

2023-2025

Town of Prosper Communications and Community Engagement Plan



Revised April 2024

Town of Prosper Communications and Community Engagement Plan 2023-2025

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Current State of Communications and Community Engagement	3
Communication Structure	4
Target Audiences and Stakeholders	6
Communication Channels	6
Community Engagement.....	10
Town-wide Training and Support	10
Policies and Procedures.....	11
Performance Measures	11
Five-Year Staffing Projection	12
Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Tactics.....	13
Social Media Policy and User Guidelines.....	Appendix A
Media Relations Policy.....	Appendix B
Photography and Video Recording Policy.....	Appendix C
Crisis Communications Policy	Appendix D
Brand Guide	Appendix E

Executive Summary

The 2023-2025 Town of Prosper Communications and Community Engagement Plan outlines goals and actions that will assist the Town of Prosper with informing, engaging, and connecting residents with their Town government. This Plan is an administrative document of the Town of Prosper, Texas establishing communications guidelines and expectations applicable to all Town employees who are under the direction and supervision of the Town Manager. While this document should serve as a blueprint for all messaging endeavors by the Town, it shall not be mandated for elected officials or any person not under the direct supervision of the Town Manager.

The Town recognizes the need for open and two-way communication, particularly as it pertains to providing information, listening to residents, gathering feedback and expanding the use of technology in providing relevant, accurate, and timely information. This Plan is intended to serve as a guide to achieve the Town's communication and community engagement goals over the next three years.

The Communications and Community Engagement Plan is a living document intended to be adapted and enhanced as the Town continues to evolve, and as goals are achieved. This Plan is expected to change to meet emerging needs, and as communication technology and platforms for community engagement continue to advance. This Plan addresses the changing needs of Prosper's communication strategy, building upon the Town's communication strengths, expanding opportunities for more effective community engagement, and improving internal communication. Through this Plan, the Town will enhance how and when it communicates with all target audiences.

The Plan memorializes current communication and community engagement efforts and provides a guide for the implementation of future efforts in response to changing goals and priorities, emerging communication trends, new concepts, and opportunities to communicate with the Town's target audiences. As it is written today, the Plan is a snapshot of the Town's current communication and community engagement goals and provides a unified approach to achieve those goals. The information in this Plan was used to develop a set of Goals, Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics that will guide staff's efforts over the next three years.

Current State of Communications and Community Engagement

Guiding Principles

The Town of Prosper recognizes that good communication is a fundamental obligation of a responsive and transparent government. Through consistent, accurate, and timely communication, the Town of Prosper can increase resident participation in local government, enhance community pride, and instill a high level of public confidence. The Town recognizes that having a Communications and Community Engagement Plan in place that outlines a framework for effective communication will foster an engaged, informed community.

The Town of Prosper Communications and Community Engagement Plan is guided by the following principles that support effective municipal communication. These principles will help coordinate and manage the communication activities of Town employees related to official Town business in order to ensure accuracy, consistency, and timeliness in relaying information to employees, departments, members of the media, Prosper residents, and the diverse information needs of the general public.

1. Tell Our Own Story

It is the Town's responsibility to share Town-related information with residents, rather than rely on others to interpret the organization's actions, issues, and decisions. The Town's Communications staff and the communication channels that are utilized will be the most accurate and reliable sources for Town government information. When residents are well-informed, they can participate more effectively in their government and make the best decisions about issues impacting their lives.

2. Proactive vs. Reactive

The Town must take a proactive, coordinated approach to initiate communication and disseminate information, rather than simply responding to issues and events as they occur. The Town of Prosper believes in building and maintaining positive relationships and partnerships between the Town government, residents, businesses, community organizations, and other stakeholders to achieve a high level of community engagement and awareness.

3. Centralized Approach

This Plan will establish a uniform procedure for messaging that will ensure accuracy, Town-wide coordination, and timely responses for any situation within the Town involving Town personnel or officials. The Town's Communications staff is responsible for leading all public messaging efforts for the Town, maintaining the Town's official web presence via social media platforms and the Town's website(s), and to engage with local, state, and national credentialed media outlets.

The Town's Communications staff serve as liaisons to coordinate media responses with designated Town staff serving as subject matter experts, and as a resource to support staff in their communication efforts. Within the centralized system, the Communications staff will provide

a unified communication system that supports open, inclusive government and provides all Town employees with the training necessary to communicate information effectively and accurately about each department's programs and services.

4. Open, Two-Way Communication

The Town of Prosper believes in providing open and transparent government services, ensuring that information is shared throughout the community and within the organization, emphasizing two-way informational flow and fostering positive dialogue. Communications staff will be responsive to comments and inquiries, and communication will be presented in a way that allows for productive conversation and feedback.

5. Consistent Messaging

This plan supports, reinforces, and reflects a key principle in the Town Council's Strategic Visioning Priorities, "Continue to provide excellent municipal services," emphasizing the concept that the Town of Prosper's primary directive is to serve its residents. Communications and Community Engagement staff will provide a unified message that effectively supports the mission and goals of the Town of Prosper government, as established by the Town Council.

6. Build Relationships

True community engagement occurs when relationships are created between government and individuals, or groups of individuals. Collaboration and the identification of shared values help build relationships. This leads to increased trust in government, better communication, and improved civic infrastructure, all of which can be leveraged to solve problems and improve the quality of life in a community. Communities solve problems when people are willing to trust each other, talk to each other, listen to each other, and help each other.

7. Never Stop Learning

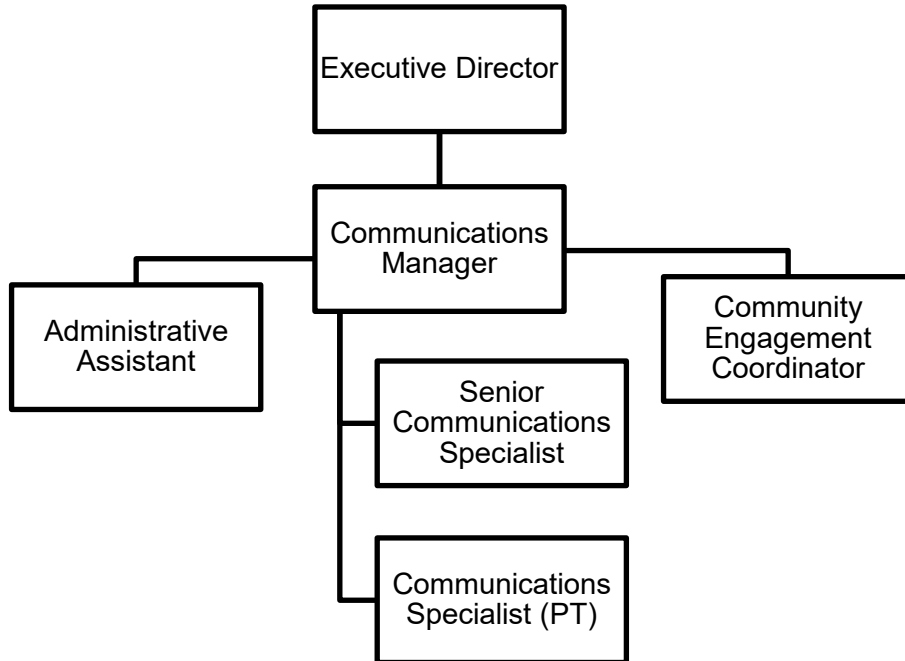
For effective communication and community engagement to occur, the Town staff must consistently look for new ways to reach the Town's target audiences using their preferred communication channels. That means staying informed on the latest use of technology, social media platforms and communication channels, and finding new ways to engage individuals and groups of individuals. Using digital analytics and other performance measures, the Town can ensure that messaging and engagement efforts remain relevant and effective.

Communications Structure

The Town of Prosper Communications and Community Engagement staff is comprised of the Executive Director, who directs the efforts of a full-time Communications Manager. The Manager is responsible for overseeing the Town's communication efforts, coordinating the communication strategy, and implementing the Communications portion of the Plan. A full-time Senior Communications Specialist is responsible for maintaining the Town's social media platforms, takes photographs and video at Town events, and prepares analytic reports of communication activities. The Part-Time Communications Specialist collaborates with staff members to develop graphic designs and special marketing projects. A Full-Time Community Engagement Coordinator helps coordinate the Town's community engagement activities, assists with maintaining content on the Town's website, and manages the myProsper mobile app. An

Administrative Assistant serves as the Receptionist for Town Hall, manages reservations for the Community Room, and handles various administrative and clerical duties for the department.

Communications & Community Engagement Organizational Chart



This Plan applies to Town officials and staff who have been designated as core communicators for the Town. All official communication to the media and any outside channels should be routed through the Communications Department. Creating a structure for those individuals who have been designated as core communicators enables the Town to provide consistent and clear messages. The Town has built a team of core communicators who are primarily responsible for sharing the Town's messages with the public and the media.

Town of Prosper Core Communicators

- Town Manager
- Communications Staff
- Police Chief or designee
- Fire Chief or designee
- Mayor and Town Council

Target Audiences and Stakeholders

A key component of any communication plan is to identify partners in the conversation. The Town of Prosper considers the following groups and entities as community stakeholders:

Internal Stakeholders:

- Town Employees
- Town Council
- Town Board, Commission and Committee Members and other appointed positions

External Stakeholders:

- Residents
- Homeowners Associations
- Visitors
- Media
- Prosper ISD
- Prosper Chamber of Commerce
- Prosper Business Community
- Developers and Development Professionals
- Community and Service Organizations
- Neighboring Cities and Towns
- Local and State Government Agencies
- Elected Officials
- Future/Potential Homeowners and Businesses

Communication Channels

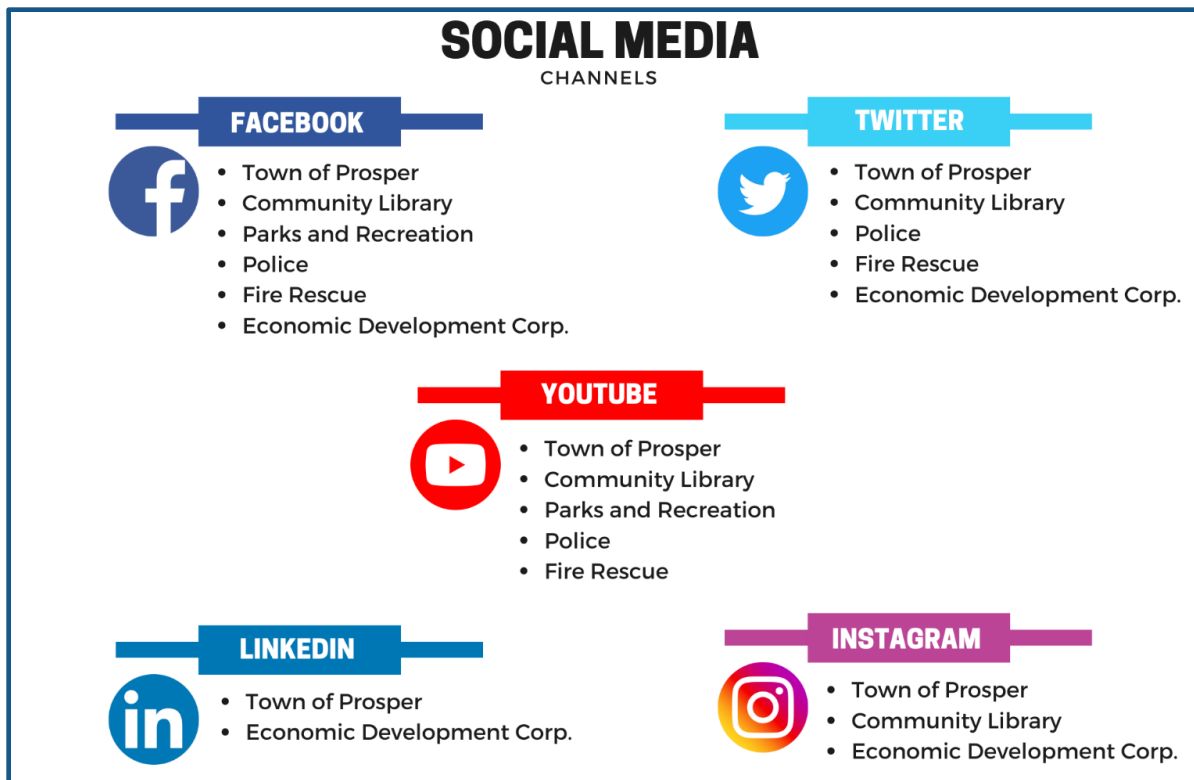
The primary channels used in providing information to target audiences is through various forms of digital communication and media, including the Town website, social media, and email. To engage a diverse audience, however, the Town utilizes multiple communication formats to reach target audiences. Listed below are the communication channels currently employed by the Town.

Website

The Town of Prosper website, www.prospertx.gov, is the Town's main portal for information. It is the responsibility of Department Heads and/or designated personnel to review content periodically to ensure information is current and accurate. The Town maintains a separate website for the annual Christmas Festival, www.prosperchristmas.org, which is utilized to market the festival to sponsors and vendors and provide information about festival activities to the public. The Town conducted a complete redesign of the Town website in 2023 to improve the user experience, enhance interaction, and ensure ADA compliance.

Social Media Platforms

To address the rapidly changing manner in which residents communicate and obtain information, the Town makes appropriate use of various forms of social media to communicate with residents in ways they find most convenient. Currently, the Town manages 21 different social media accounts across seven different platforms: Facebook, X, Instagram, Nextdoor, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Pinterest. While the Town maintains a primary page, several Town departments also maintain their own accounts in order to cater specifically to the interests of their respective audiences. Information is shared between accounts when appropriate, depending on the nature of the content. New accounts may be added as audiences continue to grow. Content is customized to the audience, as different platforms have different audiences with different interests.



Video Content

The popularity of live and recorded video content has increased dramatically on social media platforms, particularly on Facebook and Instagram. Trends show that there is a much higher response rate on social media platforms for video content, as opposed to photographs and graphics. In response to this trend, Communications staff and departmental communicators continue to produce a wide variety of promotional video content to keep residents interested and engaged. The Communications staff has the capability of producing high-quality videos in-house, and the staff utilizes a professional video production company to produce more complex projects.

Digital and Print Publications

The cost effectiveness of digital distribution versus print publications is an ongoing factor in any communication strategy. In most cases, digital distribution of information is the preferred and

predominant method, though direct mail may be used for specific projects. The Communications staff assists departments with the development of digital and printed publications and promotional materials on an as-needed basis, including but not limited to newsletters, flyers, posters, postcards, brochures, calendars, social media graphics and infographics. These materials are used to help promote and market the Town's various events, programs, and activities.

MyProsper Mobile App

Residents can use the Town's mobile app to request services, access Town information, and sign up for resident newsletters. Service requests are automatically routed to appropriate staff, and residents are provided with status updates until the request is resolved.

Media Relations

Developing and maintaining positive working relationships with local media outlets is an important way to ensure that all aspects of Town programs, services, and activities are being accurately shared with the public. The Communications staff is responsible for producing media releases, monitoring media coverage, and facilitating media inquiries and interviews.

Crisis Communications

The Communications staff assists public safety and emergency management staff with crisis communication efforts to ensure that residents are informed in a timely, consistent, and transparent manner in times of crisis. The Town has retained a communications consultant for on-call crisis communications services should the need arise. Town Council members and Communications Staff receive ongoing training in crisis communication to maintain readiness in the event of a crisis. Town residents may subscribe to the Town's Smart911/RAVE Emergency Alert System to receive urgent notifications regarding emergencies, storm warnings, or other related information distributed via social media and/or text if the resident chooses to opt in. A Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) is maintained through the Town's Office of Emergency Management. See the Town of Prosper Crisis Communications Policy in Appendix D for more information.

Internal Communication Methods

An effective internal communications system ensures that the Town Council and Town employees not only receive important information but are regularly updated on the Town's progress toward meeting its goals and objectives. When information flows freely up and down the communication chain, employees are more likely to feel that their opinions are heard, their contributions matter, and they are valued members of the organization. Good communication builds trust by fostering transparency, and dispelling rumors and misinformation. Internal communication also provides an opportunity to reward and reinforce members of the staff who demonstrate exceptional performance and customer service and contribute to a positive organizational culture. The following internal communication strategies are currently utilized by the Town:

- Weekly Update – Town Manager's weekly newsletter distributed each Friday to the Town Council and Executive Staff focusing on events, news, and major project updates that occurred during the week.
- The Week That Was – employee version of the Weekly Update.

- Employee Edition – monthly e-newsletter focused on news and information of particular interest to employees.
- Town-wide Email – employee events, announcements, policy updates and other important information is distributed via a Town-wide distribution list. Information is typically printed and displayed for those employees with limited access to email.
- Informational Meetings – the Human Resources Department and the Town Manager's Office schedule informational meetings on topics of particular importance to employees, such as Open Enrollment Meetings, and Town Manager Briefings.
- Employee Events – annual events such as the annual Employee Appreciation Luncheon and other employee engagement events provide an opportunity for employees to build relationships with each other, and for Town leadership to interact with staff in a fun, informal setting.
- Digital Signage – monitors in the employee break room, the Town Hall common areas and the Police Station show upcoming events and other important information.
- Town Manager Briefings – the Town Manager addresses the entire staff at least twice per year with updates on Town-related matters including the Strategic Plan, Budget, policy updates and major accomplishments.
- Mayor's Minute – the Mayor records a video message after each Council meeting summarizing any significant discussions or action taken.
- Prosper THRIVES – the Town's Management Team and Employee Engagement Committee conducted a facilitated exercise in 2021 to identify the Town's organizational core values: Teamwork, Heart, Respect, Integrity, Vision, Excellence and Service. The Communications staff assisted with the development of a logo and marketing materials to help transmit the core values throughout the organization.



Advertising

The Town publishes notices for public hearings, elections, bid openings, and other legal notices in compliance with state law and the Town Charter. The Town may utilize paid advertising to promote specific events, programs, and projects. Revenue-generating departments, such as the Parks and Recreation Department, may purchase advertising for promotional purposes and as recognition for sponsors and partners for Town events. All paid advertising other than legally required public notices must be coordinated through the Communications and Community Engagement Department.

Community Engagement

Community Engagement is an integral part of building a community of active and engaged residents. Individuals and groups of individuals participating in the local government decision-making process results in improved delivery and quality of Town services. The Town can also improve the quality of life in the community by providing opportunities for residents to build relationships with Town officials, and with each other. The Town is committed to providing a variety of ways for residents to be involved in promoting public values, addressing areas of public concern, and enhancing the quality of life in Prosper. Town Council and staff members regularly attend and participate in Town events and activities in order to engage and interact with residents, ensuring that all residents feel included in the community, and all voices have an opportunity to be heard.

Community Engagement Activities

- HOA Presidents Meetings
- Citizens Academy
- New Resident Mixer
- State of the Community
- Presentations to HOAs and service groups
- Balcony Receptions
- Mayor's Youth Advisory Council
- Mayor's Teen Government Academy
- Prosper Partners in Faith
- Participation in Town-wide events

Communications and Community Engagement staff assist with the coordination and implementation of the events listed here, in addition to preparing presentations for the Mayor, Town Council, and Town Manager for public meetings. The staff is also responsible for assisting all Departments with website updates, monitoring the MyProsper mobile app for service requests, and coordinating reservations for the Town Hall Community Room by the public.

The Town Council appointed a Community Engagement Committee (CEC) in December 2020. The CEC was established for the purpose of providing residents an opportunity to enhance the Town's interaction with the public. The Community Engagement Committee's scope and purpose include acting in an advisory capacity to the Town Council regarding Community Engagement activities, serving as a focus group for selected projects and programs, acting as social media ambassadors, and participating in community events to help share information and facilitate effective communication between the Town and residents.

The Town's Communications and Community Engagement staff will continue to seek new ways to connect with individuals and groups to ensure residents have multiple options to engage with the Town.

Town-Wide Training and Support

Town Communications and Community Engagement staff will serve as an ongoing resource to departmental communicators. Educational programs such as media and communication training will be provided on an as-needed basis to ensure the Town's communicators have the skills needed to convey consistent messaging. Staff members are available to assist departmental

communicators and staff with the development of content, talking points, interview preparation, and communication best practices to effectively convey information about Town programs, events, and activities.

In 2020, the Communications staff implemented a help ticket system with the assistance of the IT Department. Help tickets may be entered by staff from any Town department using the same platform as an IT help ticket. The ticket system allows Communications staff to manage and track requests from departments for website updates, graphic design assistance, social media posts, media releases, or help with online forms.

Policies and Procedures

The Town's Communications and Community Engagement policies are located in Chapter 18 of the Town of Prosper Administrative Regulations. All communications policies are included in the Appendix section of this Plan. Additional sections may be added if deemed necessary by the Communications and Community Engagement staff.

Performance Measures

Monthly Communications Report

The Communications and Community Engagement staff compile a report each month to measure the effectiveness of communication efforts. Without effective data and statistics, it is difficult to know whether the Town's communication efforts are reaching the desired audience or having the intended effect. The report tracks the output of each communication channel, such as the number of mobile app service requests and the number of media releases generated. The report also tracks the number of social media followers on each platform, the number of e-newsletter subscribers, community engagement opportunities, and mobile app downloads. Website data provides insight on which pages are visited the most and the amount of time visitors spend on the website. The report shows the number of Communication Help Tickets submitted by each department and highlights selected user-generated content. The report is a helpful tool in tracking the success of the various communication channels.

Five-Year Staffing Projection

The chart below outlines the projected need for additional staff resources over the next five years in order to achieve the Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Tactics outlined in the next section of this plan. Implementation of the key components of this plan are dependent upon additional staff resources approved through the annual budget process.

Job Title	FY 2023-2024	FY 2024-2025	FY 2025-2026	FY 2026-2027	FY 2027-2028
Executive Director	1	1	1	1	1
Director of Communications		1	1	1	1
Communications Manager	1			1	1
Administrative Assistant	1	1	1	1	1
Senior Communications Specialist (Social Media)	1	1	1	1	1
Communications Specialist (Graphic Design)	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Community Engagement Coordinator (Programs)	1	1	1	1	1
Community Engagement Specialist (Programs)		1	1	1	1
Communications Specialist (Video/Digital Media)		1	1	1	1
Video Producer (A/V)				1	1
Total:	5.5	7.5	7.5	9.5	9.5

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Tactics

Goal 1: External Communication

Provide relevant, accurate, and timely communication to residents and stakeholders using a multi-channel communication approach.

Objective 1: Provide an accessible and informative website presence that is easy to use.

		Measure	Timeline
Strategy 1:	Redesign and launch a new Town website.		
• Tactic:	Launch Redesigned Website.	Website fully tested and launched	Spring 2023
Strategy 2:	Ensure the Town website is regularly updated with relevant content.		
• Tactic:	Discuss relevant news, events, hot topics, etc., that should be added to the website at monthly Communications Team meetings.	Add standing agenda item to monthly meeting agendas	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Conduct quarterly meetings with Departmental staff to review/refresh website content.	Monthly report from Communications Manager	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Update chatbot FAQs every quarter.	Quarterly report from Community Engagement Coordinator	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Utilize SiteImprove tools and reports to make monthly improvements to Town website.	Monthly report from Communications Manager	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Develop website analytics reports for analysis.	Website metrics in Monthly Communications Report	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Provide website training opportunities for departmental staff.	Offer online training opportunities to new and existing employees as needed	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Initiate quarterly infrastructure video updates to highlight major road and infrastructure projects	Launch quarterly videos	Winter 2023/2024
• Tactic:	Create and fill a Communications Specialist position to help manage additional workload and maintain a high level of service	Submit a decision package for consideration in the Proposed Budget	FY 2024-2025

Objective 2: Produce high-quality print, digital and video content for external distribution that is timely, relevant and accurate.

		Measure	Timeline
Strategy 1:	Use video to highlight Town events, programs, and activities.		
• Tactic:	Continue general event promotions, classes, programs, and public service announcements using video	Produce weekly videos	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Capture video content of special events to create recap videos after each event, and to use as promotional content for the following year.	Produce recap videos Special Events and Community Engagement Programs	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Use video and/or drone footage to provide regular updates on road and infrastructure projects.	Use drone footage in quarterly transportation videos	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Produce a Year-In-Review/Annual Report video to highlight notable accomplishments from the previous year.	Release video concurrent with State of the Community each January	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Reinstate the Prosper Works video series featuring employees from various Town Departments.	Produce one video per month	Spring 2024
• Tactic:	Pursue drone video training for Communications staff	Register Communications Manager for training	Fall 2024
• Tactic:	Create and fill an in-house Video Production Specialist position	Submit decision package in Proposed Budget	FY 2026-2027
Strategy 2:	Ensure all print and digital projects are accurate, well-composed, and engaging, utilizing industry best practices within the scope of Town policies.		
• Tactic:	Set a high expectation for quality by submitting projects for annual awards to TAMIO, TML, 3CMA, and other professional organizations	Review projects annually and submit projects for recognition	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Provide graphic design services for all departments to promote Town events, programs and initiatives	Include graphic design request statistics on Monthly Communications Report	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Adopt a Brand Guide and Policy	Present to Council for Adoption	Spring 2023
• Tactic:	Implement a digital and/or printed Town of Prosper Annual Report highlighting Town-wide achievements	Issue Annual Report	Spring 2024

Strategy 3:	Utilize expertise and improve coordination among the designated communicators in each department.		
• Tactic:	Provide regular opportunities for departmental communicators to share information.	Encourage attendance at monthly Communication Team meetings	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Provide communication and media relations training opportunities for Town communicators.	Track the number of training opportunities provided each year, and the number of attendees	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Continue quarterly meetings with public safety staff to share information, plan messaging and collaborating on emergency training and tabletop exercises.	Attend quarterly meetings	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Assist designated departmental communicators with the development of department-specific communication and marketing plans.	Meet with one Department per month to discuss communication opportunities	Ongoing

Objective 3: Provide an interactive social media presence on multiple platforms that encourages two-way communication.

		Measure	Timeline
Strategy 1:	Broaden the Town's social media audience by exploring emerging trends and platforms and analyzing performance measures.		
• Tactic:	Regularly review social media analytics reports to analyze trends, and measure the reach and effectiveness of content.	Include social media analytics in Monthly Communications Report	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Work with departments to produce new content that informs and educates residents about Town programs, services and initiatives.	Discuss opportunities for new content during regular Departmental meetings	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Create and fill an additional Communications Specialist position to maintain a high level of service and manage additional workload	Submit decision package for consideration in Proposed Budget	FY 2025-2026
Strategy 2:	Identify relevant sources for industry best practices, training and tools through participation in professional programs.		
• Tactic:	Participate in online and in-person training opportunities focusing on best practices and current trends.	Include professional development activities in annual performance evaluations for staff	Ongoing

• Tactic:	Encourage two-way communication on social media by providing a timely response to all questions and inquiries.	Provide responses to comments and private messages within one business day	Ongoing
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Objective 4: Develop and maintain effective working relationships with the media.

		Measure	Timeline
Strategy 1:	Keep local media informed of Town-related activities, events, program enhancements, and infrastructure projects.		
• Tactic:	Regularly distribute media releases and media advisories to relevant media contacts.	Include number of releases/advisories in Monthly Communications Report	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Respond quickly and accurately to all media requests and inquiries.	Respond to media requests and requests for interviews within one business day	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Proactively contact members of the local media to establish relationships and discuss topics of interests to target audiences.	Contact Community Impact, Check Out Prosper, and other appropriate media contacts at least twice per month to suggest potential news stories	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Initiate an annual media event to build relationships between key members of the media and staff.	Conduct one event per year	Fall 2024

Objective 5: Recruit and retain a highly-skilled Communications and Community Engagement staff.

		Measure	Timeline
Strategy 1:	Create a positive working environment that provides professional development opportunities		
• Tactic:	Develop a five-year staffing plan for the Communications and Community Engagement Department	Update annually prior to budget kickoff	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Invest in training opportunities in videography, digital marketing, and municipal communication strategies.	Track professional development activities on annual performance evaluations	Ongoing

• Tactic:	Maintain memberships for communications staff in professional communicator associations.	Include professional membership status in annual performance evaluations	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Create and fill a Director of Communications position	Submit decision package for consideration in Proposed Budget	FY 2024-2025

Goal 2: Internal Communication

Develop effective internal communication tools for Town Council and staff.

Objective 1: Utilize a variety of communication tools to ensure employees have access to important Town-related information.

		Measure	Timeline
Strategy 1:	Utilize email communication to convey important Council actions and Town news to employees.		
• Tactic:	Reformat the Employee Edition to an e-newsletter format, using Constant Contact for distribution.	Track the number of employees viewing the monthly employee newsletter	Ongoing
Strategy 2:	Maintain useful and relevant information on the Employee Intranet.		
• Tactic:	Assist IT with the development of a new Employee Intranet site on Sharepoint.	Hold planning meetings with IT; launch site	Winter 2023-2024
• Tactic:	Regularly add/refresh Communications content on the Intranet.	Quarterly audit of Intranet pages to ensure accuracy	Spring 2024
Strategy 3:	Provide Town Manager Briefings 1-2 times per year that are engaging and informative.		
• Tactic:	Schedule planning meetings with Town Manager prior to each Briefing to determine topics, schedule, locations	Schedule Planning Meetings one month prior to Briefings	Ongoing

Objective 2: Effectively transmit the Town’s organizational culture to all levels of employees by integrating the Town’s Core Values into internal communication efforts.

		Measure	Timeline
Strategy 1:	Develop a set of internal communication objectives, structures, and methods that incorporate the core values of the organization.		
• Tactic:	Participate in bi-monthly HR New Hire Orientation program to educate new employees about communication policies, social media best practices, and services provided by the Communications and Community Engagement Department	Attend bi-monthly meetings	Ongoing

Objective 3: Utilize a variety of communication tools to ensure Town Councilmembers have access to important Town-related information.

		Measure	Timeline
Strategy 1:	Identify and utilize effective methods to convey Town-related news, information, and events to the Town Council.		
• Tactic:	Support the Town Manager's Office with the production of the Weekly Update e-newsletter	Weekly Update and The Week That Was are produced and distributed every Friday	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Provide the Town Council with relevant Prosper-related content shared by the media	Monitor Meltwater news monitoring site and distribute weekly media report	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Initiate a limited-access website (Council Dashboard/Intranet) via Sharepoint for Town Council to access relevant news, reports, events, and information.	Meet with IT staff to determine feasibility	Fall 2024

Goal 3: Crisis Communication

Ensure residents are informed and the Town's organizational stability is protected during emergencies.

Objective 1: Ensure the Town has the appropriate communication tools and resources to respond effectively during an emergency.

		Measure	Timeline
Strategy 1:	Ensure the Town's emergency communication plans and policies are up to date and follow industry standards for best practices.		
• Tactic:	Conduct media training/crisis communication training for key staff and Council 2-3 times per year	Develop topics and schedule with Crisis Communications consultant	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Update the Town's Emergency Management Plan Annexes related to Communications	Update Annexes B, I, and U	Summer 2024
• Tactic:	Update the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) for the Communications Division.	Update COOP	Summer 2024
Strategy 2:	Utilize all available communication channels in the event of an emergency.		
• Tactic:	Expand the use of Smart911/RAVE system to notify subscribers of emergency information via text messaging and social media.	Communications staff completes training on RAVE system	Spring 2024
• Tactic:	Develop a collection of media release templates for various emergencies that can be quickly customized and released to the media.	Complete an inventory of templates	Spring 2024
Strategy 3:	Maintain staff readiness in the event of an emergency		
• Tactic:	Communications staff will participate in tabletop exercises coordinated by the Emergency Management Coordinator.	Track staff's participation in tabletop exercises.	Ongoing

• Tactic:	Communications staff completes FEMA, NIMS, NCTCOG or other training recommended by the Emergency Management Coordinator.	Include recommended emergency management training in annual performance evaluations.	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Cross-train staff in website, social media, and RAVE system to ensure 24/7 staffing during an emergency.	Include appropriate cross-training objectives in annual performance evaluations.	Spring 2024

Goal 4: Community Engagement

Cultivate and encourage community engagement in local government programs and activities by fostering opportunities for residents and stakeholders to feel connected and involved.

Objective 1: Increase community awareness and support of Town events, activities, and programs.

		Measure	Timeline
Strategy 1:	Improve community awareness, participation, and involvement in Town government.		
• Tactic:	Promote the availability of Town staff to speak at HOA, Chamber of Commerce, and civic/service organization meetings.	Track the number of speaker requests under Community Engagement Opportunities on the Monthly Communications Report	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Invest in training opportunities for staff in community engagement activities and programs to stay on trend with best practices.	Track professional development activities on annual performance evaluations	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Continue to expand membership and participation in the quarterly HOA Presidents Meetings by providing informational programs that are of interest to neighborhoods.	Track attendance at quarterly HOA Presidents Meetings	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Offer an annual Citizens Academy featuring a series of presentations, tours, and demonstrations by Town departments related to Town operations.	Conduct an annual Citizens Academy	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Continue monthly e-newsletters to HOA representatives and management companies.	Distribute a monthly HOA newsletter	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Coordinate reservations for use of the Community Room by residents and civic/service organizations.	Include Community Room reservation data in Monthly Report	Ongoing

• Tactic:	Analyze options for targeted media ad buys for specific events, programs, or initiatives.	Research options and submit a budget decision package for FY 2024-2025	Fall 2024
Strategy 2:	Create and maintain positive relationships with target audiences that strengthen community partnerships.		
• Tactic:	Help promote the services provided by local nonprofit organizations and opportunities for residents to volunteer.	Maintain a list of Prosper nonprofit organizations on the Town website	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Build relationships with the Nonprofit Community to facilitate information-sharing and connect residents to needed services.	Attend monthly nonprofit breakfast meetings.	Fall 2023
• Tactic:	Hold Town Hall Balcony Receptions for partner organizations and groups.	Conduct four or more receptions per year (Developers, PISD/Legislators, Chamber of Commerce/Nonprofit Partners, HOA Presidents)	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Initiate a Mayor's Youth Advisory Council (MYAC) to engage high school students in the Town's programs, events and activities.	Initiate Program	Fall 2023
• Tactic:	Initiate an ongoing Town Council Leadership Series comprised of public appearances, coffees, and/or other Town-sponsored interactions between Council and groups of residents	Develop Program Proposal and present to Mayor/Council	Spring 2025
• Tactic:	Initiate a "Serve Prosper" / volunteer coordination program to match residents in need with volunteer groups seeking to serve.	Develop Program Proposal with CEC and present to Mayor/Council	Spring 2025
• Tactic:	Initiate Prosper Partners in Faith program with leaders of Prosper's faith-based communities to share information, build relationships, and identify potential solutions to community needs.	Initiate Program	Spring 2024
• Tactic:	Plan and implement an annual National Day of Prayer event with Prosper Partners in Faith	Initiate Program	Spring 2024
• Tactic:	Initiate a Town-wide Memorial Day Event to promote patriotism, service, and to recognize the commitment of members of America's military services.	Initiate Program	Spring 2024
• Tactic:	Initiate a Mayor's Teen Government Academy to educate high school students about local government.	Initiate Program	Summer 2024

Strategy 3:	Utilize the Community Engagement Committee (CEC) to enhance relationships with residents and stakeholder groups		
• Tactic:	Facilitate CEC attendance at community events	Encourage CEC attendance at Special Events and Community Engagement Events	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Conduct a New Resident Mixer twice per year for new families moving to Prosper.	Conduct New Resident Mixers each Spring and Fall	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Create and fill a Community Engagement Specialist position to help manage additional workload and provide a high level of service	Submit decision package in Proposed Budget	FY 2024-2025

Goal 5: Legislative Advocacy

Develop strategies to engage local, state, and federal elected officials in order to convey the Town's legislative priorities and influence the legislative process.

Objective 1: Proactively participate in the legislative process by communicating the Town's legislative priorities to state and federal elected officials.

		Measure	Timeline
Strategy 1:	Create and maintain positive relationships with the Town's local, state and federal elected officials.		
• Tactic:	Initiate in-person or virtual meetings with the Town's legislators and their key staff members	Schedule meetings twice per year	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Regularly engage the Town's legislative delegation through relationship-building activities.	Invite legislators to Special Events, Ribbon Cuttings, and other appropriate Community Engagement Events	Ongoing

Strategy 2:	Identify priority legislative issues and actively participate in the legislative process on the Town's behalf.		
• Tactic:	Engage a legislative advocacy firm (lobbyist) to assist in advancing the Town's legislative agenda	Hold regular meetings to discuss legislative strategy during the legislative session (weekly) and in the interim (monthly)	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Develop a Legislative Agenda for the Town prior to each legislative session that conveys the Town Council's legislative priorities	Propose a Resolution adopting the Town's Legislative Agenda prior to each biannual legislative session	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Communicate any relevant legislation to Town Council and staff post-session at a Town Council meeting	Schedule a legislative update in the summer following the regular legislative session	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Communicate any relevant legislation to Town staff and make appropriate policy and operational changes	Provide a summary of relevant legislation for staff and determine operational impacts, if any	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Meet with the Council Legislative Subcommittee regularly to advance the Town's legislative strategy.	Conduct monthly meetings with the Legislative Subcommittee and the Town's legislative consultants	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Build coalitions with other towns and cities to develop a unified message on issues that are of mutual benefit or concern.	Develop relationships with representatives from neighboring cities and towns	Ongoing
• Tactic:	Assign a delegate to represent the Town at the annual TML Business Meeting and vote on proposed Resolutions for the TML Legislative Program.	Assign a staff or Council delegate to attend the annual TML Business Meeting and vote on proposed Resolutions	Ongoing

**TOWN OF PROSPER
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS**

CHAPTER 18: COMMUNICATIONS

SECTION 18.01: SOCIAL MEDIA

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Town's social media policy is to provide guidelines for sharing information with community members about Town issues, programs, and services, using various social media platforms, leading to a more responsive and transparent government and a high level of public confidence. To address the rapidly changing ways in which residents communicate and obtain information, Town staff will make appropriate use of the various forms of social media available to communicate with residents in ways they find timely and convenient. This policy seeks to delineate rules and regulations for the use of social media platforms in such a way as to maintain the platforms' maximum effectiveness while staying within the bounds of good taste, propriety, and impartiality and utilizing sound communication principles.

This communication effort will be under the direct supervision of the Communications Director in collaboration with the Executive Director and the Town Manager. The Communications Director will make use of the appropriate personnel and technological resources required for successful completion of this effort.

B. ESTABLISHMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

1. The Town of Prosper will maintain only one official page on any social media platform, including, but not limited to, Facebook, X, Instagram, Nextdoor, YouTube, LinkedIn and the RAVE alert system. Any new social media platforms not currently in use may be allowed one official Town of Prosper page or account.
2. The Town also maintains departmental pages and accounts for the Police Department, Fire Department, Parks and Recreation Department and Library. Pages and accounts already in existence must comply with this policy.
3. Any new departmental pages or accounts for the Town of Prosper shall only be created after receiving approval from the Communications Director in conjunction with the Executive Director and the Town Manager. Requests for new accounts will be evaluated based on the terms of use, and staff time required to implement, monitor and maintain the site and other applicable considerations.

APPENDIX A

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. All Town of Prosper existences, activities, responses, posts and appearances on social media sites or services are considered an extension of the Town's information and communications networks. All uses of social media must be in complete compliance with this policy.
2. It is the responsibility of the Communications Director to act as the Town's primary administrator on Town social media sites. The Communications Director in conjunction with department heads may designate individuals to post, respond to and conduct other related activities on the Town's official and departmental pages and accounts.
3. Staff members who are designated as administrators, editors, or who otherwise have access to post on any Town social media platform shall be responsible for the following:
 - a. Review social media pages and accounts to which they have been designated to ensure they are in compliance with this policy. Posts from the public that are determined to be in violation of the Town's Social Media User Guidelines may be hidden from view but not deleted.
 - b. Ensure pages and accounts are regularly maintained and kept current by posting content that is relevant, informative and engaging.
 - c. Ensure that information on social media sites is accurate, professionally presented, respectful, and free from spelling and grammatical errors.
4. Any department that has not been granted editing ability may request to post content on an appropriate social media page or account by submitting a helpdesk ticket to the Communications Department.
5. The Communications Director will maintain all passwords for social media accounts. Employees who are tasked with social media assignments shall never change or otherwise alter the passwords assigned by the Communications Director. Passwords will be changed by the Communications Director, as needed, and when a staff member with access to any social media page or account leaves employment with the Town.

D. CONTENT GUIDELINES

1. Potential uses for social media include but are not limited to:
 - a. Sharing published media releases regarding Town news, programs, services, and events;
 - b. Publicizing Town programs and activities, including Special Events which the Town sponsors, either financially or through substantial in-kind support;
 - c. Publicizing new or amended Town services, holiday closings or other critical information normally found on the Town's website;
 - d. Issuing emergency alerts, road closures, or weather alerts affecting residents;

APPENDIX A

- e. Publicizing Town Council meetings, Board and Commission meetings and other public meetings held by the Town.
- 2. General overview of site content by departments includes but is not limited to the following:
 - Town of Prosper
 - a. Town Council, Board and Commission and public meeting reminders
 - b. Town office closures
 - c. Town-sponsored events,
 - d. Town programs and services
 - e. Capital project updates
 - f. Awards and recognition
 - g. Road closures/traffic notices
 - h. News releases
 - Fire Department
 - a. Emergency responses (fire, gas main break, etc.)
 - b. Safety issues
 - c. Emergency notifications
 - d. Community outreach & education (programs, tours, events, etc.)
 - e. Awards and recognition
 - Police Department
 - a. Traffic incidents
 - b. Crimewatch notifications
 - c. Safety issues
 - d. Community outreach & education (programs, events, etc.)
 - e. Awards and recognition
 - Parks and Recreation Department
 - a. Recreation programs
 - b. Park closures
 - c. Town events
 - d. Awards and recognition
 - Library
 - a. Library programs and services
 - b. Library hours
 - c. Awards and recognition

APPENDIX A

Posted information may be shared among the Town pages and accounts and departmental pages and accounts when appropriate, based on the content of the post and the intended audience.

3. Guidelines for creating high-quality content:
 - a. Ensure content is factually accurate, clear and concise, without unnecessary verbiage. Posts should provide value to the reader and the Town by conveying a positive and informative message.
 - b. A high-quality photo or graphic should accompany a post whenever possible. Content should be free from spelling, grammar and punctuation errors.
 - c. Content should be timely, interactive, and engaging, including a diverse range of media (photos, graphics, videos, links) and a variety of original and/or shared content.
 - d. Content should be posted on appropriate social media platforms based on the intended audience. Efforts should be made to post content at the most popular times for each platform to ensure the highest possible follower response and interaction.
 - e. Omissions or errors in information posted on social media sites must be corrected as soon as possible.
4. Social media posts should provide links to appropriate pages located on the Town's website whenever possible. This will create a deeper relationship between residents and the Town via the Town website, and allow residents to obtain information, forms, documents, or other online services that make it easier to conduct business with the Town.
5. Use of social media must comply with applicable federal, state and local ordinances, regulations and policies, as well as proper business etiquette. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, release of public information, the First Amendment, privacy laws and information security policies established by the Town of Prosper.
6. The Communications Director and designated departmental administrators will determine the appropriateness and suitability of any social media posts. The Town Manager will be the final determinant of whether a posting is acceptable for any of the pages and accounts used by the Town.
7. The Town of Prosper reserves the right to remove from public view any message, post, response, or other submissions that do not conform to the standards set by this policy and the Town of Prosper Social Media User Guidelines (see Exhibit A of this policy). When possible, all Town pages and accounts shall include a link to the Town's Social Media User Guidelines.

APPENDIX A

E. RESPONDING TO MESSAGES AND COMMENTS

1. The primary administrator for each Town page or account shall monitor and review activity daily for comments and/or messages from the public, and provide an appropriate response consistent with this policy, preferably within one business day. Comments should be returned during normal business hours unless there is an emergency situation.
2. Due to the time-sensitive nature of public safety communication, Police and Fire Department pages and accounts will be continually monitored for comments and messages from the public related to crime, safety, and other emergencies. Responses must be cleared through each department's appropriate chain of command.
3. Only the primary administrator or other authorized staff member for each Town page or account shall monitor and respond to messages from the public.
4. Responses to public comments, messages, or questions are intended to provide additional information, answer questions, or correct misinformation. While two-way communication is encouraged, social media platforms are not intended to be used for ongoing conversations between staff members and the public.
5. Responses to comments, questions, and messages should be polite, factual, and concise. When appropriate, members of the public should be directed to the appropriate page on the Town website where they can find additional information.
6. After responding to a public comment or message, if an additional response is warranted, Town staff should attempt to redirect the conversation to a private platform by providing the name and contact information of a staff member who can provide more information or assistance.
7. Employees shall use discretion and respect the privacy of members of the public and Town staff when handling complaints or sensitive information.

F. RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND ARCHIVING

1. Content posted on any Town page or account, including a list of subscribers, fans, or followers, is considered a public record and is subject to disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act (Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code). Requests for information related to content on any social media page or account maintained by the Town of Prosper shall be directed to the Town Secretary's Office.
2. All social media content, comments, and messages will be archived and retained in compliance with the Town's approved record retention schedules. Content shall be maintained in an accessible format so that it can be produced in response to a request.
3. Public comments that are determined to be in violation of this policy may be hidden from public view but shall not be deleted.

APPENDIX A

G. EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

Content related to public safety emergencies such as traffic issues, crime alerts or other public safety notifications will be under the direction of the Police Department or Fire Department, depending on the nature of the incident. All posted content shall be approved through the Department's appropriate chain of command. Information may be shared from the Town page or account or relevant departmental pages and accounts as needed, depending on the nature of the emergency.

In the event of a Town-wide emergency or disaster, all communication regarding the emergency is to be centralized and coordinated with the Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) in accordance with the Town's Emergency Management Plan, the Town of Prosper Crisis Communications Plan and the Police Department's General Orders related to Public Information and Media Relations. The EMC or designee will have access to post emergency communication to the Town's social media accounts, including the RAVE emergency alert system. Emergency information may be shared with departmental pages and accounts to provide greater dissemination of the information but should not deviate from the approved message.

H. EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Access to the Internet using the Town's electronic communications systems is a privilege and carries responsibilities, including responsible and ethical use. This is true whether access is for personal use or related to an employee's job duties. The Town reserves the right to access, intercept, monitor, and review all information viewed, posted, sent, stored, printed, or received through its communications systems or equipment at any time.

An employee's use of social media, whether on or off duty, must not interfere with or conflict with the employee's responsibilities or job performance, reflect negatively on the Town, or violate any Town policy. Protecting the Town's reputation and ensuring that an employee's communication with people within and outside of the Town not only reflects positively on the employee as an individual but also on the Town. Personal use of social media sites is strongly discouraged during working hours.

The Town expects all employees to use good judgment and follow the guidelines set out in this policy when posting information on social media, regardless of whether activity occurs during or outside work hours.

1. User Guidelines

Employees who wish to engage on personal social media accounts:

- a. Shall not use a Town email address for social media accounts. Furthermore, Town of Prosper email addresses cannot be used in conjunction with a personal social networking site.
- b. May not comment on work-related matters on any public platform or outlet unless they are an official spokesperson and have the approval to do so.

APPENDIX A

- c. Shall not post images, files or texts depicting Town property, equipment, apparel or personnel in any manner that would adversely affect the reputation of the Town or a Town employee or department.
- d. Shall not, on any platform or outlet, make insulting or offensive comments, engage in harassment or libel, or use derogatory speech regarding a person's race, age, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or gender.
- e. Are prohibited against disclosure of confidential information or information that could breach the security of the Town of Prosper in any way.
- f. May not attribute personal statements or opinions to the Town when engaging in private postings on social media sites.
- g. Are prohibited from posting anything that promotes or contains illegal activity of any kind.
- h. Are discouraged from posting pictures of themselves or others wearing Town uniforms or insignia, Town logos, Town equipment or Town work sites, unless they are posted on the Town's official social media platforms as part of their job duties or shared from an official Town of Prosper social media platform.
- i. The Town prohibits the unauthorized release or disclosure of any employee information on social media or through other means that may be considered private and/or confidential by law.

2. Applicability

This policy applies to all Town of Prosper employees. When an employee uses social media sites, all applicable Town policies shall be followed.

3. Policy Authority

The Town Manager, with the assistance of the Human Resources Director and the Information Technology Director, is responsible for interpreting and enforcing this policy.

4. Implementation Procedures

Employees are made aware of Town policies, including this policy, during their orientation as a new Town of Prosper employee, and they are expected to adhere to those policies. In the event that an employee violates one of the policies, the Human Resources Department will work with the affected employee and Town Management to resolve the situation. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

APPENDIX A

5. Senate Bill 1893 Regarding TikTok

Pursuant to Senate Bill 1893 passed during the 88th Legislative Session in 2023, the Town of Prosper prohibits TikTok on Town of Prosper devices and networks. Accordingly, if an employee has installed TikTok on a Town-provided device (phone, computer or tablet), the employee is required to uninstall the app from that device. This does not include personal devices for which an employee receives a monthly stipend. The Town of Prosper has also removed access to TikTok via Town of Prosper Wi-Fi and the Town of Prosper network. This restriction is effective immediately.

The Town of Prosper will continue to cooperate with applicable local, state and federal laws and implement such policies designed to safeguard the Town's organizational information.

APPENDIX A

Exhibit A

Social Media User Guidelines

The following is a set of guidelines for those who wish to interact with the Town of Prosper through one of our social media platforms. We welcome input and comments regarding the Town of Prosper, Texas.

Our social media sites are intended to share information and matters of public interest in the Town of Prosper. We encourage users to comment on posts, but please note that an opinion or comment posted on a Town of Prosper social media page or account is considered for discussion only and is not a substitute for a formal statement in a Public Hearing process.

Comments posted on all pages and accounts will be monitored. The Town of Prosper reserves the right to remove from public view any comments that contain false information, obscene language, or sexual content; threaten or defame any person or organization (including the Town of Prosper); support or oppose political candidates, political organizations, or ballot propositions; promote illegal activity, commercial services, or products; infringe on copyrights or trademarks; promote discrimination on the basis of race, age, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or gender; or, are not topically related to the particular posting. Any comments deemed to be criminal in nature will be reported to authorities.

All content, including public comments and private messages, is considered a public record. All posts, even those that may be hidden by the Town or removed by the user, may be subject to disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act (Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code).

The Town of Prosper asks all our followers to understand that content posted to our social media platforms by external parties, including comments, photos, links, or other outside materials, does not necessarily represent the ideals of the Town of Prosper or our employees. The Town of Prosper is not responsible for any such external content and does not endorse any opinions expressed by external users on our social media platforms.

The Town of Prosper may occasionally post links to third-party websites. Please note that this does not in any way constitute an endorsement of the website and/or company. The Town of Prosper does not control the content, advertising, or views of any such third-party website. The thoughts and opinions of third-party websites do not represent the opinions of the Town of Prosper.

The Town of Prosper respects the privacy of those who engage with our social media platforms. If you have a complaint about any of the information you see on one of our social media platforms, please contact Todd Rice, Communications Director, at trice@prospertx.gov or 972-569-1025.

The Town of Prosper reserves the right to remove from public view any content that is deemed in violation of these guidelines or any applicable federal, state, or local laws or ordinances. By visiting, liking, or interacting with any of our social media platforms, you are agreeing to the above guidelines for use, as well as to any of the terms of use/service outlined by third-party social media application providers. The Town of Prosper reserves the right to block users who violate these guidelines from posting to all Town of Prosper social media platforms.

TOWN OF PROSPER ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

SECTION 18.02: MEDIA RELATIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

The news media are an important component of Prosper's ability to communicate with and serve the public, accomplish public policy goals, and provide exceptional municipal communications services that are responsive, honest, and transparent.

Inquiries from properly credentialed news media are a high priority and must be responded to as quickly and efficiently as possible. Every effort will be made to meet media deadlines and ensure all information released is accurate.

To ensure the Town properly coordinates messaging, where Prosper communicates with one voice, a centralized media response system is in place which is coordinated by members of the Town of Prosper Communications Staff. Reporters who request interviews and seek information directly from any Town department, office, or employee should be referred to the Town of Prosper Communications Manager.

Coordination with the Communications Manager ensures that responses to media inquiries are properly vetted, researched, verified and presented in a professional manner. Those responses that require the direct involvement of employees as subject matter experts must also be coordinated with the Communications Manager.

B. NEWS MEDIA

While news media has experienced significant changes in recent years, and reporters now represent a wide range of news outlets, the Town's focus remains on responding to established, credentialed news media outlets, whether traditional print and broadcast or reputable online social media sites. Other news gathering entities or individuals are always welcome to gather information from the Town's social media channels.

C. COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

The Communications Department is responsible for the coordination of Town-wide media relations and for ensuring accuracy, consistency, and quality in the Town's overall responses to the media. The Communications Manager assists departments as necessary in responding to and aiding news media, and they will refer news media inquiries to departments as appropriate.

The Communications Manager is available for advice and consultation with departments on media relations matters. Training in media relations and social media policies, procedures, and techniques is periodically coordinated by the Communications Manager, providing basic and advanced media relations training on a periodic or as-needed basis.

D. PROACTIVE MEDIA RELATIONS

It is the goal of the Town of Prosper to keep the public informed about the achievements and efforts of the Town and staff, seeking opportunities to proactively communicate by notifying local, national, professional, trade media and news media outlets about Town achievements, awards, accomplishments, and innovations.

APPENDIX B

The Town will continue to create opportunities to proactively communicate news and information that is of interest to its various constituencies. These efforts may include developing news releases, media advisories, essays, stories, white papers, and editorial pieces.

E. ADDITIONAL DEPARTMENT PARTICIPATION

Departments, employees, and employee groups play a significant role in the process. Ideas, suggestions, and proposals for communication opportunities will often arise at the department level. In addition, the details and subject matter experts will likely be available only through the departments.

For this reason, department supervisors should encourage employees to be on the lookout for these ideas, suggestions and proposals that can lead to sharing news and information with residents and other stakeholders. Employees are encouraged to share their ideas with the Communications Staff to determine the best method for sharing the stories.

Departments may recommend to the Communications Manager official spokespersons who can speak authoritatively on department-specific topics. The spokespersons must undergo media training before assignment and coordinate all media interactions through the Communications Manager. Follow-up training may be provided to these individuals so they maintain their proficiency at the highest level.

Departments with several divisions or sections may wish to designate a person in each of these separate departmental sections to work with the Communications Manager to respond to media questions within their specific area. For example, Public Works may propose a spokesperson for Streets, one for Water Conservation and Education, and another for Water Services.

These departmental spokespersons would assist the Communications Manager with reactive or responsive communications, rather than proactive story placement and development. Notwithstanding their position, these department representatives must refer all media queries and interactions to the Communications Manager for coordination and message development.

While every effort will be made to meet reporters' deadlines, the accuracy and consistency of the media responses will supersede expediency.

When confronted with a media request for comment either in person, by phone, email, or text, employees should refrain from making any statement that represents the views, positions, or reactions of the Town, unless they have been specifically designated as an official spokesperson by the Communications Manager. This applies to employees, regardless of the circumstances, under which the query is made. This also applies to any media inquiries made to employees who may be on or off-duty. Employees approached by media while on the job, at a job site, on or off-duty, in a casual setting, after-hours, on weekends, or any other situation should politely relay to the media the contact information for the Communications Manager.

The employee should graciously tell the reporter, or any other media representative, that all media questions are to be referred to the Communications Manager. When pressed, the employee should ask the reporter to seek information at www.prospertx.gov.

APPENDIX B

F. MAYOR AND COUNCIL PARTICIPATION

Media questions directed to the Mayor, members of the Town Council, volunteers serving on Boards and Commissions, and other Town officials should be coordinated through the Communications Manager to ensure consistent messaging. The Communications Department will provide media training, advice and counsel to elected and appointed officials as _____ a _____ group _____ or individually on a periodic basis or upon special request.

In accordance with Section 7.03 of the Town of Prosper Personnel Policies, Town employees may not engage in political activities relating to a campaign for elective office while in uniform or on active duty, or publicly endorse or campaign in any manner for any person seeking a Town public office. The same prohibition applies to campaigning for or endorsing Town bond propositions, referendums, special elections or items of a controversial nature while in uniform or on active duty.

G. NEWS CONFERENCES

News conferences or other efforts to attract media attention regarding a Town-wide or department-specific issue or event will be exclusively coordinated through the Communications Manager in accordance with the Town of Prosper Crisis Communications Plan.

Requests from the Mayor or Council members for assistance with, or participation in, a news conference or other efforts to attract media attention must be coordinated with the Communications Manager who will provide assistance in preparing talking points or statements for the media.

H. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION /PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUESTS

The business conducted by the Town of Prosper is generally public and therefore is accessible as public information. Inquiries regarding pending economic development transactions, litigation or potential litigation, and certain personnel-related information are exceptions under state law and Town policy in accordance with the Texas Public Information Act (TPIA).

Requests from the media for public records should be handled promptly in accordance with the TPIA, the Town's Records Management Policy, and the Police Department's General Orders related to public information and media relations. A public record is generally defined as any print or electronic media, including emails and text messages, that is created, received, or maintained by a Town employee or Town official in the transaction of public business. This includes correspondence maintained on Town-issued or personal devices or accounts. When there are questions about whether the information requested can be released, departments should consult with the Town Secretary and, if appropriate, the Town Attorney's Office.

**TOWN OF PROSPER
ADMINISTRATIVE
REGULATIONS**

SECTION 18.03: PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDING

By participating in a program or event sponsored by the Town of Prosper ("Town") or utilizing facilities owned or operated by the Town, participants thereby grant the Town permission to take photos or record them and their children. The resulting photos and audio/video recordings may be used by the Town, without restriction or financial compensation to the participants, in materials published or distributed by the Town or posted on the Town's website or other social media platforms, unless the participant notifies the Town Secretary/Public Information Officer (PIO) in writing.

Photography and audio/video recording is permitted at all public programs or events occurring on property owned or operated by the Town, unless otherwise restricted. The Town reserves the right to adopt reasonable rules to maintain order, including the right to regulate the location of recording equipment and the manner in which the recording is conducted. The Town also reserves the right to ask individuals to leave the event or property and/or cease taking photos or recording if the Town determines the individual is interfering with or otherwise impairing or disrupting the program or event or use of the property. All professional photographers seeking to take photos or record on property owned or operated by the Town must request approval in advance from the Town Secretary/PIO.

The Town of Prosper Photography and Video Recording Policy was adopted on the 9th Day of December, 2019.

**TOWN OF PROSPER
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS**

Section 18.04: CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

Table of Contents

Definition..... 3

Executive Summary 3

Action Plan..... 5

Crisis Communications Management Steps..... 5

Media Briefings11

Town of Prosper Staff Directory12

Crisis Communications Checklist14

Additional Tools15

Key Audience Checklist16

Media Statement Template17

Frequently Asked Questions in a Crisis.....18

Tweet Template19

Media Log20

Media Guidelines for Town Employees21

Social Media Guidelines.....22

Town Spokesperson Guidelines.....23

APPENDIX D

Town of Prosper Crisis Communications Plan

Definition

A crisis is defined as any emergency or disaster incident that involves significant injury, loss of life, or damage to property, including but not limited to mass casualties, natural disasters or violent crime, that requires a public response from the Town. Crisis communications may be required for any incident or situation that has the potential to generate negative publicity for the Town or negatively affect citizens' trust or confidence in the Town or its leaders. These incidents may include data breaches, data interruption, major lawsuits, governmental malfeasance, citizen activism, rumors or hoaxes. The duration of a crisis situation can vary significantly, lasting from only a few hours to several weeks or months.

The Town of Prosper is committed to providing Prosper residents and members of the public with accurate and timely information. Print, digital and social media outlets and platforms play a critical role in providing Town-related information to the community, especially in the event of a crisis. Effective crisis communication provides clear and concise information to residents, the media, and members of the public, instills a sense of confidence and reassurance to the community, expresses a message of empathy to the parties involved, and provides overall situational awareness during a crisis.

Executive Summary

Any crisis can be looked at as an opportunity to tell the “rest of the story.” The universal factor governing all crises is that they all require detailed and continually updated preparation and practice. A crisis may be acute or chronic, but in either case, it has the potential to generate media interest. How a crisis is handled in the media can have a tremendous impact, either positive or negative, on the Town of Prosper and its residents.

The stakes are much too high to overlook crisis management and communications planning. Many organizations now have a Crisis Communications Response Team (CCRT), whose principal duties include working together to develop a strategy for minimizing the impact of the crisis.

Preparation is only the first step. It must then be rehearsed and practiced by all concerned parties.

This Crisis Communications Plan outlines strategic planning considerations for major crises that could occur within our community, establishes an action plan for responding to a crisis, and creates internal staff actions as well as external media considerations for any crisis.

APPENDIX D

This Plan is intended to be a working, living document that reflects how Town leadership relates to Town employees, residents, the media, and the public. If it is practiced, the results during media exposure will reflect honesty and integrity through words and actions.

The purpose of this Crisis Communications Plan is to aid Town of Prosper leadership, and specifically our Crisis Communications Response Team, in quickly and effectively:

- anticipating issues that could escalate into a crisis
- assessing the potential impacts of a crisis on key audiences
- developing communications plans and strategies to deal with the crisis
- disseminating information or instructions to key audiences directly or indirectly impacted by the crisis

The Crisis Communications Plan is designed to mitigate the impact of the crisis, provide important safety information to residents, preserve the trust of residents and stakeholders, and protect the organization's reputation. The plan recognizes that every crisis is different and will require critical judgment to evaluate different options and outcomes. This document provides a set of guidelines, templates and checklists to guide and support strategic decision-making in a crisis.

APPENDIX D

Action Plan

Crisis Communications Management Steps

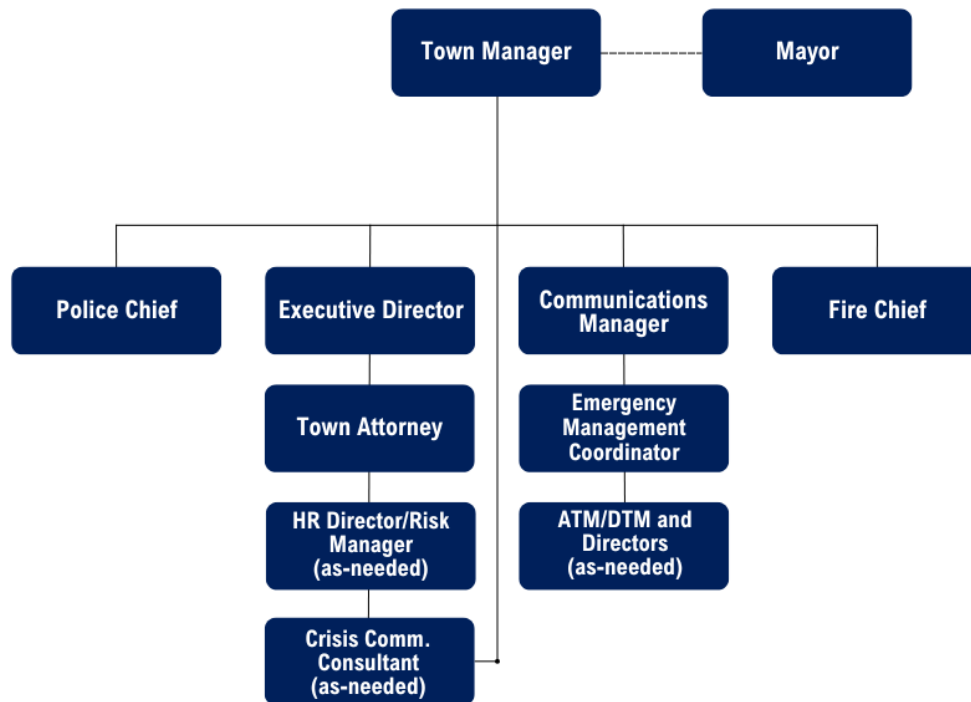
- **Notification** – Notify the Mayor, Town Manager, Executive Director, and Communications Manager immediately.
- **Definition of Communications Crisis** - Any emergency or disaster incident that involves one or more of the following situations requiring a public response from the Town:
 - significant injury, loss of life, or damage to property, including but not limited to mass casualties, natural disasters or violent crime
 - an incident that could generate negative publicity for the Town or negatively affect citizens' trust or confidence in the Town or its leaders, including but not limited to data breaches, data interruption, major lawsuits, governmental malfeasance, citizen activism, rumors or hoaxes
 - the duration of a crisis situation can vary significantly, lasting from only a few hours to several weeks or months.

Crisis Communications Response Team (CCRT) – Convenes immediately after crisis is identified. Information shall not be released until the core CCRT convenes, reviews the situation, and develops a strategy. The CCRT will convene via email, phone, virtual meeting or in person to strategically review the situation and manage the external communications surrounding the issue. The CCRT is comprised of the following key staff members:

- Mayor
- Town Manager
- Executive Director
- Communications Manager
- Police Chief
- Fire Chief
- Town Attorney
- Emergency Management Coordinator
- Human Resources Director/Risk Manager (as needed)
- Deputy/Assistant Town Manager or Department Directors (as needed)
- Crisis Communications consultant

APPENDIX D

Crisis Communications Response Team (CCRT)



Only the Communications Manager or someone he/she assigns should release information to the media and to the public. This includes information via social media. All other employees should be professional and helpful to the media by connecting them with the Communications Manager, but employees are discouraged from speaking with or providing information to the media. Communications staff will work closely with state and federal entities as needed.

- **Internal Communications** - the Town Manager, Executive Director, Communications Manager and Human Resources Director will convene via email, phone or in person to manage the internal communications surrounding the issue.
- **Assessment/Strategy** - The CCRT will assess the situation, determine facts, and begin delegation. Questions to help devise appropriate crisis communications response include, but are not limited to:
 - What is the situation? What will happen next?
 - Who on staff needs to be involved?
 - What immediate steps need to be taken?
 - What is known and who knows it?
 - Is there potential public interest? Does the issue have traction (will it become anything more than a blip on the evening news)?
 - Who will be affected?
 - What are people feeling – what emotions need to be considered?
 - What information is needed and who beyond Town staff need to be informed? When will the information be available?
 - What should the Town do about it? Is a proactive vs. reactive response required?

APPENDIX D

- What CAN and CAN'T be said? What are the Town's privacy, legal and insurance policies?
- Is legal counsel needed?
- How will the response be communicated?
- Should a resource list be compiled of additional Town spokespeople?
- What media will be contacted? What elected officials? Others?
- **Developing Key Messages** – The Crisis Communications Response Team (CCRT) will collaborate to develop factual, responsive messages to be used by the Town. It will also provide a script for the receptionist and voicemail system if needed. All media inquiries and inquiries from the public should be referred to the Communications Manager for comment.
 - Responsive messages should be prepared for media inquiries, Town Council, Town staff (as needed), and proactive correspondence with critical stakeholders.
 - Messages should reflect the Town's overall message, leadership role, and resource status. They should attempt to reinforce the positive and be action/solution-oriented, if possible.
 - All comments should be guided by professionalism, transparency, and serve to mitigate the crisis.
 - Consider what media know about the situation and what their potential interest is.
 - Recognize that unfavorable, inaccurate information, if not corrected, could have future negative consequences requiring additional responses.
 - Consider questions that will be asked in order to prepare answers for them, including the questions you hope will not be asked.
 - Develop a written statement for the receptionist and/or the representatives greeting members of the general public. Decide if it is appropriate to change the Town's or particular staff members' voicemail messages.
 - "No comment" is never an acceptable response. If an answer is unknown or cannot be immediately answered, make note of the question, tell the inquirer you will get back with him/her, and do so. If the question cannot be answered due to a policy or an ongoing investigation (such as sharing personnel information, etc.) let the inquirer know that.
 - Recognize and express empathy for individuals who have been impacted by the crisis.
 - Consider the need for additional materials such as a fact sheet, website resources, FAQs, etc.
- **Staff Notification** – As soon as practical, the Town Manager will communicate information regarding the crisis to the Mayor, Town Council and employees, if appropriate. If the crisis occurs at a time when staff are not in the office and disseminating the information is critically time sensitive, the Director of the affected department will be responsible for communicating information to his or her staff. The impact of the crisis on staff should be taken into consideration. If necessary, make resources such as an employee assistance program available. Staff should be reminded that all inquiries (media, etc.) must be referred to the Communications Manager and that they should not make any comments to the media or on social media platforms.
- **Media Releases** – At the appropriate times, the Communications Manager will distribute a media advisory, press releases, or statements to the media.
 - The release should be posted on the website and social media and distributed to the Town Council and Executive Team at the same time it is distributed to the media.

APPENDIX D

- A prepared written statement or talking points for the Mayor and Town Council should accompany the media release and be used to guide all interviews, ensuring a consistent message.
 - If necessary, establish a media staging area for the media to gather to receive periodic updates from the Town. Media access to Town facilities and job sites should be supervised at all times. Know ahead of time who the journalist is and what he or she is planning on covering. Be sure the area into which the media are invited does not have sensitive information such as reports, personnel information or other papers visually available.
 - When possible, establish a secondary command center at Town Hall for police and fire to meet with elected officials (local, state, and or federal) and give them updates and preparation for any engagement with the media. Elected officials should always plan to meet in the executive conference room behind council chambers and not at the scene of the incident.
 - In the event that Town Hall is unable to be reached due to the nature of the crisis, a secondary command center will be established at the Central Fire Department. Directions will be given in such a situation.
- **Key Group Notification** – Notify the Town Attorney or other necessary stakeholders, such as local elected officials. (Some of these parties may need to be contacted prior to contacting the media.)
 - **Record Keeping** – Document critical conversations, decisions, details and media questions regarding the crisis situation in order to effectively evaluate crisis communications management. Remember that any written correspondence, including emails, texts, or other documents may be subject to a Public Information Request (PIR).
 - **Media/Message Evaluation** – Evaluate the appropriateness and relevance of messages throughout the situation. Revise as appropriate, but don't stray from original theme.
 - **Communications Updates** – Ensure key audiences are kept up to date. Methods may include:
 - Sending communications to members and residents via email.
 - Updating the Town's social media platforms regularly.
 - Promptly returning phone calls.
 - Posting a statement on the website and updating it regularly.
 - Updating the Town's voicemail.
 - Post-crisis wrap-up communication and calls.
 - **Loose Ends** – Ensure all loose ends are secured (i.e. follow-up calls, email updates, etc.)
 - **Conduct an After-Action Meeting** – schedule a time to debrief with the CCRT to identify strengths and weaknesses of the crisis response. Discuss and take notes on what was done well and what could be improved in handling future PR crises.
 - **Post-Crisis Clean-up** – File notes, correspondence, digital and print assets, and after-action report from the crisis.

APPENDIX D

CCRT Guidelines

The CCRT and Communications staff will make every effort to:

1. Communicate as quickly as possible, as facts become available.
2. Be honest and transparent in all communications (to the extent that any ongoing investigation permits).
3. Exhibit empathy for those affected by the situation.
4. If the Town of Prosper has a role in or is responsible for the situation, accept responsibility and apologize to the affected parties.
5. Ensure all messaging is consistent to all audiences.
6. Reassure key audiences by providing regular updates.
7. Demonstrate attentiveness to those affected by the crisis and respond to stakeholder concerns.
8. Announce the resolution of the issue as quickly as possible.

APPENDIX D

Town Employees' Responsibilities During an Emergency Event

Anytime the Town experiences a crisis or emergency event of any magnitude, the Communications staff enacts an emergency response plan, and the information is disseminated to the public in an orderly fashion.

In the event of a large-scale crisis or a credible threat whereby a large number of residents in the Town of Prosper could be in imminent danger or have actually experienced a crisis that has placed residents' safety and well-being in danger, the need may arise to rapidly mobilize a larger-than-normal number of Town employees to assist, even as a pre-planned emergency response communications strategy is implemented.

If the Town Manager determines an emergency event necessitates employees assisting during or in the aftermath of an emergency situation before, during, or after normal business hours, employees should expect to:

1. be immediately on-call via text message, email, or phone call and subject to reporting for duty, as assigned.
2. work extended hours beyond the normal shift.
3. work shift hours different from the normal practice.
4. perform other duties as assigned.
5. work under the direction of different supervisors or to directly report to emergency officials.
6. work in different departments or areas other than their usual assignment.
7. operate under procedures and policies that may have to be suspended or amended by department directors to cope with unusual situations.
8. refer any media/press to the Communications Manager or to the Town website or social media accounts.
9. abstain from providing any details or responses on any Town social media platforms unless instructed to do so as part of their job duties. Misinformation can be critically dangerous in the aftermath of a crisis. If an employee (which would be a "credible source" to a reporter) is putting erroneous information out in the public forum, the results could be critically dangerous.

In the event of a crisis where communication signals are lost, employees are encouraged to report to their normal work site as soon as is safely possible for briefing and instruction. In the event that a Town facility is inaccessible, employees should report to Town Hall.

APPENDIX D

Media Briefings

Media briefings will be organized by the Communications Manager and the Town's Crisis Communications Consultant, as needed. When the Town of Prosper holds a media briefing it is because the Town has determined that the need to communicate with the media in person is necessary. The Town will not call a media briefing without new facts or elements of the story that it considers vital. Frequent briefings are a good habit to keep the media from wandering around trying to get information elsewhere. The goal is to give information to the media regularly, and to provide accurate and complete information.

The Communications Manager shall organize and lead all media briefings and will assign staff members to assist who can best respond as a subject matter expert regarding the Town's operational response during a crisis. This is usually a member of the Fire Department or Police Department, unless the crisis falls under the jurisdiction of another agency. The Mayor and/or Town Manager may be called upon during a media briefing to provide a sense of confidence and reassurance to the community, express a message of empathy, and provide overall situational awareness.

If necessary, the Town of Prosper will provide media kits and make them available to all members of the media as soon as they arrive. The media kits may include fact sheets with relevant information and background about the situation.

The following is a list of spokespersons authorized to speak on behalf of the Town of Prosper:

Town Spokespersons:	Office Phone:	
Mario Canizares, Town Manager	972-569-1010	
Mayor David Bristol	972-965-0446	
Police Chief Doug Kowalski	972-569-1034	
Fire Chief Stuart Blasingame	972-347-2424	
Todd Rice, Communications Manager	972-569-1025	
Robyn Battle, Executive Director	972-569-1011	

All spokespersons should not only have a backup person immediately available when they are not on location, but should also let an Administrative Assistant or staff member know where they are, and how they can be reached. Spokespersons should have a cell phone with them at all times when not on Town premises.

APPENDIX D

Town of Prosper Staff Directory (Cell phone numbers are for staff and Council use only)

Town Manager

Mario Canizares

Cell:

Office: 972-569-1010

Email: mcanizares@prospertx.gov

Deputy Town Manager

Bob Scott

Cell:

Office: 972-569-1162

Email: bscott@prospertx.gov

Assistant Town Manager

Chuck Ewings

Cell:

Office: 972-569-1163

Email: cewings@prospertx.gov

Executive Director

Robyn Battle

Cell:

Office: 972-569-1011

Email: rbattle@prospertx.gov

Town Secretary

Michelle Lewis Sirianni

Cell:

Office: 972-569-1073

Email: mlsirianni@prospertx.gov

Finance Director

Chis Landrum

Cell:

Office: 972-569-1008

Email: clandrum@prospertx.gov

Human Resources Director

Vacant

Cell:

Office:

Email:

Director of Information Technology

Leigh Johnson

Cell:

Office: 972-569-1150

Email: ljohnson@prospertx.gov

Director of Parks & Recreation

Dan Baker

Cell:

Office: 972-569-1060

Email: dpbaker@prospertx.gov

Director of Library Services

Leslie Scott

Cell:

Office: 972-569-1185

Email: lscott@prospertx.gov

Director of Development Services

David Hoover

Cell:

Office: 972-569-1137

Email: dhoover@prospertx.gov

Director of Engineering

Hulon Webb

Cell:

Office: 972-569-1065

Email: hwebb@prospertx.gov

Director of Public Works

Vacant

Cell:

Office:

Email:

Police Chief

Doug Kowalski

Cell:

Office: 972-569-1034

Email: dkowalski@prospertx.gov

Fire Chief

Stuart Blasingame

Cell:

Office: 972-347-2424

Email: sblasingame@prospertx.gov

Town Attorney

Terry Welch

Brown & Hofmeister, L.L.P.

Cell:

Office: 214-747-6104

Email: twelch@bhlaw.net

APPENDIX D

Crisis Communications Tools

- ☐ Checklist (internal & external)
- ☐ Additional Tools
- ☐ Key Audience Checklist
- ☐ Media Statement Template
- ☐ Frequently Asked Questions in a Crisis
- ☐ Tweet Template
- ☐ Media Log
- ☐ Media Guidelines for Town Employees
- ☐ Social Media Guidelines
- ☐ Spokesperson Guidelines
- ☐ Emergency Communications Kit

APPENDIX D

Crisis Communications Checklist

This checklist is designed to enhance the Town Communications staff's ability to reach key audiences in a crisis.

Internal

- ☐ Cell phone and/or laptop
- ☐ Teams or Zoom meeting capability
- ☐ Employee email lists
- ☐ Employee cell phone numbers
- ☐ Town voicemail notification system
- ☐ Employee text message notification system
- ☐ Employee intranet
- ☐ Media Relations Policy
- ☐ Social Media Policy
- ☐ Designated meeting place for staff if cell phones are out
- ☐ Other:

External

- ☐ Media contact list
- ☐ Email addresses for key audiences/influencers
- ☐ Office and cell numbers for key audiences/influencers
- ☐ Email notification system access (Constant Contact)
- ☐ Social media access and monitoring – all platforms
- ☐ Website access – Homepage, Hot Topics and/or Media Releases page
- ☐ Free news coverage monitoring (Google Alerts, etc.)
- ☐ Paid news and social media monitoring (Meltwater, Cision, TV Eyes, etc.)
- ☐ Customer inquiry monitoring (social@prospertx.gov)
- ☐ Media assembly area
- ☐ Other:

APPENDIX D

Additional Tools

In a crisis that could impact public health and safety, property, or the environment, or has gained major public attention, consider using one or more of the following tools to enhance your communications efforts:

- ☐ Media log (see template)
- ☐ Media email address to direct incoming emails to one location
- ☐ Media voicemail to direct incoming calls to one location
- ☐ Media alerts/invitations to media briefings and press conferences
- ☐ Media briefings – for larger groups of reporters/bloggers in person or via live stream video or conference call
- ☐ Live video streaming – Facebook Live, YouTube, Zoom, etc.
- ☐ Virtual meeting technology – Zoom, Teams, etc.
- ☐ Media interviews – one-on-one
- ☐ Separate website or web page dedicated to a prolonged crisis
- ☐ Instructional videos
- ☐ Infographics
- ☐ Conference calls with influencers/key customers
- ☐ Crisis hotline: 800-number with recorded message or call center
- ☐ Phone scripts to assist customer service, other personnel in responding to incoming calls
- ☐ Outbound phone calls/automated call scripts
- ☐ Community/Town Hall meetings
- ☐ Flyers, letters, door hangers
- ☐ Door-to-door visits
- ☐ Local/national ads

APPENDIX D

Key Audience Checklist

Consider all of the audiences that you may want to reach or influence in the crisis. Prioritize your list to help you select communications tactics to target the most important audiences.

- ☐ Management
- ☐ Employees
- ☐ Employees' family members
- ☐ Strategic Partners
- ☐ Investors/Shareholders
- ☐ Affected constituents
- ☐ Donors/Sponsors
- ☐ Influencers/Advisors
- ☐ Volunteers
- ☐ Vendors
- ☐ Subcontractors
- ☐ Consultants
- ☐ Neighbors
- ☐ General public
- ☐ Social media followers – all platforms
- ☐ Town, County, State Legislators and their key staff
- ☐ Government regulators
- ☐ Public agencies
- ☐ Industry/trade association leadership
- ☐ Professional association leadership
- ☐ Nonprofit leadership
- ☐ Nonprofit members
- ☐ Environmental organizations
- ☐ Consumer advocacy organizations
- ☐ Local news media
- ☐ National news media
- ☐ International news media
- ☐ Trade/professional media
- ☐ Ethnic/specialty media
- ☐ Other:

APPENDIX D

Media Statement Template

At the first sign that a crisis is brewing, the CCRT will develop a “standby statement.” The standby statement will enable the Town to quickly respond to media calls, social media posts and internal and customer inquiries. Know that you won’t have many facts early in the crisis, when the pressure for information is most intense. Offer the facts you have at the time. Update the statement as you learn more.

When you release the statement to the media, you may choose to post the statement on your website, relay it via social media and provide it to key audiences via email, text, Intranet and other communications tools.

Template

On (date/time), (describe situation) occurred OR (name alleged XYZ incident occurred.)

We have learned (describe known facts about the situation). We understand that (estimate/number) of (people/property/other) were involved. This is all we know at this time.

We are in the process of (gathering the facts about the situation/working with investigative authorities/other actions) to determine (how/why) this happened. OR, we have investigated and concluded that (describe conclusion.)

Additional Messages

In the event of illness, injury or death, add an empathy statement:

- a. We are in the process of notifying the families of these individuals. Our heartfelt concern/condolences go out to all of them.

Describe any instructions for people to follow or plans to continue to communicate:

- a. We are working with (police/fire/health/other authorities) to protect the (health/safety/other) of our (employees/residents/volunteers/other).
- b. We have advised the (employees/residents/volunteers/other) to (describe action you have asked them to take).
- c. We will post more information on our website at (address) as it becomes available. We will also provide updates via (describe communications tools)
- d. We plan to (hold a press conference/issue a news release or statement) on (day/time).

Frequently Asked Questions in a Crisis

Core Questions

- ☐ What happened?
- ☐ Who was impacted?
- ☐ When did it happen?
- ☐ Where did it happen?
- ☐ Why did it happen?
- ☐ What are you doing about it?

Other Potential Questions

- ☐ Was anyone harmed? Who?
- ☐ Are those that were harmed getting help? How?
- ☐ Are people out of danger?
- ☐ Is the situation under control?
- ☐ Has this ever happened before?
- ☐ What does this all mean?
- ☐ Who is in charge?
- ☐ What can we expect next?
- ☐ What are you advising people to do?
- ☐ When do you expect to resolve the situation?
- ☐ Who else is involved in the response?
- ☐ Did you have any forewarning that this might happen?
- ☐ Why didn't you prevent from happening?
- ☐ Could this have been avoided? How?
- ☐ What else could go wrong?
- ☐ Who is to blame?
- ☐ When did you find out?
- ☐ When did you respond?
- ☐ When did you disclose the situation?
- ☐ Who is conducting the investigation?
- ☐ What are you going to do after the investigation?
- ☐ What have you found out so far?
- ☐ Has anyone broken the law?
- ☐ Has anyone made mistakes? Who?
- ☐ Have you told us everything you know?
- ☐ What are you not telling us?
- ☐ What effect will this have on the organization, constituents and the public?
- ☐ Do you accept responsibility for what happened?
- ☐ Can this happen in another location?
- ☐ What is the worst-case outcome of this crisis?
- ☐ What lessons did you learn?
- ☐ What will you do to prevent this from happening again?

APPENDIX D

Tweet Template

Potential tweet elements:

- ☐ @(author)
- ☐ # (Alert/MediaAdvisory/Update)
- ☐ # (event/incident/subject)
- ☐ links to your website and/or external authority websites (police, fire, American Red Cross, etc.) for more information
- ☐ photos/instructional videos/other images as appropriate

Sample tweets regarding backpacks found on Boston Marathon finish line, April 2014:

Boston Police Dept. @bostonpolice Apr 16

UPDATE: One Arrested for Hoax Device at Marathon Finish Line

<http://bpdnews.com/news/2014/4/16/update-one-arrested-for-hoax-device-at-marathon-finish-line> ...

Boston Police Dept. @bostonpolice Apr 15

#BPDSafetyPublicAlert: To ease fears & concerns relating to backpacks - #BPD again discouraging their use at this year's #BostonMarathon.

Boston Police Dept. @bostonpolice Apr 15

#BPDPublicSafetyAlert: #BPD confirming a male suspect in custody in connection to the unattended backpacks found at the Finish Line.

Boston Police Dept. @bostonpolice Apr 15

#BPDMediaAdvisory: For officer safety - media outlets are discouraged from showing any live video of backpacks found near Finish Line.

Boston Police Dept. @bostonpolice Apr 15

#BPDPublicSafetyAlert: #BPD Bomb Squad still on scene in the area of Marathon Finish Line investigating call for 2 unattended backpacks.

Boston Police Dept. @bostonpolice Apr 15

#BPDPublicSafetyAlert: Boylston St has been closed & MBTA Green Line service temporarily suspended. Community members asked to avoid area.

APPENDIX D

Media Log

In a major crisis, you are likely to receive a barrage of media calls immediately and throughout the duration of the crisis. A media log will help keep track of reporter/blogger inquiries, evaluate interview requests and respond with consistent information.

Date	Time	Outlet	Name	Phone & Cell	Email	Questions

APPENDIX D

Media Guidelines for Town Employees

The goal of our media guidelines is to try to prevent unauthorized spokespeople from talking to the media. While these are part of the Town's guidelines, it is good to distribute at the first warning signs of a crisis or when it has hit.

Sample Email:

To: Town of Prosper Employees

From: Town Manager

Date: (Month, Day, Year)

Re: Town of Prosper Media Guidelines

The Town of Prosper has Media Guidelines regarding calls or visits from reporters. If a member of the media wants to talk with you, please do not answer any questions. Follow these steps:

1. Tell the reporter, "I am not an authorized spokesperson for the Town of Prosper. Please contact Todd Rice, our Communications and Media Relations Manager at 972-569-1025 or trice@prospertx.gov
2. If a member of the media attempts to ask you questions in person, repeat the above. Do not agree to go on camera or answer any media questions. Ask, "Do you have a business card?"
3. Immediately call, text or email the complete contact information to Todd Rice, Communications and Media Relations Manager.

We appreciate your cooperation in following this media policy.

APPENDIX D

Social Media Guidelines

The goal of our social media guidelines is to try to prevent unauthorized spokespeople from speaking on behalf of the Town via social media.

Protocol/Rules of Engagement:

- ☐ Abide by Town of Prosper social media guidelines and policies (see Chapter 18 of the Town's Administrative Regulations).
- ☐ Pause all prior scheduled social media posts until the crisis has passed.
- ☐ Posting authority:
 - Communications staff may access the social media channels and the social media dashboard.
 - During a crisis, any content posted on social media sites must be approved by the Communications and Media Relations Manager.

APPENDIX D

Town Spokesperson Guidelines

1. Express compassion to those directly impacted by the crisis. Offer empathy messages first, before the facts.
2. Think of messages as your quotes. Persuasive messages interpret, explain and educate. Simplify complex information.
3. Take an active role in the interview. Ask the reporter for a quick overview before you begin. Make the first answer count to ensure you get your key points across.
4. Focus 100% on the interview. If you're on the phone with a reporter, remove all distractions. Have the Q&A or statement handy either in print, on your smart phone, tablet or laptop. Jot down reporter questions to help you focus on what they are asking and how to respond.
5. Practice bridging to the information you want to convey. Briefly answer a negative or irrelevant question, then introduce or bridge to your message. Elaborate when asked positive questions. "Yes, that's correct, and what's more..." Provide brief answers to negative questions. Set the record straight when the reporter has his or her facts wrong. Say, "No, that is not correct, and let me explain."
6. Decline to speculate on the motives or actions of others. Politely say, "I wish I could help you, however you should contact them directly."
7. Don't feel obligated to answer every question on the spot. It's perfectly fine to say "I don't know" vs. risking off-the-cuff answer that may turn out to be wrong. If you don't know the answer, say so. Add that you or someone from the organization will try to get back to them with the answer as soon as possible.
8. If you are unable to comment, explain why; either because of confidentiality, litigation or because police, fire or other authority has requested that you refer questions to them.
9. Never say anything "off the record." The reporter could inadvertently use your comment, or your "anonymous" quote could be traced back to you. Always assume that anything you say or put in writing could be used in a sound bite or news story.
10. Stay on message. Even if the reporter uses an accusatory tone or is rude, remember that it is often a tactic to provoke a reaction. Don't take it personally. If the reporter persists in using a hostile tone, consider ending the interview and suggest talking at a later time.
11. The toughest rule for most people to follow, and the most important, is to stop and think before answering questions. It only takes a few seconds to shape a quote that will be on the record for years.
12. Do not feel obligated to conduct a live or recorded interview either in-person or over the phone. In most cases it is acceptable to ask the reporter to submit their questions in writing and respond via email.
13. Be respectful of the reporter's deadlines. If you are unable to respond immediately, ask when they need to receive a response and try to accommodate them if possible.

APPENDIX E

**TOWN OF PROSPER
ADMINISTRATIVE
REGULATIONS**

SECTION 18.05: BRAND GUIDE

The Town of Prosper Brand Guide was developed for the purpose of establishing a graphic identity for the Town. The color palette, typography, and proper use of the Town logo helps to solidify the brand of the Town and influences the impression our residents and community members have about the Town of Prosper. It is essential that the elements in the Brand Guide are used correctly and consistently to solidify the perception of the Town's brand in the minds of visitors, residents, businesses, and employees.

The Brand Guide is to be used as a resource for designing Town of Prosper print and digital materials, including, but not limited to, letterhead, business cards, presentations, marketing materials, forms, apparel, promotional products, publications, the Town website and official social media platforms. Questions about the information contained in the Brand Guide should be referred to the Communications Division.

Brand Guidelines



**Town of Prosper, TX
Brand Guidelines
Administrative Regulations
Section 18.05
Approved February 8, 2023**

Town of Prosper, TX
250 West First Street
Prosper, TX 75078
T | (972) 569-1025
E | trice@prospertx.gov
W | prospertx.gov

Welcome

Welcome to the Town of Prosper, Texas Brand Guidelines. This document contains all you need to know about how our brand should be used in print and digital materials ensuring it remains consistent throughout. Using our brand correctly is extremely important to us, so we ask that the guide is always referred and adhered to. We hope you enjoy getting to know our brand better.

Table of Contents

1. Logo.....	4
Master Logo.....	5
Logo Color	6
Variations	6
Logo Variations	7
Emblems & Watermarks	8
Department.....	9
Logos	9
2. Color Palette	10
Brand Colors	11
Midnight Blue	12
Rich Red	13
Sky Blue.....	14
Cool Gray.....	15
Patina Green.....	16
Chickadee Yellow.....	17
Sepia Brown	18
3. Typography	19
Use of Type.....	20
Arial.....	21

1. Logo

The single most identifiable element of our identity is our logo. Consistent use of our logo is key to retaining brand strength through immediate recognition of who we are and what we stand for as a brand.

APPENDIX E

Master Logo

The iterations below are the master logo shown in full color and one color (black). Full color should always be used when possible. When necessary, one color can be used.

For example: Full color should be utilized for all digital uses and any print collateral and promo items when feasible. In some instances where color options are not available or are limited, one color iterations of the logo may be used.

Full Color



One Color (Black)



Logo Color Variations

APPENDIX E

There will be some instances where the logo will need to use different color variations. Whether it is because of light vs. dark backgrounds or promotional item requirements, the following logos have been laid out for each use case.

In cases where the logo is used on a darker background, the Midnight Blue "Prosper" or the Cool Gray "Windmill" can be exchanged out for white. If there isn't enough contrast between the secondary colors and the background, the solid white logo should be utilized.

One Color

Midnight Blue - One Color



Sky Blue - One Color



Rich Red - One Color



Cool Gray - One Color



Dark Backgrounds

Not Enough Contrast



Acceptable



Not Enough Contrast



Acceptable



Not Enough Contrast



Acceptable



Logo Variations

APPENDIX E

Any changes to our logo diminish its integrity of our brand. The examples shown below are the only acceptable alternatives to our logo. The other examples shown here are some specific “do not’s.”

Our logo must be sized large enough to be easily read on every application. It is sometimes necessary to increase and decrease the logo depending on the print area. Always keep the logo in proportion and ensure the text is legible.

While smaller sizes are sometimes necessary, it is preferred that the logo appears larger when possible. When resizing, please make sure that the proportional distance between the graphics elements and text remains the same.

Acceptable Alternate Logos



Logo with tagline.



Logo in one color.

Unacceptable Alternate Logos



Do not lock-up text to the logo.



Do not alter the logo's shape in anyway.



Do not add elements or shadows to the logo.



Do not alter the logo's colors with colors outside of the color palette.



Do not rotate or distort the logo.

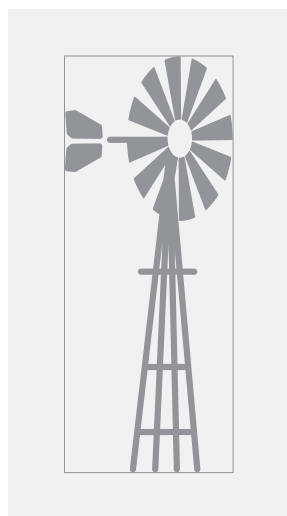


Do not change or remove any of the logo's components.

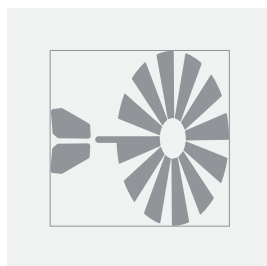
Emblems & Watermarks

Clear space (represented by the gray area below) is the area surrounding our logo that must be kept free of any text or graphic elements. By leaving space around the logo, we make sure it stands out on all of our communications.

Emblem Guidelines



Full Windmill



Windmill Blades Only

APPENDIX E

Our brand features a windmill that is historic and sentimental for the Town of Prosper, TX. It is used in our logo and can be used as an emblem or watermark, which allows for further brand recognition.

The Windmill can be used as a watermark by enlarging the image and using it at 10% or lower opacity. Please refrain from using it as a watermark with a higher opacity since it will affect legibility.

The Windmill can also be used as an emblem in special cases. It should be used as a standalone image with no text around it. Please do not rotate or distort the Windmill during resizing.

Watermark Use Examples



Letterhead Use Case



Powerpoint Use Case



Business Card Use Case

Department Logos

APPENDIX E

To ensure brand integrity, we have laid out our logo with the various departments of Prosper, TX. Any variations of the logos shown below will diminish the brand identity and is not permitted.

If any new departments are established or you need a logo that is not shown below, please contact our team. We will provide any new department or needed logos to you.

When using these logos, it is preferred that they appear as large as possible. When resizing, please make sure that the proportional distance between the graphics elements and text remains the same.

Department Text

Font Size: 90pt

Tracking: 50pt

Leading: 90pt

Department Logos



2. Color Palette

Our brand is underpinned with a color palette designed to be fresh, modern, and distinctive. Different combinations of color can dramatically change the tone and appearance of a document so it is important to consider how they work together. To help achieve greater brand recognition it is important that our color palette is applied consistently.

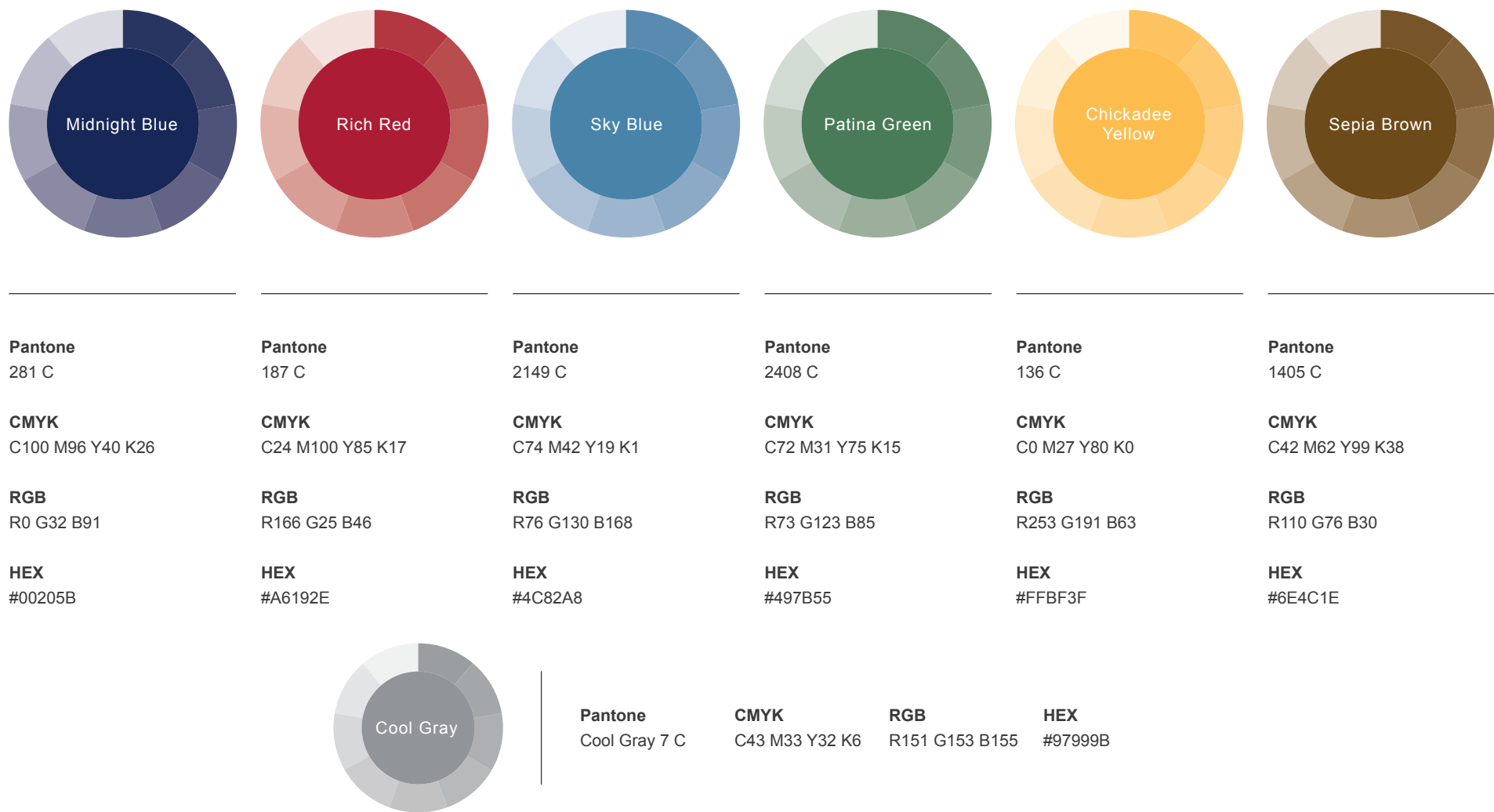
Brand Colors

APPENDIX E

Our color palette should be constant throughout all communications. A color hierarchy has been implemented, ranging from Midnight Blue being the most important to Sepia Brown being the least used.

Midnight Blue, Rich Red, Sky Blue, and Cool Gray are the brand’s primary colors and should be used most often. Patina Green, Chickadee Yellow, and Sepia Brown are used as secondary colors and should be used sparingly.

Avoid using any other colors outside of the designated color palette. Where possible Pantone colors should be used. For extra impact, special print techniques such as debossing can also be applied.



Midnight Blue

Midnight blue is bold. This color works best at 100%. If there is an occasion when you need to create contrast without adding extra colors, you can use this color in incremental tints. Our tints are increments of 10% -

APPENDIX E

90%, 80%, 70%, 60%, 50%, 40%, 30%, 20%, and 10%. Color is a key element of design, therefore it is important that Pantone colors are used to print the designs rather than CMYK. Pantone colors will provide

the maximum amount of consistency. In instances where this is not possible we have created optimized CMYK, RGB, and Hex values.

Midnight Blue

281 C

Pantone
281 C

CMYK
C100 M96 Y40 K26

RGB
R0 G32 B91

HEX
#00205B

10%

20%

30%

40%

50%

60%

70%

80%

90%

Rich Red

Rich Red is warm. This color works best at 100%. If there is an occasion when you need to create contrast without adding extra colors, you can use this color in incremental tints. Our tints are increments of 10% -

APPENDIX E

90%, 80%, 70%, 60%, 50%, 40%, 30%, 20%, and 10%. Color is a key element of design, therefore it is important that Pantone colors are used to print the designs rather than CMYK. Pantone colors will provide

the maximum amount of consistency. In instances where this is not possible we have created optimized CMYK, RGB, and Hex values.

Rich Red

187 C

Pantone
187 C

CMYK
C24 M100 Y85 K17

RGB
R166 G25 B46

HEX
#A6192E

10%

20%

30%

40%

50%

60%

70%

80%

90%

Sky Blue

Sky Blue is cool. This color works best at 100%. If there is an occasion when you need to create contrast without adding extra colors, you can use this color in incremental tints. Our tints are increments of 10% -

APPENDIX E

90%, 80%, 70%, 60%, 50%, 40%, 30%, 20%, and 10%. Color is a key element of design, therefore it is important that Pantone colors are used to print the designs rather than CMYK. Pantone colors will provide

the maximum amount of consistency. In instances where this is not possible we have created optimized CMYK, RGB, and Hex values.

Sky Blue

2149 C

Pantone
2149 C

CMYK
C74 M42 Y19 K1

RGB
R76 G130 B168

HEX
#4C82A8

10%

20%

30%

40%

50%

60%

70%

80%

90%

Cool Gray

Cool Gray is professional. This color works best at 100%. If there is an occasion when you need to create contrast without adding extra colors, you can use this color in incremental tints.

APPENDIX E

Our tints are increments of 10% - 90%, 80%, 70%, 60%, 50%, 40%, 30%, 20%, and 10%. Color is a key element of design, therefore it is important that Pantone colors are used to print the designs rather than

CMYK. Pantone colors will provide the maximum amount of consistency. In instances where this is not possible we have created optimized CMYK, RBG, and Hex values.

Cool Gray

Cool Gray 7 C

Pantone
Cool Gray 7 C

CMYK
C43 M33 Y32 K6

RGB
R151 G153 B155

HEX
#97999B

10%

20%

30%

40%

50%

60%

70%

80%

90%

Patina Green

Patina Green is fresh. This color works best at 100%. If there is an occasion when you need to create contrast without adding extra colors, you can use this color in incremental tints.

APPENDIX E

Our tints are increments of 10% - 90%, 80%, 70%, 60%, 50%, 40%, 30%, 20%, and 10%. Color is a key element of design, therefore it is important that Pantone colors are used to print the designs rather than

CMYK. Pantone colors will provide the maximum amount of consistency. In instances where this is not possible we have created optimized CMYK, RGB, and Hex values.

Patina Green

2048 C

Pantone
2408 C

CMYK
C72 M31 Y75 K15

RGB
R73 G123 B85

HEX
#497B55

10%

20%

30%

40%

50%

60%

70%

80%

90%

Chickadee Yellow

Chickadee Yellow is bright. This color works best at 100%. If there is an occasion when you need to create contrast without adding extra colors, you can use this color in incremental tints.

APPENDIX E

Our tints are increments of 10% - 90%, 80%, 70%, 60%, 50%, 40%, 30%, 20%, and 10%. Color is a key element of design, therefore it is important that Pantone colors are used to print the designs rather than

CMYK. Pantone colors will provide the maximum amount of consistency. In instances where this is not possible we have created optimized CMYK, RGB, and Hex values.

Chickadee Yellow

136 C

Pantone
136 C

CMYK
C0 M27 Y80 K0

RGB
R253 G191 B63

HEX
#FFBF3F

10%

20%

30%

40%

50%

60%

70%

80%

90%

Sepia Brown

Sepia Brown is classic. This color works best at 100%. If there is an occasion when you need to create contrast without adding extra colors, you can use this color in incremental tints.

APPENDIX E

Our tints are increments of 10% - 90%, 80%, 70%, 60%, 50%, 40%, 30%, 20%, and 10%. Color is a key element of design, therefore it is important that Pantone colors are used to print the designs rather than

CMYK. Pantone colors will provide the maximum amount of consistency. In instances where this is not possible we have created optimized CMYK, RGB, and Hex values.

Sepia Brown

1405 C

Pantone
1405 C

CMYK
C42 M62 Y99 K38

RGB
R110 G76 B30

HEX
#6E4C1E

10%

20%

30%

40%

50%

60%

70%

80%

90%

3. Typography

Arial IS our brand typeface. It should be used in all instances where typography is required. Typography shouldn't be overlooked as a key element within our toolkit. It is important to adhere to the leading, tracking, and text arrangement specified in this document to achieve brand consistency throughout.

Use of Type

Arial Black is our headline weight.

Arial Bold is used for secondary headlines and tag lines.

Arial Regular is used for captions and small bodies of text.

Arial Italic is used for captions and small bodies of text.

Arial Light can be used when a more delicate weight is needed.

APPENDIX E

Arial

Arial is our body copy typeface. It should be used in all instances where typography is required. It is a simple, clean, and legible typeface that is utilized in our logo.

It is also a web-safe font that will translate well across all devices, operating systems, and software. We use two weights of Arial: Bold and Regular.

It is important to adhere to the leading, tracking, and text arrangement specified in this document to help achieve brand consistency throughout.

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Aa

Weights

APPENDIX E

Black

Size: 18pt

Tracking: 0pt

Leading: 25pt

Available from:

Pre-Installed on any device or

Upon Request

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

0123456789!@#\$%^&*()_+{}[]\|:;”<>,.?~

£ÃÆÇÈØ×ßÜåæç

Bold

Size: 18pt

Tracking: 0pt

Leading: 25pt

Available from:

Pre-Installed on any device or

Upon Request

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

0123456789!@#\$%^&*()_+{}[]\|:;”<>,.?~

Ç×ßÜç

Regular

Size: 18pt

Tracking: 0pt

Leading: 25pt

Available from:

Pre-Installed on any device or

Upon Request

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

0123456789!@#\$%^&*()_+{}[]\|:;”<>,.?~

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Light

Size: 18pt

Tracking: 0pt

Leading: 25pt

Available from:

Pre-Installed on any device or

Upon Request

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

0123456789!@#\$%^&*()_+{}[] \|:;”<>,.?~

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