

To: Corporate and Finance Services Committee

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

Report Number: CF-25-33

Date of Report: April 30, 2025

Date of Meeting: May 5, 2025

Subject: Social Media Policy

Ward: All Wards

File: 03-05

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Report is to propose guidelines and standards for the acceptable use of the City of Oshawa's social media accounts as well as guidelines and standards for City staff participating in online activities (e.g. personal websites, blogs, social media accounts, etc.) when it relates to discussing, sharing or commenting on City Business.

Attachment 1 provides information on the City's current use of social media platforms and accounts.

Attachment 2 is the current Online Communications Policy as per SIC-12-10-CM.

Attachment 3 is the proposed Social Media Policy.

2.0 Recommendation

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

That based on Report CF-25-33 dated April 30, 2025 concerning an updated Social Media Policy:

1. That the new Social Media Policy be approved as set out in Attachment 3 to said Report; and,
2. That Corporate Communications staff be authorized to implement minor housekeeping updates to the Social Media Policy, as required.

3.0 Input From Sources

- Corporate Leadership Team

- Human Resource Services
- Information Technology Services
- Legal Services
- Legislative Services
- Purchasing Services
- Oshawa Senior Community Centres
- Municipal Benchmarking: Ajax, Brock, Clarington, Cobourg, Collingwood, Brampton, Burlington, Guelph, Milton, Oakville, Peterborough, Region of Durham, Scugog, Toronto, Uxbridge, Waterloo, Whitby

4.0 Analysis

The City of Oshawa uses its website as the primary source of information on City Business, including news, programs, services and projects. The City uses social media accounts to enhance communication and information sharing.

4.1 Background

The City of Oshawa was one of the early municipal adopters of social media. In 2009, staff implemented a nine-month e-communications pilot project that included RSS Feeds, a corporate Twitter account (now referred to as X) and e-newsletter. In 2010, Council approved staff recommendations to continue and expand the City's social media presence on new platforms and develop a corporate e-communications policy (SIC-10-11). In 2012, through Report SIC-12-10-CM, Council approved the e-communications policy named Online Communications Policy (Attachment 2). The Online Communications Policy referenced specific social media platforms but also focused on other online tools to disseminate timely information, including the City website, RSS Feeds, e-newsletters and community events calendar.

Over the past 13 years, social media has undergone significant changes. The emergence of new platforms and their widespread adoption (EnviroNics data reports that 87% of Oshawa residents were active on social media within the past month), and the evolving ways in which they are used to share information have transformed communication expectations from the public. As a result, the City's current Online Communications Policy is outdated and no longer reflects the current social media landscape or best practices.

4.2 Benchmarking Findings

Many municipalities have created policies dedicated to social media in recent years. These policies allow the municipalities to address staff and community use of the tools, ensuring timely information is provided in a respectful and safe space for all those accessing municipally managed accounts.

Specifically, most of the standalone social media policies include (but are not limited to) sections addressing:

- roles and responsibilities of staff with access to a municipally managed social media account;

- roles and responsibilities of staff when using personal social media accounts as ambassadors of their respective municipalities;
- practices for addressing management and maintenance of municipally managed social media accounts; and,
- reputation and security best practices.

4.3 Current Social Media Presence

While the City of Oshawa website is our primary online source for information, staff recognize the importance of social media within our community, especially as a source of local information as traditional media continues to decline.

Social media is part of a broader communications framework that works to enhance the City of Oshawa's profile and communications. Corporate Communications monitors trends and best practices, performs benchmarking, and measures and evaluates the City's communication tools, including but not limited to analytics on its social media accounts.

Staff strategically use social media to enhance communication and share information, tailoring content to reflect a platform's specific audience and reach. Attachment 1 provides an overview of the City's current use of social media platforms and accounts.

4.4 Alignment with the Modernized Communications Framework

The City of Oshawa Social Media Policy encourages effective and meaningful engagement with our community and aligns with the Council-approved Modernized Communications Framework, specifically:

- Pillar 5: Strengthen Reputation which includes Action 5.2 - "Proactively manage and mitigate misinformation and disinformation in the media, print and digital.";
- Pillar 3: Increase Storytelling which includes Action 3.2 - "Increase the use of storytelling across the City's digital channels to showcase value for City services and programs."; and,
- Pillar 3: Increase Storytelling which includes Action 3.3 - "Identify more opportunities to convey the importance of key municipal topics and programs using storytelling and develop and promote the campaigns."

4.5 Social Media Policy

The proposed new Social Media Policy (refer to Attachment 3) is a modernized approach and is consistent with other municipalities. The proposed Policy includes the following areas:

- roles and responsibilities of staff with access to a City-managed social media account;
- roles and responsibilities of staff, contracted service providers and volunteers related to City Business when using personal social media accounts; and,
- procedures for staff to manage and administer City-managed social media accounts, including but not limited to:

- identifying and evaluating existing social media accounts for potential expansion or retirement;
- identifying and evaluating new social media platforms for adoption by the City; and,
- general governance.

The new Social Media Policy also references the City's social media Terms of Use that are posted prominently on the City's website and social media accounts.

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 Cassidy, Director,
Corporate Communications



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

Current Social Media Accounts

The City of Oshawa's Corporate Communications Branch actively monitors social media trends and best practices, conducts benchmarking, and manages the City's social media presence on various social media platforms.

Environics

Oshawa residents are active on social media, with Environics reports indicating that 87% of residents were active on social media within the past month.

Residents indicated that they use the platforms to stay informed, with:

- 35% using social media to stay up to date on news;
- 55% using social media to keep in contact with family; and,
- 63% using social media to keep in contact with friends.

In terms of news, when compared to Durham Region residents, Oshawa residents are:

- 12% more likely to indicate that social media is easy to understand; and,
- 18% more likely to indicate that social media provides news they can trust.

Current Social Media

The City's social media presence includes the following platforms and accounts.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional networking platform, utilized for networking, job searching and business and organization growth and highlights. LinkedIn offers features such company pages and professional groups.

The City has one active and growing City Corporate Account on LinkedIn that features content including job opportunities, announcements about City Business and highlighting success stories of our partners and of Oshawa-based organizations and businesses.

In 2024, this account achieved 20,000 followers, with content reaching over 400,000 unique views. 65% of our follower base indicated Oshawa Area or Greater Toronto Area as their geographic region (32% indicated Greater Oshawa Metropolitan; 33% indicated Greater Toronto Area). Top performing content focused on local businesses milestones, staff features and post-secondary achievements.

Instagram

Instagram is a photo and video-sharing platform. It is renowned for its visual-centric content, including posts, stories, and reels. Instagram allows users to edit and enhance their media with filters and tags, fostering engagement.

The City has two active and growing accounts on Instagram:

1. @CityofOshawa is the City's Corporate Account. Content posted to this account includes updates on City projects, behind-the-scenes highlights of City programs, events and staff, and community partner stories. In 2024, this account achieved 10,000 followers, with content receiving over 300,000 views. 41% of our followers indicate that they reside in Oshawa, while 20% indicate they reside in another Durham Region municipality. Top performing content focused on behind-the-scenes City staff hard at work, community participating in City events and activities, and information on City programs, projects and initiatives.
2. @DowntownOshawa is a City Audience Account dedicated to sharing updates about the downtown core and promoting DTO businesses and services. This account is managed day-to-day by Economic Development Services, with oversight and support from Corporate Communications. In 2024, this account achieved 5,000 followers, with content receiving over 300,000 views. 43% of our audience indicate they reside in Oshawa, while 20% indicate they reside in another Durham Region municipality. Top performing content focused on downtown events, small business openings and enhancements to the downtown streetscape.

Facebook

Facebook is the largest social media platform globally. Facebook offers opportunities for users to create and share content including text, images, and videos, and supports user interaction (e.g. comments, likes). Facebook also offers various features such as events.

The City has two active and growing accounts on Facebook:

1. @OshawaCity is the City's Corporate Account. Content posted to this account includes City and community partner events, information on City programs, projects and initiatives, and behind-the-scenes City highlights. Staff also use Facebook for event promotion. In 2024, this account achieved 12,000 followers, with content receiving nearly 1,000,000 views. 46% of our followers indicate that they reside in Oshawa, while 14% indicate they reside in another Durham Region municipality. Top performing content focused on behind-the-scenes City staff hard at work, City events, and information on City programs.
2. @OshawaAnimalServices is a City Audience Account dedicated to sharing updates and messaging from Oshawa Animal Services (O.A.S.). This account is managed day-to-day by O.A.S., with oversight and support from Corporate Communications. In 2024, this account achieved 28,000 followers with content reaching over 7,500,000 views. 24% of our followers indicate they reside in Oshawa, while 19% indicate they reside in another Durham Region municipality. Top performing content focused on adoption success stories, and sharing information about pet ownership.

X (formerly known as Twitter)

Twitter is a microblogging platform, where users share brief text-based posts that may also include images, videos, and links. The platform is still regarded as a go-to social media platform for emergency services and emergency updates.

The City has two accounts on X (Twitter):

1. @OshawaCity is the City's Corporate Account. Content posted to this account includes emergency situations, significant incidents / service disruptions/updates, as well as public notices. In 2024, this account achieved over 20,000 followers, with content reaching over 475,000 views. Top performing content focused on community partnerships, Oshawa project updates and partner service updates (e.g. Metrolinx, M.T.O.).
2. @OshawaFireServices is a City Audience Account dedicated to sharing updates and messaging from Oshawa Fire Services (O.F.S.). This account is managed day-to-day by O.F.S., with oversight and support from Corporate Communications. Content posted to this account includes timely information on O.F.S. emergency response and significant incidents, fire prevention messaging and staff milestones. In 2024, this account achieved 4,700 followers, with content reaching over 425,000 views. Top performing content focused on live on-scene updates during emergency response operations.



Item: SIC-12-10-CM
Attachment 6
Online Communications Policy

Title:	Online Communications Policy	Pages:	1 of 7
Date of Policy:	November 29, 2012	Date Approved by Council:	

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidelines and criteria for the use of e-Communications including website content, RSS Feeds, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, eNewsletter, Community Events Calendar and Third-Party Website Links. In addition, accessibility, measurement and privacy standards are set-out.

The City of Oshawa shall support the use of online communications to disseminate timely information, provide information on city news and services and promote the image of Oshawa. However, the use of online communications shall not compromise public safety or the Corporation's image.

The City's corporate online communications shall include:

- Website (www.oshawa.ca)
- RSS Feeds (www.oshawa.ca/ecommunications-rss.asp)
- "OshawaCity" Twitter Account (www.twitter.com/OshawaCity)
- "OshawaCity" Facebook Page (www.facebook.com/OshawaCity)
- "OshawaCity" YouTube Page (www.youtube.com/OshawaCity)
- e-newsletters (www.oshawa.ca/enews)
- Community Events Calendar (www.oshawa.ca/events.asp)
- Third-Party Website Links (www.oshawa.ca/links.asp)

2.0 Source

This Policy has been developed by Corporate Communications and Marketing in alignment with the Online Communications Strategy (available on the "J" Drive and the City's website).

3.0 Policy

The following policies shall apply to the use of online communications by the Corporation of the City of Oshawa. The City's online communications shall follow branding standards as set out in the Corporate Identity Manual (available on the "J" Drive and the City's website), clearly indicate that they are maintained by the City of Oshawa, and include contact information. In addition, the website address shall be included on all online communications.

The City of Oshawa shall reserve the right to not post or to delete content (including comments, community events and external links) that:

- include foul language or vulgarities;

Online Communications Policy

- are offensive to an individual or an organization, rude in tone, or abusive;
- solicit/advertise/promote particular services, products, or political parties, advocacy groups or organizations;
- infringe on copyrights or trademarks;
- are spam; and/or
- are off topic, meaning that the comment does not focus on City of Oshawa events and the promotion of local tourism.

3.1 Website

All content shall meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Communicates the Corporation of the City of Oshawa businesses (e.g. meetings, service updates, programs, services, initiatives, etc.)
- Promotes Oshawa tourism
- Promotes economic development
- Highlights Oshawa good news
- Engages the community (e.g. call for volunteers, call for submissions)
- Communicates public service announcements (e.g. CLOCA Watershed Alerts, Durham Region road closures)
- Communicates emergency notifications

The City shall not promote:

- Retail events, such as sales or dining specials (Note: Farmers' Markets are not considered retail events)
- Yard sales or rummage sales unless raising money for a not-for-profit
- Third-party retail programs such as fitness classes
- Initiatives that are partisan or religious ideology
- Open ended events (without a start and end date)

3.2 RSS Feeds

The City shall use RSS ("really simple syndication") for two purposes:

- As a turn-key method to deliver content (City news, emergency notifications, service updates, public notices, meetings and employment opportunities, and community events) to the City's Twitter and Facebook accounts
- As an online service, allowing web users to subscribe to the specific feed(s) that are of interest



3.3 Twitter

The City's Twitter profile shall state that the purpose of the account is to provide timely, relevant information, and encourage residents to contact Service Oshawa with their inquiries and comments. Followers shall be able to send comments, which shall be monitored and responded to by CC&M, in collaboration with Service Oshawa, to ensure consistency in maintaining customer service standards and for records management.

The following message shall be prominently displayed on the City's Twitter account:

"City of Oshawa posts local news, community events, and City jobs, service updates and meetings. Inquiries: <http://www.oshawa.ca/service> . RTs do not mean endorsement."

In general, the City shall follow local non-profit organizations, community groups, government partners and the media. RTs (retweets) shall be used to share community news and to further disseminate a conversation. DMs (direct messages) shall be used when messages require private information.

3.4 Facebook

The City's Facebook Page shall promote community events and communicate good news stories and City initiatives, services updates, meetings and employment opportunities. The Facebook Page shall include a brief description about The Corporation of the City of Oshawa, an outline of the terms of use and contact information, as well as the ability for viewers to "like" the page to continue to receive City updates on their personal Facebook timelines.

Viewers shall be able to leave comments, which shall be monitored and responded to by CC&M, in collaboration with Service Oshawa, to ensure consistency in maintaining customer service standards and for records management.

The following message shall be prominently displayed on the City's Facebook account:

"Welcome to the City of Oshawa's Facebook Page showcasing local events and news. We are also posting City of Oshawa meeting notices, service updates and job opportunities.

Community Event Submissions

Community organizations wishing to promote their community events on the City's Facebook Page can submit their event through the Online Community Events Calendar at <http://www.oshawa.ca/eventrequest.asp>.



Please note that the posting of events on the Online Community Calendar, "OshawaCity" Facebook Page and "OshawaCity" Twitter Account is at the sole discretion of the City of Oshawa. Furthermore, posted events will be non-partisan, and promote and support the positive image of Oshawa.

Comments & Links Policy

Please note that this is a moderated online page. Third-party content (including community event information, comments and links) posted on the City's "OshawaCity" Facebook Page does not necessarily reflect the opinions and position of the City of Oshawa or its employees or Council members. The City reserves the right to not post or to delete comments, links and other content that does not comply with this Policy.

If you have any questions concerning the operation of this online moderated page, please contact the City of Oshawa at service@oshawa.ca or call 905-436-3311."

In general, the City shall "likes" other Facebook Pages that belong to local non-profit organizations, community groups and government partners. It shall be the City's practice not to "friend" specific individuals. In general, "likes" and "sharing" posts shall be used to share community news.

3.5 You Tube

The City shall have a branded YouTube channel to showcase the City's commercials and videos and include closed-captioning. In addition, to ensure video search-optimization, the title description tags and category fields shall be completed. Further, broadcasting options shall be set to:

- Privacy – share video
- Comments – do not allow
- Comment voting – do not allow
- Video responses – do not allow
- Rating – do not allow
- Embedding – external sites may embed and play video
- Syndication – video is available on mobile phones and television

3.6 eNewsletters

The City shall have e-newsletters that disseminate information to residents and business stakeholders. Subscribers shall have the option to subscribe or unsubscribe at their discretion.

3.7 Community Events Calendar

Community events posted to the City's online communications shall meet all four of the criteria outlined below:

- The event is either being held within the City of Oshawa or, alternatively, an Oshawa-based organization is hosting the event.
- The event has at least one contact source (e.g. email address, website URL, phone number) that the public can contact for more information.
- Events must be open to all members of the public.
- Both free and ticketed events are eligible; however, if there is a fee, the amount must be included in the posting.

3.8 Third-Party Website Links

The City's Links Webpage shall include links to non-profit organizations, community groups or government sites that serve the Oshawa community. Links to these sites shall be provided for the convenience of the web user and are for information only. Furthermore, all links posted shall fall under one of the categories outlined below:

- Accessibility Resources
- Education
- Other Government Resources
- Emergency Services
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Community - Local Sports Organizations/Clubs
- Community – Attractions

In addition, the City's website and e-Communications contain third-party content (including community events and third-party website/email addresses). This information is provided for the convenience of the user, however, the City shall not guarantee the accuracy, completeness or timeliness of the information located on third-party websites and reference to any third-party event, service or product does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation or favouring by the City of Oshawa, its employees and/or Council members.

4.0 Accessibility

The City shall be committed to creating an accessible online environment and to making its website documents available to everyone. The City shall design its website to conform to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) developed under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005 to make the website more accessible to all users.

A number of accessibility features shall be included in the City's online communications, for example:

- Simplified HTML
- Use of anchors to skip to main content on all pages
- All functionality available from a keyboard
- Use the alt attribute to describe each visual
- Captioning and transcripts of audio, and descriptions of video
- Hypertext links – use of text that makes sense when read out of context - avoid "click here"
- Use headings, lists, and consistent structure.
- Text can be resized

As legislation, regulations and technology change, the accessibility features in use by the City are also expected to change.

5.0 Measurement

Annual website metrics reports shall be prepared to evaluate the functional aspects of the website (e.g. Site Performance, Parameter Analysis, Browsers and Systems, Spiders, Wireless Statistics, Geographical Analysis). Furthermore, annual and campaign-based website key performance indicator reports shall be prepared to evaluate the performance of the website (e.g. Visits, Page Views, Downloaded Files).

In addition, annual metrics reports shall be developed on the performance of the City's e-communication accounts (e.g. Facebook Insights, Bitly Statistics, Twitter Counter, eNewsletter Metrics).

6.0 Privacy

The following privacy message shall appear on the City's website under "Terms of Use" and shall be accessed from any webpage footer, including the homepage:

Collection of Non-Identifying Information

The City of Oshawa collects non-identifying information from your computer when visiting our websites. This information includes the Internet Protocol (IP) address, type of browser, date and time of visit, and the different webpages visited by you. This information is used strictly for statistical reporting purposes and to design and improve access to information and services available on our websites. This information is not combined with other information or services to determine your browsing habits on websites beyond those operated by us, or to identify you personally.

Cookies

Cookie technology captures aggregate – not individual – information on visitor use patterns. This is a computer code that tracks "traffic" so we can determine how effective our websites are in providing information and services to the public. A cookie contains no information which can identify you personally and the City of Oshawa acquires no



knowledge of your browsing path once you leave our websites. Apart from providing a performance measure, the data collected by the cookie is otherwise meaningless.

Collection, Use and Disclosure of Personal Information

There may be instances where your personal information is required to provide you with information or services. Where your information is required, the amount collected will be limited to the minimum amount and type necessary to provide you with the information or service requested. This information will only be used for the purposes for which it was collected and will not be used to create an individual profile or combined with other information held by the City to create a new database of information. Where the collection occurs a notice will state the legal authority, purpose and the name, address and phone number of the individual who can answer questions regarding the collection. The personal information that you provide will be used, protected and disclosed only in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.



Corporate Policy

Title: Social Media Policy

Number: GOV-25-##

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 the use of Social Media platforms, forums, etc. by the City of Oshawa including defining roles, responsibilities, practices and procedures.

This Policy is part of a broader communications framework that works to enhance the City of Oshawa's profile and communications while encouraging effective and meaningful engagement with our community.

2.0 Policy Statement

While the City's website, oshawa.ca, remains its primary online source for information, it recognizes the importance of Social Media within our community, especially as a source of local information as traditional media continues to decline. The City uses Social Media to enhance communication and information sharing.

This Policy and related Procedures will set clear roles and responsibilities for the use of Social Media to assist in providing a safe and respectful space to inform the public, promote City achievements, and ensure that accurate information is available in regards to City Business and during Emergency/ Significant incidents.

3.0 Scope/Application

This Policy applies to Employees, Contracted Service Providers and Volunteers in their capacity as representatives of the City of Oshawa. The Policy also applies to those engaging with City-managed Social Media accounts.

Although this Policy applies to Oshawa Senior Community Centres (O.S.C.C.) as Authorized Content Creators, Employees and/or Volunteers, the Policy does not apply to strategic oversight or management of O.S.C.C. Social Media accounts.

This Policy does not apply to personal or private use of Social Media by any of the abovementioned groups that does not involve posts related to City Business, the City Visual Identity Standards or City Assets, or when affiliation or connection to the City is not known or made evident.

This Policy does not apply to Elected Officials in their capacity as members of Council. Social Media accounts representing the online activity of an Elected Official are created and maintained by the Elected Official and are not the responsibility of the City or its Employees.

In the event of an Emergency/ Significant Incident, the [City of Oshawa Emergency Master Plan](#) and its related protocols supersede this Policy.

4.0 Definitions

Authorized Content Creators means Corporate Communications Branch staff and Employees outside of the Corporate Communications Branch who have been approved by the Corporate Leadership Team (or designate) to have access to manage City Social Media either through a Corporate Account or Audience Account.

Branch means any a grouping of City of Oshawa Employees who are part of a unit of the organization that does not constitute a separate entity but is responsible for a type of work.

Campaign Period means in the case of a regular municipal election, the period between May 1 and Voting Day in the year of a municipal election; or, in the case of a municipal or schoolboard by-election, the period between the passage of a by-law authorizing a by-election and Voting Day; or in the case of provincial or federal election or by-election, from the date the writ is issued up to and including Voting Day.

City means the Corporation of the City of Oshawa.

City Adult or Youth Image Consent Form means the form that gives the City, and others outlined in the form, the irrevocable right to use the individual's name, photograph, image, audio recording, video recording or likeness in all forms and manner.

City Assets includes images or videos of and/or on City-owned property, facilities, parks, equipment, uniforms/ City-provided clothing, etc., or City created videos or images of Employees.

City Audience Account means a Social Media account managed by Authorized Content Creators that is dedicated to sharing informative updates and positive news regarding a specific City Business topic (e.g. Oshawa Animal Services, Oshawa Economic Development Services, Oshawa Fire Services).

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 Crest means the City's official coat of arms, which is a formal symbol of civic authority and is only used for official purposes such as permanent City building plaques and signs, legal documents, City seal, office of the Mayor, and is not authorized for external use.

City Corporate Account means a Social Media account managed by the Corporate Communications Branch that is dedicated to sharing informative updates and positive news regarding City Business to residents, property owners and the broader community.

City Logo means the primary graphic symbol of the City and the most important visual element of our brand.

City Visual Identity Standards means the approved look and feel for any visual content created by, for or on behalf of the City of Oshawa, including the City Logo and Crest, as well as graphics, videos, and photography, as outlined in the City's Visual Identity Standards manual.

Community Members means Oshawa residents, property owners and/or those with an interest in City Business.

Contracted Service Provider means an individual or business that undertakes a contract or agreement with the City in order to perform a service on a one-time, periodic or continuing basis (e.g. Oshawa Executive Airport Manager, Tribute Communities Centre Manager, Security Guard Services, Marriage Officiants, etc.).

Corporate Communications Branch means a City Branch that provides strategic communications support to the City and City Business through promotions, advertising, community engagement, media relations, emergency communications, branding and social media.

Director means the head of a City Branch.

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.

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

Election means a municipal, provincial or federal election, or by-election, held in accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c.32, the Election Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.6, or the Canada Elections Act, S.C. 2000, c. 9.

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.

Employee Code of Conduct means the formal, written document outlining expected Employee behaviour within the City.

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

Handle, also known as a username, means a unique identifier on Social Media that is often preceded by an @ symbol that individuals, organizations or businesses use to represent themselves.

Head of Council means the leader of the municipality. In the City, this position is called Mayor.

Human Resource Services Branch means a City Branch that oversees all human resource activities including labour and Employee relations, corporate learning and Employee communications, health, safety, wellness and disability support, talent and organizational development.

Social Media means third-party websites and mobile applications that enable users to create and share content and/or participate in two-way discussions. This may include platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X and any future platforms developed, micro-blogging/forum sites, and more.

Spokesperson means an Elected Official who speaks on behalf of City Council, or an Employee who is authorized to speak to the media regarding City Business.

Tag means a hyperlinked reference to a Social Media Handle that is used to notify the tagged user of a post made online.

Terms of Use means a contract between a website or Social Media platform host and its users, defining how the service can be used.

Volunteer means an individual who volunteers their services, from time to time, to assist in areas of the City, including but not limited to event or service volunteers, members of Advisory Committees of Council or members of staff working groups such as the Public Art Task Force, Community Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, Cultural Leadership Council or Committee of Adjustment.

5.0 Responsibilities

5.1 Corporate Communications Branch:

- a. serves as the City's Social Media expert;
- b. manages the strategy and day-to-day activity of City Corporate Accounts;
- c. manages the strategy and provide oversight and advice to Authorized Content Creators, who manage the day-to-day activity of City Audience Accounts;
- d. provides training for Authorized Content Creators with respect to appropriate interactions and best practices;
- e. shares content with Elected Officials for use on their respective Social Media account(s) to further City messaging (e.g. available community engagement initiatives, upcoming events, etc.);
- f. identifies and evaluates new Social Media platforms for City Corporate Account expansion;
- g. identifies and evaluates requests from City Branches for new City Audience Accounts;
- h. secures City Handles to protect the City's reputation on up and coming Social Media platforms;
- i. reserves the right to:
 - i. monitor posts on Social Media in regards to City Business by any individual or group identified in Section 3.0 of this document;
 - ii. withdraw City Corporate Account or City Audience Account access for any Branch or individual.

5.2 Authorized Content Creators:

- a. may only create, post and monitor content within their area of expertise;

- b. manage the day-to-day activity on the City's Audience Accounts or messaging for a specific City Branch on the City's Corporate Accounts;
- c. regularly monitor their City Audience Account(s) and provide prompt and proactive communications management;
- d. reach out to Corporate Communications Branch when requiring advice or assistance;
- e. must not create or share:
 - a. private or confidential City Business;
 - b. information that is inaccurate, misleading inflammatory, offensive, discriminatory or harmful relating to City Business or that may negatively impact the City's reputation, Employees or Community Members;
 - c. content using City Assets in a manner that the City would deem to be detrimental to its reputation;
 - d. personal information or direct City phone numbers or emails of City Employees unless given permission to do so;
 - e. content that contravenes the City's [Terms of Use](#) in their capacity as a City Employee, or towards co-workers or the City of Oshawa; and,
- f. shall not use the City Logo and Crest unless granted approval to do so through process outlined in the City's Visual Identity Standards.

Employees may have employment-related consequences if their behaviour violates applicable legislation, directives, policies or procedures, up to and including dismissal.

5.3 Employees on their personal Social Media account(s) are considered ambassadors of the City and:

- a. should consider the online realm the public, and as a result are asked to continue adhering to the City's Policies and Procedures and demonstrating the City's core values;
- b. are encouraged to share information about City Business and positive information related to their employment;
- c. are encouraged to follow and share messaging from City Corporate Accounts or City Audience Accounts to amplify messaging;
- d. must not create or share:
 - i. private or confidential City Business;
 - ii. information that is inaccurate, misleading inflammatory, offensive, discriminatory or harmful relating to City Business or that may negatively impact the City's reputation, Employees or Community Members;
 - iii. content using City Assets in a manner that the City would deem to be detrimental to its reputation;
 - iv. personal information or direct City phone numbers or emails of City Employees unless given permission to do so;

- v. content that contravenes the City's [Terms of Use](#) in their capacity as a City Employee, or towards co-workers or the City of Oshawa;
- e. shall not use the City Logo and Crest unless granted approval to do so through process outlined in the City's Visual Identity Standards;
- f. are not expected to provide customer service on behalf of the City, but if an Employee chooses to respond they are encouraged to refer questions regarding City Business to City customer service avenues (e.g. Service Oshawa) or Tag the appropriate City Corporate Account or City Audience Account for an online response.

Opinions expressed by an Employee online (e.g. as part of a video, or on an Employee's personal website, blog, and/or Social Media account(s)) do not necessarily reflect the views of the City of Oshawa.

Staff may consider adding a disclaimer to their account(s) indicating that their opinions are their own; however, this does not remove an Employee's obligation as a municipal Employee, and Employees may have employment-related consequences if their behaviour violates applicable legislation, directives, policies or procedures, up to and including dismissal.

Employees are reminded that information published on the internet (including Social Media) is public and permanent; if in any doubt, Employees are encouraged to not post.

5.4 Contracted Service Providers:

- a. must not share:
 - i. private or confidential City Business;
 - ii. information that is inaccurate or misleading relating to City Business;
 - iii. personal information or direct City phone numbers or emails of City Employees unless given permission to do so;
 - iv. content that contravenes the City's [Terms of Use](#) in their capacity as a Contracted Service Provider, or towards City Employees or the City of Oshawa;
 - v. content that reflects poorly on them in their capacity as a Contracted Service Provider of the City of Oshawa, City Employees or the City of Oshawa;
- b. shall not use the City Logo and Crest unless granted approval to do so through process outlined in the City's Visual Identity Standards;
- c. shall refrain from discussing anything not already present in a public forum;
- d. should not provide customer service on behalf of the City unless arranged as an element of their current contract.

Opinions expressed by a Contracted Service Provider online (e.g. as part of a video, or on a Contracted Service Provider's personal website, blog, and/or Social Media account(s)) do not necessarily reflect the views of the City of Oshawa.

Failure to comply with this Policy may result in default of contract up to and including termination of contract(s) with the City.

5.5 Volunteers:

- a. are encouraged to share positive information about their experience volunteering with the City, projects they have worked on and other City initiatives they are interested in;
- b. are encouraged to follow and share messaging from City Corporate Accounts or City Audience Accounts to amplify messaging;
- c. must not share:
 - i. private or confidential City Business;
 - ii. information that is inaccurate or misleading relating to City Business;
 - iii. personal information or direct City phone numbers or emails of City Employees unless given permission to do so;
 - iv. content that contravenes the City's [Terms of Use](#) in their capacity as a Volunteer, to other Volunteers, City staff or the City of Oshawa;
- d. shall not use the City Logo and Crest unless granted approval to do so through process outlined in Visual Identity Standards;
- e. should not provide customer service on behalf of the City, but may refer questions regarding City Business to Service Oshawa at 905-436-3311 or Tag the appropriate City Corporate Account or City Audience Account for an online response from Service Oshawa.

5.6 Community Members:

- a. are encouraged to engage with the City on its City Corporate Accounts and City Audience Accounts within the conditions outlined in the City's [Terms of Use](#);
- b. shall not use the City Logo and Crest unless granted approval to do so through process outlined in Visual Identity Standards;

6.0 Practice/Procedures

6.1 Governance

City Corporate Accounts and City Audience Accounts:

- will be monitored during regular business hours (i.e. Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.);
- will feature a profile picture reflective of the City's Visual Identity Standards, and biographies/about us section that indicate that they are managed by the City of Oshawa, include contact information, direct viewers to oshawa.ca, and link to the City's [Terms of Use](#); and,
- follow the City's password best practices in regards to password requirements and update frequency.

6.2 Management and Administration of Social Media

City Corporate Accounts and City Audience Accounts are used to enhance communication and information sharing and:

- will feature content that whenever possible directs viewers to an official City website (e.g. oshawa.ca and connectoshawa.ca) for additional information;
- will reflect the City's branding standards as outlined in the City's Visual Identity Standards;
- will feature high resolution City Assets;
- will feature identifiable images or videos of members of the public only when a City Adult or Youth Image Consent Form has been signed;
- may Tag External Partners so long as the partner is prominently featured in the post and the post is not promoting a paid product or service (note that this does not apply to sponsorships or the Downtown Oshawa account), but should never Tag Employees (except on LinkedIn) or Elected Officials.

Employees are encouraged to assist in identifying potential:

- content opportunities for City Corporate Accounts and City Audience Accounts in their respective lines of work;
- contentious issues that may attract attention on Social Media.

6.3 Requests for New Social Media Accounts

An Employee at the Director level may approach Corporate Communications Branch to request a new City Audience Account. The request can be sent to the Director of Corporate Communications Branch and must reflect steps outlined in the respective Procedure. Requests should give consideration to target audience, account goals and staff resources.

Social Media accounts will not be created to represent Volunteer committees or groups.

6.4 Social Media during a Campaign Period

In alignment with the Council-approved Communications Policy, during a regular municipal and school board Election, or in the case of a municipal and/or school board by-Election:

Elected Officials:

- will continue to be featured in photos and videos shared on digital communications tools in their capacity as members of Council;
- will not have a speaking role in any videos, except as Head of Council.

The Head of Council:

- will continue to have a Spokesperson role (e.g. delivering remarks, etc.) in videos;
- will not be able to designate any video opportunities to another member of Council.

Corporate Communications Branch and Authorized Content Creators:

- will ensure City Corporate Accounts and City Audience Accounts remain neutral and do not become a platform for candidates or third parties to comment or

attempt to sway public opinion on a candidate or current member of Council, even if they are not seeking re-election;

- will use City Corporate Accounts and City Audience Accounts to inform voters on the who, what, when, where, why and how of the Election or by-Election.

Employees, Contracted Service Providers and Volunteers:

- in addition to elements outlined in 5, this group is encouraged to share City-generated content regarding the Election or by-Election to amplify messaging within the conditions of the City’s [Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes](#) and the City’s Employee Code of Conduct;

Community Members:

- are encouraged to engage with the City on its City Corporate Accounts and City Audience Accounts within the conditions of the City’s [Terms of Use](#).

In the event of a disparity, the City’s [Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy](#) and Communications Policy supersede this Policy.

7.0 Monitoring/Review

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

Questions regarding Social Media can be directed to the Director, Corporate Communications Branch. Questions regarding Employee use of Social Media can be directed to a Human Resource Services Branch Director.

8.0 References

[City Adult Image Consent Form](#)

[City Youth Image Consent Form](#)

[City of Oshawa Municipal Emergency Master Plan](#)

[Communications Policy](#)

Employee Code of Conduct

[Terms of Use](#)

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

Visual Identity Standards

9.0 Approval

Authority Council	Date Date approved	Signature
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