



COUNCIL POLICY C-CO01

Communications Policy

PREPARED BY:	Communications Services	COUNCIL APPROVAL DATE:	February 23, 2021
EFFECTIVE DATE:	February 23, 2021		
REFERENCES:	Parkland County's Long-Term Strategic Plan Council Code of Conduct Bylaw 2018-05 Public Engagement Policy C-AD51 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Visual Identity Guide	PREVIOUS REVISION DATE:	NEW
FUNCTION:	Communications	LS REVIEW DATE:	November 23, 2020

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure communications to internal and external audiences are proactive, strategic, effectively managed, consistent and responsive to the diverse information needs of the public.

DEFINITIONS

"Chief Administrative Officer or CAO" is the individual appointed to the position of Parkland County's Chief Administrative Officer, or his/her designate.

"Council" is the collective group of Elected Officials who govern Parkland County.

"County" is the Municipality of Parkland County.

"Elected Officials" are the Mayor and Councillors of Parkland County.

"Mayor" is the Chief Elected Officer as defined in the Municipal Government Act

"Public" means ratepayers, residents, staff, community organizations, businesses, suppliers, other levels of government, and all other individuals and groups with whom Parkland County works and/or serves.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Parkland County Elected Officials and staff.

AUTHORITY & RESPONSIBILITY:

1. Council is responsible to ensure that the County's powers, duties and functions are carried out appropriately, in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*.

- a. The Mayor is the spokesperson for Council and conveys the official Council position on issues of general impact.
- b. Depending on specific circumstances, the Deputy Mayor or another Elected Official may serve as spokesperson on a particular issue. When so designated, the Elected Official will represent official Parkland County Council policies or positions.

In cases of critical significance to the municipality, the Mayor will work with Council, the Chief Administrative Officer and the Director of Communications to develop a communications plan to detail the known facts of the situation and summarize the County's position.

2. Leadership Team

The Chief Administrative Officer and General Managers (Executive Committee), and Directors represent Parkland County externally on all management issues, programs and activities. Where appropriate, Directors may act as spokesperson, or designate knowledgeable staff, including technical or subject matter experts, to speak in an official capacity on issues or subjects for which they have responsibility or expertise. To ensure coordinated and effective communications, departments are required to consult with Communications staff before conducting media relations.

3. Executive Committee provides leadership to the Director of Communications in establishing communication priorities and themes and approves corporate communications priorities. The Director of Communications acts as the first level of response for day-to-day communications requirements and issues and is responsible for establishing and managing Parkland County's communications policies and guidelines, protocols and standards.

4. Communications Department

In support of the organization's strategic direction, communications policy and guidelines, Parkland County's Communications Department will:

- a. Advance the reputation and a positive image of the organization to its public through timely, accurate and integrated communications of Parkland County policies, programs and activities.
- b. Advise and assist Elected Officials, senior management and departmental staff in areas related to public relations, media relations, stakeholder relations (including internal communications), crisis/emergency communications, advertising, social media, websites and website applications, creative production, marketing, special events and protocol.
- c. Use a variety of new and traditional methods of communications to accommodate the needs of a diverse public. To promote two-way communication, County materials will provide residents with a phone number, email, mailing address, Internet address and/or social media channel as applicable for more information or input.
- d. Manage the effective and appropriate use of the organization's brand and visual identity.
- e. Collaborate with department management and/or staff to facilitate effective integration of individual department activities (public engagement) with the overall corporate objectives.
- f. Manage the production and delivery of all advertising and creative services (writing, design, print and digital production) for programs and initiatives.

STANDARDS

1. In communicating with its diverse public, Parkland County will:
 - a. Facilitate proactive, two-way communications.
 - b. Provide the public with timely, accurate, clear, objective and complete information about its policies, programs, services and initiatives.
 - c. Promote coherent, consistent communications within, between and among County programs — one organization, speaking with one voice.
 - d. Identify and address communication needs and issues routinely in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs, services and initiatives.
 - e. Encourage Parkland County Council and Administration to follow a protocol in terms of communicating with like levels of representation about programs, services and activities with which they are familiar and for which they have responsibility (e.g., Mayor to Premier; Chief Administrative Officer to Deputy Minister, etc.) Adhere to applicable federal, provincial and local laws, regulations and policies. All content (messaging, data and digital images) must be able to be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with these laws.
2. Communications' function is governed and guided by policies, practices, acts and plans (and any related procedures) to ensure professional and ethical conduct, and alignment with other corporate requirements. These include:
 - a. Parkland County's Long-Term Strategic Plan
 - b. Public Engagement Policy C-AD51
 - c. *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
 - d. Visual Identity Guide