

DRAFT – Procedure for Media Release Preparation and Distribution

1. Developing Media Releases and Responsibilities of Staff

a. Determining when to use a media release

- i. The Communications Lead will follow the Proactive and Reactive guidelines below.
- ii. The decision to use a media release as a tactic is made on a case-by-case basis, considering the intended audience and intended action/behaviour change to be taken, and interest the media may have in covering the subject.
- iii. A media release will be considered as a part of planning for program communications and includes but is not limited to: funding announcements, service level changes, program updates for residents, program milestones, opportunities to engage with the Region, budget information, etc. These opportunities are identified in advance and the work can be taken proactively.
- iv. The Communications Lead should proactively consider the use of a Media Release as a positive approach to reaching media audiences and the opportunity to reach others directly as well (examples: members of Council, staff, and the public through posting to website).
- v. The Communications lead will consider the current relevance of the materials using their community and portfolio awareness, current media activities, additional or alternate ways of sharing the information including direct to resident communications, campaign approaches being used, online and social media alternatives. Detailed criteria to be considered:
 1. Newsworthiness: Does the topic align with trends in the media, has the media reported on this topic before (either in Mississauga or other municipality)?
 2. Financial Impact: Is there a financial impact ex. funding announcement of more than \$50,000 or third party funding of more than \$50,000, transparency and impact to tax dollars?
 3. Reputation: Does it showcase the City's brand, reputation or demonstrate value of tax dollars?
 4. Public interest: Is it confusing to the public, would a release help simplify? Does the public need to know this for public safety, program or service update, by-law or legislation change? Is there a human-interest element or considerable public interest?
 5. Council Position: Do we need to indicate a stance or position taken by council?
 6. Awards: Is this an award of national or international significance?
 7. Project Update: Is this item a new initiative or a follow-up or next phase of a large-scale project or master plan?
 8. HR Announcements: Announcement of new staff at the Director level and above.
 9. Emergencies: Significant events

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- vi. There are also opportunities for media releases which will not will not be identified in advance and this Media Release Procedure sets out timelines and support for identifying and developing Media Releases in these instances as well.

2. Responsibilities

- a. The Chair and Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:
 - i. acting as the Regional Spokesperson, on matters of Council
- b. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is responsible for:
 - i. acting as the Regional Spokesperson, on matters of a corporate or administrative nature
- c. The Director of Communications is responsible for:
 - i. ensuring that all information that is given to the media either orally or in written form is factual, free from bias, accurately reflects the Region's policies and procedures, and is issued in a timely manner
 - ii. ensuring that the appropriate Communications Lead is aware of all information that is given to the media
 - iii. approving, or delegating authority to approve, all media communications prepared by Communications team
 - iv. refraining from commenting on any Regional matter that is personal or confidential, in accordance with the [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(MFIPPA\)](#), or in camera, or is the subject of litigation
 - v. attending media conferences and media briefings, or delegating as appropriate
- d. The Regional Clerk is responsible for:
 - i. acting as the Regional Spokesperson on all Council agendas and Council decisions of record or delegating as appropriate.
- e. The Director, Marketing and Communication is responsible for:
 - i. identifying and arranging for a Regional spokesperson
 - ii. briefing the Regional spokesperson
 - iii. Identifying a Communications Lead
- f. The Communications Lead is responsible for:
 - i. identifying the appropriate methods of communication for the distribution of information to the media, including the media release
 - ii. identifying key media for the distribution of information
 - iii. coordinating the research and completion of communications in order to distribute information to the Region's audiences
 - iv. distributing and maintaining copies of approved media communications
 - v. monitoring media coverage
 - vi. analyzing media coverage
 - vii. identifying Regional source and spokesperson(s), in preparation for and in response to media inquiries

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- viii. seeking approvals from the appropriate department representative regarding the content of communications

3. Coordination of Media Releases with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) - Proactive

- a. On an ongoing basis, staff attend Council and Committee Report Reviews (CRRs) which will include consideration to communications needs for reports coming to Council or Committee.
 - i. The Council Report Review is a proactive process which provides an opportunity to identify to the Director of Communications those council reports which may benefit a media release.
 - ii. The Director of Communications will consult with the CRR team and the Communications leads to identify those matters which could benefit from a formal media release.
- b. When the need for a media release is positively identified, either through CRR or as a normal course of supporting the departmental communication needs, the Communications lead will work with the Department to proactively gather information and draft the media release.
- c. The Departmental subject matter expert (SME) will provide factual information to support the development of the media release and associated communications supports for the intended audiences.
- d. The Communications lead will draft the media release with the departmental SMEs, who consult to ensure that all content is correct. The Communications lead will also ensure that other aspects of the communications are prepared to align – including, but not limited to, resident-facing communications, social media, signage, e-newsletters, community engagement, translations and so on.

4. Coordination of Media Releases with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) – Reactive

- a. When information is new or unplanned (as in an emergency, an immediate service change notification, or a Motion that is passed by Council requiring public awareness), the Clerk will inform the Communications Director and the Communications Director will designate a Communications lead to prepare a media release as soon as possible.
 - i. When safety is concerned, due to an emergency, a public health matter, etc. the highest urgency will be undertaken, and immediate distribution will take place.
 - ii. When the matter is less urgent, a one-to-two business day turnaround can be expected to confirm the information, seek approvals and consult with SMEs. The matter will be treated with reasonable urgency, and fact checking will be undertaken as recordings, motion wording and vote information may not yet be available.

5. Developing Supportive Quotes/Statements

- a. The purpose of quoting spokespersons/individuals is to support the media release and Regional activity through sentiment, recognition, linking to strategic

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plan and community outcomes when possible. The communications lead will guide the development of the quotes or supportive statements and will work to find a balance of appropriate content.

- b. When the media release would be enhanced by a quote from the **Chair - Head of Council**, the Communications lead works with the Chair's office to determine the quote/statement, seeks review and sign-off. Within the Chair's office, the Chief of Staff is responsible for coordination, review and seeking approvals of materials, quotes and providing any background information which may be helpful to the development of the release. The Chair should also indicate at this time if they are available for media interviews. This information will be made available as a part of the media release.
- c. When the media release would be enhanced by a quote from the **Chair of a Committee of Council**, the Communications lead works with the Committee Chair's office directly to determine the quote/statement, seeks review and sign-off. The Communications lead will work with the Regional Chair's office to keep them informed of the activities with the Committee Chair.
- d. When corresponding with the Chair's office or a member of Council, the Director of Communications, the Commissioner of Corporate Services and the CAO will be copied on correspondence.
- e. When the Regional Chair is not available, or the Committee Chair is not available, an alternate will be identified and consulted/included.
- f. When the media release would be enhanced by information or a quote from a **partner organization**, or a leading organization from within Peel (example: BCAN, PAMA co-curator, Community Response Table partnerships, etc.), information, quotes and approvals will be coordinated by the Communications lead.
- g. When the media release would be enhanced by information or a quote from **another level of government**, the Communications lead will work with the Communications lead from the Local tier municipality, the Province and/or Federal government. Information, quotes and approvals will be coordinated by the Communications lead.
- h. When the media release would be enhanced by information or a quote from the **Chair of a Committee of Council**, the Communications lead works with the Committee Chair's office to determine the quote/statement, seeks review and sign-off. The Communications lead will work with the Chair's office to keep them informed.
- i. SME's may also be quoted – most appropriate to quote **CAO** first, or the CAO may delegate to Commissioner. The Communications Advisors will work with CAO and Commissioners to prepare and seek approval for quotes.

6. Supportive Communications

- a. Whenever appropriate and possible, the media release will provide links to relevant materials, Council reports, and ways to seek further information. This will include contact information for a Communications lead.
- b. A standard 'boilerplate' will be used on each media release referring to background information on the Region of Peel.

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- c. Releases distributed on social media platforms (namely Twitter) will be accompanied by assets created via approved template, highlighting key quotes or vital information as determined by Social Content Supervisor and Communications lead.
- d. The social media assets will be shared with Council once available.

7. Distribution

- a. Once all contributors have reviewed and approved the media release, plus any communications tactics aligned to the media release and overall communications strategy, Communications will distribute the media release to a media contact list via email, post to website, and share through other channels.

8. Timing of Media release

- a. When the communication is **planned**, the timing of the media release will be coordinated to coincide with the event, the Council report once approved, the announcement and so on.
 - i. In general, distribution **same day** is expected for known (proactively prepared) media releases, to align with the report, event or announcement.
 - ii. In some cases, current media activity and day-of-week timing will be considered. Late in the day and late in the week may be pushed to next business day when appropriate.
- b. When the communication is **reactive**, the timing of the media release will be coordinated with reasonable urgency.
 - i. When the matter is less urgent, a **one-to-two business day turnaround** can be expected to confirm the information, seek approvals and consult with SMEs. The matter will be treated with reasonable urgency, and fact checking will be undertaken as recordings, motion wording and vote information may not yet be available.
- c. When possible, quotes/statements from those identified in Developing Supportive Quotes/Statements will be included; the need to deliver information in a timely manner should not be held up by lack of a quote or statement, as a statement can always be provided later to media.

9. Media advisories

- a. When an invitation to the media to attend an announcement either virtually or in person is required, a Media Advisory will be developed and sent to media in advance of the media event.
- b. The Media Advisory will serve as an invitation to media to attend the event, and will identify:
 - i. The intended purpose, time, location or virtual attendance information, who will be present, speakers, subject matter, appropriate information on the physical site if applicable, who the lead Communicator is.

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Appendix – social tile drafts and examples

