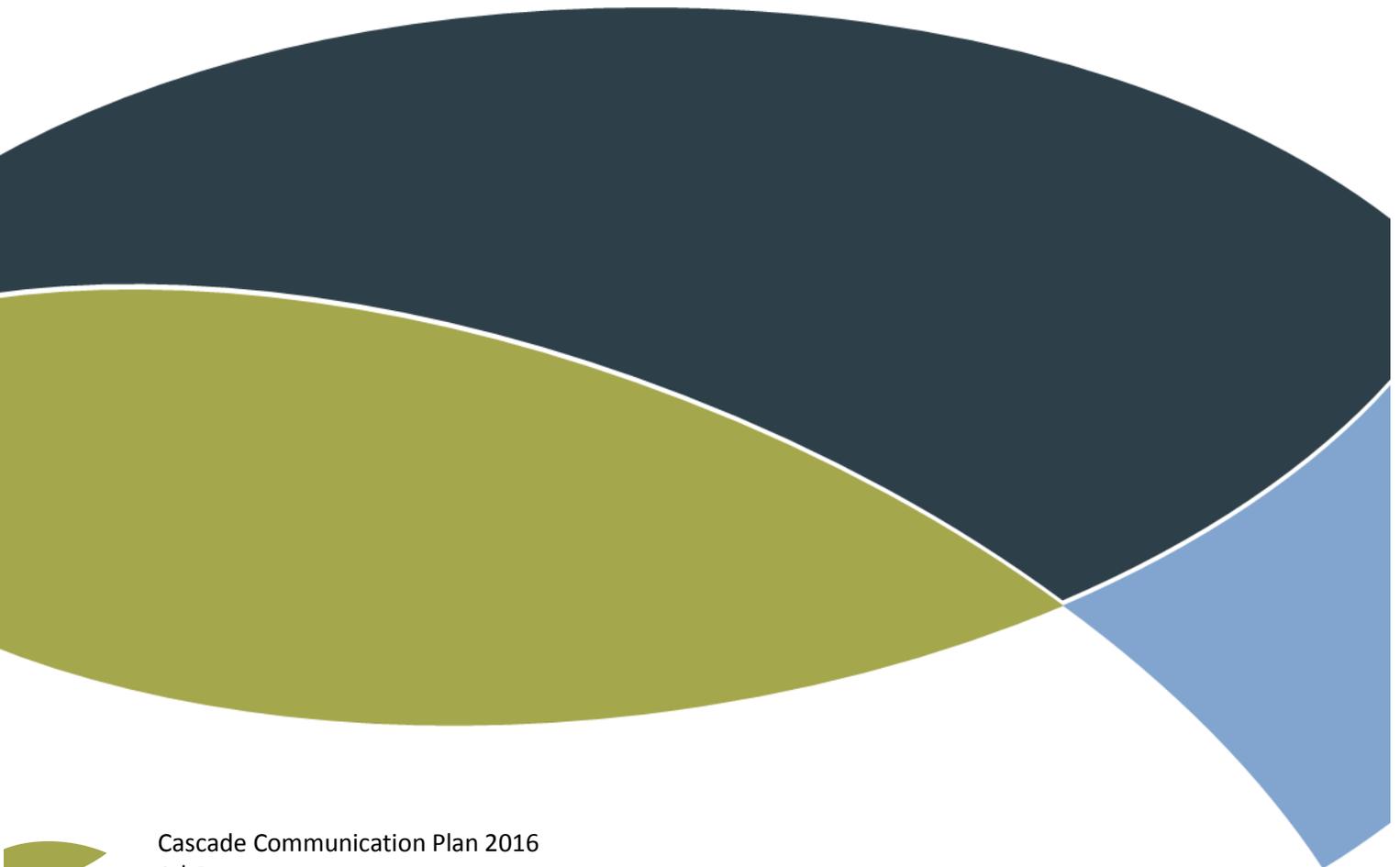


# Cascade Township Communication Plan

Prepared for the Township

May 2, 2016



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## Why Communication Matters

Since Township staff and elected members of council have frequent contact with the public and high exposure to residents, each individual has an obligation to communicate with tax payers and other levels of government with a high degree of professionalism. Good governance requires an ongoing, symmetrical exchange of ideas. Information must flow not only from the municipality to stakeholders, but from stakeholders to the municipality.

## Introduction

The purpose of this Cascade Township Communication Plan is to put in place key recommendations to improve communications with citizens. The Plan reviews the Township's current communication methods, and observes practices in comparable municipalities.

## Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for communication with the Township of Cascade come from past practices which govern the behavior of the Township of Cascade, its officials and staff.

- 1. Integrity** – The Cascade Township is committed to providing reliable, accurate and clear communication and will strive to achieve communication excellence.
- 2. Trust and Respect** – The Cascade Township will be dedicated to open communication and will seek to listen and understand citizens, township officials and staff. The Cascade Township will be respectful of the access to information and privacy rights of citizens and employees.
- 3. Accountability** – The Communication Plan will set out goals to ensure that the Cascade Township is accountable through the establishment of open communication.
- 4. Professionalism** – Based on the standards set-out in the Township of Cascade Branding Guidelines, the Township will ensure that all communication has a consistent and professional look and feel.
- 5. Inclusivity** – An integral part of communication is ensuring that messages are “getting out” to as many people as possible. The Township will be inclusive by establishing messages that are clear, understandable and in plain language. Material will be created to be accessible and designed to engage employees, stakeholders and residents.

The Township of Cascade Township currently undertakes many communication initiatives both internally and externally. The various communication tools are used to relay information to various stakeholders including tax payers, citizens, community groups, elected officials and staff.

## Website and Social Media

Website - In addition to the Township's main website, the Township currently offers a newsletter and post card mailings.

The Clerk and Assistant Clerk is responsible for maintaining the Township website and social media sites as well as postings, publishing in the Post Bulletin, newsletter, and post card mailings.

**Facebook** – The Township has created a Facebook site to provide information regarding municipal and community events. The Facebook page will feature "Newsfeeds" which are quick tidbits of information, photos, videos, etc. that can be shared quickly to anyone who has a Facebook account, and has "Liked" the Township Facebook page. The Facebook page is not meant to replace the Township website, but instead to be used as a supplement to it and to drive viewers back to the Township website.

Township's use of social media is to augment and enhance our established print, signage and web communications with the public, our vendors and constituents.

Township Social Media Accounts:

1. Any citizen who wishes to have information posted on the Township website shall first submit the information to the Clerk for approval. Once approved, the Clerk will submit information to the Assistant Clerk for posting.
2. The Clerk shall have the right to modify or refuse to post any information it deems objectionable or contrary to the interests of the Township.
3. The Clerk shall have the right to delete or withdraw any information posted on its Social Media accounts for any reason.

## Official Township Social Media Guidelines:

The purpose of this social media policy is to establish enforceable rules for the use of social media by Township Clerk and Assistant Clerk when engaged in Township business.

Rules are necessary to assure that communications made on behalf of the Township are properly authorized and in correct form; and that the public is clearly and fully informed that a message received by the Township from the public by means of social media is not a substitute for required reporting procedures.

1. The objective of the use of social media by the Township is to expand and facilitate the dissemination of information from the Township to its residents, taxpayers and the general public.
2. This policy governs all electronic social media use by or on behalf of the Township.
3. The Township shall have a single presence on each social media site approved for use.
4. Any pages or sites created and/or maintained by an individual department or instrumentality of the Township require prior approval of the Township Clerk, and shall comply with this Social Media Policy.
5. The Township's Social Media Policy will be presented on the social media site either by means of a link back to the Township's website or published in its entirety on the social media site.
6. All Township use of social media, including use by departments or instrumentalities of the Township, are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and county laws, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Open Public Record Act (OPRA), First Amendment, privacy laws, sunshine laws, and information security policies (if applicable) established by the Municipality, its departments, affiliated boards, commissions and authorities.

7. Wherever possible, links to more information should direct users back to the Township’s official website.

8. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk shall monitor content on all social media sites to ensure adherence to the Social Media Policy for appropriate use, message, and branding consistent with the goals of the Township.

9. Social media sites are not to be used by the general public for making any official communications to the Township, for example, reporting crimes or misconduct, reporting dangerous conditions, giving notice required by any statute, ordinance or regulation (e.g. notice of claim).

10. The Township Clerk and Assistant Clerk shall have the authority to remove any prohibited content (see below) from any Township social media site at any time.

a. The Township of Cascade can enact a ‘No Comment’ policy for its social media sites. All comments posted by a member of the public on any Township of Cascade social media site may be removed.

b. The Township of Cascade reserves the right to deny access to Township of Cascade social media sites for any individual who violates the Township of Cascade’s Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice.

c. Departments shall monitor their social media sites for comments in violation of this policy.

d. In the event of a dispute or disagreement on the interpretation or application of any clause or the exercise of any right under the Social Media Policy, the decision of the majority of the Township Board shall be final.

11. This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time.

[Twitter](#) – The Township does not currently use Twitter to relay information to the community however, the Township does own a Twitter account (@CascadeTownshipXXXXX) that can be used in the future.

[YouTube](#) – The Township does not currently use YouTube to relay information to the community however, the Township does own a YouTube account. The channel is not actively used or publicized. (@CascadeTownshipXXXXX).

## Print Media

Newsprint - There is one main newsprint publication available to the Township to relay information to the community: The Rochester Post Bulletin uses paid subscription newspaper on an as needed basis to publish public notices (planning, finance, etc) for Cascade Township.

## Newsletter

The Township electronic newsletter will be published as needed and will feature quick tidbits of information, photos, links, etc. that can be shared quickly to anyone who has an email account or access to our website.

## Postcards

The Township will mail postcards to citizens as reminders when appropriate and needed.



## Target Audiences

Identifying and prioritizing target audiences are key components of a communication plan. Without such identification, a communication plan can slip into a "ready-fire-aim" approach rather than a planned "ready-aim-fire" approach.

- Elected Officials
- Township Employees
- Permanent Residents
- Seasonal Residents
- Customers (facility renters, builders, etc.)
- Businesses
- Consultants/Contractors/Vendors
- Visitors/Tourists
- Township Committee Members
- Community Groups/Organizations
- Media
- Volunteers

## Communication Audit

Conduct a communication audit using analytical tools whenever needed. It is useful to review our overall communication efforts in order to determine opportunities for improvement.