**City of Lloydminster**

# *Policy*

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| **Policy Title:** | Communications and Public Participation Policy | **Policy Number:** | 133-01 |
| **Date of Adoption:** | September 24, 2018 | **Motion Number:** | 280-2018 |
| **Date of Amendment:** | February 6, 2023 | **Motion Number:** | 30-2023 |
| **Date of Amendment:** | October 26, 2026 | **Motion Number:** | 318-2026 |

## 1. Purpose:

1.1. To establish principles and standards for communication methods and messages to meet the needs of the public.

1.2. To ensure effective communication for all Persons and City Administration.

1.3. To ensure legislative compliance.

## 2. Objective:

2.1. To ensure City communication measures, materials, and messages are citizen-focused, inclusive, culturally respectful, transparent, and clearly presented.

2.2. To provide City communications that are accessible through multiple channels, encouraging public dialogue and participation.

## 3. Definitions:

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| **Administration** | An employee, contract employee or volunteer of the City of Lloydminster. |
| **City** | The corporation of the City of Lloydminster. |
| **State of Local Emergency (SOLE)** | A declaration made in accordance with the Emergency Management Bylaw as amended from time to time. |
| **Member of Council** | An individual elected pursuant to *The Local Government Election Act, 2015* (Saskatchewan) as a Member of Council. |
| **Spokesperson** | The Mayor or delegate which may include members of Council, Communications staff or members of Administration appointed by the City Manager. |

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| **Partnership** | An arrangement where parties agree to cooperate to advance their mutual interests to increase the likelihood of each achieving their mission and to amplify their reach |
| **Person** | An individual, a group of individuals, a corporation, firm, partnership, proprietorship, association, society, or co-operative organization. |
| **Sponsorship** | A cash/or gift in kind paid by a sponsor to the City in return for the commercial rights related to a City-owned asset. |
| **Community Members** | A current resident of the City of Lloydminster. |
| **Stakeholders** | Any person or organization with a vested interest in the actions and decisions of City of Lloydminster Administration and Council. |
| **LAFOIP Act** | The Province of Saskatchewan's *Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act,* which respects a right of access to documents of local authorities and a right of privacy with respect to personal information held by local authorities. |

## 4. Scope:

4.1. This Policy applies to all members of Council and Administration.

## 5. Principles of Good Communication:

5.1. Administration shall provide the public with timely, clear, transparent, and accurate information about items of community importance, including; municipal activities, projects, programs, and services.

5.2. Administration shall deliver prompt, courteous and responsive communications that are sensitive to the current needs and concerns of the public.

5.3. Administration shall utilize a variety of methods and means to communicate and provide information in the most appropriate formats to accommodate diverse needs.

5.4. Administration shall communicate planned service disruptions, infrastructure work, and changes to municipal services in advance where feasible, and provide updates as conditions evolve.

5.5. Administration shall work collaboratively and coordinate communications activities with other community stakeholders, where possible, to communicate and engage effectively with the public.

5.6. The City may address misinformation or clarify inaccurate public information where necessary to maintain public trust, public safety, and ensure accurate understanding of municipal services, programs, and decisions.

5.7. Administration shall ensure the City owned communication channels and resources are properly identified as such.

5.7.1. The City shall not promote matters;

i. of exclusionary nature;
ii. pertaining to political campaigns; or
iii. contrary to City policies, bylaws, or other applicable legislation.

## 6. Public Participation in City-owned Digital Platforms:

6.1. City-owned social media channels and digital platforms are moderated public spaces intended to support respectful dialogue and the sharing of information related to municipal services, programs, and initiatives.

6.2. The City shall strive to deliver prompt, courteous, and responsive communications on City-owned social media channels and web-based resources that are sensitive to the needs and concerns of the public, while respecting privacy and individual rights.

6.3. Notwithstanding 6.1, response periods for public inquiries are subject to the time and date of receipt. Responses are compiled and delivered within regular business hours.

6.4. Wherever possible, City-owned resources shall clearly indicate that any articles, comments, and other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to regulations for disclosure as defined within the *LAFOIP Act.*

6.5. Content shall not be permitted on City owned social media sites, or other digital assets that:

6.5.1. contains abusive, obscene, indecent or offensive language;
6.5.2. includes defamatory, abusive, harassing, or hateful remarks, or makes any unproven or unsupported accusations against individuals or organizations;
6.5.3. constitutes spam or the promotion of products or services;
6.5.4. the invasion of anyone’s privacy or the impersonation of anyone;
6.5.5. are not remaining on the topic being posted and discussed;
6.5.6. are posted without the necessary rights, licenses, and consents;
6.5.7. encourage conduct that may, or would, constitute a criminal offence or give rise to civic liability or otherwise violate any local, provincial,

national, or international law or regulation;

6.5.8. contain long embedded URLs;

6.5.9. contain excessive links or code;

6.5.10. are contrary to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; or

6.5.11. Are intended to harass, threaten or provoke moderators or other users.

6.6. The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content deemed in violation of this policy or any applicable law.

6.7. The City reserves the right to limit or disable commenting functions on digital platforms where moderation capacity, public safety considerations, or operational requirements warrant.

6.8. While the City strives to respond to public inquiries received through digital platforms, not all comments will receive individual responses.

## 7. Public Participation:

7.1. Administration may design and facilitate opportunities for all Community Members and Stakeholders to contribute and participate in discussion on topics of significant community interest, as identified by Council. Participation opportunities may include, but are not limited to, open houses, virtual meetings, focus groups, surveys, and non-statutory public hearings.

7.2. Where possible, Administration shall provide opportunity for Community Members and Stakeholders to access information and provide input on community-shaping initiatives.

7.3. Administration shall communicate how public input is considered and reflected in decision-making processes, where applicable.

7.4. Administration shall compile and present information collected through community engagement for the review and consideration of Council and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).

## 8. Partnerships and Third-Party Communications:

8.1. As a course of business and transparency, there is an expectation the City acknowledge partnerships and/or sponsorships within its regular communications pertaining to sponsored initiatives.

8.1.1. This may include but is not limited to; short statements outlining the partnership or sponsorship arrangement, or use of a logo on advertising materials.

8.2. To maintain fairness and impartiality, the City reserves the right to decline requests to share, promote, or distribute third-party information through City-owned communication resources

8.3. Administration shall not advertise or otherwise promote third-party services, products, or organizations unless part of a formalized partnership, sponsorship, or approved initiative, or with written approval from the Director, Communications or delegate.

8.4. Contractors, consultants, and vendors conducting any form of public communication or advertising relating to City owned projects, sites, personnel, or activities, shall comply with this Policy, as well as communications and advertising protocols specified within agreements.

8.5. City reserves the right to refuse or revoke approval of third-party communications that conflict with City policies, priorities, brand standards, or public interest considerations.

8.6. Endorsements and testimonials for third-party organizations are subject to written approval from the Director, Communications or delegate.

8.7. Third-party communications associated with the City shall not imply endorsement, sponsorship, or approval by the City unless expressly authorized in writing.

## 9. Branding, Sub Brands, and Brand Elements:

9.1. The City's branding reflects the organization's role as the accountable and authoritative body and distinguishes the City from other Persons and organizations. The logo and unique brand elements are protected by copyright and trademark and cannot be used without the express consent of Administration.

9.2. City branding used by outside entities shall accurately reflect the City's official role, involvement, or partnership in a program, service, or event. All requests for third-party use of City branding shall be submitted to the Director, Communications or delgate for review and approval.

9.3. The City maintains branding guidelines that provide details on logo placement, colours, typography, campaign visuals, and other branding elements that guide development of all public marketing and communication campaign identities and communication resources.

9.4. The City reserves the right to revoke permission for the use of City branding where such use is inconsistent with approved guidelines, misrepresents the City's involvement, or conflicts with City policies or public interest.

## 10. Communicating During Crisis or Emergency

10.1. During any crisis or emergency situation – including a State of Local Emergency – the City's defined emergency communications plans shall be enacted and followed to ensure timely, accurate, and coordinated messaging to the public. Emergency communications plans shall override other communications plans and policies.

## 11. Penalty:

11.1. Any member of Administration found to be in violation of this Policy may be subjected to disciplinary action. Such action may be dependent upon the nature of the breach of this Policy; discipline may range from a verbal warning to dismissal with cause.

11.2. Any Persons deemed in contravention of this Policy through misuse of City digital media or other assets may be subject to removal of offending content and/or permanent restriction of access.

## 12. Responsibility:

12.1. City Council shall review and approve all policies.

12.2. Administration may administer this Policy through the use of a supporting procedure, as required.