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Date: 10/25/2019   **Updated:** 12/31/2022   **Date To Be Reviewed:** Three Years - 12/31/2025

Title of Document: 3.4.3.2.A LOPR_City of Lake Oswego Social Media Guidelines & Best Practices

Background:

This document equips staff to confidently and effectively engage on social media. This document has been developed in conjunction with the City's overarching Social Media Policy as a tool to help guide a consistent message, protect our brand, and provide helpful tips for posts. This is a working document and is intended for internal staff use only. It is applicable to all City Department social media accounts and administrators of those accounts.

General Best Practices for Content:

1. Social media is pivoting from text to bite-size visual content captured on the mobile device – think about what the content will look like on a phone before posting it.
2. Investing in video and visual provides great engaging content.
3. Look at social media as a two-way communication with our citizens.
4. Social media is public record – accounts and comments constitute public records. Comments cannot be deleted or hidden unless defamatory as it constitutes free speech.
5. Experiment with how and when you post (test, try and analyze).
6. Focus on creativity and authenticity with developing content – humanize government.
7. Live video is a powerful tool – think less about ourselves and more about the others needing the information.
8. Only take vertical (portrait) video for Instagram or Facebook stories – use horizontal (landscape) for other videos.
9. Recycle the same content and tailor it to the specific platform but DO NOT cross post the same identical content. (e.g. Use hashtags on all posts on all platforms.)
10. Consider who is using each platform and why. Tailor content and messages that resonate with users (more tips per platform below).
11. Post content regularly to get the reach to our audience.
12. Identify area administrative support and train them to monitor accounts. Avoid giving interns or non-city employee's access to accounts.
13. Wherever possible, content posted should be able to link directly back to the City's website and relevant content.
14. Each account should include the City logo or applicable department logo. When appropriate, use both logos.

15. Given sites vary in content and use, the Public Affairs Office will review the establishment of a new site/account and approve it before it is created based on its need, purpose and audience.
16. Brand voice should be consistent: friendly, helpful, neighborly, and trustworthy. A more formal tone should occur during emergencies or serious topic.

Tools, Platforms & Objectives:

The City approves the following social media tools: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Nextdoor, and YouTube.

a. Facebook

Facebook is a social networking site. Businesses and governments have joined individuals in using Facebook to promote activities, programs, projects and events. It is a good tool for building trust in the community and developing relationships. The City's use of Facebook is designed for City Departments looking to drive traffic to department webpages through the City's website and to inform more people about City activities.

The City's Facebook page serves the following primary purposes and objectives:

1. News and announcements
2. Promotion of events/programs/meetings
3. Emergency announcements
4. Customer service inquiries and responses (through use of messenger)

Facebook Guidelines:

1. Post terms of use and policy/disclaimer on the Facebook page.
    a. Use hashtags on all platforms.
2. Always include hashtags. Try to capitalize the first letter of each word in the hashtag i.e. #LakeOswego vs #lakeoswego. Do not use more than 10 hashtags. **Hashtags should be separate from post content (a line in between is recommended).** Refer to Examples of Common Hashtags in the Twitter section (pg 4.)
3. Create events on Facebook that mirror the major City events on the website.
4. Post videos or use Facebook Live. If using Facebook Live, answer questions from commenters.
5. Captioning should be applied to videos that are posted – automated captioning can be added but should be edited if needed.
6. Avoid using government jargon. Be conversational.

7. Reply to comments when appropriate – even if only with a like. The audience will feel you are talking to them, not just ignoring them.
    a. If replying use @userhandle.

    b. Twitter

Twitter is a micro blogging tool that allows account holders to tweet up to 280 characters of information to followers. It is the fastest way to get messages out – it is speed and influence. Users on Twitter are actively seeking information and have a discovery mindset. By procuring and maintaining Twitter accounts, City Departments communicate information directly to their Twitter followers, alerting them to news and directing them to the city website for more information.

The City's Twitter account serves the primary purposes and objectives:

1. News and announcements
2. Customer service
3. Emergency announcements
4. Chats
5. Promotion of events/all programs/meetings

Twitter Guidelines:

1. Every tweet should have an image or photo.
2. Tweets are limited to 280 characters (including spaces and urls).
3. Videos are limited to 2 minutes and 20 seconds long (140 seconds max). Captioning should be applied to videos that are posted – automated captioning can be added but should be edited if needed.
4. Ensure content is correct before posting as Twitter doesn't allow for content editing once the post is up – it can only be deleted (which violates public record retention).
5. **Always use hashtags** and tag other agencies/organizations (if appropriate). Try to capitalize the first letter of each word in the hashtag i.e. #LakeOswego vs #lakeoswego. Do not use more than 10 hashtags.
6. Know the trending hashtags or topics, and use them in tweets to encourage conversation and replies i.e. #LoveYourPetDay: "we don't deserve them, let me see yours" – sounds human and invites conversation.
    o Be sure to verify twitter for appropriateness & accuracy before posting the hashtag

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7. Reply to tweets when appropriate – audience will feel you are talking to them, not just ignoring them.
   o If replying use @twitterhandle, <u>be sure to use a period before the @</u> if you want the post to be publicly posted. Periods allow everyone to see the tweet whether they follow both user in the thread or not.
8. Avoid using government jargon. Be conversational.
9. Use emojis when practical and provide a call to action if appropriate.
10. Add visual/video to show what is happening.
11. Upload visuals directly – think about something that can be digested with no sound.
12. Use www.bitly.com to reduce the URL link and character spacing.

Examples of Common City Hashtags:

All/General Topics	Construction/ PW/ Major Projects	Parks & Rec
#LakeOswego	#TrafficAlert	#LivingWellInLo
#LakeOswegoOr	#TrafficReminder	#LakeOswegoLife
#LakeOswegoOregon	#LakeOswegoCityProjects	#LOParks
#LocalGov	#PublicWorks	#LOParksGnomes
#GovJobs	#BoonesFerryProject	
#GovLove	#RoadWork	
#PublicSafety	#LaneClosure	
	#NightWork	
	#PDXTraffic	

c. Instagram

Instagram is a social networking site that primarily uses photo and video content and that permits threaded discussions on each post. The City uses Instagram to share City-owned, high quality, relevant images through this platform as an additional channel to reach its audience. It also uses Instagram Stories to promote events and notify followers. The City uses linkin.bio or "sauce" for links now through social media making it more user friendly for followers to go direct to content from Instagram

The City's Instagram page serves the following primary purposes and objectives:

1. News and announcements
2. Promotion of events/programs/meetings
3. Emergency announcements

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4. Customer service inquiries and responses (through use of direct messages)

Instagram Guidelines:

1. Posts vs stories:
    a. Posts – eye catching photos; evergreen content; content lives forever; get vibe of the user/account by seeing pics; posts are public facing and receive public comments
    b. Stories – authentic; not as pristine or refined; real-time in the moment; tells a story; one-on-one conversation; only last 24 hours (these are archived though).
2. Always include hashtags. Try to capitalize the first letter of each word in the hashtag i.e. #LakeOswego vs #lakeoswego. Do not use more than 10 hashtags. **Hashtags should be separate from post content (a line in between is recommended).** See common hashtags on previous page in Twitter section.
3. Video Posts need to be between 3-60 seconds. Captioning should be applied to videos that are posted – automated captioning can be added but should be edited if needed.
4. Video Posts to Instagram Stories are in 15 second increments/60 seconds maximum.
5. Try to use vertical photos/videos for Instagram Stories - Instagram stories are vertical only, videos will be clearer and formatted better as vertical. Videos that are regular posted content can be horizontal.
6. Add a story to the Highlight feed if you want it to last longer than the stories.
7. Optimize each post for discovery – add location tags, hashtags, tagging partners. Use emojis when practical.
8. If re-sharing an image, be sure to ask for permission first and give credit when posting.
9. Sauce (Link in bio app): Because Instagram does not allow direct URLs to be posted in content, Sauce is used to provide a direct website link. At the end of post, prior to hashtags, please include "for more information, visit the link in bio." Then, using the Sauce instructions, connect image to a direct URL.
10. Reply to comments when appropriate – even if only with a like. The audience will feel you are talking to them, not just ignoring them.
    a. If replying use @userhandle.
11. Avoid using government jargon. Be conversational.

    d. Nextdoor

Nextdoor is a private social media network for neighborhoods. Members need to be verified as residents and it is plot specific. The City's use of its public agency Nextdoor page allows direct communication with verified residents in our jurisdiction.

The purpose:

1. Targeted messages to a specific neighborhood or city-wide
2. Good for polling – helps educate the public and get results/feedback
3. Important announcements
4. Emergency notifications

Nextdoor Guidelines:

1. Always include an image or a video – even if the image is generic.

2. Don't post all content on Nextdoor – only use it selectively for important, relevant or targeted information i.e. not for lost keys, etc.

3. Consider checking with Public Affairs before posting to Nextdoor.

e. YouTube

The City's YouTube channel provides the ability to publish content-rich audio/visual information related to the City that can convey more than text.

1. All recorded public meetings are posted automatically to the City's YouTube page.
2. Closed captioning should be used whenever possible in accordance with ADA requirements.
3. Always include a title and description to videos. Try to include a hyperlink to the relevant content on the city's website when possible.

I.   **Dealing with Comments**

Social media is a real-time, two-way communication forum involving the public. As such, posts with comments and/or questions from the public will appear on our social media sites. Responsive, timely, and well thought out responses to comments and inquiries demonstrates that the city is listening, is interested in people's thoughts, and that interacting with citizens is valued. When a response is appropriate, staff is encouraged to respond to comments and inquiries as soon as possible in a timely manner, but within <u>no longer than one business day</u>. When a response requires additional time to formulate, staff should acknowledge that the

inquiry has been received and give an indication of when a full response can be expected. Post author is responsible for monitoring comments of individual posts. Responses to direct messages are monitored by the City's Public Affairs Department and assigned accordingly.

Please remember all comments are public record and remain in the public forever. Below is a guide for responding to comments:

Type of comment	Response
Positive, supportive	No response is required; however, an acknowledgment is encouraged to increase engagement and conversation, such as a "like"
Question related to Department (benign inquiry)	Post response with answer/resources.
Critical, untrue, factually incorrect	Post response with polite justification/explanation or polite correction. State the facts and be non-accusatory. If there are repeated re-posts from the individual, request that they email a specific staff person for further discussion.
Topic or question unrelated to the Department or its mission	Direct questioner to the correct Department for assistance. Delete or hide post.
Negative, inflammatory, offensive or inappropriate	Notify Department Director and Public Affairs. Ignore trolls. Delete or hide post if the comment is defamatory. Save snapshot of comment in relevant social media comment folder with date and platform name.

Responsibility/Contacts: Events Division Supervisor, Communications and Sponsorship Coordinator