

Citywise

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—CITY 101 P.23 ▶



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Capitol Gains

Tips for furthering the legislative goals and issues important to your city

GET in the habit of inviting legislators of both parties to your city's events, groundbreakings, and celebrations.

LOOK at your legislative delegations through not only a local lens but a regional lens—it will help ensure that you are working with both sides of the aisle.

THINK about messaging your issues in ways that can appeal to both parties. One legislator may have sympathy for the social service aspects of the issue you're working on, while the public safety benefits might appeal to the next one.

DON'T hold grudges. The legislator you disagree vehemently with on one issue may become your most vital ally on the next one.

IF you choose, as a citizen or for professional reasons, to contribute to legislative races, think about donating to members of both parties who have been helpful to your cause.

PURPLE PROS

The benefits to cities of working both sides of the aisle

DOUG LEVY OWNER, OUTCOMES BY LEVY, LLC

WITH A NOD to Prince and Husky fans—and with apologies to Cougs everywhere—city officials in our state who want to get things done in Olympia would be well-advised to “think purple.”

Purple is a political term signifying a mixture of “blue” (Democrats) and “red” (Republicans). It's a helpful lens through which to view the Washington Legislature, where Democrats outnumber Republicans by razor-thin margins in the Senate (25-24) and House (50-48). That alone

GETTING LEGISLATORS OF BOTH PARTIES INTERESTED IN YOUR END-GAME GOALS ADDS CURRENCY TO YOUR EFFORTS.

should inspire us to view the political prism differently than we do in regard to that “other Washington,” where toxicity, demagoguery, and political paralysis seem to rule the day.

No matter the outcome of the November elections, it still makes good strategic sense for cities to use a “purple” strategy in furthering their legislative agendas and outreach—for a host of reasons:

- Bread-and-butter issues for cities—fiscal matters, capital and infrastructure investments, public safety, housing and homelessness—are of keen interest to both parties. In the nearly quarter-century that I have lobbied in Olympia, I've never heard a lawmaker claim that such issues are the exclusive domain of one party or the other.

- Getting legislators of both parties interested in your end-game goals adds currency to your efforts. Legislators who see a mix of “Ds” and “Rs” signed onto a

bill can immediately focus on the policy and forget about whether it is politically motivated.

- Savvy lobbyists know they can't dismiss one party or the other. Let's say you work on a bill that clears a committee on a party-line 5-4 vote—or somehow makes it off the floor on a 50-48 vote. What do you have then? A bill likely to soak up precious floor time, and one that looks like a study in confrontation rather than collaboration. With few exceptions, legislative leaders tend to leave such bills on the cutting-room floor.

- It takes weeks, if not months, to build alliances necessary to pass a bill, but in the blink of an eye, a single member crossing party lines can undo all of that hard work.

- In Olympia, a simple majority doesn't always cut it. A poignant reminder came when the 2017-19 Capital Budget stalled over the water-rights fight in the wake of the Hirst decision. Republicans could—and did—block action because our state Constitution requires a *60 percent majority* to pass bonds that finance such a budget.

How does all this translate to you and the issues of importance to your city? It means you should cultivate coalitions featuring members of both parties and do the front-line bipartisan work that helps mitigate the risks outlined above. It's not a 100 percent formula for success (that doesn't exist in Olympia), but it will enhance your chances of getting your issues to the finish line. **C**

Doug Levy is the owner and operator of Outcomes By Levy, LLC. He has worked in the legislative arena since 1995 and currently represents a mix of cities, outdoor recreation associations, and arts and culture organizations.



SOCIAL SKILLS

Community policing in the age of instant information

VICTOR MASTERS TUKWILA POLICE DEPARTMENT

FOR YEARS, law enforcement agencies have struggled with building and maintaining relationships within their communities. Having a strong relationship with the community is imperative, especially in the age of instant information and social media. When an incident goes viral, it can be viewed by millions of people within minutes. Getting information out quickly exemplifies transparency and helps to curb false narratives and misinformation that can result in tension between law enforcement and the community.

There are roughly 2.2 billion Facebook users, 330 million Twitter users, and 800 million Instagram users. To make contact with billions of people, you need nothing but a computer or smartphone and internet access. But to truly connect with these billions of people, you need to be able to get their attention and engage them in two-way dialog. If you say something and no one hears it, then you

are just talking to yourself—and if you choose to say nothing, someone else will speak for you.

Rather than just putting out facts and bland information, departments need to engage the online population the same way they would during a casual in-person conversation. If someone on Twitter asks for recommendations on a good place to get pho, why can't the police department or other government agency answer that question? When a resident posts a photo of a personal accomplishment, congratulate them for it. When putting out information, add humor to it.

Make even the mundane upcoming road closure announcement interesting to read; otherwise, no one will read it. Tell a story, and include the little details and nuances. Write like you are writing to a friend. Share your successes with the community, but make them feel like they are a part of the reason for those successes. Rather than just touting an achievement, share that achievement,

and thank the community for their support and assistance in making that achievement possible.

Most importantly, as a police department or government agency, promote your city! In many cities, police department social media pages tend to have thousands more followers than the city pages. Be an advocate for your city, the businesses, and the residents. Use that follower base to be an active part of the community and not just another branch of the local government. Promote new businesses, upcoming events, and things of interest even if they are not related to law enforcement. Show that your department is a member of the community and not just a part of the government. **C**

Officer Victor Masters has been with the Tukwila Police Department since 2015 and serves as the department's public information officer. Prior to that, he was a federal agent with the US Border Patrol, where he was assigned to the Public Affairs Office.



Officer Friendly

These excerpts from actual Tukwila Police Department tweets show how being engaging can inspire citizens to engage:

↳ **Angela White** and 10 others Retweeted your Tweet

Mar 14: If your package with a brick of coke doesn't arrive, it is because we have it. Please swing by the station to pick it up and bring your ID 🙌

Angela White - 3m
@TukwilaPD This has to be one of the best, and funniest, tweets I have ever seen. LOL I hope the person claims their missing package. LOL

↩️ 🔄 ❤️ 1

Tukwila Police @TukwilaPD - 29 Jun 2017

If you are going to give us somebody else's name when we ask for yours, you might not want to give us a name of someone that has warrants 🚓

💬 3 🔄 14 ❤️ 60

Tukwila Police @TukwilaPD - 20 Oct 2017

Unfortuitous timing for the man who was exiting a store after shoplifting just as we were walking in to arrest a different one for the same.

💬 2 🔄 1 ❤️ 15



Another Notable Project

Woodland Make a Difference Day

For over 20 years, Woodland High School seniors have worked with volunteers and businesses to help those less fortunate during an October “Make a Difference Day.” Beginning in September, the seniors meet with the city to plan and publicize the event, asking for projects and volunteers. Good old-fashioned flyers are plastered throughout the community, and the city extends the outreach on its website and on Facebook. Project requests start pouring in from residents who need help with their homes and yards. Organizers also connect with a local nonprofit, Woodland Action Center, to coordinate work. A free hazardous waste drop-off site is also set up.

In 2017, 175 volunteers participated, over a dozen local businesses provided financial donations, and 34 residents (elderly and/or those with disabilities) received yardwork, garbage pickup, and lawn care. Other community work included litter pickup, plantings, weeding, window washing, and general cleanup at local parks, schools, park-and-rides, the Woodland Care Center, and the historical museum. But beyond the cleaning, young and elderly residents, experienced and inexperienced volunteers, and those less fortunate and those with plenty came together to satisfy larger community needs.

RALLY CAPS

Sequim pursues beautiful days with its neighborhoods.

WINNER AWC MUNICIPAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

IN 2015, the Sequim Neighborhood Revitalization Coalition embarked on a downtown exterior property survey that tacked into a short-term neighborhood trash cleanup strategy. Buoyed by partnerships with Habitat for Humanity, the Sequim Sunrise Rotary Club, Rotary International, USDA Rural Development, First Federal Bank, the Olympic Community Action Program, and concerned citizens, the coalition went to work.

Rally in the Alley launched in 2016 with donated refuse containers and volunteers who scoured one downtown quadrant; in one hour, they cleaned up the neighborhood, collecting 4.8 tons of trash. Rally in the Alley 2 focused on another quadrant of the city and hauled in 8.28 tons. In 2017, city council expanded the program to include the entire city with three more events. Total tonnage thus far has been 47.99, and four more events are scheduled for 2018, with 400 volunteers and 15 organizations involved.

The program captured attention beyond city limits. Habitat for Humanity selected Sequim and the Habitat of Humanity of Clallam County as one of 25 communities nationally to test their Quality of Life Framework, through which Sequim will receive help in surveying neighborhoods over time to see if the coalition’s impacts can be measured. And the Kettering Foundation invited the city to join its twice-a-year City Managers Forum on civic engagement.

With the program expansion in 2017, Sequim even began the more formal process of defining its seven different neighborhoods. The city met with 170 community members representing every neighborhood area, and an internal team of trained facilitators continues to

connect with two dozen neighborhood ambassadors and volunteers for conversations focused on projects, connections, and the importance of neighborhoods.

All of this work led to Service Fest, an event bringing Habitat for Humanity Care-A-Vanners into Sequim (this June) for neighborhood revitalization instead of the better-known home building. Twenty RVs were set to arrive and work

RALLY IN THE ALLEY LAUNCHED IN 2016; IN ONE HOUR, THEY CLEANED UP ONE NEIGHBORHOOD, COLLECTING 4.8 TONS OF TRASH.

for two weeks, partnering on projects on both public and private property. The Sequim Makeover covers everything from constructing neighborhood kiosks and creating nature paths in semirural areas without sidewalks to building demolition and roofing.

Finally, a new budget process starting in fall 2018 brings in neighborhood input and focus group ideas for capital planning and priorities. City staff is supporting council to build in neighborhood engagement and dialogue on “wicked” policy issues like housing before recommendations emerge. The city also plans to launch a citizens’ academy in 2019 with a neighborhood organization and advocacy component.

To bring all of the pieces together after Service Fest, Sequim wants to set up a quarterly ambassador program that combines Rally in the Alley, the citizens’ academy, community budget/issue input, and future Service Fests while supporting city service delivery overall. **C**

