



Background

Creating excitement around city infrastructure is a challenge. Especially when a city's infrastructure seems to be in pretty good condition on the surface. Very few residents of Livermore, California consciously think about the roads they drive on to work, the parks they play at after school, the trails they enjoy for exercise, or storm drains and waterways that prevent flooding – **until something breaks.**

Livermore community members share in the benefits provided by public infrastructure, but **most do not realize how much money is needed to support it all.** They assume it will work properly when they need it, no matter what. However, like most California cities, Livermore does not have sufficient funds to fix everything before it breaks. We need an additional **\$30 million per year** to fund infrastructure repair and replacement.

To help our community understand the magnitude and depth of Livermore's infrastructure challenges, the City Council formed a nine-member citizen's advisory committee in January 2020. With Public Works Department staff support, this volunteer committee developed program branding, a strategic outreach plan, and a 12-month schedule of intensive in-person public outreach events through January 2021. And then **COVID** hit.

With strict lockdown conditions, we needed to quickly develop new ways to engage our community, while keeping everyone safe.

Research & Planning

Consistent results from our biennial National Community Survey told us our residents feel Livermore's infrastructure is highly important and incredibly well maintained. While we appreciate their praise, we knew we needed to *tell the truth about our infrastructure dilemma* AND ALSO *avoid a crisis message*. We then followed-up with a [more specific infrastructure survey](#) to help develop our outreach campaign. **Over 1,100 residents responded.** We also conducted interviews with City staff and our citizens advisory committee.

Feedback from these interviews and the survey highlighted the need to start with an activity that **reached all segments of the population and was engaging and approachable.** We then focused on two primary objectives:

1. Convey the reality of our infrastructure dilemma while empowering community members
2. Create a sense of community by focusing on our City's history, culture, and accomplishments

AND, we needed to be relevant. Residents were looking for COVID-safe activities to get out of the house after months of lock-down. Thus, we decided to **take them on an infrastructure adventure** from October through December 2020.

Implementation Overview

We developed the [Asset Geocache](#) to share infrastructure information in a fun, engaging, and hands-on manner. We introduced Livermore residents to **L'more the Basset Hound (or "Asset Hound")** who led them on an information treasure hunt to five destinations throughout Livermore. These destinations were City-owned facilities with significant infrastructure needs, including the Livermore Municipal Airport, the Livermore Water Reclamation Plant, the downtown park, Civic Center Meeting Hall, and the Public Works Department's Maintenance Service Center.

We then employed a **guerrilla marketing campaign**, using innovative, unconventional, and extremely low-cost techniques to gain maximum exposure. These methods included:

- Promotion on the City of Livermore's website, direct mail newsletter, email newsletters, and social media accounts. Participants were encouraged to post pictures on social media and tag @cityoflivermore for a chance to win additional prizes.
- Promotion through free local newspaper ads and including fliers in thousands of Livermore Library curbside pickup bags.
- Promotion through partner organizations such as local moms' groups, Livermore Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, major local employers, Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District, the Livermore Area Recreation & Park District, and countless others.

Budget

All of this work was done in-house by two Public Works Department staff, including the Asset Manager and an Administrative Assistant. As such, this low-cost project can easily be replicated by smaller agencies without dedicated Public Information Officers.

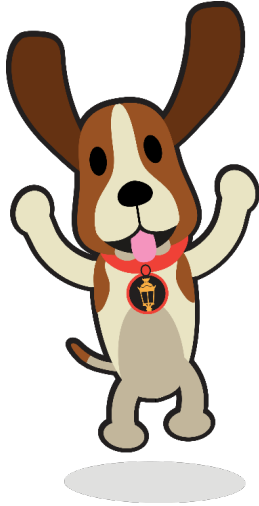
- **Consultant cost: \$800**
Includes: Graphic design for L'more the Asset Hound illustrations.
- **In-house costs: \$700**
Includes: Website quiz plugin (\$45), boosting Facebook posts (\$300), ground stakes and laminating sheets (\$100), and participant prizes (\$250). 100 internal staff hours for project development, coordination, review, and implementation.
- **Total: \$1,500**

Results & Evaluation

Cumulative social media impressions reached the following numbers: approximately 6,000 on Instagram, 3,200 on Twitter, 13,600 on NextDoor and over 500 link-clicks on Facebook. **In less than three months over 600 residents participated** and a post-geocache survey resulted in over **150 responses**, all of which were positive. While these numbers are highly impressive, this effort resulted in much more than just social media clicks/views, activity participation, and positive feedback. This activity resulted in **over 1,500 cumulative hours of Livermore-specific infrastructure education**, including nearly 200 residents 18 and older.

Many participants stated that they learned a lot about City infrastructure, explored parts of the City they knew existed but had never visited, and appreciated that it was COVID safe. Most asked for a second installment to continue their education. **As a result of the Asset Geocache, many of our residents are now infrastructure ambassadors.** Using their new knowledge and community pride, participants are now speaking at Council meetings about the importance of infrastructure funding and responding to other resident's questions or misstatements about infrastructure on social media. **At a cost of approximately \$2.50 per person, this was an incredibly affordable outreach and information tool that has made a lasting impact.**

City of Livermore Asset Geocache



The **Asset Geocache** adventure was designed for all ages and included engaging graphics. Participants solved riddles or used GPS coordinates to travel to destinations throughout the City with significant infrastructure needs. At each location they used their smart phone to engage in an interactive quiz and **learned about the surrounding infrastructure** in an easy-to-understand and relatable language.

Because this activity was designed during COVID, it had an emphasis on **convenience and safety**. Participants could participate any day of the week or time of day and could start and stop

anytime. They were encouraged to participate alone or in their “pod” to avoid potential COVID exposures. And they didn’t need any new equipment or apps, just a working smartphone.



Adventure hunters started on the City’s website at <http://www.livermoreassets.net/geocache> for instructions and the clue to the first destination. You can virtually experience the Asset Geocache by using this [this link](#).



**Clue # 1 to the
Livermore Municipal Airport:**

*Up and away we go, on our first
cache quest,*

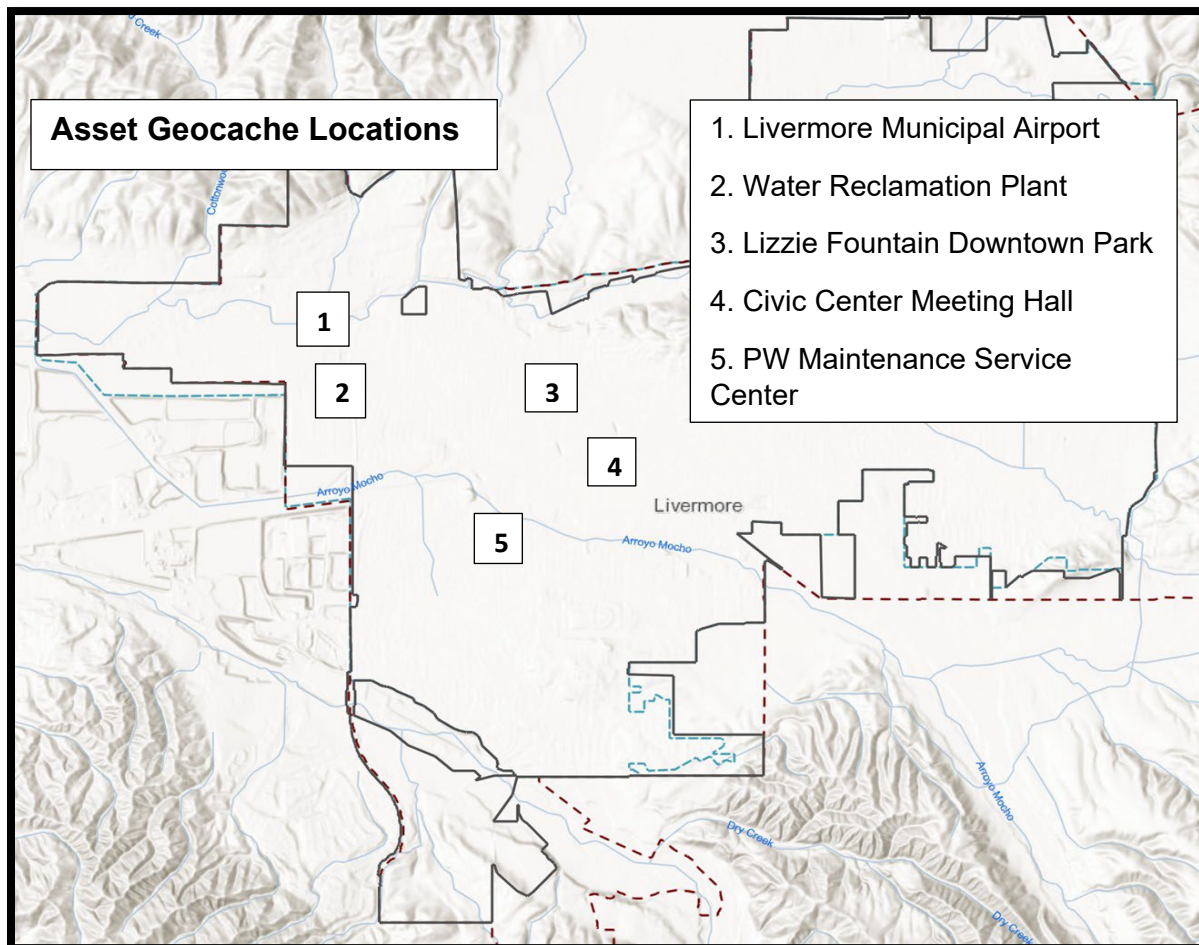
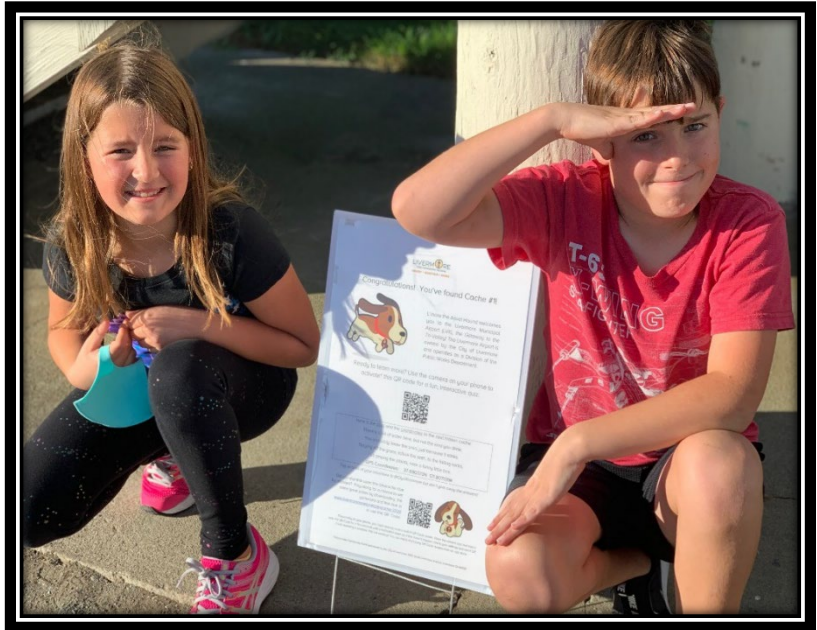
*Can you hear the rumbling, can
you feel it in your chest?*

*By wooden tower stairs I hide,
will you observe me today?*

*Hurry up, don't be late, or I
might fly away!*

Participants used each clue or
specific GPS coordinate to
travel to **five destinations**,

including Livermore Municipal
Airport, Livermore Water Reclamation
Plant, Lizzie Fountain Downtown Park,
Civic Center Meeting Hall, and Public
Works Department's Maintenance
Service Center.



Poster at Location #1



Congratulations! You've found Cache #1!



L'more the Asset Hound welcomes you to the Livermore Municipal Airport (LVK), *the Gateway to the Tri-Valley!* The Livermore Airport is owned by the City of Livermore and operates as a Division of the Public Works Department.

Ready to learn more? Use the camera on your phone to activate* this QR code for a fun, interactive quiz.



Here is the clue and the coordinates to the next hidden cache:

There's a lot of water here, but not the kind you drink.
You probably know the area, just because it stinks.
Staying off the grass, follow the path, to the falling rocks,
I sit among the plants, near a funny little box.

GPS Coordinates: 37.690373N 121.807131W

Tag pictures of your adventure to @Cityoflivermore but don't give away the answers!

Did you stumble upon this Geocache clue by accident? Play along for a chance to win some great prizes by downloading the gamecard and first clue at www.livermoreassets.net/geocache

or use this QR Code:



*Depending on your phone, you might already have a built-in QR Code reader. Open the camera app and hold it over the QR Code for a few seconds until a notification pops up. If this doesn't happen, check your settings and see if QR Code scanning is enabled. Still not working? You can install third-party QR Code readers from an app store.

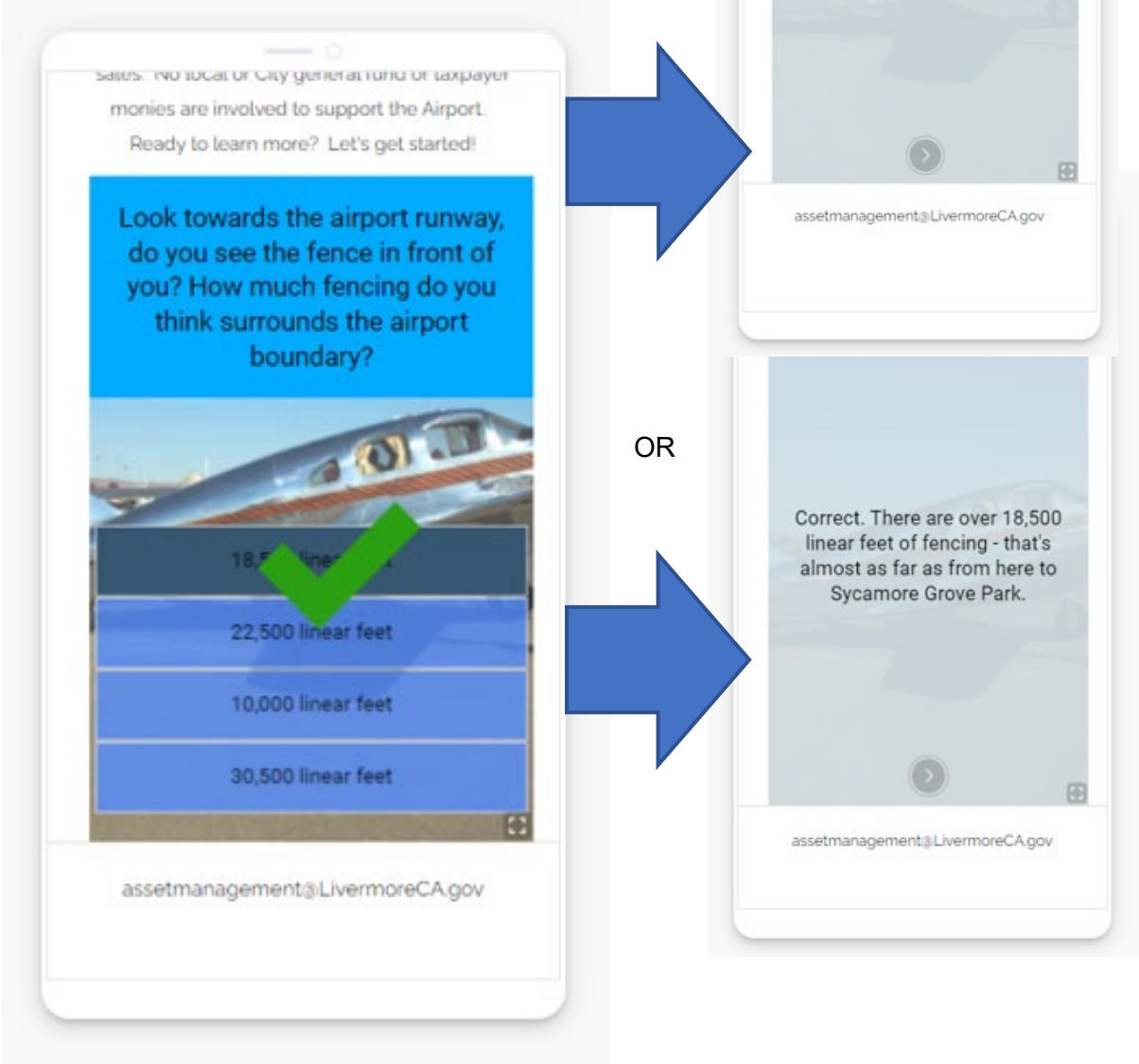
This is a free Community Event sponsored by the City of Livermore, 1052 South Livermore Avenue, Livermore CA 94550

Upon arrival at each destination, participants searched for a poster with **L'more the Basset Hound (or "Asset" Hound)**. This poster included information about the location, QR code to an interactive quiz, and clue and coordinates to the next destination. It also included other items such as contact information, a reminder to post pictures to the City's social media, and information about the adventure for anyone who accidentally stumbled upon the poster.



When a participant enabled the poster's unique QR code they opened a **website with some fun facts about the location and a quiz with multiple questions focused on the surrounding infrastructure**. A correct answer would result in automatic advancement to the next question. An incorrect answer produced a silly response along with the correct answer. This way the player never was stuck on a question for long.

Quiz sample at Airport



A few more infrastructure facts were sprinkled in at the end of each quiz and then the clue and coordinates to the next destination were provided.

At the final location, after the final quiz, participants were encouraged to complete and submit a gamecard (electronic or hardcopy) for the chance to win prizes. **This enabled us to collect participation metrics and contact information.** Through this effort we added over two hundred residents to our Asset Management newsletter distribution list.



Based on submitted gamecards, prize winners were selected randomly. We asked the winners how they learned about the activity to determine which advertising activities were most successful. We also asked for feedback and it was unanimous – **everyone LOVED the adventure and highly recommended it.** With their permission we photographed the winners with their prize and posted it on social media to encourage additional participation.



Creative/No-Cost Marketing

To help spread awareness, we frequently posted on social media. We highlighted “Throwback Thursday” posts showing old pictures of our City’s infrastructure. One post resulted in **over 1,200 people** visiting our Geocache website, **numbers unheard of for any City outreach effort**. In fact, it engaged the over 55 crowd, which is unusual because the City’s social media posts are most popular with 35-54- year-olds.

Additionally, we encouraged participants to post pictures of their adventure to social media while tagging @Cityoflivermore. These posts helped spread awareness of the activity and provided “free” advertising which was more valuable than any paid advertising we could’ve funded.

Seeing your friends, acquaintances, or total strangers having fun while doing this activity was **very motivating**.





Post-Survey Results

In a post-geocache survey we received **over 150 comments, all positive**, including the following:

"This was a wonderful experience. I know Livermore well, but it was a welcome change of pace to have an excuse to get out, tour the city and learn about its assets at the same time."

"This activity was a lot of fun, and I learned more about the City that I've lived in all my life. More activities like this would be welcome."

"We really enjoyed the Geocache hunt and would enjoy if you continued to do it every year. Thank you, Happy Holidays."

"Fun afternoon family event visiting some places we haven't been to before. We would enjoy more geocaching events."

"So much fun and information for kids in long Thanksgiving break. We made a nice day out of this geocaching event. Thank you."

"Fun, educational, great way to spend Black Friday!"

"The boys had a wonderful time finding these caches. I really liked that it didn't all have to be done in one day. Thank you for the fun activity!"

"We had fun exploring and finding L'more around the town. Would love to do this with our grandchildren, but unfortunately we cannot at this time. It gave us a wonderful reason to get out and about and get some fresh air - thank you so much!"

"This was super fun! We learned a lot as well as saw places we wouldn't normally. It would be great to have more of these, especially where there is NOTHING else to do right now!"

"Super fun. Our first ever geocache. New to Livermore (since June). This was awesome to do and perfect weather for it. Thanks!"

REMOTE access to experience the Asset Geocache

The Asset Geocache is no longer active but you can virtually experience it with [this link](#). An interactive map provides the clues and links to the quizzes for all 5 locations. Have fun and learn about Livermore's infrastructure and awesomeness along the way.