City of Edmonton

Edmonton

SOCIAL MEDIA STANDARDS

Social Media Team
Strategic Services
Chief Communications Office

Last updated: February 2025

Author: Karly Watson, Social Media Communications Advisor

Introduction

The Social Media Standards stand as a compass for endorsed practices concerning the creation, sharing and management of content on social media platforms in the City of Edmonton.

These standards have been developed to frame the understanding of opportunities, navigate potential risks and ensure that as representatives or employees of the City, there is a clear understanding of the responsibilities and boundaries associated with the integration of social media into all areas. Staff are responsible for following the Social Media Standards in accordance with Directive A1446A.

Definitions and Abbreviations

Standard - An established best practice to help support users in meeting standards. Guidelines can more frequently change in response to emerging trends and developing information. They provide a framework and guidance on how to meet standards but also provide flexibility and wider parameters for application.

Social Media - Online platforms and applications that facilitate the generation, sharing and engagement with content or participation in social networking.

Content - Any information, visuals (such as messages, images or videos), or media shared on a social media platform.

Copy - The written content or text that accompanies a social media post. It includes the words, phrases or captions used to convey a message, share information, tell a story or engage the audience on social media platforms.

Primary Social Media Accounts - Social media accounts belonging to the City of Edmonton, managed and supervised by the Social Media team.

Secondary Social Media Accounts - Secondary social media accounts are dedicated to specific operational domains and services and administered by staff outside the Social Media team. These accounts are still subject to the Social Media Standards and are overseen and monitored by the team to ensure alignment with our communication standards and goals.

Social Media Administrator - The individual responsible for a specific social media account. This person holds the authority to run a social media account, including posting, commenting and moderating comments in accordance with the City of Edmonton's Social Media Terms of Engagement.

The City / City - The City of Edmonton

DDB - Doyle Dane Bernbach Advertising Agency, the City of Edmonton's Agency of Record

Social Media Team - Centralized team in the Strategic Services section of the Chief Communications Office

For more information visit edmonton.ca/SocialMedia or contact socialmedia@edmonton.ca.

Table of Contents

Appendices

Reference Documents

Open City Policy - C581 | Strategic Plan 2019-2028 | The City Plan
City of Edmonton Corporate Brand Guidelines | Visual Identity Standards
City's Inclusive Language Guide | City's Social Media Accessibility Requirements

Why does the City use Social Media?

Since 2009, the City of Edmonton has used social media to share information and engage with the public. This use of social media aligns with the broader communication objectives of the City, encompassing principles of transparency and accessibility, fostering a progressive image, ensuring Edmontonians and community partners are informed and engaged, and extending its reach to local, national and global audiences. The City uses social media to implement:

Community Engagement - Actively engaging with the local community to foster a sense of belonging and participation.

Information Dissemination - Providing timely and accurate information on city services, events, news and updates to residents.

Emergency Communication - Using social media as a rapid communication channel to keep residents informed during emergencies or critical situations.

Crisis Management - Effectively managing and addressing crises or public concerns in a responsive and coordinated manner.

Public Relations - Monitoring the city's public image and reputation through positive interactions and responses to inquiries.

Transparency - Promoting transparency by sharing insights into city operations, decision-making processes and public initiatives.

Feedback - Encouraging feedback from residents and gathering input on city projects, policies and services.

Promotion of City Initiatives - Promoting and raising awareness of city programs, campaigns and initiatives.

Community Building - Building a supportive and engaged online community, fostering connections among residents and stakeholders.

Education and Awareness - Educating residents about important issues, civic responsibilities and city services.

Monitoring and Listening - Monitoring conversations and listening to what residents are saying on social media to stay informed about public sentiment and concerns.

Accessibility - Ensuring that City content is accessible to all residents, including those with disabilities, by adhering to accessibility standards.

The City's social media platforms further contribute to:

Increasing Residents' Access to Government - Social media serves as a direct conduit between the public and the City, nurturing civic engagement. Through various platforms and accounts, the City establishes a real-time information channel, offering residents updates on

pertinent matters, programs, services, as well as news and events. The presence of the City across social media platforms ensures multiple avenues for individuals to connect with their municipality.

Relationships with Residents and Partners - The City effectively cultivates and nurtures connections with individuals and the community. Through social channels, the City reinforces existing relationships while building robust and enduring bonds with Edmontonians online and offline.

Providing Customer Service - While it is not a replacement for 311, social media can be used to respond to inquiries from the public, particularly straightforward questions, in a timely manner. Social media allows the City of Edmonton to address and clarify misinformation. The social media administrator may interject in conversations that contain false information to provide accurate details.

Increasing Trust in City Government - Edmonton has committed to being as transparent and open as possible in providing public access to information (see Open City Policy - C581). Social media is an important tool in building trust through ongoing information sharing and engagement.

Enhancing City Reputation and Image - Social media provides an opportunity to highlight work that contributes to Edmonton's growth today and its future development. The City's social media channels serve as gateways for people locally and around the globe to explore what Edmonton has to offer. Ensuring engaging social media content is crucial, considering it frequently serves as the initial introduction for both the local community and the broader world.

Creating Dialogue with the Public - Social media offers a platform for real-time, interactive conversations with the public. This fosters two-way communication, emphasizing openness and transparency and encourages others to join the conversation both online and offline. It's important to note that while social media can sometimes involve receiving online criticism, the context plays a pivotal role. Constructive criticism can lead to positive changes and improvements, enriching the dialogue and strengthening community engagement.

Content that Stands Alongside Mass Media - The City can use social media to clarify information in news stories by traditional media that can benefit from supplemental information. In the current landscape, where traditional media outlets are challenged in sharing content through social media, the City can use its channels to get pertinent information out to the public.

For those seeking comprehensive information and in-depth details on various City initiatives and projects, the Transforming Edmonton Blog serves as an excellent source. It provides insights, updates and valuable content that can enhance public understanding of City-related matters.

Communicating Quickly in an Emergency - Social media enables the City to share updates with the public quickly during an emergency. This helps the City contribute to protecting the safety, health and welfare of people through the dissemination of timely and accurate information.

Providing Data and Analytics - Social media can be used to understand and address emerging issues. Monitoring social media trends and discussions helps staff to anticipate concerns or misunderstandings and prepare messages or communication strategies to address, effectively staying ahead of potential escalations. Both the general public and media frequently turn to the City's social media platforms as reliable sources for news and information.

Reach Specific Audiences on Specific Issues - The City's social media content encompasses messages from every municipal department, aiming to showcase and share information on our numerous programs and services. Residents engage with the primary City accounts to access essential details regarding municipal services, initiatives and happenings.

Different social media platforms have different demographics of users, and it's essential to recognize that not taking a one-size-fits-all approach is crucial in The City of Edmonton's communications strategy. Accommodating the different audiences on varied channels provides an opportunity to tailor messages for specific groups, ensuring our content resonates effectively.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Social Media team oversees the City's primary social media channels, secondary social media channels and all social media plans involving the City's channels. The team ensures that social media plays a pivotal role in accomplishing the City's objectives, as outlined in ConnectEdmonton, as well as its goals outlined in The City Plan. To gain insight into the teams and individuals responsible for social media, along with a brief overview of their duties, please refer to Appendix I.

City of Edmonton Social Media Accounts

The City's primary and secondary social media accounts are listed at edmonton.ca/SocialMedia.

Primary City of Edmonton Social Accounts (managed by the Social Media team):

- X (Twitter)
- Facebook
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Transforming Edmonton Blog
- LinkedIn
- Threads

The primary social media accounts serve as direct communication channels with the public and showcase content sourced from various City departments. These accounts boast a substantial following, making them a highly effective and efficient means of disseminating messages to the public.

Prior to beginning content creation for primary accounts, staff can consult with the Social Media team to ensure that the content aligns with the City's strategy, meets established standards of

quality, is written in the City's voice, adheres to the established branding guidelines and is tailored appropriately for the specific social media platforms it will be posted on. Staff must meet with the Social Media team for approval before the development of any contests or new accounts. It is strongly advised that communications staff meet wit Social Media team in the strategy development stage of any major campaign or social media plan.

Content featured on the City of Edmonton's main social media accounts is broad, including media releases, updates about City programs, services, events, educational campaigns, opportunities for public engagement, traffic advisories and public safety information. Moreover, these accounts play a pivotal role in gauging public sentiment on these subjects and addressing inquiries from the community related to the City.

For social media requests please submit through WorkFront. For additional questions please contact socialmedia@edmonton.ca.

Messaging the City provides on its corporate social media channels:

- City announcements
- Messages concerning public safety
- Support for external organizations' initiatives
- Responses to public inquiries about City services, operations or events
- Promotion of public invited events or activities
- Creation, posting and invitations for events
- Contests organized by the City of Edmonton
- Projects, programs or initiatives supporting the City Plan
- Brand-building, light-hearted and engaging visual storytelling
- Plans, actions and initiatives around complex societal matters

Overview of Social Media Audiences

Each platform hosts a distinctive audience with varying interests, behaviours, and expectations. To ensure effective engagement it's important to adapt messaging to align with the demographics and preferences of these diverse audiences. This approach helps maintain a relevant and meaningful presence on each platform, fostering stronger connections and interactions with the City's residents and partners.

X (Twitter)
@CityofEdmonton

Platform Overview

X is a real-time microblogging platform that enables users to share concise text-based posts of up to 280 characters. With features including photos, videos, hashtags, reshares and mentions, X fosters quick and dynamic conversations. It's a go-to platform for real-time news, customer service, networking and engagement with a global audience.

Individuals must be logged into an X account to view content. The City X account is public meaning that users can choose to follow the City's X account or view content without following.

X is the main social platform that the City uses to monitor conversations.The Social Media team monitors user interactions with City of Edmonton X posts, as well as account mentions, local interests and topics. Edmonton stands as one of Canada's most active cities on X.

Differentiation from other social platforms:

- Go-to platform for real-time public communication
- Effectively shares immediate breaking news, timely updates and rapid responses
- Fosters transparency and open dialogue with residents
- A trusted source for real-time updates during emergencies and crises
- Space for diverse conversations within Edmonton's community
- Direct and prompt resident engagement

Content Standards

The City of Edmonton's X content standards revolve around clarity, visuals, timely updates, engagement and trust. By using relevant hashtags, embracing transparency and adapting strategies based on feedback the City can create a purposeful X presence. X content must include:

Clarity and Brevity - Keep posts concise and to the point, utilizing the 280-character limit effectively. If posting an X thread each post should connect purposefully and drive the reader to the next post.

Engaging Visuals - Incorporate compelling images, videos and graphics to enhance post engagement. Posts with visuals are three times more likely to gain audience engagement.

Hashtags - X post hashtags should always include relevant trending tags, suitable tags such as #Yeg and any Edmonton-based hashtags that apply. If the post is part of a campaign, it must also include any campaign-specific hashtags outlined in the communications social plan. There can be three to four hashtags maximum in each post. Hashtags can be used throughout the copy or at the end of the copy.

Tags - When a post involves partners, businesses, individuals or entities it is encouraged to ask them for consent to tag them in those specific posts. This can enhance engagement and expand the reach of content to the appropriate audience.

Links - If there are links available that provide additional information related to the content mentioned in the post, it is mandatory to include these links in the post copy.

Timeliness - Providing relevant and timely updates and valuable resources aligned with the subject matter.

Call to Action or Interaction - Actively engage with residents by providing an appropriate call to action or encouraging engagement based on the specifics of the content.

Variety - Diversify content to include images and videos with updates, events, civic initiatives and community stories.

Accessibility - Ensure content is accessible to all users (including those with disabilities) by following accessibility standards. Alt text is a requirement for all images, while burnt SRT files must also accompany any videos with speech.

Approval - All posts require a thorough review and approval process. The relevant Communications department is responsible for the initial review and approval, with the final step overseen by the Social Media team, who conducts the ultimate review and approval of social requests.

Types of Posts

Single Post - An X post is a short, public message posted on the X platform. Limited to 280 characters, an X post can contain text, images, GIFs, videos or links. X posts are used to share thoughts, news, updates, opinions, links to articles and more.

They contribute to ongoing conversations, often including hashtags and mentions to connect with broader topics and other users. X posts appear on users' timelines and can be reposted, liked or replied to, fostering engagement and interaction.

Thread Post - An X thread allows users to link multiple posts together in an ordered sequence, rather than posting multiple items separately. Each post within the thread is limited to 280 characters and can contain text, images, GIFs, videos or links. X threads are used to share more comprehensive thoughts, discussions or narratives that require multiple posts.

They allow users to expand on a topic while maintaining the context throughout the sequence. Threads contribute to ongoing conversations, often employing hashtags and mentions to connect with broader topics and other users. X threads appear on users' timelines and can be followed, replied to or reposted, enhancing engagement and interaction.

However, it's important to note that longer threads may experience a drop-off in engagement past three posts. For optimal engagement, keep X threads concise, typically limited to a maximum of three posts, with visuals and copy aimed to keep the audience engaged.

Content Sizing Requirements:

- Images size: 1600 x 900 pixels
- Minimum size: 600 by 335 pixels
- Aspect ratio: 2:1 and 1:1 on desktop and 2:1, 3:4, 16:9 on mobile
- Supported formats: MP4, MOV, GIF, JPG and PNG
- Maximum file size: Up to 5MB on mobile and up to 15MB on the web
- Maximum video length of 140 seconds (recommended length 30 seconds)

Resources for X:

- **About X**
- **Rules and Policies**
- **Content Sizing Guide**

Facebook
@CityofEdmonton

A Facebook page allows users to share link posts, photos, videos and event posts. The City of Edmonton Facebook page is also used on occasion for paid content (advertising).

Facebook users can choose to like/follow the City's Facebook page. Facebook users can engage with the City's content in a variety of ways including, reacting using an emoji, posting a comment and sharing the City's content. Individuals do not need to be logged into a Facebook account to view content, however, there are limitations to the visibility of comments and resharing or positioning of content.

Differentiation from other social platforms:

- Diverse forms of content sharing on Meta's interfaces
- Effective and integrative advertising platform (part of Meta)
- Variety of communities connecting through groups and pages
- User-friendly source for event promotion and management
- Ease of Integration with Meta's other platforms and messaging systems

Content Standards

The City of Edmonton's Facebook content standards prioritize clarity, visuals, storytelling, engagement and trust. With Facebook, the City embraces transparency in connecting with residents on a more personal front through City content. All Facebook content must include:

Clarity and Brevity - Posts must be kept concise, engaging, purposeful and relevant. The content and copy should connect with residents through storytelling and encourage interaction through clear calls to action.

Engaging Visuals - Facebook content must incorporate compelling images, videos and or graphics to enhance audience engagement and capture their attention. All Facebook posts must have visuals. The exception to not using visuals is if a link provided auto-populates an appropriate image to tie into the post.

Storytelling - Prioritizing compelling storytelling is vital when conveying messaging, sharing experiences and humanizing city initiatives in Facebook posts. It is an essential element in creating content that resonates with the City's audience and fosters meaningful engagement.

Hashtags - The City does not use hashtags on Facebook at this time. However, if the subject matter of the content is relevant to a campaign, the use of a campaign-specific hashtag is permissible. Please connect with the Social Media team to confirm if a hashtag is necessary for the content/campaign.

Tags - When a post involves partners, businesses, individuals or entities it is encouraged to ask

them for consent to tag them in those specific posts. This can enhance engagement and expand the reach to appropriate audiences.

Links - If there are links available that provide additional information related to the content mentioned in the post, it is mandatory to include these links in the post copy.

Timeliness - Providing relevant and timely updates and valuable resources aligned with the subject matter.

Call to Action or Interaction - Following the copy, provide an appropriate call to action or encourage engagement based on the specifics of the content.

Variety - Diversify content to include images and videos with updates, events, civic initiatives, community spotlights and stories that foster connection, engagement and belonging.

Accessibility - Ensure content is accessible to all users (including those with disabilities) by following accessibility standards. Alt text is a requirement for all images, while burnt SRT files must also accompany any videos with speech.

Approval - All posts require a thorough review and approval process. The relevant Communications department is responsible for the initial review and approval, with the final step overseen by the Social Media team, who conducts the ultimate review and approval of social requests.

Types of Posts

Static Image - A static post on Facebook is a single (or multiple), visual content piece that captures a moment, tells a story, conveys a message or imparts information to the City of Edmonton's audience. It serves as a snapshot of the City of Edmonton's essence, thoughtfully curated to align with its visual identity. Accompanying the static post is a caption that delivers context, encourages engagement and provides necessary details, contributing to a comprehensive and impactful storytelling experience.

Video - Uploading videos to Facebook allows for sharing captivating visual content with an audience. From informative clips to entertaining narratives, videos offer a dynamic way to engage viewers. By carefully selecting and curating videos, a compelling and immersive experience can be created that resonates with an audience's interests and provides valuable insights into the City's initiatives.

Facebook Events - Events provide a unique opportunity to connect and engage with an audience. Whether organizing a local gathering, festival, webinar, workshop or any event, creating one allows for sharing details, inviting guests and encouraging participation. Attendees can RSVP, receive notifications and interact with event updates, ensuring a well-coordinated experience. With the ability to customize event descriptions, co-hosts, dates and locations, Facebook Events empowers event hosts to create successful gatherings that resonate with the City of Edmonton.

Content Sizing Requirements:

Facebook Post
- Single image size: 1200 x 630 pixels
- If sharing two to ten images the post images should be 1200 x 1200 pixels

Facebook Video
- Ratio: 16:9 to 9:16
- Maximum 240 minute video length

Facebook Event Cover
- Event cover image size: 1200 x 628 pixels

Facebook Ads
- Feed ads: At least 1080 x 1080 pixels Minimum size 600 x 600 pixels | Ratio 1.91:1 to 1:1
- Right Column ads: At least 1080 x 1080 pixels Minimum size 254 x 133 pixels | Ratio 1:1 (These are a desktop-only ad format)
- Instant Articles: Ratio 1.91:1 to 1:1 Maximum file size of 30 MB
- Marketplace ads: At least 1080 x 1080 pixels Ratio 1:1 Maximum file size of 30 MB
- Search: At least 1080 x 1080 pixels Minimum size 600 x 600 pixels | Ratio 1.91:1 to 1:1 Maximum file size of 30 MB
- Sponsored Messages: At least 1080 x 1080 pixels Ratio 1.91:1 to 1:1 | Maximum file size of 30 MB
- Messenger inbox ads: At least 1080 x 1080 pixels Minimum size 254 x 133 pixels | Ratio 1:1 Maximum file size of 30 MB
- Messenger Stories ads: At least 1080 x 1080 pixels Minimum width of 500 pixels | Ratio 9:16

Resources for Facebook:

- **About Facebook**
- **Rules and Policies**
- **Content Sizing Guide**

Instagram
@CityofEdmonton

Instagram is a visual-based story-telling social platform where users can post images, videos and descriptions to their grid, and time-limited stories comprising images, videos and storyboards. It features Instagram Reels for short video editing and supports live broadcasting. Additionally, the account occasionally functions as a platform for paid content and advertising campaigns.

The City of Edmonton account is public, meaning Instagram followers can choose to follow the account so the content will show up in their feed, or they can view content without following.

The Social Media team monitors user interactions with the City of Edmonton's Instagram posts.

Differentiation from other social platforms:

- Visually focused showcasing images and videos with personable storytelling
- Effective and integrative advertising platform (part of Meta)
- Diverse forms of content sharing on Meta's interfaces
- Carousel feature - displaying multiple pieces of content in one swipeable post
- Collaborator feature - bringing one piece of content to two audiences
- Stories feature - temporary content sharing
- Reels feature - visual storytelling through short-form video

Content Standards

The City of Edmonton's Instagram content standards prioritize visual storytelling, authentic connection, and meaningful engagement. Much like the City's approach on Facebook, Instagram serves as a platform for storytelling, but with a heightened emphasis on visual content. All Instagram content must include:

Clarity and Brevity - Posts must be kept concise, engaging, visually appealing, purposeful and relevant. The content and copy should connect with residents through storytelling and encourage interaction through clear calls to action.

Engaging Visuals - Instagram content must incorporate visually captivating and engaging images or videos. Graphics accompanied by text is not suitable content for the City's Instagram feed but can be utilized with the City's Instagram stories. All Instagram posts must include high-quality and visually focused images and or videos.

Cover Image (Videos Only) - If posting a reel, feed video or live it is mandatory to provide a cover image. This is what users see when scrolling through the City's grid feed or reel feed. The image must be high quality with no graphics or text and relevant to the video content.

Video Length - Video length depends on the post type. A Feed Video must be between three

seconds - one hour. Instagram Story Video is up to 60 seconds. Instagram Live is up to four hours. Instagram Reel is between 15-90 seconds.

Storytelling - Prioritizing visual storytelling is at the forefront of connection and engagement on Instagram. All curated content and copy must convey key messaging with elements of emotion, experience, and relatability. These are essential elements in creating content that resonates with the City's audience and fosters meaningful engagement.

Hashtags - Instagram post hashtags should always include relevant trending tags, suitable tags such as #Yeg and any Edmonton-based hashtags that apply. If the post is part of a campaign, it must also include any campaign-specific hashtags outlined in the communications social plan. There can be five hashtags maximum in each post. Hashtags can be used throughout the copy or at the end of the copy.

Tags - When a post involves partners, businesses, individuals or entities it is encouraged to ask them for consent to tag them in those specific posts. This can enhance engagement and expand the reach to appropriate audiences.

Links - It's important to note that links in post copy cannot be hyperlinked. Instead direct the audience to a suitable call to action in the post copy, such as 'Visit the link in our bio.' The Social Media team must be provided with the mentioned link for inclusion in the City's Linktree.

Timeliness - Providing relevant and timely updates and valuable resources aligned with the subject matter.

Call to Action or Interaction - Following the copy, provide an appropriate call to action or encourage engagement based on the specifics of the content.

Variety - Diversify content to include images and videos with updates, events, civic initiatives, community spotlights and visual storytelling that fosters transparency, connection, engagement and belonging.

Accessibility - Ensure content is accessible to all users (including those with disabilities) by following accessibility standards. Alt text is a requirement for all images, while burnt SRT files must also accompany any videos with speech.

Approval - All posts require a thorough review and approval process. The relevant Communications department is responsible for the initial review and approval, with the final step overseen by the Social Media team, who conducts the ultimate review and approval of social requests.

Types of Posts

Single Static Post - individual images or visuals that communicate a story, message or information through visual content. The Social Media team curates and selects posts to ensure a cohesive quality that upholds the City's brand on an Instagram grid. The caption of a static post should encompass all pertinent details, calls to action and relevant information tied to the accompanying image.

Carousel Post - A sequence of multiple images or visuals (max of 10) designed to narrate a story, showcase various aspects or provide detailed information. These posts are thoughtfully curated to maintain a harmonious visual identity across an Instagram profile. The caption accompanying a carousel post should encompass comprehensive details, calls to action and pertinent information linked to the series of images.

Collaborator Post - Single posts that simultaneously appear in both the City of Edmonton's and the specified collaborators' feeds and or reels. These posts feature two users as the post's co-authors, fostering shared content ownership.

Note that all collaborator posts must be posted through the City of Edmonton's official account and not through City partners' or influencers' individual accounts. This ensures consistent branding, messaging and quality control.

Stories - Brief narratives for sharing timely updates, interactive experiences and exclusive moments. They contribute to a profile's visual identity and encourage immediate engagement. Stories are viewable for 24 hours, except when saved as highlights.

Reels - Dynamic short-form videos that offer a creative canvas for expressing ideas, entertaining audiences or delivering quick insights. Crafted with care, Reels contribute to a consistent visual theme across an Instagram profile. The caption accompanying an Instagram Reel should encapsulate essential details, prompts for engagement and pertinent information connected to the video content.

Content Sizing Requirements:

Instagram Organic Posts
- Portrait Post: 1080 x 1350 pixels (prefered sizing as of 2025)
- Instagram Stories: 1080 x 1920 pixels
- Instagram Reels: 1080 x 1920 pixels (video shot in 1080)
- Instagram Reels Cover: 1080 x 1920 pixels
- Regular Video Post Recommended length of 2-3 minutes max
- Instagram Reel Recommended length of 30 seconds max
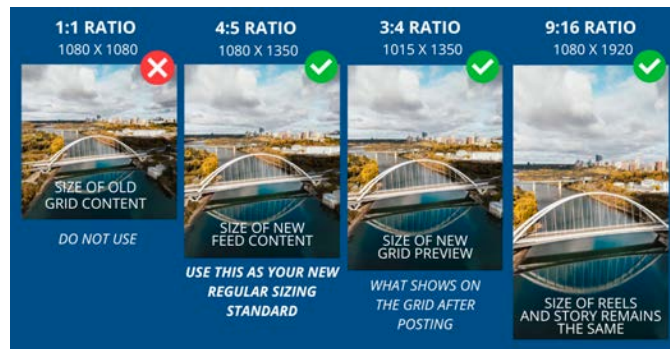
Resources for Instagram:

- **About Instagram** | **Rules and Policies**| **Content Sizing Guide**

YouTube
@CityofEdmonton

The City of Edmonton's YouTube channel features videos from different departments, including live broadcasts of media events, panel discussions and other content. Users can subscribe to receive notifications for new videos and interact with the content through likes, dislikes, and comments.

The Social Media team monitors user interactions with the City of Edmonton's YouTube posts.

Differentiation from other social platforms:

- Go-to platform for long-form video content
- User-friendly video search engine
- Outlet for video-based educational resources
- Broad audience reach and engagement

Content Standards

City of Edmonton YouTube content prioritizes the delivery of informative, visually appealing and professionally produced videos. Video content should aim to educate, inform and engage the City's diverse audience, fostering a sense of community and transparency. Youtube content must include:

Clarity and Transparency - Video content must provide clear, concise and transparent information pertaining to the subject matter featured.

Visual Quality - High-quality visuals including graphics, animations and well-composed shots should be used to enhance the video's visual appeal. Ensuring that it is both informative and visually engaging.

Length - Videos must be an appropriate length, balancing the depth of information with the viewer's attention span to ensure viewers stay engaged and informed. Suggested video length is between 15 seconds - 15 minutes. Depending on the content subject matter some videos may be longer than 15 minutes. Maximum file upload size is 256 GB or 12 hours.

Visibility - Specify the visibility settings for the video, which determine its accessibility. The options are Public, Private or Unlisted.

Hashtags - YouTube video hashtags should always include relevant trending tags, suitable tags such as #Yeg and any Edmonton-based hashtags that apply. If the post is part of a campaign, it must also include any campaign-specific hashtags outlined in the communications social plan. There can be 15 hashtags maximum in each post. Hashtags can be used throughout the copy or at the end of the copy.

Variety - Diversify content to include videos with updates, information, events, civic initiatives, community spotlights and visual storytelling that fosters transparency, connection and engagement.

Accessibility - Ensure content is accessible to all users (including those with disabilities) by following accessibility standards. If a video includes any type of speech it is mandatory to provide an SRT file to upload with the video or have the SRT file burnt into the video prior to upload.

Timeliness - Providing relevant and timely updates and valuable resources aligned with the subject matter.

Call to Action or Interaction - Depending on the video subject matter provide an appropriate call to action or encourage engagement based on the specifics of the content.

Approval - All posts require a thorough review and approval process. The relevant Communications department is responsible for the initial review and approval, with the final step overseen by the Social Media team, who conduct the ultimate review and approval of social requests.

Types of Posts

Videos - Uploading videos to YouTube helps share informative content with an audience. Whether educational or news-related, videos provide a way to connect. By refining titles, descriptions and tags, discoverability is boosted. Engaging through comments, likes and shares encourages community involvement. YouTube videos can be uploaded as public, unlisted or private.

Live Streams - Live streaming on YouTube presents an opportunity to engage with an audience in real-time. Whether it's broadcasting events, discussions or informative sessions, live streaming fosters immediate connections. Viewers can participate through live comments and other engaging options available.

Content Sizing & Resolution Requirements:

- 1280 x 720 pixels (720p): This is the minimum resolution required for high-definition (HD) playback. A full 16:9 aspect ratio is recommended for videos at this resolution.
- 1920 x 1080 pixels (1080p): Full HD resolution happens at 1080p. This is a top-tier resolution if wanting to upload high-quality videos for advanced playback devices.
- 2560 x 1440 pixels (1440p): For an even more detailed viewing experience, upload videos in 1440p, also known as 2K.
- 3840 x 2160 pixels (2160p): Ultra HD or 4K resolutions are the best for large screens if wanting a sharp, defined image.

Resources for YouTube:

- **About YouTube**
- **Rules and Policies**

- **Content Sizing Guide**

Transforming Edmonton Blog

The Transforming Edmonton blog shares the City of Edmonton's efforts in serving its residents and building a better community. City employees can contribute by providing insights, behind-the-scenes details and information about various programs. Blog posts are subject to approval by the Brand and Story team, ensuring quality writing, readability, and plain language. Departmental clients are encouraged to utilize this platform to tell their stories, and City employees seeking to contribute can connect with their Communications Advisor for assistance.

The Transforming Edmonton Blog is a platform that thrives on diverse, engaging content from the City's program areas. It's the perfect space to share storytelling topics such as:

- Behind-the-scenes look at projects
- In-depth stories about the City's initiatives
- Variety of success stories
- Insights into the people and communities that shape Edmonton

Content Standards

A Transforming Edmonton post should engage, inform or tell a unique story, rather than rehashing PSAs or News Releases. It's a platform to showcase the impact of the City's initiatives and share success stories. For instance, the City wouldn't post about hosting an open house but instead focus on the open house's outcomes and benefits to the City and attendees. All blog posts are promoted through the City of Edmonton's social channels. All Transforming Edmonton Blog posts must include:

Clarity and Brevity - Posts must be kept concise, engaging, visually appealing, purposeful and relevant. The content and copy should connect with residents through storytelling.

Storytelling - Storytelling is at the forefront of connection on Transforming Edmonton. All curated content and copy must convey key messaging with elements of emotion, experience and relatability. These are essential elements in creating content that resonates with the audience and fosters meaningful engagement.

Engaging Visuals - At Least one high-quality image is required per blog post, however using more than one image is encouraged.

Captions - Captions must be included with all images provided.

Blog Length - All blogs must be between 350-750 words.

Tags - When a blog involves partners, businesses, individuals or entities it is encouraged to ask them for consent to tag a website related to them in the blog post. This can enhance

engagement and expand the reach to appropriate audiences.

Links - If there are links available that provide additional information related to the content mentioned in the blog, it is mandatory to include these links at the bottom of the copy for resources.

Variety - Diversify content to include images and videos with updates, events, civic initiatives, community spotlights and stories that foster connection, engagement and belonging.

Call to Action or Interaction - Depending on the subject matter provide an appropriate call to action or encourage engagement based on the specifics of the content.

Accessibility - Ensure content is accessible to all users (including those with disabilities) by following accessibility standards. Alt text is a requirement for all images, while burnt SRT files must also accompany any videos with speech.

Approval - All blogs require a thorough review and approval process. The relevant Communications department is responsible for the initial review and approval. The second approval is through the Story team. The Story team also coordinates the posting of the blog.

Resources for Transforming Edmonton:

- **About Transforming Edmonton**

LinkedIn
[@CityofEdmonton](#)

While the City's LinkedIn account primarily focuses on job postings, there are occasions when it is suitable to share content from other areas, such as City employee success stories, community impact updates, awards and recognitions and engaging historical stories.

Differentiation from other social platforms:

- Professional Business and networking-focused platform
- Go-to platform for job postings and scouting
- Provides users with access to professional development
- Variety of professional communities connecting through groups and pages
- Opportunity to interact with and inform professionals on a wide range of content

Content Standards

City of Edmonton LinkedIn content prioritizes professionalism, relevance and value. Sharing insightful posts related to the City's urban development, civic matters, jobs and success stories. Content should encourage engagement, foster meaningful conversations and provide valuable information to professionals, residents and community partners. All LinkedIn posts must include:

Clarity and Transparency - Content must provide clear, concise and transparent information pertaining to the subject matter featured.

Visual Quality - Visuals must incorporate high-quality images, videos and or graphics to enhance audience engagement and capture their attention. All LinkedIn posts must have visuals.

Video Length - Videos must be an appropriate length, balancing the depth of information with the viewer's attention span to ensure viewers stay engaged and informed. Videos can be between three seconds minimum to ten minutes maximum in length.

Hashtags - LinkedIn post hashtags should always include relevant trending tags, suitable tags such as #Yeg and any Edmonton-based hashtags that apply. If the post is part of a campaign, it must also include any campaign-specific hashtags outlined in the communications social plan. There can be three hashtags maximum in each post. Hashtags can be used throughout the copy or at the end of the copy.

Timeliness - Providing relevant and timely updates and valuable resources aligned with the subject matter.

Call to Action or Interaction - Following the copy, provide an appropriate call to action or encourage engagement based on the specifics of the content.

Variety - Diversify content to include videos with updates, information, events, civic initiatives, staff spotlights and visual storytelling that fosters transparency, connection and engagement.

Accessibility - Ensure content is accessible to all users (including those with disabilities) by following accessibility standards. Alt text is a requirement for all images, while burnt SRT files must also accompany any videos with speech.

Approval - All posts require a thorough review and approval process. The relevant Communications department is responsible for the initial review and approval, with the final step overseen by the Social Media team, who conduct the ultimate review and approval of social requests.

Types of Content

Static Post - Designed to capture moments, convey messages and provide information to the City's professional audience. These snapshots reflect the City's essence and identity, accompanied by informative captions that encourage discussions and provide a professional story-telling experience.

Video Post - Whether it's informative clips, compelling achievements or insightful stories, videos provide a dynamic medium to captivate LinkedIn viewers. By carefully selecting this content, the City creates a compelling and immersive experience that resonates with the audience's interests while offering valuable insights into the city's initiatives.

Job Post - All job postings must be requested, reviewed, approved and posted through human resources.

Content Sizing Requirements:
- Feed Image Post: 1200 x 628 pixels
- Video post aspect ratio: 1:2.4 - 2.4:1
- Video post file size: 5GB - 75KB

Resources for LinkedIn:

- **About LinkedIn**
- **Rules and Policies**
- **Content Sizing Guide**

Threads
@CityofEdmonton

Threads is an extension of Instagram, offering focused engagement with the City's Instagram audience, similar to X (Twitter) in its text post focus.

On Threads, each post is limited to 500 characters and can include links, photos, videos or shared posts from other users.

Access to Threads requires an Instagram account. The City Threads account is public, allowing users to follow it or view content without following it.

Threads users can create single posts, threads, reposts (sharing someone else's content), quote posts (reposting with added commentary) and reply to others' posts. Currently, direct messaging is not available.

Threads is in its testing stages with Strategic Services to help better assess its suitability for the City's primary social platforms. **Threads is in a testing phase and is not currently open to program areas for social requests.**

Resources for Threads:

- **About Threads**

Social Media Advertising

At the City of Edmonton, the social media advertising process is governed by a stringent protocol. Prior to launching any social media ad or campaign, all program areas must follow a mandatory review and approval process. This involves consulting with Strategic Services to ensure alignment with branding, messaging and communication strategies.

This thorough review not only upholds the Social Media Standards but also guarantees adherence to the Visual Identity Standards and Branding Guidelines. Only after securing internal approval will the campaign be forwarded to the City's external advertising partner, DDB, for execution.

These processes help the City deliver cohesive, strategic social media communications that consistently reflect the City's mission and values.

Strategic Service's Role	Doyle Dane Bernbach's Role
To ensure that all social media ads align and comply with the City's Branding Guidelines, Visual Identity Standards and Social Media Standards. All social media ads undergo review and approval by Strategic Services before their official submission to DDB.	To translate the Communications team's strategic vision into effective social media advertising. They manage the setup, monitoring, targeting, ad placements, budget allocation and performance metrics to ensure campaigns reach the right audiences.

Communications teams must consult with Strategic Services prior to submitting their ad buy to DDB. All social media ad buy requests must have the following prepared:

Clear Objectives and Measures of Success - Defined clear objectives for the social media ad campaign. What is the program area aiming to achieve through this campaign? What metrics will be evaluated against success? Whether it's increasing program registrations, raising awareness or promoting an event, the objectives should be specific, measurable and time-bound.

Target Audience - Specify the target audience for the ad campaign. Provide detailed demographics, interests and behaviours of the intended audience to help create precise ad targeting.

Key Messaging - Clearly outline the key messages or content that should be conveyed in the ad including information, benefits or calls to action for the targeted audience.

Visual Assets - Provide high-quality visual assets including images, videos or graphics that align with the ad's messaging and objectives. When requesting Creative Services they must be informed that the visuals will be used for social media ads. This assures that assets are prepared in the correct format and resolution for various social media platforms.

Branding Guidelines - Follow the City of Edmonton branding guidelines, including logo usage, colour schemes and fonts, that maintain a consistent and professional appearance across all

ads. Visit the [City of Edmonton Corporate Brand Guidelines](#) and [Visual Identity Standards](#) or connect with Creative Services for more information.

QR Codes - while not advised for social media campaigns, QR codes can be suitable for other digital initiatives but must strictly comply with all corporate guidelines and standards. It is mandatory that they are developed through Creative Services to ensure organizational consistency and enable Google Analytics tracking. Furthermore, each QR code must exclusively direct to an edmonton.ca link.

Budget and Duration - Determine the budget allocated for the ad campaign and its duration. Providing this information helps DDB optimize social media ad placement and scheduling.

Platform and Placement Selection - Indicate which social media platforms (e.g. Facebook and Instagram) the ad will be placed. Different platforms may require varying size ratios and formats based on specific placements.

Ad Copy and Call to Action - Craft concise and compelling ad copy. Clearly state the key messaging, benefits and any necessary instructions. Specify the desired call to action (e.g., "Register Now," "Learn More," "Contact Us").

Landing Page or Link - Provide the URL of the landing page or website where users will be directed when they click on the ad. Ensure that the destination page is relevant and optimized for conversions.

Tracking and Reporting - Include any specific tracking parameters or goals (e.g., website conversions, and form submissions) for the campaign. This allows for accurate tracking and reporting of ad performance by DDB.

Review and Approval Process - Strategic Services must be included in the review and approval process to ensure compliance with the City's Visual Identity Standards and Social Media Standards. To avoid delays in social media campaigns it is strongly advised that these teams are brought in early. Ensure that all partners involved in the campaign are aware of their roles, responsibilities and turnaround time.

Compliance and Legal Requirements - If there are any legal or compliance considerations for the ad campaign, share these with Strategic Services to ensure that ad content adheres to regulations and policies.

By providing Strategic Services with these essential details communications teams can help create effective, targeted and visually appealing social media ads that resonate with the City of Edmonton's diverse audience. Clear communication and a well-defined strategy are key to achieving successful outcomes in social media advertising.

To contact Strategic Services regarding social media ads, please submit a request through Workfront.

Influencer Campaigns

Partnering with influencers can significantly amplify the impact of the City of Edmonton campaigns. However, it is important to assess both the reputational benefits and risks an influencer could present.

To ensure successful collaborations that align with the Social Media Standards all communications teams must consult with the Social Media team prior to proceeding with an influencer campaign.

Adhering to the standards set in place, program areas can leverage influencer marketing effectively to enhance the reach and impact of the City of Edmonton campaigns while maintaining transparency, authenticity and alignment with the City's values.

All influencer campaigns, whether paid or not, are subject to a mandatory review process that ensures compliance with the City of Edmonton's Social Media Standards, Visual Identity Standards and Branding Guidelines.

The Communications departments are required to initiate this process by consulting with the Social Media team. This consulting process is to take place before any influencer campaign can proceed. It is essential for crafting a strategic approach that aligns with the City's mission, values and objectives. The team plays a pivotal role in overseeing and approving the campaign's strategy, ensuring it adheres to legal, ethical and Social Media Standards.

Approvals with the applicable department Director, Branch Manager or Deputy City Manager is also required priority to the advancement of any influencer campaign.

To request consultation for an influencer campaign please contact socialmedia@edmonton.ca

Running a Contest on Social Media

Before running a contest through the City's social media channels, it is essential to consult with the Social Media team. Different platforms have varying regulations, including aspects like receiving contest entries and contacting winners via social media. Consultation with the team is necessary for each new contest as platforms continuously update their terms and conditions. Consequently, a contest that might have been permissible two years ago may not meet current standards.

Questions to Consider:

- Who is the audience for the contest?
- Which social channels do they use?
- Who is eligible to enter?
- What does the audience do to enter the contest?
- Who is monitoring how contest entries are received?
- Who is choosing the winner of the contest
- How is the winner(s) contacted?
- What is the duration of the contest?
- What are contest prizes and the value of those prizes*?
- Does the contest outline go against the social platform rules and regulations?

Please note, that to run a contest on social media, a clear set of contest rules and regulations must be approved by the City's legal team. It is a statutory requirement to give adequate and fair disclosure to potential contest entrants of the contest information. Once the contest rules are prepared, they should be forwarded to the Legal Services Branch with sufficient time for review prior to the planned start of the contest.

For a complete list of contest rules and checklists, please see Appendix IV.
To request a consultation for a social media contest please contact socialmedia@edmonton.ca.

*Please make informed choices if considering ordering promotional items for prizing.
Refer to this document for guidance.

Creating Social Media Content

Content is any information that is posted on social media including words, images, videos, links and anything else displayed on a social media account. Content is what drives social media. The City values meaningful, informative, accurate and authentic content to attract and retain its social media audience, build awareness of and affinity to the City and its programs and services, promote engagement and facilitate conversation. This section outlines the best practices for creating social media content.

Social Media Content must be:

Meaningful - Content should serve a purpose for the City and its social media audience. What outcomes are to be achieved from sharing content? Meaningful content sustains audience engagement, potentially resulting in increased awareness, reach, higher engagement and conversions such as website visits, survey completions, program registration and more.

Informative - The City is a public service and strives to enable a better life for all Edmontonians. Social media content must inform and educate about City programs, initiatives and policies.

Visual - Photos, videos and graphics do more than just capture attention; they communicate the City's commitment to excellence and professionalism. High-quality visuals reflect the city's dedication to its residents, showcasing the City's efforts to deliver the best information, services and experiences. They help the City connect authentically, fostering trust and reinforcing Edmonton's identity as a vibrant forward-thinking community. *All visuals must meet our quality standards. Strategic Services has the authority to refuse visual content that does not meet these quality standards.*

Accurate, Timely and Reliable - In addition to being informative, social media content must be accurate. It should provide information in a clear, concise and complete manner, as well as being timely and reliable. The City should be seen as the source of truth.

Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) - A tool which helps examine how intersecting identity factors (like sex, gender and ethnicity) can produce inequalities and privileges for certain individuals and groups. By challenging assumptions and identifying missing perspectives in the development of content, the City can be more inclusive in approach.

Inclusive and Accessible - Social Media content must be accessible to all and follow online accessibility best practices. This includes adding alternative text to images and closed captioning to videos.

Visit OneCity to access the [City's Inclusive Language Guide](#) and the [City's Social Media Accessibility Requirements](#) for more information.

Creating Content

Catering content to each social media channel strategically enhances its reach and effectiveness. Whether it's an impactful X post, a dynamic Facebook event, a captivating Instagram photo or reel or an engaging YouTube video, the Social Media team can help tailor content for optimal audience engagement and goal achievement.

Content quality is more important than quantity. Great content should reach and engage an audience, and achieve objectives from the first post. Subsequent posts should reach an audience at different times of the day, be reworded to serve different social platform placements and amplify key messages. To get a better idea of how many posts a specific campaign needs, please see the Social Media Request Template.

All content must be created by Centralized Strategic Services teams including, Creative Services, Story Telling and Brand, and Social Media Team. **There are some exceptions for content created by communications areas but must be approved by the Social Media Team.**

Consulting with the Social Media team

The Social Media team specializes in providing strategic services to assist program areas in crafting compelling content and executing successful social media campaigns. The team works to develop tailored strategies that align with the area's goals and resonate with target audiences. From content creation to campaign optimization, Strategic Service's expertise ensures key messaging stands out in the digital landscape, helping foster engagement and achieve set objectives.

Submitting Content for Review and Publishing

To submit social media content for review and scheduling on the City of Edmonton's primary social media channels, submit the Social Media Request Template through the Social Media Workfront request form. Full edit access on any documentation must be granted.

Requests to post social media content on the City's social media channels should be sent a minimum of two business days before the date they are to be posted. Social media campaigns require seven business days before the date the campaign is set to start. Requests sent with less notice may be rescheduled or denied at the discretion of the Social Media team.

Please note social media requests will only be accepted from Communications teams and staff.

Using Graphics and Images

Graphics and images posted on City Social accounts need to follow the City of Edmonton Corporate Brand Guidelines (see *Best Practices for Social Media Graphics on Page 39*) and Visual Identity Standards. AI generated images are strictly prohibited, see Generative AI Standards.

When recognizable people appear in photography and videography to be used in social media posts, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* requires their written consent. Please ensure a Model Release Contract is completed when conducting a shoot.

Requesting to Reshare Content

The City's social media primarily focuses on updates, events and activities related to the City of Edmonton. Occasionally, the City may share or reshare information from other organizations or partners. The City may engage with and promote social media posts from other organizations when there is a clear alignment with the City's involvement and a valid reason to do so.

The City <u>does not</u> share or reshare social media posts or content from:

- News Outlets
- Reporters
- Businesses (unless approved through special case campaigns)
- Individuals or Influencers (unless approved through special case campaigns)

The City's primary goal is to maintain impartiality and avoid favouritism while emphasizing City related content. However, it's important to note that the City cannot share news content due to Canada's *Online News Act*.

Additionally, permission is mandatory when sharing photos owned by individuals or organizations external to the City of Edmonton. This approach helps the City maintain fairness and compliance with legal regulations.

For a more specific breakdown of what content is appropriate for each individual platform visit [The City of Edmonton Social Accounts](#) section.

On-going Established Social Media Programs

Continuous and structured social media programs are supported by administrative processes. Implemented by the city to promote and communicate various media releases, initiatives and weather response information through social media. These programs are in place to keep residents informed, engaged and involved.

See [Appendix VI: Established Social Media Programs](#).

How to use Hashtags

Hashtags are concise, keyword-based labels used on social media platforms to categorize and organize content. They consist of the "#" symbol followed by a word or phrase, allowing users to search for relevant posts and discussions related to a particular topic. Hashtags enhance content visibility and help connect that content with a wider audience. Below is an overview of how hashtags are used on each of the City's social media platforms:

X - Include one to three relevant hashtags in each X post to ensure messaging remains clear. Engage with the City's audience by using known local established or trending hashtags. For longer-term campaigns consider creating campaign-specific hashtags. Hashtags can be used throughout the copy or posted at the bottom of the copy.

Facebook - Organic engagement on Facebook is primarily driven by content quality, rather than the use of hashtags. The impact of hashtags on Facebook posts is limited. Hashtags are not needed for Facebook except when cross-sharing an Instagram Reel onto Facebook. In this case, hashtags from the original Instagram post can still offer some relevance.

Instagram - Include one to five relevant hashtags in each Instagram post. Hashtags stand as a cornerstone, working to elevate the content's visibility in Instagram searches and on explore pages. Hashtags can be used throughout the copy or posted at the bottom of the copy.

YouTube - Incorporating one to three relevant hashtags in video titles and descriptions helps categorize the City's content, making it more discoverable to the City's audience. Choosing relevant and appropriate hashtags ensures videos reach those actively seeking specific information. This approach significantly strengthens the City's platform presence, contributing to effectively addressing the information needs of the City's audience while boosting visibility. Hashtags can be used throughout the copy or posted at the bottom of the copy.

Tagging Other Social Accounts / Partners

Tagging other individuals, partners, organizations or accounts in social media posts can enhance engagement and collaboration. However, it can also be seen as a City of Edmonton endorsement which can carry risks, so it is important to ensure any tagged accounts achieve strategic goals while reflecting transparency, authenticity and alignment with the City's values.

This section provides insights into the City's utilization of tags for external accounts across platforms and outlines their advantages. Below is an overview of each platform and how to use tags effectively for each:

X - Mentioning another user in an X post is done by using the "@" symbol followed by their username. It not only notifies them but also creates a link to their profile. Up to ten usernames can be tagged on one X post.

Facebook - Tag other Facebook users or pages in posts by using the "@" symbol followed by their name or page name. They will receive a notification and their name or page will become a clickable link. Up to 50 usernames can be tagged on one Facebook post.

Instagram - Similar to Facebook, tag other users or accounts in Instagram posts and stories using the "@" symbol followed by their username. This notifies them and creates a clickable link to their profile. Instagram also has a secondary tag feature called "collaborator" which will share one post across two platforms, showing the content to both parties' followers. Up to 20 usernames can be tagged on one Instagram post.

YouTube - Tag other YouTube channels or users by using the "@" symbol followed by their channel name or username in video descriptions or comments. This helps in engaging with other channels and creating a more interactive experience. Tag up to 15 usernames maximum on one Youtube video.

Tagging Information Required by the Social Media team:

- The usernames or names of the accounts to tag
- A direct link to their profiles
- If cross-posting through several platforms ensuring the different usernames are provided
- Consent from the parties that are to be tagged

All tagging information must be provided within the social request template and submitted through the Social Media [Workfront request form](#).

Accessibility

Accessibility is a fundamental part of the City's core values, encompassing the City's entire online presence including social media. The City is committed to making sure that all members of the City's diverse community can interact on equal terms. The City demonstrates this commitment through practices like adding alt text for images and providing closed captions for videos. To ensure that the City is reaching all residents, it is mandatory that all social media content (including from external vendors) includes:

Alternative Text (Alt Text) - Often abbreviated as alt text, which is a brief and descriptive text description added to images and graphics in social media posts. It serves as a valuable accessibility feature, providing context and information about visual content for individuals who use screen readers or have visual impairments. Alt text enhances the inclusivity of social media content, ensuring that everyone can understand and engage with images and graphics.

SubRip Subtitle File (SRT File) - Text-based file formats used to provide synchronized captions or subtitles for video content in social media posts. SRT files display text on the screen, allowing viewers to read the spoken dialogue and understand the content, especially when the audio is muted or for those who are deaf or hard of hearing. Incorporating SRT files ensures that video content remains accessible and inclusive to a wide range of audiences on social media.

Closed Captions - Text-based overlays that appear on video content, providing a written transcription of spoken dialogue, sound effects and background noises. These captions can be turned on or off by viewers, enhancing accessibility and allowing individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to engage with video content on social media. Closed captions are a crucial component of inclusive social media posts, ensuring that all audiences can fully comprehend and enjoy video content.

Using am and pm - For those using assistive technology, writing "am" and "pm" in social media copy is more accessible vs the standard Canadian Style Guide of "a.m." and "p.m.".

For more information and resources please visit the [City's Social Media Accessibility Requirements](#) document.

Conduct on Social Media

Using social media comes with a certain amount of risk. To manage the risk effectively, it is mandatory that all City employees know, understand and put into practice the standards for acceptable use of social media.

Social Media on City Accounts

When using social media in an official capacity, the same rules apply as when communicating with the media or representing the City at business conferences or similar events. Employees acting as official City representatives or spokespeople should refrain from expressing personal opinions when posting or commenting from a City of Edmonton Social Media account.

Moreover, City of Edmonton-owned devices must be utilized for posting and monitoring social media content on the City's official social media accounts.

For additional details, please refer to the Code of Conduct.

Maintaining City Social Media Accounts

The City of Edmonton's primary and secondary social media accounts are City-owned. Full Administrator access to all city-owned social media accounts must be provided to the Social Media team.

To comply with the Social Media Standards, City-owned social media accounts must post regular content updates, whether it's on a daily, weekly or biweekly basis. This includes keeping banner images, account bios and 'about' sections current. This ensures accounts remain timely, relevant and reliable for Edmontonians.

In cases of prolonged inactivity of a primary or secondary account, a reassessment of its purpose may be undertaken. The Office of the Chief Communications Officer has the authority to oversee inactive accounts and determine whether they should be archived or deleted.

Addressing Problematic Users

The City prioritizes constructive communication with its social media audience. There are times when social media administrators or City staff may not like or agree with a response, but this does not mean it is problematic.

Occasionally, an individual or organization may go beyond reasonable discourse and interact with the City in a manner that is abusive. If there is uncertainty about whether a comment requires a response, don't hesitate to contact Social Media team for guidance and consult the Social Media Terms of Engagement (Appendix II). These terms outline the kinds of comments that the City will moderate and address.

When it comes to making decisions about banning or blocking users on social media, the City does so with careful consideration. However, if an individual consistently breaches the City's Social Media Terms of Engagement, the Social Media team has measures in place that may involve restricting or revoking their future posting privileges on City social media channels.

Social Media and Contracted Organizations

Entities or individuals contracted to generate content for City social media accounts (e.g., advertising agencies) must obtain authorization from the Social Media team and adhere to the prescribed Social Media Standards.

Personal Social Media

The guidelines for personal social media use by city employees are detailed in the City's [Employee Code of Conduct.](#)

Online Bullying and or Harassment

The City is steadfast in its commitment to providing a safe and respectful online environment for its employees. The City does not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment directed towards the City's staff. The City believes in fostering a culture of inclusivity, respect and support, both within the organization and in interactions with the public. If someone is experiencing bullying or harassment, encourage them to visit the [Connected City - Online Bullying and Harassment](#) Document for support.

Consequences for Abuse of Social Media

In the event a City employee uses City social media in a manner that violates the City's Code of Conduct or these Social Media Standards, the user may lose access to that social media account and may face disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Engagement

Engaging on the City's social media is a fundamental aspect of commitment to professionalism, respect and inclusivity. It means actively listening to residents, providing helpful responses and maintaining a courteous and unbiased tone. This includes respecting diversity, treating everyone with respect and adhering to accessibility and inclusivity standards. By engaging with these principles, the City contributes to a more vibrant and harmonious online community that mirrors the City's values and goals. The below engagement standards for the City's social media are mandatory and must be upheld by all Communications personnel.

Treat Everyone with Respect and Equality

Treating all individuals with respect, fairness and equality is fundamental in all interactions on the City's social media platforms. Whether engaging with the public on primary or secondary accounts, it's essential to maintain a respectful and inclusive tone in all communications. By upholding these principles the City's social media channels serve as welcoming spaces that reflect the City's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

If a comment or question violates the City's Social Media Terms of Engagement, do not respond to it, instead, the social media administrator may choose to ignore the comment, hide the comment, delete the comment or report the comment using the social channel's reporting tools. If guidance is required on this subject, please reach out to socialmedia@edmonton.ca.

Promote Two-way Conversations

If opportunities are provided for the public to respond to posts, expect to be involved in some social media conversations. This will provide a better perspective on how the public is responding to certain issues, and the feedback can be used to alter future campaigns or projects as necessary.

Provide Accurate Information

Whether sharing updates, news or responding to inquiries, ensure that the information provided is up-to-date, factually correct and in alignment with the City's policies and procedures. Accuracy is crucial in building trust with the City's audience and fostering informed, transparent and constructive conversations on the City's social media platforms.

Timely With Responses

Timely responses are crucial. Before replying to any comments or questions, the appropriate Communications team must confirm that the responses align with approved messaging to ensure accurate information and swift engagement.

Tone and language

Tone should be consistent throughout all content published on the City's social media channels. Language should be clear, concise and consistent. Please refer to the [City's Brand Guidelines (page 9)](#) for more information on tone and language.

Everything Posted is Public

It is vital to exercise discretion and caution when creating content and responding to inquiries. Always ensure that the information shared aligns with the City's communication standards and doesn't disclose confidential or sensitive data about the City. Commitment to professionalism and adherence to these principles will help foster a positive and trusted online community.

Responding to Social Media Comments

The City strives to address the concerns of the public. Social media administrators respond to general inquiries in a timely manner during business hours using messaging provided by Communications staff or from edmonton.ca and 311 scripts. Inquiries that require additional details or personal information will be replied to, asking them to use the 311 services.

Responding to comments and queries on social media is not always necessary. The Social Media Terms of Engagement detail the types of comments and questions the City responds to.

It's critical to have a key messaging response matrix in place when creating any social media campaign or content. Great content usually leads to engagement, which means receiving feedback or questions. Have answers prepared that can foster relationships and provide great customer service.

If managing a secondary social media channel, it is expected that responses to comments and questions will be aligned with the City's Social Media Terms of Engagement.

Analytics and Reporting

The Social Media team uses Facebook Insights, X Analytics, Meta Analytics, Hootsuite Pro and Google Analytics to download data on how City of Edmonton social media content is performing on the main City of Edmonton social media channels. This data is used in Strategic Services monthly and annual media reports that provide analytics and insights on content posted on the main City social media accounts. The reports are shared with the Communications staff.

The Social Media team can provide reports on social media campaigns that run on the City's main social channels by request. Reports on paid social media campaigns (paid advertising on social media) need to be requested separately through the City's advertising agency of record. Recommendations may be made to Communications staff or client areas based on social media content analytics and performance. Analytic reports include:

Engagement Metrics - These include likes, comments, shares and clicks, providing a measure of how actively the audience is interacting with specific content.

Reach and Impressions - These metrics reveal how many people have seen specific posts (reach) and how many times they've been seen (impressions), helping assess the content's visibility.

Audience Demographics - Information on the age, gender, location and interests of the engaged audience.

Content Effectiveness - Metrics on the performance of different content types, such as images, videos or links. This defines what resonates most with the audience interacting with specific content.

Referral Traffic - Reports may show how much traffic the social media channels are driving to a specific website or other online platforms. Note this is only applicable to posts with links provided.

Conversion Tracking - For campaign-specific goals, the number of conversions, such as sign-ups or surveys generated through social media efforts can be measured through conversion tracking. It's important to note that this is only applicable to paid ad posts with links provided.

Sentiment Analysis - Gauges of sentiment (positive, negative or neutral) through comments and mentions related to campaigns or posts.

Historical Data - Comparative campaign data from previous periods can assess growth, trends and the impact of changes in strategy.

Advising - the Social Media team can provide advice based on the overall analytics and performance of specific social content or campaigns.

For analytic report requests please submit a request through WorkFront.
For additional questions please contact socialmedia@edmonton.ca.

Social Media in an Emergency

Social media stands as a crucial asset for sharing immediate, real-time information with the public, particularly during emergencies where swift and controlled messaging is paramount.

In the event of an emergency triggering the activation of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), at least one Public Information Officer (PIO) is assigned to manage the primary City of Edmonton social media accounts. They provide updates approved by the EOC Director and coordinate with the Crisis Communications team.

In escalated emergency situations, the primary City of Edmonton social media accounts prioritize delivering appropriate messaging exclusively related to the emergency and the City's response. During such times, all other corporate messaging is temporarily paused. The Social Media team can direct secondary City social media accounts to pause their regular messaging to ensure consistent and accurate information dissemination.

Given the public's reliance on the City during emergencies, responses must be prepared accurately and promptly and must provide clarity by speaking with one voice. During an emergency, any social media content related to the emergency must be sent to the Crisis Communications team for approval before disseminating on any platform, whether a primary or secondary account.

The EOC may also activate for planned events, such as Canada Day fireworks. In these cases, a PIO, who is also a member of the Crisis Communications team, ensures residents receive the latest information from emergency and City partners as it becomes available.

Situations that Constitute as an Emergency:

- Natural Disasters
- Severe Weather Events
- Public Health Emergencies
- Civil Unrest and Protests
- Infrastructure Failures

Categories of Content for Emergencies:

- Facts and Reports
- Resources and Communications
- Updates and Alerts
- Support and Community
- Safety

Social Media Training

Social media training is strongly advised for both individuals and communication teams responsible for the management of the City of Edmonton social media accounts, as well as those involved in content and copy curation for social media plans. This training helps to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the City's social media practices.

The Social Media team offers comprehensive social media training for any City of Edmonton employee, with priority given to those actively involved in city-related social media activities, including communication teams. Training options encompass both group sessions and personalized coaching, tailored to individual and team knowledge and requirements.

Social Media training covers various platforms, including X, Facebook, Instagram, Hootsuite, LinkedIn, YouTube and the Transforming Edmonton Blog. Topics range from content creation and best practices to engagement strategies, equipping communication teams with the tools needed for effective social media management.

For administrators of new accounts, the Social Media team provides specialized training on setting up and managing accounts efficiently, ensuring all communication teams are well-prepared to contribute to successful social media plans.

For more information on social media training please contact socialmedia@edmonton.ca.

Closing a social media account

When evaluating the status of a secondary social media account, it is imperative to assess its continued alignment with the City of Edmonton's present business objectives, operational goals and adherence to evolving social media standards. It is worth noting that while certain decisions may have been strategically sound in the past, acknowledgment of the dynamic nature of social and strategic landscapes requires the City to adapt accordingly. If a secondary account no longer serves a viable purpose, the applicable area should take the appropriate steps to discontinue it.

In such instances, this involves the closure of the secondary account and the transfer of its content into either the City's primary social media accounts or another existing secondary account that better suits current needs.

To initiate the process of closing a social media account please contact socialmedia@edmonton.ca.

Requesting a new City social media account

Careful consideration is required to assess the business need to establish a dedicated secondary social media account for a particular City business area or program. Before proceeding with the creation of a new account, the respective business unit must consult with the Social Media team and relevant staff members to determine why goals and objectives can not be met through the primary accounts. **Any request for new secondary accounts must be approved by the Chief Communications Officer.** If approved, all new secondary social accounts must provide access to the Social Media team including [login information and a list of administrators](#).

The Social Media team serves as the overseeing authority responsible for evaluating any proposals to create secondary social media accounts. Numerous critical factors necessitate thorough consideration before the establishment of such accounts. Factors to consider before submitting a new account request:

Social Media Experience - Prior to creating an account(s), proficiency in operating and maintaining the chosen social media channel(s) is needed. The Social Media team advises administrators to possess a high level of experience in crafting social content and managing social media channels effectively.

Business Case for a New Account - Clarify objectives for initiating a new social media account and the rationale of why it can not be met through a primary account. For one-time events, alternative promotional methods might be more suitable.

Target Audience on Social Media - Identify where the specific audience is online to determine the most beneficial social media platforms. Opt for channels that resonate with that specific audience.

Alignment with the City's Brand and Vision - Ensure alignment with the City's vision, goals and brand. The City's Reputation and Brand team ensures new social accounts adhere to the corporate brand. Contact brandteam@edmonton.ca for details.

Resource Availability - Managing social media accounts demands dedicated time and effort on a daily to weekly basis. Having individuals who can allocate regular time, ideally every day, significantly aids management.

Consistent Engagement - The success of a social media account hinges on content. Posting frequently is beneficial, but content must be purposeful and resonate with the specific audience. A thriving account requires consistent and engaging content.

Existing Account Capacity - The City of Edmonton offers a variety of social platforms to effectively promote content for program areas. Should a separate account be deemed necessary, or can the existing social platforms sufficiently manage the program area's content requirements?

If the case aligns with established standards and the need for a dedicated social media account is deemed necessary, please proceed with completing the Social Media Account Request Form.

The Social Media team will conduct a thorough review of the request before making an informed decision.

New and Emerging Platforms

The Social Media team evaluates potential new and emerging social media platforms to determine whether they might align with the City of Edmonton's Social Media Standards and whether they should be adopted into the City's suite of services. This proactive approach helps assess the suitability of these platforms for the City's communication needs and audience engagement strategies.

City departments or areas cannot create new social media accounts on emerging platforms without following the approval process through the Social Media team. Creating multiple accounts on platforms that may not be adopted creates reputational risks. When accounts are created and then abandoned or not regularly used, residents can lose trust in the reliability of the City's accounts.

Evaluation and Implementation Process

The City follows a systematic and strategic procedure for evaluating and testing emerging social media platforms. The Social Media team's method includes an assessment of the platform's alignment with the social media objectives and standards. When a new platform is found to be compatible with the City's goals, the team has a strategic process in place for seamless integration into the City's primary suite. This approach guarantees the continued dynamism and effectiveness of digital presence. It is important that the evaluation and implementation process is grounded in the following considerations as well as performance and analytics.

Detailed below is a step-by-step of the Social Media team's evaluation, review and implementation process.

1. Evaluation

- **Identify Potential Platforms -** the Social Media team identifies and assesses new and emerging social media platforms.
- **Suitability Assessment -** Evaluate the platforms based on relevance, audience demographics and alignment with the City's communication goals.
- **Feasibility Analysis -** Assess the technical and resource requirements for managing the platform effectively.
- **Approval Process -** Seek approval from the Social Media team to open an account.

2. Implementation

- **Planning Phase -** Develop a comprehensive implementation plan, outlining objectives, strategies and tactics.
- **Resource Allocation -** Allocate necessary resources, including personnel, tools and budgets.
- **Integration -** Seamlessly integrate the new platform into the City's primary suite of social media channels.

- **Testing Period -** Conduct a testing period to identify and resolve any issues or challenges.

3A. Success Outcome

- **Sustained Success -** If the new platform proves successful in achieving communication goals and engagement, it is integrated into the City's regular social media strategy.
- **Continued Support -** the Social Media team provides ongoing support, monitoring and reporting to ensure the platform's continued effectiveness.
- **Expansion -** The platform's use may be expanded to additional City departments if deemed beneficial.
- **Proceed to 4. Opening Content Submissions.**

3B. Failure Outcome

- **Reassessment -** If the platform does not yield the expected results or engagement, it is reassessed.
- **Evaluation Review -** the Social Media team conducts a thorough review to identify reasons for the platform's failure.
- **Reconsideration -** Depending on the review findings, a decision is made on whether to continue or discontinue using the platform.
- **Transition Plan -** If discontinued, the Social Media team develops a transition plan to manage the closure or migration of content and users to other platforms.

4. Opening Content Submissions

- **Confirmation of Suitability -** Once the evaluation confirms the platform's suitability, the Social Media team informs Communications staff.
- **Content Standards -** Provide standards for creating and submitting content on the new platform.
- **Submission Process -** Open up the platform for content submissions from the respective City communications departments.
- **Monitoring and Oversight** - Continuously monitor and review the content submissions to ensure alignment with the City's messaging and communication goals.
- **Feedback Loop** - Establish a feedback loop with area-specific teams to address any concerns or improvements.

This structured process ensures that new platforms are thoroughly evaluated, seamlessly integrated and effectively utilized by the City's Communications teams, with clear protocols for both success and failure outcomes.

Please note, that TikTok is not an approved platform for official City use and will not be utilized as part of the City's communication strategy.

Social Media Account Audits

Social Media Audits provide an evaluation of social media presence, designed to help align secondary social accounts with the City of Edmonton's Social Media Standards, strategy and branding. The Social Media team assesses platform performance, content alignment, and community engagement and can provide actionable adjustments for refinement, ensuring the account's digital footprint resonates with the City of Edmonton's identity.

The City doesn't just communicate; The City communicates strategically. Social media audits help shape a stronger, more informed and highly engaged online Edmonton community.

Services Included in Social Media Audits:

Account Performance Metrics
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- Metrics for Each Social Media Account (e.g., Followers and Engagement Rate)
- Benchmark Data (Comparison with Previous Periods)

Content and Brand Alignment Analysis
- Content Types (e.g., Posts, Images and Videos)
- Frequency of Posting
- Top Performing Content
- Content Calendar (if applicable)
- Review of branding alignment both visual and written

Audience Insights
- Audience Demographics
- Audience Growth Trends
- Audience Engagement (Likes, Comments and Shares)

Risk Assessment
- Identified Risks in Social Media Activities
- Mitigation Strategies

Compliance and Standards
- Adherence to City of Edmonton Social Media Standards
- Compliance with Legal and Ethical Standards

Advising
- Actions to Improve Social Media Performance
- Strategies to implement based on specific goals

Appendices
- Supporting Documents and Reports
- Additional Data or Charts

Conclusion
- Summary of Key Findings
- Next Steps and Action Plan

Each social media presence is unique. The Social Media team offers customized social media audits tailored to suit the specific needs and objectives of all areas.

The Social Media team expertise goes beyond generic assessments. Whether it's audience engagement, content effectiveness or compliance, the Social Media team's audits are designed to deliver precise insights empowering communications teams to make informed decisions and strengthen digital presence within the City of Edmonton. ([Appendix V](#))

Social Media Account Access & Security

In order to optimize communication channels and ensure secure continued access to all accounts 24/7, it is mandatory that any areas managing secondary social media accounts under the City of Edmonton provide the Social Media team with necessary access.

Social Media Account Information Required:

- Login information including passwords
- Second authentication contact information (if applicable)
- List of contact information for persons with access to social accounts

This ensures cohesive coordination, enabling efficient oversight and providing security across the City's digital platforms.

Please notify the Social Media team if any information changes at any time by emailing socialmedia@edmonton.ca.