



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL POLICY
COMMITTEE REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 09/27/2022

ITEM NO: 2

DATE: September 14, 2022
TO: Town Council Policy Committee
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Discuss and Recommend Updates to the Social Media Policy to the Town Council

RECOMMENDATION:

Discuss and recommend updates to the Social Media Policy to the Town Council.

BACKGROUND:

At its January 25, 2022 meeting, the Council Policy Committee added an update to the Town's Social Media Policy, including guidelines for Elected/Appointed Officials, to its workplan for 2022.

The Town's current Social Media Policy went into effect on September 2, 2015 (see Attachment 1). In the past seven years since this Policy went into effect, much has changed regarding Social Media utilization and peer best practices. The Town's use of social media has increased substantially, social media platforms and government best practices have evolved, and Assembly Bill 992 (AB 992) was passed in 2020 amending the Brown Act to provide social media guidance for public officials.

The Social Media Policy is a public-facing document that is linked on Town social media accounts. It works in tandem with Town staff administrative procedures and especially the Town Communication Plan (Attachment 2).

DISCUSSION:

As part of the update process, staff examined the Town's current social media best practices, consulted with the Town Attorney and the inter-Departmental Town Communication Team,

PREPARED BY: Holly Young
Senior Management Analyst

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, and Town Attorney

DISCUSSION (continued):

examined resources offered by staff membership in the Government Social Media Organization (a professional association for public sector social media professionals), and reached out to other communications professionals in municipalities throughout Santa Clara County. Attached to this report are sample policies from Cupertino (Attachment 3), Los Altos (Attachment 4), Monte Sereno (Attachment 5), Gilroy (Attachment 6), and Government Social Media Organization (Attachment 7).

The proposed 2022 Social Media Policy in Attachment 8 provides substantial updates to the existing policy based on current Town best practices and research into broader public sector social media best practices.

Some internal guidance in the 2015 Social Media Policy is now captured in the Town Communication Plan (e.g., staff procedures for opening a new Town social media account) and has been removed from the proposed 2022 Policy.

An overview of the major proposed additions to the Policy is as follows:

- Adds definitions for the key terms in the Policy.
- Provides clear guidelines for content that is acceptable for posting on Town social media accounts.
- Provides clear guidelines for content that shall not be permitted in connection with Town social media accounts and is subject to removal.
- Adds guidance for Elected/Appointed Town officials who choose to use social media. This includes important information regarding violations of the Brown Act consistent with the update provided by AB 992 pertaining to public officials' use of social media.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends that the Policy Committee discuss, provide any additional guidance, and forward a recommendation to the Town Council to approve the proposed updates to the Social Media Policy.

COORDINATION:

This report was coordinated with the Town Attorney, Town Manager's Office, and representatives across Town Departments through the inter-Departmental Communication Team.

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SUBJECT: Social Media Policy Updates

DATE: September 27, 2022

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no associated fiscal impact.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.

Attachments:

1. Current Social Media Policy
2. Town Communication Plan
3. Cupertino Social Media Policy
4. Los Altos Social Media Policy
5. Monte Sereno Social Media Policy
6. Gilroy Social Media Policy
7. Government Social Media Organization Social Media Policy
8. Proposed 2022 Social Media Policy