

# CITY OF MOOSE JAW COMMUNICATION POLICY

EST. SEPTEMBER 23, 2019





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# COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

## MISSION STATEMENT

The City of Moose Jaw strives to provide open, honest communication with residents, businesses, City employees, and visitors. Communication plays an integral role in the success of each City department, both externally and internally. All City of Moose Jaw employees engage in communication practices daily, whether one-on-one with customers/public, with co-workers or with the media.

The Communications Policy provides background information and guidelines for the various forms of communications practices that are, or should be, in place to ensure a high level of communications proficiency.

## EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The City of Moose Jaw employs a wide variety of platforms for communicating to the public so we may provide information and education about City programs and services, and transparency about “what we do and why we do it.”

These platforms include:

City Website – [www.MooseJaw.ca](http://www.MooseJaw.ca)

City Social Media Accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube)

“Friendly City Insider” Podcast (Produced out of the City Communications Manager Office)

Mail Campaigns

## MEDIA RELATIONS

The City of Moose Jaw needs to let the public know who we are and what we do. That message is often conveyed through the news media. The entire City staff needs to be aware of how we can cooperate with the media to better serve the public.

There are several external media outlets in Moose Jaw that provide coverage of matters related to City Council and City of Moose Jaw operations. Within that group are “traditional” (radio/print/television) and digital (online) platforms operated by companies that own media outlets in other markets across Canada.

Additionally, there are independently operated websites that provide coverage of City Council and City of Moose Jaw operations.

## COMMUNICATION GOALS:

- Establish a uniform procedure for working with the media that will help ensure accuracy, City-wide coordination and a timely response to meet media deadlines.
- Maintain a respectful, professional working relationship with the media.

## POLICY:

- The City shall respond to all media requests.
- The City will monitor media coverage of City-related news and with discretion may seek corrections if content is found to be factually incorrect or a significant misrepresentation of facts.
- Media shall direct all interview and/or information requests to the Communications Manager, who will then facilitate arranging interviews and/or answers to media questions.
- If media contacts a department immediately, media shall be directed to the Communications Manager for further follow-up.
- The Communications Manager shall be notified by the interviewee after a media interview takes place. The notification to the Communications Manager can be via e-mail, text or phone call, whatever is easiest for the interviewee.
- Where deemed necessary the Communications Manager shall work with respective City Staff on matters related to dealing with media.
- The Mayor shall typically be the City Council spokesperson when discussing decisions of Council, though City Council Members may respond to media inquiries at their own discretion.
- Responding to media inquiries at fires and other emergency and/or public safety situations may be handled differently in order to suit the specific nature of each incident. The responses typically must come from the scene and from the designated spokesperson at that scene. In the case of Fire and Police the spokesperson is typically determined by the person in charge of the scene. Power outages or problems involving Water/Wastewater are also included in this exception. The Communications Manager should be notified in those instances where there is media coverage and will come to the scene when warranted.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

It is the City's goal to provide notice to the public reflecting any new program or service, of any changes to existing programs or services or any matter affecting the lives of Moose Jaw residents and/or businesses. There are numerous other circumstances where the City is obligated to provide public notice. These circumstances are noted in the City Administration Bylaw No. 5175, which contains the following relevant sections:

### **3. MATTERS FOR WHICH NOTICE MUST BE GIVEN**

- 3.1 Public notice in accordance with this policy shall be given before Council initially considers the following matters:
- (a) prohibiting or limiting the number of businesses of a particular type in an area of the City or specifying separation distances between businesses of a particular type;
  - (b) permanently closing or blocking off a street, lane or walkway;
  - (c) permanently modifying an intersection with the use of physical barriers;
  - (d) permanently closing a median opening;
  - (e) borrowing money, lending money or guaranteeing the repayment of a loan;
  - (f) moving capital moneys to an operating budget or reserve;
  - (g) imposing a special tax or determining the use to which excess revenue from a special tax is to be put;
  - (h) establishing an investment policy;
  - (i) selling or leasing land for less than fair market value and without a public offering;
  - (j) selling or leasing park lands and dedicated lands except where the land is covered by public notice provisions in an Act other than *The Cities Act*;

- (k) establishing a purchasing policy;
- (l) establishing a business improvement district;
- (m) setting remuneration for council or committee members;
- (n) increasing or decreasing the number of councillors on Council;
- (o) appointing a wards commission and dividing the City into wards;
- (p) amending or repealing a bylaw for which public notice was a requirement at the time the bylaw was passed;
- (q) any matter where holding a public hearing is required under *The Cities Act* or any other Act;
- (r) discussing a matter at a public meeting held as a result of a petition signed by the required number of electors; and
- (s) an amendment or repeal of a bylaw or resolution when the resolution or bylaw was passed as a result of a vote of the electors.

#### **4. NOTICE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND AFFECTED PARTIES**

4.1 Notice shall be given to the general public for all matters set out in section 3.1 in accordance with this section:

- (a) notice of the matter shall be published in a local newspaper circulated in the City at least seven (7) clear days prior to the meeting at which Council will initially consider the matter; and
- (b) notice of the matter shall be posted at City Hall at least seven (7) clear days prior to the meeting at which Council will initially consider the matter; and
- (c) notice of the matter shall be posted on the City's web site at least seven (7) clear days prior to the meeting at which Council will initially consider the matter.

4.2 In addition to the general notice requirements of section 4.1, **additional** notice shall be given in accordance with subsection 4.3 to all affected parties when Council is initially considering the following matters:

- (a) prohibiting or limiting the number of businesses of a particular type in an area of the City or specifying separation distances between businesses of a particular type;
- (b) permanently closing or blocking off a street, lane or walkway;
- (c) permanently modifying an intersection with the use of physical barriers;
- (d) permanently closing a median opening;
- (e) imposing a special tax or determining the use to which excess revenue from a special tax is to be put; and
- (f) establishing a business improvement district.

- 4.3 **Additional** notice of the matters listed in subsection 4.2 shall be given using either of the following methods:
- (a) by mailing notice of the matter to all affected parties by ordinary mail which is to be postmarked no later than seven (7) clear days prior to the Council meeting at which the matter will initially be considered; **or**
  - (b) by leaving notice of the matter in a mail receptacle at the address of the affected party at least seven (7) clear days prior to the Council meeting at which the matter will initially be considered.

5. **NOTICE OF FURTHER DEALINGS RESPECTING A MATTER**

5.1 Subject to subsection 5.2, the notice requirements provided for in this policy shall only be applied when Council initially considers a matter. For purposes of clarity, unless otherwise directed by Council and subject only to subsection 5.2, no notice, including notice to affected parties, will be given of any subsequent meeting of Council at which the matter will be considered.

5.2 The City Clerk shall provide at least four (4) hours notice to any interested party of any further proceedings by or before City Council involving a matter for which such party has expressed an interest.

## **6. DISCRETION OF COUNCIL**

- 6.1 The notice requirements set forth in this policy are minimum requirements and are not intended to limit City Council's discretion to provide additional notice, utilizing different or additional methods or repeating notice, as may be deemed appropriate by City Council.

## **7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITY CLERK**

- 7.1 The City Clerk shall be responsible to City Council for ensuring compliance with this policy and may, in his/her absolute discretion:
- (a) refuse to place any item on the agenda of City Council, where there has been substantive non-compliance with the notice requirements of this Policy; or
  - (b) where there have been deficiencies in meeting the notice requirements provided for in this Bylaw, place any item on the agenda of City Council, with a caution to members of City Council that the matter should be tabled pending full compliance with the notice requirements set forth in this Policy.

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

At all times the City of Moose Jaw welcomes resident feedback and provides the following platforms for residents or businesses to communicate with City Administration and/or City Council:

- The "Contact Us" link on the home page of MooseJaw.ca provides telephone numbers and email addresses to all City departments
- The 'City Council' page of MooseJaw.ca lists the public phone numbers and email addresses of the Mayor and City Council
- City Hall is open to the public Monday through Friday, 8:15a.m.-5:00 p.m. year-round, with the exception of Statutory holidays.

- Residents are welcome to speak during the “Open Forum” held during regular meetings of City Council. In addition, any resident wishing to make a presentation to Council may do so by registering with the City Clerk’s Office.
- Facebook Messenger. Questions and/or comments sent to the City of Moose Jaw account on Facebook Messenger will receive a response within **two business days** from the time the inquiry was submitted. The City of Moose Jaw does not engage\* in Facebook conversations generated by posts on the City of Moose Jaw account.

\*Some exceptions may apply during emergency situations.

The City of Moose Jaw often solicits feedback on Civic matters and will forward that information for City Council’s use in their decision-making process. Tools used to solicit that feedback include:

- Media Releases
- Social Media
- Public online surveys
- Targeted online and/or phone surveys
- Open House-style information sessions
- City staff bringing information displays to public events

## POLICY

When a new Bylaw, or amendment(s) to an existing Bylaw is being considered, the City will utilize one or more of the above tools to solicit resident and/or business feedback. Feedback will then be presented to City Council for consideration. Feedback tools may also be used to engage residents regarding other City initiatives. Use of said tools will be at the discretion of the Strategic Leadership Team

## CONSTRUCTION COMMUNICATION

When the City of Moose Jaw undertakes construction/infrastructure projects (either planned or to address infrastructure failure) it is imperative to communicate any disruption of service to all who may be affected, including:

- Property owners
- Business owners
- Residents

## COMMUNICATIONS GOAL:

The City has several Communications tactics available to deliver pertinent messages about construction/repairs and any related disruption(s). These tactics include:

- Delivery of notices to all properties in the construction zone who may experience a disruption to their daily lives
- Media Release detailing the project
- Information posted to the City's website and social media accounts
- Electronic billboards on the perimeter of the construction zone

## POLICY:

- Any or all of the above tactics shall be utilized as part of a Communications strategy for each project, with the Communications Manager and Engineering Dept./Municipal Operations determining the optimum approach based on the expected community impact of the project.
- When construction is planned, notices to residents shall be delivered between 24-72 hours prior to construction beginning.
- When the construction is in response to an infrastructure failure (water main break, etc.), notices to affected properties shall be delivered within two (2) hours of the incident being recognized by City of Moose Jaw crews.\*
- **\*There may be instances where it may take more than two hours for crews to isolate and determine the extent of the failure. In all cases, notice shall be provided "as soon as possible" to affected properties.**
- When capital construction projects (i.e. water main replacement, road repair/reconstruction) are scheduled, business owners shall be hand-delivered notices regarding the pending project a minimum of one month from the expected construction start date.
- Information provided will relate to overall scope of the project, potential disruptions and providing customer/delivery access. At that time an estimated construction start date shall be provided. Once a construction date has been finalized, updated notices shall be delivered a minimum of one week prior.
- Business owners shall be provided with contact information of the Project Manager and Communications Manager to address ongoing questions or concerns.

- Where construction impacts access to area businesses, communications messaging shall indicate that “businesses remain open” throughout the project and, where applicable, maps be produced showing how customers may access the respective business(es) during construction.
- Regular updates shall be posted to the City website/social media accounts/local media regarding any changes to traffic accommodation plans, project timelines, etc.

## EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

It is imperative that the City of Moose Jaw provide timely, effective communication before, and during, an emergency. An “emergency” may be defined as any situation that may threaten the life, health, property or environment of Moose Jaw residents.

### POLICY:

When an emergency situation is identified, the City of Moose Jaw's Communication Department will work with the City's Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) to alert residents and detail the safety measures being enacted.

The City of Moose Jaw will use the following platforms to communicate information related to the emergency:

- Local radio stations
- SaskAlert app
- City website ([www.MooseJaw.ca](http://www.MooseJaw.ca))
- City social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram)

For more details on the City's EMO and the ways in which you can prepare for an emergency situation, you can visit the following page on MooseJaw.ca:  
<https://moosejaw.ca/fire-department/emo>

## SOCIAL MEDIA/CITY WEBSITE

The City of Moose Jaw's web site, [www.MooseJaw.ca](http://www.MooseJaw.ca), has increasingly become a tool of choice for residents, City employees and non-residents, both nationally and internationally, to find information about the City of Moose Jaw. The City also has the following social media accounts:

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Linked In
- YouTube

The City uses its social media platforms to drive users back to [MooseJaw.ca](http://MooseJaw.ca), while also utilizing social media to:

- Promote at least one "good news" story per week (i.e. positive content related to City policy, programs or personnel)
- Inform residents of any safety concerns within the community
- Update residents on the latest projects/construction that could impact their daily routine
- Capture and promote initiatives in City parks and facilities
- Showcase City employees in a positive light, whether performing their jobs OR as part of the community
- Recruit potential employees

## POLICY:

- The Communications Manager will determine what information is highlighted on the City's home page.
- The Communications Manager will work with department heads and the City Manager to determine what information will be posted to the City's website.
- Linking to an outside news source to promote City of Moose Jaw-related information is prohibited. Exceptions to this would be in the case of a co-sponsored event.
- Information posted to the Internet should include a contact name with a phone number and an e-mail address. This contact person shall respond to requests for additional information in a timely manner.
- The Communications Manager is responsible for determining what graphics standards might be appropriate for the City's website

- The Communications Manager will be accurate, consistent and timely with information that is to be published on the City's website and ensure that the information published is accessible by all people regardless of their respective level of technology.
- The Communications Manager is responsible for all social media content that is published. There are instances where the IT department may post News Releases on the City's Facebook/ Twitter feeds. Additionally, two Parks & Rec employees have been empowered to create Instagram content on behalf of the City. The Communications Manager monitors their activity and provides feedback.
- The Communications Manager will ensure posts are in alignment with the City's Strategic Plan and Employee Social Media Policy

## FRIENDLY CITY INSIDER PODCAST

The "Friendly City Insider Podcast" is a bi-weekly audio podcast, hosted by the Communications Manager.

### COMMUNICATIONS GOAL:

- The goal of the podcast is to provide detailed information on City initiatives, events and programs, and to have that information delivered within the proper context.

### POLICY:

- The Communications Manager Director will establish protocols to allow all City departments an opportunity to provide content for the podcast.
- The podcast will be uploaded to the audio hosting site "SoundCloud", with each episode also hosted on MooseJaw.ca and promoted through the City's social media platforms.
- The podcast content should reflect the objectives within the City of Moose Jaw's Strategic Plan.

## CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Moose Jaw City Council meetings are held on the second and fourth Mondays of each month, with exceptions made in the case of Statutory holidays. Meetings traditionally begin at 5:30 p.m. and are immediately followed by meetings of Executive Committee. Both meetings are hosted in Council Chambers at City Hall and are open to the public. The Communications Manager handles on-site media relations and serves a “gatekeeper” role by ensuring that all media requests are responded to by the most appropriate and informed City Staff representative.

## COMMUNICATIONS GOAL:

- Ensure City response to agenda items that will get media coverage through an awareness of issues. Promote unnoticed "good news" issues for the City.

## POLICY:

- The Communications Manager will work with department heads and the City Manager to identify agenda items for potential advance publicity.
- The Communications Manager will work with department heads to identify agenda items that will require research and ensure that any needed background material is made available to representatives of the media and the general public. The City Manager is the key spokesperson and shall be briefed when media require response to specific agenda items.
- The Communications Manager shall issue a media release containing a detailed list of all City Council decisions and/or resolutions within three (3) days of the most recent Council and Executive meeting. An archive of these media releases shall be posted on the City Council page on [www.MooseJaw.ca](http://www.MooseJaw.ca).
- City Council and Executive Committee meetings are available to watch live via a streaming link found on the 'City Council' page on [MooseJaw.ca](http://MooseJaw.ca) and are also televised to Shaw Cable customers in Moose Jaw.
- Video recordings and Minutes of City Council meetings are archived and made available to the public via [MooseJaw.ca](http://MooseJaw.ca) within three days of that week's meeting.

## ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The City of Moose Jaw has several Boards, Committees and Commissions, each of which is comprised of representatives from some or all of the following groups: local citizenry, members of Administration and Council. These groups assist Council in their decision-making process in various ways.

### COMMUNICATION GOAL:

The City of Moose Jaw will assist Boards, Committees and Commissions (BCC) with communicating pertinent information to Moose Jaw residents in situations where it is deemed necessary.

### POLICY:

BCC may either request assistance from the City's Communications department directly, or a Communications strategy may be part of a larger recommendation to Council. Should Council approve said recommendation, the Communications department would create a Communications strategy for the initiative.

The City shall not create separate social media accounts for BCC. If social media communication for any BCC is deemed necessary for an initiative, the respective group may engage the Communications department for assistance in promoting the message through official City of Moose Jaw social media channels.

## CUSTOMER SERVICE

**August 1, 2018, the City of Moose Jaw adopted a policy regarding Customer Service**, designed to provide City Administration with guidelines regarding the appropriate procedures and timelines for communications with members of the public (citizens) of the City of Moose Jaw.

This guideline is intended to enhance communications and customer service between Administration and citizens as well as among City employees. As well, to minimize time spent researching issues and requests that did not meet minimum response times and require further investigation.

**SCOPE:** This policy applies to all Departments of the City of Moose Jaw.

### DEFINITION:

**Departments:** Human Resource Services Department, Parks and Recreation Department, Engineering Services Department, Planning and Development Services Department, Information Technology Department, Financial Services Department, City Clerk/Solicitor's Department, Communications, Fire Department

**Inquiry:** A question from an external customer which requires investigation, follow-up, and a response to the customer at a later point in time. These shall be logged and tracked using this procedure.

### **PROCEDURES (for internal customer service):**

The Communications Manager shall distribute an update to City employees following meetings of City Council, for the purpose of sharing information and enhancing internal communications.

This update shall include items approved and general interest so that staff can provide answers to inquiries over the phone.

### **PROCEDURES (for external customer service):**

Individual Departments, exclusive of the Engineering Department that have an existing system in place, shall create and maintain a spreadsheet intended for tracking inquiries from the public until a city-wide system is in place.

Details of the spreadsheet to include: date inquiry was received, contact information from citizen that submitted the inquiry, general nature of the inquiry, employee inquiry has been delegated to, date responded to and the resolution. The City Manager shall have access to the spreadsheets upon request.

**Switchboard Staff (Finance):** For inquiries that relate to another Department, Switchboard is not required to track these. Instead, they shall be sent to the appropriate Department for that Department to track and respond to.

### **Inquiry Tracking:**

- If an inquiry is answered at the time of the request, that inquiry is not required to be tracked. (Eg. A customer asks a question about their water bill and Finance is able to provide a response to the customer without having to get back to them, the inquiry does not need to be tracked.)
- If an inquiry requires further background research/information and the customer does not receive an answer at the time of the request, these types of inquiries need to be tracked and followed up on.
  - Exception: Inquiries that are responded to within the same day of the request are not required to be tracked. Treasury staff within the Finance Department fall under this exception.

Departments are required to follow the guidelines below when dealing with communications/inquiries (phone calls, emails, etc.) from members of the public:

- When an inquiry is received from a member of the public, each individual Department shall record all pertinent information regarding inquiries received into a spreadsheet, such as date inquiry was received, contact information from citizen that submitted the inquiry, general nature of the inquiry, employee inquiry has been delegated to, date responded to and the resolution. In the absence of a city-wide system to track inquiries from the public, each Department is to create a spreadsheet to track inquiries until a system is in place.
- Individual Departments shall provide the City Manager's Office with access to its inquiry tracking spreadsheet upon request.
- All inquiries from the public are to be responded to within **two business days** from the time the inquiry was submitted. If an inquiry requires background research in order to respond appropriately, the appropriate employee of the Department shall notify the person as soon as possible that the inquiry was received, further background research is required and that a response will be provided with an estimated date. The Department shall then proceed to research the answer and provide a response. Departments are to ensure that tracking/follow up of inquiries is followed through in accordance with this policy.
  - a. Each Department, for quality control, shall print and review a report weekly to ensure communication guidelines have been met and no inquiries have been missed.

- b. Each Department will provide a monthly report to the City Manager detailing the number of inquiries, responses within the standard, responses outside the standard and the reasons why.
- Should an inquiry be submitted and the Department responsible cannot provide an answer or may require City Manager approval, the Director is to then submit the inquiry to the City Manager and the City Manager's Executive Assistant in order to provide a response.
- The City Manager's Executive Assistant shall record all pertinent information regarding inquiries received (to the City Manager's/Mayor's Offices). Individual Departments are to record all pertinent information regarding inquiries that relate specifically to the Department.

Employees shall abide by these guidelines when dealing with any inquiry made by a member of the public.

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

This section provides a brief description of the various vehicles of internal communication currently utilized by the City of Moose Jaw for disseminating information to staff and members of City Council, including the Mayor.

### COMMUNICATION GOAL:

- To effectively communicate City policies, procedures and other relevant information to employees.

The City of Moose Jaw currently utilizes multiple tools to communicate with staff:

- Email
- In-person/Staff meetings
- Human Resources Training sessions
- Raspberry Pi message screen at City Complex
- Employee Newsletter
- Mailed correspondence

### POLICY:

- Department heads are responsible for delivering information contained in emails to any appropriate staff that do not have access to email.
- Sessions should be face-to-face on a regular basis, no less than annually for entire departments and monthly for division staff. Meetings open to City employees only.
- The Communications Manager to regularly update the Raspberry Pi screen information to display relevant information

- The Human Resources department will identify and provide training sessions on matters deemed relevant to the physical and mental wellbeing of employees
- The Communications Manager creates and distributes an Employee Newsletter each quarter. Content for the Employee Newsletter can be generated by any City employee, with all content suggestions being emailed to the Communications Manager for consideration. The Communications Manager will consult with Department Heads prior to publishing each edition to ensure content is accurate and properly vetted.

## GUIDELINES FOR TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION WITH CITY COUNCIL

### COMMUNICATION GOAL:

City Council, on behalf of their constituents and in the interests of their position are required to seek information between Council meetings. This information is designed to provide City Administration with guidelines regarding the appropriate procedures and timelines for communications with City Council. This guideline is intended to enhance communications between and provide information to Council in a timely fashion. This guideline will also establish a systematic process to managing and responding to requests for information.

### DEFINITIONS:

Director: an employee of the City of Moose Jaw as follows: (Director of Human Resource Services, Director of Parks and Recreation, Director of Engineering Services, Director of Planning and Development Services, Director of Information Technology, Director of Financial Services, City Clerk/Solicitor, Communications Manager, Fire Chief.)

Emergency/Priority Status of Inquiry: If there's no indication of the priority of the inquiry, the City Manager or the Executive Assistant shall determine the urgency and communicate this to the Director.

### POLICY:

Directors are required to follow the guidelines below when dealing with communications/inquiries (phone calls, emails, etc.) from members of City Council:

- Members of City Council will communicate inquiries (via email or text where possible) through the City Manager and copy to the City Manager's Executive Assistant. Based upon the current system and process, Council can assume that the email was received, viewed and forwarded as there is triple redundancy in the system.
- Council will attempt to get as much pertinent data as possible to assist Administration in researching an inquiry such as:

1. When, including times of calls or inquiries
  2. Where
  3. Unit #'s if a vehicle
  4. If they have called and not received a response
    - Members of City Council, as an option, can refer customers to contact the City Manager or appropriate departments to discuss an inquiry if the customer has not done so already.
    - The City Manager/Executive Assistant will review all inquiries and forward to the Directors (when necessary) for appropriate responses to Council. The Director shall provide the City Manager and Executive Assistant with the response and the City Manager or Executive Assistant will provide the response to Council.
- All inquiries from City Council are to be responded to within **two business days** from the time the inquiry was submitted. If an inquiry requires background research in order to respond appropriately, the City Manager/Executive Assistant shall notify Council as soon as possible that the inquiry was received, further background research is required and that a response will be provided with an estimated date. The Director shall then proceed to research the answer and provide a response as soon as possible to the City Manager and Executive Assistant.
  - If an inquiry is submitted to a Director without being communicated to the City Manager, the Director is to forward the inquiry to the City Manager.
  - The Executive Assistant shall record all pertinent information regarding inquiries received, such as dates received and responded to for quality control and accountability purposes.

Directors shall abide by these guidelines when dealing with any inquiry made by a member of Council.

This Communication Plan is intended to be a “living” document and will be revised as needed and kept up to date by the Communications Manager, in consultation with the Strategic Management Team.





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