



## CITY OF SAN RAFAEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Subject:	Web Site Link Policy
Issue Date:	May 6, 2009
Revision Date:	N/A
Prepared By	Gus Bush, IT Manager
Approved By:	Ken Nordhoff, City Manager

### Web Site Link Policy

#### **PURPOSE:**

The City of San Rafael, through the City's official web site ([www.cityofsanrafael.org](http://www.cityofsanrafael.org)) provides links to other organizations. These links are provided for additional information solely as a service to our customers. The purpose of the policy is to ensure any links provided on the web site are in accordance with the City's mission and intent.

#### **RESPONSIBILITY:**

City IT Manager, Web Content Coordinator, and Department Webmasters.

#### **REFERENCES:**

City Web Site Management Policy (February 1, 2006)

#### **POLICY:**

A. The City's official web site contains links to other, external web sites. In establishing and maintaining its official web site, the City does not intend in any manner to create a forum or other means by which public discourse, exchange of opinions, or discussion on issues of any nature may occur. Rather, the sole and limited purpose of the City's web site and permitted external links is to provide information about the City and the surrounding community for use by residents, businesses and visitors. The City does not endorse or provide preferential treatment to any third party web sites or associated organizations or persons. Since the City does not control third party web sites, it does not warrant that third party web sites are accurate or reliable or that they have operational links. The user acknowledges and agrees that the City of San Rafael is not liable in any way for the content, accuracy, reliability, viewpoints, policies, or products provided by these external resources. Once a web site visitor leaves the City's web site and links to an external site, the City of San Rafael policies no longer apply and the visitor will be subject to the new site's policies.

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B. Consistent with the foregoing policy, the City will limit external links to the following kinds of entities and organizations:

1. Other governmental agencies;
2. Chambers of Commerce and/or Visitors Bureaus;
3. Public and private, bona fide educational institutions as defined in Education Code § 210.1, or as described in Education Code § 66010(a) and (b), located in Marin County;
4. Hospitals located in Marin County;
5. Non-profit organizations with an Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3) certification which provide online information about events or activities occurring within Marin County, or that otherwise further the City's goals or project-specific efforts;
6. Public Utilities (e.g., telephone, electricity, cable television companies) providing services in Marin County;
7. Entities that the City has an existing formal, contractual relationship with through direct funding or co-partnership on programs; and
8. Neighborhood associations registered with the City's Planning Division as bona fide representatives of the residents from a defined area within San Rafael.
9. Commercial entities which provide online information when the City determines
  - a. The site's primary content is critical to a service provided by a City department or is a vital enhancement to the department's mission; and,
  - b. No non-commercial site provides similar content in an effective manner; and,
  - c. The City's independent replication of the content is infeasible due to financial or other considerations.

C. Entities and organizations wishing to have the City establish external links on the City's official web site must submit an application on a form provided by the City which shall contain all information necessary to verify the facts stated and as may be necessary to establish that the proposed link is in compliance with this policy. The City of San Rafael reserves the right to 1) deny an external link application as to any person, business or organization when it is determined, following review of a complete application, that the entity or organization for which application is made does not meet the criteria set forth in this policy; 2) deny an external link application as to any person, business or organization which fails to provide all required information, or fails to provide truthful information; 3) remove any external link if the nature of the organization or business to which the link relates no longer complies with the City's external link policy; 4) to discontinue an external link at any time if the entity's web site provides or promotes false, slanderous, illegal, immoral, discriminatory or incorrect information at any time, or 5) to revise this policy without prior notice when to do so is deemed to be in the best interests of the City.

**PROCEDURE:**

The following procedures are to be used in processing applications for external links on the City's official web site:

A. Application forms will be made available online via the city's web site and also in hard copy form in City Hall, as well as by other means as deemed appropriate by the City's Web Team Committee.

B. Applications will be forwarded for verification to the department generally responsible for the type of activity represented. For example, applications submitted by public utilities would be sent to the Public Works Department while those submitted by neighborhood associations would be sent to the Community Development Department. Applications submitted in relation to a contractual relationship with the City or co-partnership on programs would be sent to the department responsible for managing/monitoring the relationship.

C. In addition to ensuring adherence to the City's policy, verifying departments may also consider the following guidelines in verifying the applicability of requested external links:

1. **Public Benefit Facilities and Venues.** The City has established and maintains certain facilities which promote the arts, science, cultural studies, recreation and other public purposes (including, but not limited to the City parks and Falkirk Cultural Center). Promotion of events, programs and exhibits at such facilities may be placed on the City's web site. This includes links to commercial enterprises that market tickets, or other means of access, to these facilities or foster participation in their programs.

2. **Entities Operating on City Property.** Some commercial enterprises operate on City owned property and departments maintain working relationships with these entities. Links to this type of operation may be appropriate as they would serve to enhance the department's customer service efforts.

3. **Sites Containing Promotional Material.** Certain private commercial sites might include advertising or other promotional material that is not necessarily related to the primary content they provide. Although the City neither supports nor endorses such advertising or promotion on these sites, there may still be a substantive public benefit in providing access to the site's primary content. It is imperative in such a case, however, that departments thoroughly weigh the benefits and extent to which the requested external link adheres to the City's policy.

4. **City Program Sponsors and Donors.** Subject to any additional policies that the City may adopt regarding sponsorship, individuals, business or organizations that donate cash or services to sponsor City programs may be acknowledged through a display of their names, logos and a link to their web sites once a formal relationship is established.

5. **Outsourced Service Providers.** Some City departments contract with private firms to provide services to the public that would otherwise be provided by the City. Departments may link to outsourced service providers when the department's mission is best served by providing citizens direct access to their information.

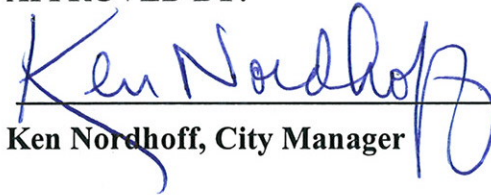
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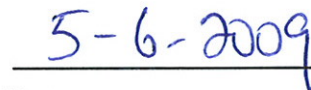
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**6. Sites Containing Political Information.** Except for links to the Board of Elections, departments should refrain from linking to sites containing political information. To avoid the appearance of City endorsement of political content, links should not be made to sites that are associated with, sponsored by, or serving a candidate for elected office or any political party or organization supporting or seeking to defeat any candidate for elective office or ballot proposal.

D. Departments will maintain documentation of their verification activities for requested external links. Departments will also routinely check the links on their web pages to ensure they are functional and contain no material that violates the City's policy. Department Directors are responsible for ensuring that all material posted on their department web pages are accurate and in compliance with the city's policy.

**APPROVED BY:**

  
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Ken Nordhoff, City Manager

  
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Date