



Municipality of the County of Annapolis Communications Strategy 2026–2028

Prepared by:

Nadine I. McCormick

Public Relations Officer

January 2026

Communication Goals (External)

Goal #4:

Promote a unified and recognizable County brand.

Outcome:

County communications consistently reflect professionalism, trust, and community focus.

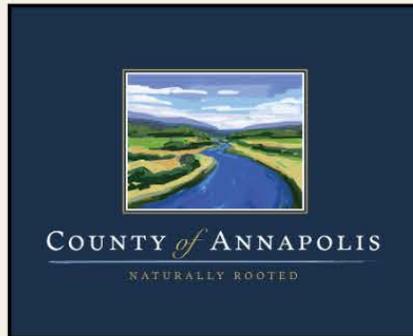
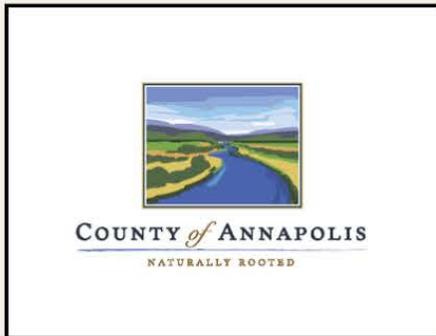
Strategies:

- Apply approved templates, tone, and visual identity across all materials.
- Conduct quarterly brand audits for consistency.
- Offer website, brand, and tone refresher sessions for staff and Council.

Brand & Identity:

Importance of a Unified County Brand

The County's brand is more than a logo or slogan, it represents who we are as a community. Our image, words, and actions should consistently reflect a County that is 'Naturally Rooted' in its people, landscape, and shared values. Maintaining a unified brand ensures the Municipality's identity remains trusted, professional, and community-driven.



COUNTY of ANNAPOLIS
NATURALLY ROOTED

References for proper use:

- Policy 1.2.4 Respecting Coat of Arms, Flag, and Logos
- Brandmark Guidelines

PSSST....

Municipal staff are often the first and most direct representatives of the County to residents, visitors, and business partners. Whether greeting the public at the front desk, conducting inspections, maintaining public spaces, or hosting a public meeting, these employees reflect the values, professionalism, and approachability of our organization. When possible, staff should wear County clothing and travel in marked vehicles to represent the municipality.



Communication Goals (Internal)

Outcome:

Staff and Council operate cohesively with timely, accurate communication.

Goal #1:

Strengthen collaboration and information flow across departments and Council.

Strategies:

- Maintain *Council Connect* weekly updates of relevant news articles.
- Maintain an internal SharePoint hub for cross-departmental news.
- Create locations (upstairs and downstairs) where internal information can be easily shared and accessed (i.e. bulletin board in lunch rooms).

Communication Goals (Internal)

Outcome:

Employees feel informed, engaged, and aligned with County values.

Goal #2:

Promote a culture of openness, innovation, and shared purpose.

Strategies:

- Recognize communication excellence in staff evaluations.
- Host staff idea sessions.
- In cooperation with HR, celebrate staff achievements internally and publicly.

Communication Goals (Internal)

Outcome:

All staff and Council communicate with one voice grounded in respect and accountability.

Goal #3:

Reinforce the County's mission, values, and brand Internally.

Strategies:

- Integrate communications values into onboarding and training.
- Provide a concise Communications Style Guide for everyday use.
- Conduct internal surveys to measure communication effectiveness and satisfaction.

Communications Platform schedule:

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Annual	As Needed
Social Media						
Website (Rotator)						
Press Releases						
Council Highlights						
Public Service Announcements						
Newsletters (Mailed out)						
Newsletter (Digital)						
Newsletter (Internal)						
Council Meeting videos						
Council Connect (Local news items)						
The Community Table: Conversations with Council (In-person)						
In Conversation: Connecting Council & Community (Video sessions)						

Social Media



The Municipality primarily uses Facebook, BlueSky, YouTube, and Instagram to share information with external audiences; less frequently, LinkedIn is utilized. Currently, there are three active Facebook Pages – Annapolis County, Annapolis County Recreation, and Annapolis County Navigator (temporary page created for wildfire response). The Public Relations Officer (PRO) has admin access to all social media platforms, and can assign/delete users as appropriate.

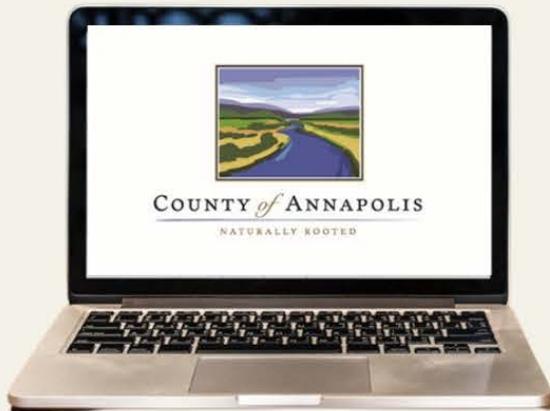
Media

The media plays a vital role in telling the Municipality's stories, supporting transparency, building a sense of community, and sharing information throughout the Annapolis County region. The PRO is responsible for building strong media relations, organizing media events, media monitoring, and preparing press releases. All interview requests received by staff should immediately be directed to the PRO who, in turn, can offer the following support as needed:

- 1) Identification of the appropriate spokesperson or subject matter expert for the interview.
- 2) Develop key messages and/or responses.
- 3) Interview preparation.
- 4) Gather visual or audio pieces to support the interview, as needed.
- 5) Verify credentials of reporter and/or news agency.



Website



The County website serves as a primary and trusted source of information for residents, visitors, and businesses. It provides timely access to services, resources, municipal updates, and opportunities to learn more about the region.

In 2024, the website was refreshed with a new visual design and improved functionality to ensure a more user-friendly experience. A key enhancement is the homepage rotator, which allows Public Relations Officer (PRO) to feature important announcements and time-sensitive information without overwhelming the homepage layout. This ensures that critical updates are visible and easy to locate.

The site also features a public calendar that highlights municipal meetings, events, and other community-based activities, making it easier for users to stay informed and engaged.

Each County department is responsible for maintaining the content on its respective webpage(s). Designated staff within each department are tasked with updating information and ensuring content remains accurate and relevant. The PRO works collaboratively with departments to ensure the website reflects a consistent voice and visual identity that aligns with the County's brand standards.

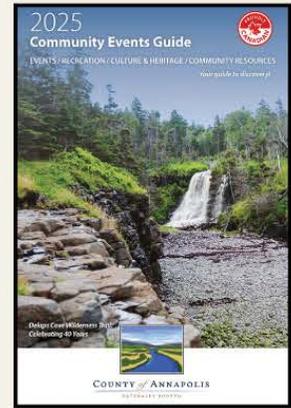
Access to administrative controls is managed to ensure the security and integrity of the website. Only the PRO, IT Manager, and the contracted web designer have Super Administrator access. Departmental staff maintain content through designated user access accounts. The PRO will provide website refresher training every two years, or as needed, to ensure staff remain confident and consistent in website content management practices.

To request placement of content in the homepage rotator, departments must submit the item to the PRO for review and inclusion.

The website also incorporates accessiBe, an AI-powered accessibility enhancement tool. This software supports the County's commitment to accessible and inclusive digital communications by helping the site meet and maintain accessibility compliance standards.

Advertising/Promotion:

There is no single communications approach that can effectively reach every resident, business, or community within Annapolis County. Our population is diverse in geography, age, interests, literacy levels, and access to technology. As such, the Municipality strives to employ a balanced, multi-channel advertising and promotional strategy designed to reach people where they are, using formats they are most likely to access and trust.



The Municipality utilizes online communication methods, but also continues to rely on credible, community-based communication mediums, including local radio stations, newspapers, posters, event pamphlets, mail-out flyers, and newsletters. These channels remain essential for residents who engage primarily offline and for areas of the County where internet service is insufficient or unavailable. The Municipality also values the role of free information sources, such as community bulletin boards, free local print publications, County electronic sign, and on-air radio messaging (PSA's), to ensure that essential information is accessible to all at no cost.

Statutory advertising is carried out in accordance with the Municipal Government Act (MGA) and any other legislated requirements. For non-urgent matters where discretion allows, and where audiences can be clearly defined, the Municipality will prioritize cost-effective digital advertising, particularly the use of boosted social media posts. These campaigns allow targeted outreach, efficient use of resources, and the ability to measure engagement and reach.



The Municipality also recognizes the importance of encouraging public participation and engagement. To support this, Annapolis County leverages its website, email list serves, and social media platforms, as well as its networks with community groups, partner organizations, and key local stakeholders. Staff continue to strengthen relationships within communities to support word-of-mouth communication, which remains a highly effective method of information sharing in rural settings.

Additionally, the Municipality participates in public-facing events and tradeshow to meet residents and visitors where they gather. These opportunities enable two-way communication, promote County initiatives, and build stronger awareness of municipal services and programs.

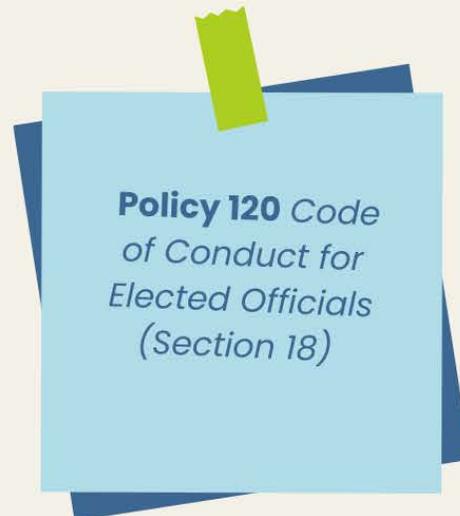
This multi-channel approach ensures that important information is delivered consistently, accessibly, and respectfully across Annapolis County, supporting an informed and engaged public.

Roles & Responsibilities

Clear roles and responsibilities support consistent communication and reinforce accountability across all levels of the Municipality.

Council:

The Warden is the official spokesperson for Council and is responsible for representing the Municipality on behalf of Council in all public communications, including media interviews, official statements, and public announcements. The Warden may, at their discretion, designate another Councillor to speak on their behalf when appropriate. This approach ensures consistency, accuracy, and clarity in messaging, and supports a unified voice in all municipal communications.



Staff:

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) serves as the primary spokesperson for the Municipality on operational and administrative matters. The CAO may designate another staff member or subject-matter expert to speak on behalf of the County when appropriate to ensure clarity and accuracy of information.

Communications should:

- Ensure all messaging aligns with the County's tone, brand, and values.
- Provide accurate, clear, and timely information to residents and Council.
- Use approved templates, logos, and style guides for all written and visual communications.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2026-2028

Building trust, inclusivity,
and pride in our
communities.



COUNTY *of* ANNAPOLIS
NATURALLY ROOTED



Measuring Success – How We Evaluate and Adapt

Evaluation ensures that communications are effective and aligned with the County's goals. Measurement allows for transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.



Performance Indicators:

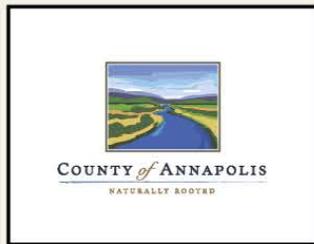
- Website traffic and engagement analytics.
- Social media reach and sentiment.
- Media coverage quality and accuracy.
- Employee and resident satisfaction surveys.
- Timeliness and clarity of information shared.
- Public participation levels in County programs and events.

Conclusion

Clear, consistent, and thoughtful communication is essential to how the Municipality of the County of Annapolis serves its residents and represents itself to the wider region. This strategy recognizes the important role communication plays in building trust, strengthening relationships, and fostering community pride. Central to this work is the Public Relations Officer (PRO), who supports Council and staff in presenting information in a professional, coordinated, and engaging manner.

Whether preparing publications, updating the website, coordinating media inquiries, organizing public meetings, or developing key messages, the PRO works collaboratively across departments to ensure that the County speaks with one voice. This role helps maintain a consistent brand identity and tone, while ensuring that information shared is accurate, accessible, and aligned with the County's values and strategic priorities.

Every interaction, whether online or in person, contributes to how the County is understood and respected by residents, partners, and visitors. By working together, Council and staff, we ensure the County is represented in its best light: professional, welcoming, and responsive. This collaborative approach strengthens our reputation, builds confidence in local government, and supports the County in achieving its vision of a connected, informed, and engaged community.



Nadine I. McCormick
Public Relations Officer
(902) 526-2907
nmccormick@annapoliscounty.ca

Introduction & Purpose:

Effective communication builds trust, understanding, and collaboration between the Municipality of the County of Annapolis, its residents, community partners, and staff. This Communications Strategy (2026–2028) provides a framework for clear, consistent, and inclusive communication that supports the County’s VISION 2027 Strategic Priorities. It aligns with the County’s commitment to transparency, accountability, and community engagement, ensuring residents are informed, included, and inspired to participate in local governance.

This strategy is both a practical guide and a long-term commitment to continuous improvement in how we share information, listen to residents, and represent the County’s identity. It builds upon the foundation of the 2012 Communications Plan, while integrating the values and direction of the 2023–2027 Strategic Priorities Plan (“VISION 2027”).

This Communications Strategy will be reviewed every two years, and amended as needed, to ensure it continues to reflect the evolving needs of our residents, staff, and Council, while responding to emerging trends and incorporating proven best practices.



Vision

A connected, informed, and engaged Annapolis County where communication builds trust, inclusivity, and pride in our communities.

Mission

To communicate openly, clearly, and consistently to build confidence in local government and strengthen relationships with residents, community partners, and staff.

Purpose

To ensure every message from the Municipality reflects the County's values, priorities, and commitment to serving its residents with transparency and respect.

Values

Transparency – Open and honest communication.

Inclusiveness – Engaging diverse voices and perspectives.

Collaboration – Working together with residents and partners.

Accountability – Communicating decisions and outcomes clearly.

Respect – Listening to and valuing all viewpoints.

This Communications Strategy supports the County's VISION 2027 framework and its five strategic priorities:

- Investing in Housing and Housing Infrastructure
- Investing in Community Infrastructure
- Investing in County-wide Community Facilities
- Investing in Our People
- Investing in Partnerships and Accountability

These priorities emphasize growth, community strength, and transparency – values reflected in all County communications.

Communication Principles:

Our communications reflect who we are as a local government and as a community. The following principles guide every message and interaction

Inclusiveness – Ensure all residents have access to information and opportunities to engage.

Trust – Communicate with integrity and consistency.

Transparency – Share information proactively, not just reactively.

Collaboration – Promote teamwork across departments, Council, and communities.

Audiences & Stakeholders:

Understanding our audiences ensures that messages are clear, relevant, and accessible. Different audiences require different approaches and channels.

Primary Audiences:

- Residents of Annapolis County
- Municipal Council and Staff
- Community groups and volunteers
- Businesses and local entrepreneurs

Secondary Audiences:

- Media and regional partners
- Provincial and federal government representatives
- Visitors and potential residents
- Educational institutions and advocacy organizations

According to 2021 Census...

We have a total population of **18,834** (excluding Towns);
21,252 (including Towns)

11,053 residential tax accounts

616 commercial tax accounts

60 Full-time staff

11 Councillors



Communication Goals (External)

Goal #1:

Build public trust through transparency and engagement.

Outcome:

Residents understand County decisions and feel their voices are valued.

Strategies:

- Share Council updates, project milestones, and budget summaries in plain language.
- Publish “Council Highlights” after each Council meeting.
- Host in-person meet and greets, and livestream “ask Council” sessions on the YouTube Annapolis County Channel.

Communication Goals (External)

Goal #2:

Increase awareness of
Annapolis County

Outcome:

Residents recognize
the impact and value
of municipal
initiatives.

Strategies:

- Share success stories.
- Enhance youth involvement to promote a better understanding of municipal government.
- Maintain a consistent posting schedule across social media.
- Partner with community groups (i.e. community grant recognition) and local media for joint storytelling.
- Educate the public to better understand the responsibilities within the different levels of government.
- In addition to annual newsletter (hardcopy), distribute a digital newsletter highlighting ongoing projects and happenings.
- Revive monthly "*Warden's Words*".

Communication Goals (External)

Goal #3:

Strengthen partnerships
and regional collaboration.

Outcome:

The County is
recognized as a
proactive and reliable
partner.

Strategies:

- Coordinate joint announcements with community partners, neighbouring municipalities, provincial, and federal partners.
- Highlight partner contributions in press releases and events.
- Maintain regular updates with business, tourism, and volunteer networks