

The Corporation of the Township of North Huron

By-law No. 38-2026

Being a By-law to adopt a Corporate Communications Policy for the Corporation of the Township of North Huron.

This accessible version of this by-law is printed under the authority of the Council of the Township of North Huron.

Printing Date: May 20, 2026

Disclaimer:

The following version is an electronic reproduction made available for information only. It is not an official version of the by-law. The format may be different, and plans, pictures, other graphics or text may be missing or altered. The Township of North Huron does not warrant the accuracy of this electronic version. This consolidation cannot be distributed or used for commercial purposes. It may be used for other purposes only if you repeat this disclaimer and the notice of copyright. Official versions of all by-laws can be obtained from the Clerk's Department by calling 519-357-3550.

The Corporation of the Township of North Huron

By-law No. 38-2026

Being a By-law to adopt a Corporate Communications Policy for the Corporation of the Township of North Huron

WHEREAS Section 5(3) of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c.25, as amended provides that municipal power shall be exercised by by-law;

AND WHEREAS Section 224 of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c.25, as amended, states "It is the role of Council to (b) develop and evaluate the policies and programs of the municipality";

AND WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the Township of North Huron deems it desirous to adopt a Corporate Communications Policy;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the Corporation of the Township of North Huron ENACTS as follows:

1. That the Corporate Communications Policy attached hereto as Schedule "A" is hereby adopted and shall form part of this by-law.
2. That this by-law shall come into force and takes effect on the day of the final passing thereof.

Read a first and second time this 19th day of May, 2026.

Read a third time and passed this 19th day of May, 2026.

Paul Heffer, Reeve

CORPORATE SEAL

Carson Lamb, Clerk

Township of North Huron

Corporate Communications Policy



Table of Contents

1. Purpose	3
2. Policy Objectives	3
3. Values and Guiding Principles.....	3
4. Scope	4
5. Definitions.....	4
6. Responsibilities.....	5
7. Visual Branding and Editorial Branding Guidelines	6
8. Corporate Communications	6
9. Media Relations and Conflict Communications Training	9
10. Copyright	10
11. Reporting Violations.....	10
12. Inappropriate Communications Toward Employees	10
13. Amendments	11
14. Policy Review	11
15. Related Township Documents.....	12
16. Acronyms	12
17. Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.....	12
18. Artificial Intelligence.....	13

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Township of North Huron's (Township) Corporate Communications Policy (Policy) is to establish an internal and external communications framework that foster equitable, consistent, effective, timely and transparent communications as key components of its information sharing.

The Township is committed to improving its sharing of information and community engagement with openness and clarity supporting cross-departmental collaboration and service excellence.

2. Policy Objectives

- 2.1 This Policy provides the framework for the Township's Corporate Communications to achieve the following objectives:
- a) Enhance public engagement by fostering transparent, timely, and effective communications with stakeholders.
 - b) Improve accessibility and inclusivity, ensuring communications are accessible, inclusive and compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
 - c) Administer the Policy and its related procedures in accordance with the Municipal Act, 2001, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and any other relevant legislation.
 - d) Manage crisis communications by providing a structured approach for timely and accurate information during emergencies.
 - e) Promote awareness of the Township's services and initiatives informing residents and stakeholders about programs, services, policies and community developments.
 - f) Encourage transparent communications and facilitate dialogue between the Township and the community to foster trust and engagement.

3. Values and Guiding Principles

- 3.1 All communications shall embody and reflect the Township's values as contained within the Township's Strategic Plan and through the following:
- a) Accessibility by using plain language and a variety of communication methods to be inclusive and responsive to the needs of the target

audience.

- b) Diversity by using gender neutral, and non-discriminatory language and excluding words and/or images that connote stereotypes, any negative or passive language relating to physical appearances and exclude clichés, slang, and jargon.
- c) Accountability by being responsible for the actions, goals, and objectives of the Township and when an error is made, it must be acknowledged and corrected, with intention and accountability.
- d) Cordiality and professionalism by delivering communications with friendliness, kindness and compassion.
- e) Timeliness by aiming to communicate with residents as quickly as possible without compromising key values, e.g., should an interaction or request require additional or detailed information and input, the request should be first acknowledged as received with an estimate of how long a more thorough response will take.
- f) Transparency by communicating honestly and openly with stakeholders including providing proactive disclosure of information where appropriate.

4. Scope

- 4.1 The Policy applies to all internal and external Township communications and is inclusive of all Members of Council, employees, contractors, and volunteers.

5. Definitions

- 5.1 "**CAO**" means the Chief Administrative Officer for the Corporation of the Township of North Huron.
- 5.2 "**Office of the CAO (Communications Team)**" means a working group responsible for managing internal and external communications including public relations, media relations, social media management, crisis communications, branding, marketing, and stakeholder engagement. This team includes the Community Engagement Coordinator (CEC) and Economic Development Officer (EDO) with direct inputs from the Reeve, the Director of Legislative Services/Clerk (CLERK) and the CAO.
- 5.3 "**Corporate Communication(s)**" means the variety of ways the Township, as a government body, communicates with external and internal audiences.

- 5.4 **"Emergency"** means a situation that requires prompt action to maintain community health and safety and to limit damage to persons, property, or the environment.
- 5.5 **"Inappropriate Communications"** means communications that includes, but is not limited to, in-person, electronic, telephonic, written or other forms of communication that:
- a) a person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause the subject of the communication, the person receiving the communication, or both to feel humiliated or intimidated
 - b) is discriminatory, threatening, violent or defamatory
 - c) is part of a pattern of communications that may be considered frivolous, vexatious or made with malicious intent
- 5.6 **"Media Product"** means the type of document used to communicate with members of the media and the public, including, but not limited to, news releases, press conferences, media releases, public service announcements (PSAs) and media advisories.
- 5.7 **"Media Relations"** means reactively or proactively engaging with representatives from print, online, social or broadcast media outlets.
- 5.8 **"Social media"** includes websites and digital applications that enable users to create, share and interact with content online, or to participate in social networking, which may change from time to time.
- 5.9 **"Stakeholder"** means a resident, business, municipal neighbor, elected official, staff, upper tier level of government, board, committee, authority, agency, association and anyone participating in municipal affairs.
- 5.10 **"Township"** means the Corporation of the Township of North Huron.

6. Responsibilities

- 6.1 The Communications Team provides media relations support to the Township as required and which may include:
- a) Coordinating day-to-day interaction of Township staff with media.
 - b) Preparing Township staff by providing advice and support to facilitate positive media interaction.

- c) Providing timely notification to the CAO and Communications Team of issues in which there is media interest.

7. Visual Branding and Editorial Branding Guidelines

- 7.1 All corporate communications must adhere to the *Township's Visual Brand and Editorial Branding Guidelines*. Usage of the Township's brand outside of corporate communications shall be at the discretion of the CAO. It is the staff's responsibility to ensure that the logo and brand are used in accordance with these guidelines as contained within the Township's *Corporate Communications Plan* and in accordance with *The Canadian Style: A Guide to Writing and Editing*.

8. Corporate Communications

- 8.1 The Township shall maintain a website to provide the public with information regarding municipal services, Council decisions, Council and Committee meeting schedules, minutes and agendas, by-laws, policies, activities, events, and ongoing government business.
- 8.2 The CAO shall be the official spokesperson for matters related to the administration of the Township. All media inquiries shall be referred to the CEC to further be discussed with the CAO.
- 8.3 If authorized by the CAO, an employee may serve as the designated spokesperson for matters relating to their position, skills, and expertise.
- 8.4 The Township recognizes all federal commemorative days as specified on the Government of Canada website at Canada.ca, as well as any additional special days identified by the Reeve through Township social media accounts.
- 8.5 All Township social media use and interaction by employees and Council shall be done in adherence with the Township's Social Media Policy.
- 8.6 Emergency Communications:
 - a) In times of emergencies or crises, the Township shall communicate all information needed to protect the health, safety and security of residents and their property.
 - b) Communications decisions shall be made by the Township

Emergency Information Officer (EIO) in consultation with the Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) and the CAO.

- c) Communications may take any form as necessary to keep residents, businesses and visitors safe and that they receive accurate, timely, and relevant information to prevent, mitigate, respond to, or recover from an emergency.
- d) Due to the role of the Fire and Rescue Services, the Fire Department has its own spokesperson, being the Director of Fire & Public Safety (Fire Chief) or designate, to respond to media requests related to fire and rescue incidents.

8.7 Reeve and Council Media Relations:

- a) The Reeve is the primary spokesperson on Township matters.
- b) The Reeve, in their capacity as the spokesperson and Head of Council, may receive communications support from the Communications Team. Such assistance may include but is not limited to speaking notes for public appearances or events, scripts or research notes for media interviews, and/or key messages for media requests or emergency situations.
- c) In all communications from Members of Council, including the use of social media, the following shall be considered:
 - i. Obligations under the Council's Code of Conduct.
 - ii. Obligations under Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation.
 - iii. The accuracy of the information provided.
 - iv. If the communication could bring about disrepute to or expose the Township to legal action.
 - v. Whether the subject or position on a matter is enabled or prohibited by a statutory law, Township By-law and/or Policy.
 - vi. Whether the communication reflects Township values.

vii. Whether Council has taken a particular position, by way of a motion, on the topic.

- d) When sharing Township information on social media, Members of Council are encouraged to share directly from the Township's official social media channels to ensure information is accurate and up to date.
 - i. Individual members of Council are encouraged to reflect the position of Council in their communications, or state they are providing a personal opinion whether the Council member is in support or not in support of the council decision. Where an individual Member of Council expresses a personal opinion, whether written or verbal, it must be explicitly clear to the audience that the Member is not speaking on behalf of the Township or Council.

Accordingly, when a Member of Council is communicating as an individual, they may include the following statement in written correspondence:

"The information contained in this correspondence reflects the views of an individual Member of Council, and not those of Council as a whole or the Township of North Huron."

- ii. With respect to communicating the business of the Committees of Council, the Members of Council serving as Chair shall refer to and be bound by the policies of their respective Committee.
- e) Media inquiries received by Members of Council.
- f) Councillors shall refer all media inquiries to the Reeve and CAO for direction and assistance.
- g) The Reeve shall be the default spokesperson for all media inquiries regarding Council matters, unless another Member of Council is designated by the Reeve to respond to a particular matter.
- h) Nothing in this policy is intended to limit a Council Member's ability to respond to communication received from the public.

8.8 Staff Media Relations:

- a) Township staff contacted directly by the media shall refer all inquiries to their immediate Director as well as the CEC.
- b) The CEC will provide support to the designated Township spokespersons in the way of briefing notes, communications messages, question and answer packages or other information materials.
- c) All media crews, reporters, etc., requesting access to non-public areas shall sign-in at the front desk and the CAO and/or the CEC will be notified to facilitate the visit.
- d) All media products, news conferences and media advisories are arranged by the CEC (and/or Communications Lead in event of emergency) in conjunction with the appropriate department.
- e) All media products shall identify the CAO as the contact for further information and, where appropriate, a program contact is identified as well.
- f) All Media products are to be prepared and coordinated by the Office of the CAO (and/or Clerk). If a media product is initiated by a department, a draft is to be sent to the CEC for review and distribution to the media.
- g) Where appropriate, media products will include an approved quotation from the Reeve. A Member of Council, staff member or a third-party stakeholder may also be asked to provide a quotation. This will be determined by the Reeve and/or CAO.
- h) Prior to publication of a media product containing quotes, approval of the final product must be obtained by each individual quoted.

9. Media Relations and Conflict Communications Training

- 9.1 Media relations and conflict communications training is offered through the Communications Team to the Reeve, Members of Council, Department Heads and other individuals who are designated as media spokespersons. The purpose of the training is to assist them in communicating the Township's activities and operations to the public in an effective, consistent and non-confrontational or reactionary manner.

10. Copyright

- 10.1 The use of images in print and digital communications products, and their distribution to target audiences, will comply with Canada's *Copyright Act*. The Township will ensure that the ownership rights associated with works subject to copyright are fully respected in the Township's communications channels and products.

11. Reporting Violations

- 11.1 Members of Council and employees shall immediately report known or suspected violations of this Policy to the CAO. All good faith allegations of violations of this policy will be confidentially investigated.

12. Inappropriate Communications Toward Employees

- 12.1 If employees believe they have received inappropriate communication, they will report the incident in writing to their supervisor through an Incident Report. Where the incident is limited to written or electronic communication, a copy of that written or electronic communication should be included.
- 12.2 If, upon receipt and review of an Incident Report, the manager or director believes the incident may have violated this Policy and/or any other Township policy, they will forward the Incident Report and other relevant background information to the CAO.
- 12.3 When the CAO receives an Incident Report, they will take such action as they deem appropriate in the circumstances, considering the following guidelines:
- a) whether the inappropriate communication concerned a matter for which the author of the communication had a statutory right to be heard;
 - b) the role of the individual to whom the Inappropriate communication was directed;
 - c) whether the inappropriate communication relates to comments and feedback regarding a program, service, or initiative of the Township;
 - d) whether the inappropriate communication is violent, threatening, defamatory of an individual or discriminatory;

- e) whether the inappropriate communication was a single or repeated act;
 - f) whether the person has acknowledged wrongdoing or apologized for the inappropriate communication;
 - g) whether the person had received previous warnings or actions from the Township regarding inappropriate communication.
- 12.4 The CAO may determine that the incident did not constitute a violation of this Policy and take no further action.
- 12.5 The CAO may determine that the incident constituted a violation of this Policy and take one or more of the following steps:
- a) issue a written warning letter to the person who engaged in inappropriate communication.
 - b) impose limits on the way and channels through which a person communicates with employees including:
 - i) limiting the person to communicating in a particular manner (e.g., email only).
 - ii) at a particular time (e.g., telephone calls only one day per week, emails only reviewed once per week).
 - iii) a particular duration of time (e.g., a maximum time for telephone calls) require that all communications from the person be directed to their respective manager and advise other employees not to respond.
 - c) any other action the CAO considers appropriate in the circumstances.

13. Amendments

13.1 None.

14. Policy Review

14.1 This policy shall be reviewed at a minimum of every two years, pending departmental changes and any recognized national and/or global

communications developments.

15. Related Township Documents

- Township of North Huron Strategic Plan 2024-2027
- Social Media Policy
- Internal Communications Plan
- Communications and Marketing Plan (External)
- Visual Branding Guidelines
- Editorial Branding Guidelines
- Township [Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Statement Policy](#)
- Artificial Intelligence Policy (To Be Proposed)

16. Acronyms

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AODA	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CEC	Community Engagement Coordinator
CEMC	Community Emergency Management Coordinator
EIO	Emergency Information Officer
Policy	Corporate Communications Policy
Township	Township of North Huron

17. Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

- 17.1 The Township recognizes and embraces the principles of Truth and Reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous population, as outlined in the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report.](#)

17.2 The Township consulted with local First Nations communities and received feedback on the development and finalizing of the two following land acknowledgement statements:

- a) "We [I] would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Anishinabewaki, Odawa and Mississauga Peoples."
- b) "The Township of North Huron would like to begin by acknowledging that we are situated on Treaty 29 and Treaty 45 1/2 territory and the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Anishinabewaki, Odawa and Mississauga Peoples. For this, we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land."

17.3 It is at the discretion of Council and staff which of the Township's Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Statements is chosen to be recited. It is encouraged be recited in the following circumstances:

- a) Council and Committee Meetings
- b) Corporate Documents (newsletters, strategic plan, etc.)
- c) North Huron Special Events

For more information about the land acknowledgement statement, please refer to the [Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Statement Policy](#).

18. Artificial Intelligence

18.1 The Township recognizes the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence in all aspects of society including the workplace. An Artificial Intelligence Policy will be developed by the Township to ensure a common understanding and agreed-upon practices for how this evolving technology can be used as a positive tool for advancing Township goals.