

Content Governance and Strategy Guide

The City of Campbell River

March 7th, 2025

This Content Governance and Strategy Guide outlines content strategy guidelines and recommendations for the workflow/process related to creating and maintaining content on the City of Campbell River’s website. Its purpose is to guide staff when updating the website to help maintain a high standard of up to date and accessible content on the City’s website.

Table of Contents

Content Governance and Strategy Guide	1
Why Have a Content Strategy?.....	1
Content Planning and Creation	2
Roles and Responsibilities	2
Planning Content.....	4
Creating Content	5
Maintaining Content.....	5
Unpublishing Content.....	6
Content Guidelines	6
Style Guidelines	6
Accordions and FAQ Guidelines	7
PDF Guidelines.....	8
Link Guidelines	8
Vanity (Short) URL Guidelines.....	9
Accessibility Guidelines	9

Introduction

This content strategy guide governs how City website content is created, who creates it, how it's managed, and how it's structured and organized. It helps ensure that content on the City website serves a legitimate purpose.

This guide covers the four primary phases of content strategy: planning, creation, maintenance, and unpublishing. It will help the City:

- develop content that meets our audience's needs and improves user experience
- maintain consistency when creating content
- support content that is relevant and up to date, and its removal when it is no longer necessary

Content Planning and Creation

Roles and Responsibilities

Departments are responsible for different parts of the content planning and creation process:

- **Communications Department:** Responsible for the overall website management, including approving and publishing content, approving menu changes and creating Communications related content.
- **Other Departments:** Responsible for the creation and maintenance of their content.

The following user role breakdown will help each department fulfill their role on the website:

1. Content - Admin role (Admin/Managers in Communications Department,)
 - a. [Manages media](#), theme menus, webforms and taxonomy vocabularies
 - b. Moderates and approves Page content edits submitted for review
2. Content - Publisher role (Communications Department)
 - a. Manages media and the main menu
 - b. Moderates and approves Page content edits submitted for review
3. Content - Editor role (Departments)
 - a. Is able to create drafts of new or existing nodes and submit them for review by Content – Admins and Content - Publishers.
4. Content - Viewer role (Departments)
 - a. Is able to view drafts of existing nodes only.

When adding a new user to the site, it is recommended they are assigned the user role with the **minimum permissions necessary** for them to complete their work on the site. For example, if you are adding a user who just needs to review and edit drafted content for accuracy (i.e., a subject matter expert), but doesn't need to create new content, publish or unpublish content, they should be given the Content-Editor role.

Content stage	User responsible	User role	Steps required
Planning	Departments	N/A	See Planning
Creation	Departments	Content - Editor	See Creation The Departments are responsible for creating an initial draft of content on the website. Drafted content should be as close to a final product as possible before flagging for review. Departments are responsible for making sure content follows the City's style and brand guide, along with best practices for web content. Spelling and grammar should be checked before submitting to the Communications Department. Once draft is created, it will be marked as 'Needs Review' with User Notifications for Content – Admins and Content – Publishers selected. In the pages Revisions Log, make a note of where a new Page should live in the menu, where changes were made, if any other departments need to review the content and any additional information or context to help the Communications Department review,

			including if this content needs to be published on a specific date/time.
Review	Communications	Content - Admin; Content - Publisher	<p>The Communications Department will review content for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate menu placement • Proper messaging • Alignment with style guide, brand guide and best practices • Grammar and spelling • Sensitivities <p>The Communications Department will send content back to Departments if it does not meet standards and requires rewriting or restructuring. If a draft needs to be revised, it should be marked 'Needs Review' with User Notification for the original drafter selected. Using the Revision Log, Communications can provide direction for revisions.</p> <p>The Communications Department will update and publish content without Department review for minor adjustments, such as spelling and grammar.</p>
Approve/Publish	Communications	Content - Admin; Content - Publisher	<p>If the Communications Department approves the page, it can be published immediately, or a transition can be scheduled for the appropriate time if the Department has indicated this within their initial draft's Revision Log.</p> <p>Before publishing the page, the Communications Department is responsible for ensuring the page is placed in the menu.</p>
Maintenance	Communications Departments	Content - Admin; Content – Publisher; Content - Editor	<p>See Maintaining</p> <p>The Communications Department will mark pages on the Stale Content list as 'Needs Review' with User Notifications for the appropriate Content – Editor selected for review and maintenance, using the Revision Logs to communicate that page content has not been updated in 12 months.</p> <p>Whether completing an annual review of content or making regular updates to content, Content – Editor's will review page content and make appropriate updates to content. Once content is updated, the page should be marked 'Needs Review' with User Notifications for Content – Admins and Content – Publishers selected. The Revision Logs should be used to communicate what updates were made. The Communications Department can compare revisions</p>

			side by side in the Revision Log for easier review of updated content.
Removal	Communications	Content - Admin; Content - Publisher	<p>If content is no longer required, Content – Editors should make note in the Revision Log that page should be archived. The page should then be marked ‘Needs Review’ with User Notifications for Content – Admins and Content – Publishers selected.</p> <p>If a Content – Editor recommends that a page should be removed, the Communications Department will review and unpublish the page.</p> <p>It is recommended that pages are unpublished, rather than deleted, when they are no longer relevant.</p>

Planning Content

Content planning should revolve around your target audience and their needs. For some City pages the audience may be broad, such as Campbell River residents, for other pages the audience may be narrower such as local developers. To learn what audiences’ needs are, you may need to undergo a discovery process in which audience profiles are built to gather information about your users. For help with this contact communications@campbellriver.ca.

The following should be taken into consideration when planning new content:

1. **Start by reviewing existing content.** New content shouldn’t repeat or overlap with existing content. Instead, new content should aim to fill any gaps in existing content.
 - a. Consider if new content would make more sense on an existing page or on a new page. If a page already exists that covers a similar topic, it may make more sense to update the existing page. Whenever possible, while keeping content on existing pages manageable and easy to follow, this approach should be taken to reduce content bloat.
 - b. Keep in mind that topics covered by other departments may cover closely related topics. When reviewing for existing content, consider if other departments’ content could be edited to address the topic you are planning to create content for. It may make sense to plan new content in collaboration with other departments who handle related topics or issues.
 - c. If, after reviewing existing content, you have identified a gap in existing content that cannot be filled by improving content on existing pages, then you may have a case to create new content.
2. **Consider the purpose of new content.** New content should be created with users’ needs in mind.
 - a. Consider who the new content would be for, keeping in mind the website’s and the specific page’s audience.
 - b. Consider what user need – if any – this page is trying to meet. Is the page trying to meet multiple user needs? Ideally, one user need per page is the goal. For example, a user may need to apply for a building permit. The page should then be focused on providing information and resources on the permit application process to meet this user need. This is not to say that pages should be focused on one specific topic or question: users looking to apply for a building permit are likely going to need information on building inspections as well as the application forms, so it makes sense to include this information on a single page.
 - c. Consider if the City is the authority on this topic. If not, it may be more appropriate to mention the topic and link to resources/information on another site instead. This will also help keep the City’s website up to date as the authority on the topic will be responsible for keeping their resources up to date. It is still important

for the City to review any external links/resources to ensure they are still relevant, so aim to reference a resource that is evergreen.

- d. Based on the answers to the above, is the new content necessary, or can existing content be improved to better meet user needs?

If you are planning content updates that are more than one or two new pages, such as a restructuring of a section or an entirely new section, you should consult with the Communications Department at the beginning of the project.

Creating Content

Once new content is determined to be necessary, to fill an existing content gap or meet a user need, then content creation can begin:

- When drafting new content, keep in mind the content gap you are trying to fill, or the user need you are trying to fill. Keep content focused on this goal.
 - It may help to focus on a key word or phrase and build content around it. This will help keep content focused on a single topic.
- Ensure you are drafting content to be as evergreen as possible.
 - If writing time sensitive content (e.g., temporary changes, content about new changes, or progress updates), it's recommended to also have a transition scheduled for when that content becomes out of date. A scheduled transition can be used to schedule content changes to update content (e.g., "This project will be completed." To "This project is completed.") or back to standard content (e.g., "Fields are closed from X to X" to "Fields are open.")
 - If your content requires a scheduled transition, make sure the Communications Department is aware through the Revision Log on your draft.
- Decide where in the menu this content should live.
 - Aim to keep content on similar topics grouped together.
 - The sitemap is not organized to reflect the City's internal structure, but to match user understanding. Don't put new content with other content from your department if there is another area of the sitemap that covers a similar topic.
 - Make a recommendation for the general area of the sitemap new content should live and the Communication's department will use this to decide the exact location of the new page.
- The final product of content creation should be a drafted page that aligns with content guidelines in this document and brand guidelines for positioning, and has been reviewed by the Department for accuracy, spelling and grammar. Then it is ready for Communication's review.

Maintaining Content

All content on the website should be reviewed annually to ensure it is still accurate and valuable to users. Some content may require more frequent review and updating, which should be completed by departments as needed.

To ensure content is reviewed regularly, the City website uses a stale content report to automatically add pages to a list when they have not been updated in 12 months.

When reviewing page content, try the ROT method. ROT stands for redundant, outdated, or trivial, and is a useful set of criteria:

- **Redundant:** ensure the content doesn't exist elsewhere on the site or doesn't overlap with existing content.
- **Outdated:** ensure the content is up-to-date and that information is still correct.
- **Trivial:** ensure the content is providing value to its intended audience.

Once you've reviewed your content and identified anything redundant, outdated, or trivial, you can do one of the following:

- **Keep content as is.** If the page is free of errors and ROT content, and meets audience and organizational goals, it can be left as is.
- **Edit the content.** If the page has some ROT but is otherwise still serving the site's purpose and audience, then it should be edited to remove that ROT content.
- **Remove the content.** If the page content is no longer providing value, is entirely out of date, or overlaps significantly with other content, it may be best to remove that content entirely.

If content is being updated outside of the annual review of stale content, related and similar pages should be reviewed to ensure the update is made across all necessary pages. It is the department's responsibility to ensure updates are made to all content when necessary. For this reason, whenever possible, content should be written to be evergreen and not repeated across multiple pages.

Unpublishing Content

If a piece of content is no longer providing value for users, then it should be removed from the site.

When recommending a page be removed, you may want to put a redirect in place so that any links pointing to that content will redirect users to an active page elsewhere on the site. If an appropriate place for a redirect exists, make a recommendation to Communications.

Content Guidelines

Style Guidelines

It's important to consistently follow Canadian English grammar and spelling when writing content for the City's website.

Canadian English:

- Prefers -ize and -yze word endings (e.g., organize and analyze rather than organise and analyse)
- Uses -our at the end of some words instead of -or (e.g., colour or favour rather than color or favor)
- Uses -re instead of -er at the end of many words (e.g., centre or fibre rather than center or fiber)
- Distinguishes between noun and verb forms of some words (e.g., noun: practice and verb: practise)
- Doubles the final "l" in words when adding a vowel suffix (e.g., traveller or cancelled rather than traveler or canceled)
- Uses -ogue instead of -og at the end of certain words (e.g., catalogue rather than catalog)

In general, Canadian Press guidelines should be used for spelling and punctuation. Common Canadian Press guidelines include:

- **Avoid using a serial comma.** A serial comma is the comma following the second-to-last item in a list, before the 'and' or 'or'.
 - Incorrect: "Cats, dogs, and hamsters."
 - Correct: "Cats, dogs and hamsters."
- **Spell out numbers one to nine and use figures for numbers 10 and above.**
 - For time and money, you can use figures for all numbers.
 - For numbers with decimals, use figures (e.g., 7.5).
- **Use the active voice as much as possible.** In active voice, the subject of the sentence performs the action.
 - Active: "We will review your application."
 - Passive: "Your application will be reviewed."
- **Use short direct sentences and simple plain language.** This helps make content easier for all audiences to read and understand.

For the City's website, there are some exceptions to following Canadian Press guidelines. These include:

- **Not using periods for abbreviations, including for provinces.** While Canadian Press would write 'B.C.', use 'BC'.
- **Capitalizing Council, job titles and department titles.** As Canadian Press is a down style, these terms are not to be capitalized, however, to align with style conventions of other municipalities, these terms are capitalized on the Campbell River website.

Other style guidelines to keep in mind for the City website include:

- Always spell out the City of Campbell River (the City) first, then use 'The City' after that or pronouns ('we', 'our').
- **Headings:** Title case (e.g., **B**usiness and **E**conomic **D**evelopment), except for accordions, which should use sentence case (e.g., **C**an I start my project before the Building Permit has been issued?)
- **Acronyms:** No periods (BC)
- **Time:** 9 p.m. 7:30 a.m. (Midnight and noon rather than 12 a.m., 12 p.m.)
- **Money:** \$5, \$25, \$500, \$5,000, \$5 million
- **Thousands:** 12k, 12,000 (use a comma), or 12 thousand.
- **Per cent:** Use word not symbol %, except in charts or graphs.
- **Addresses:** 301 St Ann's Road, Campbell River, BC, V9W 4C7
- **Dates:** Monday, June 17, 2020

Content for the website should be written in as plain of language as possible, aiming to keep reading levels low. Follow these tips to help ensure content is easy for all users to read:

- **Keep content concise.** Users generally don't read large blocks of text.
 - Write in short, clear sentences and paragraphs.
 - Use list formatting as appropriate.
- **Ensure language is for the user.** Avoid technical or complex language except where appropriate.
 - Writing should be at a grade eight level or below.
 - Spell out abbreviations or acronyms the first time they appear on a page.
 - Consider providing a glossary for terms that readers may not know.
 - Use inclusive, respectful, gender-neutral language that any user would be comfortable with.
- **Stay focused.** Do not overload a page or section with too many topics and try to stick to one or two "key messages."
- **Make sure content is easily findable.**
 - Structure content so that the most important information is at the top of the page.
 - Don't hide information in large paragraphs or further down the page.
- **Provide informative and unique page titles.** For each webpage, provide a short title (or main heading) that describes the page contents and distinguishes it from other pages.
- **Make content easily scan-able by users' eyes.** Break up text with subheadings, bullet points and accordions.
 - Using a strict heading structure (H1, H2, H3, etc.) also makes content easily scan-able by screen readers and other assistive technologies.

Accordions and FAQ Guidelines

[Accordions](#) and FAQs (Frequently asked questions) can be a helpful way to structure content on pages when used effectively. However, accordions and FAQs can present some issues. In particular, when all content on a page is broken up into small pieces, it can be tough for users to easily scan a page's content or find what they are looking for. This is because:

- Accordions hide content from page search tools.
- Accordions may force users to expand all accordions to scan through content, or open and close each one individually while searching for information.
- FAQs, when in accordions, have the same issues, plus:

- Users' actual questions are unlikely to exactly match the way FAQs are worded. Either several versions of similar FAQs must be included, or users must try to match their question with the ones provided to find information.
- Often, FAQs either repeat information already included in body content or contain content that would better serve users as body content.

To ensure accordions and FAQs are being used to help users find information and not hinder them, follow these guidelines:

- **Use accordions sparingly.** Accordions should provide supplemental information to body content on a page.
 - If users are most likely coming to a page for certain information, don't bury it in an accordion.
- **Accordions should not make up an entire page's content.** Key information for a page should always be written as body content.
- **Avoid repeating information in an FAQ.** Content in an FAQ should not repeat what is already said in the body content or what is already said in another FAQ.
- **If using FAQs, aim to have under 5.** This is not a firm number, but if more than 5 seem necessary, consider if body content provides all the information it should.
 - Focus on FAQs providing answers to questions users are likely to have *after* reading a page's main content, not before.

PDF Guidelines

To meet accessibility standards, improve user experience and optimize search engine results, follow these guidelines to decide when to use a PDF:

When PDFs can be used:

1. For council and committee meeting minutes and agendas
2. Forms that are meant to be printed out (due to length, signature or in-person submission requirements)
3. Formal documents that must keep the formatting of the PDF
4. Long documents such as annual reports that may be cost- or time-prohibitive to convert to HTML

When PDFs should not be used:

1. As a default, in all cases except those mentioned above
2. When the information in the PDF can be pulled out and placed on a web page instead
3. When the PDF is designed as a print piece, like a brochure, and is therefore hard for users to navigate on a screen
4. For forms that can easily be transferred into web-based HTML forms

Link Guidelines

Linking should be done consistently across the site. There are three options for linking:

- **Inline Link.** Inline links are links that are within the content.
 - Inline links should be for supplemental information. If a link is important for users to follow, it should use one of the other link options.
- **Below Text Link.** Below text links are links that are below a section of content.
 - Below text links are easier for users to spot, and so are a good option for links users are likely looking for.
 - If using multiple links below a section of content, those links should be properly formatted as a list.
- **Button Links.** Button links are similar to below text links but are styled as a button to appear more prominent.
 - Buttons links are the most prominent link option. They should be used for links you actively want to encourage users to follow.

Regardless of the type of link option you are using, the [link text should be descriptive of the link's destination](#).

Vanity (Short) URL Guidelines

Vanity URLs are URLs that are shorter and easier to remember than a page's actual [URL or primary URL alias](#). For example, a URL with the path `/government/city-council/council-meeting/webcasts` could use a vanity URL to shorten it to `/webcasts`.

- [URLs: Absolute vs Relative](#)

When requesting a vanity URL for a page, they should follow these guidelines:

- Vanity URLs should primarily be used when a URL must be communicated in print. URLs in print must be retyped by users into their browser, so vanity URLs make it easier for users and encourage them to visit a link by reducing the amount they must retype.
 - Vanity URLs may also make sense for social media posts. For example, you cannot include a link in an Instagram post, so using a vanity URL is an alternative option to directing users to a link in your profile bio.
 - If a link doesn't have to be visible (i.e., if text can instead be linked), then a vanity URL is not necessary, and using descriptive link text would be a better option.
- Vanity URLs should be simple and memorable. Try to keep them to a single word, if possible.
 - Vanity URLs should also be descriptive of the links destination.
 - If necessary to use a second word, ensure they are separated by a hyphen (-). This helps keep them readable.
- Check if there is an appropriate, existing vanity URL before creating a new one. Check what redirects already exist for a page using [the pages node ID \(e.g., /node/#\)](#).
 - It's also important to ensure the vanity URL you wish to use is not being used for a different page. You can test your vanity URL to see if it goes anywhere.
 - There should only be one vanity URL per page. If the page gets unpublished, then each vanity URL will need to be redirected to an appropriate alternative, or else any print materials using the link will be directing users to a [404 page](#).

Accessibility Guidelines

Web users are diverse in their abilities, so it is important to ensure that web content is accessible and can be viewed and navigable by all users.

Here are some considerations for writing accessible content:

- **Write meaningful text alternatives for images.** For every image, write alternative text that provides the information or function of the image – this enables visually impaired users to “see” the image using screen readers.
 - Purely decorative images do not require alternative text.
 - Alternative text is usually not visible on the screen.
- **Avoid using ALL CAPS and excessive bolding.** Bold text and all caps can be difficult for users to read, and all caps can cause screen readers to read out words like acronyms.
- **Use a proper heading hierarchy.** Screen readers use headings to help users navigate a page. As such, it's important to use headings in a descending order from H2 to H6, without skipping a level. Bold text should never be used in place of a heading.
- **Ensure links are organized, and link text is meaningful.** Link text should describe the content of the link target, and avoid the use of ambiguous words, such as “click here” or “read more.”

Meaningful Link	Non-Meaningful Link
Our Bylaws Compliance Guide offers support for parking tickets.	See more information about bylaws here .

[Bylaws Guidelines](#) *[using a call-to-action button]*

[Click here to learn more.](#)

- **Create transcripts and captions for multimedia.**
 - For audio-only content, such as a podcast, provide a transcript.
 - For audio and visual content, such as videos, also provide captions.
 - For the above, include sounds that are important for understanding the content, for example, “door creaks”.
 - For video transcripts, include a description of important visual content, for example “Nathan leaves the room”.