

The Corporation of the Town of Perth			
Social Media Policy		Effective:	April 25, 2023
		Replaces:	By-law No. 4183
Issued by:	Director of Community Services	Approval:	By-law No. 2023-5098
Applicable Policy and Legislation	<i>Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001 c.25, as amended</i>		

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Town of Perth is committed to continuous improvement in order to succeed at our Strategic Plan’s Mission:
The Corporation of the Town of Perth is a dedicated team who serves its community and partners by delivering exceptional services and supports in a consistent and professional manner.
- 1.2 Effective service delivery requires providing services in a fair, timely, respectful, and transparent fashion. This policy provides the framework for the use of Social Media for the Town of Perth
- 1.3 The Town supports the use of digital communications including, but not limited to, the Town’s official public-facing website and social media accounts as methods of providing information to the public.
- 1.4 The Town’s official accessible website, www.perth.ca , will remain the Town’s primary means of digital communication. Corporate social media accounts will complement and enhance the Town’s established web-presence.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set guidelines and standards to ensure the appropriate use and management of social media on behalf of the Town.
- 2.2 More specifically, the Purpose of this Policy is to:
 - 2.2.1 Protect the Town’s reputation and ensure consistency and professionalism with how the Town communicates with the public via social media
 - 2.2.2 Establish protocols, criteria, and courses of action for:
 - 2.2.2.1 Appropriate monitoring and administration of the Town’s social media pages;
 - 2.2.2.2 Determining/adopting new social media accounts for the Town;
 - 2.2.2.3 Providing timely, effective, and accurate information and responses;

- 2.2.2.4 Establishing a mechanism to address controversial or sensitive matters relating to online content about the Town;
- 2.2.2.5 Warranting appropriate protection of privacy of the public who engage or interact with the Town via social media.

2.2.3 Provide Town employees, Council, Committee members, volunteers, and the public with an understanding of the policies surrounding the acceptable corporate and personal use of social media accounts as they relate to discussing the business of the Town.

3. Scope

3.1 This policy applies to Town employees, Committee members, volunteers and Council members who make public statements on Town social media sites and other social networks that discuss, share, or comment on the Town. This policy also applies to members of the public who use, comment, or post on Town social media sites and social networks. The policy applies to all social media accounts used by the Town of Perth.

4. Responsibility

4.1 It is the responsibility of all Council members, employees, Committee members and volunteers to ensure compliance with this policy. Issues concerning potential non-compliance with this policy will be brought to the attention of the Director of Community Services to ensure compliance with this policy.

5. Definitions

5.1 “**Town**” – means The Corporation of the Town of Perth.

5.2 “**Employee**” – means an employee of The Corporation of the Town of Perth.

5.3 “**Digital Communication**” – means information that is shared using the Internet or mobile communication network for any purpose (i.e.: information sharing, marketing, public engagement, etc.).

5.4 “**Social Media**” – means the various online, accessible communication accounts or technologies that enable individuals to join and/or participate in online communities for the purpose of publicly sharing information, ideas, messages, pictures, etc. These accounts can include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, as well as blogs, mobile applications, websites, photo boards, discussion boards, or any other online location where commentary is publicly shared and attributed to the Town, an employee or elected official.

5.5 “**Social Media Content**” – means content that is planned and developed by the Town’s departments and posted or intended to be posted on the Town’s social media pages. This refers to any posts, notices/media releases, documents, photographs/graphics, videos, links, or other information that is created, posted, distributed, or transmitted via social media.

- 5.6 “Social Media Moderators”** – means Town staff who are designated to post, update, monitor, and review content on corporate social media pages, and who are also responsible for social media governance, strategy and implementation, and who work directly with all municipal departments and stakeholders to lead social media initiatives.
- 5.7 “Public Record”** – means anything which is created in the regular course of conducting Town business and which documents the business of the Town, regardless of format. Public records documents decisions, policies, procedures, transactions, activities, commitments, obligations, ownership, entitlement, legal rights, etc. of the Town and are relied upon by the Town as proof of such to support Town business.
- 5.8 “Public Statement”** – A declaration made by a Town employee, official, or representative in any public forum, which relates to the Town, its employees, and/or its business. This includes statements made on personal social media accounts which the public can view, public online forums or discussions, social networking pages, and elsewhere in the public record.

6. Guidelines

6.1 Site Content

- 6.1.1** Social media is used as a communication tool for the intent of enhancing communication with the public about programs and services.
- 6.1.2** The Town invites the public to engage with posts while treating others with respect, including the municipality.
- 6.1.3** The Town understands that members of the public may express concerns, feelings, or opinions that may not align with municipal decisions. Community engagement, both positive and constructive, are welcome in discussions on the Town’s corporate social media. The Town will not, however, tolerate inappropriate posts or comments
- 6.1.4** When possible, each social media account used by the Town should contain a disclaimer that includes the aforementioned guidelines for conduct.

6.2 Site Administration

- 6.2.1** Only Social Media Moderators shall post on the Town social media accounts.
- 6.2.2** Social Media Moderators serve as a centralized resource for the oversight of the Town’s social media. They adhere to the following principles:
- 6.2.2.1** The Town’s official corporate social media pages are monitored regularly by the Social Media Moderator(s) during business hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.;

- 6.2.2.2 Every effort is made to respond to constructive concerns and questions on the corporate social media pages. If a response is required, the goal is to address the comment within one (1) business day, however this timeframe may be impacted by Town Staff availability to assist with the content of the response; and,
- 6.2.2.3 Account login credentials and passwords are confidential and will be stored in a secure location with the Social Media Moderator(s).

6.3 Use of Social Media by Council, Employees, Volunteers, and Committee Members

- 6.3.1 In order to facilitate compliance with public records law, prevent false or misrepresented information, and to ensure that communications from the Town are streamlined, Employees and Council that wish to use personal accounts for the promotion or marketing of Town events, property, or services must share the original post from the Town's corporate social media accounts.
- 6.3.2 Employees, volunteers, committee members, and Council are all representatives of the Town and must uphold the standards of the Town branding when engaging in anything related to the Town, its services, operations, policies, and/or procedures. This includes engaging in online interaction on the Town's corporate social media pages or any online conversation that involves information about the Town on a public page. Employees, Council members and committee members must adhere to their respective Codes of Conduct.

6.4 Municipal Staff Usage of Social Media

- 6.4.1 Employees are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites, however their speech cannot impair or impede the performance of their duties, impair discipline and harmony among co-workers, or negatively affect the public perception of the Town. No employee shall speak in a way as to cause deliberate harm or disruption to the mission and functions of the Town.
- 6.4.2 Employees may identify themselves as a Town employee, however online postings cannot reveal confidential information about the Town. Any questions about what is considered confidential should be directed to their supervisor, Social Media Moderator, or the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

6.5 Mayor and Council Usage of Social Media

- 6.5.1 In accordance with the Municipal Act, 2001, Section 224 Council's social media usage must take into account:
 - 6.5.1.1 They represent the public and must consider the well-being and interests of the Town, and develops and evaluates the policies and procedures;
 - 6.5.1.2 They ensure the accountability and transparency of the operations of the Town.

- 6.5.2** If members of Council are responding to a public comment about a Town matter, they must identify themselves as a member of Town Council.
- 6.5.3** Social media and other types of online content sometimes garner media attention and/or legal questions. Any inquiries should be brought to the attention of the CAO.
- 6.5.4** Council are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites, however their speech cannot impair or impede the performance of their duties, impair discipline and harmony among Council and Staff, or negatively affect the public perception of the Town. No member of Council shall speak in a way as to cause deliberate harm or disruption to the mission and functions of the Town.

6.6 Sharing and Re-Posting Content

6.6.1 When sharing or re-posting content that is not owned by the Town, the Social Media Moderators must abide by the following;

6.6.1.1 Content that include external links can be shared or re-posted if:

- It connects the public with information and services provided by upper tier governments or government-funded agencies or boards;
- It provides further information on a subject matter. Such information must be provided by an official and/or accredited source; or,
- It is from a Town-affiliated organization, a service club, or a registered charity; or,

6.6.1.2 Content promoting events can be shared or re-posted if the event:

- Occurs within the boundaries of the Town and/or Lanark County
- Is open to the public
- Has one of more of the following attributes:
 - Funded in full, in part, or sponsored by the Town;
 - Organized by a Town advisory committee;
 - Organized by the Business Improvement Area or Chamber of Commerce for general promotional purposes;
 - Organized or funded by another level of government;
 - Organized by a government-funded agency or board;
 - Organized by a registered charity operating with the Town;
 - Organized by a service club operating within the Town; or,
 - Not a commercial or for-profit business.

Exceptions can be made in relation to Tourism initiatives as determined by the Director of Community Services.

6.7 Removing Public Contents and Turning Comments Off

- 6.7.1** As part of the Town's commitment to transparency and community engagement, the Social Media Moderator(s) shall not turn comments off and shall not prevent the public from interacting with the Town.
- 6.7.2** The Town reserves the right to remove any content that is deemed inappropriate based on the following criteria:
- 6.7.2.1 Profane or inappropriate language or content; including sarcastic or disrespectful comments;
 - 6.7.2.2 Content that includes personal attacks on an individual, whether it be staff, Council, representatives, a member of the public, or a specific group or organization;
 - 6.7.2.3 Discriminatory content;
 - 6.7.2.4 Content considered to be in oversight with municipal Human Resources, Health & Safety and other policies;
 - 6.7.2.5 Content that discusses politically charged issues and/or statements, political rants, or attacks on the Town;
 - 6.7.2.6 Sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - 6.7.2.7 Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
 - 6.7.2.8 Content related to any industries or businesses or related to sales, advertising, or promotions falling outside of the boundaries of Perth;
 - 6.7.2.9 Promotion or opposition to a candidate for municipal, provincial, or federal election;
 - 6.7.2.10 Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
 - 6.7.2.11 Information that discloses personal information as protected in the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA);
 - 6.7.2.12 Information about or photos of any identifiable individual, unless the identifiable individual has provided written consent to the Town in advance;
 - 6.7.2.13 Plagiarized or copyrighted material;
 - 6.7.2.14 An accusation or message that impersonates or misrepresents someone else; or,
 - 6.7.2.15 Any other content that is believed to be inappropriate as determined by the Director of Community Services.
- 6.7.3** If a comment is removed, documentation must be kept by the Social Media Moderator, such as a screenshot of the content, and the reason for deleting the comment.
- 6.7.4** If a member of the public believes a submission on any Town social media account violates the Town of Perth Social Media Policy, they must report it immediately to the Social Media Moderator(s). Any content that is deemed inappropriate will immediately be dealt with and, if an issue arises, will be brought to the attention of the Director of Community Services who will review the scenario and determine a course of action.

6.8 Social Media Metrics

6.8.1 The Social Media Moderator will produce an annual report of analytics on the Town's social media accounts. Reporting performance measures should include, but are not limited to;

6.8.1.1 Twitter – number of tweets, reach, retweets, likes/reactions

6.8.1.2 Facebook – number of posts, followers, reach, impressions, comments, likes/reactions, shares

6.8.1.3 Instagram – number of posts, followers, reach, impressions, comments, likes/reactions

6.9 Privacy Policy

6.9.1 As a government entity, the Town conducts public business and its records are generally available for public review in accessible formats. For more information, please see the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA).

6.10 Social Media Disclaimer

6.10.1 When possible, each social media account used by the Town should contain a disclaimer clearly advising visitors that third party comments are not official communication of the Town. The disclaimer should also note that the Town website is the official destination for information.

6.11 Review

6.11.1 This Policy shall be reviewed once during each term of Council.

6.12 Related Policies and Procedures

6.12.1 Policy-01-Code of Conduct for Members of Council, Committees, Advisory Panels, Mayor's Task Force and Local Boards

6.12.2 Policy-02-Human Resources Policy Manual

6.12.3 Procedure-04-Social Media as a Communication Tool Procedure