



# POLICY

**POLICY NAME:** Communications Policy

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**CATEGORY:** City Government and Infrastructure  
**APPROVED BY COUNCIL:** 2022/07/11  
**DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE:** Office of the City Manager

## **PURPOSE:**

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This purpose of the Communications Policy is to establish guidelines for the City of Prince George when communicating or releasing information on behalf of the City. To ensure information is provided in a timely, transparent, accurate, consistent and appropriate manner.

This policy applies to all City of Prince George employees and all contractors or partners who communicate with citizens, other agencies or the media on behalf of the City.

## **POLICY OBJECTIVES:**

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To establish standards for effective City communications.

## **POLICY:**

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### **1. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

All communication activities conducted by the City of Prince George must adhere to the applicable policies, procedures, guidelines, and statutory requirements set out by legislation.

Communications activities must also reflect the City of Prince George's Communications Principles:

1. Provide information that is timely, accurate, clear, accessible, and responsive.
2. Consider the range of communication tools at our disposal and use those most appropriate to address the needs associated with each circumstance.
3. Work collaboratively across the organization to ensure that information is thorough, factual, and timely.
4. Respect the access to information and privacy rights of citizens and employees.
5. Support opportunities for engagement to inform public policy.
6. Strive to achieve a culture of two-way communication and communications excellence practices.

## **2. PLAIN LANGUAGE**

The City of Prince George will use plain language for its internal and external communications as much as possible while also meeting statutory requirements.

Plain language can be broadly described as any writing designed to ensure the reader understands the message as quickly, easily, and completely as possible. Plain language strives to be easy to read, understand, and use. It avoids verbose, convoluted language and jargon and uses document structure and visual aids (such as graphics or charts) to guide the reader.

## **3. TIMELY RESPONSE**

The City of Prince George will strive to provide residents, business, visitors, and other interested and invested parties timely, accurate, clear, accessible, and responsive information. City of Prince George employees will respond to enquiries as promptly as is practicable.

## **4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The City of Prince George is committed to involving its citizens in the decision-making processes, where appropriate. When the City gathers feedback from the community, the community will be informed of how the information will be used and the results of the public engagement will be made public.

The City is guided by the following International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values as its foundation when considering public participation and engagement:

- 4.1 *“Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.*
- 4.2 *Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.*
- 4.3 *Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.*
- 4.4 *Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.*
- 4.5 *Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.*
- 4.6 *Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.*
- 4.7 *Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.”*

## **5. MEDIA RELATIONS**

Media relations activities will be coordinated in accordance with applicable supporting Administrative Procedures approved by the City Manager.

## **6. PARTNERSHIPS AND THIRD-PARTY PROMOTION**

For the purposes of this policy:

6.1 “Partnership” is defined as an arrangement where parties agree to cooperate to advance their mutual interests in order to increase the likelihood of each achieving their mission and to amplify their reach.

6.2 “Sponsorship” is defined as a formal agreement in which cash and/or an in-kind fee is paid toward a program, service or amenity in return for marketing, advertising, public relations or other recognition.

The City of Prince George regularly, as part of its day-to-day operation, enters into partnerships or sponsorships with other organizations, governments, societies, and businesses. The City should acknowledge these partnerships as part of its regular communications. This may include short statements outlining the partnership or sponsorship arrangement, use of a logo on advertising materials, or another similar tactic.

The City will not actively promote or advertise any third-party organization, society, entity or business over another similar organization, unless as part of an officially recognized partnership or sponsorship relationship.

## **7. SOCIAL MEDIA**

The City of Prince George will use social media as communication and engagement tools to:

- Engage citizens at their convenience.
- Make it easy for citizens to participate.
- Create a two-way dialogue with the community.
- Provide the City with the ability to communicate effectively and quickly.

Use of City social media platforms and accounts will adhere to applicable supporting Administrative Procedures approved by the City Manager.

## **8. BRANDING AND BRAND ELEMENTS**

The City of Prince George has a single and consistent visual identity for its roles and responsibilities to be clearly recognized. All communication from the City from signage to correspondence to digital platforms will adhere to the applicable Administrative Procedure approved by the City Manager.

Where naming rights exist additional branding may be present in accordance with any contractual obligations but this does not preclude any City branding unless authorized by the City Manager.

## **9. WEB ELEMENTS**

The City of Prince George will maintain one official website ([www.princegeorge.ca](http://www.princegeorge.ca)) to provide the public with information regarding City services, Council decisions, Council and committee meeting

schedules, minutes and agendas, bylaws, activities and events, and ongoing local government business.

The website and any other City web elements will only be used to promote activities provided by the City or in partnership with the City.