



San Diego County
Local Agency Formation Commission
 Regional Service Planning | Subdivision of the State of California

5C

AGENDA REPORT
 Consent | Action

March 7, 2022

TO: Commissioners

FROM: Keene Simonds, Executive Officer
 Priscilla Allen, Analyst I

SUBJECT: Social Media Guidelines

SUMMARY

The San Diego County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) will review proposed guidelines involving staff’s delegated authorization to use social media to communicate LAFCO activities. The proposed guidelines have been prepared consistent with the adopted workplan and for purposes of directly implementing the Commission’s earlier adoption of a Social Media Use Program. This includes outlining specific strategies, principles, and line of responsibilities to guide current and future staff in using social media platforms in communicating Commission interests and activities. Staff recommends the Commission formally receive and file the proposed guidelines.

BACKGROUND

Current Workplan & Direction to Establish Social Media Use Guidelines

San Diego LAFCO’s current workplan was adopted at a noticed public hearing in May 2021 and includes 30 specific projects for the fiscal year. One of the workplan projects involves establishing guidelines to directly aid in the implementation of the Commission’s earlier adoption of a Social Media Use Program (Administrative Policy 107).

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DISCUSSION

This agenda item is for San Diego LAFCO to consider proposed guidelines in implementing the Commission's earlier adoption of a Social Media Use Program. The guidelines have been prepared by staff in conjunction with a review of best practices among other local governmental agencies. This includes establishing key staff responsibilities in managing social media platforms. The proposed guidelines are provided as Attachment One.

ANALYSIS

The proposed guidelines before San Diego LAFCO provides clear parameters to staff in its existing delegated tasks to actively use social media platforms in communicating Commission activities. Key provisions include establishing baseline standards for staff to regularly post content at least once a week as well as addressing mistakes. It also provides instructions for staff to delete inappropriate comments, warning and blocking users, and reporting security infractions.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended San Diego LAFCO formally accept and file the proposed guidelines on social media uses given its placement on the workplan and provide related direction to staff as needed. This recommendation is consistent with Alternative One outlined below.

ALTERNATIVES FOR ACTION

The following alternatives are available to San Diego LAFCO through a single motion:

Alternative One (recommended):

Accept and file the proposed guidelines on social media uses as provided as Attachment One with any additional direction to staff as needed.

Alternative Two:

Continue to a future meeting and provide direction to staff with respect to any additional analysis or information requested.

(continued)

PROCEDURES

This item has been placed on the agenda as part of the consent calendar. Accordingly, a successful motion to approve the consent calendar will include taking affirmative action on the staff recommendation as provided unless otherwise specified by the Commission.

On behalf of the Executive Officer,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Priscilla Allen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Priscilla Allen
Analyst I

Attachments:

- 1) Proposed Social Media Guidelines
- 2) Administrative Policy 107: Social Media Use Program

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SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES: STRATEGIES, PRINCIPLES, & LINE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

These guidelines serve as an administrative resource for designated staff in implementing San Diego LAFCO’s adopted Social Media Use Program (Administrative Policy 107). The Executive Officer and/or their designees will reference these guidelines in informing social media uses and ensuring online communications appropriately reflect LAFCO’s objectives and standards.

The Executive Officer is responsible for these guidelines and authorized to make any changes as appropriate with notice provided to the Commission.

Strategies

San Diego LAFCO should actively use various social media platforms to communicate, receive, and exchange information associated with the Commission’s broad growth management interests and duties. All social media uses should serve to generate interest in LAFCO and/or relevant topics and drive online traffic to the LAFCO website. Social media uses should also consistency reflect positive and constructive energy and whenever applicable use illustrations, pictures, and humor to communicate points of interests.

Approved social media platforms:

Approved Platforms		
Platform	Engagement Type	Opportunities and Uses
Facebook	Social Networking	Build and Join Communities
Twitter	Microblogging	Real-Time Messages; Media Connectivity
LinkedIn	Business Networking	Agency Reputation; Recruitments
YouTube	Visual: Short to Long Videos	Commission Meetings; Extended Messaging
Instagram	Visual: Static and Short Videos	Real-Time Visual Communications

Principles

San Diego LAFCO’s use of social media platforms should be focused on adding value by establishing and maintaining community communications beyond traditional forms while – importantly – creating overall interest in the Commission’s activities. Key principles follow.

1. Mission Minded

Content on all accounts should directly support LAFCO’s mission, goals, and interests. All accounts shall also maintain consistency in visual identity, logo use, and writing style.

2. Build Online Communities

Keep all accounts active by regularly producing and/or sharing content to help ensure LAFCO continues to build and maintain online communities with targeted audiences.

3. Target Audience

LAFCO’s target audience is expansive and comprises three distinct categories: local government agencies; media; and community members with the latter two further distinguished by interest in growth and development activities and related public policy issues in San Diego County.

4. Listen, Monitor and Respond

Provide content on that is open-ended and invites responses; continually monitor comments and provide timely and constructive responses whenever appropriate.

5. Simple and Light

Content should be uncomplicated and free of nuances that can be misinterpreted or otherwise misunderstood; when possible, use illustrations, pictures, and humor to communicate key points of interests.

6. Stay the Course

Focus on LAFCO’s interest and expertise in facilitating orderly growth and development and related public policy issues; avoid content and/or commentary on outside subjects.

7. Connect and Share

Connect followers with related and interesting articles, pictures, videos, links, and comments from others that tackle relevant LAFCO topics. Sharing does not constitute endorsing and should be made clear on all accounts.

Line of Responsibilities

Consistent with adopted policy, the Executive Officer is responsible for overseeing all LAFCO social media communications with authority to delegate tasks to one or more employees. The Executive Officer shall ensure – directly or through their designee – all of the following responsibilities are addressed.

- **Establishing Accounts**

The Executive Officer or designee shall register accounts with any approved platform using their assigned LAFCO email account. Usernames and passwords shall be kept confidential with the Executive Officer and no more than two designees.

- **Updating Passwords**

Passwords shall be updated and changed anytime there is a change in the Executive Officer position or with a designee employee. Changes in the Executive Officer position shall also include providing password information to Commission Counsel.

- **Managing Branding**

All registered accounts shall have consistent branding elements with respect to logos, colors, illustrations, and agency description.

- **Regular Posting**

All accounts shall be actively maintained with the goal of posting content no less than once a week. Preplan posting to cover holidays or other times when staff resources are redirected. An exception involves posting to YouTube which should be less frequent and primarily dedicated to publishing monthly Commission meetings.

- **Timely Engagement**

Ensure content is kept current, responses are timely, and treat engagement as a real-time conversation in which participants expect information to be distributed quickly.

- **Friending and Following**

Discretion shall be exercised in following or friending to help avoid associations with inappropriate or otherwise controversial persons, organizations, or topics.

- **Addressing Mistakes**

Admit mistakes quickly and remedy as appropriate through clarifications, modifications, or removals. Any posting modifications or removals should be accompanied by a short explanation.

- **Linking Website**

The website shall continue to serve as LAFCO's primary and predominant online resource, and social media traffic should be directed/redirected accordingly.

- **Taking it Offline**

Transition conversations offline to help resolve disagreements and/or address sensitive topics. Acknowledge the conversation on the social media platform and indicate the conversation is being taken offline. Do not delete posts that are moved offline unless the content violates Commission policy (e.g., profanity, etc.)

- **Deleting Comments**

Inappropriate comments as defined under policy – such as profane, pornographic, or racist content – must be removed immediately after being captured via screenshots and thoroughly documented.

- **Warning and Blocking Users**

Any user that makes an inappropriate comment as defined under policy shall receive an immediate warning. A second offense by the same user will receive another warning and notice of another violation will result in LAFCO blocking them from the account. A third violation will result in a permanent block.

- **Security**

Actively monitor online traffic to identify unauthorized attempts to upload or change information. Report all unauthorized activities to the platform administrator.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY A-107

Subject

SOCIAL MEDIA USE PROGRAM

Purpose

To provide clear and flexible guidelines for San Diego LAFCO to augment traditional communication methods with the use of social media networks and platforms. This includes establishing baseline objectives and standards in managing authorized social media networks to help ensure appropriate protocols are continuously maintained in communications with the public.

Background

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization (“CKH”) Act of 2000, pursuant to California Government Code Section 56300, directs the Commission to exercise its regulatory and planning responsibilities consistent with its written policies and procedures. The Commission is directed under subsection (f) to maintain an internet website to ensure pertinent agency information is readily available to the public; a provision consistent with a key premise underlying CKH for commissions to improve engagement with citizens in their respective jurisdictions. Several social media platforms are used by public agencies to promote government information and services to the public.

Definitions

The following words are defined as stated for purposes of this policy:

- a. “Commission” means San Diego LAFCO.
- b. "Commission account" means an account on a social media network which the Commission establishes and maintains, and over which it has control over all posts, except for advertisements or hyperlinks by the social media networks’ owners, vendors, or partners. The Commission account will supplement, and not replace, legally required notices and standard methods of communication by or on behalf of the Commission.

- c. “Social media networks” means social media sites or platforms approved by the Executive Officer to be used to convey and post content information. Format types vary and include social networking, blogs, photo-sharing, video-sharing, and podcasts.
- d. “Posts” or “postings” mean content containing information, articles, pictures, videos or any other form of communication posted on Commission social media networks.
- e. “Users” refers to persons and/or organizations utilizing the Commission’s social media sites.
- f. “Comment” or “Comments” mean and include any information, articles, words, pictures, videos or any other form of communicative content posted by users on Commission social media sites.

Objectives

- a. Social media networks are important channels in communicating Commission activities and receiving timely feedback.
- b. The Commission encourages the active and responsible use of social media networks to maintain and enhance effective communication with other governmental agencies, tribes, and members of the public.

Administration

- a. The Executive Officer serves as administrator for all the Commission’s social media networks and related uses. The Executive Officer may delegate responsibilities to Commission employees or consultants as appropriate.
- b. The Executive Officer shall be responsible for approving all Commission accounts and securing all associated account information – including usernames and passwords.
- c. The Executive Officer shall be responsible for posting, monitoring, and removing content consistent with this policy. The Executive Officer similarly shall ensure this policy is implemented in conjunction with all related rules and policies adopted by the Commission.

- d. This policy and its administration shall comply with all applicable federal and state laws, regulations, and policies. This includes, but not limited to, established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, California Public Records Act, First Amendment, and Americans with Disabilities Act.
- e. The Executive Officer shall take reasonable measures to ensure current and pertinent Commission information is disseminated through appropriate social media networks.

General Standards

- a. All authorized and active Commission accounts shall be regularly monitored to ensure content standards as established in this policy are continually maintained – including user comments.
- b. For each approved Commission account, usage standards approved by the Executive Officer will be developed to optimize Commission use of the site.
- c. All approved Commission accounts shall be authenticated using an official Commission logo and email account.
- d. The following forms of content posted by external and authorized users may be subject to removal on any Commission social media network if they contain:
 - 1. Comments that are not typically related to the information posted.
 - 2. Profane language or content (video, sounds, etc).
 - 3. Content that perpetuates violence, discrimination, or harassment.
 - 4. Solicitations of commerce or advertisements.
 - 5. Promotion or endorsement of political issues, groups, or individuals.
 - 6. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.
 - 7. Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public.
 - 8. Content intended to defame any person, group, or organization.
 - 9. Personal attacks against Commissioners or employees.
 - 10. Disclosure of confidential, sensitive, or proprietary information.
 - 11. Sexual or obscene content or links to sexual or obscene content.
 - 12. Images or videos of a minor without the consent of the minor’s parent.

- e. The Commission's website shall continue to serve as the agency's primary and predominant internet presence. Towards this end, whenever possible, content posted on the Commission's social media networks will also be made available on the agency website.
- f. Commission accounts shall be managed consistently with the Ralph M. Brown Act. Commissioners shall not respond to, "like", "share", "retweet" or otherwise participate in any published postings or use the account or any form of electronic communication to respond to, blog or engage in serial meetings with each other, or otherwise discuss, deliberate, or express opinions on any issue within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission.

Records Management

- a. Commission accounts are subject to the California Public Records Act. The content maintained on the social media networks must be retained pursuant to the Commission's records retention policy.
- b. Postings by a third party on a Commission account are not public records and are not subject to disclosure unless the posting triggers some action by the City, including a response or removal of the post.
- c. All postings on Commission accounts subject to retention, as noted in paragraphs (a) and (b) above, must be captured via screenshot and saved.
- d. Any content removed based on this Policy must be retained, including the time, date, and identity of the poster, when available, for six months or such other period as required by the Commission's records retention policy, provided that the Commission may remove content which violates this policy even if there is no reasonably practical means to retain that information.

Adopted: March 1, 2021