

Sandy City Council

Policies and Procedures

Original Approval Date: March 17, 2015

Revision:

Chapter:

Section:

Date Council Approved:

SUBJECT: Council Communication Policy

BACKGROUND:

Council Members are independently elected officials, and the City Council as a whole is an independently elected branch of City government. The City Council strives to maintain and cultivate a collaborative relationship with the Mayor and Administration. The City Council and its Members individually have interest in proactively communicating information to residents and the media. This policy is intended as a guide to Council Members and Council Office staff when sharing information or addressing requests from media representatives. In the areas of mass communication and media relations, it is important for Sandy City to “speak” with a unified voice to the greatest extent feasible.

POLICY:

1. The City Council encourages open, responsive, and productive public outreach, communication and media relations.
2. The City Council respects the right and responsibility of independently elected officials to provide information to constituents and the media. Elected officials retain their First Amendment rights. As independently elected officials, City Council Members have the discretion to proactively contact media organizations or utilize social media. When engaging the public via traditional or social media, Council Members are strongly encouraged to first consult with Administration’s Communications staff and/or Council Office staff, and offer content which facilitates constructive, meaningful public awareness and debate.
3. The Council Office and Council Members individually may utilize social media to enhance communications with citizens. The Council Office is responsible for managing and maintaining social media accounts for the Council as a whole. The purpose of any City Council social media platform is educational and shall be limited to providing factual information about actions of the City Council. Questions about City Council social media content shall be decided by the City Council Chair.
4. Council members may choose to create and manage their own social media accounts to communicate with the public. These accounts may be subject to public records laws.

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5. Requests from media representatives to speak with a specific Council Member shall be referred to the Council Member requested. City Council Members retain the discretion to personally respond to media requests, or delegate the response to the appropriate staff representative. When engaging the media as an individual, Council Members should make clear that their views and opinions do not represent the views and opinions of the entire Council.
6. Requests from media representatives for general information about the City Council, its actions or policies shall be referred to the Council Chair. The Council Chair retains the discretion to personally respond on behalf of the City Council, or delegate the response to the appropriate staff representative.
7. In order to ensure timely, complete and accurate responses to media requests and maintain unanimity where feasible, Council Members and/or the Council Chair on behalf of the Council are encouraged to notify Administration's Communications staff, and/or Council Office staff before offering a response to a media request.
8. This policy is internal to the City Council and is not intended to infringe or restrict the Mayor's communication policies. Citizens often contact the City Council about Sandy City issues they learn about through various media outlets. In order to be as responsive to residents and up-to-date as possible the City Council appreciates appropriate opportunities for advanced consultation in Sandy City sponsored media events or other information releases.