



Port of  
**HOOD RIVER**

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# COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Adopted June 11, 2024

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this communications plan is to set in place the necessary policies and protocols, and enable the development of new programs and tools, to optimally communicate with Port constituents, stakeholders, customers, and partners.

The plan is meant to foster a proactive approach to public relations while equipping the Port to be prepared to react and respond when unexpected issues arise, or during a crisis. As the coming years promise to bring a period of some of the most rapid change in the Port's history in terms of bridge replacement and ownership, waterfront and rural industrial site development, and continued coalition building for advocacy of regional priorities in an increasingly dramatic and polarized political climate, the purpose of this plan will be to maintain a thoughtful, proactive approach in planning and executing all communications.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Proactive, and well prepared for reactive communications
2. Positive focus versus negative
3. Open, transparent, clear disclosure of the issues
4. Dialog encouraged and preferred over one-way communications
5. Uniform theme/key talking points. Long-term context explained to avoid scattered, disconnected messages
6. Innovative use of new media, adept and informed deployment of communication technologies (the medium is the message)
7. Collaborative messaging and partnership development throughout the Columbia Gorge for the purpose of amplifying and organizing regional voice on needs and priorities
8. Quality versus quantity – investing in producing highest quality collateral products, programs, and services with an eye to channel fatigue in target audiences (slow and steady wins the race)
9. Stewardship and storytelling – recognition of the historic and cultural significance of the Port of Hood River, its assets, and its work. Care and attention to archiving, preserving, and sharing the stories of the Port, including focusing on our Commission, volunteers, management and front line staff
10. Provide Spanish translations of content to better reach Spanish-speaking communities, particularly when the content could impact them.
11. Ensure that content created is accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities.
12. Ensure that the content being utilized does not infringe upon any copyright restrictions.

## TARGET AUDIENCES

The Port is organized into five primary functional areas: Bridge, Airport, Marina, Waterfront Recreation, and Industrial/Commercial Development. Administratively, Port operations generally fall into three categories: Administrative/Office, Bridge Toll Booth, and Facilities. Each functional area can claim its own group or groups of target audiences and stakeholders dependent on department heads and staff for ongoing informational updates, dialog, and opportunities to provide input throughout the year.

In general terms, the Port's main target audiences are listed below, with some overlap in each category:

- Residents of cities of Hood River, White Salmon, Bingen, Klickitat County, Underwood, and Eastern Skamania County.
- Port District constituents

- Port Building Tenants
- Waterfront users
- Marina moorage tenants, guest dock users, cruise ship dock users
- Airport T-Hangar tenants, guest airport users, residential and commercial neighbors of the Airport
- Bridge users and BreezeBy customers
- Businesses and prospective tenants
- Local agencies
- State and federal legislators and their staffs
- Local news media
- Development and construction project bidders and vendors.

Secondary audiences:

- Other Ports and public entities of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest (Model organization and programs)
- State and National news media
- Broader public consumer audiences throughout Oregon and Pacific Northwest (Community branding and marketing)

## MEDIA

The Port generally employs the following media to provide the communications services either in-house or via personal service contracts:

- Press Releases
- Web site(s)
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Email Listserv bulk email messaging (newsletters, news alerts, surveys and reports)
- Online Surveys and Feedback Forms
- E-commerce Web Portals
- Presentations
- Print Publications, including twice-yearly newsletters, annual reports
- Print Display Advertising
- Media relations (Including provision of stock photography, B-Roll video, Fact Sheets, etc.)
- Promotional collateral and educational materials development (multimedia)
- Events (Conferences, Trade Shows, Receptions, Tours, etc.)
- Interactive, dynamic-content online Calendars
- Sponsorships
- Policy documents
- Commission Meeting Packets (print and digital)
- Signage: Way finding, Traffic Control, Interpretive, Promotional, and Informational
- Maps: Way finding, Parking Control, Promotional and Informational
- Public Notices and Classified Advertising

## PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

### 1. Large Projects that Impact Bridge Traffic:

- a. Contact everyone on the Bridge Closures Checklist<sup>1</sup> to ensure there are no conflicting major projects scheduled for the same dates that could be disrupted by the bridge closure.
- b. Issue a minimum of 30 days' notice through email, the Port website, social media, and local news.
- c. Send a reminder email one week before the event, also utilizing social media.
- d. Display announcements on reader boards 3-5 days ahead of the event.
- e. ODOT and WSDOT reader boards may also be utilized if needed and/or available.

### 2. Emergency Bridge Notifications:

- a. Notify the public as soon as possible through email, the Port website, social media, and local news.
- b. For significant impacts, notify local authorities such as the Hood River County Sheriff's Department, the City of Hood River Police Department, and the Washington State Police. Refer to the Bridge Closures Checklist for any other entities that could be affected by the bridge emergency.
- c. Post updates on social media and the Port website at least every hour, even if there are no new developments (e.g., "12:00 PM: Bridge remains closed").
- d. Send a final notice when the issue has been resolved via email, the Port website, social media, and local news.

### 3. Other Port Notifications not Related to the Bridge:

- a. Notify the public as soon as possible via website, social media, and news media.

## NEWSPAPER OR OTHER MEDIA IN WHICH PUBLIC NOTICES MAY BE PUBLISHED

1. **Columbia Gorge News** – Publication for general circulation. Features local news, classifieds, legal, public notices.
2. **Daily Journal of Commerce** – Statewide circulation. Features business, construction, real estate, legal, news, and public notices.
3. **OregonBuys** – State of Oregon's online, web-based, eProcurement system that automates the state's procurement process.

See Oregon law for specific publication requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> File Path: R:\Archives\Administrative Records\Templates & Forms\Bridge\Bridge Closures Checklist

## SOCIAL MEDIA – STAFF GUIDELINES

It is imperative for the Port to maintain effective communication channels with the public. Traditionally, this involved disseminating information through press releases, flyers, and bulletins. While these methods are still relevant, we recognize the evolving expectations of the public. Thus, alongside our conventional means, we've embraced digital platforms. We maintain a robust website and actively engage with the community through various social media channels. We understand that utilizing social media comes with its own set of challenges, particularly in terms of record keeping and legal compliance. Therefore, these guidelines are designed to ensure that the Port adheres to the Oregon Public Records Law when utilizing social media platforms.

1. **Public Record:** Posts made on an official Port account are considered public records. Staff using a private account to distribute information on behalf of the Port to the public is prohibited, unless sharing a post that has already been made on an official Port account.
2. **Retention Period:** The retention period for social media varies depending on the post. Refer to the Records Retention Schedule for appropriate retention periods.
3. **Comments from Members of the Public on the Port's Page:** Comments and posts put on the Port's account by members of the public or other outside entities are not automatically considered to be records, unless those comments trigger some action by the Port.
  - a. Example of a comment that **IS** public record: A resident comments on the Port's page that a pothole needs fixing and the Port then corresponds with the resident or takes action to fix the pothole, then that comment is a public record.
  - b. Example of a comment that is **NOT** public record: A resident expressed their dislike for paying the toll. No action is required by the Port as the resident was merely stating their opinion; therefore, this comment is not a public record.

In general, Individuals should be encouraged to directly contact or email the Port for any related inquiries or concerns.

4. **Moderating Social Media Pages:** Port social media platforms are intended to be a space for constructive and respectful dialogue. To maintain this environment, the Port may moderate content that violates any applicable laws or the Port of Hood River social media Policy (see pg. 7). This moderation is not censorship. The Port's goal is to ensure a positive and safe experience for all users, and it welcomes diverse opinions and perspectives. To be clear about these criteria, the social media Policy must be publicly posted on all accounts. The Port is not required, for records management purposes, to maintain inappropriate comments or inflammatory language posted by members of the public. Therefore, the Port reserves the right to remove, hide, or disable comments or postings on the website or any social media page that violate these guidelines.
5. **Capturing Record Content from Social Media Accounts:** It is important to capture critical record information and maintain it appropriately. Most social media outlets do not automatically allow account holders to download their activity logs, so it is important to consider ahead of time how posts will be preserved. Methods for preservation may include manual record-keeping, digital archiving tools, or other appropriate means to ensure the integrity and accessibility of the content. This also applies to private messages received over social media accounts.



The Port of Hood River works to promote and maintain a healthy economy and strong quality of life in the Port District and throughout the Columbia Gorge. The website [portofhoodriver.com](http://portofhoodriver.com) and all Port social media sites or pages (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Instagram, YouTube, Vimeo, and the like) are intended to serve as a mechanism for communication between the public and the Port.

Postings on the [portofhoodriver.com](http://portofhoodriver.com) website and social media feeds may be Public Records under Oregon law. To the extent such content is a public record, the Port of Hood River will be subject to disclosure requirements under the Oregon Public Records Law.

The Port does not endorse nor sponsor any advertising posted by the Social Media host on the Port's site or pages. Social Media sites are private sites and the privacy terms of those sites apply. The Port does not guarantee reliability and accuracy of any third-party links, and the Port reserves the right to remove any conversation which is prohibited by the Port of Hood River Social Media Terms of Use, Prohibited Content and Disclaimer described here.

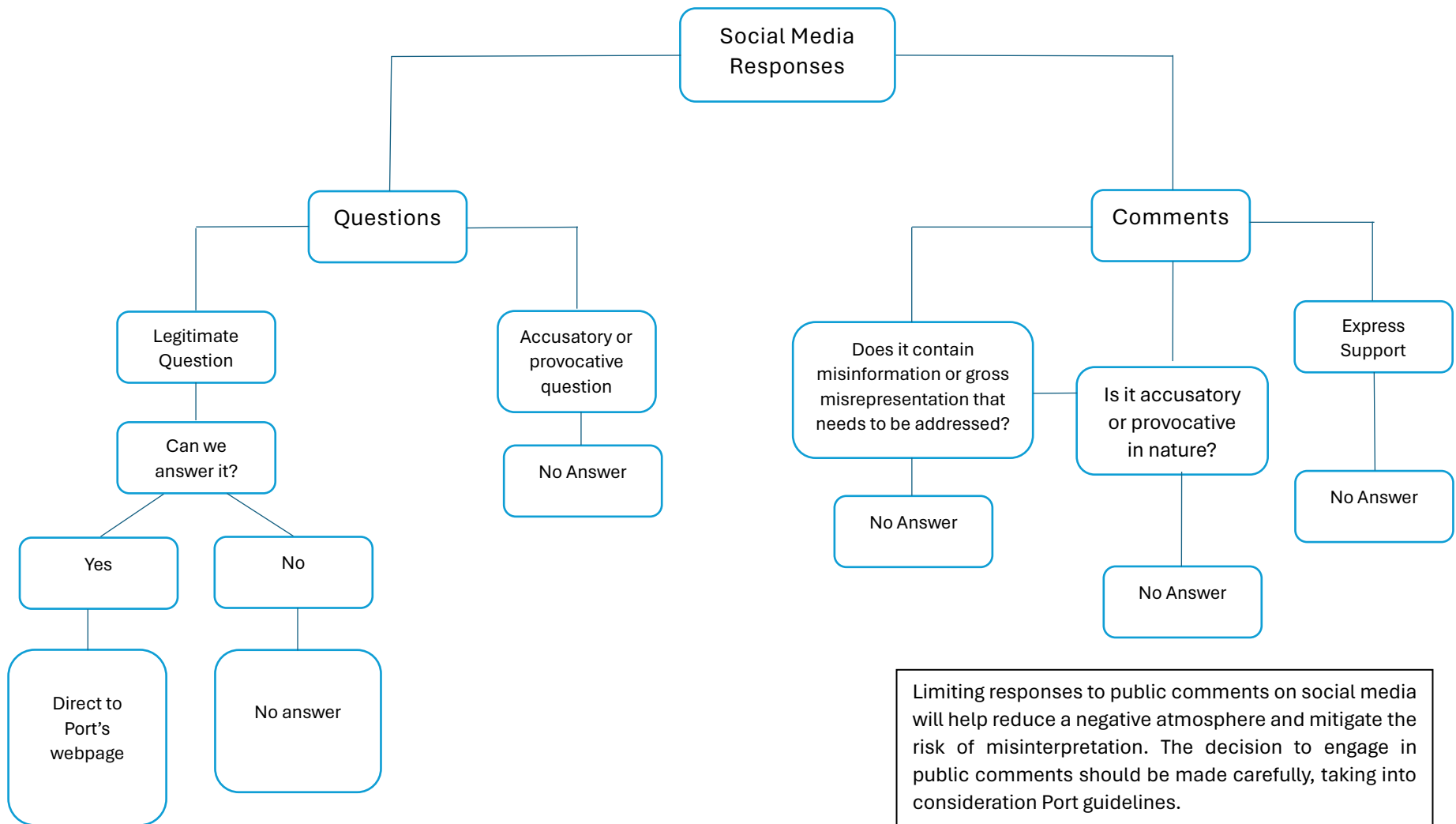
Comments sections on the [portofhoodriver.com](http://portofhoodriver.com) website and social media pages operated by the Port of Hood River are limited forums where the public may comment on articles and content posted by the Port of Hood River. The Comments posted to the [portofhoodriver.com](http://portofhoodriver.com) website and all social media pages or sites will be monitored. The Port of Hood River reserves the right to remove, hide, or disable inappropriate comments including those that have obscene language or sexual content; threaten or defame any person or organization; violate the legal ownership interest of another party; support or oppose political candidates or ballot propositions; promote illegal activity; promote commercial services or products or are not topically related to the particular posting. This moderation is not censorship. The Port's goal is to ensure a positive and safe experience for all users, and it welcomes diverse opinions and perspectives. Citizens have the right to develop their own social media pages to publicize personal points of view.

The Port may remove, hide, or disable the following prohibited content from its website and social media pages or feeds when possible:

1. Comments not topically related to the particular article being commented upon;
2. Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
3. Profane language or content;
4. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, marital status, familial status, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, source of income or other protected status under applicable law;
5. Inappropriate sexual content or links to inappropriate sexual content;
6. Solicitations of commerce;
7. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
8. Private and confidential information;
9. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
10. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

# PORT OF HOOD RIVER

## SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONSE FLOWCHART



Limiting responses to public comments on social media will help reduce a negative atmosphere and mitigate the risk of misinterpretation. The decision to engage in public comments should be made carefully, taking into consideration Port guidelines.



## STAFF TO COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATIONS

WHO	TASK	TIMING	DESCRIPTION
Executive Director	Monthly Executive Directors Report	Monthly	Written or verbal report highlighting key activities and relevant issues.
Executive Director	Executive Director Annotated Work Plan	Six Months	Annotated status report of all projects listed in the approved work plan.
Executive Director	Executive Director Lunch with Board President	Monthly	Lunch meeting to discuss all aspects of Port operations and current/planned projects. Legal Counsel or other Port staff may sometimes attend if needed.
Executive Director	Commission Meeting Draft Agenda Review	Before Meetings	Executive Director (ED) forwards draft agenda to Commission President Tuesday of each week prior to Commission meeting for comment & approval. ED and Port President discuss agenda immediately prior to each meeting.
Executive Director	Internal Committee/ Commissioner Lunches	Quarterly	Executive Director meets for lunch with each individual Commissioner to discuss any projects, issues, or other matters.
General Staff	Email/Text Port Emergencies, Incidents, etc.	As Needed	As appropriate and necessary, the Executive Director or other Port staff will alert the Commission via email or text to any item that may require significant public interest. This is to ensure Commissioners are aware of such incidents and ready to respond appropriately if contacted directly by members of the media or citizens.
General Staff	Identify Speaking Opportunities for Commissioners	As Needed	To raise the public profile of the Port Commission, staff will monitor regional and relevant industry and policy-based events and group activities for potential speaking opportunities for both Port staff and members of the Commission. In addition, interview opportunities with local and regional broadcast and print media will be relayed and arranged.
General Staff	Newsletter and Annual Report	Bi-Annual	The Commission President provides a "Message from the President" letter in each newsletter. The focus of the letter can be as broad or detailed as the President prefers but should reflect the President's approach to leadership of the Port for the coming year.
General Staff	Directives & Projects Report	Continuously update	Keep an updated document readily available to the Commission and staff, detailing the current status of directives and projects.

## COMMUNICATIONS FROM COMMISSIONERS

1. **Active Participation in Assigned Committees:** Commissioners will actively participate in the meetings and activities of the Port Committees to which they have been assigned and provide oral reports of the activities during the following Commission meetings. Committee responsibilities may also include individual meetings with staff and/or committee members and attendance at special events. Commissioners will provide leadership while also acting as a conduit for public input on committee activities and projects.
2. **Ear of the Port:** Commissioners serve as the eyes and ears of the Port and should make themselves available to hear from their constituency and relay any input received to Port staff. Feedback from the public on Port projects and business operations is an essential function of the Commissioner role.
3. **Heads Up:** Each Commission meeting begins with an up to 30-minute period allowed for public comment. These can sometimes be contentious and when they are, usually individual Commissioners have already been contacted by members of the public about the issue. The best response or resolution is often provided when staff has time to investigate the issue and prepare information ahead of time. Commissioners receiving public comment of a contentious issue should alert staff to the issue and provide guidance on how best to address it.
4. **Op-ed Opportunities:** Local and regional newspapers often welcome Opinion/Editorials from elected on any topic of significant public interest. This provides Commissioners with an opportunity to go on record about their position on any issue, convey Port planning or policy issues in detail with the reasoning behind any Commission decision, and simply raise awareness of the Port's benefit to the community.
5. **Mid-Columbia Today Show Radio Program:** Once a month, the KHR radio station welcomes Port staff or Commissioners to be interviewed live, on-air about any topic related to Port business. This is usually a 10-to-20-minute interview and any Commissioner is welcome to participate at any time. The Executive Director will coordinate schedules between KHR and Commissioners based upon areas of interest and availability.