



FORTFRANCES
BOUNDLESS

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY
ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE 1.1

POLICY

Created: 2024-02-13

Revised:

Authorized: By-Law 26-24

Superseded: Media Communications ADM 1.1

1. PURPOSE

- (1) The purpose of this Communications Policy is to establish guidelines and procedures for external communications to ensure consistency, accuracy, and effectiveness in conveying the Town of Fort Frances' messages to its residents, stakeholders, and the broader community.
- (2) The Town of Fort Frances recognizes the importance of transparent, timely, and accessible communication with the public through various channels, including social media platforms, traditional media, and other communication methods. This policy aims to facilitate proactive engagement, uphold the reputation of the Town of Fort Frances, and promote community involvement.

2. SCOPE

- (1) This policy applies to all employees and representatives (see Section 4. Definitions) of the Town of Fort Frances who engage in external communication activities on behalf of the Municipality.
- (2) The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is granted exemption from the provisions outlined in this policy. This exemption is justified by the CAO's direct accountability to the Mayor and Council, their overarching responsibility for the administration and oversight of the Town, and the inherent nature of their role which necessitates public visibility for the purpose of promoting and representing the Town's interests.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

- (1) The Communications Coordinator and Deputy Clerk is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, working with employees and representatives of the Town of Fort Frances on external communications, and ensuring compliance with administrative procedures.

4. DEFINITIONS

- (1) "External Communications": Any communication initiated by the Town of Fort Frances directed towards the public, stakeholders, or media outlets.
- (2) "Social Media Platforms": Refers to social media channels officially managed by the Town of Fort Frances.
- (3) "Traditional Media": Includes newspapers, radio stations, and other conventional forms of media within the Town of Fort Frances jurisdiction.

- (4) “Employees and representatives of the Town of Fort Frances” refers to the Town of Fort Frances permanent, contract, casual, and seasonal employees, volunteers, contractors, and other individuals who have engaged with the Town by way of contract or agreement. Elected officials are exempt from this definition as their role is captured under Ontario’s Municipal Act, Part VI.

5. MUNICIPAL IDENTITY

- (1) All external communications must adhere to the Town of Fort Frances branding guidelines to maintain consistency in messaging, logos, colours, and visual identity across all communication channels.
- (2) Consistency in branding reinforces the identity of the Town of Fort Frances, enhances recognition, and cultivates trust and credibility among residents, stakeholders, and the broader community.

6. CORE COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES

- (1) **Transparency**
We prioritize openness and honesty in all our communications, ensuring that information shared with the public is clear, truthful, and accurate.
- (2) **Engagement**
We actively seek and encourage dialogue, feedback, and participation from residents, stakeholders, and community groups, fostering collaboration and trust.
- (3) **Accessibility**
We are committed to making our communication accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities or language barriers, by providing information in alternate formats where able, and in formats that are easy to understand.
- (4) **Diversity and Inclusion**
We value and celebrate the diversity of our community, ensuring that our communication efforts reflect and respect differences in culture, ethnicity, language, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, and socioeconomic status.
- (5) **Honesty**
We prioritize truthfulness and reliability in our communication practices, ensuring that the information we share is credible and trustworthy.
- (6) **Timeliness**
We recognize the importance of providing timely updates, announcements, and responses to

inquiries, ensuring that information is delivered promptly and efficiently to meet the needs and expectations of our residents and stakeholders.

7. INFORMING THE PUBLIC

(1) **Multi-Channel Communication Approach**

The Town of Fort Frances recognizes the importance of diverse communication channels to reach stakeholders effectively. The Town of Fort Frances will adapt its communication methods to meet the evolving needs of the public and the Municipality.

(2) **Media Engagement and Management**

Given the necessity to disseminate information widely and accurately, interaction with the media is often essential. With prior approval of the CAO, management, being knowledgeable about their respective divisions, are encouraged to engage directly with the media to ensure accurate information dissemination. Utilization of subject matter experts is endorsed for communication in their areas of expertise.

(3) **Media Release Authorization**

Formal media releases, interviews, and press conferences require prior approval from the CAO. General advertisements, public notifications, meeting notices, and job advertisements do not fall under this category.

(4) **Communications Coordination**

All other communications must be routed through the Communications Coordinator and Deputy Clerk. The Coordinator is responsible for managing and approving outgoing communications across various platforms including, but not limited to, social media handles, the Town website, media releases, newspapers, e-newsletters, and radio broadcasts. Additionally, the social media channels are under the purview of the Coordinator who authorizes their use by others. User Administration is undertaken by the IT Manager.

(5) **Emphasis on Digital Platforms**

Digital media will serve as the primary mode of interaction with stakeholders due to its widespread use and cost efficiency. However, the Town of Fort Frances understands that for some, traditional media is more effective, and multiple communication channels will be maintained to cater to the diverse information needs of the public.

8. EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

- (1) In the event of a major crisis or incident, the Communications Coordinator will be contacted to assist the Community Emergency Program Coordinator and CAO of the Town of Fort Frances with handling media relations during and in relation to the event.

- (2) All information regarding the crisis is to be immediately communicated to the team along with Council. No statements will be made to the media until the information is available to Council. The Mayor should obtain regular briefings from the Communications Coordinator or CAO and it is recommended that any statements made to the media come only through the designated spokesperson.