

To: Corporate and Finance Services Committee

From: Tracy Adams, Chief Administrative Officer,
Office of the C.A.O.

Report Number: CF-24-64

Date of Report: October 30, 2024

Date of Meeting: November 4, 2024

Subject: Corporate Communications Modernization

Ward: All Wards

File: 03-05

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a modernized communications approach and streamlined policies for media relations, media events, grand-openings and special event opening ceremonies.

Attachment 1 is the proposed Oshawa's Strategic Communications Roadmap: A Modernized Framework.

Attachment 2 is the proposed Official Openings Policy.

Attachment 3 is the proposed Communications Policy.

2.0 Recommendation

That the Corporate and Finance Services Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That based on Report CF-24-64 regarding Corporate Communications Modernization dated October 30, 2024, Oshawa's Strategic Communications Roadmap: A Modernized Framework as set out in Attachment 1 be approved;

2. That Council repeal the "Media Events, Groundbreaking, Grand Opening and Opening Ceremonies Guidelines Manual" and "Media Relations Guidelines Manual" as set out in [Report CORP-19-02](#) dated January 9, 2019; and,

3. That Council approve the "Official Openings Policy" and "Communications Policy" as set out in Attachments 2 and 3 to said Report.

3.0 Input From Other Sources

- Corporate Leadership Team
- Community and Operations Services Department
- Corporate and Finance Services Department
- Economic and Development Services Department
- Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
- Municipalities: Ajax, Barrie, Brampton, Brantford, Burlington, Cambridge, Clarington, Guelph, Hamilton, Kawartha Lakes, Kingston, Kitchener, London, Milton, Mississauga, Newmarket, Oakville, Ottawa, Peterborough, Pickering, Richmond Hill, Sudbury, Toronto, Waterloo, Vaughan, Whitby, Windsor
- Community Stakeholders

4.0 Analysis

Effective communication is essential for building strong, engaged communities and to delivering clear and timely information about City initiatives. Effective communication promotes public awareness and understanding of City services and programs which in turn increases transparency and trust in local government.

The City's communication practices are outdated as Council-approved guidelines were first developed approximately 20 years ago. Evolved from the 2004 Council approved Groundbreaking and Grand Opening Protocol, the "Media Events, Groundbreaking, Grand Opening and Opening Ceremonies Guidelines Manual" was first approved by Council in 2013 and has had several minor housekeeping updates, including in 2018 and 2019. The "Media Relations Guidelines Manual" was first approved by Council in 2007, with minor updates over the years including in 2016 and 2018, as well as in 2019 when both the Manuals were updated to incorporate Wards and Vice-Chairs (refer to [Report CORP-19-02](#)).

While changes to the manuals have been minimal over the years, in contrast the media and communications landscape has changed dramatically.

4.1.1 2018 - 2021 Communications Strategy

Approved by Council in 2018, the [Communications Strategy 2018 - 2021](#) was forward-looking, incorporating new practices in engagement, storytelling and digital communications and aiming to address the shift in the media and communications landscape. The Strategy identified the following 10 strategies each with corresponding actions:

- Revitalize Branding
- Build a Resource Toolkit
- Restructure Corporate Communications
- Communicate Government Services
- Implement Grassroots Engagement
- Support a Richer Digital Presence
- Create Good News Platforms

- Formalize Partnership Approach
- Public Relations
- Issues Management

Since 2018, staff have been implementing the action items within the Strategy and in recent years, have been building upon the successes and outcomes of the 10 strategies and action items.

4.1.2 Benchmarking Findings

In 2023, staff began a comprehensive review of its progress achieved on the Communications Strategy while reviewing the City's approaches to communications and media relations. The review included evaluating the City's existing communications and media relations approaches and processes, benchmarking of municipal comparators, one-on-one information sharing discussions with communications leads at comparable municipalities and reviewing the latest best practices and industry standards.

As part of its benchmarking, staff compared the City's media relations practices to municipal comparators similar in location and/or size to Oshawa. Key themes from the comparison of 28 municipalities demonstrated that the City of Oshawa:

- issued two-to-three times more media releases than each of its neighbouring counterparts and compared to those of similar population range (e.g. Ajax, Barrie, Burlington, Clarington, Richmond Hill, Sudbury, Whitby);
- was the only municipality to issue media releases with quotes for special events; and,
- included three-to-four times more elected official quotes per media release (e.g. Mayor, Chair, Vice-Chair, Regional and City Ward Councillor, City Ward Councillor) compared with most other municipalities that typically include only one or two municipal elected official quotes per media release.

Additionally, through one-on-one discussions with communications counterparts, benchmarking findings identified updated municipal practices in the areas of:

- Media events and releases – shift from formal media events with speeches and media releases with numerous quotes to news releases for large-scale announcements and celebratory events with the community;
- Staffing complement – communications branches typically include specialty staffing positions in key areas (e.g. graphic design, social media, community engagement);
- Connecting and engaging with the community – identified as a significant new area of focus to meet increased expectations from the public resulting in increased delivery of open houses, pop-up events, etc. (e.g. meeting people where they are such as malls, schools, parks, etc.); and,

- Storytelling – focus on shifting conventional communications tactics to strategic, tailored approaches that combine storytelling and use of multimedia (e.g. videos, photos, infographics).

4.1.3 New Approaches

In 2023 and 2024, based on findings, the City's Corporate Communications Branch shifted to a new work structure to support a strategic communications approach to ensure that the City is well positioned to communicate effectively with its community members and audiences. As part of this new strategic approach, several modernized improvements have been implemented, including but not limited to:

- moving to a new internal service delivery model (business partner or “portfolio” approach);
- introducing specialty positions (social media and multimedia design);
- streamlining the City's online channels; and,
- introducing a variety of new communications tactics and outreach activities with associated measurement and key performance indicators (KPIs).

These new approaches were measured and evaluated, and the City achieved a number of communications successes including but not limited to:

- an improved corporate communications mindset across the organization;
- increased in-person attendance and engagement at community-focused events;
- increased online subscribers, followers and engagement on City channels; and,
- improved reach of digital and print communications tactics to targeted audiences.

Examples of modernized approaches implemented since 2023 include:

- Delivery of two Shape Oshawa Open Houses at the Oshawa Centre (12+ City program and service areas participating in the all-day events; 3,500+ combined engaged interactions);
- Introduction of video highlight reels following neighbourhood park official openings (7,000+ video views and 600+ engagements for Gold Point Wildlife Reserve video; 5,700+ video views and 400+ engagements for Sunnyside Park video); and,
- Leveraging existing City assets and channels to communicate corporate messaging (1,000+ QR scans on digital waste calendar flyer insert in tax bills; 600+ QR scans on City event signs in City parks).

4.2 Modernized Communications Framework

As a result of the comprehensive review and implementation of communications improvements over the past 18 months, staff have developed the proposed Oshawa's Strategic Communications Roadmap: A Modernized Framework (refer to Attachment 1). The proposed Modernized Framework is based on communications research and municipal best practices, supported by quantitative and qualitative measurement, and shaped through collaborative input from City departments and community stakeholders.

The three-year Modernized Framework outlines five communications pillars each with several priority actions that guide future communications planning and key priority areas. The five communications pillars are:

1. Enhance the City Brand
2. Embrace Strategic Communications
3. Increase Storytelling
4. Connect with Community
5. Strengthen Reputation

The five communications pillars address the shifting communications landscape and focus on enhancing effectiveness and strategically allocating resources while the actions provide the roadmap to achieve priorities over the next three years.

Together, the Modernized Framework and its five pillars and associated actions:

- support the goals and actions of the Oshawa Strategic Plan 2024 - 2027;
- support the 2018 - 2021 Communications Strategy;
- support the City’s other strategic plans, including Plan Twenty30, the Economic Development Strategy and the 2025 - 2029 Financial Strategy;
- strategically allocate resources to approaches that engage and reach target audiences and the greater public; and,
- continue to build upon the City’s communications strengths and successes.

The five communications pillars evolved from the [2018 - 2021 Communications Strategy](#) and its 10 strategies and associated actions as noted in the table below.

2024 - 2027 Communications Pillar	2018 - 2021 Communications Strategies	2018 – 2021 Communications Actions
Enhance the City Brand	Revitalize Branding Build a Resource Toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build Templates • Increase use of visuals
Embrace Strategic Communications	Restructure Corporate Communications Support a Richer Digital Presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructure Delivery Model • Apply Stronger Prioritization • Maintain eNews • Maintain Quality of Website

Increase Storytelling	Support a Richer Digital Presence Communicate Government Services Create Good News Platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in Storytelling • Communicate “Who Does What” • Support and Recast Social Media Presence • Celebrate Municipal Government • Use Video Organically • Promote Good News
Connect with Community	Implement Grassroots Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in Storytelling • Engage with Hard-to-Reach Audiences • Provide On-site Engagement (City Hall on Wheels)
Strengthen Reputation	Public Relations Create Good News Platforms Issues Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand City News • Promote Good News • Maintain Quality of Website • Update Definition of Media

4.2.1 Enhance the City Brand

Consistency in branding is essential to ensure a professional, recognizable look and feel, and to in turn, convey authenticity, foster trust, and strengthen reputation and pride. The Corporate Communications Branch will further establish the City brand and update guidelines and templates to elevate the City’s brand, modernize the look and feel of our print and digital assets, and strengthen our corporate identity.

4.2.2 Embrace Strategic Communications

The continued growth of the digital era means that the City’s audiences are faced with information overload. The Corporate Communications Branch has shifted to implementing more strategic and tailored approaches to its digital and print communications tactics, leading to excellent results in recent campaigns and resulting in a stronger subscriber and follower base and reach of City messaging. The Branch will continue to apply a strategic lens to ensure that resources are allocated to communications tactics (print and digital) that offer the most effectiveness and reach. The Branch will prioritize building the City’s online channels as a trusted news source for timely and accurate information, as well as leveraging existing City assets and print distribution (e.g. mail outs, flyers, door hangers).

4.2.3 Increase Storytelling

Storytelling in government is an evolving field to communicate the “why” as it provides the opportunity for audiences to relate on a more personal level. Messages conveyed through storytelling are much more likely to be retained than when using traditional communication methods. The Corporate Communications Branch has been using this technique to illustrate the value of City programs and services and demonstrate value for tax dollar. Reviewing digital metrics has demonstrated that storytelling content posted to the City’s digital channels receives significantly more engagement and is more often shared when compared to traditional approaches and channels. The Branch will continue to identify more opportunities to use the storytelling approach to engage with our audiences and strengthen community connection with local government.

4.2.4 Connect with Community

Connecting with the community both in-person and online provides opportunities to reach many diverse audiences and helps to build trust and understanding of the role of municipal government. The Corporate Communications Branch completed a comprehensive review and benchmarking of groundbreaking, opening ceremonies and grand opening event practices, which has shown that the City’s practices are outdated (refer to [Report CORP-19-02](#) the Media Events, Groundbreaking, Grand Opening and Opening Ceremonies Guidelines Manual – April 2016).

The proposed Official Openings Policy (refer to Attachment 2) is a modernized approach and is consistent with other municipalities in celebrating with the community on completed projects, as well as engaging with key audiences in meaningful and relatable ways. The proposed Official Openings Policy reflects the current Media Events, Groundbreaking, Grand Opening and Opening Ceremonies Guidelines Manual with the following modifications:

- formatted in new Corporate Policy template;
- updated definitions;
- introduction of Neighbourhood Event Openings; and,
- streamlined the openings and event agendas.

4.2.5 Strengthen Reputation

The significant change in the traditional media landscape has created challenges for governments and organizations to address inaccuracies and manage messaging. Misinformation and disinformation are often more read or engaged with than factual news, which can in turn affect the public’s trust in government.

The Corporate Communications Branch has completed a comprehensive review of media relations practices, which has shown that the City’s media practices are outdated and are not achieving the intended results (refer to [Report CORP-19-02](#) the Media Relations Guidelines Manual – November 2010). The proposed Communications Policy (refer to Attachment 3) reflects the current Council approved Media Relations Guidelines Manual with the following modifications:

- formatted in new Corporate Policy Template;
- updated definitions;
- streamlined quotes and contacts for media materials;
- replaced public service announcement (PSA) category with a modern news story category; and,
- addition of a media correction procedure.

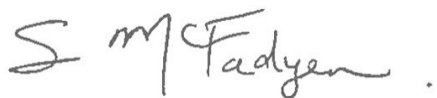
To strengthen the City's reputation and foster trust and civic pride, the Corporate Communications Branch will continue to develop strategies to improve reach of messaging.

5.0 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications related to this Report as any associated costs are included in annual Department Operating budgets.

6.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan

This report responds to the Oshawa Strategic Plan Priority Area "Lead: Governance and Service Excellence" with the goal to enhance effective communication and encourage all community members to actively participate and learn about City services, programs, and spaces.



Shannon McFadyen, Director,
Corporate Communications



Tracy Adams, Chief Administrative Officer,
Office of the C.A.O.

Oshawa's Strategic Communications Roadmap:

A Modernized Framework

November 2024



Background

The communications landscape has changed dramatically over the past two decades, and even more so in recent years. The City of Oshawa’s Corporate Communications Branch recently reviewed its approach to communications and media relations to ensure that we are aligned with municipal best practices and are effectively reaching the community and our audiences.

The review included:

- municipal benchmarking;
- input from City staff and community stakeholders;
- analyzing the City’s traditional communications methods (e.g. outdoor static signs, print materials); digital communications methods (e.g. email, social media, website); and, media relations activities (e.g. media releases, media events);
- inventorying other opportunities for promotion (e.g. facility assets); and,
- reviewing the current media landscape.

This review aligns with the 2024 - 2027 Oshawa Strategic Plan that prioritizes enhancing effective communications and supports the goals of the Council-approved Communications Strategy 2018 - 2021.

Modernized Framework

The review and research findings have informed a three-year Modernized Framework that builds upon the successes of the 2018 - 2021 Communications Strategy, is informed by metrics, and incorporates new best practices. The Modernized Framework will guide future communications planning and priority areas for the City of Oshawa.

The Modernized Framework outlines five communications pillars, each with associated actions. The priority pillars address the shifting communications landscape and focus on enhancing effectiveness and strategically allocating resources while the actions provide the roadmap to how we will meet our priorities over the next three years.

The five Communication Pillars that work together to form the Modernized Framework for the City of Oshawa’s Communications are:

1. Enhance the City Brand
2. Embrace Strategic Communications
3. Increase Storytelling
4. Connect with Community
5. Strengthen Reputation

Pillars and Actions

1. Enhance the City Brand

Consistency in branding is essential to ensure a professional, recognizable look and feel and to in turn, convey authenticity, foster trust, and strengthen reputation and pride. The Corporate Communications Branch will further establish the City brand and modernize guidelines and templates to elevate our brand, modernize the look and feel of our print and digital assets, and strengthen our corporate identity.

Actions	Measurement	Year
1.1 Update the Visual Identity Guidelines Manual.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion and Council approval 	2025
1.2 Create modern graphic design templates for print and digital materials for staff and vendors to enhance brand reputation and maintain consistency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion • # of uses for each template 	2025
1.3 Develop refreshed look and feel and brand guidelines for staff and vendors to reflect new graphic design best practices and a modern visual identity to City communications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion following update of Visual Identity Guidelines 	2025
1.4 Build a multimedia library with go-to local (authentic and inclusive) photos, videos and B-roll video.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion • # of photos and videos; increase year over year 	2025 and ongoing
1.5 Investigate and introduce tools and technology to streamline and manage brand consistency across the Corporation (e.g. corporate Canva account, photo management library).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of new tools / platforms • # of new tools / platforms implemented 	2025 and ongoing
1.6 Update the look and feel of all City e-newsletters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion • # of subscribers, decrease in unsubscribes, open rate, click through rate 	2025
1.7 Manage branding on the City's fleet, including use of decals with the City logo. Work with staff to identify opportunities for vehicle wraps with corporate messaging.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of approved requests for use of City logo on fleet • # of vehicles wrapped 	2024 and ongoing

2. Embrace Strategic Communications

The continued growth of the digital era means that our audiences are faced with information overload. The Corporate Communications Branch has shifted to implementing more strategic and tailored approaches. The Branch will continue to apply a strategic lens to ensure that resources are allocated to print and digital communications tactics that offer the most effectiveness and reach. The Branch will also prioritize building the City’s online channels as a trusted news source for timely and accurate information and leverage the reach of existing City assets and print distribution.

Actions	Measurement	Year
2.1 Review the City’s existing channels to identify the best-performing content types for each channel and key audience type.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion • Increase in engagement, engagement rate, based on adjustments 	2025
2.2 Develop a modernized Communications Plan Template that outlines specific goals, identifies key audiences and the most effective channels and tactics (print and digital) per audience, and embeds metrics reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation and adoption of new template • Improved results based on identified plan KPIs 	2025
2.3 Assume management of public-facing digital screens in City facilities to ensure consistency in brand and to strategically tailor promotions to facility visitors. Work with staff to investigate the feasibility of new digital signs in high-traffic areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift of ownership of digital signs • # of new screen locations identified and installed • # of scans, # of webpage visits / actions 	2025
2.4 Develop a “newsroom” on Oshawa.ca that uses a combination of content, videos and photos to engage with audiences and share our own good news stories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion • # of subscribers, # of visits, # of video views 	2024
2.5 Upgrade the website to refresh the look and feel, including the City’s homepage and landing pages, and incorporate storytelling in key web sections (e.g. newsroom).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion 	2025
2.6 Deliver a Subscribe campaign with prize to increase subscribers to the City’s newsroom, website newsfeeds, e-newsletters and online calendars.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of subscribers, year-over-year increase • # of scans, # page visits, action taken on page 	2025

3. Increase Storytelling

Storytelling in government is an evolving field to communicate the “why” as it provides the opportunity for audiences to relate on a more personal level. The Corporate Communications Branch has been using this approach to illustrate the value of City programs and services. Metrics has demonstrated that storytelling content posted to our digital channels receives significantly more engagement and is more often shared when compared to our traditional approaches and channels. The Branch will identify more opportunities to use the storytelling approach to engage with our audiences and strengthen connections with the community.

Actions	Measurement	Year
3.1 Conduct a review of the City's YouTube Channel and develop a YouTube and video strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion • Development of strategy and identification and improvements of KPIs 	2025
3.2 Increase the use of storytelling across digital channels to showcase value for City services and programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of video views, average watch length, engagement, engagement rate 	2025 and ongoing
3.3 Identify more opportunities to convey the importance of key municipal topics and programs using storytelling and develop and promote the campaigns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of video views, average watch length, engagement, engagement rate 	2025 and ongoing
3.4 Design and disseminate Budget Overview and Budget Highlights publications that incorporate engaging visuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion • # of webpage visits, # of downloads 	2024 and ongoing
3.4 Develop a “Your Tax Dollars at Work” multimedia campaign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurement of identified KPIs based on selected strategies 	2025
3.5 Develop and disseminate Infographics to illustrate Who Does What and to better communicate Where Tax Dollars Go.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion • # of webpage visits, # of downloads, engagement, engagement rate 	2025 and ongoing
3.6 Embed videos on the City's corporate website through the new “newsroom” and in City News Stories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion • # of webpage visits • # of video views, average watch length 	2024 and ongoing

4. Connect with Community

Connecting with the community provides opportunities to reach many diverse audiences and helps to build trust and understanding of the role of municipal government. Staff will modernize approaches to connecting with the community and our audiences in meaningful and relatable ways, both in-person and online.

Actions	Measurement	Year
4.1 Update the Community Engagement Framework and create a toolkit with updated templates for staff and vendors to ensure the City reaches the diverse community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion 	2025
4.2 Develop streamlined and modernized Official Openings Policy and related procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion and Council approval 	2024
4.3 Organize community-focused events to celebrate the completion of major City projects and neighbourhood improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of community celebrations executed • # of attendees, attendee engagement 	2025 and ongoing
4.4 Use video focused on the community to connect with residents. Feature community members voicing what City projects, programs, services and spaces mean to them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of video views, # of engagements, engagement rate 	2024 and ongoing
4.5 Deliver in-person Open Houses “City Hall on Wheels” in high traffic areas within the community (e.g. Shape Oshawa at the Oshawa Centre).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of events • # participating program and service areas • # of interactions at each event • # of completed feedback forms 	2024 and ongoing
4.6 Maintain a list of opportunities for City program and service areas to have an in-person presence out in the community, including opportunities to connect with hard-to-reach audiences (e.g. schools, parks).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of events • # participating program and service areas • # of interactions at each event 	2024 and ongoing

5. Strengthen Reputation

The significant shift in the traditional media landscape has created challenges for governments and organizations to manage messaging. To strengthen the City’s reputation and foster trust and civic pride, the Branch will modernize its media relations practices and develop strategies to further the reach of our messaging and to manage misinformation.

Actions	Measurement	Year
5.1 Introduce an enhanced platform that will streamline identifying, sharing and reporting on mentions of Oshawa online and in the media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion 	2024
5.2 Proactively manage and mitigate misinformation and disinformation in the media, print and digital.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media sentiment rate • # of corrections requested, # of media corrections 	2024 and ongoing
5.3 Create a “The Real Facts” section on the new Oshawa.ca newsroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion • Use internally as a proactive tool • Use externally, when required, and # page visits per story 	2024
5.4 Launch a Podcast in a conversation-style format that address topics of community importance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch • # of episodes • # of subscribers, # of listeners, avg. listen length 	2024
5.5 Modernize media relations guidelines with an updated Communications Policy and related procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion and Council approval 	2025
5.6 Launch a quarterly e-newsletter for City messaging.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion • # of subscribers, decrease in unsubscribes, open rate, click through rate 	2025
5.7 Maintain a list of annual studies and reports and implement cyclical media briefings for proactive media outreach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion • # of proactive outreach instances to media • # of responses to media 	2024 and ongoing



Corporate Policy

Title: Official Openings Policy

Number: GOV-24-##

Approved By: City Council

Administered By: Corporate Communications

Effective Date:

Revision Date(s): N/A

1.0 Purpose/Background

The purpose of this Policy is to establish clear and consistent guidelines for Official City Openings and Special Event Opening Ceremonies.

This Policy is part of a broader communications framework that works to enhance the City of Oshawa's profile and engage with our community, partners and Local Businesses.

2.0 Policy Statement

The City of Oshawa recognizes the value and importance of celebrating events, new facilities and announcements with our community. This Policy and related procedures set a clear direction to staff and outlines roles and responsibilities for openings, opening ceremonies and announcements.

3.0 Scope/Application

This Policy applies to all City Employees and Elected Officials in their capacity as members of Council.

In instances when the City has a legal or partnership agreement that stipulates the City's communications and support requirements, the roles, responsibilities and procedures in the Policy may differ and the legal agreement supersedes this Policy.

This Policy does not apply to External Partners and Local Businesses as it is the responsibility of the External Partner or Local Business to determine, plan and deliver their respective openings, events and announcements.

4.0 Definitions

Campaign Period means the period between May 1 and Voting Day in the year of a municipal election year.

Business Celebration means an occasion when an Oshawa company, store, restaurant or other organization is celebrating a notable milestone or anniversary and has requested the attendance of City representatives and/or City support for their opening.

Business Opening means an occasion when a new company, store, restaurant, or other business organization starts officially doing business and has requested the attendance of City representatives and/or City support for their opening.

City means the Corporation of the City of Oshawa and, where the context allows, its officers, officials, Employees and agents or any of them.

City Produced Special Event means special events coordinated by the City's Special Events and Culture Services team.

Elected Official means a member of Council for the City of Oshawa

Employee means all full-time, part-time, temporary, seasonal, and staff hired on a contract basis for a defined period of time, of the City of Oshawa, as well as students. For the purpose of this Policy only, the definition includes paid or unpaid volunteers, students and interns but does not include Oshawa Senior Community Centres.

External Partner means external organizations, entities, business or corporations. Examples include community organizations, local partner organizations and other entities including post-secondary and health care institutions, and other levels of government.

External Partner Events means announcements, events and openings coordinated by External Representatives that have requested the attendance of City representatives and/or City support.

Facility means City property and facilities. Examples include public buildings, parks, trails and sport fields.

Joint Partnership Announcement means events that celebrate a significant partnership with an External Partner. Examples include new City facilities or City Facility features that were significantly constructed, developed or funded through a partnership; renamings and dedications with a family or local community group; and, major new projects or programs that were developed through a partnership.

Local Business means a company, store or restaurant or business-related organization with a physical address or its main operations in the City of Oshawa.

Neighbourhood Event Opening means events that are less formal in structure to celebrate the completion of smaller-scale capital projects impacting a Ward or neighbourhood with a specific audience (e.g. local area residents, a surrounding neighborhood or user group). Examples include community park redevelopments and new parkettes and may include significant new park or Facility features (e.g. feature garden).

Official City Opening means official openings for the City's large-scale projects with large capital budgets. Examples include community buildings and destination parks.

Special Event Opening Ceremony means opening ceremonies for City Produced Special Events coordinated by the City's Special Events and Culture Services team.

Spokesperson for this Policy means an Elected Official who speaks on behalf of City Council or an Employee who speaks on behalf of the City.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Official City Openings

Official City Openings are delivered by City staff and include these elements:

- a) Interactive public event (on average 3 hour duration) with free activities such as tours, activities and demonstrations and may include light refreshments and entertainment, as well as informal opportunities to connect with members of Council.
- b) Formal opening component that includes introductions from the emcee (Standing Committee Chair or Vice-Chair as designate); official remarks delivered by the Mayor as Head of Council (or designate); followed by a celebratory activity (e.g. ribbon-cutting or ceremonial first pitch / jump ball) led by the Ward Councillors and involving all members of Council.

Members of Council:

- a) Upon availability, attend the event and participate in the celebratory activity, photos and videos.
- b) Standing Committee Chair (or Vice-Chair as designate) deliver introductions as emcee.
- c) Mayor (or designate) deliver official remarks on behalf of the City.
- d) Ward Councillors lead the celebratory activity when the Official City Opening occurs in their ward.

Corporate Communications:

- a) Establish Date and Time – review members of Council calendars with the Mayor's Office and Office of City Council and confirm the date and time with input from the Mayor's Office, emcee and Ward Councillors, funding partners/key community stakeholders (if applicable) and City Branch staff.
- b) Circulate Invitations – distribute an internal email calendar invite from communications@oshawa.ca with date, time and high-level event details to all members of Council, Corporate Leadership Team and City Branch staff, as well as invite via email funding partners/key community stakeholders involved in the project (if applicable). Invitations will request that individuals who require accessibility accommodations to provide notice in advance of the event.
- c) Track RSVPs – track and coordinate RSVPs.

- d) Create Itinerary – develop the formal opening event itinerary with input from the Mayor’s Office, emcee and Ward Councillors as well as funding partners (if applicable); follow the City’s Event Itinerary and Table of Precedence Procedure and Land Acknowledgement Policy.
- e) Draft Speaking Notes – develop speaking notes and share with the event itinerary for consideration with the Spokespersons at least five business days in advance of the event, if possible.
- f) Organize Event logistics – coordinate all required logistical items with City staff support.
- g) Lead Communications – prepare and distribute promotions and communications to the public.
- h) Attend and provide support on day-of – attend the Official City Opening event and capture photography and videography.

Branch staff:

- a) Deliver Logistics – provide logistical items as required such as podium, sound system, tents, chairs and deliver programming elements as required (e.g. demonstrations, tours, free activities)
- b) Determine Budget – ensure the budget for the capital project includes funding to deliver and promote an Official City Opening.
- c) Attend – attend the Official City Opening event.

5.2 Neighbourhood Event Openings

Neighbourhood Event Openings are delivered by City staff and include these elements:

- a) Drop-in event (typically 1 – 1.5 hours) for community members to connect with their Ward Councillors and other members of Council and typically includes an activity(ies) for users (e.g. playground program).
- b) Informal remarks that include introductions from the Standing Committee Chair (or Vice-Chair as designate); welcome greetings from the Ward Councillors; followed by a celebratory activity involving the community led by the Ward Councillors and involving all members of Council (e.g. a box lacrosse game, a bike ride on a new trail).

Members of Council:

- a) Upon availability, attend the event and participate in the celebratory activity, photos and videos.
- b) Standing Committee Chair (or Vice-Chair as designate) deliver introductions as emcee.
- c) Ward Councillors deliver welcome greetings.
- d) Ward Councillors lead the celebratory activity where it occurs in their ward.

Corporate Communications:

- a) Establish Date and Time – review members of Council calendars with the Mayor’s Office and Office of City Council and confirm the date and time with input from the Ward Councillors, emcee and City Branch staff.
- b) Circulate Invitations – distribute an internal email calendar invite from communications@oshawa.ca with date, time and high-level event details to all members of Council, Corporate Leadership Team and City Branch staff, as well as invite via email funding partners/key community stakeholders involved in the project (if applicable).
- c) Develop the Itinerary – coordinate the celebratory activity with input from the Ward Councillors, emcee (Standing Committee Chair or Vice-Chair as designate) and City Branch staff.
- d) Organize Event logistics – coordinate all required logistical items with City staff support.
- e) Lead Communications – prepare and distribute promotions and communications to the public.
- f) Attend and provide support on day-of – attend and capture photography and videography.

Branch staff:

- a) Provide Logistics – provide logistical items and deliver programming elements as required.
- b) Determine Budget – ensure the budget for the capital project includes funding to deliver and promote a Neighbourhood Event Opening.
- c) Attend – attend the neighbourhood opening event.

5.3 Joint Partnership Announcements

Joint Partnership Announcements are delivered by City staff in partnership with the Partner.

The format of the announcement will be determined by the topic, audience and location. If the facility’s or program’s purpose is to serve the needs of the community, the announcement typically will include some or all of the following elements:

- a) Drop-in event for the audience (e.g. board of directors, partner’s family, partner organization officials, and/or facility users) that may include light refreshments.
- b) Welcome greetings from the Mayor as Head of Council (or designate) and a representative from the Partner (e.g. External Partner, Government Entity or Family).
- c) Celebratory activity that involves all members of Council, the Partner representatives and, if applicable, facility users (e.g. sign unveiling, cake-cutting).

Members of Council:

- a) Upon availability, attend the event and participate in the celebratory activity, photos and videos.
- b) Mayor (or designate) deliver official remarks on behalf of the City.
- c) If applicable for formal announcements at City facilities, Standing Committee Chair (or Vice-Chair as designate) deliver introductions as emcee.
- d) Mayor (or designate) and Partner lead the celebratory activity.

Corporate Communications:

- a) Establish Date and Time – review Council calendars with the Mayor’s Office and Office of City Council and confirm the date and time with input from the Mayor’s Office, Partner and City Branch staff, as well as, if applicable, the emcee.
- b) Circulate Invitations – distribute an internal email calendar invite from communications@oshawa.ca with date, time and high-level event details to all members of Council, Corporate Leadership Team and City Branch staff, as well as, if applicable, coordinate with the Partner invitations via email to funding partners/key community stakeholders involved in the project. Invitations will request that individuals who require accessibility accommodations to provide notice in advance of the event.
- c) Develop Itinerary – if applicable, coordinate the celebratory activity or formal remarks with input from the Mayor’s Office and partner and if applicable, the emcee. If the announcement is hosted at a City Facility, follow the City’s Event Itinerary and Table of Precedence Procedure and Land Acknowledgement Policy.
- d) Track RSVPs – track and coordinate RSVPs with the Partner.
- e) Draft Speaking Notes – provide speaking notes for City Spokespersons and share for consideration at least five business days in advance of the event, if possible.
- f) Organize Logistics – coordinate all required logistical items with City Branch staff.
- g) Lead Communication – coordinate with the Partner to prepare and distribute communications to the public as required.
- h) Attend and provide support on day-of – attend the announcement and capture photography and videography as required.

Branch staff:

- a) Deliver Logistics – provide logistical items and programming elements as required.
- b) Determine Budget – ensure the budget for the announcement is accommodated within the project / program budget as per the partnership agreement.

5.4 Special Event Opening Ceremonies

City Produced Special Events are delivered by City staff and may have an official opening ceremony component. The inclusion of opening ceremonies during a City Produced Special Event is dependent on several factors such as but not limited to event funding from other levels of government and the program format of the event.

When a Special Event Opening Ceremony (“Opening Ceremony”) is determined as part of the event program, it will include the following Spokespersons:

- Master of Ceremonies (emcee) who introduces Elected Officials and if applicable funding partners and sponsors; and/or
- Mayor as Head of Council (or designate) to deliver greetings on behalf of the City.

Members of Council:

- a) Upon availability, attend the event and participate.
- b) Mayor (or designate) deliver official remarks and introductions.
- c) Upon request and availability, Standing Committee Chair (or designate) may be requested to emcee the Opening Ceremony component.

Special Events and Culture Services staff:

- a) Circulate Invitations - distribute an internal calendar invite from specialevents@oshawa.ca to all members of Council, Corporate Leadership Team, and key community stakeholders as required, as well as invite dignitaries such as federal and provincial representatives (if funding providing) and sponsors (if applicable). Invitations will request that individuals who require accessibility accommodations to provide notice in advance of the event.
- b) Track RSVPs – track and coordinate RSVPs.
- c) Confirm Emcee - confirm a Master of Ceremonies (emcee) for the Opening Ceremony component of the event. Depending on the program event format, the emcee will be the Standing Committee Chair (or designate), a member of the local media or a local member/ community member with an appropriate tie to the event.
- d) Develop Itinerary - develop an itinerary for the Opening Ceremony component of the event with input from the Mayor’s Office and emcee; follow the City’s Event Itinerary and Table of Precedence Procedure and Land Acknowledgement Policy.
- e) Draft Speaking Notes – develop speaking notes for City Spokespersons and share the agenda and speaking notes at least five business days in advance of the event with Spokespersons.
- f) Track RSVPs – track and coordinate RSVPs.
- g) Organize Logistics - coordinate all required logistical items with City Branch staff.

- h) Attend and provide support on the day-of – greet and track attendance of members of Council, dignitaries and special guests, facilitate warm introductions, provide speaking notes on site, and assist individuals on and off the stage as required.

5.5 Business Openings and Business Celebrations

It is the responsibility of the Local Business to determine, plan and deliver their business grand opening and business milestone events.

Upon request and/or upon notification of a Business Opening or Local Business Celebration event, City staff:

- a) Direct requests for Local Business groundbreaking, grand opening and/or business milestone events to Business and Economic Development Services via business@oshawa.ca or the City's [Celebrate a Business Milestone application request form](#).

Business and Economic Development Services:

- a) Respond – acknowledge all incoming Local Business groundbreaking, grand opening and/or business milestone event requests within three business days.
- b) Date and Time – educate Local Business representative(s) on preferred member of Council dates, noteworthy conflicting City events/initiatives, and opportunities of support courtesy of Business and Economic Development Services.
- c) Circulate Invitations – distribute an internal calendar invite from business@oshawa.ca to all members of Council, Corporate Leadership Team and Corporate Communications. The invitation will include the date, time to arrive, time of event, length of event, event location as well as any provided pertinent details related to the event.
- d) Draft Speaking Notes – upon request from the Local Business, coordinate the availability and attendance of City Spokespersons with the Mayor's Office and Office of City Council and, if applicable, draft speaking notes for consideration.
- e) Logistics— as per the standardized opportunities for City support, prepare and/or coordinate any requested items.
- f) Day-of – endeavour to attend to assist with warm introductions and proceedings, and capture photography/ videography for City communications.

Mayor's Office and Office of City Council:

- a) Date and Time – upon request, review calendars for preferred member of Council dates.
- b) Upon request, Mayor's Office to prepare a Certificate of Recognition and deliver to the member of Council or Business and Economic Development Services City representative in advance of the Business Opening event.

5.6 External Partner Events

It is the responsibility of the External Partner to determine, plan and deliver their announcements, events and openings. Examples include but are not limited to External Partner led tree plantings, funding announcements, community events and organization/partner facility openings (e.g. new elementary/secondary schools).

Upon request, when an External Partner reaches out for support or extends the offer for members of Council and the City to participate, the lead City Branch staff, the Mayor's Office and/or Office of City Council staff:

- a) Respond – acknowledge all event requests within three business days.
- b) Advise Date and Time – educate the External Partner on preferred Council dates, noteworthy conflicting City events/initiatives, and opportunities of support.
- c) Invitations – upon request, distribute an internal calendar invite to all members of Council, Corporate Leadership Team and Corporate Communications. The invitation will include the date, time to arrive, time of event, length of event, event location as well any provided pertinent details related to the event.
- d) Draft Speaking Notes – upon request from the External Partner, coordinate the availability and attendance of City Spokespersons with the Mayor's Office and Office of City Council and, if applicable, draft speaking notes for consideration.
- e) Logistics – as per the standardized opportunities for City support, prepare and/or coordinate any requested items.

6.0 Procedures

6.1 Official City Openings, Neighbourhood Event Openings and Joint Announcements

The Corporate Communications Branch is responsible for the development and implementation of the Corporation's communications strategies.

To support Policy compliance, Corporate Communications will establish and maintain this Policy (Official Openings Policy), the Communications Policy and the Event Itinerary and Table of Precedence Corporate Procedure.

6.2 City Produced Special Events

The Special Events and Culture Services team is responsible for the development and implementation of City Produced Special Events, including determining which Special Events will have an Opening Ceremony component, as well as supporting External Partner Special Event Opening Ceremonies as required.

To support Policy compliance, the Special Events and Culture team will establish and maintain Special Event Opening Ceremonies procedures.

6.3 Business Events

The Business and Economic Development Services Branch is responsible for supporting Oshawa businesses, developers and industry leaders on their respective business events and announcements such as openings and business milestone events.

To support Policy compliance, the Business and Economic Development Services Branch will establish and maintain Business Openings and Business Events procedures.

6.4 Openings, Events and Announcements During a Campaign Period

During a Campaign Period, members of Council and Employees will follow the Council approved [Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy](#) and these guidelines below:

For openings, events and announcements categorized in Section 5.0 of this Policy,

Members of Council:

- will continue to receive invitations to and attend openings/ events / announcements in their capacity as members of Council;
- will continue to be included in photos and videos when attending openings/ events / announcements in their capacity as members of Council;
- will not have a Spokesperson role, except the Mayor as Head of Council.

The Mayor, in their capacity as Head of Council:

- will continue to have a Spokesperson role (e.g. delivering remarks, sending greetings, remarks as an emcee);
- will not be able to designate any quote or speaking opportunities to another member of Council.

Employees:

- will avoid delivering Official City Openings, Neighbourhood Event Openings and Joint Announcements during the period between the last regular City Council Meeting of the current Council up until and including Voting Day, notwithstanding instances in which the City cannot delay announcing funding or partnerships or is obligated as per signed agreements. City Produced Special Events with Special Event Opening Ceremony components will continue to be delivered;
- will extend invitations to City-led Official City Openings, Neighbourhood Event Openings and Joint Announcements to both members of Council and Council-elects when the events are held following Voting Day and up until Council-elects are sworn in (the Mayor of the outgoing Council will be the only member of Council to have a speaking role in their capacity as Head of Council);
- upon approval and request from the Local Business or External Partner, will extend invitations to Business Openings and Business Celebrations and External Partner openings, announcements and special events to both members of

Council and Council-elects when the events are held following Voting Day and up until Council-elects are sworn in (the Mayor of the outgoing Council will be the only member of Council to have a speaking role in their capacity as Head of Council).

7.0 Monitoring/Review

This Policy is reviewed by the Director, Corporate Communications every five years to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with legislation and current business processes or as required based on legislative changes. The Director is authorized to make minor or housekeeping amendments to this Policy, as required.

8.0 References

- [Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy](#)
- [Land Acknowledgement Policy](#)

Communications Policy
 Corporate Procedure - Event Itinerary and Table of Precedence

9.0 Approval

Authority Council	Date Date approved	Signature
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Corporate Policy

Title: Communications Policy

Number: GOV-24-##

Approved By: City Council

Administered By: Corporate Communications

Effective Date:

Revision Date(s): N/A

1.0 Purpose/Background

The purpose of this Policy is to establish consistent and clear guidelines for the City of Oshawa's communications activities, including defining roles and responsibilities for City Spokespersons.

This Policy is part of a broader communications framework that works to enhance the City of Oshawa's profile and encourage effective communications to inform the community, Media and our audiences.

2.0 Policy Statement

The City of Oshawa acknowledges the valuable role of the Media to assist in informing the public of programs, events, services, projects, and initiatives; promote City achievements and successes; and ensure that accurate and consistent information is relayed on City Business and during Emergency/ Significant Incidents.

3.0 Scope/Application

This Policy applies to all City Employees and Elected Officials in their capacity as members of Council.

In the event of an emergency or significant incident, the City's Municipal Emergency Plan and its related protocols supersede this Policy.

This Policy does not apply to External Partners and Local Businesses as it is the responsibility of the External Partner or Local Business to prepare, coordinate and disseminate their respective communications activities and openings / events and announcements.

4.0 Definitions

Campaign Period means the period between May 1 and Voting Day in the year of a municipal election year.

City means the Corporation of the City of Oshawa and, where the context allows, its officers, officials, Employees and agents or any of them.

City Business means a core, central or basic function of the City, as related to the City's mandate and functions. Examples include City events, programs, initiatives or issues as well as action taken as per Council direction.

City Story promotes or celebrates an event, program or initiative using content and supporting visuals. The objective is to engage the community through storytelling with messages, images and video that can be shared with the Media for positive news coverage.

City Notice provides interesting, factual and timely information on City events, programs, services, including community service notices and disruptions in City services.

Elected Official means a member of Council for the City of Oshawa.

Emergency/ Significant Incident means a natural or human-caused imminent or actual emergency within Oshawa affecting human health, property or the environment. Emergencies may vary in size and severity and may affect localized businesses, residential areas and/or the general welfare of Oshawa residents.

Employee means all full-time, part-time, temporary, seasonal, and staff hired on a contract basis for a defined period of time, of the City of Oshawa, as well as students. For the purpose of this Policy only, the definition shall include paid or unpaid volunteers, students and interns but does not include Oshawa Senior Community Centres.

External Partner means external organizations, entities, business or corporations. Examples include community organizations, local partner organizations and other entities including post-secondary and health care institutions, and other levels of government.

Facility means City property and facilities. Examples include public buildings, parks, trails and sport fields.

Local Business means a company, store or restaurant or business-related organization with a physical address or its main operations in the City of Oshawa.

Media means print (newspapers, newsmagazines), broadcast news (radio, television) and online (news blogs, online newspapers, social channels) media outlets that focus on delivering news and feature stories to the general public or a target audience. This includes national, regional, local, community media outlets and their respective reporters, photographers and editors.

Media Materials means documents or files that provide information about the City Business to the Media and may be also shared with the public or key partner organizations. Examples include News Releases and News Advisories.

Neighbourhood Event Opening means events that are less formal in structure to celebrate the completion of smaller-scale capital projects impacting a Ward or neighbourhood with a specific audience (e.g. local area residents, a surrounding neighborhood or user group). Examples include community park redevelopments and new parkettes and may include significant new park or Facility features (e.g. feature garden).

News Advisory is an invitation to the Media to an event or announcement with the objective of generating Media interest during the event or announcement.

News Release is issued for newsworthy stories such as large-scale, city-wide projects, initiatives and partnership announcements and may include funding. Factors that increase the likelihood of Media pick-up include prominence, impact and timeliness.

City Produced Special Event means special events coordinated by the City's Special Events and Culture Services team.

Official City Opening means officials openings for large-scale projects with large capital budgets. Examples include community buildings and destination parks.

Special Event Opening Ceremony means opening ceremonies for City Produced Special Events coordinated by the City's Special Events and Culture Services team.

Spokesperson means a person who is authorized to speak to the Media regarding City Business, as further described in Section 5 of this Policy.

Subject Matter Expert (S.M.E.) means an Employee who has an authority in a particular area or topic. S.M.E.s may be spokespeople following approval from their respective member of the Corporate Leadership Team or their Director.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Media Relations Activities

5.1.1 Members of Council

The Mayor, as head of Council, will act as Council official Spokesperson. If the Mayor is not available, the Mayor will designate another member of Council.

All members of Council may conduct media relations activities on behalf of themselves as Elected Officials with it being understood that comments from the Councillor represent the views of the Councillor and not necessarily the official position of the City.

Upon request, for matters related to City Business, Corporate Communications will provide media relations support to members of Council in their capacity as Elected Officials.

5.1.1.2 Remarks and Quotes

The following members of Council may be invited to provide the following:

- As Head of Council, the Mayor (or designate) may provide:
 - Greetings and Remarks (including emcee Remarks) on behalf of City Council, when applicable and outlined in an event itinerary (as per the Official Openings Policy)
 - Quotes and media contact information for City News Releases
 - Video story remarks
- On matters directly related to their respective Committee, the Standing Committee Chair, or when unavailable the Vice-Chair, may provide:
 - Quotes and media contact information for City News Releases
 - Emcee remarks, when applicable and outlined in an event itinerary (as per the Official Openings Policy)
 - Video story remarks
- During Neighbourhood Event Openings, the respective Ward Councillors may provide:
 - Welcome greetings (as per the Official Openings Policy)
 - Video story remarks

5.1.2 Employee Spokespersons

Authorized Employee Spokesperson roles are:

- A member of the Corporate Leadership Team (C.L.T.) or designate may be the Spokesperson for their respective department.
- A Director (who may also be a Subject Matter Expert) may be the Spokesperson on matters of City Business for their respective Department if they have been designated by their respective C.L.T. member.
- A Subject Matter Expert (S.M.E.) may be the Spokesperson if they have been designated by their respective C.L.T. member or Director.

5.1.3 Other Employees

All other Employees shall direct Media inquiries to the Corporate Communications Branch (communications@oshawa.ca, or ext. 5686) and their respective Supervisor/Manager and/or Director to facilitate a timely and accurate response.

5.2 Responding to Media Inquiries

Members of Council who receive a Media inquiry may conduct media relations activities on behalf of themselves as Elected Officials with it being understood that comments from the Councillor represent the views of the Councillor and not necessarily the official position of the City.

Upon request, for matters related to City Business, Corporate Communications will provide media relations support to members of Council in their capacity as Elected Officials.

All Media inquiries received by City Employees should be addressed as per the Communications Policy or immediately directed to Corporate Communications. Corporate Communications will contact the Media outlet, confirm request and deadlines.

If a reporter calls or arrives in-person at a City Facility without making prior arrangements, City Employees should assist the Media in contacting Corporate Communications.

6.0 Procedures

The Corporate Communications Branch is responsible for the development and implementation of the City's communications strategies and related procedures.

6.1 Preparation and Distribution of Communication Materials

Effective communications require a quick turnaround due to tight deadlines. Depending on the topic and communications strategy and target audience, Corporate Communications will tailor its communication tactics to promote City Business, respond to Media inquiries or address misinformation.

6.1.1. News Advisory

News Advisories should aim to be no more than one page in length and provide logistical details such as:

- a brief summary of the event/announcement/photo-opportunity
- names of dignitaries who will be in attendance with respective titles (if applicable)
- time, date and location of the event/announcement
- parking instructions and directions (if applicable)
- Contact information (typically communications@oshawa.ca) to track R.S.V.P.s and direct inquiries to Spokespersons for more information

Process

The Branch staff completes a News Advisory template to include the details outlined above. Corporate Communications will review and, if required, edit the draft News Advisory in consultation with the Branch staff.

Contact Information

The media contact specified in the News Advisory should be Corporate Communications for the purpose of tracking R.S.V.P.s.

Timing

Completed News Advisory templates must be emailed to the Corporate Communications 10 business days prior to the identified distribution date.

Approval

Corporate Communications will finalize the draft and request approval from the Manager and Commissioner and/or Director.

Distribution

Once approved, Corporate Communications will distribute the News Advisory by email to members of Council and their support staff, the Corporate Leadership Team and their support staff, and Service Oshawa, as well as to Directors and Branch staff involved in the project, prior to the Media. Distribution timing will be at the discretion of Corporate Communications as Media Materials will be issued strategically to avoid competing with other news related announcements. Typically, News Advisories are not posted on the City's website or distributed through the City's social media channels.

As required, Corporate Communications will follow up with the Media to increase opportunities for news coverage. When appropriate, and only if the lead department's budget allows, News Advisories on significant City Business may be distributed via newswire to increase reach of the media invitation.

6.1.2 News Release

News Releases should aim to be no more than one-and-a-half pages in length and be written in plain, everyday language, avoiding technical jargon. News Releases must answer the "who, what, when, where, why and how", with the information ordered from most important to least important.

Process

The Branch staff (project lead) completes a News Release template to include the details outlined above. If applicable, the Branch staff is to include related images and video in an electronic format along with a brief descriptive sentence.

Photos and videos that contain identifiable people must be accompanied by electronic copies of the signed photo consent form along with names and titles, if applicable. Corporate Communications will review and, if required, edit the draft News Release in consultation with the author.

Quotes

City of Oshawa News Releases may include a quotes from:

- The Mayor as the Spokesperson for the City as Head of Council on City Business. The Mayor may designate another member of Council.
- The Standing Committee Chair, or when unavailable the Vice-Chair, on City Business related to their respective Committee.
- In instances when a News Release is announcing a significant partnership with an External Partner, the External Partner may include a quote.

Quotes are to be prepared by the Spokesperson. Upon request, Corporate Communications will provide media relations support when preparing quotes.

Contact Information

The media contact person(s) specified in the News Release will be determined by the Spokesperson(s) who provided quotes.

Timing

Completed News Release templates and related images must be emailed to Corporate Communications 10 business days prior to the identified distribution date.

Approval

Corporate Communications will finalize a draft and request approval from the Branch staff, Manager/Supervisor, and Director of the Branch before sending the News Release for approval to the Director, Corporate Communications and to the Department Commissioner and/or Chief Administrative Officer. The draft will also be sent to those who are included as the media contacts. Authority to approve and issue a News Release is the responsibility of either the Chief Administrative Officer, Commissioner or Director of Corporate Communications.

Distribution

Once approved, Corporate Communications will distribute the News Release as information by email to members of Council and their support staff, the Chief Administrative Officer, the Corporate Leadership Team and their support staff, Service Oshawa, as well as to Directors and Branch staff involved in the project, prior to the Media and community stakeholders. Distribution timing will be at the discretion of Corporate Communications as communication materials will be issued strategically to avoid competing with other news related announcements.

Corporate Communications will post the News Release on the City's website and distribute through the appropriate City social media channels. When appropriate, and only if the lead department's budget allows, News Releases on significant City Business may be distributed via newswire to increase coverage.

Measurement

Corporate Communications will monitor traditional news coverage and social media engagement and share applicable metrics with City Branch staff.

6.1.3 City Story and City Notice

City Stories and City Notices should be no more than one-and-a half pages, written in plain, language without jargon. They must answer “who, what, when, where, why and how”, with details ordered by importance.

News Stories promote or celebrate an event, program or initiative through storytelling with messages, images and video.

Notices provide interesting, factual and timely information on City events, programs, services, including community service notices and disruptions in City services.

Process

Corporate Communications or Branch staff completes a City Story or City Notice template to include the details outlined above. City Stories will include related images and/or video.

Images and video that contain identifiable people must be accompanied by electronic copies of the signed photo consent form along with names and titles, if applicable. Corporate Communications will review and, if required, edit the draft City Story or City Notice in consultation with the Branch staff.

Contact Information

Not applicable.

Timing

Completed City News Story and City Notice templates and related images and video are typically emailed to or prepared by Corporate Communications seven business days prior to the identified distribution date. Time-sensitive City Notices must be emailed to Corporate Communications as soon as possible as they may contain time-sensitive information.

Approval

Corporate Communications will finalize a draft and request approval from the Branch staff, Manager/Supervisor, and Director. The City News Story will then be sent as information to the Commissioner before distribution.

Distribution

Once approved, Corporate Communications will post to the City’s website and sent to City News e-subscribers and shared on the City’s social media channels. The communications plan may include other communications tactics and channels.

Once posted to the website, Corporate Communications will send an email from communications@oshawa.ca with a link to the online content to members of Council and their support staff, the Chief Administrative Officer, the Corporate Leadership Team and their support staff, Service Oshawa, as well as to Directors and Branch staff involved in the project. City News Stories may also be distributed to the Media and community stakeholders.

Distribution timing will be at the discretion of Corporate Communications as communication materials will be issued strategically to avoid competing with other news related announcements.

Measurement

Corporate Communications will monitor traditional news coverage and social media engagement and share applicable metrics with the Branch staff.

6.1.4 Letters to the Editor

Occasionally, the City may prepare and email a letter to the editor of a specific Media outlet as a way to explain a City position or policy in response to a news article. Letters to the editor should be brief, balanced and fact-based.

Process

Corporate Communications develops the draft letter to the editor with input from Branch staff who is the subject-matter expert. Letters to the editor must be approved by the Mayor as Head of Council, Chief Administrative Officer/Commissioner and the Director, Corporate Communications or designate and may also include Legal Services review and approval.

Contact Information

In instances when contact information is included, the contact will be determined by Corporate Communications and could include the Mayor as Head of Council, Chief Administrative Officer, Commissioner and/or designate or Corporate Communications.

Distribution

Once approved, Corporate Communications will distribute the letter to the editor by email to the Media outlet. Letters to the editor may be posted to the City’s website.

6.1.5 News Media Correction Request

To address factual inaccuracies in news coverage, the City may prepare and email a correction request to the reporter and/or editor / editorial board of a specific news Media outlet. Requests for a correction are to be fact-based.

Process

Corporate Communications develops the draft with input from the Branch staff who is the subject-matter expert. The final must be approved by the Chief Administrative Officer, Commissioner and/or designate, Director of Corporate Communications or designate and may also include Legal Services review and approval.

Contact Information

In instances when contact information is included or requires inclusion, the contact will be determined by Corporate Communications and could include the Mayor as Head of Council, Chief Administrative Officer, Commissioner and/or designate or Corporate Communications.

Distribution

Once approved, Corporate Communications will email the correction request to the reporter and/or editor/editorial board of the Media outlet. Correction requests may be posted to the City's website.

6.1.6 External Partner and Local Business Media Materials Process and Distribution

Preparation, content and distribution of an External Partner or Local Business News Advisory, News Release or other Media Materials is the responsibility of the External Partner.

At the discretion of Corporate Communications, News Releases provided electronically may be posted on the City's website and distributed through the City's social media channels as appropriate.

6.2 Media Relations Activities during a Campaign Period

During a Campaign Period, Elected Officials and Employees will follow the Council approved [Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy](#) and these guidelines below:

For openings, events and announcements,

Members of Council:

- will continue to receive invitations to and attend openings/ events / announcements in their capacity as members of Council;
- will continue to be included in photos and videos when attending openings/ events / announcements in their capacity as members of Council;
- will not have a Spokesperson role, except the Mayor as Head of Council.

The Mayor, in their capacity as Head of Council:

- will continue to have a Spokesperson role (e.g. delivering remarks, sending greetings, remarks as an emcee);
- will not be able to designate any quote or speaking opportunities to another member of Council.

Employees:

- will avoid delivering Official City Openings, Neighbourhood Event Openings and Joint Announcements during the period between the last regular City Council Meeting of the current Council up until and including Voting Day, notwithstanding instances in which the City cannot delay announcing funding or partnerships or is obligated as per signed agreements. City Produced Special Events with Special Event Opening Ceremony components will continue to be delivered;
- will extend invitations to City-led Official City Openings, Neighbourhood Event Openings and Joint Announcements to both members of Council and Council-elects when the events are held following Voting Day and up until Council-elects

are sworn in (the Mayor of the outgoing Council will be the only member of Council to have a speaking role in their capacity as Head of Council);

- upon approval and request from the Local Business or External Partner, will extend invitations to business openings and business celebrations and External Partner openings, announcements and special events to both members of Council and Council-elects when the events are held following Voting Day and up until Council-elects are sworn in (the Mayor of the outgoing Council will be the only member of Council to have a speaking role in their capacity as Head of Council).

7.0 Monitoring/Review

This Policy is reviewed by the Director, Corporate Communications every five years to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with legislation and current business processes or as required based on legislative changes. The Director is authorized to make minor or housekeeping amendments to this Policy, as required

8.0 References

City of Oshawa’s Municipal Emergency Master Plan
Municipal Elections Act, 1996 S.O. 1996 c.32
[Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy](#)
Official Openings Policy

9.0 Approval

Authority Council	Date Date approved	Signature
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