

# MVRPC Social Media Policy

## Overview and Purpose

Social media networks provide opportunities for Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC) to deliver highly-accessible content through a variety of new channels and platforms. Participation may augment current communication strategies to reach a broader audience and encourage greater citizen engagement. MVRPC offers these guidelines to help foster greater public participation, while building the awareness of MVRPC programs. The guidelines refer to official MVRPC social media interactions, not the personal, non-job related interactions of MVRPC staff during their own time, using their personal equipment.

## Social Media Participation

MVRPC's social media content will be created and posted by Marketing and Public Outreach Associate serving as the "Social Media Coordinator." Agency directors shall appoint staff members to be official representatives, and submit proposed posts to SMC. SMC will develop information posts for the department and add the post to the Social Media Calendar. Social Media Calendar will be available to view what is scheduled and days needing content. This will also house approved text for posts. Draft posts will be created by SMC and approved by department representative who supplied topic. Social Media Calendar will track the success of the post and updates to the likes/follows to help develop future successful posts. Hootsuite, a social media management software, will be used to assist in managing posts as well as tracking of posts success. If a department does not have a topic for their day, a post may be selected to be posted or another department can fill in with another topic.

Default department assignments for each weekday:

- **Monday – Marketing/Public Affairs**
- **Tuesday – Long Range Transportation Planning**
- **Wednesday – Regional Planning**
- **Thursday - Short Range Transportation Planning**
- **Friday – Sustainable Solutions and Transportation Alternatives**

## Social Media Participation Guidelines

Social media includes professional, official communications and branding that represent the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, **supplementing** MVRPC's website, marketing materials, and press releases. The MVRPC Personnel Policies and Employee Handbook, Media Relations section (Page 21), addresses formal news media contact policy which should continue to be followed when dealing with the news media. Any staff member using social media on behalf of MVRPC should adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Respect your audience.** Always be respectful of the opinions and views of others. Don't use religious, racial or ethnic slurs, personal insults, or obscenity.
- **Protect Sensitive or Personal Information.** When sharing content on social media platforms, do not share personal or confidential information. If there is any question as to whether or not information is sensitive or personal in nature, consult with agency senior management before sharing content.

# MVRPC Social Media Policy

- **Be Accurate.** Before posting content or responding to comments, ensure that the information or response is accurate. Accuracy is critical, because content on social media platforms is extremely visible and can be replicated in multiple locations within minutes.
- **Correct Mistakes.** If a mistake or inaccuracy is found, correct the mistake and communicate its subsequent correction clearly and quickly.
- **Be Considerate.** Ensure that all communication is professional, respectful, and factual. Remember that all content represents MVRPC.
- **Respect Copyrights & Trademarks.** When posting content, do not infringe upon copyright or trademark protections. If you are unsure, consult with SMC.
- **Use Agency Email Addresses.** Agency e-mail addresses (name@mvrpc.org) should be utilized to confirm to users that the content provided is official. Personal e-mail accounts (non-mvrpc, e.g. private Yahoo or Gmail accounts) should not be utilized for official agency communications through social media platforms.
- **Avoid Advertisements, Sponsorships & Endorsements.** When possible, MVRPC postings should avoid advertisements, endorsements, or sponsorships on social media communication platforms.
- **Misrepresentation.** Concealing or misrepresenting one's name or affiliation to mask unauthorized, fraudulent, irresponsible or offensive behavior in electronic communications, is prohibited.
- **Stay within Area of Expertise.** Consult with subject matter experts and obtain assistance preparing responses before posting content to maintain credibility and relevancy. Posting to MVRPC social media shall be limited to areas directly related to the job of the MVRPC employee and comments or information posted that is outside of the employee's role may result in disciplinary action.

## Content and Engagement

Social media is intended to be very accessible and interactive. In order for social media platforms to remain relevant, content needs to remain current. Participation in social media platforms will require a significant commitment to ensure effective and sustained engagement. Please remember that even in online interactions, you are expected to adhere to MVRPC Personnel Policies and Employee handbook, especially Part VI, General Employee Guidelines.

MVRPC will reserve the right to monitor user comments including the right to delete or block users who engage in:

- Vulgar or offensive language.
- Content (or a user) that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.
- Spam.
- Content that advocates illegal activity.
- Promotion of particular services, products.
- Content that supports or opposes political campaigns or ballot measures.

# MVRPC Social Media Policy

- Infringement upon copyrights or trademarks.
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
- Content that is off topic.

## Public Participation Meeting Integration

MVRPC will use social media platforms to promote public participation meetings in the following manner, but not limited to:

- By creating an event on Facebook with details of the public participation meeting on the day the press release is posted (3 weeks prior to meeting).
- By sharing created event on MVRPC Facebook for people to join to receive automatically generated reminders from Facebook platform.
- By posting 1 week before meeting, a reminder on Facebook and Twitter (even if the day does not correspond with the department's assigned day)
- By posting the morning of the public participation meeting, a reminder on Facebook and Twitter.
- By posting a reminder on Facebook and Twitter, 1 week before the comment period ends to remind followers there is still time to submit electronic comments if they missed the meeting.

## Interactions with Businesses

Likes (Facebook) and Follows (Twitter) shall be limited to government agencies, MVRPC Board of Directors member jurisdictions/businesses and other entities related to MVRPC. MVRPC will not Follow or Like Pages for businesses or private users that are not related to the goals of the agency. Follows and Likes will be reviewed by the Executive Director.

## Questions/Comments from users

A coordinated response to interactions on social media platforms is the goal of SMC. We understand that social media is a 24/7 medium; however, we cannot monitor, post or respond to comments 24/7, but we will respond as quickly as possible. Generally, we will post or respond to comments from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday. Therefore, the following actions will take place as needed:

- Acknowledgement of posts/tweets on MVRPC pages will be gathered by SMC
- SMC will assign to specific departments based on topic to issue a proper reply.
- SMC will handle notification to departments about question/comment and post response.
- SMC will also capture screen shots and document interactions related to public participation.
- All comments made on MVRPC's social media sites are considered public records.

MVRPC disclaims any liability for any loss or damage resulting from any reliance on such information. Anyone who posts comments participates at their own risk, taking personal

# MVRPC Social Media Policy

responsibility for their comments, username and any information provided. For official inquiries or correspondence, visit our website, [www.mvrpc.org](http://www.mvrpc.org) or call us at 937.223.6323 or TTY/TDD at 800.750.0750.

Comments posted to MVRPC's social media sites represent the opinions of the individuals providing the comment and not the views, positions, or policies of MVRPC.

This comment policy is subject to modification at any time.

## Personal Use of Social Media by Employees of MVRPC

These guidelines focus on agency participation on social media platforms; however, like any other citizen, employees have the right to participate in social media on their own personal time using their own personal IT resources.

- While staff members have the rights to express their own thoughts, views or opinions on their own personal social media accounts, please keep in mind that this policy applies to employees while employed at MVRPC.
- It is important that employees understand when creating content or posting comments, there should be no expectation of privacy.
- Social media is an extremely public forum and the lines between personal and professional opinions could easily become blurred; it is important to be cognizant of this fact.
- Any posting will become a public record subject to use by others or for potential legal information requests. A good rule of thumb is to never post or create anything that would be potentially embarrassing or considered offensive. Remember that even if information is shared from personal accounts, it could be identified by the press and reported in association with an employee's professional role.

In addition, in order to avoid the appearance of speaking on behalf of the agency, or to avoid the appearance of leveraging the stature of the agency, staff shall not use their assigned agency e-mail address. Official MVRPC e-mail addresses, such as "name@mvrpc.org" should not be used for personal communication in public forums.