

**OFFICE OF THE CITY CONTROLLER**



**CITY-WIDE POLICY & PROCEDURE AUDIT  
PHASES II AND III POLICY DESIGN/EFFECTIVENESS AND  
OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

**REVIEW OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 1-18, POLICY ON USE OF  
SOCIAL MEDIA FOR FY 2014**

**Ronald C. Green, City Controller**

**Courtney E. Smith, City Auditor**



OFFICE OF THE CITY CONTROLLER  
CITY OF HOUSTON  
TEXAS

RONALD C. GREEN

December 18, 2014

The Honorable Annise D. Parker, Mayor and Honorable Council Members

**SUBJECT: REPORT #2015-05  
CITY-WIDE POLICY & PROCEDURE AUDIT, PHASES II AND III – POLICY DESIGN/EFFECTIVENESS  
AND OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS – EXECUTIVE ORDER 1-18 POLICY ON USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA  
FOR FY 2014**

Dear Mayor Parker and Council Members:

As part of our responsibilities under Article VIII, Section 7 of the City of Houston Charter, Code of Ordinances, the Audit Division (AD) of the Office of the City Controller has completed a Compliance Audit of the City of Houston's (City) policy design and operational effectiveness of Executive Order (E.O.) 1-18, Policy on Use Of Social Media, including alignment of the strategic objectives to the framework of the policies, management, monitoring activities, effectiveness of the design, operational effectiveness and departmental compliance with the policy.

This audit is part of a recurring audit process as outlined in our audit notification letter to your office dated January 15, 2014 and includes the following audit phases:

- Assess Policy Governance Framework;
- Assess Policy Design and Effectiveness;
  - Identify relevant Strategic Objectives and how they are aligned with Policies;
  - Assess Policy Management; and
  - Review Policy Monitoring Activities;
- Test Operational Effectiveness of Specific Policies and Departmental Compliance.

The Audit Team concluded that the City has established key control procedures for overall policy design and operational effectiveness of Executive Order (E.O.) 1-18. We identified several strengths and noted only a few recommended areas for improvement.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald C. Green  
City Controller

cc: Tina Paez, Director, Administrative and Regulatory Affairs  
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**City of Houston**  
**City-Wide Policy & Procedure Audit**  
**– Phases II and III Policy Design/Effectiveness**  
**and Operational Effectiveness Review of**  
**Executive Order 1-18, Policy on Use of Social**  
**Media, for FY 2014**

*December 18, 2014*





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# Executive Summary

## ***Introduction***

The Administration & Regulatory Affairs Department (ARA) is charged with the responsibility of facilitating the creation of and updates to City-wide policies and procedures. The City of Houston Controllers Office Audit Division (AD) collaborated with Protiviti to perform a review of City of Houston (City) Administrative Procedures (A.P.'s) and Executive Orders (E.O.'s) and evaluate the following:

- Policy Design and Effectiveness
- Operational Effectiveness

The selection process for identifying the A.P.'s and E.O.'s for review consisted of the following factors: AD's Risk Assessment, last update/creation date of the policy, reputational risk of the City, potential for penalties or fines against the City, and the potential for fraudulent activity. In addition to development of a selection process, Protiviti developed testing procedures for the A.P.'s and E.O.'s selected for testing going forward.

As a result of the selection process, E.O. 1-18, Policy on Use of Social Media was selected as one of the policies for review. Social media as defined in E.O. 1-18 is *"Internet-based technology communications tools with a focus on immediacy, interactivity, user participation, and information sharing. These venues include social networking sites, forums, weblogs (blogs, vlogs, microblogs), online chat sites, and video/photo posting sites or any other such similar output or format"*. City social media represents the collection of Internet-based applications dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration in which there exists data creation, sharing and exchanging of information, ideas, and other data in virtual communities and networks. It involves the creation and exchange of user-generated content.

This report covers a review of the design and operating effectiveness of E.O. 1-18.

## ***Procedures Performed***

Procedures performed included a review of the design effectiveness of the selected policy, E.O. 1-18 Policy on the Use of Social Media. Further, AD and Protiviti selected one department, the Houston Police Department (HPD), to evaluate compliance of the department's current Facebook page with E.O. 1-18 utilizing a combination of testing procedures (i.e., inspection and observation).

Key Tasks performed during the audit included:

- Reviewing the policy to identify key controls;
- Meeting with the Director of Communications and the Director of Social Media in the Mayor's Communication Office to discuss key factors of the policy and obtaining supporting documentation for testing;

- 
- Inquiring with the Social Media Administrator of HPD to gain an understanding of the processes / controls in place at HPD for E.O. 1-18 and obtaining supporting documentation for testing; and
  - Documenting results in an audit report, detailing identified findings and recommendations.

### ***Summary of Results***

Based on inquiries and detailed testing performed, the Audit Team noted that the Mayor's Communications Office and HPD have various controls in place to ensure the City and the department are in compliance with the policy. We noted that the Mayor's Communications Office has general oversight of the policy and provides the final approval of departmental social media requests. Based on supporting documentation reviewed during testing, we verified that the Mayor's Communications Office has established a thorough process to review and approve departmental social media sites.

The Audit Team determined that HPD has appropriate controls in place to ensure the department complies with the social media policy. Further, we noted HPD has an effective process in place for monitoring the department social media site, which involves the Social Media System Administrator, Public Information Officers and the social media third party monitoring company SMC4 (Social Media Capture, Control, Communication, Compliance).

We identified two (2) opportunities to improve both the design and operating effectiveness of the Social Media Policy and related procedures. Below is a listing of observations identified during the audit:

1. The City of Houston does not archive information that is posted on its social media sites;
2. Although the HPD Facebook site currently includes language required under sections 7.5.1 and 7.5.2 of EO 1-18, the site does not currently include the social media disclaimers required under section 7.4.1 of EO 1-18 on the department Facebook site.

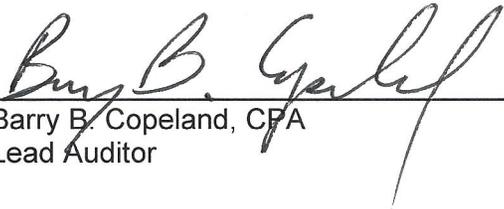
We also noted that a best practice in policy development is to identify within the policy the appropriate policy contact information so that individual readers and users of policies and procedures can contact responsible parties with questions they may have regarding the policy and/or to propose enhancements. While E.O. 1-18 does not include contact information within the policy, the Mayor's Office of Communications has disseminated appropriate contact information for policy reference. AD was provided the following comments:

“ . . . contact information as well as periodic email communications are provided independently of the policy to all social media” personnel in the city. This recommendation will be taken under advisement for consideration in the event there is an update of the policy.”



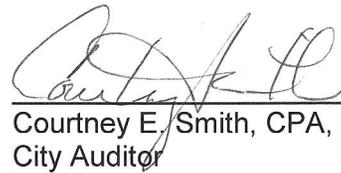
## ***Acknowledgement and Signatures***

The Audit Team would like to thank the management of the Mayor's Office of Communications, the Houston Police Department and the City of Houston Legal Department for their cooperation, time and efforts throughout the course of the engagement. We would also like to thank the management and staff of Protiviti for their expertise, research, and data analysis which contributed to the evidence contained in this report.



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Barry B. Copeland, CPA  
Lead Auditor



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Courtney E. Smith, CPA, CIA, CFE  
City Auditor

# Detailed Findings

Detailed descriptions of the risks, controls, findings, and recommendations identified during the audit are organized within this section.

Risk	#	Findings / Recommendations	Priority	Mgmt Action Plan
<p>The City's actions may result in non-compliance with record retention laws and regulations and may subject the City to potential State fines and/or penalties.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p><b><u>Finding:</u></b>            The Houston Police Department (HPD) does not archive information that is posted on its Facebook site, as required by Section 9.1 of EO 1-18, Records Retention and Public Information. The guidance requires that "Departments maintaining a City social media site or using social media tools shall preserve records on a City server for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible." Furthermore, a lack of archival and retention of social media content may violate Section 441.158 of the Texas Government Code, Texas State Library and Archive Commission.</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation:</u></b>            We recommend the Mayor's Communications Office confer with the City Legal Office to verify the appropriate application of Section 9.1 of EO 1-18 to City social media sites and confirm if the information posted on the City social media sites, such as Facebook, must be archived by the City Departments. If confirmed with Legal, recommend the Mayor's Communications Office communicate to the HPD Social Media Administrator and the Social Media Administrators for other departments not currently archiving their department social media sites to proceed with archiving social media site records on a City server for the required retention period in a format as required by Section 9 of EO 1-18. Additionally, the department Social media Administrators should destroy, transfer, and otherwise dispose of records in accordance with records disposition schedules.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p><b><u>Management Response:</u></b>            Partially concur - conversations with the Legal Department have already occurred</p> <p><b><u>Additional Management Comments:</u></b>            On November 20, 2014 The Legal Office provided these additional comments:</p> <p><i>The Mayor's Office of Communication conferred with the City Legal Department and determined that it is appropriately archiving data from source documents placed on City social media sites. According to the Legal Department, the archiving requirement is content specific and subject to various exceptions. Legal further advises that document retention requirements are content specific and subject to various exceptions. The requirements and exceptions would not require a blanket rule to preserve all content on all departmental social media sites.</i></p> <p><b><u>Estimated Implementation Date:</u></b>            N/A because the recommendation has been taken under advisement at this time.</p> <p><b><u>Assessment of Management Response</u></b></p>



			<p>The Audit Division agrees with The Mayor's Office of Communication's commitment to maintaining a document archiving capability for city social media sites. The Mayor's Office of Communication provided the City Legal Office comments on November 21, 2014 and the Legal Office confirmed its concurrence on the same date. We consider the actions required by the City Office of Communication satisfied.</p>
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# Detailed Findings

Risk	#	Findings / Recommendations	Priority	Mgmt Action Plan
<p>Lack of disclaimers can expose the department to legal ramifications.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p><b><u>Finding:</u></b>            Although the HPD Facebook site includes the required statements outlined in Sections 7.5.1 and 7.5.2 of EO 1-18, which indicates that the site is not a public forum and indicates that the City monitors the site and reserves the right to delete inappropriate comments, the site does not currently include the required disclaimer text noted under Section 7.4.1 of EO 1-18.</p> <p>HPD uses “departmental website” in reference to the department’s “social media sites.” EO 1-18 is not applicable to websites, only to social media sites. The Mayor’s Office of Communications sometimes uses the word “website” to refer to the social media sites. The disclaimer text noted under section 7.4.1 should be included on HPD’s Facebook site. The disclaimer in section 7.4.1 is not included on the HPD Facebook site nor the departmental website.</p> <p><b><u>Recommendation:</u></b>            We recommend the HPD Social Media Administrator include the following required disclaimer statement on the HPD Facebook site per Section 7.4.1 of EO 1-18:</p> <p>“HPD is a department of the City of Houston, www.houstontx.gov. This site is intended to serve as a mechanism for communication between the public and HPD on the listed topics. Following or “friending” persons or organizations is not an endorsement by the City and is only intended as a means of communication. All content of this site and all comments submitted to this page and its list of fans are public and are subject to disclosure pursuant to the Texas Public Information Act. Public information requests must be directed to HPD’s public information officer.”</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p><b><u>Managements Response:</u></b>            Concur.</p> <p><b><u>Estimated Implementation Date:</u></b>            The Controller’s recommendation has been communicated to HPD.</p> <p>On December 4, 2014 HPD’s Social Media Administrator indicated concurrence with the finding and revised the HPD Facebook page to add the language required by EO 1-18 Section 7.4.1 to the website.</p> <p><b><u>Assessment of Management Response</u></b>            The Management Response provided by the Mayor’s Office of Communication and the HPD fully addresses issues identified in finding 2.</p>

# **APPENDIX**

## **Executive Order 1-18 Policy on Use of Social Media**

(Policy at December 18, 2014)

Please refer to the City of Houston Website for the current version of Executive Order 1-18



# CITY OF HOUSTON

## Executive Order

Subject: **Policy on Use of Social Media**

E. O. No:

**1-18**

Effective Date:

**January 4, 2011**

### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 City of Houston departments may use social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to reach a broader audience. While the City's website ([www.houstontx.gov](http://www.houstontx.gov)) is the City's primary Internet presence, the City recognizes that, when used appropriately, social media may be useful in furthering the goals of the City and the missions of its departments.
- 1.2 This Executive Order provides policies, standards, and procedures for the use of social media sites. All official City presences on social media sites or services are considered extensions of the City's information networks and are governed by the responsibilities set forth in this and related policies and procedures (such as E.O. 1-48, Policy on Information Technology Security and A.P. 8-2, Procedure on Electronic Mail Communications) and in the City's standards of conduct, Chapter 14, Section 14-183 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinances. Violations of this policy shall be considered misconduct and may result in discipline up to and including indefinite suspension/termination.
- 1.3 Additionally, the City recognizes that many City employees use social media tools such as Facebook in their personal lives. Therefore, this policy provides guidelines for City employees when they communicate on social media sites as a private citizen.

### 2. OBJECTIVE

- 2.1 To maintain the integrity of the City's presence in social media and to ensure that social media is used appropriately and within City guidelines and policies.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

**City Social Media Sites** – Those pages, sections or posting locations in social media websites established or maintained by an employee of the City authorized to do so as part of the employee's job and that are used to communicate with the public on City business.

**Social Media** – Internet-based technology communications tools with a focus on immediacy, interactivity, user participation, and information sharing. These venues include social networking sites, forums, weblogs (blogs, vlogs, microblogs), online chat sites, and video/photo posting sites or any other such similar output or format. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Approved:

Date Approved:

01/04/2011

Page 1 of 6

**Social media administrators** – City employees expressly designated by their department directors to maintain oversight of their department’s social media sites. A social media administrator’s authority is limited to actions that directly reflect guidance from the social media administrator’s departmental director and the policies and procedures of the social media administrator’s department and the City.

#### 4. SCOPE

- 4.1 This directive applies to all City employees, including contract employees and volunteers for the City of Houston when working with social media tools on behalf of the City and applies to the extent specified herein with regard to personal social media sites; provided, however, that this executive order does not apply to social media sites of the City’s elected officials used solely for campaign or personal purposes.

#### 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 Each department director is responsible for implementing the provisions of this directive and designating a social media administrator.
- 5.2 Each departmental social media administrator is responsible for oversight of the department’s social media tools and shall:
  - 5.2.1 Review all requests to establish official City departmental social media sites and recommend approval or denial to the Mayor’s Communications Office. Social media administrators shall review social media sites or tools that have already been established in their departments to ensure that they are in compliance with this policy and shall submit a request for approval of such sites in accordance with Subsection 6.4 of this executive order.
  - 5.2.2 Ensure the department’s social media sites are regularly maintained and kept current.
  - 5.2.3 Review information posted to the department’s social media sites to ensure the content is appropriate, professional, and consistent with the City’s policies and the purpose for which the site exists. Frequent review of sites that provide opportunity for comment or other interaction is essential.
  - 5.2.4 Keep the department’s director informed of the department’s social networking tools and activities.
- 5.3 City employees whose official duties include creating or posting information to a City social media site are responsible for ensuring that such information is accurate, professionally presented, respectful, relevant, and on topic with the department’s mission. Care must be taken to ensure that grammar and spelling are correct. Mistakes must be corrected quickly.

#### 6. GENERAL GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT OF CITY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

- 6.1 City social media sites may contain information that represents or appears to represent the City’s position on policy issues or other matters affecting City business and/or the positions of the City’s leaders. Thus, the Mayor’s Communications Office has general

oversight of all City social media sites. In disaster or emergency situations, the Mayor's Communications Office may assume control of departmental social media to ensure that communications are managed appropriately.

- 6.2 Each departmental social media site must be approved by the department's social media administrator. Requests to establish departmental social media sites must contain an explanation of the business necessity for establishing such a site and will be submitted to the department's social media administrator who will review and recommend approval or denial of the request to the Mayor's Communications Office. Requests shall be made in the format found in Appendix A. A department may have more than one social media site upon a showing that multiple sites will accomplish the City's goals in the use of social media.
- 6.3 For social media sites and tools in existence at the time this executive order is promulgated, departmental social media administrators shall submit a request for approval for each of their department's social media sites and tools to the Mayor's Communications Office. Such requests must be submitted within 90 days of the date this Executive Order is promulgated unless an extension is approved in writing by the Mayor's Communications Office.
- 6.4 Persons responsible for setting up or maintaining City social media sites shall provide each administrator's access, login, and password information to the following: their departmental social media administrator, their departmental ITD personnel, the IT Department's Infrastructure Services Security Administrator, and the Mayor's Communications Office. Any changes in administrator access, login or password information must be reported immediately to all such personnel.
  - 6.4.1 Social media administrators and City employees authorized as part of their official duties to post information, make comments, and send messages to the public on their department's Facebook page shall set up a Facebook account to facilitate transparency in communications.
  - 6.4.2 Such Facebook account shall:
    - 6.4.2.1 Contain the administrator's or employee's name.
    - 6.4.2.2 Be created using the administrator or employee's City email address.
    - 6.4.2.3 Be set up so that the page does not allow "wall posts" or "friending" the administrator or employee.
    - 6.4.2.4 Be used solely for City business in connection with their department's Facebook page, and shall not allow comments or "friending" the administrator or employee.
    - 6.4.2.5 Comply with section 7.0 of this directive.

## 7. DESIGN AND CONTENT OF CITY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

- 7.1 Design elements (logos, background, images) should be appropriate to the subject matter and consistent with the City's design guidelines found at [www.houstontx.gov/homepage.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/homepage.html).
- 7.2 Social media sites must contain a link to both the City website ([www.houstontx.gov](http://www.houstontx.gov)), and the City departmental website. Each City and departmental website shall contain a clear statement of the purpose and subject matter of social media sites.

- 7.3 Departments will use proper grammar and where possible, avoid jargon. Social media tools are often more casual than most communication tools but all City social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, shall represent the City appropriately and professionally.
- 7.4 The following statement shall be included on each departmental website following the City department or program description of the purpose of the social media site or tool:
- 7.4.1 [Insert name of department or program] is a department [or program] of the City of Houston, [www.houstontx.gov](http://www.houstontx.gov). This site is intended to serve as a mechanism for communication between the public and [department/program] on the listed topics. Following or “friending” persons or organizations is not an endorsement by the City and is only intended as a means of communication. All content of this site and all comments submitted to this page and its list of fans are public and are subject to disclosure pursuant to the Texas Public Information Act. Public information requests must be directed to the [department’s] public information officer.
- 7.4.2 Departments may use a departmental logo in their social media tools. Where appropriate for a particular site, social media pages will include the City’s logo. Page names should be descriptive of the department/division. City departments will create “pages” in Facebook, rather than “groups.” For “type” description, “government” will be used.
- 7.4.3 Departmental Twitter account biographies will read “[City of Houston, Department name]” and contain a link to the department’s website. Where possible, departmental user names should begin with Houston or HOU (HoustonPolice, HOUPWE, for example). The department’s website shall contain the following statement: “When the City ‘follows’ or ‘friends’ a third party Twitter account, it is only for the purpose of facilitating communications and does not imply City endorsement of any such account.”
- 7.4.4 All content-sharing activities, such as video-sharing, shall be in good taste, appropriate, and consistent with the City’s policies.
- 7.5 Comments from the public are allowed on the City’s social media sites and shall be monitored daily to ensure the comments meet certain criteria; the City’s social media sites must be structured narrowly to focus discussions on a particular interest of the City rather than creating a “public forum.” Social media web sites that allow comments must contain the following text on the social media site or must include a link to the location on the departmental website containing the following text:
- 7.5.1 “Comments. The purpose of this site is to present matters of public interest in the City of Houston, Texas. We encourage you to submit comments, but please note that this is not a public forum.
- 7.5.2 Comments posted to this page will be monitored. The City reserves the right to delete comments that: contain false information, obscene language or sexual content, threaten or defame any person or organization, support or oppose political candidates, political organizations or ballot propositions, promote illegal activity, commercial services or products, infringe on copyrights or trademarks or are not topically related to the particular posting.”

7.6 Information that is proprietary, subject to the attorney-client privilege or state or federal privacy laws, and information not subject to disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act shall not be posted on any City social media site. Each department's social media administrator shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with this rule.

## 8. SECURITY AND PRIVACY

8.1 Applications (such as streaming video, music, photos, subscriptions to RSS feeds) that may be useful to a City social media site's mission can cause clutter and security risks. An application should only be used to serve a City purpose and add to the user experience, and only if it comes from a trusted source and has gone through the approval process outlined in Section 6 of this Executive Order. An application may be removed at any time if it causes a security breach or contains a virus.

8.2 Social media sites are hosted by third parties and are governed by such parties' privacy policies. Additionally, the City's social media sites are governed by the City's privacy policy, [www.houstontx.gov/privacy.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/privacy.html).

## 9. RECORDS RETENTION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

9.1 Records Retention. Pursuant to Section 441.158 of the Texas Government Code, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission promulgates records retention schedules for records of local governments. Each City department has a schedule and policy for retention of its records. The retention period for a record depends on the content of that record, regardless of the medium in which it is maintained. Departments maintaining a City social media site or using social media tools shall preserve records on a City server for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible. Further, departments will destroy, transfer, or otherwise dispose of records in accordance with records disposition schedules.

9.2 Open Records. City of Houston social media sites are subject to the Texas Public Information Act (TPIA), found in Ch. 552, Texas Government Code. Content in City social media, including a list of subscribers and posted communications, is public record. The department maintaining the site is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public information requests for information on social media. Content shall be maintained in an accessible format so that it can be produced in response to a request. Difficulty in accessing the information does not excuse compliance with the TPIA. Users of City social media sites shall be notified that public information requests must be directed to the relevant departmental public information officer.

## 10. APPROPRIATE EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

10.1 Employees assigned to maintain City social media sites shall adhere to the principles articulated in this policy. Employees shall not work on departmental social media sites during off-duty hours unless specifically pre-approved to do so in writing on a day-to-day basis by the employee's supervisor. All such time worked outside the employee's normal work scheduled shall be reported and included in the employee's 40-hour work week. Any work in excess of 40 hours will be paid overtime as required by law and City policy.

- 10.2 Consistent with the City's policies on use of the City's telephone and email systems, incidental and occasional personal use of social media is permitted during work hours provided it is very limited in duration and does not have a detrimental effect on employee productivity.
- 10.3 City resources, work time, social media tools, and a City employee's official position shall not be used for personal profit or business interests or to participate in political activity. For example, a building inspector may not use the City's logo (or its likeness), email, or work time to promote a side business as a plumber.
- 10.4 Personal or business venture social media account names shall not be tied to the City. For example, CityofHoustonCop would not be an appropriate personal account name.
- 10.5 If commenting on City business, employees should use a disclaimer which establishes that their comments represent their own opinions and do not represent those of the City of Houston.
- 10.6 Employees may not attribute personal statements or opinions to the City when engaging in private blogging or postings on social media sites.
- 10.7 Employees, City contract employees, and City volunteers shall not use their City email account or password in conjunction with a personal social networking site.
- 10.8 City employees, contract employees for the City, and City volunteers shall not post images, files, or text depicting City property, equipment, or personnel in any manner that would adversely affect the reputation of the City or a City department.
- 10.9 The following guidelines apply to personal communications using various forms of social
  - 10.9.1 Use common sense when using social media sites. Remember that what you write is public, may be public for a long time, and may spread to large audiences. Refrain from posting information that you would not want your supervisor or other employees to read or that you would be embarrassed to see in the newspaper or on television.
  - 10.9.2 The City expects its employees to be truthful, courteous, and respectful toward supervisors, co-workers, citizens, customers, and other persons associated with the City. Employees shall not engage in name-calling or personal attacks or other such demeaning behavior.

## 11. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

- 11.1 Boards or commissions that wish to initiate the use of official social media sites should do so by formal action of the board or commission and must follow requirements for approval and governance outlined in this policy.
- 11.2 Under the Texas Open Meetings Act, individual members of a board or commission covered by such Act are prohibited from participating in postings or discussion threads on social media sites created and maintained by the board or commission of which they are a member.

## 14. ATTACHMENT

- 14.1 Attachment A - Application for Approval of Social Media Site/Tool

**Attachment A**  
**Application for Approval of Social Media**  
**Site/Tool**



## Appendix A – Social Media Executive Order 1-18

### Social Media Site Proposal (SMSP)

Pursuant to the City’s Policy on the Use of Social Media, Executive Order No. 1-18, a SMSP must be completed for each type of social media site/activity, and must be reviewed by your department’s social media administrator before forwarding to the Mayor’s Communication’s Office for final approval or denial. While the City’s website ([www.houstontx.gov](http://www.houstontx.gov)) is the City’s primary internet presence, the City recognizes that, when used appropriately, social media may be useful in furthering the goals of the City and the missions of its departments.

**Your Name:**

**Your Department/Division, and Contact Information:**

**Date:**

### SMSP Details – Provide Responses on Page 2 – SMSP Outline

1. **Project name:** Identify the type of social media communication (Facebook Fan Page, Twitter, etc.) and the name of page proposed.
2. **Key theme/message, and how it furthers the goals of the City:** What is the theme or key message you want to communicate? What is the “big idea” you want your audience to remember, and how does it further the City’s goals or mission?
3. **Audience:** Who are your audiences?
  - Primary
  - Secondary
4. **Audience needs, concerns, interests:** What are the needs, concerns or interests of your audience that you must take into account in creating this social media? These deal with what’s already on their minds, or the context for this message.
5. **Desired action:** For each audience group, what is the ultimate action or response that you want from them?
  - Awareness?
  - Attitude formation/reinforcement/change?
  - Action?



6. **Key facts:** What specific information is important for them to know and *must* be contained in your message?
7. **Social Media Administrator:** Your department director is responsible for designating a social media administrator for your department, who will oversee your social media site.

Who from your department should serve as spokesperson or be featured in your message?

Who will maintain your social media site?

**Social Media Site Proposal Outline – Provide Complete Responses for Each Item**

1. **Project name:**
2. **Key theme/message, and how it furthers the goals of the City:**
3. **Audience:**
4. **Audience’s needs, concerns, interests:**
5. **Desired action from audience:**
6. **Key facts:**
7. **Social Media Administrator, spokesperson, and featured person(s):**

**To be completed by your department’s social media administrator:**

I am the \_\_\_\_\_ Department’s Social Media Administrator. I have reviewed this Social Media Site Proposal. I recommend:

\_\_\_\_\_ Approval

\_\_\_\_\_ Denial

\_\_\_\_\_  
Social Media Administrator/Date