

DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: Review of Social Media Channels

Date Prepared: March 6, 2025

Report To: Committee of the Whole

Councillor and Role: N/A

Ward: N/A

Decision/Direction Required: To review recommendations for the use of social media platforms for the City of St. John's.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

Social media continues to be a critical tool for communicating with residents of the City of St. John's. In 2024, the City published over 1,000 posts across its corporate accounts. The communications department has been asked to review social media channels, particularly the use of X (formerly known as Twitter), in relation to Motion passed by council on February 25.

The City's Marketing and Communications Team currently oversees multiple social media channels. This report provides a breakdown of analytics for each page in 2024. YouTube is excluded from this report as it is used primarily for video content rather than daily outreach. Additionally, LinkedIn is not included as the City only began using the platform in 2025.

Social Media Performance Overview

Below are key stats for the City's social media accounts. Most stats provide a year-over-year comparison in brackets from the 2023 calendar year. Please note that X (formerly Twitter) has changed access to account insights, making reach and views data available only through a premium paid feature. As a result, the City cannot report on this data.

Key definitions for the analytics are as follows:

- **Likes/Followers:** The number of users who have liked or followed the page. Likes for X content refers to the feature of liking a post.
- **Reach:** The total number of unique users who have seen the content. This represents how widely messaging has been distributed.
- **Views:** The total number of times the page and its posts or videos have been watched or seen. This may include multiple views from the same user.

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- **Content Interactions:** The total number of actions users take on a post, such as likes, comments, shares, or reactions, indicating engagement levels. The only interaction data available for X are likes and retweets.
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City of St. John's

Facebook

- **Likes:** 45,225 (+23.3%)
- **Reach:** 967,582 (+61.1%)
- **Views:** 4,136,745
- **Content Interactions:** 60,608 (+86.75%)

Instagram

- **Total Followers:** 18,511 (+4.3%)
- **Reach:** 60,811 (+54.9%)
- **Views:** 4,255,440
- **Content Interactions:** 5,188 (+100%)

X

- **Followers:** 65,524 (+0.3%)
 - **Total Likes:** 4,761
 - **Retweets:** 2,593
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What's Happening St. John's

Facebook

- **Likes:** 10,284 (+34.5%)
- **Reach:** 220,762 (+25.9%)
- **Views:** 328,035
- **Content Interactions:** 7,948 (-45.4%)

Instagram

Note: No year-over-year stats available due to changes in account structure in 2024.

- **Total Followers:** 731
- **Reach:** 21,107
- **Views:** 21,696
- **Content Interactions:** 535

X

- **Followers:** 2,304 (+3.8%)
- **Total Likes:** 185
- **Retweets:** 173

Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)

X

- **Followers:** 1,042 (+1.4%)
- **Total Likes:** 355
- **Retweets:** 470

Humane Services

Facebook

- **Likes:** 17,154 (+38.5%)
 - **Reach:** 424,026 (+30.2%)
 - **Views:** 588,081
 - **Content Interactions:** 37,393 (+35.6%)
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Analysis & Considerations

- **Facebook remains the most effective engagement tool.** The City's Facebook account has the highest reach, interactions, and referral traffic, making it the most valuable platform for communication with residents.
- **Declining engagement on X.** While the City's X account maintains over 65,000 followers, it has seen a decline of over 500 followers since January 1. Additionally, the use of X as a referral tool for website traffic has dropped significantly. Based on the analysis, X is no longer a key engagement tool for the City. By shifting focus to Facebook and Instagram—where the City sees the highest interaction and referral rates—communication with residents can remain effective and accessible.
- **Challenges with X's content environment.** There is uncertainty around content moderation, the spread of misinformation, and the platform's approach to addressing hate speech and harassment. Increasing levels of disrespectful and negative discourse on the platform have been observed, which does not align with the City's core values of fostering a positive and respectful community. Some residents have requested that the City leave the platform.
- **Limited engagement for What's Happening St. John's and LIP on X.** These accounts show low interaction and declining referral traffic, making their continued operation on X ineffective.
- **Humane Services Facebook account remains valuable.** Given its strong engagement levels, no changes are recommended for this account at this time.
- **Potential future adoption of Bluesky.** While the City has been asked to consider joining Bluesky, there is currently limited data on its use in Canada. Additionally, the platform is not yet supported by the City's social media management software, though this may change as it grows. The Communications team recommends monitoring its development before making a decision to join the platform.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications: N/A
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: N/A
3. Is this a New Plan or Strategy: No

If yes, are there recommendations or actions that require progress reporting?

If yes, how will progress be reported? (e.g.: through the strategic plan, through Cascade, annual update to Council, etc.)

4. Alignment with Strategic Directions:

A Connected City: Increase and improve opportunities for residents to connect with each other and the City.

Choose an item.

5. Alignment with Adopted Plans: Strategic Plan

6. Accessibility and Inclusion: n/a

7. Legal or Policy Implications: n/a

8. Privacy Implications: n/a

9. Engagement and Communications Considerations: change in communication's social media practices and protocols

10. Human Resource Implications: n/a

11. Procurement Implications: n/a

12. Information Technology Implications: n/a

13. Other Implications:

Recommendation:

That Council:

1. Deactivate the City's corporate X account and rely on Facebook and Instagram as the primary communication tools.
2. Deactivate the What's Happening St. John's X account and continue promoting event-related news through Facebook and Instagram.
3. Deactivate the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) X account and integrate newcomer and immigration-related updates into the City's corporate Facebook and Instagram accounts.
4. Monitor Bluesky's growth and reconsider adoption at a later date when more data on its effectiveness and user engagement in Canada becomes available.

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Approved by: