



## Media Relations Policy

**Policy Manual Section:** Governance – Communication and Promotions

**Policy Number:** G-CP-005

**Authority:** 379/15

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**Department Responsible:** Administration

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### Purpose:

The Town of LaSalle is aware that the media is one of the most effective ways to publicize information about the Town's services, programs and events. This policy is intended to promote the Town of LaSalle, and protect the Town's identity, while ensuring timely, consistent and accurate communications. This policy also outlines the responsibility of the Town's employees, members of Council and/or volunteers who may communicate with members of the media.

### Policy Statement:

The Town of LaSalle will ensure open, honest and clear channels of communication with members of the media. The key objectives are to engage the community through two-way communication, increase the awareness of the Town's services, and to improve accountability through accurate and timely information shared with members of the media. The Town of LaSalle will designate spokespersons who may speak to members of the media on behalf of the Town of LaSalle.

### Scope:

The policy applies to all Town of LaSalle employees and departments, members of Council, members of committees, volunteers, and any person who has been retained and/or engaged to act on behalf of the Town of LaSalle, save and except LaSalle Police Services.

### Policy:

Definitions



## Media

Members of the media may gather information for the newspaper, radio, television, websites and social media. The media provides key sources of information for the community about municipal programs, services, events and issues.

Website ([lasalle.ca](http://lasalle.ca))

The Town's website is considered to be the primary source for information about the Town's services, programs, events etc.

## In-Camera Council Meetings

Council meetings are generally open to the public unless the subject matter contains information that is considered to be confidential as outlined in the Ontario Municipal Act section 239 (2) and (3). In these instances, that portion of the meeting will be closed to the public.

## Media Release

Media Releases are informational in nature, and provide members of the media with background information that enables them to develop stories. Media releases may be reactive (in response to an inquiry, event or situation) or proactive (providing information about Council decisions, special events, plans, notices etc.). All media releases will be issued and arranged by the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO. All employees and Council members are required to provide information to the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO to be used in media releases as required.

## Public Service Announcement

The Town of LaSalle will issue Public Service Announcements to provide information to the media that is intended to be shared with the community. These messages may be shared on the radio, on the television, in print publications, on websites and on social media sites. Information shared this way often includes: special events, notice of meetings, road closures, construction projects etc.

## Media Advisory

The Town of LaSalle will issue Media Advisories when there is an event that may interest members of the media to develop stories.



## Procedures and Practices

The Town of LaSalle will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- The CAO oversees this policy and designates who are official spokespersons for the Town of LaSalle.
- Most often, requests from members of the media should be directed to the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer. The Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer, in turn, will ensure that any requests from the media are directed to knowledgeable staff designated as spokespersons. In certain circumstances, specific employees have been identified as authorized spokespersons. These employees are able to respond to requests from members of the media based on their expertise and experience. Schedule "A" attached to this policy designates spokespersons.
- Those employees who are listed in Schedule "A" as spokespersons may designate an alternate spokesperson on their behalf should they be unable to share information and/or answer questions from media representatives in a timely manner.
- Enquiries from the media, whether by phone, email, letter or in-person, should be addressed promptly when possible to accommodate publication, posting or broadcast deadlines.
- Employees, members of committees, volunteers, and any person who has been retained and/or engaged to act on behalf of the Town of LaSalle should ensure that all media requests are directed to the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO, unless the employee is listed in Schedule "A" as a spokesperson. The spokesperson should advise the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO following the contact with the member of the media including the media contact information and the nature of the discussion.
- Those employees who are designated as spokespersons on behalf of the Town of LaSalle should present concise and accurate information. Spokespersons must only speak on their area of expertise; they are not to offer an opinion or interpretation of a decision made by Council. They must not share confidential or sensitive information. The Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO may provide support and advice with respect to discussions with members of the media.
- Council meetings are open to all members of the public unless they are taking place in-camera. The Council agenda is available to the public prior to all Council meetings on the Town of LaSalle website, and in hard copy at the Tax Counter at the LaSalle Civic Centre. Every effort will be made to encourage accurate coverage of Council meetings and the decisions of Council.



- The decision to issue a comment, statement, media release or to grant an interview will be taken by the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or the CAO. The Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO may ask staff members who are designated as Town spokespersons to speak directly with members of the media to ensure accuracy and consistency of information.
- Potential issues that may negatively affect the public's image of the municipality are to be shared with the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO as soon as it is identified. The Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO and/or Mayor will coordinate a response and/or designate a spokesperson, as necessary.
- The Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer will maintain a current list of media contacts.
- All information shared with the media will have a consistent look that clearly identifies that it is from the Town of LaSalle. Any quotes used in information released to the media will be pre-approved by the spokesperson making the statement.
- Once a Media Release, a Public Service Announcement and/or a Media Advisory is issued, a copy will be forwarded to Council members and Department Heads as information.
- If a department is planning to host an event, open house, town hall meeting etc., the department must advise the Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer and/or CAO at the time of planning of the event. The Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer can provide assistance and advice on the advertising/announcement of the event including advising the media, the use of the Town of LaSalle's social media sites and traditional forms of promotion (brochures, flyers etc.).
- In the event of an emergency, the Town of LaSalle Emergency Response Plan supersedes the Media Relations Policy. The Town of LaSalle Emergency Response Plan outlines the protocol for communication during emergency situations.
- The Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer is responsible to track and archive media exposure. The Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer will maintain a page on the Town of LaSalle's website that will include an archive of Media Releases, Public Service Announcements and Media Advisories issued by the Town of LaSalle.



**Responsibilities:**

The Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer is responsible for this document.

**References and Related Documents:**

Town of LaSalle Council Code of Conduct  
Town of LaSalle Employee Code of Conduct  
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

**Attachments:**

Schedule "A" - The Corporation of the Town of LaSalle Spokespersons



## **Media Relations Policy**

### **Schedule "A" - The Corporation of the Town of LaSalle Spokespersons**

The following is a list of employees who have the authority to share information and/or answer questions with members of the media as it relates to their expertise and experience. The individuals listed below may designate an alternate spokesperson on their behalf should they be unable to share information and/or answer questions from media representatives in a timely manner. In addition, other approvals of spokespersons may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

- Mayor
- Deputy Mayor
- Members of Council
- CAO
- Deputy CAO
- Treasurer
- Director, Council Services/Clerk
- Director, Culture and Recreation Department
- Director, Development and Strategic Initiatives
- Director, Public Works
- Director, Human Resources
- Fire Chief
- Corporate Communication and Promotions Officer