
The Communications Officer should have strategic authority over external citywide messaging strategy with participation from communications staff citywide regardless of reporting structure. Day-to-day operations would remain with service areas/bureaus. (example: requiring bureau staff to contribute content for citywide newsletter)	1	3	10	28	15 = 43
The Communications Officer should have strategic authority over crisis communications strategy and leadership with participation from communications staff citywide regardless of reporting structure. Day-to-day operations would remain with service areas/bureaus. (example: coordinating top level messaging during a crisis)	5	3	3	23	23 = 46

Q3 Top Lines:

- **46 respondents agree or strongly agree:** should have strategic authority over crisis communications strategy and leadership with participation from communications staff citywide regardless of reporting structure. Day-to-day operations would remain with service areas/bureaus.
- **43 agree or strongly agree:** The Communications Officer should have strategic authority over external citywide messaging strategy with participation from communications staff citywide regardless of reporting structure. Day-to-day operations would remain with service areas/bureaus.
- **41 agree or strongly agree:** The Communications Officer should have strategic authority over establishing branding guidelines regardless of reporting structure. Day-to-day operations would remain with service areas/bureaus.
- There were no statements above that respondents disagreed with so heavily (strongly disagree or disagree), that it outweighed the amount of agreement, however, strategic authority over editorial decision making was least agreed with, and had the most disagreement.

Q4. In last year's survey, participants ranked all these items as "very important" or "essential" for a future communications leader. Please rank all of these functions to help identify the top three priorities for the Communications Officer's first year on the job.										
Answer Choices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Advance equity and anti-racism through the City's communications.	5	6	3	9	10	11	1	1	2	9
Build relationships, culture and morale for communication staff citywide.	0	4	5	5	5	5	6	8	12	7
Build relationships with communications leaders at other agencies.	0	3	1	5	5	3	6	10	12	12
Hire, mentor and lead a central communications team.	9	5	5	7	4	6	9	6	3	3
Improve the consistency and quality of communications products.	3	12	6	4	8	6	3	6	3	6
Lead the development of an organization-wide communications strategy.	18	11	3	8	5	2	3	1	3	3
Lead the development, management of a central communications budget.	1	3	3	5	4	10	8	9	6	8
Serve as a strategic advisor to the city administrator and other leaders.	7	8	10	7	5	4	5	6	4	1
Serve as a bridge between bureau and elected office communications.	3	4	10	3	8	7	7	4	7	4
Serve as a public spokesperson for high-profile, cross-bureau issues.	11	1	11	4	3	3	9	6	5	4

***Not sure that I'm reading these results correctly, though I believe these are the top 3 choices for the functions most important for the future communications leader.**

Q5: What should a communications leader do to improve/maintain communications staff confidence or morale across the city during this time of change?

Empower them to excel at their jobs. Bridge gaps between staff and resources with an eye on solving sticking points to providing better comms across the city.

Focus on coordinating communications internally and externally between the new councilors and CAO first so there is clarity and consistency about communications initiatives rather than different messages from unified communications and service area leaders. Allow more flexibility for bureau-level communications staff to implement programs that meet their business needs rather than forcing bureaus use top-down designated programs like GovDelivery that actually do not meet their business needs and create a lower level of service delivery.

Commit to the city's core values.

Bring us together more, and facilitate communities of practice to start building stronger connections between bureau staff.

Lead regular (monthly/bimonthly?) meetings w/all City comms staff. In alternate months (or whatever interval), meet with comms managers across the city. Offer "town hall"-like meetings of comms staff (ala Mike Jordan's regular meetings during and after the pandemic) to give staff a chance to hear his thinking on the evolving process of transitioning to the new form of government. Always ended in a Q&aA.

They should recognize and acknowledge the current successes of communications staff across the city--the things that are working well now. Don't just focus on deficiencies. It's important to acknowledge that lots of good comms work is already being done and to not try and fix what isn't broken. They should also respect and listen to staff expertise and seriously consider input of all comms staff **before making changes to established communications processes in the City. Any changes should be attempting to fix identified problems and needs--not just changes for the sake of it. In addition, any changes should be thoughtfully communicated in advance and clearly express why they were made, what feedback was considered, and what problems they are attempting to solve. Doing so will help morale by ensuring staff feel respected and listened to and help staff feel more confident in leadership decisions.** They should also advocate for and defend the importance of communications work and staff to other city leaders.

respect the good work of teams

Listen to staff regarding what is and isn't working well, understand barriers and challenges, communicate often and with transparency.

Provide tools and resources for communications staff to leverage across the City to ensure we're maintaining one brand and one sound as City Staff.

A communications leader should focus their efforts on bureaus that currently lack communications staff. Large bureaus like the Public Works bureaus already have robust suites of communications professionals who are experts in their fields and collaborate with each other. A communications leader's time will be best spent supporting bureaus that do not have access to the same resources.

Have office hours, offer quick tips/guides for important messaging or crisis communications support; build relationships with incoming Council members and their staff to bridge administrative and legislative communication messaging.

Provide regular, monthly mixers for communications staff across the City to share their bureau updates and potential collaborations among bureaus.

Listen to the needs and struggles group by group then build a structure of support
Help to keep communications staff across the city in touch and in tune with each other and each other's work. Encourage the sharing of strategies, collateral, templates, etc.
Ensure there is transparency in communications.

Listen to staff and understand what the actual needs are before implementing solutions.
Be sure to communicate an understanding of the very different needs and resources that bureaus have. The way communications has been talked about from city leadership - that there's somehow too many of us, especially in public works - demonstrates a lack of understanding about the very specialized knowledge that these bureaus have. And that doesn't help morale at all.

Review pay and classifications across the bureaus to make sure staff are both paid fairly but also classified correctly.

First of all, transparency! Is key for this leader to be communicative to their team. Is also critical that they have an equity lens to understand the diverse perspectives of their future team.

Communicate clearly, value employee contributions, collaboratively develop and creatively implement strategy.

Assure bureau communications staff that their input will be considered and maintain transparency about when and why any changes are happening.

Find balance between building a consistent brand and communications strategy for the city with allowing communications staff embedded on specific teams to have meaningful decision making power. Help city communicators see the value of greater integration, collaboration and consistency in the look & feel of city communications.

Advocate for consistent investment of resources around the City and demonstrate to communicators that they understand the value they bring and that they share the value and importance of a highly qualified communications staff.

I am not central enough to communications functions to offer insight into what City communications staff need (or to advise on org chart models). If we had our own staff to do this, however, I think they'd likely need to touch base with the mothership routinely to stay in alignment with brand standards and the City's communications strategy, to ensure they had support for crisis communications, to help plan out proactive strategic communications, and potentially to receive mentorship and developmental support. I also wonder if service areas should have their own communications staff or if there should be some kind of "HRBP" model in which the comms person is actually on the comms team and not an employee of the service area, but they're embedded in the service area? The idea here might be that they could then do rotations (maybe if they wanted) to get a more

robust and comprehensive experience of the City and its issues. I am also wondering if there is going to be a centralization of the City's community engagement staff - which are often adjacent to comms staff? We don't have any of these in DAM/BFF but I feel like we're going to need some expertise in this over time and I have no idea where I will get that help. Overall we are 100% behind this effort and please advise on what we can do to support you!

Work with the communicators to identify areas where combining forces would be beneficial to the work groups and the public, and which areas are best suited to staying decentralized.

It is important to recognize and lean on the expertise of the existing comms staff, building a centralized approach from the bottom up rather than hiring all new people and forcing change from the top down. I am pro-centralizing these services, but to work it has to come from a place of recognizing what is already working in some bureaus/service areas and recognizing that the subject matter expertise that our embedded comms teams bring to the table is a net positive for the communities we serve.

Establish clear lanes; schedule frequent meetings early on to work out any issues; celebrate communication "wins" while identifying areas for improvement.

Have open door policy

consistently communicating with staff (so nothing is left up to the imagination). Get to know people and what they do.

Engage the staff in developing a strategic vision and let them develop their own workplans. Give staff agency in the decisions.

Offer strategic counsel when needed and support bureau/service area communications staff in their day-to-day efforts

Understand and reflect back their value. Express the value of bureau comms teams to leaders in all areas of this new structure.

Listen and learn from their unique expertise in the bureaus they serve, include them in building a new system together.

The biggest thing people are looking for at this time is clarity. Clarity in their role and their place during this massive time of transition. We want a comms officer to clearly and calmly explain these broader issues across the City.

Focus the initial implementation of this new position on the creation of communication standards (graphics/writing/accessibility), standard practices for communication channels

(media releases, social media), for the City, and communication support to the City Administrator Office and a communication strategy for the City as a whole, including specific goals for Service Areas.

Create and distribute consistent, brief, and timely communications regarding issues affecting City employees.

Advocate for the value that we bring to the City. My confidence and morale dampens every time I hear Mike Jordan say at Citywide meetings and on KGW the amount of comms at Public Works bureaus! The public demands a higher level of communications and our teams work to meet those demands. Having the City Manager characterize our teams as bloated dampens morale. Please help him better understand the value we bring.

We really need an investment of employee communications and a TEAM that improves the experience. You might want to talk to Felicia Heaton or Quisha Light at Water Bureau. I understand that there is a 4-person team within the bureau that engages with employees to improve the customer experience. While one can develop written and/or visual communication materials, what is often missing is a team to ensure that those materials are shared/delivered to the intended audiences.

Lead with help, not direction - focus first on central resources before central requirements. I selected 'strongly agree' on all of the authority questions above; I think that single, central decision-making role is essential, but it only works if there is strong - and visible - collaboration with service area leadership and comms staff.

active listening, engage them in a communications strategic plan, joint training and culture-building activities

Establish reliable communication, open lines for feedback, detail what to expect from them, acknowledge difficulties while presenting opportunities to make things better.

Find best practices that can be emulated and shared across the city, lift up what is going right.

I think recognizing the importance of embedded communication professionals that speak and can translate specialized content to a larger audience is incredibly valuable. While there is a push to send communication to an enterprise scaling, it's necessary to recognize the value of internal communication coordinators and public information officers that speak to particular audience segments.

CENTRALIZED MODEL

Q6. Please select one of the following for each statement below.					
Answer Choices	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
The centralized scenario supports flexibility for bureaus to meet operational needs.	11	11	14	16	2
The centralized scenario supports increased communications productivity.	9	13	13	16	3
The centralized scenario has clear lines of authority.	3	8	15	19	9
The centralized scenario supports consistent messaging from the City of Portland to residents.	2	5	18	22	7
The centralized scenario would connect bureau and service area communications to an overall communications strategy for the city.	4	2	7	33	8
The centralized scenario provides expanded support services for communications in bureaus and service areas.	7	11	18	13	4

Diagram of Centralized Comms Officer

Top Lines:

- 41 agree or strongly agree that the centralized scenario would connect bureau and service area communications to an overall communications strategy for the city. (41 agree or strongly agree)
- 29 agreed that the centralized scenario supports consistent messaging from the City of Portland to residents.
- 28 agreed that The centralized scenario has clear lines of authority.
- 22 disagree that The centralized scenario supports flexibility for bureaus to meet operational needs.
- 22 disagree that The centralized scenario supports increased communications productivity.
- 29 disagree or are neutral that the centralized scenario model provides expanded support services.

Q7. What other benefits would a centralized scenario provide?

I think a centralized scenario provides the ability to identify opportunities for the redistribution of workload, increase efficiencies and reduce duplicity of work efforts and products across bureaus and service areas.

Consistent messaging.

None.

Just want to note/give a shout out to the existing Centralized Comms Team, which has done an exemplary job of unifying comms efforts across the City. We know have some great comms "infrastructure" in place to build on. Thank you!

I don't think there are any benefits that a centralized scenario would provide that couldn't also be provided by alternative models

Setting much needed standards.

It reinforces the ability to have a single brand/single sound for the City of Portland.

It seems like this scenario might give bureaus that currently don't have a lot of bandwidth for comms the staff to pursue comms projects.

Offers a needed unified approach to governing public information.

The best part of this plan is that it maintains some bureau-specific comms people. This is really important because a lot of our work in public works is highly specialized and requires a lot of background knowledge to do properly.

Coordinated crisis communication response.

Brand structure, central resources, continuity of communications

I don't think there is enough information in this survey to give conclusive opinions on the centralized scenario benefits, but it is possible this would lead to increased abilities to work across bureaus on communications. I also see opportunities for collaboration across bureaus to share resources and bandwidth for similar projects and audiences.

The main benefit that I see is clear lines of authority and clear decision-making power. I think it could improve flexibility, productivity, and support services FOR SOME BUREAUS, but if not done very carefully it could do the opposite for bureaus that already have a robust and effective communications structure/team.

Public morale (they see us as The City or one unit, not as bureaus).

More distributed support to areas that need it?

I think this could have some benefits for presenting a "united front" as a city.

It would enable communications staff embedded in bureaus to disagree with bureau management on communications strategy and messaging, and provide frank counsel, without fear of being disciplined or reassigned.

Not many.

Flexibility to adapt to shifting needs over time, when particular programs or initiatives require more support

Clarity and clear, unsiloed structure - something we are currently missing

None

Consistency

I'm not sure I'm seeing the benefits here. The issue that exists within the service areas is that we are not flexible and unable to adjust resources/staffing. Why can't we have a "graphics design team" or a "media relations team" and have service areas be billed according to the use of staff time? If you thought of having the entire city's communications team as an agency, and have staff begin to bill time (especially during emergencies), the burden wouldn't feel so heavy if the work was shared by the entire comms team especially during emergencies.

I have not seen any benefits

I've worked with centralized communications in a large government before - it seemed to work well. A good place to provide advice, support, and training on media relations, public records, etc. They also maintained a calendar of internal citywide events to help prevent clashes or overkill (think multiple simultaneous charitable asks rather than one per month, more common support for affinity group messaging/celebrations, etc.)

Consistency, familiarity with all subjects, opportunities to see patterns in what communication blocks occur.

The City needs a comms officer with the authority to make enterprise decisions, otherwise, who will be at the table with the Equity and Engagement Officers?

Centralizing communication work would advance a clear set of authority.

Q8: What challenges do you foresee with a centralized scenario?

There are two service areas that share a handful of communications staff. What would this structure look like for those service areas?

Was unaware that the 'service area comms manager' position was in discussion. There's already a ton of red tape to get communications products out to the public in a timely fashion. This would only add to the layers of approval and probably detract from the decades of subject matter expertise that comms employees in each bureau have.

This model would create too many layers of bureaucracy and not allow bureau-level communications staff to be efficient in meeting the business needs of their bureau. This model would also lead to reduced subject-matter expertise and lower levels of service for smaller bureaus, since the larger bureaus would likely require the most resources, which would not be allocated proportionately.

Bureaucracy.

This seems to reduce the DCA's access to and engagement with the communications employees in their service area, which seems inefficient and risky.

If the communications officer sees their main duty as PR for the city, then embedded communications staff could have to focus their time on marketing instead of applying greatly needed communication skills to improving how services and programs are delivered to the public.

Lack of flexibility? Ensuring whatever is coming from the top penetrates the levels below. That means mid-level management needs to be "held accountable."

-determining what staff positions count as "communications" and thus should be moved into the centralized structure. The difficulties of those kinds of decisions are exemplified by the complexity of the recent work to centralized permitting functions. For example, in the Water Bureau, the customer service group produces many direct customer communications, but that comms work should absolutely not be centralized as it is so embedded with bureau customer service operations. There are many more examples like this of communications work that is performed by staff that aren't members of officially defined "comms teams" because it is inherent to other program operations. It wouldn't be realistic or helpful to centralize all that work--the scope would be enormous. But there still be a related challenge of some comms work being done in the centralized structure and some outside it--who would be responsible for what? How would that be coordinated? If all comms work had to go through the centralized structure, that would dramatically decrease efficiency and increase waiting times for comms work--as shown by the speed and quality of service provided by other centralized functions already at the city.

-centralization almost always results in a decrease in quality of services because the authorities/final decision makers are more and more removed from the context of the work. A lot of communications work is also time sensitive and centralization also often depresses speed by adding more layers of bureaucracy and review to processes. Further, what are the cost implications to bureau? Will they be asked to pay more overhead to support the centralization but have reduced comms capacity? How does this intersect with restricted funding sources, such as water or sewer rates. - different bureaus and service areas have vastly different communications needs and relationships with the public. This goes beyond just subject matter expertise. Its also about scope/size, visibility of work (external vs internal services), types of programs/services offered, and areas where interaction with the public can occur. It would be difficult, if not impossible, for one

person to fully understand and tack all of these different needs and subject matters. How can one person be expected to manage all of those communications? Further, while some amount of citywide strategy and messaging is certainly a needed benefit, because service areas are so different, they will always need individual strategies and messages to serve the public. With centralization, there is a risk that those individual/specific needs could be overlooked due to focus on the whole--which could lead to some area falling through the cracks and public needs for information not being met. -I think the lines of authority will be challenge in this scenario and actually are quite ambiguous and subjective. While they are theoretically clear on paper, in practice, I don't think they respect/honor subject matter expertise as claimed. What happens when a subject matter expert in a bureau and the comms officer disagree on content or strategy? As noted above, it will be impossible for the comms officer to have subject matter expertise in all comms area of the city given the scope of operations. In the Public Works service area especially, comms decisions can have impacts on bureau operations, security, and more. Comms work is not separate from or extraneous to other work in the city. Comms work is deeply embedded and entwined with programmatic work and service delivery. Even if staff remain embedded in bureaus or service area, placing comms authority entirely in a separate structure forces an arbitrary separation between comms work and other work. How will bureau experts/directors be able to express their comms needs in this structure? Do all comms projects and decisions have to be initiated through the comms officer? If not, which ones do and don't?

I worry that this adds more layers of management rather than providing opportunities for efficiencies

It could meet the above needs, but it's going to depend on how the comms lead executes on this structure.

I don't know if a service area communications manager is needed for each service area. It may be worthwhile to put a single manager over multiple service areas.

It seems like this scenario will create two new levels of approval beyond the current approval layers, which may slow down communications production for bureaus that currently interact with the public a lot.

Increased bureaucracy, decrease in responsiveness to community members and constituents, slow communications work and lack of nimbleness, high risk of authoritarian rigidity

The Communication Staff's service area directors having conflicting thoughts/opinions/needs from a Communications or PIO from the Communications Officer

I foresee a lot of confusion for embedded comms staff about who they actually report to and whose instructions to follow: citywide comms leadership or bureau leadership? I also foresee bureau staff confusion on the same topic.

Decision-makers may not have the capacity at first to understand the complexities of functions and needs in each bureau to make strategic staffing choices.

Centralizing comms to some degree under service areas makes sense, but adding an entire layer of review or authority above that would result in a bunch of steps to accomplish basic communications functions and would ultimately restrict bureau's ability to do their comms jobs in a timely manner. I foresee needing a simple fix to a graphic poster made, for example, and having to wait two weeks (at least) to get it done.

Not enough flexibility and not nimble enough to ensure timely communications.

I can't imagine what a Service Area Communications manager would actually do. The last thing the City needs is more bloated manager positions. Many of your communications staff are currently bargaining for a Union contract through CPPW. It's going to be very frustrating to hear the City say they can't afford our requests while simultaneously bringing in more high paid managers. Coordinators are overwhelming women and women of color and are also among the lowest paid employees at the city.

Politics.

current brand loyalty, perception that creativity will be stifled.

I foresee issues with added layers of approval for timely communications. Each work group within the bureaus has tailored communications for their communities and projects, I would worry these approaches, built out of community need, would go unanswered.

There will be resistance from comms professionals in bureaus that already have a robust comms departments. There is a very real risk that centralization, while helping bureaus that currently lack comms infrastructure, could harm the comms efforts of bureaus that already have a robust and highly effective comms team. There's also the risk of losing subject matter expertise in comms teams, but that could be averted by having embedded comms teams in high-need bureaus. These embedded teams could still report up through a central chain of command, but they could be dedicated to working within a certain subject area that they have in-depth knowledge of (water or PBOT come to mind).

Agreeing on communication protocols from so many different communication departments.

each bureau has their way of doing things, so there may be disagreement on some approaches/methods.

This does not offer strong flexibility for each service area. It also does not effectively engage service area staff in a collaborative process.

If communications staff periodically get reassigned from one bureau to another, it might not allow some communications staff to develop subject-matter expertise in a particular bureau's service area.

Many. Separating the communications professionals who work in the service areas from working directly with the DCA overseeing those specialty areas creates an unnecessary and burdensome level of bureaucracy that this new structure is trying to (hopefully) eliminate

In my opinion, the service area comms manager needs to connect directly to the service area DCA.

Bureau directors, deputy city administrators and the communications officer would need to work together effectively to ensure that business needs are met by communications staff embedded in service areas.

Each bureau has its own mission and way it likes to present itself (for example, the Water Bureau has an AMAZING social media presence!). I fear that a fully centralized structure will take away that individualized presence.

The history of a very decentralized City communication service will take time to align.

Starting with having all the communication staff in the City report to one person or a small team initially is unrealistic. The disconnect of authority for communication by subject matter experts in bureau leadership and DCAs would lead to uniformed editorial decisions by a centralized communications team. Current communications staff are managing large volumes of work (i.e. Water, Police, BES, PBOT, PP&R etc) and creating a centralized team will make it less responsive to community needs and customers.

removing authority from bureau subject matter experts, giving top-down rules regarding communications when folks within bureaus know how to do their jobs best and have already made community media, cross-bureau, cross-agency, etc. connections

We're still siloed in this approach. There isn't enough flexibility to quickly respond.

Too many people with not enough subject matter expertise trying to help.

This is, clearly, the most aggressive next step we could take. I question our ability to successfully implement this dramatic re-organization without an intermediate approach.

Likely a very hard sell for some bureaus with long-standing teams, branding, etc. Change management will need to be robust and clear authority established.

The communications coordinator may have TOO much work to handle effectively.

- staff are removed from the day to day of their home bureau's work. - staff will have difficulty connecting with SMEs. - bureaus will need (or want) some comms functions at the bureau level, leading to additional cost - general funds may fall leaving these positions vulnerable without dedicated funding

The real problem I foresee is that while bureaus have had to grow their own internal services, those services are fairly integral to the day to day operations of those bureaus. Creating a centralized office risks the flexibility of those professionals to do their work. Currently, we sit next to decision-makers...in a centralized model, we are steps removed.

HYBRID MODEL

Q9. Please select one of the following for each statement below.					
Answer Choices	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
The hybrid scenario supports flexibility for bureaus to meet operational needs.	3	8	16	21	7
The hybrid scenario allows some unique strategy and messaging to be developed within service areas and bureaus.	3	6	9	29	8
The hybrid scenario would support increased communications efficiency.	5	11	22	14	3
The hybrid scenario has clear lines of authority.	7	19	14	13	1
The hybrid scenario supports consistent messaging from service areas to residents.	4	13	18	19	1
The hybrid scenario allows the Communications Director to set communications strategy for overarching, citywide projects and goals.	5	9	15	22	4
The hybrid scenario provides guidance to bureaus on best practices.	3	6	21	17	7
The hybrid scenario potentially provides expanded support services for communications in bureaus and service areas.	4	7	22	19	3

Responses based on diagram of hybrid model.

- 28 were in agreement + 16 neutral that the The hybrid scenario supports flexibility for bureaus to meet operational needs.
- 37 were in agreement that The hybrid scenario allows some unique strategy and messaging to be developed within service areas and bureaus.
- 26 were in agreement + 15 neutral that The hybrid scenario allows the Communications Director to set communications strategy for overarching, citywide projects and goals.
- 26 disagreed that The hybrid scenario has clear lines of authority.
- 17 were in disagreement, + 18 neutral that The hybrid scenario supports consistent messaging from service areas to residents.

- 22 were neutral + 22 in agreement that The hybrid scenario potentially provides expanded support services for communications in bureaus and service areas.

Q10: What other benefits would a hybrid scenario provide?

Some comms areas could benefit from being combined (say, construction/capital projects that involve multiple bureaus), but this would not be true for most areas of comms.

This would allow for more subject-matter expertise than the first option.

More representation and opportunity for collaboration and upward flow of ideas with a communications leadership team.

More autonomy for individual bureaus/service areas. But I'm not sure that's a good/better thing. The whole point of centralized comms is to increase communication/collaboration both up and down and across the organizational structure.

-forming a communications leadership with representation from each service area could be a great benefit to the City and residents. It would enable much more thoughtful formation of citywide communications strategies, as expertise and considerations from each service area could be incorporated without relying on a single person (comms officer) to understand the nuances of each service area's subjects, programs, needs, etc. It could also help increase support services for comms in bureaus/service area by providing a clear pathway for the citywide comms team/comms officer to learn about needs and gaps in each area--rather than trying to guess or fix things that aren't broken. It would also provide opportunities for the service areas to better understand each others comms needs and projects and identify areas where collaboration would be beneficial. -shared (rather than fully centralized) comms authority could resolve many of the potential challenges of the full centralization approach around valuing and incorporating service area expertise and ensuring that the needs of different services areas are recognized and met, while still providing a clear mandate and avenue for citywide coordination. It provides a more reasonable span of authority for the comms officer and doesn't place as many unrealistic expectations on one role. This would allow that officer to focus more on truly citywide strategies and projects and better manage the central comms team--rather than be stretched thin in overseeing all comms work. -Depending on how a hybrid scenario was implemented, there could be other potential benefits, but only if the scenario allows services areas to adopt different models for comms staffing and organization and not requiring the same service-area centralized model to be used in every case. -could provide more resource sharing and opportunities to learn from other comms staff across the city

Service areas know their programs and audiences best to understand the nuance of messaging.

More collaboration across bureaus within a service area, but...(see * below)
it would require more internal communication/coordination so it may result in improved relationships between bureaus and bureau communications staff

Offers collaborative outcomes.

This would streamline communications to the public, particularly around impacts on either high profile projects or around day to day impacts to the public, such as for street closures or construction projects.

Not a lot.

Individualized brand identity for each service area

This scenario seems to be a bit clearer in terms of organization and could potentially allow work groups and bureaus to collaborate more easily with the new communications staff and director. Prevents professional burnout Promotes collaboration and transparency

I appreciate that this scenario engages the various bureau teams in a more collaborative manner. It gives agency to the comms staff and provides a forum for working together.

This enables communications staff to build up subject matter expertise on issues dealt with in that service area; communications employees do not become jack-of-all-trades generalists

Keeping the service area work expertise and communications expertise married is an important goal and this version is much closer to that vision than the centralized model.

This would better allow for individuality across bureaus - something that I do think is valuable to maintain

Hybrid approach is likely to be more effective in the early years of transition as it builds on current communications team within Service Areas. Small offices, coupled with larger bureaus in service areas can level up service for all in the service area. Editorial authority for weekly/daily operations is more efficient at the service area level rather than centralized.

allows for SMEs to continue to do the work that they do best with support and guidance from a clear place of communications authority

It gives autonomy to the service areas. This feels the most like today's structure where the commissioner-in-charge sets the message, tone, etc.

Nothing

The concept of a Communications Steering (or maybe Advisory) Committee is a good way to help with hearing bureau perspectives, gaining buy-in to strategies, etc. Suggest this be incorporated into whatever scenario is chosen.

Lessening the burden on the Communications Officer, lets Deputy Director, who is more familiar with bureau content, make decisions concerning bureau communications.

The communications leadership team seems like a great way to share ideas and collaborate efficiently.

Q11: What challenges do you foresee with a hybrid scenario?

There are communications needs, strategies and expertise that may be unique to various bureaus, and the bureaus that share a service area may benefit from their comms managers being part of a service area comms manager team. This might be a more cohesive approach to managing the communications teams within service areas.

Efficient on paper, -not- in practice. This would effectively cancel out a lot of subject matter and process-based expertise of staff in different bureaus. I've been through a similar "integration" at another organization, and no matter how thoughtful we were about it, it slowed everything down and we didn't really recover from it.

Lack of clarity for decision-making. Not enough flexibility to allow for bureau-level business needs to be met if centralization occurs at the service area level. Smaller bureaus would not receive the level of service needed.

This scenario feels too laissez-faire to me. Not enough direct lines going up and down the organizational chain.

- Every service area is different and has different comms needs. While this model is certainly better at addressing that than the centralized scenario, fully integrating the comms staff in each service area into one service area-wide team will present most of the same challenges as the centralized scenario--just at a different scale. While some service areas could probably benefit from the model presented here, using a cookie-cutter approach to each service area doesn't really support flexibility. This is especially true for the larger service areas, such as public works in particular. The public works service area is (I believe) the largest by far in terms of budget and staff. Because of the number of program and projects within the service area, there are a lot of comms needs. In addition, while there are certainly some comms needs/projects across the PW bureaus that are similar, they are not identical, and the comms work for each bureau still required subject matter expertise that is not transferable across the service area. For example, all three complete construction projects and maintain infrastructure Portlanders use and interact with daily. However, construction projects by the different bureaus have different goals and have different impacts on the community and thus require different comms content and strategies. The points of interaction between the public and each bureau's infrastructure is also different. The Water Bureau is unique in having direct customer interactions, which comes with unique comms needs. Further, the scope of each infrastructure bureau's work is already large. Much of the comms work in each bureau

requires specialized knowledge and subject matter expertise that is unique to each bureau. For those reasons, trying to fully centralize the PW works bureau's comms teams would present almost all of the same challenges as the fully centralized scenario and some additional ones, including: - identifying who/what counts as "comms" and should be moved to the centralized team. -how to ensure restricted funds are spent appropriately (i.e that water ratepayer funds pay only for water services, sewer for sewer, etc.) -artificially separating comms work from other operations within bureaus, thereby reducing the important interconnections between communications and service delivery -risk of decreased speed or quality of comms work from centralization at the service area level adding more layers of review and severing relationships between comms staff and program staff -with such large comms team in each PW bureau (which are needed to meet all the comms needs of the very large bureau's with lots of interaction with the public), one person would not realistically be able to directly manage all the comms work/staff or have subject matter expertise in every comms need/area. The service area comms team would realistically have to be subdivided with additional managers/supervisors. That potentially raises concerns about management bloat and staffing costs--what value does adding a service area comms manager provide to the public? -while there is certainly more similarity in subject matter and comms needs within service areas than across them, in a large area like Public Works, each bureau still has unique needs as they each have different missions, different goals, different types of projects/programs, and many different points of interaction with the public. Attempting to centralize all comms work in PW could gloss over those differences and result in important details being lost in public comms

It's not clear enough and conflicting strategies might happen. That creates bottlenecks to determine final decision making. I've been in a similar situation and it's more of a time sink than a time saver.

It assumes each bureau has communications staff, and I don't know if that's the case. If it's not the case, we'd want to ensure that the service area comms staff are providing support to each bureau - especially ones that do not have communications staff in the current/commission form. It may also enable a communication disconnect across the City if the communications managers do not directly report to the communications officer. This format may also create more bureaucracy/processes with communication strategies and timelines.

Where is the line between a service area communication and a citywide communication? Will be tricky to determine who is responsible for what. Also, if comms staff will be grouped by service area, what happens to the service areas that don't have comms staff already? This might create more inequity across service areas. *...Finding information will be MUCH harder. When you work inside a bureau, you learn who knows what. Creating a shared comms team will mean each comms person will have to learn the information networks of each bureau in their service area. Or, you'll end up with the same system we have now, where certain individuals work exclusively with certain bureaus. On a similar note, it will be harder to foster relationships between staff and maintain consistency

across publications. People in my bureau know exactly what services I provide and come to me directly for help. In this Franken-comms scenario, I imagine it will be hard for people in bureaus to connect with specific people for help. This scenario could also create money problems. Certain bureaus are not funded by the general fund and must use ratepayer money for their services. How difficult is it to draw money from the general fund to support the efforts of a ratepayer-funded bureau?

It seems time-consuming, inefficient, and leading to more bureaucracy. "Editorial authority" will slow down communications productivity overall, lead to misunderstanding and resentment within and among bureaus who get speedier/better support compared to those that don't, and squeaky wheels will get the most grease. It seems inequitable and like a solution in search of a problem.

Similar challenge - The Communication Staff's service area directors having conflicting thoughts/opinions/needs from a Communications or PIO from the Communications Officer Service area comms managers serving two masters and then having to filter down both sets of instruction to bureau comms staff - an unenviable position!

It could be challenging or take more time to problem solve, especially during emergencies. DCA may not have the capacity to oversee communication goals.

First, there's no bureau specific comms people. In Public Works this would cause all sorts of issues, especially with major projects and regulatory communications, which we have many of. People who are knowledgeable about transportation issues, for example, know nothing about Water or Sewer. And vice versa. So having a single service area comms team could lose a lot of that nuance if that's not accounted for.

I can't imagine what a Service Area Communications manager would actually do. The last thing the City needs is more bloated manager positions. Many of your communications staff are currently bargaining for a Union contract through CPPW. It's going to be very frustrating to hear the City say they can't afford our requests while simultaneously bringing in more high paid managers. Coordinators are overwhelming women and women of color and are also among the lowest paid employees at the city.

Bureaucratic fear-based communications.

It feels convoluted

Communications Directors for the service areas should still have some degree of responsibility to the Communications Officer to ensure flexibility for the unique demands of each service area while complying with citywide best practices.

This scenario adds a layer of complexity that could alter the effectiveness of the communications. There would need to be very clear communications between the teams

to ensure work isn't being repeated, and that everyone is on the same page with who is responsible for which type of communications.

The line of authority and decision making is less clear. The comms officer seems to be another layer of bureaucracy without as strong a purpose. It does not really get us the "one city" approach that transition leadership keeps talking about.

N/A

Too many chefs in the kitchen.

This scenario will require a comms leadership that is committed to meaningfully engaging staff. It will also require consistency.

If there isn't regular and close coordination with the City's communications officer, there is a risk that the service areas become siloed and detached from citywide messaging.

It is important that while the service area teams work together, they still stay assigned to specific bureaus to provide the level of expertise that comes from being embedded in specialty areas.

There may still be times when it's unclear who is the final decision-maker.

This does create a convoluted management structure that will be hard to be sustainable. I fear this would have the same siloing issues we run into currently.

Shared authority between the DCA and Communications Officer could at times require involvement of the Assistant Administrator to resolve.

too many cooks in the kitchen, differing priorities within service areas

There is no consistency. This model favors autonomy to the service areas. This feels the most like today's structure where the commissioner-in-charge sets the message, tone, etc.

Nothing

This approach assumes the same structure within each service area. That is a very limiting assumption that almost disqualifies the scenario, for me - even though I don't think full centralization is the right immediate next step and there is a lot to like, otherwise, about this scenario.

Continues siloing rather than a One City approach; is a communications director position at each service area necessary - cost concerns

The Deputy Director and Communications Officer are going to have one million meetings to coordinate messaging.

What if the DCA and Comms Officer disagree on something? This could prove highly inefficient for service areas.

This seems very challenging, with no clear lines of authority but no bureau independence either.

MARGINAL ADJUSTMENT SCENARIO

Q12. Please select one of the following for each statement below.					
Answer Choices	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
The marginal adjustment scenario supports flexibility for bureaus to meet operational needs.	1	3	9	20	20
The marginal adjustment scenario supports increased communications efficiency.	4	10	22	11	6
The marginal adjustment scenario has ambiguous lines of authority.	7	11	10	11	14
The marginal adjustment scenario supports consistent messaging to residents.	5	11	18	16	3
The marginal adjustment scenario provides communications support services to bureaus similar to current services.	4	5	19	18	7

Responses based on marginal adjustment scenario diagram

Top Lines:

- 40 agree or strongly agree that The marginal adjustment scenario supports flexibility for bureaus to meet operational needs.
- 25 agree or strongly agree that The marginal adjustment scenario provides communications support services to bureaus similar to current services.
- 25 also agree or strongly agree that The marginal adjustment scenario has ambiguous lines of authority.
- 22 were neutral that The marginal adjustment scenario supports increased communications efficiency, where the responses for agreement with this statement, and disagreement with this statement were just about split.

Q13: What other benefits would a marginal adjustment scenario provide?

This would allow comms teams that are working WELL to continue to work well and could provide support to bureaus that need additional tools.

This allows for a higher level of service for smaller bureaus and best allows all bureaus to meet their specific business needs.

I don't see any. Seems like worse than the status quo.

- I think this scenario would provide increased comms support services to bureaus compared to current services because the central comms team/officer would be able to provide more tools and strategic consultation. -Comms work would be less artificially separated from program/service delivery compared to other scenarios--which allow the important relationships between comms staff and subject matter experts to continue and support the continued development of high quality comms products on a variety of specialized topics -ensures the different needs and subject area of bureaus are more likely to be met well by keeping comms decision making authority close to programmatic decision making authority and expertise - still offers room for service area and citywide comms staff to share resources and learn from each other without micromanaging. In particular, allows service areas to collaborate on comms strategies and projects and share functions that make for them while still recognizing that large service areas such as public works still require comms staff with bureau-level expertise and knowledge to succeed -reduces speed of changes and abrupt/disruptive changes and thus fewer short term disruptions to the important communications that the city continues to delivery to Portlanders every day. The citywide structure established in this scenario could be leveraged to more thoughtfully evaluate areas where more collaboration and coordination would actually materially benefit city residents and staff rather and in what areas it would be counter productive.

Service areas know their programs and audiences best to understand the nuance of messaging.

Bureaus that have robust communications can continue to provide those communications without interruption. This could be a great option for Public Works, since we already have a lot of comms staff and strong relationships with the public.

This approach minimizes the amount of budget and spending needed for a centralized communications team, it ensures the team focuses on strategy and supporting bureaus with specific requests rather than requiring all "editorial authority"- if the central team is lean, strategic and effective, bureaus will want their support and guidance. This approach helps a central team that can focus on communicating to constituents about legislative and executive parts of the city. That type of messaging consistency is what is needed most, not "editorial authority."

Greater support and control of the Communications Officer

By far the least confusing option.

Depending on what the centralized services looks like, that could be a benefit.
None.

This would be a good transition strategy, and a time to collect information on individual bureaus as they transition to the new form of government to allow for some tailored solutions.

It is the most "same" of the options and will receive less pushback from existing staff, but that seems like just about the only benefit.

N/A

Subject matter expertise already established within infrastructure bureaus would be acknowledged and maintained.

This seems to keep things roughly status quo, which might be a good thing during the potentially rocky first few years of the transition.

As expressed above, it is important to keep the bureau expertise held by embedded communications professionals intact. This version does that and removes the excess layer of bureaucracy seen in the centralized and hybrid version.

Less change management needed in the short-term

I can't think of any - I don't love how convoluted this is

Least disruptive to current communication services and may provide better strategy and tools.

This seems like a better approach for bureaus that engage in emergency communications: a citywide comms team can develop and fund projects that are beneficial to the whole City while emergency communicators have the flexibility to do their vital work quickly

Once more, this model gives more autonomy to the service areas. This feels the most like today's structure where the commissioner-in-charge sets the message, tone, etc.

It's the best scenario in letting Bureau managers direct their communications staff.

Lots of change happening right now, this might be a stopgap in advance of a new City Administrator who brings their own vision

Leaving communications in services areas to experts in the field.

allows bureaus to keep some unique identity and keeps comms staff embedded with SMEs, but aware of service area priorities and city needs.

Q14: What challenges do you foresee with a marginal adjustment scenario?

There are two service areas that share a handful of communications staff. What would this structure look like for those service areas?

Still don't understand where the service area comms manager position comes from or its true purpose. We don't need more managers, we need more people making comms products.

None.

Inconsistent messaging.

See above.

-adding a service area comms manger in each case and some service area centralization continues to present challenges similar to other scenarios around administrative/managerial bloat, proper use of restricted funds, potential impacts to speed/quality of materials, etc.

This might be the easiest but also might not be enough

Getting direction and standards from one team but reporting to another is blurry. Who is the ultimate decision maker in times of disagreement?

Communications managers reporting to the DCA could present a scenario where bureaus and service areas are making independent decisions on communication strategy without vetting ideas through the communications officer.

Not much support for other service areas that aren't as flush with comms staff as Public Works.

Similar to the hybrid model, some bureaus may end up with more strategic support from the central team, compared to other bureaus, creating resentment among bureaus and inequity in resources provided to bureaus.

Not sure if this will meet the goals of the transition.

It misses the opportunity to make structural changes to citywide communications that will allow us to communicate more clearly, consistently and proactively with the public. It's unclear what the role of this office would be in this scenario. With no authority, it would basically mean providing some centralized services, which would be good, but is that enough?

I can't imagine what a Service Area Communications manager would actually do. The last thing the City needs is more bloated manager positions. Many of your communications staff are currently bargaining for a Union contract through CPPW. It's going to be very frustrating to hear the City say they can't afford our requests while simultaneously bringing in more high paid managers. Coordinators are overwhelming women and women of color and are also among the lowest paid employees at the city.

Too many to count!

ambiguity, confusion, perpetuation of the same dysfunctional siloed structure, multiple brands.

I think each service area and bureau would ultimately try and make a case that they're the exception to the rule and could create animosity amongst service areas for those who get an exception to do things differently.

As with all the scenarios, challenges can be difficult to determine beforehand, but I can see how this strategy might be confusing for some bureaus who don't have robust communications teams, but helpful for those that have their communications strategies well established; to prevent communications interruptions.

The lines of authority are extremely unclear. The comms officer is a virtually pointless position, adding bureaucracy but little value. This does nothing to achieve the desired "one city" approach the transition team (and the people of Portland) seem to want.
N/A

Comms Officer doesn't have any authority.

This doesn't feel like it's on par with the scale of the transformation. Does it match the moment? Also, could end up sidelining the citywide comms staff if the leadership in that office isn't particularly dynamic and effective.

The lines of authority under this arrangement are unclear

There could be some crossed wires between the central communications team and the DCAs.

We wouldn't be fully capitalizing on the opportunities presented by Portland's new form of government.

It will be important for the City to still have a communication strategy, standard operating procedures and standards (writing/graphics/accessibility).
Inconsistent messaging and branding

I don't think we'll see much of a change in this scenario.

This also prescribes organizational changes within service areas, which may or may not be appropriate for a given service area - which seems designed to lead the respondent toward the consolidation scenario.

Continues siloing rather than a One City approach; makes standardization around branding, messaging, tools, or any other citywide decision challenging

This seems like a plan that could be enacted two or three years after the first or second model. I fear that in the beginning, this sort of model will create resistance with bureaus to adhere to the Communication Officer's advice or necessary changes.

I think elements from each scenario could be combined into a nice structure. For example, the comms leadership team seems like a good practice, regardless of scenario. calling it a marginal adjustment seems judgement laden. This is still a significant shift, just one that takes what's working well and adding a layer of strategies and tools citywide.

This is not status quo, but coding it as such could make change management difficult when employees expect few changes but actually see a significant shift.

Q15. How important is it for a Communications Officer for the City of Portland to have the following traits?				
Answer Choices	not important at all	slightly important	important	essential
Familiarity with Portland city government	2	7	20	26
Demonstrated commitment to advancing equity	1	5	21	29
Ability to effectively interface with political offices	1	6	28	21
Experience as a communications practitioner	0	0	11	45
Crisis communications experience	1	0	28	27
Change management experience	0	6	26	24
Track record of innovative approaches in communications	1	20	19	16
Ability to interface with media and build media relationships	0	12	25	19
Experience managing large teams and operationalizing plans	1	6	23	26

Top Lines:

- 56 believed it was important or essential that the Comms Officer has experience as a communications practitioner

- 55 believed it was important or essential for the Comms Officer to have crisis comms experience
 - 50 believed it was important or essential for the Comms Officers to have Change Management Experience
 - 50 believed it was important or essential for the Comms Officer to have a demonstrated commitment to advancing equity
 - 49 believed it was important or essential that the Comms Officer has experience managing large teams and operationalizing plans
-

Summary of Feedback on Centralized Communications Scenario

Benefits

1. Unified and Consistent Messaging:

- A centralized model provides consistent messaging across the city, reinforcing a single brand and sound for Portland.
- It offers a unified approach to governing public information and maintaining continuity in communications.
- Centralization can enhance public morale by presenting the city as a single, cohesive unit rather than disparate bureaus.

2. Efficiency and Resource Optimization:

- This model can identify opportunities for workload redistribution, increasing efficiencies and reducing duplicity of efforts across bureaus.
- Smaller bureaus that currently lack bandwidth for communications can benefit from shared resources and support under a centralized system.
- Centralized crisis communication response ensures coordinated and effective management during emergencies.

3. Standardization and Support:

- Setting much-needed standards and maintaining a central repository of resources can improve the overall quality and consistency of communications.
- It provides opportunities for collaboration across bureaus, sharing resources, and increasing overall bandwidth for projects.
- A centralized structure allows comms staff to offer frank counsel and disagree with bureau management without fear of discipline, fostering a healthier work environment.

4. Clear Authority and Decision-Making:

- Clear lines of authority and decision-making power can improve flexibility, productivity, and support services for some bureaus.
- A single comms officer with enterprise-wide authority ensures cohesive strategy and decision-making.
- The centralized model can help comms staff adapt to shifting needs over time, providing flexibility for changing priorities.

5. Support for Understaffed Areas:

- Bureaus that currently have limited communications capacity can receive the support they need to pursue projects and enhance their communications efforts.
- This model allows for a more equitable distribution of support, ensuring all areas have the necessary resources.
- It fosters familiarity with all subjects and helps identify patterns in communication challenges across the city.

Challenges

1. Increased Bureaucracy and Inefficiency:

- The centralized model could create additional layers of bureaucracy, slowing down the communications process and reducing responsiveness.
- It may lead to inefficiencies, with more approval steps required for communications products, impacting timeliness.
- Bureaucracy can result in decreased quality of service as decision-makers become further removed from the context of specific bureau needs.

2. Loss of Subject-Matter Expertise:

- Centralizing communications risks losing the subject-matter expertise that bureau-specific comms staff bring to their work.
- Comms staff may struggle to maintain the specialized knowledge required for effective communication within their specific service areas.
- Embedding comms staff within a centralized structure might lead to a loss of nuanced understanding and reduced effectiveness in specialized areas.

3. Flexibility and Adaptability Issues:

- The centralized model may lack the flexibility needed to address the unique needs of different bureaus and service areas.
- Determining which staff positions count as "communications" and should be centralized can be complex and contentious.
- A one-size-fits-all approach might overlook the individual strategies and messages required for different service areas, potentially leaving some needs unmet.

4. **Management and Resource Concerns:**

- Adding more layers of management could result in management bloat and increased staffing costs without providing proportional value.
- Ensuring appropriate use of restricted funds, such as water or sewer rates, within a centralized structure could be challenging.
- The centralized model might not adequately support bureaus with robust and effective existing comms teams, potentially disrupting successful efforts.

5. **Organizational and Cultural Resistance:**

- There may be resistance from bureaus with long-standing comms teams and established branding, requiring robust change management.
- Ensuring clear lines of authority and avoiding conflicts between citywide comms leadership and bureau leadership could be difficult.
- The history of decentralized communications in the city means aligning to a centralized model will take time and effort, risking potential disconnects and inefficiencies during the transition.

Possible Recommendations to Address Employee Feedback:

1. **Clear Communication Protocols:** Establish clear communication protocols and decision-making processes to avoid bureaucratic delays and confusion.
2. **Retention of Expertise:** Ensure comms staff maintain their subject-matter expertise by embedding them within bureaus while coordinating through a centralized structure.
3. **Flexible Implementation:** Tailor the centralized model to address the specific needs of different service areas, allowing for flexibility and adaptability.
4. **Resource Management:** Monitor and manage resources carefully to avoid management bloat and ensure efficient use of funds.
5. **Engage Stakeholders:** Engage with bureau comms teams and other stakeholders throughout the transition process to address concerns and enhance buy-in.

Summary of Employee Feedback on Hybrid Communication Scenario

Benefits

1. Enhanced Collaboration and Expertise Sharing:

- The hybrid scenario fosters collaboration across bureaus, allowing for more representation and an upward flow of ideas.
- It promotes subject-matter expertise by enabling comms staff to develop deep knowledge in specific areas rather than becoming generalists.
- Shared authority can help maintain service area-specific expertise while providing a clear pathway for citywide coordination.

2. Improved Communication Strategies:

- Representation from each service area in a communications leadership team can lead to more thoughtful and inclusive citywide strategies.
- The scenario allows for individualized brand identities for each service area, respecting their unique needs and audiences.
- Streamlined communications can better address high-profile projects and daily public impacts, such as street closures and construction.

3. Increased Autonomy and Resource Sharing:

- Service areas retain some autonomy, which can be beneficial for addressing their specific needs and maintaining close relationships between comms and program staff.
- The model supports resource sharing and learning opportunities among comms staff across the city, enhancing overall efficiency and effectiveness.
- Autonomy within service areas can prevent professional burnout and promote collaboration and transparency.

4. Operational Efficiency:

- The hybrid approach may be more effective during the early years of transition, building on the existing communications teams within service areas.
- Editorial authority at the service area level can make daily operations more efficient than a fully centralized model.
- The scenario allows comms officers to focus on citywide strategies without being overstretched, enhancing overall management of the central comms team.

Challenges

1. **Complexity and Inefficiency:**

- The hybrid scenario might add complexity and bureaucracy, potentially slowing down communication processes and creating bottlenecks.
- There are concerns about the clarity of decision-making and the risk of conflicting strategies between different service areas.
- Coordination challenges may arise, requiring additional layers of management and increasing the risk of inefficiency.

2. **Lack of Flexibility and Consistency:**

- The model may not provide enough flexibility to meet the unique needs of each bureau, especially larger ones with diverse comms requirements.
- There is a risk of inconsistent service levels, with some bureaus potentially receiving better support than others, leading to inequity.
- Determining the line between service area communications and citywide communications can be challenging, potentially causing confusion and delays.

3. **Siloing and Disconnectedness:**

- Without regular and close coordination with the city's communications officer, service areas might become siloed and detached from citywide messaging.
- The model might continue the current siloing issues rather than promoting a "One City" approach, contradicting the goal of unified communications.
- Relationships between comms staff and program staff could be severed, reducing the effectiveness of communications work.

4. **Resource and Management Concerns:**

- Adding service area comms managers could lead to management bloat and increased staffing costs, raising questions about the value provided to the public.
- Ensuring that restricted funds are spent appropriately and not misallocated across different service areas could be a challenge.
- There are concerns about the potential for increased bureaucracy and the risk of creating fear-based communications.

5. **Employee and Structural Impact:**

- The scenario may lead to frustration among staff, particularly if new high-paid management positions are added while current comms staff are bargaining for better contracts.
- It could create an unclear line of authority, with shared decision-making between the Deputy Director and Communications Officer potentially leading to conflicts.

- The hybrid model might be perceived as too convoluted, with no clear lines of authority and insufficient bureau independence.
-

Possible Recommendations to Address Employee Feedback:

1. **Enhanced Coordination Mechanisms:** Implement clear lines of communication and decision-making to avoid bottlenecks and conflicts.
 2. **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Tailor the hybrid model to the specific needs of each service area to ensure flexibility and effective communication strategies.
 3. **Resource Management:** Monitor and manage resources carefully to avoid management bloat and ensure appropriate use of funds.
 4. **Unified Messaging:** Foster close coordination with the city's communications officer to maintain a unified citywide messaging approach.
 5. **Employee Engagement:** Engage staff meaningfully in the transition process to address concerns and enhance buy-in.
-

Summary of Employee Feedback on Marginal Adjustment Scenario

Benefits

1. **Retention of Effective Practices:**
 - Allows communications teams that are currently functioning well to continue their operations without disruption.
 - Bureaus with robust communications teams can maintain their established relationships and effective communication strategies.
2. **Targeted Support and Flexibility:**
 - Provides additional tools and strategic consultation from the central comms team to bureaus needing support, without disrupting existing successful operations.
 - Allows for service area and citywide comms staff to share resources and learn from each other without heavy-handed centralization.

3. Minimized Disruption:

- Reduces the speed and abruptness of changes, minimizing short-term disruptions to ongoing communications efforts.
- Offers a smoother transition by keeping decision-making authority close to programmatic expertise, reducing the need for extensive change management.

4. Cost-Efficiency and Resource Optimization:

- Minimizes budget and spending needed for a centralized communications team, focusing on strategy and supporting specific requests rather than broad editorial control.
- Ensures that comms support is lean, strategic, and effective, particularly for legislative and executive messaging consistency.

5. Enhanced Autonomy and Subject Matter Expertise:

- Maintains the autonomy of service areas, allowing them to direct their communications staff and tailor strategies to their unique needs.
- Keeps subject matter expertise within bureaus intact, ensuring high-quality communications products that reflect the nuances of specialized topics.

Challenges

1. Ambiguity and Inconsistent Messaging:

- Potential for inconsistent messaging across different bureaus, as decision-making authority remains decentralized.
- Blurred lines of authority and decision-making can create confusion, particularly in times of disagreement or when setting communication standards.

2. Administrative and Managerial Concerns:

- Risk of administrative and managerial bloat with the introduction of service area comms managers.
- Concerns about the true purpose and effectiveness of additional managerial positions, especially given ongoing negotiations for better contracts by current comms staff.

3. Limited Structural Change:

- May not be sufficient to meet the goals of the transition to a new government form, missing opportunities for significant structural changes.
- The role of the central comms office could be unclear and underpowered, providing some centralized services but not enough authority to effect meaningful change.

4. **Resource Inequity:**

- Some bureaus, particularly smaller ones, may continue to lack sufficient comms support compared to larger, well-resourced bureaus.
- Potential for resentment and inequity if some bureaus receive more strategic support from the central team than others.

5. **Resistance to Change and Siloing:**

- Potential for resistance from bureaus with established comms teams, making it difficult to achieve a cohesive "One City" approach.
- May perpetuate existing silos, making standardization around branding, messaging, and tools challenging.
- Significant shift in responsibilities could still be expected, despite being labeled as a marginal adjustment, causing difficulties in change management.

Possible Recommendations to Address Employee Feedback:

1. **Clarify Authority and Decision-Making:** Establish clear lines of authority to avoid ambiguity and ensure consistent messaging across all bureaus.
2. **Balance Support and Autonomy:** Provide targeted support to bureaus needing additional tools while maintaining the autonomy of well-functioning comms teams.
3. **Monitor Resource Allocation:** Ensure equitable distribution of resources and support across all bureaus to prevent resentment and inequity.
4. **Foster Collaboration and Learning:** Encourage collaboration and resource sharing among comms staff citywide to enhance overall effectiveness and efficiency.
5. **Engage Stakeholders in Transition:** Engage with bureau comms teams and other stakeholders throughout the transition process to address concerns and enhance buy-in.

Staff Quotes:

“Bring us together more, and facilitate communities of practice to start building stronger connections between bureau staff.”

"We know how to communicate what we do, check in during emergencies, communicate to partners... How does Vibrant Communities liaise with the electeds and back to those communities?"

"We still need to retain a good amount of autonomy about the types of comms we have to do and do it at our own pace."

"One of the most important things is aligning our comms around our districts. Getting word out to community by district, bureau level, service area level or city level."

"Having a broader team with a manager who is a strategist helps us see the long-term goals that we are working towards, how my bureau's work fits into that, and how we serve shared goals through our work."

"Service areas figuring out how to meet the needs of Portlanders. Vision/themes by CO and then the bureaus can work those into their content."

"Having a cohesive narrative where Portlanders don't have to understand the nuances of the city's structure to get a message through."

"The rub around the bureau directors not being included is tough because we need purview of what's going on. There needs to be a control mechanism through which information is passing."

"Need to build a common understanding of how decision making drives to the lowest possible level of the workers... People who are doing day-to-day comms work need to understand that work really well so that they're not developing something new every day."

"Overall the outcome should be that the City has a discrete identity community and partners all see the same way, because we're all operating with the benefit of a central set of eyes on everything to help stay on track towards that outcome."

"Whatever gives authority to the Communications Officer to get their job done effectively. The DCA needs authority over the Communications Officer in that way."

"Any changes should be attempting to fix identified problems and needs--not just changes for the sake of it. In addition, any changes should be thoughtfully communicated in advance and clearly express why they were made, what feedback was considered, and what problems they are attempting to solve. Doing so will help morale by ensuring staff feel respected and listened to and help staff feel more confident in leadership decisions."

“Provide tools and resources for communications staff to leverage across the City to ensure we're maintaining one brand and one sound as City Staff.”

“Engage the staff in developing a strategic vision and let them develop their own workplans. Give staff agency in the decisions.”

“Listen and learn from their unique expertise in the bureaus they serve, include them in building a new system together.”