



City of Bothell™

Social Media Policy

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8/23/10

Introduction

Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, and more have created channels for anyone or any organization, including government, to share information, network, socialize, and report on life as it happens.

Government agencies now have efficient, cost-effective means to reach citizens directly and encourage instant feedback. Additionally, changes in the economy have created challenges for traditional forms of media so it has become even more important for government agencies to find new ways to reach citizens.

However, using social media poses particular challenges for the public sector. Concerns about fairness as well as state and federal laws such as the Public Records Act and Open Public Meetings Act can pose challenges to fully embracing social media. Additionally, with limited resources, local governments usually have few staff who are trained in public communications. Releasing untrained on public outreach through social media creates risk for inconsistent or inaccurate information.

This paper explains the City of Bothell's strategy for implementing social media. Also included are details on how various risks and concerns are addressed in the Social Media Administrative Order #1.5.4 and corresponding documents.

Implementation Strategy

Limited use in the first three months: The Social Media Administrative Order (AO) specifies that Departments must obtain approval from the Public Information Officer prior to creating a social media site (section 6.1.b). For the first three months after approval of the AO, other than the social media sites already developed by the Tourism Coordinator and Police PIO, no new social media sites will be created except those managed by the Public Information Officer. During the three-month period, the PIO will create a City Facebook account and resurrect the City's Twitter account. In addition to opening new communication channels, this will provide

Corresponding Documents

- 1. Administrative Order #1.5.4 Social Media Policies and Procedures**
Internal policies for City staff.
- 2. City of Bothell Social Media Policy**
Policy for external audiences to be posted or linked to all City social media sites.
- 3. Social Media Application Form**
Application form for staff to submit to the Public Information Officer.
- 4. Social Media Site Guidelines**
Template developed in order to provide specific guidelines to staff if they have been approved to create and manage a social media site.

an opportunity to learn more about the online audience in Bothell and ensure the effectiveness of the adopted policies.

Education for employees and elected officials: When the AO was approved, the PIO notified staff of the new policy and explained procedures for applying for a social media site for departments. In coordination with the Human Resources Director, the PIO will provide training to departments about the new policies, as well as some of the pitfalls and benefits of personal use of social media as a public employee. The City Attorney notified elected officials about the new policy and advised them not to participate in the City’s social media sites, emphasizing sensitivity to the Open Public Meetings Act.

Application for social media sites: After the initial three-month testing phase, staff may apply to manage a department-specific social media site (see “Social Media Application Form”). The purpose of the form is to

1. assist staff in thinking strategically about why they want to use social media and who they are trying to reach;
2. assist staff in developing plans for managing the site and setting goals;
3. obtain Director review and approval; and
4. assess how the social media site might fit into the overall City communications strategy.

If approved, the Public Information Officer will provide guidelines specific to that social media site based on a standard template (see “Social Media Site Guidelines”) as well as ongoing support and training.

Regular meetings of approved site managers: Those staff who manage approved social media sites will be expected to attend monthly Bothell 2.0 meetings to share experiences, tips, and troubleshoot. The meetings will also include all City website contributors (noted in the Social Media Guidelines).

Review and evaluation: Social media sites will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Public Information Officer, including an audit every six months to ensure they are being maintained in compliance with policies and guidelines, to measure progress on meeting goals, and to evaluate effectiveness (noted in the AO section 6.1.g and Social Media Guidelines).

Legal Issues

Public Records Management

According to a report issued by the law firm Davis Wright Tremaine, “Posts by public entities and their employees in the state of Washington should be considered to be public records if they are made or received in connection with the agency’s public business.” Furthermore, there are requirements in Washington Code to maintain “metadata” or data about data Chapter 434-662 WAC). While there is still some ambiguity about how state public records law applies specifically to social media, agencies are advised to err on the side of caution.

Public records issues have been addressed in Bothell's social media policies in the following ways:

1. The AO defines all information posted on City social media sites as subject to the Public Records Act and associated retention schedule (section 6.3.a).
2. City staff are encouraged to post secondary copies of information to social media sites rather than original source content. For example, staff should generally post information that has already been posted on the City's website.
3. Department staff are responsible for ensuring retention of the original source content in organized, searchable electronic file folders on the City's servers. The records should be retained in such a manner that entire folders can be deleted after hitting the three year mark (AO section 6.3.b).
4. Subscriber information and comments – including removed comments – also must be similarly retained (AO section 6.3.c.).
5. The AO is somewhat open ended about the exact method of retention in order to accommodate changes in technology. Currently, one of the most comprehensive and efficient means of maintaining social media records is through a service called "Backupify." Procedures are detailed in the Social Media Guidelines.
6. Through the external City of Bothell Social Media Policy which is required to be linked to all City social media sites, the public is notified that all posts and comments are subject to public disclosure under the Public Records Act.

Open Public Meetings Act

Also according to the report issued by the law firm Davis Wright Tremaine, "Some social media sites such as Facebook allow only certain approved participants ("friends") to take part in online discussions. To the extent that any such online discussions involve public business, there could be a claim that such discussions were in violation of open meetings laws." Some cities adopt separate legislative policies to specify approved activities of elected officials on social media sites, such as the City of Seattle's Legislative Policy on the Use of Social Media by City Councilmembers. Other cities, such as the City of Shoreline, ban all use by elected officials on the City's social media sites. The approach taken for the City of Bothell is as follows:

Councilmembers and other officials and appointed volunteers (i.e. members of the Planning Commission, Landmark Preservation Board, LEOFF-1 Disability Board, Library Board, Lodging Tax Advisory Board, Shorelines Board, Parks and Recreation Board, Civil Service Commission, and ad hoc appointed citizen advisory committees) shall not comment or otherwise communicate on the City's Social Media sites. Participating in online discussions may constitute a meeting under the Open Public Meetings Act. The Public Information Officer may post secondary copies of materials developed by elected officials if the original content has been published through other City communication channels (such as the "Council Corner"). (AO section 6.2.g)

Per the advice of the City Attorney, the above language will be presented to the City Council to be included in the Council Protocol Manual.

First Amendment Rights

In order to maintain the integrity and credibility of the City's social media sites, it is important to place parameters around appropriate content for the sites. In order to avoid running afoul of First Amendment rights, it is recommended that public entities clearly state that the social media site is providing a moderated online discussion, and that the entity reserves the right to delete postings not in compliance with its policies. This issue is addressed for the City of Bothell in the following ways:

1. Prohibited content is stated in the AO (section 6.4), the external Social Media Policy, and in the Social Media Site Guidelines. This list was compiled from examples of other cities as well as the Washington State Attorney General's Office.
2. The content limitations apply to staff as well as the public.
3. The external Social Media Policy states that City social media sites are limited public forums and are moderated by City staff.
4. Staff are instructed to remove inappropriate content and retain records.

Privacy Rights

Privacy rights are addressed as follows:

1. The external Social Media Policy includes a privacy policy and disclaimer, which also notes that users of a City of Bothell social media site are also subject to the site's own privacy policy.
2. Social Media Site Guidelines state that staff should create logins and passwords that are not associated with any logins and passwords used for personal business.

Section 508 Accessibility Rights

In 1998, Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act to require Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. Government entities which receive Federal funding are generally required to provide qualified individuals with disabilities equal access to their programs, services, or activities unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of their programs, services, or activities or would impose an undue burden. Accessibility is addressed as follows:

1. The Social Media Site Guidelines state that, when posting photos, add text to explain what is in the picture. For video, add text that explains what the video is about. For PDF posted to the City website and linked on the social media site, clearly identify what is in the PDF and an alternate way to obtain the PDF (such as a phone number). Many people with disabilities use "assistive technology" to enable them to use computers and access the Internet such as screen readers – devices that speak the text that would normally appear on a monitor. Because screen readers cannot interpret images unless there is text associated with it, adding text and other means of obtaining information will make the site more accessible to everyone.
2. Staff are encouraged to use secondary copies of information on social media sites.

An agency with an inaccessible site may also meet its legal obligations by providing an alternative accessible way for citizens to use the programs or services, such as a staffed telephone information line.

Copyright Protection

Copyright issues run both ways – staff are at risk of violating the copyrights of those outside of the City and the City of Bothell is at risk of having content used without permission. The following addresses copyright issues:

1. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party is prohibited. (AO section 6.4.j).
2. The external Social Media Policy states that all information and materials generated by the City of Bothell and provided on City of Bothell social media sites are the property of the City of Bothell (section D. Copyright Policy). The policy goes on to explain appropriate use of City copyrighted materials.
3. The external Social Media Policy also states that copyright holders can contact the City of Bothell to have information corrected or content removed if copyrighted materials are not properly credited.
4. In the Social Media Site Guidelines, staff are cautioned to be sensitive of copyright issues when posting to the City’s social media sites.

Other Issues

Security

Site security against outside infiltration is addressed in the Social Media Site Guidelines. As stated in the AO, the Public Information Officer is responsible for maintaining a record of all logins and passwords and for communicating that with the Information Services Department.

Coordination with Information Services

The Public Information Officer will coordinate with Information Services to ensure access to social media sites for those employees approved to manage or contribute to social media sites.

Commercial Language

In order to accommodate existing social media sites managed by the Tourism Coordinator and to allow future flexibility, posts and comments that promote or advertise commercial services, entities or products are prohibited *except* as stipulated in City marketing plans and determined by the City to be essential to economic development (AO section 6.4.b).

Personal Use

AO #1.5.4 addresses social media on behalf of the City of Bothell to communicate with the public. A separate but related issue is how individual employees are using social media. After meeting with the Human Resources Director, we agreed that keeping these two issues separate would be more efficient, as the development of social media policies for personal use requires careful consideration of complex issues and possible approval of the City’s labor unions.

Employee social media use entails the following issues for the City of Bothell:

1. **Employees who create a social media site on behalf of the City:** As submitted, AO #1.5.4 limits employee use on behalf of the City, and once approved, should cease creation of any new social media sites without permission of the Public Information Officer.
2. **Employees who use social media for personal business while at the workplace:** Personnel Policy 10.5 addresses business and limited personal use at the workplace, specifying that it should be of short duration and not interfere with the workplace.
3. **Employees who identify themselves as City of Bothell employees on social media sites on their own time:** This is perhaps the greatest risk to the City related to social media at this time. If unaddressed, the City could be vulnerable to public misinformation, a tarnished reputation as an employer, claims of defamation, harassment, copyright infringement, and private information disclosure. Complicating the issue is the City's responsibility to First Amendment rights and protected concerted activity (NLRA).

Recommendations:

While further policies regarding social media are being considered for City employees, the following steps could be taken in the interim to mitigate risk to the City:

1. Training: Departments or teams could be trained on responsible use of social media in their personal lives. While not prohibited from identifying themselves as City of Bothell employees, the training could include tips on preserving privacy and maintaining professionalism. Remind employees that they should have no expectation of privacy when posting information on a public website. As Public Information Officer, I would be happy to assist in trainings.
2. Request that if City employees make statements on social media about the City of Bothell that they note that their comments are personal and not reflective of the City of Bothell as a whole.

Conclusion

By addressing legal issues and providing clear guidelines to employees, the City of Bothell is poised to implement social media in a way that is legally compliant, harnesses the creativity and enthusiasm of employees, and provides a valuable service to Bothell citizens.

#1.5.4

**CITY OF BOTHELL
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**

TITLE: Social Media Policies and Procedures

EFFECTIVE DATE: 7-20-2010

REPLACES ORDER:

APPROVED BY:



Name: Robert S. Stowe
Title: City Manager

1.0 PURPOSE:

- To establish basic guidelines, standards and instructions for the City to use social media for the purpose of sharing time-sensitive and emergency information; enhancing customer service; providing information about City programs, services, projects, issues, events and activities; and marketing City goals and missions within an overall communications strategy.
- To establish guidelines for City social media sites in order to ensure consistency, accuracy, value to citizens, and compliance with State and Federal laws.
- To prohibit inappropriate use.

2.0 DEPARTMENTS/DIVISIONS AFFECTED:

All

3.0 REFERENCES:

City of Bothell Personnel Policies & Procedures (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 10.1, 10.2, 10.5)
Administrative Orders (1.5.2, 1.5.3., 2.0.1)
State Public Disclosure Act (RCW 42.56)
State Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30)
State Preservation of Electronic Records Code (Chapter 434-662 WAC)

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4.0 DEFINITIONS:

- a. Social Media: the use of third party hosted online technologies that facilitate social interaction and dialogue provides alternative ways for the City of Bothell to share information with a broader audience. Social Media includes social networking sites like FaceBook, micro-blogging tools such as Twitter and audio-visual networking sites such as YouTube.
- b. Site Manager: a designated City contact who creates a department-specific Social Media site and is responsible for posting information and monitoring comments on that site.
- c. Site Contributor: a designated City contact who posts information and monitors comments under the direction of a site manager.
- d. Post: an article or short statement or other content posted to a City social media site by a City site manager or site contributor.
- e. Commenter: a member of the public who submits a comment for posting in response to the content of a particular City post or social media content.
- f. Comment: a response to a City post or social media content submitted by a commenter.
- g. Subscriber: a member of the public who subscribes to a social media site to receive regular updates (such as “followers” in Twitter and “fans” in Facebook).

5.0 ORDER:

The following procedures and standards will be used by all departments using Social Media sites.

6.0 PROCEDURE:

1. Creating Department Social Media Sites
 - a. Prior to creating a Social Media site, departments should consider the need and value of a department- or program-dedicated site versus relying on other City communication channels to disperse department or program information. Since Social Media sites lose the interest of their audiences when not updated regularly, department staff should calculate the time and effort it will take to maintain a site so that visitors continue to find value over time. As a rule of thumb, Social Media sites should be updated at least once per week.
 - b. Departments must obtain approval from the Public Information Officer prior to creating a Social Media site for City business.
 - c. Once approval is received from the Public Information Officer, the department must use guidelines developed by the Public Information Officer to create the Social Media site in order to ensure appropriate

information is posted and to maintain consistency with other City Social Media sites.

- d. The Public Information Officer shall maintain a list of all City Social Media sites that are operating including logins and passwords. Departments must inform the Public Information Officer if they make changes to logins and passwords or intend to stop operating their Social Media site. The Public Information Officer will make this information accessible to the Information Services Department for technical assistance.
- e. The Department director must appoint a specific staff member(s) to maintain and monitor the Social Media site (site manager). Directors are responsible for ensuring their staff follows the procedures set forth in this Social Media Administrative Order.
- f. In compliance with sections 6.2, and 6.3, site managers are responsible for regularly posting information, monitoring comments, removing any prohibited content as set forth in section 6.4, and saving content required under the Public Records Act as described in Section 6.3.
- g. Social Media sites will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and audited every six months by the Public Information Officer to ensure that they are maintained in compliance with procedures set forth in this Social Media Administrative Order. At anytime that a site is not being managed and monitored appropriately, the Public Information Officer may take action, including shutting down the site.
- h. A Comment Policy Notice must be displayed on Social Media sites that allow comments and if the profile settings can accommodate the Notice, indicating the discussion is moderated and inappropriate content will be removed. The City's External Social Media Policy must be linked on all Social Media sites.

2. Information Posted on Social Media Sites

City-Posted Information

- a. The most appropriate uses of City Social Media sites are: (1) for time-sensitive and emergency information; and (2) as a communications/promotional/marketing tool which increases the City's ability to broadcast its message to the widest possible audience.
- b. Site managers must maintain accurate City information on Social Media sites by frequently reviewing and updating it as necessary and appropriate.
- c. In order to ensure appropriate retention of public records, most content posted by the City departments on City Social Media sites should not be original source content (content that has not been created anywhere else; only exists on the Social Media site), but rather a secondary copy of information that is posted either on the City website or contained in an electronic record or a hard copy.

- d. If original content is posted on a Social Media site, that information must be retained as described in section 6.3.
- e. Wherever possible, a link to the City's website, www.ci.bothell.wa.us, should be included in Social Media posts, directing users back to the City of Bothell website for in-depth information on the posted content.
- f. Content posted to Social Media sites should comply with policies set forth in section 6.4 as well as City of Bothell Personnel Policies and Procedures.
- g. Councilmembers and other officials and appointed volunteers (i.e. members of the Planning Commission, Landmark Preservation Board, LEOFF-1 Disability Board, Library Board, Lodging Tax Advisory Board, Shorelines Board, Parks and Recreation Board, Civil Service Commission, and ad hoc appointed citizen advisory committees) shall not comment or otherwise communicate on the City's Social Media sites. Participating in online discussions may constitute a meeting under the Open Public Meetings Act. The Public Information Officer may post secondary copies of materials developed by elected officials if the original content has been published through other City communication channels (such as the "Council Corner").

Information Posted by Outside Individuals

- a. For all City Social Media sites that allow posts, those sites are limited public forums, moderated by City of Bothell staff to ensure content posted by outside users is appropriate.
- b. Prohibited content is described in section 6.4.
- c. Prohibited content must be removed immediately and retained as required under the Public Records Act and described in section 6.3 by the site manager.

3. Retention of Posted Information

- a. Information posted on the City's Social Media sites is subject to the Public Records Act and associated retention schedule. Original source content posted on Social Media sites must be retained for three years from the date of posting.
- b. Site managers are responsible for ensuring retention of the original source content in organized, searchable electronic file folders on the City's servers. The records should be retained in such a manner that entire folders can be deleted after hitting the three year mark.
- c. Subscriber information and comments posted by outside users on City Social Media sites, including those that are prohibited and removed by staff, must be retained. In addition, when inappropriate content is removed, the record must include the name of the staff member who removed the content and the date and time the content was removed. Records will be maintained using the best technology available in order to capture comprehensive data about what has been posted on social media sites. Instructions to site managers and contributors will be detailed in guidelines provided by the Public Information Officer.

4. Prohibited Content

The following is prohibited on City of Bothell Social Media sites:

- a. Comments not topically related to the particular post being commented upon;
- b. Posts and comments that promote or advertise commercial services, entities or products except as stipulated in City marketing plans and determined by the City to be essential to economic development;
- c. Political statements, including comments that endorse or oppose political candidates or ballot propositions, are prohibited under state law (RCW 42.52.180);
- d. Posts and comments that promote, foster or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- e. Posts and comments that include vulgar, offensive, threatening or harassing language, personal attacks or unsupported accusations;
- f. Obscene or sexual content or links to obscene or sexual content;
- g. Illegal activity or encouragement of illegal activity;
- h. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- i. Comments from children under 13 cannot be posted in order to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. By posting on a City social media site, users acknowledge that they are at least 13 years old. Those 12 years old or younger may e-mail the City instead;
- j. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party; or
- k. Anonymous posts.



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City of Bothell Social Media Policy (External)

A. Privacy Policy and Disclaimer

Any individual accessing, browsing and using a City of Bothell Social Media site accepts without limitation or qualification, the City's Social Media Policies (hereafter "Policies"). These terms and conditions apply only to the Social Media sites (defined here as third party hosted online technologies that facilitate social interaction and dialogue, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) that are managed by the City of Bothell. The City of Bothell maintains the right to modify these Policies without notice. Any modification is effective immediately upon posting the modification on the Social Media Policy page unless otherwise stated. Continued use of a City of Bothell Social Media site following the posting of any modification signifies acceptance of such modification.

All users of a City of Bothell Social Media site are also subject to the site's own Privacy Policy. The City of Bothell has no control over a site's privacy policy or their modifications to it. The City of Bothell also has no control over content, commercial advertisements, or other postings produced by the Social Media site that appear on the City of Bothell Social Media site as part of the site's environment.

The City of Bothell operates and maintains its Social Media sites as a public service to provide information about City programs, services, projects, issues, events and activities. The City of Bothell assumes no liability for any inaccuracies these Social Media sites may contain and does not guarantee that the Social Media sites will be uninterrupted, permanent, or error-free.

B. Posts Policy

Although we encourage posts and comments on City of Bothell Social Media sites that allow posts, these sites are limited public forums and are moderated by City staff. All posted content (comments, photos, links, etc.) must be related to the topic at hand. The following are prohibited on City of Bothell Social Media sites:

- Comments not topically related to the particular post being commented upon;
- Posts and comments that promote or advertise commercial services, entities or products except as stipulated in City marketing plans and determined by the City to be essential to economic development;
- Political statements, including comments that endorse or oppose political candidates or ballot propositions, are prohibited under state law (RCW 42.52.180);
- Posts and comments that promote, foster or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- Posts and comments that include vulgar, offensive, threatening or harassing language, personal attacks or unsupported accusations;

- Obscene or sexual content or links to obscene or sexual content;
- Illegal activity or encouragement of illegal activity;
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- Comments from children under 13 cannot be posted in order to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. By posting on a City social media site, users acknowledge that they are at least 13 years old. Those 12 years old or younger may e-mail the City instead;
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party; or
- Anonymous posts.

The City of Bothell reserves the right to remove posted content that does not comply with these Policies. All posts and comments uploaded to City of Bothell Social Media sites that allow posts will be periodically reviewed. All posts and comments are public records subject to public disclosure under the Public Records Act.

Communications made through City of Bothell Social Media sites in no way constitute a legal or official notice or comment to the City of Bothell. (For example, a post or comment that asks for public records will not be considered a public records request under RCW 42.56.) To comment about a specific city project or program, please contact the appropriate department.

C. Links Policy

1. Links to other Social Media Sites and External Websites Provided on City of Bothell Social Media Sites

The City of Bothell may select links to other Social Media sites and outside websites that offer helpful resources for users. Once an individual links to another page or site, the City's Policies no longer apply and you become subject to the policies of that page or site. The City of Bothell's Social Media sites are intended specifically to share information about City programs, events and services. The City of Bothell is not responsible for the content that appears on these outside links and provides these links as a convenience only. Users should be aware that these external pages and sites and the information found on those pages and sites are not controlled by, provided by or endorsed by the City of Bothell. The City reserves the right to delete links posted by outside individuals that violate the City's Posts Policy at any time without notice.

2. Links by Other Entities to City of Bothell Social Media Sites

It is not necessary to get advance permission to link to City of Bothell Social Media sites; however, entities and individuals linking to City of Bothell Social Media sites may not capture any of the City's Social Media sites within frames, present City of Bothell content as their own or otherwise misrepresent any of the City's Social Media site content. Furthermore, they shall not misinform users about the origin or ownership of City of Bothell Social Media site content. Links to City of Bothell Social Media sites should not in any way suggest that the City of Bothell has any relationship or affiliation with that organization or that the City endorses, sponsors or recommends the information, products or services of that site.

D. Copyright Policy

All information and materials generated by the City of Bothell and provided on City of Bothell Social Media sites are the property of the City of Bothell. The City retains copyright on all text, graphic images and other content that was produced by the City of Bothell and found on the page. You may print copies of information and material for your own non-commercial use, provided that you retain the copyright

symbol or other such proprietary notice intact on any copyrighted materials you copy. Please include a credit line reading: "credit: City of Bothell Facebook (or Twitter or YouTube) Page" or "Courtesy of City of Bothell."

Commercial use of text, City logos, photos and other graphics is prohibited without the express written permission of the City of Bothell. Use of the City logo is prohibited for any non-governmental purpose. Any person reproducing or redistributing a third party copyright must adhere to the terms and conditions of the third party copyright holder. If you are a copyright holder and you feel that the City of Bothell did not use an appropriate credit line please notify the Public Information Officer with detailed information about the circumstances, so that the copyright information can be added or the material in question can be removed.

E. Contact Us

If you have any questions or concerns about the City of Bothell Social Media Policy or its implementation, or if you find incorrect information or are interested in seeking permissions that fall outside of the guidelines above, please contact the City's Public Information Officer.



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Social Media Application Form

Thank you for your interest in creating a social media site to communicate about City of Bothell services. Per Administrative Order #1.5.4, departments must obtain approval from the Public Information Officer prior to creating a social media site. This is to ensure that social media sites are consistent with the City's mission and communications strategy, as well as legally compliant. Once approved, you will be provided with guidelines for setting up and managing the social media site. Please submit this form with Director approval to the Public Information Officer and allow 5 to 10 business days for processing. If you have any questions about this form or the City's policies on social media, please contact the Public Information Officer.

Date: _____

Director Approval	

Signature	Date

Contact Information

Name: _____ Department: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Social Media Proposal

Topic: _____

Type: Facebook Twitter Flickr YouTube Blog Other _____

What is the business need? _____

Who is your target audience? _____

There are social media sites for the City of Bothell as a whole. What are the benefits to creating a separate social media site for your topic? _____

Are there other departments or other functions in your department that would be logical partners in this social media site? _____

If more than one staff member will be involved with managing this site, please list all staff members who will have administrative access to the site:

Please briefly describe your plans for the following:

How will you drive subscribers to this site? _____

What are some of the subjects you plan to include within this topic? _____

How often will there be new postings on the site? _____

How will the site be monitored and how will responses be handled when a City response is needed? _____

How will you measure success and what are your goals over the next year? _____

[EXAMPLE ONLY]



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Social Media Site Guidelines

Date: _____	Site Topic: _____
Type: <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter <input type="checkbox"/> Flickr <input type="checkbox"/> YouTube <input type="checkbox"/> Blog <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
Site Manager: _____	Department: _____
Target Audience: _____	
Goals: _____	
Review Date: _____	

Thank you for taking the lead on creating a social media site to communicate about City of Bothell services. This document confirms approval of the social media application you submitted. Please note that this does not guarantee that site will be permanent. All City of Bothell social media sites will be reviewed every six months to ensure that they are maintained in compliance with procedures set forth in the Social Media Administrative Order. Following are guidelines specific to the site you will be managing. Please also reference Administrative Order #1.5.4. If you have any questions, please contact the Public Information Officer.

Before Going “Live”

Setting up the social media site will go more smoothly if you check that the following are ready to go ahead of time:

- Have any firewalls removed from site (send request to Helpdesk)
- Create a profile picture (see below)
- Brainstorm back up articles/postings for slow periods

Setting Up the Social Media Site

Identity: Create a login and password that are not associated with any logins and passwords that you might use for personal business. The password should also be dissimilar to other passwords used for City business. Use your city email address as the account email. The main reference website should be: www.ci.bothell.wa.us.

Contributors: You have identified the following City staff members as other contributors to the site: (list). You will want to share the logins and passwords with the other contributors and determine how you will be sharing tasks. As site manager, you are responsible for ensuring that all contributors comply with these guidelines and Administrative Order #1.5.4.

Profile picture: An approved city logo should appear as the profile picture or as part of the profile picture. In order to make the profile picture site specific, a custom profile picture could be created. Please discuss further with the PIO.

External policy: All social media sites must link to the City's external social media policy, "City of Bothell Social Media Policy:" www.ci.bothell.wa.us/socialmediapolicy.pdf. If the site does not have the capability of linking to more than one website in the account profile, then link to the external policy.

Comment policy: If the site allows comments, a Comment Policy Notice must be displayed on the site.

Reporting: Once the site is live, notify the PIO and send the password and login via interoffice mail or over voicemail (not email). The PIO maintains records of all passwords and logins and coordinates with Information Services. Please also notify the PIO of any changes to passwords, logins, and contributors.

Posting to the Site

Frequency: It is recommended that new information be posted to the site at least once per week and no more often than twice per day.

Content: As identified in Administrative Order#1.5.4, most content posted by City departments on social media sites should be a secondary copy of information that is posted either on the City website or contained in an electronic record or hard copy. Examples of secondary content might be articles published in the Bothell Bylines, news releases, messages sent via mass email, or City website posts. For original content, please see "Retaining Records" below.

Subjects: Since the topic of this social media site is _____, posts on the social media site should relate to this topic and should be within the department's area of expertise. If the information to be posted crosses over multiple departments' areas of expertise, or if there are any questions as to appropriateness of the subject, please contact the Public Information Officer before posting.

Voice: Social media is successful when subscribers feel connected to the person who is posting. Consider signing your posts with at least your first name, or name and contact information where

appropriate. Using casual language while still speaking with the official voice of a city government can be tricky. When in doubt, err on the side of sounding official.

City website links: It's a good idea to get into the habit of updating relevant pages on the City website, then including a link to a specific City webpage within postings on the social media site. The URL can be shortened by going to bit.ly or tinyurl.com.

Outside website links: The external policy states that the City of Bothell may select links to other social media sites and websites that offer helpful resources for users.

Copyrighted information: Use caution in reposting articles or photos from outside sources. In all cases, credit should be given to the original source and in some cases, written permission is required before posting. If in doubt, either check with the Public Information Officer first or do not post. As stated in the external social media policy, copyright holders may notify the Public Information Officer to correct credit information or have the material removed.

Accessibility: When posting photos, add text to explain what is in the picture. For video, add text that explains what the video is about. For PDF posted to the City website and linked on the social media site, clearly identify what is in the PDF and an alternate way to obtain the PDF (such as a phone number). Many people with disabilities use "assistive technology" to enable them to use computers and access the Internet such as screen readers – devices that speak the text that would normally appear on a monitor. Because screen readers cannot interpret images unless there is text associated with it, adding text and other means of obtaining information will make the site more accessible to everyone.

Prohibited content: Please see the list under "Monitoring and Responding to Comments." This list also applies to City staff who are posting on the social media site.

Monitoring and Responding to Comments

Frequency and response time: It is recommended that site be checked for comments at least once per day. Aim to respond immediately when possible, or within 24 hours if further research is required.

Responding to comments: Unless the comment can be responded to in one sentence or less, respond with a name and phone number and/or a City website link for more information. Keep the answers friendly and upbeat, and thank the commenter whenever appropriate. If the site receives comments from "trolls" (people who take a negative view of the post and seem to overreact to the content), take time to respond so that you are not responding out of emotion. Give yourself time to think about the situation. Has the troll really done anything more than disagree with the post? If action is required, start by making an unemotional response. Thank the commenter for expressing his or her opinion. Did the troll make any valid points? Thank the troll for adding those points to the conversation. If the comment is prohibited by the City's social media policy, remove the comment (see list below as well as "Retaining Records"). For complicated questions outside of your department's area of expertise or for questions that relate to policy, contact the Public Information Officer.

Media inquiries: Refer media inquiries to the Public Information Officer (see Administrative Order 1.5.2 Media Relations Policies and Procedures). Support staff members may respond to matters of a routine,

incidental or inconsequential nature (i.e., special event schedule or recreation activity) as stated in the City's Media Relations Policies and Procedures (AO #1.5.2). If in doubt about the nature of the question or whether or not the subscriber is a member of media, please contact the Public Information Officer.

Prohibited content: (Also known as the Comment Policy Notice) The following is prohibited:

- Comments not topically related to the particular post being commented upon;
- Posts and comments that promote or advertise commercial services, entities or products except as stipulated in City marketing plans and determined by the City to be essential to economic development;
- Political statements, including comments that endorse or oppose political candidates or ballot propositions, are prohibited under state law (RCW 42.52.180).obscene content;
- Posts and comments that promote, foster or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- Posts and comments that include vulgar, offensive, threatening or harassing language, personal attacks or unsupported accusations;
- Obscene or sexual content or links to obscene or sexual content;
- Illegal activity or encouragement of illegal activity;
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- Comments from children under 13 cannot be posted in order to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. By posting on a City social media site, users acknowledge that they are at least 13 years old. Those 12 years old or younger may e-mail the City instead;
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party; or
- Anonymous posts.

Removing prohibited content: It is your responsibility to monitor the site, remove prohibited content, and retain records of removed content as required under the Public Records Act (see "Retaining Records").

Elected officials: Councilmembers and other officials and appointed volunteers are not to comment on the City's social media sites because participating in online discussions may violate the Open Public Meetings Act. If you notice that an elected official is commenting on this site, please contact the Public Information Officer immediately.

Emergency Communications and Citywide Messaging

Emergencies: In the case of an emergency, such as a natural disaster, if you are able to access the social media site post the following message: "For emergency updates, go to www.ci.bothell.wa.us or call 425-487-5132." You will be contacted by the Public Information Officer if further assistance is needed with outreach. Do not post additional information unless instructed by the Public Information Officer to do so.

Citywide messages: From time to time, the Public Information Officer may request that certain messages be posted on all social media sites.

Retaining Records

Public Records Act: Information posted on the City's Social Media sites is subject to the Public Records Act and associated retention schedule.

Posts: Administrative Order #1.5.4 states that original source content posted on Social Media sites must be retained for three years from the date of posting. Currently, the City is backing up information through a service called "Backupify." The service backs up all data each week. After the data is backed up, the Public Information Officer will download files for this social media site and send them to you. Site managers are responsible for ensuring retention of the original source content

Comments: Comments posted by outside users on City Social Media sites, including those that are prohibited and removed by staff, must be retained. Comments that remain on the site will be retained through Backupify as mentioned above. When an inappropriate comment is removed, copy and paste the comment along with any available posting information (date, time, commenter) into a Word document. Make a note of who removed the comment and the date and time the content was removed. Removed comments should be stored with the Backupify downloads in organized, searchable electronic file folders on the City's servers. The records should be retained in such a manner that entire folders can be deleted after hitting the three year mark.

Driving People to the Site

"Soft" launch: After setting up the site, allow 2 to 4 weeks for practice and adjustment. Ask your friends and coworkers to subscribe to your site. Other users may find your site and subscribe to it, but don't actively pursue other subscribers. This way, if mistakes are made, it will not be in front of a large audience.

Full launch: When you are accustomed to the site and have developed a system for posting and monitoring, notify the Public Information Officer that you are ready to do a full launch. The PIO will post links to the social media site through other City communication channels, including Citywide social media sites. Post a link to the social media site on appropriate department pages on the City website. You may also consider likely partner organizations, such as government entities and nonprofits that you could notify about the social media site. The PIO can help you think of other avenues for propagating the site.

Site Safety and How to Handle Hacking

Precautions: While rare, social media sites are susceptible to spoofing attacks and hacking. A spoofing attack involves one program, system, or website successfully masquerading as another by falsifying data and thereby being treated as a trusted system by a user or another program. The purpose of this is usually to fool programs, systems, or users into revealing confidential information, such as user names and passwords, to the attacker. If you click a link on a site or in an email that opens to a page asking for your login and password, do not enter the login and password. Close out of that webpage immediately. Regular monitoring of the social media site will also help in detecting if there is a problem.

If the site is hacked: If you suspect or notice the site has been hacked, change the password. Post a message on the site indicating you are aware of the problem. Example: “It looks like we’ve been hacked. Working on the problem. Apologies for any inappropriate messages.” Notify the Public Information Officer and the IS Helpdesk that the site has been hacked and provide the new password. The Public Information Officer and Information Services will work with you to develop a plan for responding to subscribers and assessing the security of the site. If it appears the site has been compromised beyond repair, the site may need to be shut down.

Review and Ongoing Support

Review period: Social Media sites will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and audited every six months by the Public Information Officer to ensure that they are maintained in compliance with policies and guidelines, to measure progress on meeting goals, and to evaluate effectiveness. The PIO will contact you to set up a meeting for the six month audit.

At anytime that the site is not being managed and monitored appropriately, the PIO may take action including shutting down the site.

Bothell 2.0 meetings: Site managers are expected to attend monthly Bothell 2.0 meetings to share experiences, tips and troubleshoot. The meetings also include all City website contributors.