

COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATION COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL POLICY

Date Issued: August 26, 2025 – R173-25

Mandated by: Council

Next Review: January 1, 2030

Responsibility: Director, Legislative Services

1. PURPOSE

To establish a framework for productive and consistent communication between Members of Council and City Administration, and to support the development of positive working relationships and a healthy workplace environment while ensuring communication aligns with legislated responsibilities and principles of good governance.

2. POLICY

- 2.1 This policy establishes a clear and achievable framework to support consistent, transparent, and respectful communication between Members of Council and City Administration.
- 2.2 The policy helps promote equal access to information for all Members, preserves the integrity of Council's governance role, and supports Administration in carrying out its responsibilities free from undue influence.
- 2.3 The policy further encourages informal and collegial interaction between Members and staff, recognizing the value of strong professional relationships in fostering a healthy, collaborative work environment.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 *Administration* – means the administrative and operational arm of the City, comprised of the various departments and business units and includes all employees who operate under the leadership and supervision of the City Manager.
- 3.2 *City* – means the municipal corporation of the City of Fort Saskatchewan.
- 3.3 *Council* – means the municipal Council of the City of Fort Saskatchewan.
- 3.4 *City Manager* – means the Chief Administrative Officer of the City, or their designate.
- 3.5 *Member* – means an elected official who is a member of Council.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

4.1 Communication on behalf of Council:

- 4.1.1 Unless Council directs otherwise, the Mayor is Council's official spokesperson and in the absence of the Mayor, it is the Deputy Mayor. All inquiries from the media regarding the official Council position on an issue shall be referred to Council's official spokesperson.
- 4.1.2 A Member who is authorized to act as Council's official spokesperson must ensure that their comments reflect the official position and will of Council as a whole, even if the Member personally disagrees with Council's position.
- 4.1.3 Members shall accurately communicate the decisions of Council, even if they disagree with Council's decision, in a manner that conveys and fosters respect for the decision-making processes of Council.

4.2 Use of social media:

- 4.2.1 Members with social media accounts may share official City posts on their personal or professional channels, provided the content is not altered in a way that changes its meaning, tone, or accuracy.
- 4.2.2 Members who participate in social media groups may share official City posts within those groups in accordance with this section.
- 4.2.3 Information from Members' personal social media accounts will not be shared by the City.
- 4.2.4 The City will not post responses to comments which are not on the City's corporate social media accounts. Members may wish to post responses on other social media accounts, and are to do so as an individual Member, not a representative of Council as a whole.
- 4.2.5 Members shall refrain from the following:
 - a) engaging with social media or sending electronic communications while a Council or Committee of the Whole meeting is in session or a decision is pending; and
 - b) posting or sending communications through social media that discuss matters which are privileged for reasons under the Access to Information Act.

4.3 Communication with Administration:

- 4.3.1 Council may only provide formal direction to Administration through a resolution of Council, and an individual Member may not provide direction to Administration.
- 4.3.2 Information requests from a Member made outside of a resolution are to be referred to the City Manager or the appropriate Administrative delegate for a response. Information inquiries from a Member should be shared with the other members at the time of the inquiry or as soon as is reasonably possible. Responses to Member inquiries will be shared with all Members to ensure fairness, consistency, and transparency.
- 4.3.3 Communication must be channeled through designated Administrative delegates, based on the nature of the request, as outlined in this Policy.

5.0 COMMUNICATION TYPES AND EXPECTATIONS

COMMUNICATION TYPE	DEFINITION	ADMINISTRATIVE DELEGATE	REQUIREMENT TO SHARE
Information Request	An inquiry of Administration to obtain information on the operations and administration of the organization. Includes requests to have matters addressed in formal Council meetings.	City Manager General Managers	Inquiry or request communicated by the Member to all Members of Council at the time of the inquiry or as soon as is reasonably practicable. Response to be shared with all Members of Council.
General Advice or Guidance	Informal conversation or coaching related to matters that are not operational or administrative in nature.	City Manager General Managers	No requirement to share.
Support with Governance Meeting Procedures or Notice of Motions	Requesting clarification with process related Council meeting processes and/or wording with notices of motions or upcoming motions.	City Manager Director, Legislative Services	No requirement to share.
Inquiries related to citizen or stakeholder concerns	Request for information or concerns related to matters brought to Council by a citizen or other stakeholder.	All basic matters sent to Fort Report first. City Manager General Managers	Response to be shared with all Members.

COMMUNICATION TYPE	DEFINITION	ADMINISTRATIVE DELEGATE	REQUIREMENT TO SHARE
Inquiries related to prospective economic development	An inquiry from an external agency that was funneled through or included a Member requesting information, or an initial consultation regarding a prospective new development investment in the community.	Director, Economic Development	No requirement to share unless the matter is relevant to City operations or administration. When a Non-Disclosure Agreement is endorsed, the terms of the agreement shall be upheld.
Council Support Matters	Inquiry regarding Council schedules, expenses, course registrations, conferences, and travel.	Legislative Services Department	No requirement to share.
Request for Additional Information or Clarification	Member wishes to be given additional training or information on a matter before Council or on a matter related to committee work. May involve a meeting with a specific subject matter expert within Administration.	City Manager General Managers Staff Liaison for: • Library Board • Policing Committee • RVA • SDAB • Youth Council	Inquiry or request communicated by the Member to all Members at the time of the inquiry or as soon as is reasonably practicable. City Manager to use discretion as to the value of the additional information for all Members versus the requesting Member.

COMMUNICATION TYPE	DEFINITION	ADMINISTRATIVE DELEGATE	REQUIREMENT TO SHARE
Committee Responsibilities	Inquiry related to issues or concerns with a Council committee.	City Manager General Managers Staff Liaison for: • Library Board • Policing Committee • RVA • SDAB • Youth Council	No requirement to share, unless the matter is relevant to City operations or administration.
Casual/Social Conversations	Conversations of a personal or casual nature that have no relevance to City operations or administration.	All members of Administration	No requirement to share.
Proclamations	The receipt of a formal pronouncement that officially recognizes the importance of a cause, event, campaign, or organization of significance, interest, or benefit to the citizens of the City of Fort Saskatchewan for a particular day, week, month, or period of time.	Administrative Assistant, Mayor & Legislative Services Legislative Services Department, as required	Request to be reviewed by the Mayor and communicated to Members following a determination whether a proclamation request is appropriate.

6.0 AUTHORITY / RESPONSIBILITY TO IMPLEMENT

The Director, Legislative Services is authorized for the implementation of this Policy.