



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee

Date: October 16, 2025

From: Dammy Ogunseitan
Director, Corporate Communications and Marketing

File: 01-0190-01/2025-Vol 01

Re: City of Richmond Social Media Accounts

Staff Recommendation

That the report titled "City of Richmond Social Media Accounts", dated October 16, 2025, from the Director, Corporate Communications and Marketing be received for information.

Dammy Ogunseitan
Director, Corporate Communications and Marketing
(604-276-4399)

Att. 3

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO: Information Technology	CONCURRENCE ☒	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

At the General Purposes Committee on March 17, 2025, staff received the following referral:

That staff analyze the various social media platforms used by the City and report back with recommendations.

In response to this referral, staff reviewed the City's social media platforms, performance metrics, comparable municipalities and potential opportunities.

The purpose of this report is to report back on these findings and provide information on next steps.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022–2026 Focus Area #1 Proactive in Stakeholder and Civic Engagement:

1.1 Continue fostering effective and strategic relationships with other levels of government and Indigenous communities.

1.3 Increase the reach of communication and engagement efforts to connect with Richmond's diverse community.

1.4 Leverage a variety of approaches to make civic engagement and participation easy and accessible.

Findings of Fact

The City uses a range of tools to connect and engage with various audiences. They include news releases, the City website (richmond.ca), the Let's Talk Richmond website, the recently launched City e-News and other e-newsletters, along with several social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Bluesky, and X (Twitter). The City is among the region's most active municipalities on social media, maintaining a visible and consistent presence across six platforms (Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), LinkedIn, YouTube, and Bluesky), with research into non-English language social platforms underway.

Since March 2025:

- A comparative analysis of social media activity across Metro Vancouver municipalities was conducted. Richmond is one of five municipalities actively managing six social media platforms, placing the City among the region's most engaged local governments online (Attachment 1).
- Steady growth was observed across the City's official accounts on primary platforms (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube) with notable increases in followers and engagement from March to September 2025.
- The City's X (formerly Twitter) account maintains a stable follower base (10,000+); therefore, remains an important tool for a multichannel approach to sharing news, updates, emergency communication and inter-agency coordination.

- The City launched its Bluesky account in January 2025. Despite regular posting and community engagement efforts, follower growth has been modest. While Bluesky recently added support for third-party scheduling tools, its built-in analytics capabilities remain limited. This lack of integrated analytics tools continues to constrain its effectiveness as a communications and engagement tool.
- In line with local demographics, staff have explored opportunities to expand the City's presence on platforms commonly used by residents who speak languages other than English. After reviewing options such as WeChat and RedNote, staff determined that these platforms are not suitable for official City use due to verification, data security, and governance risks (see the *Considerations* section below for more information). One alternative being considered is WhatsApp, which supports multiple languages and is widely used among Chinese, South Asian, and Middle Eastern communities.

Analysis

Existing Social Media Channels

A visible, consistent presence is maintained on six social media channels – Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), LinkedIn, YouTube, and Bluesky. Each has its own audience focus, which is reflected in the style and nature of content. To reach more people and encourage interaction, it's best to tailor content to each platform. Table 1 shows the follower, user or subscriber counts for the City's social media accounts from March to September 2025:

Table 1: Richmond's social media followers – March to September 2025

Month	Facebook	X (Twitter)	Instagram	LinkedIn	Bluesky *	YouTube
March	12,959 (+48) *	10,602 (-14)	7,892 (+184)	15,859 (+225)	175	2,240 (+20)
April	12,999 (+71)	10,604 (+2)	8,031 (+141)	16,037 (+181)	-	2,250 (+20)
May	13,122 (+145)	10,567 (-40)	8,178 (+203)	16,210 (+173)	-	2,280 (+30)
June	13,159 (+62)	10,587 (+15)	8,325 (+206)	16,387 (+178)	-	2,300 (+20)
July	13,268 (+142)	10,608 (+28)	8,482 (+165)	16,646 (+257)	-	2,330 (+30)
August	13,348 (+80)	10,630 (+22)	8,665 (+183)	16,905 (+259)	-	2,330 (+/-0)
September	13,438 (+90)	10,640 (+10)	8,826 (+161)	17,157 (+252)	311	2,350 (+20)

* Bluesky does not allow monthly analytics reports, therefore the City does not have a month-to-month record of the growth of followers.

** Numbers in bracket shows month-to-month changes in followers/subscribers.

These numbers above only reflect the social accounts managed by the Corporate Communications and Marketing team. A number of other social media platforms and accounts are used and managed by other City departments directly for specific purposes (such as @FunRichmond, which promotes City events). Several associations and societies also maintain their own social media presence. A full list of other accounts is provided in Attachment 2. Table 2 provides a brief description of the various social media platforms currently used by the City as well as their benefits. More detailed descriptions of each platform, along with additional examples, are provided in Attachment 3.

Table 2: Richmond's Current Social Media Platforms

Platform	Description	Target Audience	Rationale
Facebook	A widely used social networking platform that supports text, image, video, direct messaging and event content.	25–65+ (Most within the range of 35–54)	- Reaches a broad cross-section of Richmond residents quickly and effectively. - No limits on post length. Works well for both short updates and detailed messages. - Affordable paid ads help extend reach to specific community groups. - Targeting tools make it easy to reach the right audience for each campaign.
Instagram	A visually driven platform focused on photos, Reels, stories and direct messaging.	18-65+ (Most within the range of 25–54)	- Ideal for sharing stories and updates through photos and short videos. - Highly interactive – people comment, share, and engage easily. - Reels and carousel posts help our content reach new audiences organically. - Paid ads can be targeted to reach residents by location, age or interest.
X (Twitter)	A microblogging platform that emphasizes real-time updates, short-form messaging, and direct interaction.	Other government organizations, residents.	- Best for time-sensitive updates such as emergencies or service disruptions. - Has an established audience that follows the City for quick information. - Allows coordination and visibility with other government and emergency accounts. - Paid promotion is costly and brand safety is a growing concern on the platform.
LinkedIn	A professional networking platform used for business-to-business communication, recruitment, and employee engagement.	Professionals, employees, other organizations	- Professional space for connecting with staff, job seekers, and partner organizations. - Helps build the City's reputation as a great place to work. - Useful for sharing stories about our workplace culture and achievements. - Paid advertising is more expensive than other platforms but targets a highly specific audience.
YouTube	A video-sharing platform for both short- and long-form content, including live streams.	18–65+ (Most within the range of 25–44)	- Showcases videos of all lengths, from short explainers to full Council and Committee meeting broadcasts. - Free to use and widely accessed by residents searching for local information. - Advertising options can help increase visibility of key messages. - Serves as both a video library and a search tool for how-to or educational content.
Bluesky	A decentralized microblogging social media platform used as an alternative to mainstream networks.	Residents, residents who are not on X	- Emerging alternative to X that promotes open dialogue with fewer ads or algorithm interference. - Early adoption could position the City as forward-thinking and accessible to residents seeking credible sources beyond X.

Considerations

Resource Capacity

Managing the City's six active social media channels already requires the full capacity of existing staff. Sustaining and expanding this presence across multiple platforms demands time, strategic planning, and investment in high-quality content creation. If additional platforms are introduced in the future, increased staff resources will be required to maintain quality, responsiveness, and alignment with the City's communications standards.

Chinese Language Platforms

Establishing a WeChat or a RedNote account presents significant challenges for government or organizational entities. Both platforms' stringent requirements make obtaining an official government or organization account unfeasible. Using a personal account for official purposes is not recommended, as the verification process requires submitting sensitive personal information, increasing the risk of identity theft. If the City were to register an account under a staff member's name, any changes to account details would be limited to that individual, creating potential continuity and security concerns. Alternatively, engaging a third-party vendor to assist with account setup would still require the City to share substantial personal and organizational information with both the vendor and the platform, further exposing the City to potential fraud and compromising data security. China also enforces strict content censorship, particularly for posts involving certain sensitive topics, and monitors user comments, which may discourage people from commenting on such issues.

Use of Comments on Social Media Platforms

Comments on social media play a vital role in two-way communication between the City and its audiences. Unlike traditional forms of communication, social media allows for immediate public feedback, questions and engagement. Comments provide insight into how messages are resonating with residents, how information is being received, highlighting areas of public interest or concern, and offer opportunities to clarify information or address misconceptions in real time. Being responsive to comments on social media (when appropriate) builds trust and transparency by demonstrating that the organization is listening and responsive. In addition, community members can "tag" each other in comments as way of drawing the attention of other community members to a particular post. This could be seen as the digital equivalent of sharing a flyer or calling someone to let them know about an event or activity.

In many ways, comments serve as a digital form of community dialogue, enhancing connection and accountability between the organization and the public it serves. This practice is consistent across all municipalities in Metro Vancouver and is also considered a best practice in social media communications. Under only exceptional circumstances, such as when addressing highly sensitive topics where public safety or legal considerations are involved, the municipality may choose to temporarily limit or turn off comments.

Next Steps

Social media continues to serve as an essential component of the City's communications and engagement strategy. The City actively monitors emerging trends and platform algorithm

changes to ensure its communications uphold the City's commitment to inclusivity as well as reach audiences across diverse channels. Sustaining a meaningful and responsive presence on social media requires dedicated resources, and the City's growth across multiple platforms reflects a deliberate and strategic approach to delivering targeted and engaging content. In light of the positive outcomes achieved to date, the associated resource considerations, and the evolving opportunities and challenges of the platforms, the City will:

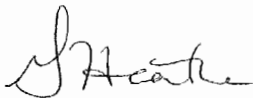
- Continue to maintain an active presence on existing core platforms: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and X (Twitter);
- Continue using Bluesky, while monitoring the platform for growth and functionality;
- Implement WhatsApp as a tool for emergency alerts and outreach to multilingual communities, with rollout scheduled for November 2025;
- Not proceed with a RedNote or WeChat account at this time due to complex registration requirements, privacy and cybersecurity concerns, and limited content flexibility; and
- Review and adjust resources as platforms and audience preferences evolve to keep pace with new opportunities and expectations.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

Social media is an essential communications and engagement tool that connects the City with a wide range of audiences. By continuing to use existing platforms, timely and important information about programs, services, emergency situations, strategic decisions, announcements, and more are shared. Social media also fosters stronger connections between the City and residents, offering a cost-effective way to reach target audiences. However, sustaining and expanding success across multiple platforms requires time, strategic planning, and investment in high-quality content creation. As platforms and audience preferences continue to evolve, maintaining this level of impact may require additional resourcing to keep pace with emerging opportunities and expectations.



Gerina Heathe
Manager, Digital Communications
Corporate Communications and Marketing
(604-204-8702)

Att. 1: Social Media Platforms Used by Municipalities in Metro Vancouver

Att. 2: Other Social Media Accounts

Att. 3: Referenced Social Media Platforms

Social Media Platforms Used by Municipalities in Metro Vancouver

Municipality	Facebook	Instagram	X (Twitter)	LinkedIn	YouTube	Bluesky
Richmond	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Burnaby	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Coquitlam	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Delta	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
New Westminster	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*
Surrey	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*
Vancouver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*
White Rock	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
District of West Vancouver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
North Vancouver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*
District of North Vancouver	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Port Coquitlam	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maple Ridge	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Pitt Meadows	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Port Moody	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Langley	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Township of Langley	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*

* Indicates the municipality has secured a Bluesky handle but does not post due to platform limitations.

Other Social Media Accounts

Account Name	Run by	Facebook	Instagram	X	YouTube	LinkedIn
How Art Works	Arts, Culture, & Heritage (City Staff)	✓	✓			
Fun Richmond	Major Events (City Staff)	✓	✓	✓		
Friends of the Richmond Archives	Friends of the Richmond Archives (Volunteers)	✓			✓	
Gateway Theatre	Gateway Theatre (Society Staff)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site	Britannia Shipyards (City Staff)	✓	✓	✓		
Richmond Art Gallery	Richmond Art Gallery (Society or City Staff)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Richmond Museum	Richmond Museum (Society or City Staff)	✓	✓	*	✓	
RPL BC	Richmond Public Library (Library Staff)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Steveston Interurban Tram	Steveston Tram (City Staff)	✓	✓			
Steveston Museum & Post Office	Steveston Museum and Post Office (City Staff)	✓	✓	*		
Richmond EDO	Economic Development Office (City Staff)	✓		✓		
City of Richmond Youth	Youth Services (City Staff)		✓			
London Heritage Farm	London Farm (Society Staff)	*	*			
Cambie Community Centre	Cambie Community Centre (Association Staff)	✓	✓	*		
City Centre Community Centre	City Centre Community Centre (Association Staff)	✓	✓			
City Centre Community Centre Youth	City Centre Community Centre (Association Staff)		✓			
Hamilton Community Centre	Hamilton Community Centre (Association Staff)	✓	✓			
Sea Island Community Centre	Sea Island Community Centre (Association Staff)	✓				

Account Name	Run by	Facebook	Instagram	X	YouTube	LinkedIn
South Arm Community Centre	South Arm Community Centre (Association Staff)	✓	✓	✓		
Steveston Community Centre	Steveston Community Centre (Association Staff)	✓	✓			✓
Steveston Community Centre Youth	Steveston Community Centre (Association Staff)		✓			
Steveston Salmon Festival	Steveston Community Centre (Association Staff)	*	✓			
Thompson Community Centre	Thompson Community Centre (Association Staff)	✓	✓			
West Richmond Community Centre	West Richmond Community Centre (Association & City Staff)	✓	✓	✓		
West Richmond Childcare Services	West Richmond Community Centre (Association Staff)	✓				
West Richmond Summer Slam	West Richmond Community Centre (Association & City Staff)	✓	✓			
West Richmond Youth	West Richmond Community Centre (Association Staff)		✓			
West Richmond Preschool	West Richmond Community Centre (Association Staff)		✓			
Richmond Parks	Parks Department (City Staff)		✓			
Richmond Nature Park Society	Richmond Nature Park Society (Society Staff)	✓	✓			
Richmond-Fire-Rescue	Richmond Fire Rescue (City Staff)	✓			✓	
Richmond RCMP	Richmond RCMP (City Staff)			✓		
Minoru Centre	Minoru Centre for Active Living (City Staff – Seniors programs only)	*	✓			
Richmond Oval	Richmond Olympic Oval (Oval Staff)	✓	✓	*	✓	✓

Account Name	Run by	Facebook	Instagram	X	YouTube	LinkedIn
OVALHP	Richmond Olympic Oval (Oval Staff)		✓			
Walk Richmond	Recreation Services (Association Staff)	✓				
Richmond Sport Hosting	Richmond Sport Hosting (Richmond Sport Hosting Staff)	*		✓		✓

* Denotes account exists but is inactive.

Referenced Social Media Platforms

Facebook

Launched in 2004, Facebook is a widely used social networking platform owned by Meta Platforms. It supports text, image, video and event content, with most users in the 35–65 age range. Once a primary source of mainstream news for users, Canada's Online News Act of 2023 (Bill C-18) resulted in Facebook blocking news outlet posts on the platform.

Instagram

Launched in 2010, also owned by Meta, Instagram is a visually driven platform focused on photos, reels, and stories. Its primary user base is aged 24–45. Because it shares Meta's policies with Facebook, it also blocks news outlet posts.

X (Twitter)

Since its purchase by Elon Musk in 2022, X (Twitter) has undergone significant changes but remains a microblogging platform that emphasizes real-time updates, short-form messaging, and direct interaction. Users post short messages that can include text, videos and links. Users are generally aged 25–34.

LinkedIn

Launched in 2003, predominantly a professional networking platform for business-to-business communication, recruitment, and employee engagement. Targeting professionals, employees and organizations, its popular with users aged 25–54.

Bluesky

A decentralized microblogging social media platform similar to X (Twitter), Bluesky was launched as an alternative to mainstream networks. It aims to be open source with an emphasis on community control. It experienced a significant spike in interest following the November 2024 US presidential election that has subsequently waned. While Bluesky has recently introduced scheduling through third-party tools, its built-in analytics remain limited, constraining its effectiveness as a communications and engagement tool. The City continues to post and curate content for Bluesky and is one of only five municipalities actively using the platform.

YouTube

Founded in 2005, YouTube is a video-sharing platform where users can upload short- and long-form content, as well as live stream. Owned by Google, it hosts a vast library of entertainment and educational content. It is used to live stream Council meetings. The largest audience is 25–34 years old, however, 88 per cent of those ages 55 and over use YouTube on a weekly basis.

TikTok

A social platform predominantly for short-form videos from 15–60 seconds. The focus is largely on entertainment with music, dance, filters and special effects. Increasingly, the Gen Z population are using short-form social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram as their search engine of choice. Due to cybersecurity concerns related to ownership, the platform is not used by the City or permitted on City-owned devices.

WeChat

A Chinese-language messaging, social media and payment app, WeChat requires significant steps to acquire an official City account. This includes sharing a copy of the organization's Business Registration Certificate, as well as specific account operator identification including a copy of their passport and phone bills for the previous three months. Any account is subject to strict regulations, with official accounts facing monitoring and content restrictions. Government accounts have additional compliance requirements. Due to cybersecurity concerns related to ownership, the platform is not used by the City or permitted on City-owned devices.

RedNote (Xiaohongshu)

RedNote, or Little Red Book, is an interactive, trend-driven platform described as a cross between YouTube and Instagram. While it is popular among Chinese residents in Richmond and its algorithm could support a more approachable and relatable brand image for the City, pursuing an official account would require navigating complex registration steps and compliance considerations. The platform is also subject to content monitoring and restrictions, which limits flexibility for government communications. Due to cybersecurity concerns related to ownership, the platform is not used by the City or permitted on City-owned devices. For these reasons, it is not being considered.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a free, cross-platform messaging and voice-over-IP (VoIP) service, and similar to Facebook and Instagram, is part of the Meta ecosystem. Users can send text messages, voice messages, make voice and video calls, as well as share photos, videos, documents, locations, and other content. Staff are actively setting up WhatsApp as a new platform because it is widely used by residents whose first language may not be English, providing an opportunity to reach a broader and more diverse audience. While content would primarily be posted in English, the platform also supports multilingual messaging which is an advantage for emergency notifications and public advisories when messages may need to be shared in multiple languages. WhatsApp will be a valuable tool for emergency communications, potentially reducing reliance on X (Twitter). It can be used to send alerts about road closures, emergencies, weather events, or public health advisories, directly to residents' phones. The platform could also help expand the City's audience for surveys and newsletters as well as support digital mail-outs. Additionally, WhatsApp has Hootsuite integration, enabling staff to schedule and manage posts from a central platform.