



Kirkland, WA

How the City of Kirkland Took a Data-Driven Approach to Reframing Their Community Engagement Newsletter



OVERVIEW

While email newsletters helped provide the growing community of Kirkland, Washington, important information about events and issues, the number of topics led to email delivery bloat. Armed with the data tools in Grancius' govDelivery system, staff was able to reframe and reformat both the newsletter and their internal processes to engage the community more effectively.

SITUATION | MANY MESSAGES FROM A VARIETY OF DEPARTMENTS

Keeping pace with explosive growth has presented both a challenge and opportunity to engage residents with community issues in Kirkland. "This Week in Kirkland," a weekly newsletter distributed by the city to online subscribers started in 2016, has grown to be a successful tool both for residents and city departments alike. While many city departments participated, the messaging became very siloed.

SOLUTION | USING DATA AS A TOUCHSTONE FOR CHANGE

Armed with insights gathered from govDelivery dashboards, the Kirkland team made "really intentional structural decisions" to how the newsletter was presented, including a brief preview or recap of what's before the City Council, a "Community Conversations" section that provides avenues for community members to get engaged in planning processes, and other relevant community information.

RESULTS | FOCUSED AND EFFECTIVE MESSAGING

"This Week in Kirkland"'s success is both quantitative and anecdotal. The newsletter saw an average open rate of 43 percent between December 2022 and May 2023, with click rates averaging between 5 and 8 percent. The breadth of topics covered in such a centralized approach has also had an impact on how Kirkland's City Council approaches their communications strategies around upcoming issues, seeing the newsletter as a critical engagement tool.

MUST HAVE SOLUTION

govDelivery

"We have a robust dashboard that we generate looking at all our channels. We look at the govDelivery data at least monthly for open rate, click rate, the backbone kind of data.... Those inherent tools are helpful."

David Wolbrecht,
Communications Program
Manager, City of Kirkland,
Washington