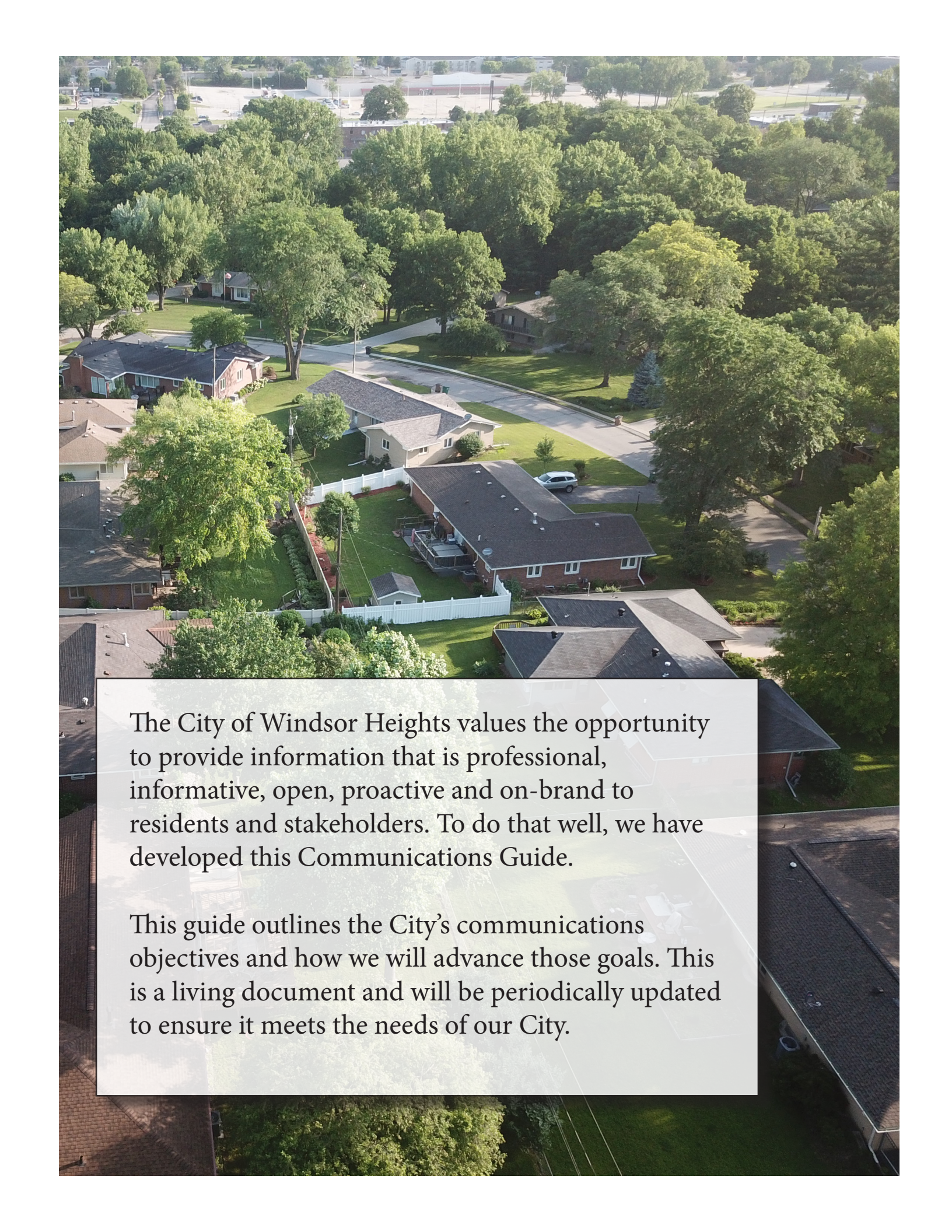




# City of Windsor Heights Communications Guide



An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood. In the foreground, there are several houses with dark roofs and green lawns. A large, mature tree stands prominently on the left. A white fence runs along one of the properties. In the middle ground, a paved road or parking lot is visible, with a few cars parked. The background is filled with more trees and some commercial buildings, including what appears to be a parking lot with several vehicles. The overall scene is a typical suburban residential area with a mix of greenery and built-up space.

The City of Windsor Heights values the opportunity to provide information that is professional, informative, open, proactive and on-brand to residents and stakeholders. To do that well, we have developed this Communications Guide.

This guide outlines the City's communications objectives and how we will advance those goals. This is a living document and will be periodically updated to ensure it meets the needs of our City.



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# Objectives

## Inform

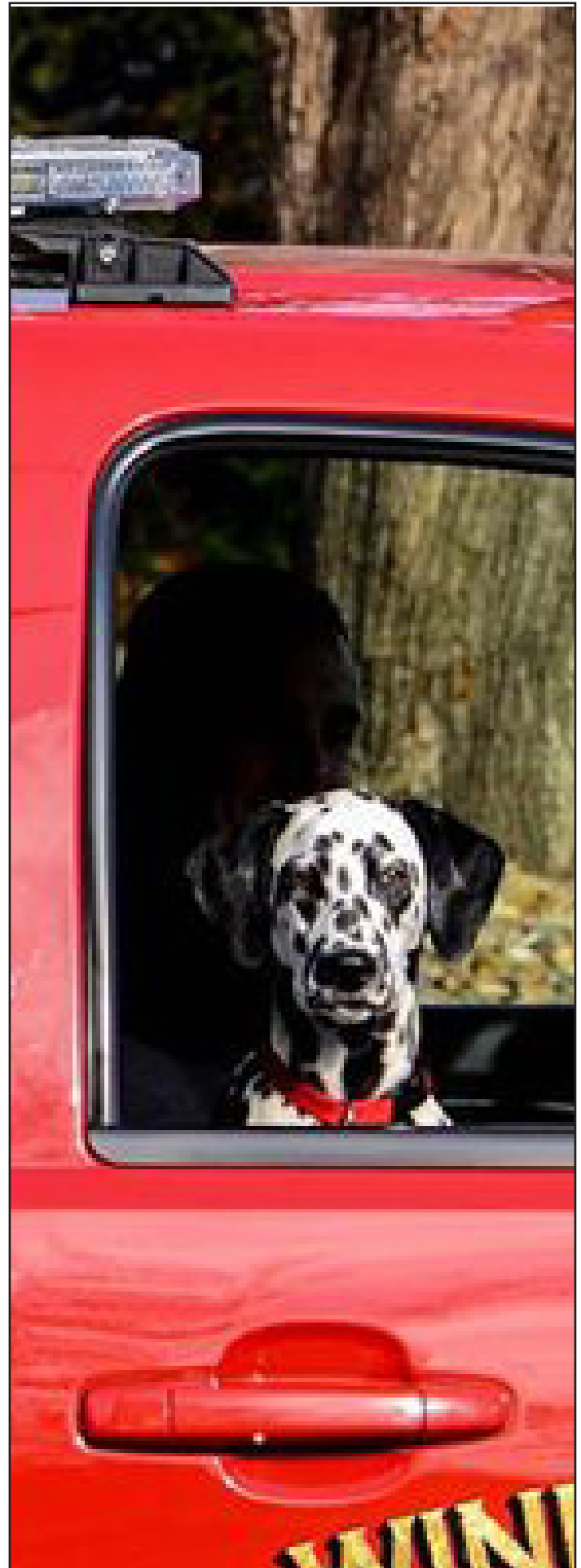
Inform residents of City news, programs, services, and events in Windsor Heights.

## Build

Build media relations and gain media coverage of Windsor Heights stories.

## Provide

Provide transparent government.





# Advancing Objectives

The following section describes the mediums and tactics we will use to accomplish our communications goals.



# Inform

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Inform residents of City news, programs, services, and events in Windsor Heights.

## Website

WindsorHeights.org will remain the primary source for City news and information. It will be routinely updated to ensure that it is accurate and user-friendly.

The site also allow users to complete Community Center rental paperwork and book the facility including the payment process online.

## Newsletters

The newsletter will be published monthly in both print and email forms. Print is a more costly medium, but it provides individuals who don't have regular access to the internet, or who choose not to use the internet, access to City news and details about City services. The email newsletter will better serve the more technology savvy demographic within the City. Both versions will have the same content and will be released on the same day. Additional special edition email newsletters may be released, for example, to keep residents updated on a large road construction project or breaking news.

Both newsletters will be written and designed by the Communications/Recreation Coordinator and will be proofread by two members of City staff. Newsletter content will feature, but is not limited to, notification of City events, road project updates or announcements, reminders of deadlines and services, safety tips from City Police and Fire Departments, City Council meeting videos, and other timely content. The newsletters will be released on the first Thursday of every month.



# Inform

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## Social Media

Social media is an important, timely tool to keep residents updated on City news, programs, events, and services. Social media allows the City to spread news quickly and is good to facilitate public discussion and interaction. This medium helps the City communicate to a broad audience of those it serves and gives the residents a place to communicate with their government. Social media will be used to:

1. Ensure that timely and accurate information is conveyed to the public
2. Establish and maintain an accurate public perception of the City
3. Increase visibility of the City
4. Attract individual members of the media's attention
5. Inform residents of City programs, events, and services
6. Promote City achievements

The City currently uses Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, NextDoor and YouTube. The use of YouTube should be increased with the addition of more video projects.

Please see the City's Social Media Policy for more information on specific guidelines.

## Video

Video is a powerful medium to help tell a story. It will be used to promote or summarize a City event, educate residents on a City service, provide safety tips from the Police or Fire Departments, explain the details of a more complex issue such as Local Option Sales & Service Tax or Stormwater Grant Program, outline what will happen in an upcoming road project, and much more.

The City currently has professional video editing software as a part of the graphic design program Adobe Creative Suite as well as a camera, tripod, and lav mic. The Communications/Recreation Coordinator shoots and edit all videos. These will be included on the City's website, social media, and email newsletter.

# Build

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Build media relations and media coverage of Windsor Heights stories.

## PR/Media Relations

The Communications/Recreation Coordinator will serve as the primary spokesperson for the City and will convey the official City position on routine media inquiries or will allocate the appropriate person for a media interview. The Mayor or City Administrator will fill in if the Communications/Recreation Coordinator is unavailable.

The Public Safety Director/Chief of Police will serve as spokesperson for all police and fire matters.

All media inquiries are to be directed to the Communications/Recreation Coordinator who will provide an answer or designate the proper spokesperson. Every effort should be made to meet media deadlines while ensuring that all information is accurate. Accuracy of information takes precedence over media deadlines. If something else takes priority over a media request, a courtesy call should be made to the reporter.

The Communications/Recreation Coordinator will work to be proactive to solicit positive media attention and maintain good working relationships with media personnel to gain positive coverage for the City.

After receiving media coverage, the Communications/Recreation Coordinator should send thank you emails to the reporters to help maintain those positive relationships.



# Provide

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Provide transparent government.

## Video

Providing recordings of City Council meetings allows residents who are unable to attend the meetings access to what occurred. Previously, Council meetings were broadcast live on Facebook Live with a low quality SD web camera and are subject to randomly stopping during a live recording if the internet cuts outs. City Council meetings are now recorded on an HD camera or through Zoom and posted that week on YouTube, the City's website, and social media. .

## Social Media

Social media can also serve as a space to provide accountability to the public of transparency of government. City Council meeting agendas, notices of possible quorums, notices of public hearings, and recordings of City Council meetings will be posted to inform the public of important actions in their city government.

## Web

City Council meeting agendas, ordinances, notices of possible quorums, city code, notice of public hearing, and other appropriate materials will continue to be posted on the City's website and posted at Hy-Vee, City Hall, and the Public Safety building.

# Social Media Policy





# Social Media Policy

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## Social Media Policy

### I. Overview

The City of Windsor Heights's official website, located at [www.windsorheights.org](http://www.windsorheights.org), will remain the City's primary online source for communicating information to the public, however the City sees a business need to use social media websites as additional communication channels to help promote its programs, events, services, and to represent itself appropriately and consistently on the Internet. Social media technology allows news of an event to spread quickly and is a good forum to facilitate public discussion.

A social media presence is yet another way government can communicate to the broadest possible audience of those it serves and also provide its residents the ability to communicate with their government pursuant to the terms of this policy.

### II. General Procedures

1. The City of Windsor Heights intends to use social media as follows:

- To supplement information from other City communication sources, such as the website and draw more eyes back to those communication sources;
- To disseminate time sensitive information as quickly as possible (i.e. emergency information);
- To facilitate two-way communication, promote transparency and social engagement in government; and
- To broadcast the City's messages to the widest possible audience.

2. The Communications/Recreation Coordinator shall be responsible for the City's primary social mediapages.

3. Any department requiring consistent and frequent social communications may be asked to start its own site(s) and to provide staff to maintain it. Each department will be responsible for the content and upkeep of any social media sites the department may create.

4. Elected officials; appointed members of City Boards, Commissions and Committees, Volunteers; and employees must comply with the guidelines outlined in this document.

5. Employees representing the City of Windsor Heights on the City's social media sites must conduct themselves professionally and in accordance with this policy at all times as representatives of the City.

### III. Standards for Operating and Maintaining a Social Media Presence.

The City of Windsor Heights' social media accounts and their associated content should focus on significant City interest areas and be organized in a manner that avoids ambiguities and/or conflicting information across the City's various communication mediums, including other City social media websites. Departments' administration and use of City social media websites must comply with applicable laws, regulations and policies, as well as proper business etiquette. The City's social media sites are subject to the Iowa open records laws, and any articles or content posted on such sites are subject to public disclosure.

All City of Windsor Heights social media pages will adhere to the content standards below:

- Social media websites are to be consistently branded in order to communicate a clear association with the City, and must contain a Disclaimer and Comments Policy as set forth below. Branding should include, but is not limited to, the inclusion of the City logo, excluding Police and Fire, city department information (address, phone number, and hours of operation) and any other aesthetic "look and feel" defined by the Communications/Recreation Coordinator now or in the future.
- The City has a "page" in Facebook, not a "group." Facebook pages offer distinct advantages, including greater visibility, customization, and measurability.
- The City's Communication Specialist will standardize and provide all City

# Social Media Policy

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Facebook page displays to include the City logo and other pertinent information.

- Any City Facebook page will be based on a template that includes consistent City branding and style. The communication specialist will provide departments/divisions with the template.
- Facebook is more casual than most other communication tools but still represents the City at all times. Utilize jargon, abbreviations, hashtags and social media tags in an appropriate manner.
- An application shall not be used unless it serves a business purpose, adds to the user experience, comes from a trusted source and is approved by the Communication Specialist.
- All City sponsored social media sites shall prominently post the Disclaimer and Comments Policy found in Appendix A. In situations where a social media site does not allow for prominent posting of the Disclaimer and Comments Policy, a link to a PDF copy of the Disclaimer and Comments Policy shall be posted instead.
- Posts and monitoring shall be done during office hours, with the exception of emergency situations and all comments or questions shall be responded to in a timely manner within those parameters.
- AFTER HOURS: In the event of an emergency need for an after hours posting, communications staff shall be contacted to post information on the City's website followed by social media.
- The City's official website shall remain the City's primary online medium for communicating information to the public such as press releases, documents with the exception of emergency communication efforts, events, postings about City functions and other social media engagement posts must be related back to information first posted on the website. While no City information shall be posted exclusively to social media websites, simple "reminders" and "shares" are appropriate and encouraged. Content posted to social media sites if necessary must contain links directing users back to the City's official website for in depth information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business with the City of Windsor Heights.

## IV. Interacting on Social Media

The City of Windsor Heights social media sites may "like" or "follow" government entities; nonprofit and nonpartisan organizations related to City functions; local media sites; and elected officials. Posts or comments related to the City and the community at large may be shared to the extent that they correspond with the City's social media goals.

## V. Accuracy and Timeliness

The City of Windsor Heights will make every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information provided on its social media pages. However, several factors that are beyond the City's control (including unauthorized modification of electronic data, transmission errors, browser incompatibilities, information that has been cached on the local computer or storage device, or other aspects of electronic communication in an evolving and time sensitive environment) can affect the quality of the information displayed on the site. For that reason, the City does not

guarantee the accuracy of the information provided on its social media page and is not liable for reliance on this information. The City's timeliness about posts and responses to comments may also vary based on staff availability. Therefore, a disclaimer shall be posted on any social media site, stating: This social media page is intended to get information out to a wide number of people quickly, not as an in depth or complete source of information, but as an evolving supplement to the City of Windsor Heights's website ([www.windsorheights.org](http://www.windsorheights.org)), newsletter, press releases, and in person communications. Staff will post or respond to comments within office hours and within the varying perimeters of staff availability. For these reasons, staff may not respond to every comment or question posted on the social media site.



# Social Media Policy

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THIS INFORMATION IS PROVIDED “AS IS” WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EITHER EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, OR NONINFRINGEMENT. THE CITY OF WINDSOR HEIGHTS ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR ERRORS OR OMISSIONS IN THIS PUBLICATION OR OTHER DOCUMENTS WHICH ARE REFERENCED BY OR LINKED TO THIS WEBSITE. IN NO EVENT SHALL THE CITY OF WINDSOR HEIGHTS BE LIABLE FOR ANY SPECIAL, INCIDENTAL, INDIRECT OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES OF ANY KIND, OR ANY DAMAGES WHATSOEVER, INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, THOSE RESULTING FROM LOSS OF USE, DATA OR PROFITS, WHETHER OR NOT ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF DAMAGE, AND ON ANY THEORY OF LIABILITY, ARISING OUT OF OR IN CONNECTION WITH THE USE OF THIS INFORMATION. THIS PUBLICATION COULD INCLUDE TECHNICAL OR OTHER INACCURACIES OR TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS. CHANGES ARE PERIODICALLY ADDED TO THE INFORMATION HEREIN; THESE CHANGES WILL BE INCORPORATED IN NEW EDITIONS. THE CITY OF WINDSOR HEIGHTS MAY MAKE IMPROVEMENTS AND/OR CHANGES IN THE INFORMATION AND/OR THE DOCUMENT(S) DESCRIBED ON THIS WEBSITE AT ANY TIME.

## VI. Responding to Comments

In cases where comments are accepted, the staff member responsible for the page MUST monitor the site regularly and respond in a timely manner.

Guidance on When/How to Respond to Comments:

- If the person has a question – Respond with information or point them back to the City’s website or other resource. You may ask them to contact you offline when appropriate (when it is a private issue, when the issue is one in which there is little or no interest by others, etc.)
- If the person has a complaint – If inaccurate, politely correct inaccuracies. When a general complaint, thank them for sharing feedback and give any other direction that may be needed. If it is regarding a personal matter, reply that you would like to address the issue offline and provide contact information.
- If the person leaves a general comment, like “Wow, this is cool” or “Can’t wait,” no response is required.
- If the person wants to start debating with a City employee – Take the conversation offline. Do not debate them on the site. It is ok to correct inaccuracies and to provide evidence to support information, but avoid debates.
- Staff discretion on responding to posts that may be considered passive aggressive, antagonistic, posts previously answered or posts that have multiple comments that needs to be addressed. You may choose to respond or not respond required depending the nature of the post.

When in doubt on how to respond to a comment, please contact the Communications/Recreation Coordinator for guidance.

## VII. Removing Comments

Comments violating the City’s Disclaimer and Comments Policy shall be removed promptly. When a person’s comment is removed, the City should try to post a reason for removing the post (i.e. “A comment to this post was removed because it endorsed a political candidate. This is in violation of the City’s comment policy (link to policy)”). Removed comments should be archived for our records by completing the tracking form found in Appendix B and submitting it to the Communications/Recreation Coordinator. The City reserves the right to restrict or

remove any content deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law. Repeat individual violators may be removed or blocked from commenting on City social media sites.

## VIII. Correcting Mistakes

# Social Media Policy

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If an employee makes a factual mistake on a City social media site, he/she should correct it as soon as possible. Corrections should be upfront and timely. If modifying an earlier post, make it clear that the post has been corrected. Designate corrections with “Updated” “Fixed Link” or “Fact Correction” prior to the correction. Do not try to “hide” corrections, as someone may have seen the incorrect information and may be acting upon it.

## IX. Review Procedures

The Communications/Recreation Coordinator will have access to all City sponsored social media sites, including rights to edit a site. Each site will be monitored weekly to ensure the site is meeting its intended purpose, that it is being updated regularly, that the content is appropriate and to look for any possible problem that would reflect negatively on the City.

## X. Employee Conduct

All City employees have a responsibility to help communicate accurate and timely information to the public in a professional manner. When using social media, City employees must follow all policies outlined here and in the Employee Handbook. Employees designated to participate in social media are expected to follow these principles:

- Postings shall be related to that department’s specific function and subject matter expertise.
- Postings shall be factual, respectful, and on-point. They should not be off topic, or offensive.
- Employees must notify the Communications/Recreation Coordinator of any media contacts received related to their posts. Further, under no circumstances shall non-department head personnel comment to reporters regarding matters of City policy, opinion, or interpretation.
- City social media sites or equipment may not be used by staff as a platform to share personal opinions or for political purposes, private business or charitable activities, commercial or personal transactions, or for any other purpose prohibited by law.
- City Staff may acknowledge sponsorships, partnerships or thank you’s to organizations, businesses or residents.
- Replies to individual constituent inquiries received via social media sites must be retained per the City’s record retention schedule.

## XI. Employees’ Personal Social Media Pages

The line between personal and professional, public and private can be easily blurred in social media. The following guidelines, in addition to those guidelines in the Employee Handbook, must be followed when using a personal social media account:

- Personal social media account names by employees should not be tied to the City except for page management of the City site. Additionally, staff should not use their personal social media accounts to speak on behalf of the City.
- Employees with personal social media accounts never have the right to post nonpublic and confidential information such as information related to co-workers, personnel data, medical information, and claims or lawsuits against the City.
- When responding to an item on the City’s page or on any other page, ask yourself if you or your department would be embarrassed to see the comment appear in the news. If so, don’t post it. Employees must take great care to make it clear that their personal opinions are their own and do not represent the official policy position of the City. It is important for employees to remember that their personal communications may reflect on the City, especially if they are commenting on City business, supervisors, or policies. The following guidelines apply to personal communications including various forms of social media, letters to the editor of newspapers, personal endorsements, email, City correspondence, newsletters, and cable television.
- All City employees are expected to actively protect any information considered



# Social Media Policy

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private or protected under Data Privacy and HIPPA Compliance laws.

(Questions should be directed to the Windsor Heights City Clerk.)

- Employees shall not comment on social media postings unless it's in a positive statement. Employees can like and share events and postings to promote the City.
- Employees shall be truthful, courteous and respectful toward supervisors, coworkers, citizens, customers and other persons associated with the City. Employees shall not engage in name-calling or personal attacks.
- Employees shall not post anything with content that violates the City's Disclaimer and Comment Policy.

## XII. Elected officials and Officials Appointed to City Boards, Commissions and Committees:

- Elected officials shall not use official City social media sites for campaigning purposes.
- Elected officials shall not post comments or links to any content that endorses or opposes political candidates or ballot propositions, including links to an elected official's campaign site.
- All comments posted during an election season by anyone who has filed for office will be removed.
- Elected officials should be mindful of the risks of electronic communication in relation to the Open Meeting Law; two way communications between elected officials should be strictly avoided. Adding to a post or comment that would create a quorum of the group you represent should also be strictly avoided. (If the comment or posting requires official review it should be handled before the group during a public meeting.)
- Elected officials should not use social media as a mechanism for conducting official City business other than to informally communicate with the public.
- Elected officials should reveal that they are elected officials for the City if/when making a post and be honest, straightforward, and respectful.
- Elected officials should be sure that efforts to be honest do not result in sharing non-public information related to coworkers, personnel data, medical information, claims or lawsuits, or other non-public or confidential information.
- Elected officials should add value to any social media discussion by staying focused on the issue.
- To help prevent errors and liability issues, officials are encouraged to ask the appropriate staff person or department to post official City documents (i.e., an ordinance recently passed by the City Council), rather than summarizing them from memory.
- If an elected official makes a mistake, it should be corrected as soon as the official is made aware of the error. Corrections should be upfront and as timely as possible. If you modify an earlier post, make it clear the posting has been corrected. Consider designating corrections with "Fixed link" or "Fact correction" prior to the correction.
- Elected officials who are contacted by the media on a topic of official City business should contact the Communications/Recreation Coordinator for direction.
- Elected officials shall not post anything with content that violates the City's Disclaimer and Comment Policy.

## APPENDIX A

### DISCLAIMER & COMMENT POLICY

(To be prominently posted on every social media page)

The purpose of this and other City sponsored social media sites is to communicate between the City, its individual departments and members of the public. The City reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to change, modify, add or delete comments or posts, photos and videos in accordance with this policy.

The City will remove comments that:

1. Contain obscenities;
2. Demean specific individuals or groups of people;

# Social Media Policy

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3. Promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination of protected classes;
  4. Promotes, fosters or perpetuates harassment of any kind;
  5. Contain content intended to defame any person, group or organization;
  6. Contain factual inaccuracies;
  7. Qualify as SPAM;
  8. Are not topically related to the particular social medium article being commented upon;
  9. Express support for or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
  10. Contain sexual content or links to sexual content;
  11. Solicit commerce or advertisements including promotions or endorsements;
  12. Conduct or encourage illegal activity;
  13. Contain violent or threatening language;
  14. Disclose confidential, sensitive, or proprietary information;
  15. Compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
  16. Violate a legal ownership interest of any other party, such as trademark or copyright infringement; or
  17. Any content that the City believes does not foster the intent of its social media policy.
- Additionally, ALL comments posted during an election season by anyone who has filed for office will be removed.

The City of Windsor Heights has the right to remove a comment from and/or block a user who is not using their legal name or otherwise appropriately identifying themselves. The City of Windsor Heights has the right to reproduce any pictures or videos posted to this site in any of its publications or websites or any other media outlets. The City of Windsor Heights has the right to quote any comments or suggestions left by users. The views, postings, positions or opinions expressed on this site do not necessarily reflect those of the City of Windsor Heights.

All content posted on this site is subject to disclosure under the Iowa open records laws.

## Advertising

The City of Windsor Heights does not endorse any product, service, company or organization advertising on its social media pages. The ads that appear on social media pages are sold, posted and maintained by those social media sites.

## Privacy policy

Please note that the City of Windsor Heights does not share information gathered through its social media sites with third parties for promotional purposes. However, any information you provide to the City is subject to the open records law.

## APPENDIX B

### REMOVED COMMENTS TRACKING FORM

All comments removed from a City sponsored social media site should be documented with this form or submit a screen shot of the posting to the Communications/Recreation Coordinator. Please deliver or email to Whitney Tucker, Communications/Recreation Coordinator at [wtucker@windsorheights.org](mailto:wtucker@windsorheights.org)

1. City of Windsor Heights social media site affected:
2. Date of original post:
3. Screen name of poster:

# Social Media Policy

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4. Entire comment that was removed (attach separate page if more room is needed:
  5. Reason for removal of comment:
  6. Date comment was removed and explanation for removal was posted to social media site:
  7. Comment removed from City of Windsor Heights social media site by:
  8. Other pertinent information (if applicable):
- Date this report was received by the Communications/Recreation Coordinator:
- This form will be retained by the Communications/Recreation Coordinator for a period of 1 year.



# Style Guide

From colors to tone of voice, a style guide provides guidance on how City communications should look, sound, and feel.



**WINDSOR**  
**HEIGHTS**  
the heart of it all

# Style Guide

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## City Colors



C=21 R=207  
M=0 G=153  
Y=53 B=153  
K=0 #cfe295



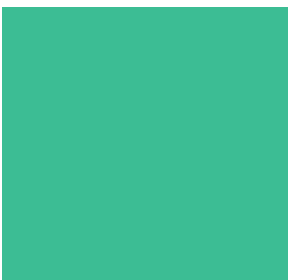
C=93 R=1  
M=58 G=102  
Y=18 B=153  
K=2 #016699



C=21 R=204  
M=0 G=204  
Y=53 B=101  
K=0 #cccc65



C=90 R=1  
M=42 G=102  
Y=55 B=102  
K=22 #006666



C=67 R=76  
M=0 G=189  
Y=55 B=148  
K=0 #4bbd95



C=65 R=102  
M=91 G=51  
Y=31 B=102  
K=18 #663366



C=27 R=51  
M=21 G=153  
Y=41 B=153  
K=1 #2f9a9a

# Style Guide

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## City Logo



## Font Options

Baskerville Old Face  
Minion Pro  
Arial

## Tone

The tone in City communications writing should be

1. Informal but not sloppy
2. Helpful but not overbearing
3. Informative but not bossy

## Image Use and Infographics

Adobe stock images or photos should appear within every post when applicable. Sometimes an infographic works better when a proper image isn't available. City colors, fonts, and logo should be used in all infographics.



# Crisis Communication Plan

In the event of an emergency, natural disaster, pandemic, cyberattack, or other event deemed a crisis by City staff, this plan will guide communication efforts with residents.



# Crisis Communication Plan

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## Purpose

This plan is a part of the Communications Guide and is designed to help facilitate communications with residents in the event of an emergency. Possible emergency events may include, but are not limited to:

- Natural disasters (flood, derecho, tornado, etc.)
- Active Threat (shooter)
- Pandemic
- Cyberattack

## Escalation Framework

All emergencies are not created equal. Below is a tiered response plan that offers an appropriate response level based on the scope of the threat.

Level	Scope	Stakeholders
Level 1	Level 1 is the highest level of crisis escalation and reflects the broadest risk of citizen and operational disruption. These are life and death situations where there is an immediate risk to the entire community. Examples may include, but are not limited to a severe natural disaster or active shooter event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- City Administrator</li><li>- Communications/Recreation Coordinator</li><li>- Director of Public Safety</li><li>- Director of Public Works</li><li>- Finance Director</li></ul>
Level 2	Level 2 represents a moderate potential risk to citizens or an impact on government delivery. Examples may include a mild natural disaster, infrastructure damage, local business crisis (e.g. business fire) where there is moderate risk to all or parts of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- City Administrator</li><li>- Communications/Recreation Coordinator</li><li>- Director of Public Safety</li><li>- Director of Public Works</li><li>- Finance Director</li></ul>
Level 3	Level 3 represents a situation that requires a coordinated municipal response, but that is unlikely to pose a health risk to citizens or severely disrupt operations. Examples may include a political controversy or scandal that involves a public figure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- City Administrator</li><li>- Communications/Recreation Coordinator</li><li>- Director of Public Safety (if this involves potential protesting/rioting/civil disturbance)</li></ul>

## Incident Response Team

The Incident Response Team includes the individuals who need to be informed first when a crisis occurs.

- City Administrator
- Public Safety Director
- Public Works Director
- Communications/Recreation Coordinator
- Finance Director
- Mayor
- City Councilmembers

## Roles and Responsibilities

The City Administrator and Director of Public Safety will work to identify the level of the crisis. They will collaborate with the Communications/Recreation Coordinator on the content of the messaging to delivery to residents. The Communications/Recreation Coordinator is responsible for executing the messaging on the appropriate platforms. The Director of Public Works will also collaborate with the Communications/Recreation Coordinator on messaging specific to damage/repairs to infrastructure within the City or cleanup efforts. The Director of Public Safety manages the social media channels for the Police and Fire Departments. Elected officials are encouraged to share messaging related to the crisis only from City accounts to help spread the messaging and prevent confusion.

## Communications Messaging Platforms

In the event of an active emergency (e.g. tornado hits at 3 am) that is a life and death situation or a Level 1 emergency, the single point of initial information will be the Windsor Heights Police Facebook page (WHPD) because the Public Safety Building has someone on staff during off hours when an emergency may hit. It will serve as the initial notification of the emergency to get the first word out. After the initial notification, crisis related communication will come from the following City platforms and will be shared or reposted by WHPD as needed.

The initial point of information for Level 2 & 3 emergencies will be the City's website/Facebook page (both have the same information). The Communications/Recreation Coordinator will determine which platforms to use based on the type of crisis for all communication related to the emergency. Every crisis situation is different and will require its own unique communication approach.



Below are descriptions of communication messaging platforms currently used by the City.

## Website

- Newsflash: this is a news item on the website. Three news items are shown on the homepage. There is a link below the images to a page with all the news items. All messaging from the City is featured as a news item. News items are also posted to the appropriate social media channels.
- Newsflash Text Alert: a news item can also be sent to a resident as a text message. Residents have to sign up to receive a text message. This is free for under 500 subscribers. The cost will increase to \$945 a year for 500-1,000 subscribers. It is always free for residents to use.
- Webpage: individual pages within the website can be dedicated to information on the crisis situation. These pages will be placed under the Residents tab.

## Social Media

- Facebook: as of September 2020, the City of Windsor Heights has 2,009 followers. This platform helps the City to communicate to a broad audience and gives residents a convenient place to ask the City questions. The Communications/Recreation Coordinator works to keep the City's Facebook Page a positive environment through a proactive approach by posting positive content, being transparent, and answering questions quickly.
- Facebook Local Alerts: the City of Windsor Heights is now eligible to use Facebook Alerts. This is a feature that recently became available for local government and first responder Pages on Facebook. When a City issues a Facebook Alert, all followers are notified versus the followers having to seek out the post or see it on their newsfeed. This should be reserved for crisis communications only.
- Twitter: the City has 699 Twitter followers. This platform is limited in the number of characters that can be used. It is ideal for short, newsworthy content and for connecting with members of the media.
- Instagram: the City has 246 followers. Instagram is the most visual platform. Instagram is not an ideal platform in an emergency. It can be used during a recovery phase of an emergency to show cleanup efforts or other visual elements.
- Hootsuite: Hootsuite is not a social media platform, but is a social media management platform that allows the Communications/Recreation Coordinator to post messaging to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram at the same time. This is an important tool to use in a crisis to help manage workflow.
- NextDoor: 1,156 residents follow the City's agency account on NextDoor. The City cannot access or view individual neighborhood accounts. Because of this, the City cannot see misinformation to correct it within neighborhood accounts. Residents

have to follow the City's agency account, but then are automatically notified when the City posts content.

- YouTube: the City uses YouTube to house video content that is reposted on the website or the above social media platforms.

#### Email

- The City uses Constant Contact to send out the monthly e-newsletter and other City news. As of September 2020 there are 848 email subscribers.

#### Media

- The Communications/Recreation Coordinator maintains a good working relationship with the local media and is responsible for sending out press releases from the City. The Public Safety Director is responsible for sending Police/Fire related press releases (e.g. building fire, robbery, etc.). Questions from the media should be routed to the Communications/Recreation Coordinator. Any media questions related to the Police/Fire/EMS incidents/responses should be directed to the Public Safety Director.

## Additional Messaging Platforms to Consider

The City should only use one text messaging platform (Newsflash Text Alerts or Nixle). Having multiple text messaging options will confuse residents. The City currently uses the Newsflash Text Alerts for road closures. Adding CodeRed (run by 9-1-1-) would be a beneficial addition for reasons described below. Below are other platforms that the City has access to.

- CodeRed: this landline and text alert system is managed by Polk County Emergency Communications (9-1-1- Center). The City does not choose or control what information is sent or when it is sent. This system is capable of making 1,200 phone calls a minute. Calls/texts can be made in a radius around a given location, by streets, custom drawn areas or by contact groups. It is used only for emergency life or death situations (Level 1) like flood evacuations, terrorist threats, or gas leaks. It is not used for road closures or other City breaking news that doesn't involve a clear and immediate danger to the public. Residents would also have to sign up for this service. It is beneficial because it includes landlines in addition to cellphones. It can be marketed as a service from 9-1-1/Polk County to help avoid the confusion with Newsflash Text Alerts. There is no additional cost.
- Nixle: this is a text messaging platform that residents also have to sign up for and is an additional cost. As of September 2020 there are 176 subscribers to the Police Departments account, which is not actively in use. This costs \$3,340 for 500 subscribers or \$4,140 for 750 subscribers.

## Before a Crisis

- The Communications Coordinator will work to build up text message, social media, and email subscribers. Throughout the year, citizens will be encouraged to sign up for these platforms. Then in the event of a crisis, they will have access to safety instructions and information when it matters most.
- The Communications Coordinator will continue to release accurate and timely information from the City on the appropriate messaging platforms.
- An emphasis on positive content should be made as well as prompt responses to questions on social media to help build and maintain a positive working relationship with residents.
- The Director of Public Safety manages the Police and Fire Departments' social media platforms and will follow the above steps for those platforms.

## Response Management Workflow

- The City Administrator and Public Safety Director work to determine the level of the crisis.
- City Administrator, Public Safety Director, and Communications/Recreation Coordinator collaborate on messaging. The Public Works Director will also be involved with information about the City's infrastructure/clean up from a crisis.
- The Communications/Recreation Coordinator releases the messaging to the determined channels. The Public Safety Director either shares or posts the same content on the Police Department and/or Fire Department's social media channels. In the case of Level 1 emergencies, the Public Safety Director will post the initial notification of the emergency to the Windsor Heights Police Department's Facebook page and this will be shared on the City channels.
  - This messaging will be clear, concise, and actionable. It should have a calm, confident, and informative tone. Accuracy of information is of utmost importance. Include photos and/or videos when possible.
  - Include contact information for local resources such as a utility company when needed.
- The City Administrator, Public Safety Director, and/or Public Works Director will continue to collaborate with the Communications/Recreation Coordinator on additional messaging that needs to be released as the crisis continues into multiple days or weeks.
- News, updates, and alerts should be communicated often. The Communications/Recreation Coordinator will determine the appropriate messaging platforms to use and how often messaging should be sent.



- The Communications/Recreation Coordinator should consider sharing/reposting content from credible agencies such as the Iowa Department of Public Health, Polk County Department of Public Health, Polk County Emergency Management, and CDC as needed. In the event of a health crisis such as a pandemic, the City should not aim to be a health expert, but to share important information from credible sources such as those listed above. The City should also not aim to be a meteorologist, but should post reminders related to snow as it impacts residents through street parking restrictions.
- When the crisis has ended, the City Administrator, Public Safety Director, Public Works Director, and Communications/Recreation Coordinator should meet to discuss what went well, where we could improve, and any changes that should be made to the Crisis Communications Plan.