

CITY OF SONOMA

SOCIAL MEDIA USE POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Social Media Use Policy ("Policy") is to establish for the use of City of Sonoma ("City") Social Media Sites, created, operated and managed by City staff, City officials and any individuals acting in an official capacity when conveying information to members of the public, including residents and community stakeholders.

The City encourages the use of social media sites to facilitate communication and dialogue from the City, and its Departments, about its mission, meetings, activities, and current issues to members of the public. By facilitating such communication and dialogue, the City intends only to create a limited public forum for dissemination of information regarding the City's mission, activities, meetings, and current events.

The City has an overriding interest and expectation in protecting the integrity of the information posted on City Social Media Sites and the content that is attributed to the City and its officials and employees. Nothing in this Policy is intended to deny, limit, impair, or restrict the free speech and First Amendment rights of any employees, officials, officers, councilmembers, or others while using City or personal social media sites.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. "City Social Media Sites" means social media sites created, authorized, and/or operated by the City of Sonoma.

B. "City official" means any person elected or appointed to a legislative body, commission, or committee of the City.

C. "City's Website" means any internet or intranet webpage which represents the City or any of its departments, commissions, or volunteers

D. "Department" means any City Department or Office that provides municipal services to residents and businesses in the City.

A list of City Departments and Offices is listed on City's official website, accessible here: <https://www.sonomacity.org/contact/>.

E. "Department Head" means an individual employee of the City that has been designated as the head of a City Department or Office and is tasked with specific supervisory roles and responsibilities related to the management of that City Department or Office.

F. "Public Information Office Team" or "PIO" means the City employee(s) under general direction who develop, implement, and direct the City's strategic communications plans and proactive employee and community communications on City actions, events, programs, and projects. The Public Information Office is responsible for the approval of social media sites, compliance with the terms of this Policy and other roles and responsibilities outlined in this Policy.

G. "Social media site(s)" mean content created and shared by individuals, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies, through and on the

Internet. Social media sites include, but are not limited to, the following types of platforms:

- a) Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Nextdoor)
- b) Video and photo sites (e.g., Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, Snapchat)
- c) Micro-blogging sites (e.g., Twitter)
- d) Ephemeral messaging applications (e.g. Instagram stories, TikTok)
- e) Forums and discussion boards (e.g., Reddit, Google groups).

I. "Staff" or City staff" means all City employees, Department Heads, officers, volunteers, interns, and any consultants, providers, and contractors acting in an official capacity and when communicating with the public on behalf of the City on City Social Media Sites.

III. GENERAL POLICY

The City's official website at www.sonomacity.org will remain the City's primary online presence. The City will use official City Social Media Sites as communication tools to disseminate accurate, direct information about City government to the public and as marketing/promotional channels which increase the City's ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience.

During times of emergency, the City may use both the website and social media to communicate emergency information including but not limited to briefing information, Nixle and SoCo alerts, evacuation warnings/orders, and resource information.

The City reserves the right to terminate any City Social Media Site at any time without notice. The City will maintain records consistent with its Records Retention Policy and the Public Records Act.

IV. CONTENT AND POSTING GUIDELINES AND LIMITATIONS

City staff shall adhere to the following content and posting guidelines and limitations listed below in managing City Social Media Sites:

1. Consider your audience when developing messaging, determining language, images and structuring content.
2. Exercise good judgment. Conduct yourself professionally and in accordance with all City policies and applicable law. Refrain from comments that can be interpreted as slurs, demeaning or inflammatory. As a representative of the City, you have the responsibility to conduct yourself with decorum and present the City in a positive light. Information posted should be practical and appropriately documented.
3. Whenever possible, refer back to the City's official website. The website is the primary source for detailed information. In general, social media can be an alternative point of contact but information should not be posted in lieu of posting on the City website.
4. Access to City Social Media Sites should be limited to work hours, on City-owned equipment.
5. No personal identifying information, except names, position titles, and City-issued email addresses, of any City staff member, Council Member, Commissioner, or resident, should be posted on City Social Media Sites. However, certain posts such as the Alcalde and Treasure Artist announcements may include additional relevant personal information with consent of the person whose personal information is to be posted. For example, an individual's family or educational background may be included. Personal social media accounts should not be tagged.
6. City Social Media Sites are not to be used as campaign tools. However, they may be used to provide objective information about election procedures, ballot instructions, ballot measures,

polling locations, candidate forums, and debates as a means of conveying information to members of the public regarding upcoming elections. State and federal campaign laws and City policies and ordinances governing elected officials' activities shall be followed. No public funds will be used to support or oppose a local or statewide ballot measure or for any campaign for public office.

7. Generally, it is the City's policy to not post photos of identifiable individuals (other than City employees or officials) on City's social media sites, unless the photo was taken at a public or City-sponsored or organized event or on public property and the photo was taken at a time that the individual had no reasonable expectation of privacy. At such times as photos are intended to be used for any purposes that require a signed release or consent it shall be the City's policy to obtain a signed release or consent at or near the time of the photo being taken to the extent practicable although such timing may not be required by law. Additionally, to the extent photos posted on City's social media sites constitute a public record under the California Public Records Act ("Act") such photos shall be subject to disclosure upon a request being made in accordance with the Act. If City intends to use photos from community events that are open to members of the public on a City Social Media Site, the best practice would be to ensure there is posted notice regarding this planned use at that community event.
8. The City shall not share posts or information from any groups or organizations except City partners, unless the specific posts or information being shared would advance, promote, or further information that the City is choosing to provide to the public on the City Social Media Site or website

Sponsored Content:

1. The City may enter into contractual agreements with social media platforms to promote City posts related to City-sponsored events or services that are available to all members of the public.
2. The event or service to be promoted must reasonably relate to and/or advance City goals, objectives, and initiatives and may not be prohibited pursuant to any of the terms and restrictions set forth in this Policy.
3. The City may only enter into contractual agreements with social media platforms to promote its own content, originating on a City Social Media Site, and created by City staff. The City will not sponsor content by any third-party.
4. The City's PIO shall have the discretion to determine whether an event or service meets the requirements described above.
5. All records related to sponsored content will be maintained by the City pursuant to record retention principles and the California Public Records Act.

V. APPROVAL AND ADMINISTRATION OF CITY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

The City's PIO Team is solely responsible for establishment of City Social Media Sites after the effective date of this Policy. The City's PIO Team:

1. Will maintain a list of all City Social Media Sites, including login and password information.
2. Will have access to all City Social Media Sites and be able to immediately edit or remove content from City Social Media Sites in line with this Policy.
3. Will have capabilities to add, change and remove approved social media systems such as Hootsuite, or any other applicable account or management tool in use by the City.

VI. RECORD RETENTION AND THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

City Social Media Sites are subject to the California Public Records Act (the "Act"). Any content

maintained in a social media format that is related to City business, including but not limited to, a list of subscribers, posted communication and private messages sent from or received by a City Social Media Site may be considered a public record under the Act and subject to public disclosure.

Content related to City business that constitutes a public record under the Act shall be maintained in an accessible format so that it can be readily produced in response to a request being made under the Act. Wherever possible, City Social Media Sites shall clearly indicate that any content posted or submitted for posting may be subject to public disclosure.

California law and any relevant and applicable City Record Retention schedules apply to all City social media content. Unless otherwise addressed in a specific, adopted schedule, the City shall preserve records for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record, pursuant to State standards, and is easily accessible. All social media content that constitutes a "record" under state law is subject to retention for the minimum two years under Government Code section 34090.

VII. PUBLIC TERMS OF USE

The following disclaimer and guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink on all City Social Media Sites:

This is an official [Account/Department Name (City; Sonoma Police Department; etc.)) Social Media Page. The City's Social Media Policy in full is available on the City's main website. The City's official website (www.sonomacity.org) is and shall remain the City's primary means of online communication with the public and should be accessed for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business with the City whenever possible.

The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this Social Media Policy. The City disclaims any and all responsibility for any content posted by third parties that cannot be removed in an expeditious and otherwise timely manner. It is understood that posting is neither private nor confidential and the City makes no representations regarding the social media provider's data privacy.

The City will not delete comments made on the Social Media Site unless the comment contains a direct threat to a person or property. However, the City may report comments made in violation of the Social Media Platform's Terms and Conditions, such as those that contain hate speech, spam, or obscenities. The Social Media Platform may take appropriate action consistent with its Terms and Conditions, including removing contents or users violating such Terms and Conditions.

VIII. ADDITIONAL TERMS

1. The use of a "like" (or similar) feature between the City and a private person or entity does not indicate the City's endorsement of that person or entity's actions or comments. City's interactions with members of the public on social media do not constitute an official endorsement of those comments or policies.
2. The City will approach the use of social media tools as consistently as possible, in accordance to an approved style guide.

3. There shall be no social media comments on live streaming of City Council meetings through City Social Media Sites; the procedure for submitting electronic public comment for City Council meetings are handled separately from this Policy.