

CROWDSOURCING USING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR EMERGENCY ROADWAY MANAGEMENT

CITY OF MYRTLE BEACH



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The City of Myrtle Beach is active on a number of social media platforms, as well as the website. We are remarkably responsive to public input and actively solicit feedback.

Our goal is “First in Service,” and the public has come to expect excellent response times – and isn’t shy about speaking up when they see something that needs work.





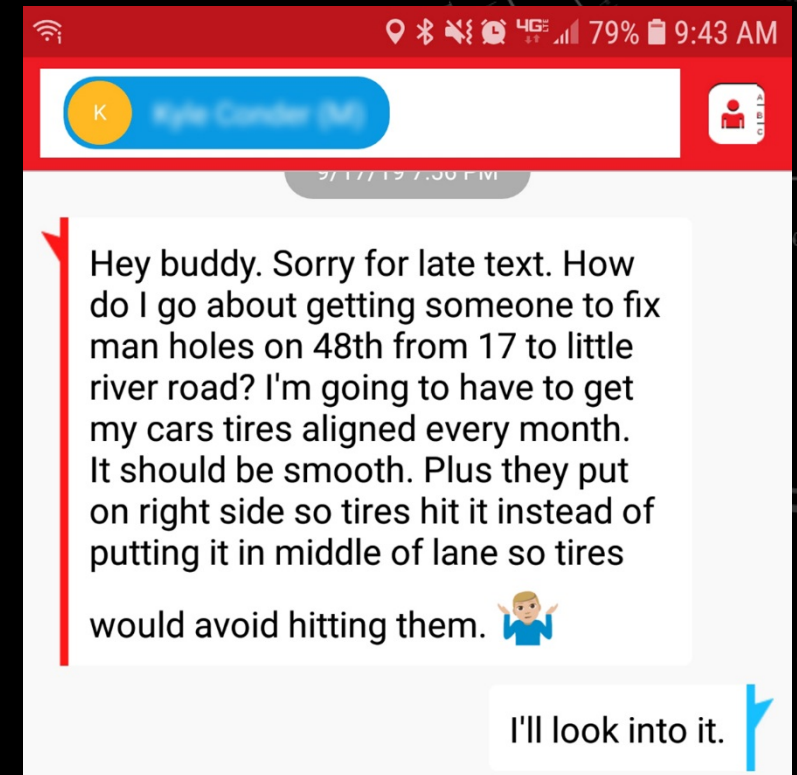
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Keys to this two-way communication are **See, Send and Solve.**

Our staff needs to see the incoming message – regardless of the platform or medium – then send it to the proper department where that staff takes responsibility for solving it.

We have both formal and informal methods for receiving information from the public about needs.

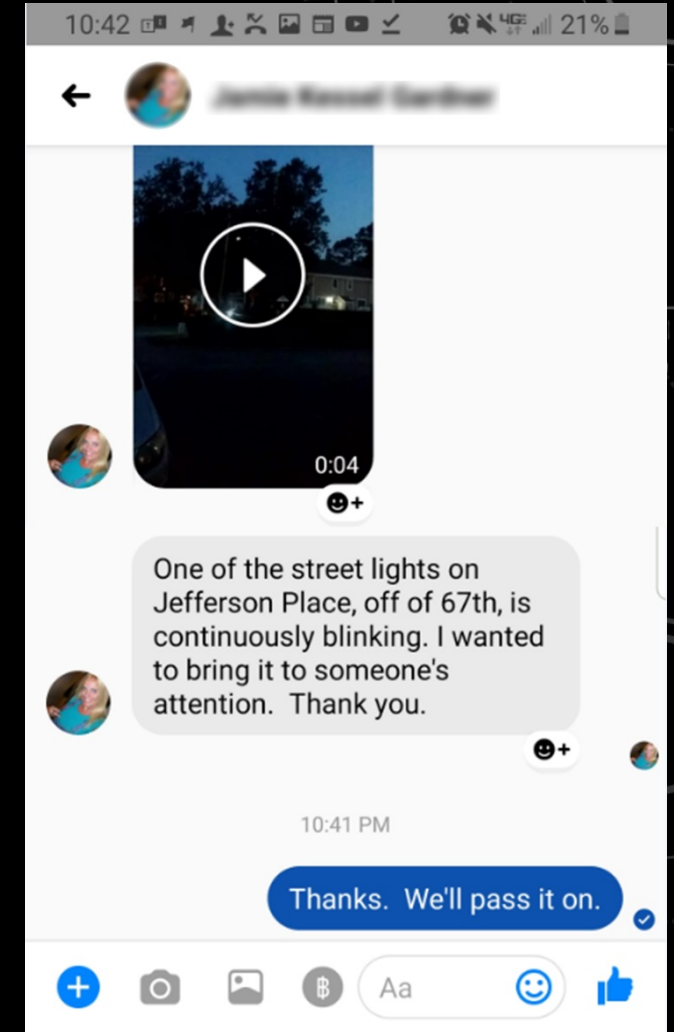




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Facebook comments, direct messages, emails, phone calls, Next Door posts all generate feedback. And its more than just roadways. Trees that need trimming, unkempt yards, potholes (we usually offer same-day service on potholes), street lights and solid waste collection are just a few of the subjects.





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This means we're watching all the time, and that we have good teamwork throughout the city.

We do actively solicit some feedback, such as for infrastructure requests in neighborhoods. These are for sidewalks, traffic-calming and stormwater projects.

The screenshot shows the City of Myrtle Beach website's 'INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT REQUEST' page. The page features a blue header with navigation links: 'I WANT TO', 'SERVICES', 'CAREERS', 'DEPARTMENTS', 'GOVERNMENT', and 'VISITORS'. A search bar is located on the right side of the header. Below the header is a large image of a wooden pier structure. The main content area is white and contains the following information:

- APPLY FOR** (button)
- INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT REQUEST** (section title)
- Public Works Department** (843) 918-2000
- The **Public Works Department** includes the Engineering Division, Equipment Maintenance Division, Parks Division, Solid Waste & Recycling Division, Street Division, Traffic Engineering Division and Water & Sewer Division. To learn more, visit the [Public Works Department](#) webpage.
- INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT REQUESTS**
- From time-to-time, citizens initiate requests for specific neighborhood infrastructure improvement projects. These include new sidewalk installations, stormwater system improvements and traffic calming devices. The city provides a uniform policy for the review of these types of requests to determine the level of support each request has within the neighborhood it will directly affect. City staff review each request with professional engineering standards and practices in mind to determine the resolution's possible success.
- A successful outcome ensures the following infrastructure priorities are met:
 1. Promotes health and safety.
 2. Enhances the quality of life for residents.
 3. Further improves the effectiveness and efficiency of the city's infrastructure.
- After city team members review the request, City Council will be presented with the request and possible solutions. City Council will review and evaluate each project request and resolutions. City Council has the right to pursue projects or deny the pursuit of projects, regardless of the results of the city staffed review process. City Council may choose to modify a particular project, too.
- POLICIES AND PETITION FORMS**
 - [Sidewalk Construction Request Policy](#) (PDF)
 - [Sidewalk Construction Request Petition](#) (PDF)
 - [Stormwater Facility Maintenance Request Policy](#) (PDF)
 - [Stormwater Facility Maintenance Request Petition](#) (PDF)
 - [Traffic Calming Request Policy](#) (PDF)
 - [Traffic Calming Request Petition](#) (PDF)

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We also have a formal, online Citizens Request Center where the public can submit questions, concerns and feedback on a variety of pre-determined subjects. However, this is not used as much as the social media methods and is not as responsive as the other methods.

The screenshot displays the Myrtle Beach Local Government Page's online customer service portal. The header includes the city logo and the text "Myrtle Beach LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAGE". The main content area is titled "Welcome to Online Customer Service" and provides instructions for submitting a new request or looking up an existing one. A "Submit a New Request" section lists various service categories such as ADDRESSING, BUDGET OFFICE, BUSINESS LICENSE, CITY BUILDING WORK REQUEST, CITY HALL, CITY PARKS, ENGINEERING, FINANCE, FIRE DEPARTMENT, GIS MAPPING, HOSPITALITY FEE, HUMAN RESOURCES, MYRTLE'S MARKET, PLANNING DEPARTMENT, POLICE DEPARTMENT, PROPERTY MAINTENANCE, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER, RECREATION DIVISION, RESIDENTIAL COMMERCIAL PERMITS, SEWER, SIGNAGE, SOLID WASTE, STREETS, TRAFFIC ENGINEERING, TRAIN DEPOT, UTILITY BILLING WATER SEWER, UTILITY CONSTRUCTION, WATER, WHISPERING PINES GOLF, and OTHER QUESTIONS. On the left, there are links for "My ACCOUNT" (Login), "SERVICE REQUEST" (Submit Request), and "LOOKUP SERVICE REQUEST" (Request Number). On the right, there are links for "Return to City of Myrtle Beach Home Page" and "Questions? E-mail info@cityofmyrtlebeach.com or call (843) 918-1014." The footer contains a "Lookup Service Request" link.



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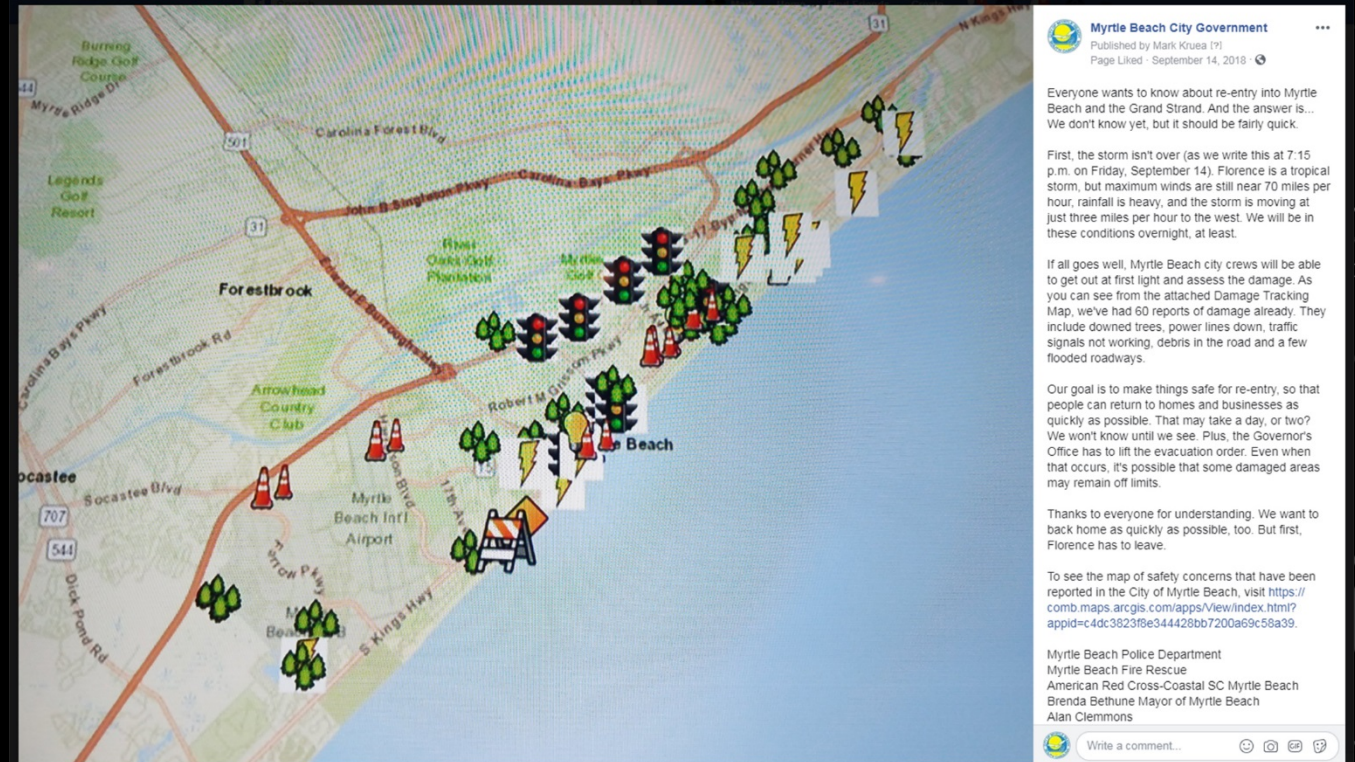
And we cross-promote the website and other formal request processes. We use all of the platforms to alert the public about ways they can get information back to the city. Formal feedback is not as frequent as informal feedback.





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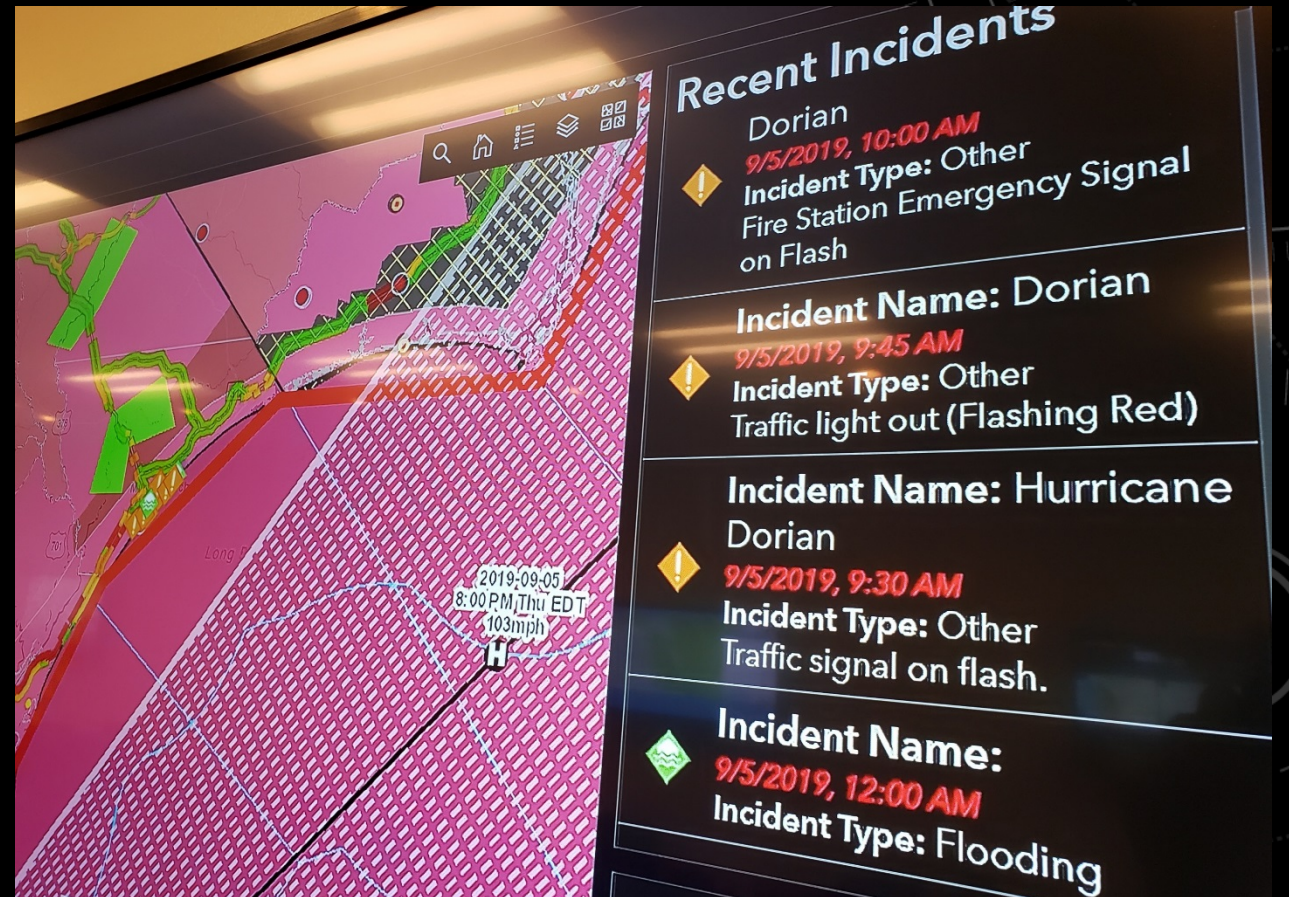
For hurricanes, we track incoming public reports (and staff reports) about road conditions, problem areas, power outages, downed trees, flooding, etc. This is the tracking screen from Hurricane Florence. We did a Facebook post about it.





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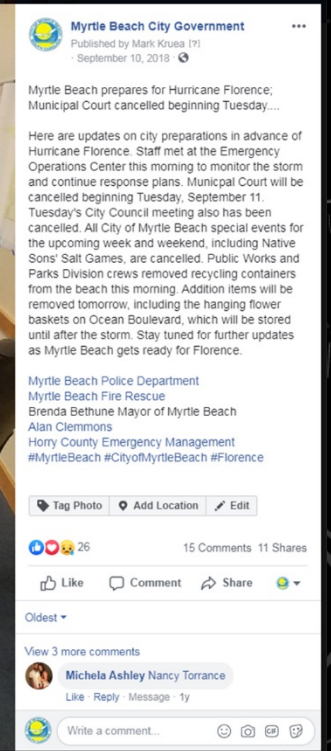
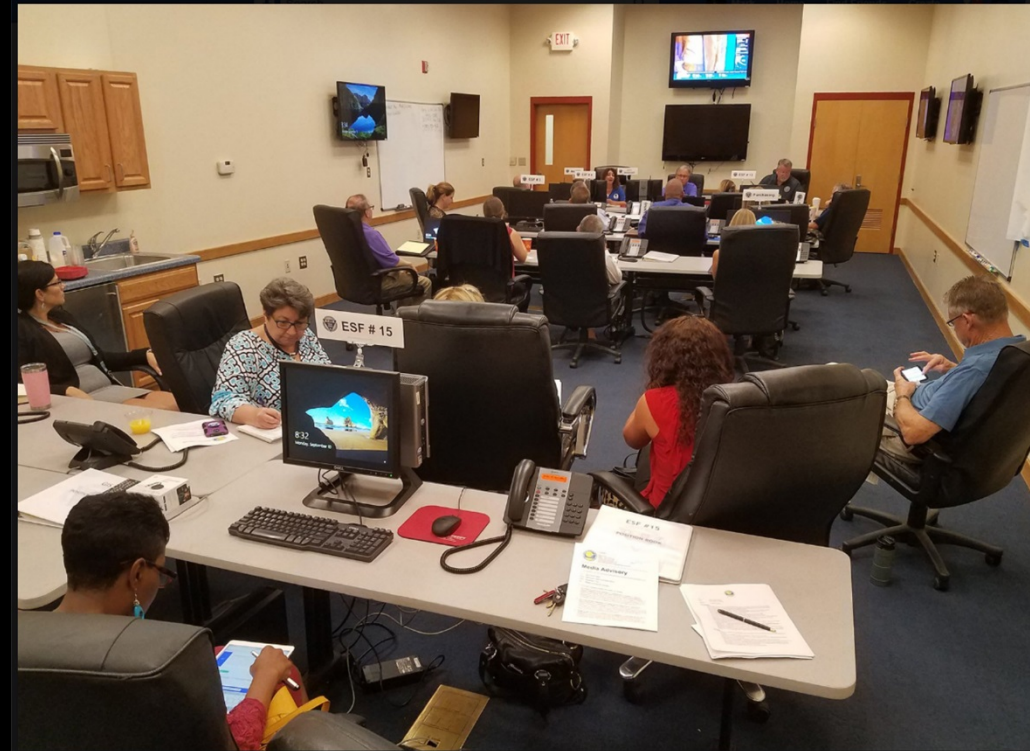
We've updated the tracking screen since Hurricane Florence. Here's the new version, used during Hurricane Dorian. It tracks when and where problems occur, as well as when they are resolved. This is active whenever the EOC is active, and we share it with the public to show proof of performance.





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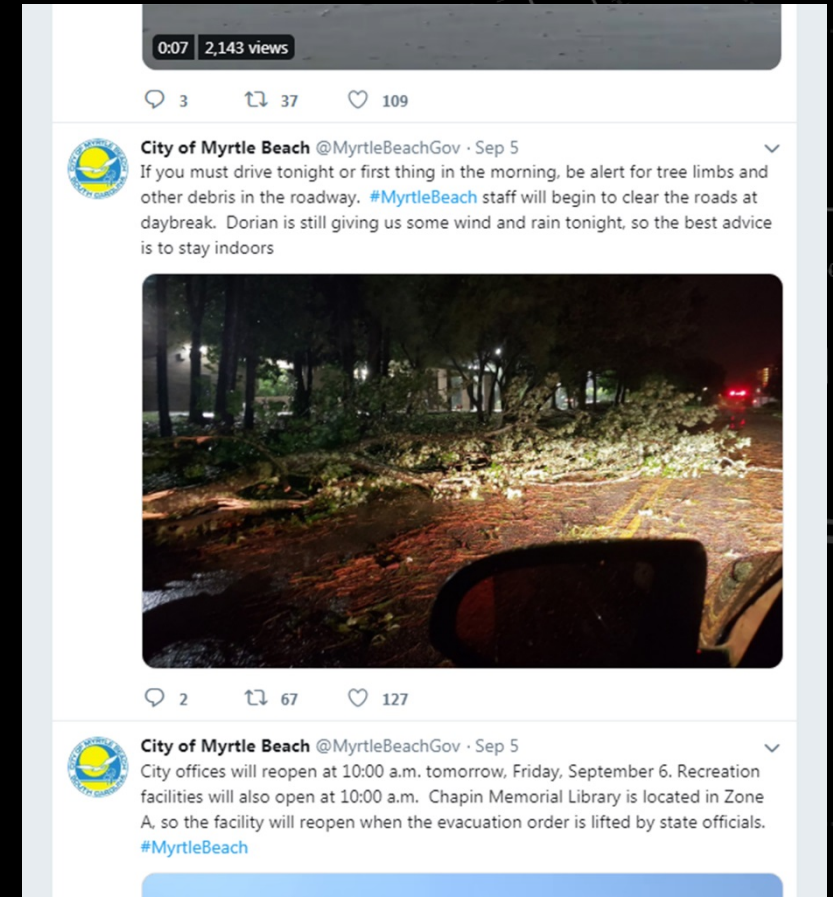
Everyone has a telephone and computer access in the EOC. Incoming reports of damage, flooding or other problems are posted on the tracking software. Again, we promote what's going on in the EOC so that the public is aware of the city's efforts.





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This photo of debris blocking a road came in via email, and we turned it into a Twitter and Facebook post about road conditions and safety in the hours immediately following Hurricane Dorian. Crews responded to this before daylight.





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Ahead of Hurricane Florence, we lowered the level in Grand Park Lake, one of our regional detention ponds, so that it had additional capacity for the rain totals we were expecting. And it worked. The lake reached capacity, but it did not overflow.





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It worked so well during Florence, that residents of the area asked via Facebook and email if we were going to lower the lake ahead of Hurricane Dorian, this fall. We had not planned to do so, but prompted by the request, we lowered the lake level again....





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And it's a good thing we did. Myrtle Beach received seven inches of rain in less than three hours. As you can see, the lake quickly filled, but did not overflow. We weren't expecting that much rain from Dorian, but we were ready, thanks to public input and our responsiveness.





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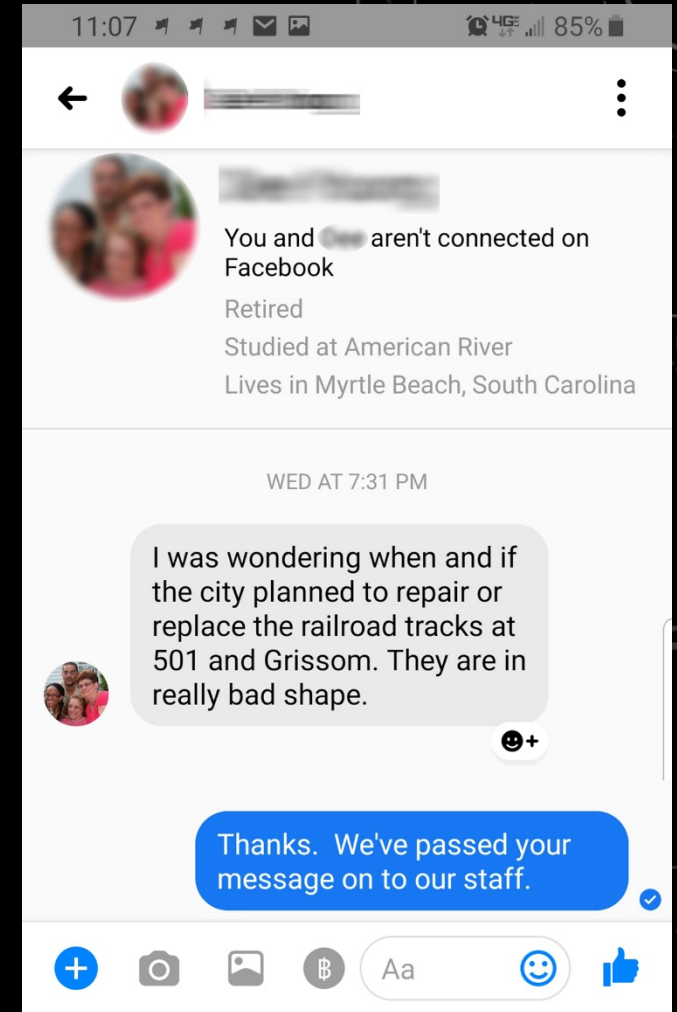
Telegraph your moves. The public does not like surprises. Let them know ahead of time where roadwork or other projects will exist. They will appreciate the advance notice, rather than becoming angry because they were caught unaware of a project or delay.





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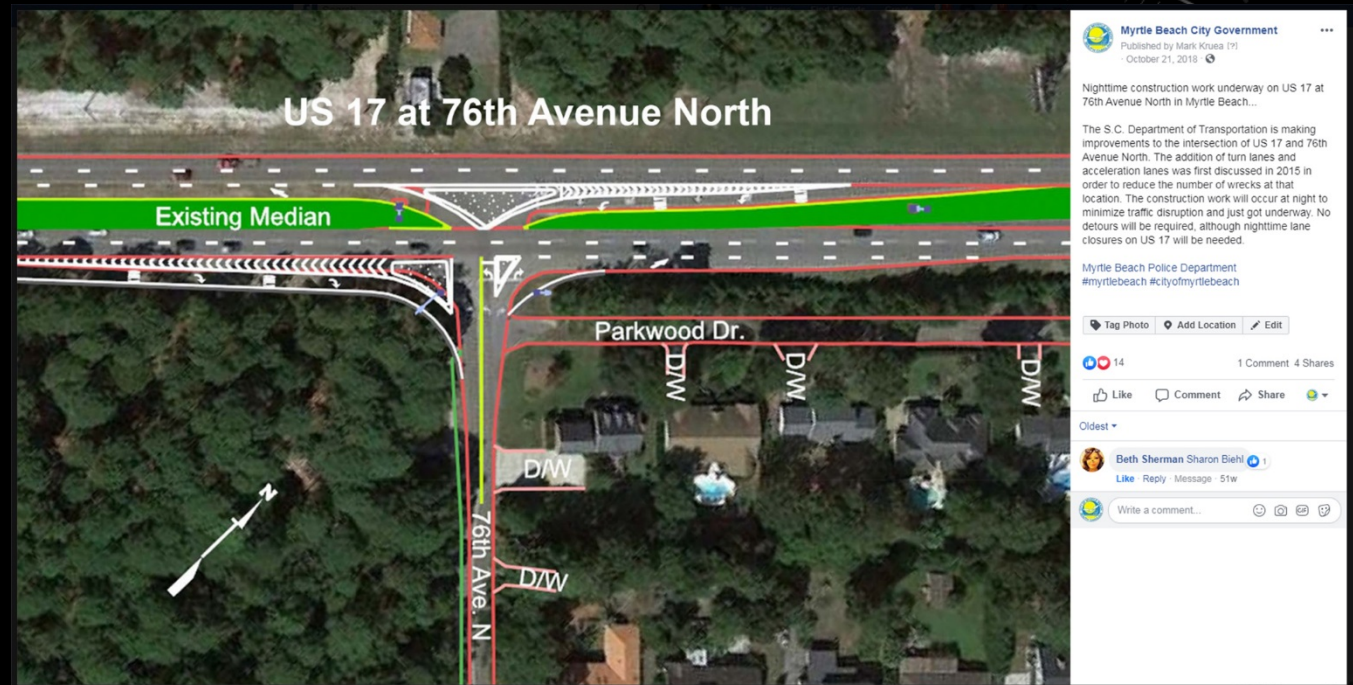
Be responsive, even if it's not your service area. This Facebook message was about a railroad crossing on a state-owned road. We relayed the concern to the South Carolina DOT, and the patch was completed with two weeks.





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Share construction details in detail. Content is king. More information is better than less. Again, the public does not like to be surprised. This is the diagram for an SC DOT project on US 17.





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Invite public input, even if it's not your project. This is an announcement is for relocation of a two-block stretch of Main Street (US 501) in Myrtle Beach. Use all media to keep the public informed about upcoming plans and projects.





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As part of the downtown master planning process, we shared information about traffic counts on major roads in the area.

It illustrates the “why” behind certain choices and is another reinforcement via social media that we really do want feedback about the proposals under consideration.





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We held several public input sessions to gather feedback about a proposed downtown master plan update, which included several road realignments. The consultants also met in small groups with area businesses, residents and other stakeholders. Advance notice is key.





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This intersection project arose from feedback at several Neighborhood Watch meetings. Residents wanted better pedestrian safety and traffic calming devices. This diagram shows what was planned and why in response to the public's request for improvements.

Myrtle Beach City Government
Published by Kaycey Leigh Hall Vrettos (1)
· July 17 ·

Pedestrian improvements set to begin at Meyers Avenue and Yorkshire Parkway intersection in Myrtle Beach...

Beginning next week, a contractor will create ADA-accessible sidewalk connections at the intersection of Meyers Avenue and Yorkshire Parkway. Then, in early August, work will begin on decorative brick red crosswalks, as shown in the attached illustration. The stamped asphalt crosswalks will improve pedestrian safety in two ways. First, they will be more visible to motorists. Second, the stamped brick texture will provide an audible reminder to drivers about the pedestrian crossings. Signage and pavement markings will complete the improvements. Residents of nearby neighborhoods requested extra pedestrian safety alerts at this location.

#CityofMyrtleBeach #MyrtleBeach

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44 reactions 19 Comments 19 Shares

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Carl Sivertsen Don't see Stop signs as requested by residents.
Like · Reply · Message · 12w

View 1 more reply

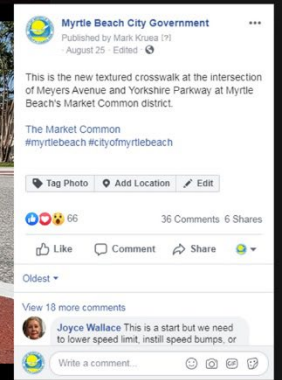
Myrtle Beach City Government
This intersection will not be a four-way stop. That wasn't part of the proposal at any point. The stop signs remain on Yorkshire and at the exit.

Write a comment...



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And here's a view of the finished project, which we shared on social media. This fits into the "proof of performance" goal – we said we were going to do it, and we did it.





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Share the bad news, too. This is a water line break in a residential area. Sharing bad news boosts your credibility with the public and builds a reputation for your social media as a reliable source of information.





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We talk about being “First in Service,” and here’s an example of that in action. Show proof-of-performance, both for staff actions and completed projects. Take the public with you throughout the process.





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City Council specifically requested an email address where the public could send information, requests and problems directly to them. We created a “dearcitycouncil” address to give the public easy access. Staff generally responds on behalf of Council for consistency.





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For more information...

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