



## Social Media Policy

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**Department Responsible:** Strategy and Engagement Department

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### 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Town is aware of the importance of using Social Media to communicate with and engage members of the community. The Town will ensure open, honest and clear channels of communication through the use of Social Media. The key objectives are to engage the community through two-way communication, increase the awareness of the Town's services, and improve accountability through accurate and timely information posted on the Town's Social Media.

### 2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Town of LaSalle employees, members of Council, members of committees, and volunteers who use Social Media to interact with the public on behalf of the Town, save and except LaSalle Police Services.

### 3. Definitions

- 3.1 In this Policy,

**CAO** means the Chief Administrative Officer of the Town.

**Department** means the Director of the Strategy and Engagement Department and the Corporate Communications Officer.

**Director** means the Director of the Strategy and Engagement Department or their designate.

**Employees** means all employees, members of committees, volunteers and any person who has been retained and/or engaged to act on behalf of the Town.

**Social Media** means the use of various online sites or communication platforms that allow users to interact with other people to share information, provide feedback and bring people together who share the same interests. Examples of social media sites include, but are not limited to: Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, PlaceSpeak etc. See Appendix “A” for the Town’s social media accounts.

**Traditional Forms of Communication** means forms of communication which include newsletters, brochures, newspapers, radio and television etc.

**Town** means the Corporation of the Town of LaSalle.

**Website** means the Town’s websites that are the primary source for information about the services, programs, events, etc.

## 4. Policy

### 4.1 Procedures and Practices

- 4.1.1 The use of Social Media should add value to the Town’s Traditional Forms of Communication and Website. The Town’s Social Media sites will include a link to the Town’s Website to provide the public with a location to review all information, forms, and documents related to the Town.
- 4.1.2 The Town’s logo and/or name will be included on all Social Media sites to identify that the site is maintained by the Town.
- 4.1.3 The Director oversees all of the Town’s Social Media.
- 4.1.4 The Town’s Social Media will be updated regularly and will share timely and accurate information with the public including, but not limited to, official Town business, Council decisions, statements, information about services, programs and/or events, employee recruitment, content to educate and inform the public and other information related to the municipality etc.
- 4.1.5 Third parties are not permitted to have access to the Town’s Social Media to post content unless they receive written permission in advance from the Director.
- 4.1.6 Those authorized to post to the Town’s Social Media must, at all times, conduct themselves in the best interest of the Town.
- 4.1.7 Those who will be posting to the Town’s Social Media will be trained by the Department. Trained Employees are trusted to have access to login and password information that is owned by the Town. All user names and/or passwords will be set/changed by the Director as required.

- 4.1.8 Use of Social Media will comply with current best practices, the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and copyright laws.
- 4.1.9 Those authorized to post to Social Media may not disclose confidential or sensitive information related to the Town, its business and/or affairs, elected officials, employees, volunteers, vendors, suppliers, residents, or other stakeholders.
- 4.1.10 Employees and members of Council are urged to like/follow the official Town Social Media and to share content from those pages.
- 4.1.11 At the discretion of the Department, any information, photos or videos that are shared or posted to the Town's Social Media may be used by the Town for promotional and/or other marketing purposes, provided the appropriate permissions have been obtained.
- 4.1.12 The Town's Social Media may be used to conduct surveys and/or questionnaires.
- 4.1.13 Comments, posts and/or messages solicited by the Town and collected for the public record using the Town's Social Media will be treated like any other form of communication, and as such will be subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- 4.1.14 Town Social Media sites are monitored Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm and may be monitored outside of these hours during events or in emergency situations.
- 4.1.15 The Department will make every effort to respond to posts/comments from the public on the Town's Social Media within two business days. From time to time, circumstances may arise that delay the response.
- 4.1.16 The Department will review any negative, sensitive or controversial comments with the appropriate department and decide on the course of action.
- 4.1.17 While the Department will make every reasonable effort to respond to concerns and questions directed to the Town's Social Media, the conversation may be redirected to email and/or phone. This will ensure that any privacy concerns are addressed, character limitations for messages are not inhibiting the response, and the amount of detail required is possible.

## **4.2 Personal Use of Social Media**

- 4.2.1 Employees and members of Council are free to use Social Media as private citizens, but are not permitted to comment on Social Media on behalf of the Town unless they have been authorized to do so by the CAO and/or the Director and/or the Mayor.
- 4.2.2 Public service is a public trust, and as such, every Employee and member of Council must be committed to the highest standards of ethical behavior, including while posting and/or commenting on any Social Media sites.
- 4.2.3 Disciplinary action may be considered should any Social Media posts and/or comments be considered to negatively affect the public's perception of the Town or its Employees or members of Council.
- 4.2.4 The use of a member of Council's title on Social Media signifies that the member of Council is acting in an official capacity. Members of Council should exercise good judgment when responding to questions on Social Media. If a question posed on any Social Media should be answered by administration, members of Council should direct the public to the Town's Social Media for a response.
- 4.2.5 Members of Council shall identify where they are expressing personal views, and not the views of all of Council. Members of Council should adhere to the *Code of Conduct for Council Members and Local Boards* when posting to any Social Media.
- 4.2.6 Members of Council shall not post or comment on the Town's Social Media. These pages are used to share information on behalf of the Town. See Appendix "B" for Social Media Guidelines for Council Members.
- 4.2.7 Members of Council may be subject to action for violation of this Policy and/or may be subject to investigation by the Integrity Commissioner.
- 4.2.8 The Town is not able to control comments posted on third-party Social Media sites and does not monitor or comment on these sites. Should the Department become aware of a post and/or comment that negatively affects the public's perception of the Town, or Employees or members of Council, the Department may contact the page owner to request removal of the content.

### 4.3 Terms of Use

- 4.3.1 At the discretion of the Department, members of the public may be permitted to comment on the Town's Social Media. Comments will be monitored for appropriateness.

4.3.2 The Department may choose to turn off comments on any post at any time.

4.3.3 In the event of an emergency, all regularly scheduled posts may be paused. Official messaging about the emergency will be posted on the Town's Social Media.

4.3.4 The Town promotes respect in the workplace and is committed to providing a safe and positive experience with all internal and external contacts. It is expected that all interactions be courteous, professional, considerate, and respectful. The Town's Social Media includes a "Terms of Use" statement that specifies what will be considered acceptable/unacceptable content. Those who post unacceptable content may be blocked and will be contacted via Social Media to request that the content be removed.

4.3.5 Inappropriate comments may be deleted and/or hidden without notice. Whether a comment is determined to be inappropriate is in the sole discretion of the Director and includes, but is not limited to:

- Personal information about an individual(s);
- Profane language and/or content and/or defamatory statements;
- Personal attacks on individuals, groups, events or ideas;
- Content that infringes on another's intellectual property rights (i.e. copyright, trademarks, design and/or patents);
- Content of a religious nature that might be deemed prejudicial;
- Content that can be considered a commercial endorsement, advertisement or solicitation of an individual and/or individual business and/or spam;
- Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination or harassment under the Ontario Human Rights Code;
- Content with the intent to inflict harm;
- Sexual content, dangerous and/or illegal activity of any kind;
- Content of a confidential nature pertaining to the Town;
- Personal information about an identifiable individual other than the person posting the comment;
- Content that promotes any candidate and/or materials for federal, provincial or municipal elections or for Council appointments;

- Derogatory comments about members of Council and/or Town employees and/or Town services/programs and/or other levels of government; and
- The sale of goods by a third party, including tickets.

#### **4.4 Criteria for Promoting Community Events**

4.4.1 The Department may choose to share information about community events on the Town's Social Media. The Town reserves the right to refuse or remove any event-related information at any time, without notice. Those events must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Event must be open to the general public;
- Organized or funded by another order of government;
- Organized by a government-funded agency or board;
- Organized by a group that is affiliated with the Town;
- Organized by a charitable organization that has a registered charitable number;
- Organized by a service club;
- Located in a facility that is owned or leased by the Town.

4.4.2 Event organizers are encouraged to advise the Department about upcoming public events at least three weeks before the event date. Details can be found on the Town's Website.

#### **4.5 Accessibility**

4.5.1 The Town of LaSalle is committed to the principle of accessibility and is required to comply with communications and information provisions in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The Town will facilitate delivery of material that the Town communicates through Social Media.

### **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

5.1 The Director is responsible for this policy.

### **6. References and Related Documents**

- Town of LaSalle Brand Identity Standards Guide
- Town of LaSalle Employee Code of Conduct
- Code of Conduct for Council and Local Boards Policy
- Customer Service Standards

- Respect and Responsibility (RZone) Policy
- Town of LaSalle Municipal Digital Signs and Lobby Screens Policy
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Ontario Human Rights Code

## **7. Attachments**

- Appendix A: Corporate Social Media Accounts
- Appendix B: Social Media Guidelines for Council Members