

	<p>Title: Social Media Communications Policy</p> <p>Number: 1002</p> <p>Effective: June 18, 2019</p> <p> Cancels: August 18, 2015</p> <p>Prepared by: Danette Brannin, General Manager</p> <p>Approved by: Authority Board Resolution No. 2019-18</p>
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POL-1002

This policy applies to social media content and activities maintained by Mason Transit Authority (MTA or the “Authority”) and all MTA officials, employees, board members, and agents.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 Recognizing that Internet-based social media platforms can provide opportunities for enhanced communication with the general public, customers, employees, and other stakeholders, MTA supports the use of social media by authorized personnel to support its mission in an ongoing and proactive manner. MTA has an interest in ensuring that content subject to this policy is accurate and authorized by MTA. This policy establishes guidelines and requirements for using social media and websites on behalf of the MTA. This policy is not intended to restrict communications or actions protected or required by law.

2.0 Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- 2.1 **Social media:** Social media is broadly defined as all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to usage across multiple platforms, such as, Facebook, Twitter, Nixel, blogs, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Vine, chat room, affinity websites, and other forms of electronic communication.
- 2.2 **Content:** Any text, metadata, Quick Response (QR) codes, digital recordings, videos, graphics, images, photos, depictions, and links.
- 2.3 **Comment:** A response to an article or social media content submitted by a commenter.
- 2.4 **MTA Representative:** An employee, board member, agent, volunteer, contractor, or vendor that is identifiable as working for or on behalf of MTA.
- 2.5 **Public Service Announcement (PSA):** A PSA is a message in the public interest disseminated without charge, with the objective of raising awareness and educating the public.

3.0 Policy

3.1 MTA uses social media in a manner that is consistent with its other communication and technological resources, and in compliance with its policies. MTA



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Representatives are accountable for the content, form, and substance of all information they post, publish, or share on social media on behalf of MTA. Use of social media for MTA purposes must maintain the highest standards of propriety, professionalism, and respect.

4.0 Guidelines & Responsibilities

4.1 **Authorization for Use:** Prior to posting MTA-related information or creating content on behalf of the MTA on social media or websites, MTA Representatives must receive approval from the General Manager or his/her designee(s).

- 4.1.1 The General Manager and his/her designee(s) must review this policy and have a signed copy of this policy on file.
- 4.1.2 The General Manager and his/her designee(s) are responsible for the approval of, posting/publishing, and maintenance of MTA’s social media content.

4.2 Approval of Social Media Content and Revocation of Approval

- 4.2.1 Before social media content is used or posted/published, MTA’s legal counsel or designee(s) shall review the “Terms of Service” for that social media platform. Authority Board approval of these Terms of Service may be required.
- 4.2.2 Authorization for MTA Representatives may be revoked if an individual (1) fails to maintain and actively engage in the social media platform; (2) fails to comply with MTA policies; (3) fails to comply with other requirements specified by the General Manager, or his/her designee(s); or (4) violates MTA’s standards of propriety, professionalism, and respect, as determined by the General Manager or his/her designee.
- 4.2.3 In compliance with sections 4.0, 5.0, and 6.0 of this policy, MTA Representatives are responsible for maintaining and monitoring MTA’s social media activities. These responsibilities include regularly and timely posting information, monitoring comments, removing prohibited content as set forth in this policy, and preserving content consistent with the Washington State records retention schedule.

4.3 **MTA Website is its Primary Internet Presence:** MTA’s website is its primary internet presence. A link to www.masontransit.org shall be included on the first page of each MTA social media platform. Where applicable, content posted on MTA social media



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platforms shall include hyperlinks to the MTA website, which shall be the primary record for social media postings.

4.4 **General Purpose:** MTA’s use of social media shall be for the general purposes of promoting community engagement and trust through the following:

- 4.4.1 Quick dissemination of emergency information.
- 4.4.2 Promotion of MTA sponsored events, or events in which MTA is a participant.
- 4.4.3 Communication of marketing or promotional messages to enhance MTA programs and services.
- 4.4.4 Employee recruitment and recognition.
- 4.4.5 Refer the general public to the information posted on MTA’s website at www.masontransit.org
- 4.4.6 Promotion of transit-related PSAs that are generated by federal, state, or local governments and community organizations or other content directly related to public transit.

4.5 **Open Public Meetings Act:** Authority Board Members and other officials should not comment or otherwise communicate on social media with information related to their official MTA duties; participating in online discussions may constitute a meeting under the Washington State Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 42.30 RCW.

5.0 Content Posted by MTA Representatives

- 5.1 **Style:** All content must contain proper grammar and punctuation. Although social media is more casual than other forms of communication, MTA’s professional presence must be maintained.
- 5.2 **Frequency:** As a rule, social media platforms should be monitored at least daily, and at least updated once a week.
- 5.3 **Disclaimer for Non-MTA Advertisements on Commercial Social Media Platforms:** Ads may appear on social media platforms that are outside of MTA’s control. Therefore, the following statement should be included when possible: “Reference to any specific commercial products, processes or services, or the use of any trade, firm, or corporation name does not constitute endorsement or recommendation by



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MTA or its employees.”

- 5.4 **Acceptable Use:** Information that is proprietary, confidential, sensitive, or unauthorized for dissemination by MTA shall not be posted/published on social media or websites.

Acceptable use guidelines shall be available via hyperlink. MTA reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that violates its policies or applicable law. The following content is prohibited:

- 5.4.1 Comments not topically related to the particular social medium article being commented upon;
- 5.4.2 Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
- 5.4.3 Obscene or profane language or content;
- 5.4.4 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 or any other legally protected class; or
- 5.4.5 Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- 5.4.6 Embedded images from external sources;
- 5.4.7 Solicitations of commerce or spam, with exception of solicitations of MTA’s own business needs;
- 5.4.8 Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- 5.4.9 Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the general public, customers, or the MTA system;
- 5.4.10 Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party;
- 5.4.11 Defamatory statements, images, photographs, or other depictions;
- 5.4.12 Hateful or mean-spirited comments;
- 5.4.13 Private, personal information published without consent; or
- 5.4.14 Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language.

5.5 Facebook & Twitter Restrictions & Disclaimer

- 5.5.1 If comments are enabled, the Facebook page should include a link to a Comment Policy tab with the following disclaimer: “Comments posted to this page will be monitored. Through its policies, MTA reserves the right to remove inappropriate comments including those that have obscene language or sexual content, threaten or defame any person or



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organization, violate the legal ownership interest of another party, support or oppose political candidates or ballot measures, promote illegal activity, promote commercial services or products, or are not topically-related to the particular posting or otherwise fail to comply with MTA policies, as amended.”

- 5.5.2 The MTA Twitter bio will read: “MTA comments and list of followers subject to public disclosure (Chapter 42.56 RCW). This site is not monitored 24/7.”

6.0 Information Posted by the Public

6.1 For all MTA social media platforms that allow posts or public participation, those platforms are limited public forums, moderated by MTA staff to ensure content posted by others is appropriate and conforms to MTA’s policies.

6.2 Posted content, including comments, images, photographs, links, and other depictions must be related to the topic posted by MTA to be considered appropriate.

6.3 Inappropriate and prohibited content subject to immediate removal from the site/platform, and deletion/blocking of a user includes content that:

- 6.3.1 Is not topically-related to the particular content being commented upon;
- 6.3.2 Promotes or advertises commercial service, entities, or products;
- 6.3.3 Supports or opposes political candidates or ballot measures.
- 6.3.4 Is profane or obscene language or content;
- 6.3.5 Discusses or encourages illegal activity;
- 6.3.6 Promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, religion, gender, marital status, statistics with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected class;
- 6.3.7 Contains sexual content or links to sexual content;
- 6.3.8 Makes solicitations of commerce;
- 6.3.9 Contains information that may compromise the safety or security of the general public, customers, MTA Representatives, or MTA’s system;
- 6.3.10 Contains content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party;
- 6.3.11 Hateful or mean-spirited comments;
- 6.3.12 Private, personal information published without consent;
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6.3.14 Is defamatory; or

6.3.15 Violates an individual's right to privacy.

6.4 Any content removed based on these restrictions must be preserved, including the time and date of the posting and the identity of the person/entity that posted it (if available).

7.0 Records Retention and Public Disclosure

7.1 MTA's use of social media is subject to the Washington State Public Records Act, Chapter 42.56 RCW.

7.2 All social media content published and received by MTA arising from or related to MTA's business and operations are considered public records for the purposes of Chapter 40.14 RCW (Preservation and destruction of public records).

7.3 MTA is responsible for preserving electronic copies of its public records made or received using social media, including those records made or received using third-party websites and platforms.

7.4 MTA shall establish mechanisms/procedures to preserve and retain public records made or received using social media.

7.5 MTA shall retain social media public records and dispose of (destroys or transfers to Washington State Archives) social media public records in accordance with records retention schedules approved by the State Records Committee under Chapter 40.14 RCW.

7.6 MTA applies records retention schedules to social media public records consistent with the application to non-social media public records, based on the function and content of the public record. For example, comments received via social media are retained for the same period as they would have been if they had been received by MTA via email or non-electronic means.