CITY OF WEST KELOWNA

POLICY

Title: Social Media
Department: Corporate Services
Policy Number: 0035
File Number: 0340-50-0035

Purpose

1.1. To provide a framework for the City of West Kelowna's use of social media platforms as a communication tool to provide information and engage with the community in support of the City's goals and priorities.

1.2. To provide guidance for the City as it engages in social media to promote West Kelowna as a tourism destination.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to City of West Kelowna Council and employees.

3. Definitions

3.1. **City** means City of West Kelowna

3.2. **Council** means the City of West Kelowna Mayor and Council

3.3. **City of West Kelowna social media** means platforms used to share information and engage with the community that include, but are not limited to, Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and OurWK.

3.4. **Personal use** means identifying, using, and posting on social media as an individual or citizen.

3.5. **Post** means any online content including, but not limited to, comments, links, documents, images, videos, and graphics.

4. Policy Statement

4.1. General

4.1.1. The City uses social media as a communication tool to share information with the public and engage with the community through information sharing and dialogue.

The City encourages the use of social media to:

- promote transparency by providing clear, current and accessible information;
- increase reach by meeting people where they are at;
- educate by providing helpful and accurate information about City programs, services and infrastructure;
- reach people quickly in an emergency by providing time-sensitive information quickly with clear direction; and

- celebrate our City by highlighting achievements, the beauty of our community, and service excellence.

4.1.2. The City's social media accounts must not be used to:

a) Share, promote or endorse non-City-related or non-partnership-related content or activities such as private events, fundraisers, or third party-led initiatives.

b) Endorse or promote businesses, sell non-municipal products or services, or endorse or favour political parties, candidates, or partisan interests.

4.1.3. The City's tourism program Visit Westside uses social media to promote, market and support West Kelowna as a tourism destination.

a) Posting appropriate content from other channels and promoting commercial services and products is acceptable for the purposes of promoting tourism in West Kelowna. Fairness and equality must be shown to all businesses and organizations without showing favouritism.

b) Posting major local events on tourism channels for the purpose of promoting tourism is acceptable. Event content will demonstrate a clear potential for drawing visitors to our community.

4.2. Roles and Responsibilities

4.2.1. The Communications department is responsible for creating and maintaining all official City of West Kelowna social media accounts. Any new City social media account must be approved by the communications manager prior to launch.

4.2.2. The tourism related social media accounts for the Visit Westside tourism program are managed by the Tourism department with support from the Communications department as needed.

4.2.3. The Communications department is responsible for aligning social media with the core message, using the appropriate tone, ensuring brand consistency, and maintaining alignment with Council's Strategic Priorities.

4.2.4. The City's social media channels must be monitored during regular business hours, Monday to Friday, excluding statutory holidays.

4.2.5. Inquiries or requests for action stemming from the City's social media sites must be forwarded by the next business day to the appropriate department for follow up.

4.2.6. The Communications department ensures City social media accounts comply with applicable City of West Kelowna policies.

4.2.7. Employees assigned to represent the City on social media are expected to conduct themselves at all times in accordance with the City's Code of Conduct policy.

4.3. Safe and Respectful Online Environment

4.3.1. The Communications department is responsible for maintaining a safe and respectful environment on the City's social media.

4.3.2. The Communications department may remove or restrict any content that is deemed in violation of this policy or applicable law and will retain a record of the removed material.

4.3.3. The following content will be removed from the City's social media accounts:

a.) Libelous, defamatory, or inaccurate statements.
b.) Obscene, profane, or sexual explicit language or content.
c.) Discrimination, harassment, bullying, hate or abusive language.
d.) Language that's threating or the promotion, incitement or endorsement of violence or any Illegal activity.
e.) Commercial advertising or promotion not approved by the City.
f.) Political or partisan content, including promotion of candidates or parties.
g.) Links to third party, non-partnership or promotional materials including affiliate marketing or social media influencing.
h.) Otherwise contrary to legislation or City policy.

4.4. Records

4.4.1. All City social media shall adhere to applicable provincial, federal and local laws, regulations and City policies, including Records Management Program bylaw and policies.

4.4.2. Content posted or received through City social media channels is considered a City record.

4.5. Employee Personal Use of Social Media

4.5.1. Employees may choose to participate on social media as private citizens. Employees' personal social media activity remains subject to the City's Code of Conduct policy, Respectful Workplace policy and procedure, Conflict of Interest policy and other applicable City policies.

4.5.2. Employees must comply with the City's confidentiality requirements as outlined in the Code of Conduct policy, and must not disclose confidential, privileged, personal or otherwise protected information through social media.

4.5.3. Employees must conduct themselves in a manner that clearly separates their personal use of social media from their professional role with the City. Employees must not use personal social media accounts to represent or speak on behalf the City, or to create the impression that they are speaking or engaging in a conversation on behalf of the City, unless authorized in writing to do so.

4.5.4. Employees must maintain impartiality in the performance of their duties. In their personal social media activity, employees must avoid making public comments or entering into public debate regarding City policies where doing so could reasonably: call their impartiality into question; create a real, potential, or perceived conflict of interest; or harm the reputation, integrity, or public confidence of the City and/or any of its employees.

4.5.5. Employees who receive inquiries on their personal social media related to their work or any City-related information from members of the media should

immediately forward the details of the request to the Communications department for follow-up.

4.6. Council's Use of Social Media

4.6.1. Council members are personally responsible for the content they publish online, whether through their social media accounts, websites, or any other form of user-generated media.

4.6.2. Council's personal social media profiles are not an official City communications channel.

4.6.3. The conduct of Council members engaging in social media discussions will be consistent with their obligations as an elected official, including any relevant legislation and City policies, legal responsibilities, avoiding conflict of interest and respecting confidentiality, pursuant to applicable legislation.

4.6.4. Council must conduct themselves on social media in a way that does not harm the City's reputation, Council's reputation, or the reputation of any persons employed by the City.

4.6.5. Council members may use their social media profiles as a secondary information source once information has been officially released by the City. This includes sharing or amplifying information released via the City's official social media accounts.

5. Authority

5.1. *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.*
5.2. Records Management Program Bylaw No. 0123

6. Related Policies or Procedures

6.1. HR-002 Respectful Workplace Policy
6.2. HR-002R Respectful Workplace Procedure
6.3. HR-006 Code of Conduct Policy
6.4. HR-012 Acceptable Use of Information Resources Policy
6.5. HR-003 Conflict of Interest Policy

7. Approval

Approved by	☐ CAO	☒ Mayor and Council
Approval date	September 8, 2026	
Council Resolution #	C238/26	

Signature	*[Original signed by Mayor]* MAYOR

8. Additional Information

Category	☒ Council	☐ Administrative
Related procedure	☐ Yes	☒ No
Procedure number		
Date of last review		