



TLG and LMC 2016 Case Study Application

Future Ready Communities

DUE: September 4, 2015



Email to: Ryan Spillers at rspillers@transformgov.org

COVER PAGE

- 1. Case Study Title: ___ Avondale - Aspiring, Achieving, Accelerating _____
- 2. Case Study Category (Select only one, selection identified by highlighting your choice):

Planning for Your Future

Creating an Inclusive Community

Reinventing Local Government

Community Networks

Blinders

3. Jurisdiction Name: ___ City of Avondale, AZ _____

4. Jurisdiction Population (US Census): ___ 79,646 _____

5. Would you like the application to be considered for our Rapid Fire Session? (Rapid Fire presentations are fast-paced, entertaining, interactive presentations. Each jurisdiction will have five minutes to make their presentations using 15 PPT slides set on auto-forward primarily containing photos/graphics. Participants will be seated at round tables to facilitate an energetic idea exchange. A cash bar will be available.)

YES

NO

6. Project Leader (Primary Contact for case study notification):

Name: ___ Pier Simeri _____

Title: ___ Director _____

Department: ___ Community Relations and Public Affairs _____

Phone Number: ___ 623-333-1611 _____

eMail: psimeri@avondale.org _____

US Mail Address, including zip code: _ 11465 W Civic Center Dr, Avondale, AZ 85323 _____

Twitter Account: ___ @AZAvondaleNews or <http://www.avondale.org/socialmedia> _____

List additional presenters contact information below:

Dan Davis, Director

Economic Development

City of Avondale AZ

11465 W Civic Center Dr

Avondale, AZ 85323

623-333-1411

1. Presentation title and description of the innovation. *100 word maximum.*

Avondale – Aspiring, Achieving, Accelerating.

Avondale leaders recognized the need for a new brand to reflect the community's identity. The challenge was discovering the identity from the community itself, rather than the perspective of city marketing and economic development staff and elected leaders. After a year-long effort of discovery through tremendous research, engagement and input, the community's story was told. Through this unique process, rather than the brand helping to set a direction for Avondale, the community's direction is found in its identity: Avondale – Aspiring, Achieving, Accelerating. The "Avi" brand has been enthusiastically embraced by the community as reflective of its positive, upbeat narrative.

2. When and how was the program, policy or initiative originally conceived in your jurisdiction? *100 word maximum.*

Avondale's rebranding process began in August 2013 through direction from the City Council as a means to attract new development, residents and visitors. None of the previous logos and marketing seemed to capture the essence of our vibrant community that means so much to its residents, employees and visitors. It was important that the rebranding extend beyond a new logo, and that the entire community – from city employees, to residents, businesses, and schools, embrace the brand story. The extensive process to identify and represent the Avondale community launched the new Avi logo and tagline in May 2014: Aspiring, Achieving, Accelerating.

3. How exactly is the program or policy innovative? How has your innovation changed previous processes, products or services? *100 word maximum.*

Branding initiatives often seem to be about "crafting your message" to a target audience; typically what the messenger wants others to think or believe about the organization. Avondale sought to capture the essence of its true identity from the broad community. By the community helping to define the brand, the process embraced and welcomed community engagement and input. Once the brand was unveiled, community members readily embraced it – they are part of the story! Though a new brand is often used to set the direction for an organization, the direction is actually contained in Avondale's community identity: Aspiring, Achieving, Accelerating.

4. Explain how the program or initiative substantially stretched or improved the boundaries of ordinary governmental operations. *200 word maximum.*

Avondale's rebranding process blazed new pathways in multiple ways – in its process, in its spending, in its ownership, and in its results! Avondale sought a brand that the entire community would embrace, share and showcase; one that reflected our true identity. Being mindful of public dollars; any outreach with the new brand had to be implemented within the existing budget. We did not seek supplemental funding for implementation of the brand, assuring both the city council and citizens that we would take a phased-in approach to implementing the new brand, and "go digital" wherever possible. As a result, social media and citizen engagement were vital in our approach to defining the new brand and getting our identity out. The unconventional organic process helped us to achieve beyond simply implementing a new brand. We engaged residents, employees,

schools, and businesses for input and, in so doing, established broad-based ownership of the brand. We were fiscally responsible in our process and rollout. And we produced a homegrown brand that reflects the heart of the community, making the process and win-win-win!

5. What individuals or groups are considered the primary initiators of your program? How does the innovation engage stakeholders or demonstrate high performance teaming? Were strategic partnerships and/or community networks developed as a result of the innovation? *200 word maximum.*

City Administration recognized the need for rebranding since the previous logo was outdated and did not represent who we are as a community. Our Public Information Officer, Community Relations Director and Economic Development Director oversaw the project from hiring a consultant to implementation, going to great lengths to engage the entire community and our stakeholders. The project was city-initiated, but conducted through shared efforts and broad participation. The development of an internal team of city staff from multiple departments, surveys, focus groups, input from committee/commission members, social media, even neighboring communities helped to draw out what sets our community apart.

The innovative process helped to produce an organic brand, while reinforcing community networks internally and beyond our boundaries. Stakeholders and community partners remained engaged, enjoyed having a part, and felt ownership in the process and the new brand. These aspects strengthened Avondale's long-held reputation of being community focused. Overall, the shared participation demonstrated value to the community at large and sent the message that it is the community whose identity is reflected in the brand.

6. If a private consultant was used please describe their involvement, identify the consultant and/or firm and provide contact information. *100 word maximum.*

A private consultant, Strategic Advisory Group (SAG), was contracted to guide the branding process. The consultant worked in tandem with our Community Relations and Economic Development departments who provided coordination and oversight. A project team was established to implement the brand and serve as department liaisons. Additionally, Avondale worked with an outside graphics vendor who understands our vision and adheres to our brand style guide, while taking appropriate creative license with our logo so that its use is eye-catching, fun and symbolic of Aspiring, Achieving, Accelerating. Contact: Strategic Advisory Group, Daniel Fenton, dan@strategicadvisorygroup.net, 831-298-7215.

7. To what extent do you believe your program or policy initiative is potentially replicable within other jurisdictions and why? To your knowledge, have any other jurisdictions or organizations established programs or implemented policies modeled specifically on this project? Please provide verification of the replication. *200 word maximum.*

Our rebranding process is replicable for other jurisdictions that are willing to engage their citizens, stakeholders and community partners. The phased approach of brand identification and incremental rollout takes time and requires conscientious project oversight, but the result is valuable and rewarding. Implementing a brand that is organically grown and reflects the identity of the community allows for greater

community engagement, both through the process and the resulting brand, giving way to stronger community involvement.

Avondale leaders agree that our longstanding community focus and transparency were essential to community participation and enthusiasm throughout the process. The involvement of active community partners such as non profit organizations, developers, faith groups, business associations, library patrons, social resource patrons, and many others who participated in surveys and focus groups were key to input and implementation. As each community is different, the unique dynamics of each jurisdiction may guide their initiative and, in so doing, gain the style of community engagement that will achieve effective results.

8. What were the costs? What were the savings? *100 word maximum.*

The city took a fiscally responsible, phased-in approach to implementation; resulting in a “cost neutral” project. Costs were held to the brand consultant cost of just beyond \$80,000, as significant savings were realized through collective efforts to incorporate costs as part of routine business activity. Launched as part of the annual State of the City event, through digital communications, and incorporated in already budgeted for outreach and marketing materials, produced significant cost savings. Delaying replacement decals on fleet vehicles, uniforms, signage, business cards, etc. until our brand launch eliminated costs that may have reached well beyond an additional \$100,000.

9. Please describe the most significant obstacle(s) encountered thus far by your program. How have they been dealt with? Which ones remain? *200 word maximum.*

Our cost neutral, phased implementation approach to our rebranding understandably required a more lengthy research, outreach and rollout timeline. Because the process was lengthy, a great deal of coordination, communication, and guidance by our Public Information Officer/project team leader, consultant, and project team was required. Our PIO's diligence to oversee each detail gave the project strength and success that may have been weakened if there had been a change in project leadership, organization or follow through. Also challenging were the required patience and cooperation of city departments to hold off updating brand-related publications such as business cards, annual report, informational brochures, and vehicle decals.

10. What outcomes did this program or policy have? What baseline data did you collect? How did you measure the change based on the intervention, and why do you believe in the credibility of this assessment? *200 word maximum.*

This process included both quantitative and qualitative research, which led to confident outcomes. Avondale cast the net wide in terms of data collection, using online methods as well as targeted focus groups and public meetings. Measures reflect a high response and engagement rate throughout the research process and throughout implementation. This is further demonstrated in the wide acceptance and recognition of the brand since implementation.

Our branding process began with outreach and research including an emailed invitation from the mayor to participate in a survey sent to more than 16,000 recipients. With a response rate of six percent, 1,758 surveys were completed and more than 700 respondents wrote individual comments. Surveys were also completed through focus groups conducted to reach a broad base. The percentage of completed surveys and responses demonstrates a high level of interest. Common-themed responses were categorized. A similar process, when coupled with comments, helped to encapsulate descriptions of Avondale residents, workers, even vehicle type. Through this multi-step process, common descriptors rose to the forefront, which were brought back to lay the foundation for defining and marketing the new brand.

11. Has the program received any press or other media coverage to date? If yes, please list the sources and briefly describe relevant coverage. *100 word maximum.*

News coverage included West Valley View regional news publication, The Arizona Republic, the Business Journal and a radio interview with the local NPR affiliate, KJZZ. Branding coverage included promotional coverage of launching the new brand at the State of the City event, press releases for innovative incorporation of brand use, notification of changes to city facilities or signage, and extensive social media engagement efforts. Several local businesses incorporated the brand into their promotions and were highlighted via the City's Facebook page as well as their own in addition to other social media outlets such as Twitter or Instagram.

12. Please provide web links where the innovation can be seen/tested (in the case of something that is web-based) *100 word maximum.*

The City's new brand can be seen on Avondale's home page: <http://www.avondale.org/> and Avondale's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CityofAvondaleAZ?fref=ts>.

13. Please provide any key references and their contact information who can be interviewed/called to discuss the innovation and its impact. *100 word maximum.*

Ms. Pier Simeri, City of Avondale
Director of Community Relations and Public Affairs
psimeri@avondale.org 623-333-1611

Mr. Dan Davis, City of Avondale
Economic Development Director
ddavis@avondale.org 623-333-1411

Ms. Ingrid Melle, City of Avondale
Public Information Officer
imelle@avondale.org 623-333-1614

14. You've been to a lot of conferences. TLG should be a unique experience for everyone. Describe how your case study presentation will be different than other conference presentations. *200 word maximum.*
- How will you make the session creative and unique?
 - How do you plan to be both entertaining and educational?
 - Include a description of how your session will facilitate group activities and/or interaction.

Just as our process was community focused and unique, our presentation approach will be as well. Presenters have been closely involved with the project and are passionate about the project as well as its impact and potential for opportunity within the Avondale community. We may consider engaging the audience as our community and role playing some of the processes we used to brainstorm ideas and flush out similar concepts for interactive involvement. We may assign roles by giving participants cards identifying who they are as a member of the community (longtime resident, business owner, developer, representative of a community organization or faith based organization, etc.) to conduct surveys, discussions, or participate in a mock focus group.

Our presentation will be interspersed with slides/pictures/video clips of our process and events.

15. Anything else you would like to add? *200 word maximum.*

We are as excited about the results of this project as we are about the community it represents. Our rebranding process was a winner in the 2015 City/County Communications & Marketing Association (3CMA) Savvy Awards. Separately, this project was noted as a predominant factor in Avondale receiving the 2015 Citizen Engagement Award through the Governing Institute, as well as the top ranking city for the Digital Cities Award.

Avondale continues to work with community partners, businesses, schools, community groups and faith-based partners to solidify and reinforce a strong and positive identity – with a brand that sets us apart from other cities in the region and country and contributes to community pride, appeal and economic prosperity. Enhancing communication and engagement is a longstanding priority. This makes marketing efforts a worthwhile strategy that will help us to more successfully communicate with, invite participation from, and serve the needs of the community.

Avondale truly is Aspiring. Achieving. Accelerating.