



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
MEMBERS OF THE CITY
COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Kamei

SUBJECT: Item 3.3: New City Council
Policy for Seamless Transition
of City Elected Official Offices

DATE: May 20, 2025

Approved:

RECOMMENDATION

1. Accept the staff recommendation and resolution with the amendments and additions as proposed in the Memorandum authored by Mayor, and Councilmembers Cohen, Ortiz and Candelas with the following additional direction to:
 - a. Require all Councilmembers¹ and any Council staff permitted by their respective Councilmember as authorized users of official social media accounts to complete training developed and approved by the City Attorney's office prior to such staff being authorized for such use on paid City time; and
 - b. Return to Council by August 2026 for further review of the policy.

BACKGROUND

Effective communication through social media has become a fundamental tool for City Council offices to share information about legislative updates, city services, emergency alerts, and community resources with the residents of San José. These channels promote accessibility and transparency, allowing elected officials and their staff to engage with constituents who may not otherwise interact via traditional government processes.

As the use of social media continues to expand, so too does the importance of ensuring that all official communications comply with applicable legal and ethical standards. Council staff who post on behalf of Councilmember offices must understand the legal distinction between official, personal, and campaign-related activity. Misuse of City resources, including the improper use of

¹ Consistent with the City Charter, the term "Councilmember" as used herein shall be construed to include the Mayor.

official accounts for political or personal content, can result in legal liability and loss of trust with the community.

In other government entities, like the California State Assembly, staff are subject to clear and strict policies governing the use of official social media accounts. These rules prohibit any content related to campaign activity from being posted—or even linked to—on a social media site that is created or maintained using legislative resources, regardless of whether legislative resources are used to post the content. Before any staff member is authorized to manage or contribute to an official social media account using Assembly-provided devices or IT services, that individual must be formally designated by their respective Member and complete a mandatory training program approved by the Assembly Rules Committee. This training ensures that users understand that all social media activity conducted on paid legislative time or using public resources is strictly limited to official use. Legislative users must be clearly identified through a process approved by the Assembly Rules Committee to ensure accountability and compliance with public resource restrictions.

ANALYSIS

To bring San José in line with these best practices, I ask my colleagues to join me in directing staff to implement a mandatory social media training and staff authorization protocol for all employees managing or contributing to official Council office accounts. Each Councilmember would formally designate staff who are authorized to perform this work. Before any access is granted, designated staff must complete a training program developed or approved by the City Attorney's Office.

By centralizing access and enforcing proper authorization protocols, the City can ensure continuity across Council transitions and reduce the risk of data mismanagement. Adopting a standardized training and authorization framework will additionally reduce legal exposure, promote ethical communication practices, and maintain the integrity of the City's public outreach infrastructure.

For questions, please contact Elise Lester, District 1, at elise.lester@sanjoseca.gov.