

City of Bellevue, Washington
Website Policies and Procedures

I. PRIVACY AND SECURITY

The City of Bellevue does not collect personal information about visitors to the city's website (<http://www.bellevuewa.gov>) unless visitors choose to provide it. The city automatically collects statistical information as described below, but it does NOT:

- Share any personal information gathered on this website with other agencies or persons unless required by law.
- Create personal profiles or provide personal information to private organizations.
- Collect and/or sell information for commercial marketing.

Automatically Collected Information

If a user browses the Bellevue website or downloads data, some information will be collected automatically. This information will not identify the user personally. It is used only to improve this site by telling the city the number of visitors and the types of browsers and operating systems visitors are using. The following information is collected each time someone visits the Bellevue Internet website:

- The Internet domain name (examples: aol.com or foxinternet.net) from which a user accesses the Bellevue site. Note: this is not an Internet address.
- The Internet protocol address from which a visitor connects to the Bellevue site. The IP address is a number assigned to a user's computer or provided by an Internet service provider whenever someone browses the Internet. The city uses this address to send data users request back to them.
- The type of browser used to visit the city site.
- The type of operating system used.
- The date and time a user visits the city site.
- The specific pages visited on the Bellevue site.
- If a visitor linked to the city site from another website, the address of that site.

Personal Information

In some cases a user may choose to provide the city or its agents with personal information, by filling out an online form or sending an e-mail. This may consist of information such as name, address or phone number. The information provided will be used only for a specific purpose, in most cases to enable the city to provide requested information. However, once submitted, that information becomes a public record subject to disclosure.

Users may review any personal information the city or its agents collect about them and may recommend changes to any personal information by submitting a written request. Usually, a user can change his or her personal information directly.

If a user believes their personal information is being used for a purpose other than what was intended when submitted, that person can contact the online editor at ciosso@bellevuewa.gov. In all cases, the

city will take reasonable steps to verify a requestor's identify before granting access or making corrections.

Site Security

The City of Bellevue has taken steps to safeguard the information on its site including monitoring, auditing and encryption. Security measures are taken as a part of the implementation of all Bellevue software and hardware infrastructure to mitigate risk. The city, however, cannot warrant as fail-proof the security of information collected or provided via this website. Unauthorized attempts to change information on this site or upload information are strictly prohibited.

Links to Other Sites

The City of Bellevue website contains links to other sites. The city's privacy and security policy does not apply to outside sites.

Subscription Services

The City of Bellevue and its agents offer users the option of having specified information sent to them by e-mail, phone text or website feed. The city will only collect the user data necessary to provide requested information. Only requested or emergency information will be sent using that data.

Neither the city nor its agents sell or rent mailing lists of its subscribers to any organization. The city *may* provide lists of its subscribers to project partner government agencies, and then only to provide customized information to residents or business owners who may be served by receipt of that information. PLEASE NOTE: The city and its agents may be required to provide e-mail lists to third parties if the information is requested under Washington State public disclosure law.

Subscribers have the permanent option to unsubscribe from any subscription services offered. Subscribers may at any time modify their contact information or remove their address entirely from the system.

Contact the online editor at ciosso@bellevuewa.gov if you have questions or suggestions regarding the city's subscription services.

Disclaimer

The City of Bellevue does not warranty the accuracy, reliability, or timeliness of the information published on its website and shall not be held liable for any losses caused by the reliance on such. Any person or entity that relies on any information obtained from this site does so at his or her own risk.

Sharing of information:

- When the city allows its staff members to communicate potentially confidential data over the Internet, authentication procedures and encryption schemes for potentially confidential data must be in place.
- The city may electronically share information between programs with related missions when the purpose for such sharing is to improve service delivery.

Records Management

- The city will stay informed of and adhere to applicable public records laws and statutes.
- The city will retain only those records that explicitly serve a government purpose, as mandated by statute or regulation.
- The city has a duty to make known the procedures it has in place for the inspection of information held about an individual or other entity.

- The Information Technology Department will save a “snapshot” of the city’s website on a monthly basis for public records retention purposes.

Responsibility

- The City of Bellevue is neither responsible nor liable for any delays, inaccuracies, errors, or omissions arising from use of this site or any material posted on the site. The city site and all materials contained on it are distributed and transmitted “as is” without warranties of any kind.
- The city is not responsible for any type of damages that may arise from the use of, or the inability to use, the site and/or the materials contained on the site whether the materials contained on the site are provided by the city or a third party.
- The city is neither responsible nor liable for any viruses or other contamination of visitors’ systems.

Cookies and Plug-ins

Cookies are simple text files stored on visitors’ computers by their web browsers. Cookies provide a method of distinguishing among visitors to a website and are frequently utilized to confirm the integrity of online transactions. If cookies are used, they will not contain personally identifiable information or otherwise compromise users’ privacy or security.

Plug-ins are tools downloaded to users’ computers to work with their software. Plug-ins are intended to enhance the browsing experience by enabling users to view information in a unique manner or enable access to information.

Online Services

If, during a visit to the City of Bellevue website, users access online services, the city will collect additional information related directly to those services.

Electronic Commerce

The city’s electronic commerce websites allow users the option to do business with the city over the Web, including making electronic payments for goods and services. Such transactions are allowed only under tightly controlled circumstances, where there are appropriate technological and other safeguards in place to protect financial and other sensitive data. Wherever possible, financial information is not seen or collected by the city itself. Instead, designated banks route the data, transfer the funds, and confirm payment to both the user and the city unless the customer has signed a written request that the city retain such information.

There may be some variation in the handling of financial data, depending on the method of payment users choose. However, in all cases, measures including but not limited to encryption are used to ensure the integrity and security of users’ financial information.

The provision of this information must not be construed in any way as giving business, legal or other advice, or warranting as fail-proof the security of information provided via city-supported websites.

Private Vendors

The City of Bellevue may use private vendors to provide online services as a means to reduce costs and improve services. These vendors are acting on behalf of the city and will abide by the relevant city policies.

II. LINKS

The city's website and social media pages contain links to other sites. These links are offered because the organization, agency or business is somehow affiliated or supportive of a city program or event. The city does not post links to organizations or businesses in return for them posting links to the city site. Neither does it post links in return for financial compensation.

The Internet sites available through these links and the materials found on them are not under the control of the city. Neither the City of Bellevue nor any agent, officer or employee warrants the accuracy, reliability or timeliness of any information published on outside sites. Making these links available is not an endorsement or recommendation of any of these sites, the materials on them or their organizations. The city provides these links only as a convenience to users. Links shall not include a "call to action" for users to patronize or support the linked business, agency or organization.

Moreover, the city is not responsible for the privacy practices of linked sites. These sites may send cookies to users, collect data or solicit personal information. Visitors should read the privacy statements of sites that collect personally-identifiable information.

Sites for Which Links Are Not Provided

The city does not provide links to:

- Sites containing material determined to be obscene, indecent, illegal or libelous;
- Candidate sites and sites advocating positions on ballot propositions (*See "Fair Campaign Practices" section below*);
- Commercial sites without affiliation with city projects, programs or objectives; and
- Individual personal home pages.

Fair Campaign Practices

To avoid the appearance of endorsement of political content, links will not be made to sites that are associated with, sponsored by or serve a candidate for elected office, any political party or organization supporting or seeking to defeat any candidate for elective office, or any ballot proposal. Links to factual information prepared by the city or other public organizations – such as the King County Voters' Pamphlet, Municipal League, League of Women Voters, and the Association of Washington Cities – may be provided as public information.

Link Maintenance

Departments will routinely check links on their web pages to ensure they are functional and contain no material that violates this policy.

Questions about the city's linking policy or requests to link to the city's website should be referred to the online editor at ciosso@bellevuewa.gov.

III. CONTENT

All content on the city's website will be sponsored or cosponsored by the city or directly linked to the city's policy objectives or departmental activities. Content will accurately reflect City Council and management policy positions. Political advocacy by individuals or interest groups, including current and former elected officials, is not appropriate material for the City of Bellevue website.

Website integrity

- The city will maintain one official website – <http://www.bellevuewa.gov> – for presenting in-depth information about city programs, services and events. No other independent city-sponsored, project-specific websites are allowed.
- To reach additional audiences, the city does post some content on social media sites Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Flickr. The city has general pages on these sites: <http://www.facebook.com/bellevuewashington>; <http://www.youtube.com/BellevueWashington>; <http://twitter.com/bellevuewa>; and <http://www.flickr.com/photos/bellevuewashington/>. The city also has department and special-interest pages on these sites. Each department or special-interest social media page will be linked with the general city site for that social medium. More information about social media sites is available in the social media chapter of this document.
- As a member of consortiums for special projects and the eCityGov Alliance, the city supports or participates in other websites not part of the official city site.
- The city's Internet site will have a consistent look and feel from page to page and department to department. The Information Technology Governance Committee has authority to interpret this policy and the related guidelines if questions arise.
- The city's website will follow established policy guidelines for use of the city's logo.
- Use of the city seal is restricted to city-sponsored or city-contracted pages.

Copyrights

The City of Bellevue owns the copyright and/or service marks, trademarks, patents, or other proprietary rights on designated materials contained on this website, including but not limited to the website look and feel, text, graphic images, software, music, video, and any other format contained on this site. Users may print copies of materials or information or reference this site for their own personal, non-commercial use, provided that they retain the copyright symbol or other such proprietary notice intact on any copyrighted materials copied. Commercial use of this information is strictly prohibited without the express written permission of the city. The City of Bellevue reserves all other rights. The City Attorney's Office will establish guidelines for material suitable for copyrighting and will provide a central file of all copyright applications.

This site may also contain some material that is copyright-protected by others. For such material, the copyright holders retain rights for reproduction or redistribution. All persons reproducing or redistributing this information are expected to adhere to the terms and constraints invoked by that copyright holder. Such protected material, however, may be used under the terms of "fair use" as defined in the copyright laws.

Accessibility

The city recognizes its responsibility to deliver services and information accessible and useable by all people, including those with disabilities. For details, consult <http://www.bellevuewa.gov/accessibility.htm>. For questions, contact the citywide ADA coordinator.

The city makes no warranty or representation with respect to the accessibility of sites linked from our site.

Advertising

Paid commercial advertising is strictly prohibited on the Bellevue website. Any other promotion that appears on the city's website must meet the goals and objectives of the city and be directly tied to a benefit to the city, such as supporting sponsored programs.

IV. SOCIAL MEDIA

To facilitate greater citizen engagement and deliver information about city services and programs to additional audiences, the city has pages/profiles on social media sites. Social media sites typically allow posting of content – including text and photos – by site visitors.

The city is represented on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/bellevuewashington>; on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/BellevueWashington>; on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/bellevuewa>; and on Flickr at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/bellevuewashington/>.

To serve groups of residents with specific interests in department events and programs, the city can have additional social-media sites.

To ensure that residents can distinguish the city's social-media pages from others, all department or special-interest social media page will be linked with the general city site for that social medium (for example, the Parks Facebook page will be linked to Bellevue's general Facebook page).

To ensure that residents can still find out about all major City of Bellevue events and programs in one place, departments with social-media pages shall post information of citywide interest on the city's general social-media page(s), in addition to the department social-media pages. For example, a major event for the Fire Department posted on the department's Twitter page, would also be posted on the city's general Twitter page.

All Bellevue social media sites or services are considered an extension of the city's information networks, and are governed by the Bellevue Technology Resource Usage Policy and/or Website Policies and Procedures.

Approval Process

The City Manager's Office shall approve what social media outlets may be suitable for use by the city and its departments.

The city manager will review department requests to use social media sites and may delegate this review function to the New Media Group and the Director of Communications. The City Manager's Office will monitor the city's social media sites to ensure appropriate use, message and branding consistent with Bellevue's goals.

Violation of these standards may result in the removal of social media pages or the imposition of oversight before content is posted. The Communications director retains the authority to remove pages and manage the posting of content.

Moderation

While visitors to social-media sites hosted by the City of Bellevue can post content directly on some Bellevue social media pages, the content must comply with Bellevue guidelines, being essentially free

of libel, profanity and harassing attacks. A comment policy stating what kinds of comments are unacceptable will be posted on all social media pages.

Staff will monitor content posted by site visitors and delete it when it does not comply with the city's stated guidelines. These social media sites or services are "limited public forums," so the city can exert reasonable limitations on what comments/content are posted. Deleted content from visitors must be retained as public records. Unless the deleted content is "spam," so obviously in violation, staff will notify the individual who posted inappropriate material how the content was in violation.

Applicable Laws

Departments that use social media are responsible for complying with applicable laws regarding records retention and open meetings.

Comments from the public posted on one of the city's social media sites are considered public records. Staff should capture the content of the comment and manage it as a record. When the city posts content on one of its social media sites, which has not already been posted on its own site or in some other manner, that content should also be captured as records.

Linking

Wherever possible, links to more information should direct users back to the city's official website or partner sites for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the city.

Blogs

"Blog," a contraction of the term "web log," refers to online journals that tend to feature relatively informal, first-person narratives. They can offer a valuable option for disseminating information and allow for comments from and interactive conversation with residents. City of Bellevue blogs have the potential to reach new audiences and engage stakeholders in a new way. City blogs are limited public forums to which state laws concerning records retention, public disclosure, open public meetings and use of government resources apply.

1. All Bellevue blogs shall be approved by the supervisor of the department or division sponsoring the blog, in consultation with the City Manager's Office, through the Director of Communications. As with social media, the New Media Group will advise the City Manager's Office regarding proposed and existing blogs. Blogs shall be published with the approved city blogging platform and tools, and administered by the Information Technology Department.
2. All City of Bellevue blogs and bloggers shall adhere to the:
 - a. City of Bellevue Website Policies and Procedures
 - b. City of Bellevue Technology Resource and Usage Policy
3. The city reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of these policies.
4. Each blog shall include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and topical scope of the blog.
5. Blogs can include links to referenced agencies or businesses, including event sponsors.

6. Blog authors can be any staff who are knowledgeable, due to their job, with the topic(s) addressed in the blog. In addition to posting entries, blog authors will moderate comments and, in some cases, post replies.
7. Blog moderators shall allow all comments topically related to the blog article and thus within the purpose of the limited public forum, in their entirety, unless they contain any of the following:
 - A. Vulgar, obscene, offensive, threatening or harassing language;
 - B. Promotion or perpetuation of discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
 - C. Content that is defamatory or potentially libelous;
 - D. Sexual content;
 - E. Promotion or advertisement for any business or other commercial purpose;
 - F. Promotion of or opposition to any ballot proposition and/or any person campaigning for election to political office.
 - G. Content for conducting or encouraging illegal activity,
 - H. Content that compromises the safety or security of the public or public systems;
 - I. Violation of a legal ownership interest of any other party; or
 - J. Links to websites or documents focused on any of the above.
8. It is the responsibility of blog moderators to be knowledgeable about the city's blog policy.
9. All blogs shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by the City of Bellevue and shall have city contact information prominently displayed. To ensure blogs are consistent with the city's branding, the CMO should be consulted regarding the look of the blog.
10. Blogs focused on time-sensitive issues may have fixed timelines. Such blogs will be removed from public view once their useful life is completed, as determined by the City Manager's Office and the sponsoring department.

Legal Requirements

1. **Public Disclosure:** City of Bellevue blogs are subject to State of Washington Public Records Act (RCW 42.56). All blogs shall clearly indicate that all content posted or submitted for posting is subject to public disclosure. All blogs shall include a notification that public disclosure requests must be directed to the city's public records officer.
2. **Records Retention:** Relevant city records retention schedules apply to blogs and blog content. The blog moderator is responsible for retaining the related public records. All blog content, including comments submitted but not posted or deleted because of inappropriate content, will be considered public records. The content should be maintained in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible. Content submitted but not posted will be retained along with the reason the content was deemed not suitable for posting. Efforts need to be taken to ensure that content and comments posted on blog sites not fully controlled by the city are captured for the entire retention period (typically two years – potentially longer for elected officials).
3. **Limited Public Forum:** As a form of communication by the government focused on specific issues, a City of Bellevue blog can be considered a limited public forum. Essentially, blog moderators can decline to post comments without being accused of violating free speech rights. However, comments can only be removed or left out if they have content named in number 7

of the General section above. Comments cannot be removed or left out simply because the commenter disagrees with or is critical of a city program or event. The criteria for comments not posted must be objective, and so must the application of that criteria. The city's policy regarding inappropriate comments shall be posted and city bloggers must specify how a comment is inappropriate per the policy.

Author and Commenter Identification

1. All blog authors shall be clearly identified.
2. Blog commenters shall register with a profile authenticated by the tool/format/website used for hosting the blog.

Provisions for Council Members

Council members may choose to launch blogs, either on their own or hosted by the city. Elected officials are expected to be knowledgeable and comply with the following issues relevant to blogs:

Use of City Resources: According to RCW 42.17.130, no elected official can use or authorize the use of public facilities, including city-sponsored blogs, for campaign purposes. Council members cannot post entries to their blogs between the day they announce they are running for reelection and the day someone has been elected for the seat. Blogs cannot contain campaign information, including links to websites intended to promote a political campaign.

Records Retention: Whether the blog is city-hosted or handled by the council member on their own, all entries and comments shall be retained. The laws relative to this are not specific about the format. As long as the council member has a consistent way to retain all the records, including comments not posted, he or she will be in compliance.

Open Public Meetings: Council members should avoid posting comments to other council members' blogs. If a quorum discusses city business on a blog, it would be a violation of the Open Public Meetings Act.