



# POLICY No. 2024-05

## Website Governance Policy

**Originating Division** CEC-05-2024

**SMT Approval:** 2024-08-23

**Council in Committee:** 2024-10-08

**Recommendation #:** 11

**Council Approval:** 2024-10-15

**Resolution #:** 151-10

**Revision History:** [Click here for revision history](#)

### **1. Purpose**

The corporate website is an essential communication tool to engage and serve residents and visitors of Haldimand County. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the County website promotes a positive customer experience that is easy to navigate, accessible, and contains accurate and up-to-date content. The policy provides a framework to guide website management and maintain legislated standards set out by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

### **2. Policy**

#### 2.1 Policy Statement

Haldimand County is committed to providing a positive customer service experience, ensuring fair and consistent treatment for all regardless of communication channel. A website visitor should experience the same considerate welcome and sense of inclusivity as a visitor to our administration building. They should expect to have issues resolved quickly, to have questions answered thoroughly and to leave our site satisfied, with a positive image of the County.

#### 2.2 Definitions

**2.2.1 SSL encryption:** Secure Sockets Layer, a protocol developed for transmitting private documents via the Internet. SSL uses a cryptographic system that uses two keys to encrypt data – a public key known to everyone and a private or secret key known only

to the recipient of the message. Most web browsers support SSL, and many Web sites use the protocol to obtain confidential user information, such as credit card numbers. By convention, URLs that require an SSL connection start with https: instead of http:.

**2.2.2 Web Page:** A web page may incorporate any combination of text, graphics and other media as appropriate, and may use hypertext links to move between its different parts and other web pages.

**2.2.3 Website:** A website is a unified collection of web pages or files linked together and available on the World Wide Web.

### 2.3 Scope

This policy applies to all staff who manage, review or publish content for the Haldimand County corporate website and/or any associated corporate microsites.

All content posted to the corporate website and/or any associated microsites also falls within this policy. The policy does not apply to any third party websites and web content on web-based applications that the County does not control.

### 2.4 Website Roles and Responsibilities

The Customer Experience and Communications division is responsible for maintaining web governance guidelines, as well as, overseeing the branding, standards, and website management of the corporate website and corporate microsites. Staff in this division have the authority to approve any edited or new web content.

An internal Web Governance Committee will be set up as a recognized sub-committee of IT Governance and will be responsible to:

- provide broad oversight for the strategic direction of Haldimandcounty.ca and associated sites,
- ensure site quality and content integrity as well as compliance with all legal and regulatory standards, including accessibility, security and protection of personal information, and
- evaluate requests to develop new web features and integrations.

All staff identified as a subject matter expert, whose work includes information that must be provided to the public on the website, is responsible to ensure the web content for their area is up to date.

## 2.5 Web Team

The web team is comprised of staff in roles responsible for editing and/or approving web content as identified in the web governance guidelines. This team will meet as required for refresh training and support on the website functions.

## 2.6 Website Accessibility

The corporate website has been designed to meet accessibility communication standards set out by Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

## 2.7 Website Standards

The Haldimand County Web Governance Guide will provide direction to ensure content on the website is accurate, up-to-date, relevant, accessible and consistent with messaging in all communications. The guide outlines detailed duties of the identified individuals responsible for the maintenance of specific content on the site along with individuals who are accountable for the overall management of the website. In addition, processes for both content management and auditing are defined within this document to ensure web content is effectively managed.

The Customer Experience and Communications division is responsible to provide resource documentation required to ensure the website meets consistent style and brand guidelines. All staff must adhere to these style and brand guidelines.

## 2.8 External Links

Haldimand County's website contains hyperlinks that may lead to sites outside the County. The presence of these hyperlinks should not be construed as an endorsement by the County of these sites or their content. The County is not responsible for the content or the privacy policies of any such external hyperlink.

The County website will not provide external links to websites that:

- promote or exhibit hate, bias, discrimination, pornography, libelous or otherwise defamatory content;
- have a primary purpose of furthering the agenda of a political organization or a candidate running for office (regardless of the political viewpoint), or defeating any candidate for elective office;
- violate any of the County's equal opportunity policies; or
- consist of personal home pages operated by individuals.

### 2.8.1 External Links Disclaimer

The Haldimand County website and associated microsites may have pages that contain links to external sites and may be the subject of a link from another external

site. Although every effort is made by the County to provide links in its website to external sites that are of benefit or convenience to the users of Haldimand County's website, and due to the dynamic nature of the World Wide Web, Haldimand County has no control over and makes no assurances or warranties respecting the accuracy of the content that any of these external sites may post and assumes no responsibility or liability in relation to same or the use or reliance on information contained in or gathered from such external sites.

## 2.9 Collection of Information

Haldimand County may collect generic data information for analytic purposes in order to inform recommendations for website improvements.

Visitors who request services available through this website via an online form or through a link to a third party service provider, may be required to furnish additional information as may be required by law or which is necessary to provide the service requested.

All identifying data collected through the website is encrypted and secured, both in transit and at rest.

## 2.10 Online Payments

To ensure a secure online experience, online payment transactions are supported by industry-standard data encryption available through the browser called Secure Socket Layer (SSL) encryption. These services are designed to ensure the privacy of credit card information, name, address, e-mail or other information provided.

## 2.11 Website Terms of Use

All web users must adhere to the Terms of Use listed on the website

## Resources

- Haldimand County Web Governance Guide
- Haldimand County Website Writing Style Guide

## **3. Revision History**

### **Report:**

**Council in Committee Date:**

**Council in Committee Recommendation #:**

**Council Date:**

**Council Resolution #:**

**Details:**