CITY SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Recommendation

The Director of Corporate Communications, in consultation with the Social Media Staff Working Committee, recommends:

1. THAT the Social Media Policy (Attachment 1) be approved; and

2. THAT the Social Media Communications Plan (Attachment 2) be received.

Contribution to Sustainability

A social media network that provides ongoing communications with City stakeholders is a key component of the Community Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan to create a vibrant community by supporting civic engagement.

Economic Impact

There is no economic impact to the budget. The proposed initiatives within the Social Media Communications Plan will be developed and delivered through the use of existing staff resources. Any additional resources required to support staff in managing social media sites will be assessed prior to the 2013 budget process.

Communications Plan

Once the Social Media Policy is approved, it will be communicated to appropriate City staff as detailed in the Social Media Communications Plan.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council approval of the proposed Social Media Policy.

Background – Analysis and Options

As previously approved by Council, the City is following a phased-in approach to utilizing social media. Currently, there are three corporate social media sites used primarily for outgoing communications (one-way or broadcast communications): Facebook launched July 9, 2010; YouTube launched Sept. 20, 2010; and Twitter launched April 20, 2011.

The Social Media Staff Working Committee has held four meetings to "formulate policies, standards and guidelines which will guide the use of social media to achieve consistency across the Corporation." The staff working committee includes representation from 16 City departments and is co-chaired by the Director of Corporate Communications and the Senior Manager of Strategic Planning.

The draft Social Media Policy has been developed in accordance with Policy No. 03.27 on Corporate Policy Development. It has been reviewed by Financial Services and Legal Services. It has been reviewed by the City Manager and the Senior Management Team. In addition, a presentation on the social media policy was made to the Quarterly SMT/Directors meeting on Nov. 24, 2011.

The City is taking a collaborative approach to social media, providing corporate support for all departmental initiatives. Although all departments and project leads can submit content to the

Corporate Communications Department for review and broadcast on any of the corporate social media sites, the draft Social Media policy facilitates the creation of specialized social media sites separate from the corporate sites. Reasons for establishing a specialized site could include the need to reach a specific audience with content tailored to that audience – for example, a youth audience interested in discussing youth recreational activities (only 12% of the corporate Facebook audience is under 25 years of age).

The City of Vaughan can employ social media technologies to improve communications with key stakeholders about City programs and initiatives by broadcasting information about City activities and by facilitating online comments to more effectively engage the community.

In order to implement best practices on a consistent basis across the Corporation, the draft Social Media policy states:

- Each City social media account will be managed by one 'primary' administrator and supported by two 'secondary' administrators, one of which will be provided by the Corporate Communications department (5.1).

- The Corporate Communications department is responsible for identifying staff training requirements and conducting orientation sessions to provide an overview of content guidelines (4.2).

- All social media sites hosted by the City will require monitoring by the primary administrators, supported by Corporate Communications, to ensure all user comments are appropriate and respectful (5.7).

The draft policy addresses the use of social media sites to mobilize and engage residents in online discussions about City projects and initiatives (two-way communications via user comments and discussion boards). For the 2013 budget process, it is proposed that an assessment be completed on the performance of departmental social media initiatives and any related costs, such as the staff resource impact for monitoring public comments.

The proposed policy and communications plan support the promotion of the City's social media sites. Every City social media site will be linked to the "social media page" or social media directory on the City's official website, accessible from the homepage. In addition, departments should advertise their social media sites in department-produced communication vehicles, such as a program brochure.

The implementation of this policy will be supported by Corporate Communications by informing and educating City staff on the potential of social media, encouraging departments to implement social media communications, and by continuing to promote the City's social media sites.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 20/20 Strategic Plan

Social media is aligned with the City's strategic plan in demonstrating effective leadership by strengthening the City's image and identity through communications with City stakeholders.

Regional Implications

N/A

Conclusion

Council approval of the draft Social Media Policy will provide the City with a timely and cost-effective vehicle to improve communications with its stakeholders and support wider community engagement.

Attachments

Appendix 1   Social Media Policy

Appendix 2   Social Media Communications Plan

Report prepared by:

Thomas Plant, Senior Manager of Strategic Planning
Ted Hallas, Manager of Corporate Communications

Respectfully submitted,

MADELINE ZITO
Director of Corporate Communications

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

prepared by

Social Media Staff Committee

January 23, 2012

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1.0   Purpose

The Social Media Policy establishes service standards and procedures relating to social media networks used by the City of Vaughan for the purpose of:

1.1   Providing accurate, timely and clear information about City services, programs and public safety to City of Vaughan residents, businesses, visitors and other stakeholders;

1.2   Increasing accessibility to local government in order to encourage greater interest and participation in local affairs;

1.3   Promoting greater transparency in government; and

1.4   Assisting City departments and employee site administrators to implement best practices on a consistent basis across the Corporation, and mitigate risks relating to social media usage.

2.0   Application

2.1   This policy applies to all employees of the Corporation of the City of Vaughan.

3.0   Definitions and descriptions

3.1   For the purposes of this policy, "social media" is understood to be content created and distributed primarily using internet and mobile-based tools designed for sharing and discussing information online and through mobile devices. As a Web 2.0 technology which allows users (i.e. visitors to a social media site) to post their own information (also known as User-Generated Content), social media networks provide two-way communications for sharing opinions, insights, experiences and perspectives. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks.

3.2   The following social media tools are approved for use by the City of Vaughan: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Flickr and LinkedIn. All additional social media tools proposed for City use will be reviewed by the Director of Corporate Communications.

3.3   The City of Vaughan's official website at www.vaughan.ca remains the City's predominant internet presence and its primary communications vehicle.

4.0   Content Development

4.1   All City staff using social media venues to communicate officially on behalf of the City must have prior permission from their Director and each City department is responsible for overseeing staff authorized to use social media.

4.2   The Corporate Communications department is responsible for identifying staff training requirements and conducting orientation sessions to provide an overview of content guidelines.

4.3   The Corporate Communications department, which is responsible for the integrity of the corporate brand and the City's image, maintains "corporate" social media sites for communicating general information about the City to the public at large.

4.4   City social media sites should be clearly identified as being maintained by the City of Vaughan through the use of the City logo, department name, and contributor's job title.

4.5   Users and visitors to social media sites will be made aware that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between City departments and members of the public.

4.6   Each City social media site will include a standardized "Terms of Use" statement, provided by the Corporate Communications Department.

4.7   City social media sites will link back to the official City of Vaughan website for further information, forms, documents and online services.

4.8   In order to support communications with the public, a central listing or a central point of access for all social media sites managed by the City will be posted to a "social media page" on the City's official website.

4.9   In compliance with the Vaughan Emergency Response Plan, all information issued by the City during a declared emergency is managed by the Public Information Section under the direction of the Emergency Management Team, including emergency information posted on the corporate social media sites.

4.10   In order to reach the widest possible audience during a declared emergency, staff administrators of social media sites will be provided with pre-approved emergency information by the Public Information Section under the direction of the Emergency Management Team for rebroadcast on their social media sites, if appropriate.

5.0   Administrator Roles and Responsibilities

5.1   Each City social media account will be managed by one "primary" administrator and supported by two "secondary" administrators, one of which will be provided by the Corporate Communications department.

5.2   Administrators will attend an orientation session on the City's social media initiative provided by the Corporate Communications department and assist in identifying any training requirements.

5.3   Administrators are responsible for ensuring their social media sites are used to post relevant and timely information about City programs and initiatives. Social media sites should add value to the City by raising awareness, sharing information, and encouraging public involvement.

5.4   All content – written copy, photographs, videos, external links, etc. – posted by a site administrator is the responsibility of the originating department.

5.5   City social media sites are updated and monitored during regular office hours, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

5.6   All City social media sites will be remotely monitored by primary and secondary administrators outside regular office hours, including weekends and holidays, through email notifications of user posts or comments. The City will proactively moderate content through the use of filters and other available site features.

5.7   All social media sites hosted by the City will require monitoring by the primary administrators to ensure all user comments are appropriate and respectful. Administrators, with the support of Corporate Communications, are responsible for removing inappropriate user comments, as defined in item 7.4 below.

5.8   Administrators must consult with their Directors to determine the appropriate response to any controversial comment or complaint posted by users.

5.9   Administrators should respond to questions received online if they directly relate to public information managed by the administrator's department. For questions relating to other departments, the administrator can post a link to the City website section which addresses the question or request the information from the appropriate department for posting.

5.10   While City departments are encouraged to activate visitor comment features of social media, site administrators may disable this functionality if deemed appropriate.

5.11   To maintain security of network usernames and passwords, authorized employee administrators must use a username/password combination that differs from their City network login ID and password.

5.12   Administrators managing a City social media site are official online representatives of the City of Vaughan and should be courteous and respectful at all times when interacting with the public.

6.0   Procedures

6.1   Information disseminated using social media technologies is considered public domain and subject to being re-printed in newspapers, magazines or online in any other web format.

6.2   Comments and messages posted to City of Vaughan social networking sites are considered transitory and will not be kept as permanent records by the City, with the exception of comments and postings made by the public during a declared emergency which need to be recorded and tracked as part of the official records of the emergency.

6.3   User comments or postings on a City social media site will not be considered or processed as official correspondence.

6.4   Departments can advertise their social media sites in department-produced communication vehicles, such as a program brochure. Every City social media site should link back to the "social media page" or social media directory on the City's official website.

7.0   User comments

7.1   The City of Vaughan reserves the right to review, edit, modify or delete any comment submitted to a City social media site by a user (i.e. visitor to a City social media site).

7.2   The City of Vaughan reserves the right to deny access to City of Vaughan social media sites for any individual who violates the City of Vaughan's Social Media Policy.

7.3   Comments on topics or issues not within the jurisdictional purview of the City of Vaughan may be removed.

7.4   Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content will not be posted to City of Vaughan social media sites:

- Comments not related to the original topic, including random or unintelligible comments;

- Profane, obscene, violent, or pornographic content and/or language;
- Content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, age, religion, gender, or national origin;
- Defamatory or personal attacks;
- Threats to any person or organization;
- Comments in support of, or in opposition to, any political campaigns;
- Solicitation of commerce, not related to City business or initiatives;
- Content in violation of any Canadian law;
- Encouragement of illegal activity;
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of any party.

8. 0   <u>Staff Participation</u>

8.1   City employees using social media venues for work-related activities represent the City of Vaughan and are subject to this Social Media Policy, all City policies including but not limited to policies governing staff conduct, and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA).

8.2   Inappropriate usage of City social media sites by City employees can be grounds for disciplinary action and may be grounds for dismissal.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Use of social media at the City of Vaughan

Updated Jan. 23, 2012

PROJECT LEAD

Social Media Staff Working Committee

Chairs:
Madeline Zito, Director of Corporate Communications
Thomas Plant, Senior Manager of Strategic Planning

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this communications plan is to inform and educate City staff on the potential of social media, encourage all departments to implement social media communications, and propose ways to promote the City's social media sites.

TARGET AUDIENCES

Internal –
City staff

External –
General public
Media

KEY MESSAGES

1.   The City of Vaughan is committed to employing new technologies to improve communications with its stakeholders.

2.   Social media is a tool for the City of Vaughan to increase interaction with the public in support of greater government transparency.

3.   Social media is a timely and cost-effective communications channel.

OVERVIEW AND GENERAL COMMENTS

Social media is changing the way people and organizations distribute and share information. There is an opportunity for the City of Vaughan to leverage these social media platforms, in combination with traditional communications, in order to enhance its public profile and better inform and engage the community. Social media networks include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.

Social media has opened the door to a rapid exchange of information due to its global reach, accessibility and instant delivery of information. It has transformed the way people interact by turning traditional one-way communications into online dialogues. Social media can take several forms, from micro-blogs (Twitter) to larger social networks (Facebook), to video (YouTube) and photo sharing sites (Flickr). Other types of social media include collaborative wikis (Wikipedia), music and file sharing, reviews and opinions (Yahoo! Answers) and social news sites (Digg.com).

It is important to note that the audience for social media is not limited to one particular age group or industry. It is a particularly effective method for reaching a youth audience, which is not readily receptive to traditional communications (newspapers, magazines, etc).

Mobile applications for social media sites have become increasingly popular. These applications are designed specifically for hand-held devices and allow users to stay connected online and create content from any location.

The City of Vaughan can employ social media technologies to improve communications with key stakeholders about City programs and initiatives by:
1. broadcasting information about City activities (one-way or broadcast communications); and
2. facilitating online comments to more effectively engage the community (two-way communications).

VAUGHAN

ACTION STEPS

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	DATES
Program guidelines	- Develop draft of Social Media Policy - Review of draft policy by Social Media Staff Committee - Approval of Social Media Policy	Complete Sept. 15/11 Q1/12
Staff participation	- Announce to staff launch of corporate social media sites - Announce to staff guidelines for launching a social media site - Announce approval of Social Media Policy - Create standardized email signature that includes social media icons (links)	Complete Q2/12 Q1/12 Q2/12
City website	- Post social media icons on homepage - Create Social Media index page on website - Update Social Media index page as new sites are launched	Complete Complete Ongoing
Advertising	- Promote social media web links on printed and digital materials - Print advertising, online advertising, promotional materials (all advertising campaigns are contingent upon program budgets) - Searchable on Google and other search engines - Research possibility of developing corporate advertisements to promote the City's social media sites	Q1/12 Q2/12 Q1/12 Q3/12

VAUGHAN

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	DATES
Media Relations	• Issue PSA on launch of corporate social media sites • Publicize new social media sites	Complete Ongoing
Metrics (Performance measurements)	• Corporate Communications to establish standard metrics for all City social media administrators • Monitor staff participation in establishing and maintaining social media sites • Monitor public participation (users/subscribers) of City social media sites	Q1/12 Q3/12 Q3/12
Assessment	• Align social media approach with new City website rollout • Assess the role of Access Vaughan in handling public inquiries through social media • To determine future requirements, assessment to be completed on the performance of departmental social media initiatives and the overall economic impact on the corporation • Develop a business case outlining the costs and staff resource impacts	Q2/12 Q2/12 Q2/12 Q2/12

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS

- Monitor departmental social media initiatives
- Track social media site visits and related metrics