

TOWN POLICY

TITLE: Communications

POLICY NUMBER: GN-186

ADMINISTRATION POLICY: **Communications**

DEPARTMENT: General Administration

POLICY NUMBER: GN-186

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 14, 2024

SUPERSEDES: Policy #GN-074

UP FOR REVIEW: November 14, 2029

Policy Statement:

The Town of Cardston is committed to engaging in internal and external communications in a consistent manner with particular focus on the following goals:

- (1) Inform citizens about the Town’s policies, programs, services, projects, and initiatives through communication that is effective, timely, accurate, and consistent.
- (2) Consult and inform stakeholders when establishing or developing priorities, policies, programs, and services where reasonable and practical.
- (3) Anticipate the needs of the community, Council, and Administration for timely and relevant information.
- (4) Engage in a proactive communications program that uses a variety of formats to accommodate diverse needs and reflects the diversity of the community.
- (5) Respond to Requests for Information in accordance with privacy legislation.
- (6) Ensure the Town is visible and responsive to the citizens it serves.

The purpose of this policy is to:

Establish guidelines to ensure that communication with the stakeholders and residents of the Town of Cardston is efficient, effective, consistent, timely, and transparent. This policy will apply to all internal and all external communications of the Town of Cardston.

2. Guidelines

- (1) Responsibilities

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
Employees (all)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate in a transparent, timely, efficient,





TOWN POLICY

TITLE: Communications

POLICY NUMBER: GN-186

	<p>and courteous manner at all times.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive information requests and direct inquiries to the appropriate party for response. • Participate in responding to external inquiries upon request of the CAO.
Communications Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and deliver external communications in consultation with the CAO. • Develop and coordinate information campaigns and public events. • Manage electronic communications in consultation with the CAO.
Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate targeted and general public consultations where required. • Manage responses to external inquiries in accordance with this Policy and the <i>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</i>.

- (2) Information on the Town’s policies, programs, services, projects, and initiatives should be available to the public in a variety of formats, subject to available resources.

3. External Inquiries

- (1) In general, external inquiries shall be answered as follows:
- (a) Information is provided by trained and knowledgeable staff.
 - (b) Service is timely, courteous, and efficient.
 - (c) Information is clearly identified as being from the Town of Cardston.
 - (d) When information is unavailable, a prompt and clear explanation is provided.
- (2) For inquiries made by representatives of the media; inquiries regarding legal issues, Town personnel, municipal elections; or requests for information which cannot be granted under the *Routinely Available Records* policy; the following procedures must be followed:
- (a) Media
 - (i) All media inquiries shall be directed to the CAO.
 - (ii) The CAO shall direct all appropriate inquiries regarding Council matters to the mayor.
 - (b) Legal, Personnel, Election, and other Requests for Information





TOWN POLICY

TITLE: Communications

POLICY NUMBER: GN-186

- (i) All such inquiries; including, but not limited to litigation, video surveillance footage, personnel-related matters, municipal election and campaign issues, and information requests outside the scope of the *Routinely Available Records* policy, shall be directed to the CAO.
- (ii) The CAO may require such inquiries to be submitted in writing on a form of their choosing.

4. External Communications

(1) General Guidelines

- (a) Town Council shall be informed about proposed policies, major new services, programs, or initiatives before the general public or media.
- (b) All external communications shall align with the will of Council.
- (c) External communications shall not speak to matters
 - (i) in draft form,
 - (ii) under investigation,
 - (iii) before the courts, or
 - (iv) under the jurisdiction of another authority.

(2) Information Campaigns and Public Events

- (a) Information campaigns and public events may be arranged to deliver information concerning matters of broad public interest, such as services, programs, projects, and initiatives.
- (b) Development of campaigns and events shall conform to the following procedure:
 - (i) Determine whether individual departments will arrange or participate.
 - (ii) Prepare a communications plan which accounts for appropriate recognition of partners and funders, such as inclusion of corporate names and logos.
 - (iii) Provide advance copy of the agenda and briefing notes, as well as any available media advisories, releases, or backgrounders to the CAO and any Council representatives expected to attend.
 - (iv) Coordinate participation through the CAO when multiple municipal departments, community partners, or other levels of government are involved, or as requested by the mayor or CAO.

(3) Public and Stakeholder Consultations

- (a) Inform citizens and stakeholders about opportunities to participate in public consultation and citizen engagement processes (such as surveys, town hall meetings, public hearings, open houses, committees' meetings, etc.) including dates, times, and locations.





TOWN POLICY

TITLE: Communications

POLICY NUMBER: GN-186

- (i) This may be done through the Town's website, social media, letters of invitation, posted notices, media notices, advertisements, and other formats.
- (ii) Clearly identify public information materials as being from the Town.
- (b) Report back to Council on the results of the public consultation.
- (c) Inform participants in summary form of the results of the public consultation and outcomes.
 - (i) This may be done through the Town's website, social media, letters of invitation, posted notices, media notices, advertisements, and other formats.

5. Internal Communications

(1) Council and Administration

- (a) Formal communication between Council and Administration shall be
 - (i) clear, concise, and relevant; and
 - (ii) in the form of Requests for Decision or information packages.

(2) Department Heads, Managers, Supervisors, and Employees:

- (a) Department Heads, Managers, and Supervisors shall communicate with employees transparently, often, and before information is made public, whenever possible.
- (b) Employees shall proactively inform other employees
- (c) To inform and engage employees, a variety of formats may be used; including, but not limited to:
 - (i) Personal communications, such as oral presentations and staff meetings.
 - (ii) Electronic/digital platforms, such as email, text, and the Town website.
 - (iii) Published materials, such as memoranda, notices, and employee newsletters.

(3) Inter-departmental

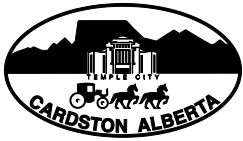
- (a) When a department's actions are likely to disrupt the workflow of other employees, the responsible department will strive to notify those who may be affected.

6. Internet and Electronic Communication

(1) Internet and electronic communication channels shall be utilized for:

- (a) Presenting routinely requested and general information concerning the operation of the municipality.
- (b) Introducing new policies, programs, services, projects, or initiatives.





TOWN POLICY

TITLE: Communications

POLICY NUMBER: GN-186

- (c) Receiving and responding to public inquiries.
 - (d) Communicating news of general public interest; particularly in regard to health and safety.
- (2) Website standards
- (a) Pages shall be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that policies, programs, services, projects, initiatives, and related third-party links are accurate, organized, and easy to understand.
 - (b) Content shall conform to a consistent look across all pages.
- (3) Third party content and links
- (a) Subject to CAO approval, third-party content and links may be posted on the Town website or social media platforms.
 - (b) Guidelines for inclusion or removal include
 - (i) relevance to the Town,
 - (ii) technical or legal considerations, and
 - (iii) content standards as prescribed by the *Digital Signage* policy.
 - (c) Allowance of third-party content or links on its electronic platforms does not imply the Town's
 - (i) endorsement of the third party or their content, or
 - (ii) responsibility for damage incurred by visiting a third-party site.

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Description
November 14, 2024	New Policy supersedes Admin Communications Policy #GN-074

APPROVAL: Jeff Shaw **DATE: November 15, 2024**

Chief Administrative Officer, Jeff Shaw *(signed copy kept in CAO policy binder)*



