

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY

I. Purpose.

This City of Cambridge (the “City”) policy establishes guidelines for the City’s media relations. The intended purpose of establishing a City media relations policy is to ensure a coordinated response with the City Manager’s Office in deciding what is “said” on behalf of the City when City department heads, department communication managers, members of boards, commissions, and committees and other City employees (“City Staff”) communicate with members of the media. This policy is not intended to address elected officials. Issues concerning any elected official’s contact with the media are exclusively with the purview of the City Council.

Effective communication with the media allows the City of Cambridge to inform the public, promote important City programs, and provide timely and coordinated information during a crisis or emergency. Building, maintaining, and coordinating a citywide media relations approach can best serve the City by:

- expanding the general visibility of the City;
- informing the public of services and resources available to them;
- promoting the City’s achievements, activities, and events of significance;
- ensuring that accurate information is conveyed to the public with transparency; and
- providing information in anticipation of, during, or after an emergency or significant event, including actions to build community resilience.

II. Policy.

- A. As designated by the City Manager, the Director of Communications and Community Relations serves as the official City spokesperson for the administration and has primary oversight of the City’s media relations program.
- B. The Director of Communications and Community Relations will work with City Staff to coordinate responses to media inquiries.
- C. Whenever City Staff receives a media inquiry, the Director of Communications and Community Relations should be notified immediately prior to responding. The Director of Communications and Community Relations should be notified as soon as possible of any media interactions - including, the nature of any conversation or inquiry, the identity of the media outlet, the contact, and the staff member(s)’ proposed response.
- D. The Director of Communications and Community Relations may work with City Staff to develop standing media response protocols to help ensure timely responses.
- E. In the event of a public safety incident or emergency, the Police Department, the Fire Department, the Department of Public Works, the Water Department and any other relevant department will coordinate with the Director of Communications and Community Relations to manage inquiries made by the media, and to coordinate information flow from the City to the public and the City Council (“Public Safety Releases”).

III. Guidelines for Media Releases.

- A. Positive media solicitation is an integral element of the City’s communications program. The Public Information Office promotes the City through a communications program that includes media releases and advisories regarding special accomplishments, events and activities,

programs, and plans. City staff should submit ideas for articles or pieces that would positively portray the City, its work, or the community to the Public Information Office.

- B. All City department media releases intended for external audiences (excluding public meeting notices, legal advertisements, construction notices issued by the Department of Public Works and Public Safety Releases) shall be coordinated through the Public Information Office.

This Policy may be updated from time to time and amended at the discretion of the City Manager.

Date: _____

11/2/18



Louis A. DePasquale

City Manager