

Appendix H:

Social Networking / Media Policy

How does the MPO use Social Networking / Media tools?

Social Networking/Media Policy

Social Networking/Media is defined as any current electronic form of communication such as chat messaging, text messaging, social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn **or any other current or future electronic messaging technology or device**. These tools are to be used for official Planning Commission and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) business. Similarly to other forms of communication, social networking/media is to be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical, and legal manner in accordance with the mission of Planning Commission and MPO. Staff should be cognizant that the use of these tools are subject to public records laws and the content generated by this usage must be retained/disposed of in accordance with the Department of State's, Division of Library Services record retention guidelines.

Only those employees designated by the Executive Director may use Social Networking/Media sites to perpetuate, formalize or communicate knowledge. The following policies are intended to govern the use of Social Networking/Media sites by staff:

1. Government representatives who set up accounts should use a general office e-mail account, agency or office name and office phone number of the staff responsible for monitoring/maintaining the media account or site.
2. The agency shall not follow private citizens or commercial profiles. The agency shall not follow government agencies outside the scope or purview of the agency's legislatively created intent.
3. Agency staff shall avoid creating new material on social networking/media sites. Posts or content should be duplicative material of content already existing on the agency's website.
4. Public posts and comments made by the poster and the outside community are considered public records. The following types of comment are not allowed:
 - a. Comments not topically related to the social medium article;
 - b. Profane language or comment;
 - c. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
 - d. Any comments that violate staff usage (see below);
5. User comments shall be monitored and appropriate action will be taken to delete inappropriate comments, the deleted comment will be reported to the Automation Team leader and Assistant Executive Director and, if needed, copies of the offending post forwarded to law enforcement.
6. All social media sites shall include the verbiage: This site is monitored for compliance with the agency's social networking/media policy. Under Florida law, e-mail addresses are public

records. If you do not want your e-mail address released in response to a public-records request, do not send electronic mail to this entity. Instead, contact us by phone or in writing.

7. Use of social media will primarily focus on the real-time dissemination of information relevant to the planning process.
8. Elected or appointed officials are prohibited from engaging in an exchange or discussion of matters via social media that will foreseeably come before the board or committee for official action.

Planning Commission/MPO Social Networking/Media sites shall not be used to send or receive the following classifications of information except when required as part of the official duties of the employee's position. The following examples are representative, but not all inclusive:

1. Messages which may reflect unfavorably on the agency, or which may be perceived as representing the agency's official position on any matter, when authority to disseminate such information has not been expressly granted.
2. Confidential/proprietary information or data to persons within or outside of the agency.
3. Sensitive information including protected health information (PHI) and Social Security Numbers (SSN).
4. Content that may constitute harassment or be considered discriminatory, obscene, derogatory, defamatory, threatening in violation of the agency's workplace violence policy, or excessively personal, regardless of the intent of the sender.
5. Any offensive or disruptive messages including illegal activity, gambling, sexual implications, pornography, materials that include profane, obscene, or inappropriate language, and/or racial, ethnic or other potentially discriminatory content.
6. Information or symbols promoting political positions or actions.
7. Information or symbols promoting religious beliefs, religious positions on an issue, or inspirational messages of a religious nature.
8. Jokes and chain letters.
9. Solicitation of commercial ventures, religious causes, outside organizations, or other nonjob related solicitation.
10. Copyrighted materials or proprietary information, or similar materials without prior authorization.

Social Networking/Media sites are not the property of the Planning Commission or the MPO but the content posted remains the responsibility of the Planning Commission and MPO. Moreover, all postings of social media are presumed to be subject to disclosure under Florida Statute §119.01, upon public records request.

Monitoring of Social Media/Networking

As social media is a fast-evolving means of public interface, this policy statement is subject to amendment or modification at any time to ensure its continued use is consistent with its intended

purpose as limited forum. These policies are subject to revision at any time according to changes in public records legislation, record retention schedules, Attorney General Opinions, or rulings by the Florida State Supreme Court.

Failure to adhere to the requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Facebook Rules of Engagement

Join the Conversation - Web & Social Media Purpose & Guidelines:

Information and conversation -

Please be aware that our web and social media sites are created as alternative ways to provide convenient access to relevant planning information, to boost awareness of upcoming public meetings or events and planning products, and for you to be able to easily share this information and/or express your feedback and ideas. In accordance with the Sunshine Law, these sites are not intended for board members or their committee members to discuss topics on which they may be asked to vote in the future. These sites are intended to better serve you.

Fair and square -

Shared posts, external links and articles of interest from other sources are provided for informational and educational purposes without any endorsement or profit to this agency or those employed within.

Respect and courtesy -

A good conversation requires consideration for each other. So, please be polite and treat everyone who you refer to with respect, including elected and appointed officials, our partner agencies and staff, and other members of the public. We won't tolerate attacks, and we'll definitely remove any content that advocates or encourages expressions of violence, bigotry, racism, or hatred.

Constructive and creative -

We can't change the past, but, together, we can build a thriving future. We warmly welcome your ideas and feedback, especially when focused on improving the economic opportunities and quality of life in our region.

Subject to change -

As social media and web technologies are fast-evolving, this policy statement is subject to amendment or modification at any time to ensure its continued use is consistent with its intended purpose. Questions or concerns regarding their use or this policy should be addressed to the agency's public engagement specialist at merendal@plancom.org.

Everyone is invited -

We are here to serve our entire community and do not discriminate. All public engagement, including meetings, services and programs, as well as web and social media opportunities, are executed without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability or family status. If you feel you are unable to participate or access information in any way, shape or form, please contact our public engagement specialist via email at merendal@plancom.org or call us at 813/272-5940. We will make every effort to assure you are as involved in the planning process as you would like to be.

For the record -

You must remember that as a government agency, we are subject to public record laws of the state of Florida. Though we are not responsible for any material posted by other participants, any comments received by us – whether in person or via mail, email, web site, social media (facebook, twitter, YouTube, Vimeo) become a public record and will be maintained in accordance with state and federal public records laws.

Better safe than sorry -

We review all comments and reserve the right to remove inappropriate messages posted on any web-based media. So...

Keep it clean -

All posts will be free of profanity and obscenity. We want everyone to feel comfortable reading or participating in the conversation.

Don't misinform or mislead -

We will remove any comments that make obviously false or unsubstantiated allegations.

No sales and marketing -

This isn't the place to market your business or sell your services.

Spam-free zone -

We welcome all legitimate comments, but we don't want anyone to overwhelm the conversation by hammering repeat messages or dragging topics completely off-course.

Don't break the law -

Illegal content or behavior is not allowed. Don't link or post any copyrighted or pornographic material, and don't engage in behaviors like harassment, impersonation, intimidation, or abuse.