



# **CITY OF SAN RAMON**

## **Social Media Policy**

*September 2012*

**CITY OF SAN RAMON**



**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY**

**DATE: September 11, 2012**

**Effective: September 19, 2012**


**SUBJECT: SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

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**PURPOSE:**

This Policy serves as a guideline for the establishment and use of social media by the City of San Ramon as a means of conveying information about the City and its events and activities to the public.

The Social Media Policy shall become effective upon the date of approval and signature by the City Manager.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Rogers, City Manager

9-19-12  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

## I - INTRODUCTION

Two of the Council's 2012-13 Goals and Priorities are to:

- Enhance communication with residents and business community
- Improve City communication efforts – Communication Plan

The City of San Ramon endorses the appropriate use of social media to augment traditional communication methods and enhance and support City program goals and objectives.

Social media can enhance communication, collaboration, information exchange, and transparency, streamline processes, and foster productivity. The use of social media, when used in local government, presents opportunity and risk. Guidelines are needed to direct the appropriate use of social media for business purposes. A mechanism must be in place to ensure that published content is in line with the defined goals and expectations for the City's social media presence. Establishment of a Social Media Policy creates a positive social media presence and will assist the City in:

- Developing and adhering to privacy guidelines
- Developing and clearly stating usage terms and conditions
- Maintaining brand consistency
- Complying with any applicable Public Records Act or City record retention policies.

Clear expectations and guidelines must be in place to guide governmental use of social media. A well defined Social Media Policy will provide a clear understanding of the terms of the service and that the Social Media Team Members/Department Moderators are responsible for posted content. Terms of use should be clear and posted publicly and easily accessible for the staff and the public. Citizen engagement guidelines should promote a user-friendly philosophy and a free exchange of views.

## II - PURPOSE

This Policy serves as a guideline for the establishment and use of social media by the City of San Ramon as a means of conveying information about the City and its events and activities to the public and for seeking information and exchange of ideas from those we serve. The City of San Ramon has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the City through the use of social media.

For purposes of this Policy, the terms "social media" and "social media sites" are understood to be content created by individuals, organizations and/or entities, using accessible, expandable, and upgradable publishing technologies through and on the Internet. Examples of social media include blogs, RSS, Twitter, etc. For purposes of this Policy, "comments" include information, articles, pictures, website links, videos, or any other form of communicative content posted on social media sites.

### **III - PENALTIES**

Violation of this Social Media Policy by City employees is regarded by the City of San Ramon as a serious offense and is subject to corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including termination, as appropriate.

### **IV - SOCIAL MEDIA TEAM – ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Social Media Team (Team) is comprised of representatives from each City Department.

The Team's responsibilities include:

- researching and recommending social media options to the Department Head team, the City Manager, and the City Council
- purchasing, implementing, training, announcing, promoting, and evaluating the selected social media
- developing a City Social Media Policy and make periodic reviews and recommendations for updates
- identifying training needs, coordinate and implement training, and prepare technical bulletins as needed.
- evaluating the effectiveness and economy of the City's social media.
- researching and recommending new social media tools for use by the City as well as submit recommendations to terminate or transition away from existing social media tools.
- reviewing all requests for additional social media accounts and making recommendations to the City Manager. The City Manager will approve additional social media accounts.

The Department Director is responsible for designating a Department Social Media Moderator/s (Moderator). The Department Director will notify the Information Technology Division of the authorized Moderators within their Department.

The following provisions apply to Moderators:

- Social media network access shall be limited to a clear City business purpose.
- Moderators shall have permission to create, publish, or comment on behalf of the City and have access to designated and approved City's social media sites.
- Moderators are responsible for the development of content and the maintenance and appropriate responses to content and postings related to their Department's activities and information on the City's designated social media site(s).
- Moderators shall be provided with a copy of the City's Social Media Policy and are required to acknowledge their understanding and acceptance via wet signature.

### **V - USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITE TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION RELATING TO A SPECIFIC CITY DEPARTMENT, ACTIVITY, EVENT, OR PROJECT**

The following provisions shall apply to the City's use of social media to establish an internet presence relating to a particular City Department of City activity, event or project.

- a) The Department Director will appoint a Department Moderator/s.
- b) The Moderator will monitor content on Department specific or City activities, events, or project specific social media to ensure adherence to this Policy.

- c) The Moderator will advise the Department Director and, when appropriate, the City Manager of any concerns regarding content or comments. The City Manager or his/her designee will advise the Moderator whether or not the content or comment should be removed.
- d) The City reserves the right to restrict or remove content that is deemed in violation of this Policy or any applicable law. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained by the Department for a reasonable period of time, including the time, date, and identity of the poster (when available).
- e) The City's content requirements must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink.
- f) The social media pages shall adhere to applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and policies.
- g) Comments on topics or issues not relating to the Department or the City activity, event, or project that is the subject of a particular social media page may be removed.

## **VI - GENERAL POLICY**

- a) The Policy is subject to approval by the City Manager.
- b) This Social Media Policy applies to all Moderators, City of San Ramon employees, and City designated users who create or contribute to any social media. It does not govern the use of an individual's private social media account.
- c) The City of San Ramon's website at <http://www.sanramon.ca.gov> will remain the City's primary and predominant Internet presence and the primary source for Internet information.
- d) Use of social media shall be administered by designated City staff.
  - 1) The City's social media site(s) should make clear that it is maintained by the City of San Ramon and that it follows this Social Media Policy.
  - 2) The purpose of the social media site is to disseminate and gather information about the City or a specific City activity, event, or project.
  - 3) To the extent possible, the use of social media will link back to the City's website for forms, documents, online services and other information necessary to conduct business with or utilize City services.
  - 4) This Policy may be revised at any time.
- e) Sites that allow public comment shall inform visitors of the intended purpose of the social media site and provide a clear statement of the discussion topic introduced for public comment so that the public is aware of the limited nature of the discussion and that inappropriate posts are subject to removal.
- f) Electronic information posted to a social media site may be considered a record subject to the California Public Records Act.
- g) Appropriate action will be taken when necessary to protect general site visitors from inappropriate or technically harmful information and links.
- h) Users shall be informed by posting to the City's social media sites that the City disclaims any and all responsibility and liability for any materials that the City deems inappropriate for posting, which cannot be removed in an expeditious and otherwise timely manner.
- i) Social Media will not be the primary tool used to disseminate information, not replace other media sources. Emergency information may be broadcast using social media tools to enhance the delivery from other media and emergency warning sources and direct the public to the specific location to obtain detailed information.

## **VII - INTERNAL USER GUIDELINES**

- a) Only Moderators shall have permission to create, publish, or comment on behalf of the City.
- b) Moderators will develop, review, and coordinate content and post the content for their Department.
- c) Moderators are responsible for the content and upkeep of their Department postings.
- d) The Department responsible for the implementation of the content on the social media site(s) shall monitor the respective site for comments requesting responses from the City and for comments in violation of this Policy.
- e) Employees representing the City government on the respective social media page must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the City and in accordance with all City policies.
- f) The City's social media sites are subject to the California Public Records Act. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to City business (with certain exceptions) is a public record.
- g) To the degree technically possible, social media content shall be maintained in an easily accessible format which preserves items per the City's electronic records retention policy under which the content may be considered a record subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act or required to be retained pursuant to the Government Code.
- h) This Policy is applied in conjunction with other City policies.
- i) Social media accounts are not open to comments promoting or opposing any person campaigning for election to a political office, any ballot or political initiative, nor to promoting or advertising a business or commercial transaction.
- j) Moderators shall be allowed to send work-related posts from a City approved account or device.
- k) When a City of San Ramon employee comments or responds to a comment in his/her capacity as a City of San Ramon employee, said comments or responses shall be made only from an official account established by the City for such purposes. No City of San Ramon employee making comments or responses in his/her capacity as a City of San Ramon employee shall share personal information about himself/herself or other City employees.

## **VIII - EXTERNAL USER GUIDELINES**

- a) A comment posted by a member of the public on the social media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the City of San Ramon, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the City of San Ramon.
- b) The City reserves the right to deny access to its social media site(s) for any individual who violates this Policy at any time and without prior notice.
- c) Comments should comply with the comment policy below and be related to the posted topic for the City's social media page or post.
- d) Users are subject to the terms of service of the host site. Information (photos, videos, etc.) shared with or posted to official agency pages are subject to the terms of service of the host site and may be used by the owners of the host site for their own purposes.
- e) Social media accounts are not open to comments promoting or opposing any person campaigning for election to a political office, any ballot or political initiative, nor to promoting or advertising a business or commercial transaction.

- f) Users shall be informed by posting to the City's social media sites that the City disclaims any and all responsibility and liability for any materials that the City deems inappropriate for posting, which cannot be removed in an expeditious and otherwise timely manner.
- g) Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted and are subject to removal by the Moderator and/or restriction by the City Manager:
  - 1) Comments not related to the business of the City including random, irrelevant, or unintelligible comments.
  - 2) Comments not topically related.
  - 3) Violent or pornographic content and/or obscene, threatening, or harassing language
  - 4) Personal attacks of any kind
  - 5) Content that promotes, fosters, disparages or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability status, national origin, physical or mental disability, veteran status, or national origin<sup>1</sup>
  - 6) Threaten or defame any person or organization
  - 7) Content that is hateful or incites violence
  - 8) Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale
  - 9) Conduct in violation of any federal, state, or local law
  - 10) Comments encouraging illegal activity
  - 11) Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems
  - 12) Content that violates a legal ownership interest such as a copyright or trademark

## **IX - COMMENT POLICY**

As a public entity, the City will abide by certain standards to serve all its constituents in a civil and unbiased manner.

- a) The intended purpose of establishing a social media presence is to disseminate and exchange information about the City or a specific City activity, event, or project to residents.
- b) Comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted and are subject to removal by the Moderator and/or restriction by the City Manager:
  - 1) Comments not related to the business of the City including random, irrelevant, or unintelligible comments.
  - 2) Comments not topically related.
  - 3) Violent or pornographic content and/or obscene, threatening, or harassing language
  - 4) Personal attacks of any kind
  - 5) Content that promotes, fosters, disparages or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability status, national origin,

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<sup>1</sup> Protected classes or status are defined and pursuant to State and Federal Antidiscrimination laws.

- physical or mental disability, veteran status, or national origin<sup>2</sup>
- 6) Threaten or defame any person or organization
  - 7) Content that is hateful or incites violence
  - 8) Solicitation of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale
  - 9) Conduct in violation of any federal, state, or local law
  - 10) Comments encouraging illegal activity
  - 11) Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems
  - 12) Content that violates a legal ownership interest such as a copyright or trademark

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<sup>2</sup> Protected classes or status are defined and pursuant to State and Federal Antidiscrimination laws.





## **CITY OF SAN RAMON**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT**

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

September 12, 2012

My signature below is confirmation that I have received a copy of the City of San Ramon's Social Media Policy as a means of conveying information about the City and its events and activities to the public. I understand that it sets forth the City's policy with respect to the use of social media. The Policy outlines employee responsibilities regarding the use of social media.

I understand that this Policy is intended to supplement other City Personnel Policies that govern rules of conduct and performance in the workplace. I further understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with the provisions of this Policy.

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Employee's Signature

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Print Employee's Name

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Date of Receipt