

## Council Social Media

---

### Intent

Social media outlets are tools to provide information, ask for feedback, hear concerns, and address questions.

The purpose of this policy is to support Councillors in their use of social media to ensure current, accurate, transparent, and efficient transmission of information to the general public regarding Town business and to establish guidelines to ensure that all communication is timely, responsive, accurate, secure, and well-coordinated.

### Definitions

CAO	means the Chief Administrative Officer or their designate for the Town of Legal
COUNCIL	means the Municipal Council of the Town of Legal
COUNCILLOR	means a Member of Council including the Mayor elected pursuant to the provisions of the <i>Local Authorities Election Act</i> .
COUNCILLOR PERSONAL PROFILE	means a Social Media account associated with a Member of Council (ie. Councillor Jane Doe)
PERSONAL PROFILE	means a Social Media account associated with an individual person (ie. Jane Doe)
SOCIAL MEDIA	means a third party hosted and interactive web-based technology that is used to interact via text, video, photos and/or audio for the purpose of collaborating or promoting information. Social media forums include but are not limited to Twitter, Facebook and YouTube
TOWN	means the Municipal Corporation of the Town of Legal
WEBSITE	means the Town of Legal official website ( <a href="http://www.legal.ca">www.legal.ca</a> )

## Policy

The Town of Legal utilizes social media for official communications to ratepayers, stakeholders and other audiences. Members of Council must ensure that social media, both through official and personal usage, does not damage the municipality's brand, reputation, or ability to fulfill its strategic goals.

### **Responsibilities:**

Councillors are bound by the Council Code of Conduct Bylaw and Procedural Bylaw, and amendments thereto, both when online and in person. This policy does not supersede any responsibilities, requirements, or regulations set out in the *Municipal Government Act*.

Councillors are individually responsible for their comments in person and on social media.

Regardless of whether online comments are personal or work-related in nature, statements made by Councillors will reflect on the reputation of the Councillor and the Town of Legal. As such, all posts shall be made in a professional manner.

### *Official Spokesperson:*

As outlined in the Council Code of Conduct Bylaw, the Mayor is the official spokesperson for Council. Announcements, official statements, and media responses come from the Mayor. In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor may make announcements and statements to the media.

### **Guidelines:**

No Councillor shall operate or manage a Town social media forum without direct, written authorization from the CAO. No Town social media forum shall be created or managed through a Councillor's Personal Profile. In addition, Town Information shall not be communicated directly through Personal Profiles; this includes posting on private groups and pages.

If a Councillor wishes to create a social media profile, on behalf of the Town, the Councillor must submit a written proposal to the CAO outlining the purpose, maintenance and strategy which shall be presented and approved through Council.

Councillors shall adhere to the Council Code of Conduct Bylaw when posting to social media. If a Councillor deems it necessary to respond to a question or comment through a Personal Profile on a private group or page, only the following statements, or statements of similar nature, shall be used:

- a) Town employees would be happy to answer your question on the Town's Facebook page. Please post your question here: [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) or call the Town Office at 780-961-3773.
- b) Please see the Town's website for additional information on this topic: [www.legal.ca](http://www.legal.ca) (or any direct link).

- c) If you have a concern, I encourage you to notify the Town directly.

No Councillor can use the Town's logo, or any other Council related material on or through a personal profile.

#### *Personal Use:*

As Members of Council are viewed as representatives of the Town of Legal even outside of regular working hours, they are expected to conduct themselves in online forums in a manner that would not damage or discredit the municipality, its services, or its ratepayers.

In any instance when other users can reasonably discern a connection between a Councillor and the Town (such as on LinkedIn where individual profiles are connected with employers), the Councillor is required to communicate as they would be expected to speak with another employee, Councillor or ratepayer. Should the individual wish to express partisan or other controversial views, they must indicate the opinion is of a personal nature and not reflective of the Town.

#### *Online discussion and debate:*

Councillors may post on public and private social media forums, but Councillors shall refrain from engaging in debate or arguments.

When posting on social media, it is recommended that Councillors:

- Repost the Town's official messages;
- Provide personal comments on activities or community events;
- Invite opinions and comments from residents;
- If incorrect information is being circulated, provide links to the correct information within the Town of Legal website.

Councillors shall not provide comments on:

- Investigations (criminal or otherwise);
- Emergency situations (unless you are reposting EOC messages);
- Private matters (please refer to the FOIP Act);
- Closed Session topics;
- Any enforcement or legal matters.

#### **Protocols to consider when using social media**

- No opinions; use a disclaimer.
- Think twice before you post; you cannot take back a post as some social media sites do not have a delete option and because posts can be copied and saved by third parties.
- Ensure accuracy; if you would not say it to a reporter, do not say it online.
- Be prepared for comments and questions; social media is a two-way.