



Agenda
City Council Workshop Meeting
Tuesday, January 28, 2025
Richland City Hall ~ Council Chambers
625 Swift Boulevard

City Council Workshop - 6:00 p.m.

Agenda Items:

1. Strategic Communications and Community Engagement Plan - Communications Assessment Report Overview and Next Steps
 - Hollie Alexander, Communications & Marketing Manager
2. Downtown Connectivity Public Outreach and Engagement Plan
 - Hollie Alexander, Communications & Marketing Manager
3. False Alarm Reduction Program Presentation
 - Marty Pilcher, Chief of Police

Future Workshop Agenda Items

Adjournment

This meeting will be broadcast live on [CityView Channel 192](#) on the City's website and on the [City's YouTube Channel](#).

Richland City Hall is ADA accessible. Requests for sign interpreters, audio equipment, and/or other special services must be received 48 hours prior to the meeting by calling the City Clerk's Office at 509-942-7389.



COUNCIL WORKSHOP COVERSHEET

Council Date: 1/28/2025

Department: City Manager

Strategic Priority I - High Performance Government

Subject:

Strategic Communications and Community Engagement Plan - Communications Assessment Report Overview and Next Steps

Summary:

This presentation provides an update on the City's partnership with Tripepi Smith and Associates, Inc., to develop a 3–5-year Strategic Communications and Community Engagement Plan. The consultant will present their initial findings after performing a thorough communications assessment, including interviews with key staff and stakeholders, analyzing data analytics and auditing all current methods of outreach. Representing Tripepi Smith will be Ryder Todd Smith, Owner, and Project Manager, Sydni Overly.

Attachments:



COUNCIL WORKSHOP COVERSHEET

Council Date: 1/28/2025

Department: City Manager

Strategic Priority 3 - Focused Development

Subject:

Downtown Connectivity Public Outreach and Engagement Plan

Summary:

As the City prepares to begin construction on the Downtown Connectivity project in 2025, they have engaged Tripepi Smith and Associates, Inc. to assist in the development of a Public Outreach and Engagement Plan. This presentation provides an overview of the recommended outreach efforts including establishing a thorough stakeholder list of impacted businesses, large employers, and residents. Representing Tripepi Smith will be Ryder Todd Smith, Owner, and Project Manager, Sydni Overly.

Attachments:



COUNCIL WORKSHOP COVERSHEET

Council Date: 1/28/2025

Department: Police

Strategic Priority I - High Performance Government

Subject:

False Alarm Reduction Program Presentation

Summary:

A presentation providing overall statistics of law enforcement response to false alarms as well as current statistics and costs of the Richland Police Department's response to same. Additional information is provided on those Richland locations with the highest rate of false alarm activations and proposals for reducing false alarms and for cost recovery where appropriate.

Attachments:

- I. False Alarm Reduction Program Presentation



False Alarm Reduction Program

City Council Presentation
January 28, 2025

Chief Marty Pilcher
Richland Police



False Alarm Reduction Program

- According to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of Justice Programs, “The vast majority of alarm calls—between 94 and 98 percent (higher in some jurisdictions) - are false.
- It is unarguable that police responses to false alarms have created a significant drain on resources, diverting officers from other calls or activities, delaying responses to calls.

According to a publication released by the DOJ Community Oriented Policing Services ([‘False Burglar Alarms’; 2nd Edition](#); pg. 11):



False Alarm Reduction Program

Each false alarm requires approximately 20 minutes of police time, usually for two officers. In many jurisdictions, the cost of responding to false alarms is not recouped through fines. Jurisdictions trying to recoup costs generally omit the lost-opportunity costs, a potentially significant part of the equation.

Typical costs include:

- Personnel costs of police call-takers and dispatchers
- Personnel, equipment, and costs related to backup personnel
- Personnel costs associated with analyzing false alarms
- Lost-opportunity costs, when police are unavailable to work on actual crime problems
- Costs associated with call displacement, because the response to other 911 calls take longer



False Alarm Reduction Program

- From January 1-December 31, 2024, RPD responded to 1509 alarm calls.
- RPD data indicates that less than 1.4% of those alarm calls actually required an emergency response – over 98% were false alarms.
- When using the average 20-minute police response time noted by the DOJ – multiplied by a two-officer response - the cost of Richland officer responses to false alarm calls is about \$145,000 (\$48,197) annually.



False Alarm Reduction Program

Commercial properties are the most common false alarm:

- Top ten most frequent false alarm locations.
- 356 of yearly total.
- Of those:
 - 55% Equipment Malfunction
 - 26% Operator Error
 - 19% Other



False Alarm Reduction Program

Major causes of false alarms:

- Unlocked or loose doors and windows
- Children, neighbors, visitors
- Cleaning, repair, and delivery services
- Pets
- User error
- Equipment malfunction



False Alarm Reduction Program

Currently Richland does not have an Alarm Ordinance.

Other Washington State communities have taken steps to address this issue:

- Seattle
- Spokane
- Everett
- Renton
- Vancouver
- Kennewick



False Alarm Reduction Program

An Alarm Ordinance could include the following requirements:

- **Alarm Permit Required** - Alarm systems located in a business or residence must be obtained prior to the installation of the alarm system.
- **Annual Renewal Required**-There is no charge for the annual renewal of the alarm permit if the renewal is completed by the designated date.
- **Enhanced Call Verification**- Two calls or other approved alternative methods, are required by the alarm company prior to contacting law enforcement.
- **False Alarm Fines**– False alarms are defined as anything that causes an alarm system to activate other than the commission of a crime.



False Alarm Reduction Program

False Alarm Fines – Alarms are counted on a six (6) month floating year. You must go six (6) months without a false alarm before starting over. Example of fine schedule:

- False Alarm 1 \$0
- False Alarm 2 \$50
- False Alarm 3 \$75
- False Alarm 4+ \$100



False Alarm Reduction Program

Goal of Program

- **PRIMARY:** Reduce the number of false alarms to which RPD and RFD personnel respond.
- **SECONDARY:** Cost recovery of those false alarms to which RPD and RFD respond.



False Alarm Reduction Program

Internal Options for Enforcement:

- City of Richland personnel process the registration of alarms, track alarm calls through existing Computer Aided Dispatch system, categorize false alarms, identify responsible parties, issue appropriate fines, receive payments, and follow-up on unpaid fines.



False Alarm Reduction Program

External Options for Enforcement:

- Outside provider processes alarm registration through existing/new alarm subscriptions, track alarm calls through access to Computer Aided Dispatch system, categorize false alarms, identify responsible parties, issue appropriate fines, receive payments, disperse City of Richland portion monthly, and follow-up on unpaid fines.
- Existing companies require no upfront cost. Take a contractually specified portion of each fine.



False Alarm Reduction Program

Questions