



WESTMINSTER



## Public Safety Town Hall Summary

On August 22, 2024, City Council, City Staff, Police & Fire Personnel, and community members gathered to discuss the critical role of communication in enhancing public safety. The discussion highlighted four key areas:

- Communication
- Community Engagement
- Education & Safety Training
- Emergency Preparedness

Over 50 participants participated in the workshop and contributed to the discussion. After the small group discussions, each city councillor shared the responses from their small group with all in attendance. Below, you can find the questions the groups answered, along with the PowerPoint presentation from the Fire and Police chiefs.

[Click here for a link to the questions utilized during the town hall.](#)

### **Topic 1: Communication:**

Community members expressed a preference for receiving updates through digital platforms, including email, social media, the city's website, and newsletters. Residents emphasized the importance of timely notifications for emergencies, critical incidents, and traffic alerts. Participants shared suggestions for improvement, including expanding the use of social media to share a mix of informative and engaging content.

- **Social Media and Digital Engagement:** Residents stressed the need for a balance of positive and critical content as well as ways to appeal to all generations. Sharing job-related stats, "Did You Know?" posts, city/personnel changes, and promotions alongside educational content and critical incident updates. Participants also shared the value in introducing a notification calendar for street closures, events and insect spraying.

- **Valuable Information/Updates & Frequency:** Residents strongly desired neighborhood-specific notifications, such as lockdown/barricade situations and follow-up on critical incidents. They also voiced the importance of proactive/positive messaging and information on upcoming community events.
- **Interactive and Engaging Communication:** Community members expressed interest in seeing more short videos on social media platforms, including YouTube shorts. They also expressed interest in hosting more community town hall events, sending mailers, and distributing flyers at events. Implementing school outreach programs to target youth for better engagement and involving the community in post-incident discussions were also mentioned.

## **Topic 2: Community Engagement:**

Attendees valued existing community programs like Citizens Police & Fire Academies and Santa programs, highlighting their success in building trust. There was a strong desire for more interactive and community-focused events, such as open houses, school-based initiatives, and joint police-fire department events. Residents suggested new initiatives, including community sports events and safety workshops.

- **Community Engagement Initiatives:** Participants strongly agreed on the need for more open houses, community and business-focused events, educational workshops, school events, and engagement-specific events such as a fishing derby, dance, and police vs. fire games.
- **Successful Community Engagement by Police & Fire:** Residents highlighted the success of both departments' Santa programs, people profiles to highlight personnel, and Citizens Police & Fire Academies. Participants encouraged more face-to-face interactions with the community and emphasized a need for increased patrol surveillance to enhance community safety.

## **Topic 3: Education and Safety Training:**

Residents showed interest in a broader range of education and safety programs, particularly those targeting youth and vulnerable populations. Key areas of interest included first aid, fire safety, and scam prevention. The community also encouraged using various communication channels, such as YouTube and town halls, to raise awareness of available programs.

- **Market Educational Opportunities:** Partner with HOAs and other community groups to promote educational programs. Create engaging online videos to reach a wider audience and improve community awareness.
- **Diverse Educational Offerings:** Provide a variety of educational courses tailored to all age groups, including fire safety, online safety, scam prevention,

and emergency preparedness, to enhance community knowledge and readiness. Attempt to integrate more with the school systems to provide age-appropriate education.

#### **Topic 4: Emergency Preparedness:**

The community stressed the need for accessible and engaging emergency preparedness education. Preferred methods for delivering this information included social media, mail, and in-person workshops. Residents also proposed ideas for community events focused on emergency preparedness.

- **Accessible and Engaging Education:** Utilize a mix of digital platforms, such as social media and YouTube shorts, to share emergency preparedness tips and tutorials tailored to various age groups. Additionally, collaborate with local schools and community groups to deliver age-appropriate workshops and training sessions.
- **Helpful Resources and Materials:** Distribute easy-to-follow guides on building emergency kits and preparing for seasonal hazards. Provide resources through multiple channels, including mailers, the city website, and local businesses, to ensure broad accessibility. Consider offering downloadable checklists and instructional videos to support self-paced learning.
- **Community Events to Raise Awareness:** Organize interactive events, such as “Make Your Own Emergency Kit” workshops, that engage families and individuals in hands-on learning. Host seasonal preparedness fairs that include demonstrations, raffles, and informational booths, and partner with local businesses to sponsor emergency response drills and simulations.

#### **Next Steps:**

The insights gained from the Public Safety Town Hall will be used to refine communication strategies, expand community engagement efforts, and enhance education and emergency preparedness programs. City Council, City Staff, and Police & Fire Personnel are committed to continuous improvement and will consider these recommendations to better serve the community.