



**Title:** **Communications Policy**  
**Effective Date:** **2025 October 27**  
**Responsible Business Unit:** **Marketing & Communications**

## 1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this Administration policy is to:

- a) Articulate the roles and responsibilities of Administration with respect to internal and external communications; and
- b) Establish guidelines and any related procedures for consistent and effective communications on behalf of The City;

1.2 Serve Calgarians through effective Administrative Communications by ensuring access to information about City services, Council decisions and emergencies.

1.3 Expected outcomes related to the policy include:

- a) Support public trust and confidence by communicating consistent, coordinated and accurate information to the public;
- b) Calgarians have equitable access to information about City services; and
- c) Employees have access to policies and procedures that guide effective communications as referenced in Section 7 of this policy.

## 2. APPLICABILITY

2.1 This Administration policy applies to all City of Calgary employees, except Calgary Police Service and Office of the Mayor.

## 3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 City Administration will:

- a) Use a consistent and coordinated approach to provide reliable and accurate communications internally and externally;
- b) Prepare messaging and materials that adhere to the *Calgary Corporate Accessibility policy* and support diverse audiences;
- c) Endeavor to communicate in an accurate and timely manner that can be accessed by members of the public;
- d) Manage and maintain channel mix and continually evaluate effectiveness and adjust accordingly;

- e) Meet or exceed all requirements for the provision of information, and storage / retrieval of information in accordance with federal, local or provincial legislation such as *Municipal Government Act (Alberta)* and the *Protection of Privacy Act*;
- f) Implement crisis communications protocols when an emergency or disaster is declared, the Municipal Emergency Plan is activated and/or the Emergency Operations Centre is open, which may include ceasing regular communications and focusing on the response; and
- g) When working with other municipalities whose communications policies may differ from The City of Calgary's, City Administration will follow The City of Calgary's Policy.

#### **4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

4.1 Employees are responsible to;

- a) Adhere to this policy;
- b) Involve Customer Service & Communications early in the development of a project or program to allow for a strategic communications approach when required;
- c) Consider corporate reputation in decision making and identify anticipated or emerging issues about City programs, services or initiatives, working with Customer Service & Communications and others as required to assess and mitigate reputational risk; and
- d) Adhere to Customer Service & Communications (CSC) policies including brand identity standards, social media and media relations policy, and accessibility and plain language policies when preparing reports or other internal or external messaging.

4.2 Employees are not responsible for Political Communications.

4.3 The Customer Service and Communications business unit (CSC) is responsible to:

- a) Administer this policy;
- b) Maintain and adhere to all policies, procedures, protocols, standards, guidelines and strategies relevant to CSC as outlined in Section 7 of this policy and the Customer Service & Communications Procedures.
- c) Determine and maintain cost-effective and efficient media buying, vendor / contractor management and City channels, including social media and calgary.ca;
- d) Support Administration's objectives by providing communications and marketing strategy, implementation and measurement, where applicable, and help address risks and emerging issues;
- e) Work across the organization to align communications to best inform Calgarians;
- f) Ensure City messaging is available and can be accessed through multiple channels to encourage broad public participation;

- g) Monitor City communications reflected in news media and tagged on social media and ensuring factual information is distributed;
- h) Inform City employees about City programs, issues and initiatives;
- i) Participate as members on issues management teams to support an active issue through strategic communications;
- j) Prepare key messages and planned communication activities on matters of interest to Members of Council to be distributed through the Chief Administrator's Office; and
- k) Steward the procedures for Administrative media availabilities, including how Members of Council will be invited to participate.

4.4 The Chief Administrative Officer is responsible to:

- a) Determine process and distribute key messages and planned communication activities on matters of interest to Members of Council.

4.5 Senior Management Team and Corporate Management Team are responsible to:

- a) Share key messages and planned communication activities on matters of interest to Members of Council as determined by the Chief Administrator's Office.
- b) Support employees, contractors and volunteers to understand the requirements of the policy;
- c) Proactively coordinate with Customer Service & Communications to ensure clear, accessible and timely messaging to the public;
- d) Support cross department and/or business unit operational coordination to ensure aligned public messaging by partnering with Customer Service & Communications regarding emergent issues relating to their programs or services;
- e) Provide ongoing internal employee communications that supplement corporate-wide employee communications.

4.6 The Director of Customer Service & Communications is responsible to:

- a) Determine the overall corporate communications priorities, strategy and allocation of CSC resources.

4.7 Emergency leadership responsibilities are:

- a) In an emergency, the Director of Emergency Management or designate will approve communications messages, channels and spokespeople, in accordance with the Municipal Emergency Plan and the evolving situation.
- b) The designated Crisis Communications team will coordinate all internal and external communications and recommend strategies, key messages, channels and frequency of communications to the Director of Emergency Management or designate.

## 5. CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE

5.1 Employees who fail to adhere to this Administration policy may be subject to corrective action, including dismissal from employment, in accordance with the Labour Relations standard, the Exempt Staff policy, and associated Regulations or the specified terms outlined in their employment contract.

## 6. DEFINITIONS

6.1 In this Administration policy:

- a) **Administrative Communication** means the planned and coordinated use of messaging across City channels to support The City's mission, objectives and reputation;
- b) **City Spokesperson** means an employee that has been officially approved by the Director of Customer Service & Communication via a business unit director or general manager to communicate publicly on behalf of The City;
- c) **Creative** is a full service, internal creative agency, including, but not limited to development of creative strategies, print productions services and direction for digital, audio, and video. They are stewards of the Corporate Brand Identity and Identifiers policy;
- d) **Crisis Communications** means internal and external communications during a localized or citywide emergency or disaster when the Municipal Emergency Plan is activated and/or the Emergency Operations Centre is open;
- e) **Crisis Communications Team** means a group of trained employees across multiple teams in the Customer Service & Communications business unit who may be redirected from their regular duties to support a disaster or emergency;
- f) **Employee** means any person employed by The City and reporting to a City of Calgary business unit, department, the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, the Office of the Chief Operating Officer, the Office of The Mayor, the City Auditor's Office, and the Calgary Housing Company including those working under an employment contract with The City;
- g) **Marketing** provides strategic and data-driven insights to employees to ensure Calgarians can access information in their preferred channels by managing corporate social media and external marketing channels.
- h) **Media** means television, radio, newspaper outlets, online reporting, blogs and forums that provide news reported by journalists;
- i) **Political Communication** means any verbal or written statement made by a Member of Council, for the purpose of conveying their opinion on municipal issues or influencing public knowledge, beliefs, and actions regarding political matters;

- j) **Social Media** means an internet-based communication tool with a focus on immediate, interactive user participation and information sharing. Social media includes social networking sites, forums, weblogs, wikis, online chat sites, and video/photo sharing sites; and
- k) **Web & Digital** creates and maintains digital content on calgary.ca and myCity. Services include, but are not limited to, new content, web content editing, video uploading, short URLs for calgary.ca and metrics and analytics. They are stewards of the Web policy.

## 7. ASSOCIATED GOVERNANCE

7.1 This Administration policy is established in accordance with:

- a) The *Municipal Government Act (Alberta)* which describes the responsibility of the Chief Administrative Officer to implement the policies and programs of the municipality;
- b) The *City Auditor Bylaw (34M2020)* which establishes and describes the responsibilities of the City Auditor to implement policies and programs, as permitted under s. 210 of the *Municipal Government Act*;
- c) *Unanimous Shareholder Agreement* between Calhome Properties Ltd. operating as "The Calgary Housing Company", section 1.6;
- d) *The City of Calgary's Municipal Emergency Plan* which provides an overview of The City's emergency management structure, policies, roles, and responsibilities, including scope of crisis communications;
- e) *Protection of Privacy Act* which sets out requirements for how The City protects personal information;
- f) *Access to Information Act* which sets out requirements for making and responding to requests for access to information in the custody or under the control of The City;
- g) *Customer Service & Communications Procedures* (in development) which outline the guidelines for Administrative Communications, including but not limited to, plain language, media availabilities, engagement, use of images, visual identity, and crisis communications;
- h) *Corporate Brand Identity and Identifiers policy* which ensures the appropriate use and consistent application of the unique identifiers that comprise The City's brand identity;
- i) *Social Media, Media Relations and Public Statements policy* which outlines how The City and its employees interact with social media, the media and members of the public;
- j) *Web policy* which formalizes The City's commitment to provide and maintain consistent, cohesive and straightforward internal and external web presences;

- k) *Engage policy* which provides the guidelines for the development and implementation of engagement processes at The City, including Calgarian-centric service delivery, equitable opportunity for public input, and use in Council decision-making;
- l) *Plain Language policy* which describes The City's expectations about the use of plain language in Administrative Communications;
- m) *Public Notice and Legal Advertising policy* which outlines The City's rationale and background for the placement of public notices and legal advertising, based on legislation contained in the Municipal Government Act M-26 RSA2000, Sections 606;
- n) *Issues Management policy* which outlines a process that identifies the issues, trends and attitudes of interested parties that can affect the organization and develops issue management strategic plans and tactics supported by communication;
- o) *Social Wellbeing policy* which outlines procedures for how City services can contribute to achieving quality of life and increased civic participation for all Calgarians;
- p) *Transparency and Accountability policy* which defines how The City will ensure it is transparent and accountable to the public; and
- q) *Corporate Records Management policy* which outlines The City's commitment to document activities and decisions through the creation of official records to support timely and accurate access to, and information about, City programs and services.

## 8. HISTORY

Action	Date	Approval	Description
Clerical Correction	2026 Jan 19	Leader, Governance and Policy	Changed Title Block to refer to Responsible Business Unit instead of Responsible Service.
New	2025 Oct 27	ELT2025-0890	Created new Communications policy to clarify how internal and external communications are conducted at The City of Calgary.