



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**Through:** Mike Land, City Manager

**From:** Hannah Cook, Chief Communications Strategist

**Date:** September 28, 2021

**Reference:** Social Media Policy for Elected and Appointed Officials

**2040:** Sustainable Government

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### Introduction:

As technology becomes more and more integral to daily life and social media becomes an increasingly important method of communication, it is necessary to ensure that City spokespeople are clearly identifiable and official messages come from authorized sources. For this reason, staff has drafted a Social Media Policy for Elected and Appointed Officials that provides guidelines and recommendations to help ensure that any City-related information published is accurate, from an identifiable source and in alignment with the Texas Public Information Act.

### Background:

While elected officials and City Council-appointed board, committee and commission members may maintain and use personal social networking sites, their status as elected/appointed officials requires special consideration. If an elected or appointed official conducts any City business or communication as an official from a personal account, professional account, or an account created for board/committee/commission, officials should assume that any City-related communications will be considered a public record subject to the Texas Public Information Act as set forth in Texas Government Code.

Staff researched social media best practices and trends for elected officials both nationwide and in the region. Cities across the nation are increasingly looking to adopt a policy outlining social media guidelines for elected/appointed officials, and multiple professional resources indicated that the Social Media for Elected/Appointed Officials adopted by the City of Durham, NC in 2017 is the industry standard. The proposed policy being presented to the Coppell City Council is largely based on the example from the City of Durham.

Additionally, staff polled approximately 35 cities in the Dallas Fort-Worth Metroplex to determine regional trends. Of the eight responses received, four cities have a similar existing policy in place. While the remaining four cities do not currently have a formal policy, each indicated that they are looking into it.

Per Council's direction, staff has updated the proposed policy to include definitions, record retention guidelines and enforcement procedures.

**Legal:**

The proposed policy has been reviewed by the City Attorney.

**Fiscal Impact:**

N/A

**Recommendation:**

Staff is looking for feedback and approval of the proposed Social Media Policy for Elected and Appointed Officials.