

SUBJECT: WEB LINKING POLICYPurpose of the City's Internet Website

The City's Vision Statement is: "The City of Madison will be a safe and healthy place for all to live, learn, work and play." The City's website can facilitate that vision by providing useful information to its citizens, visitors and businesses. The City's website is used to enhance and promote the City, to make people aware of available community services, and to provide information about the City's operations and activities. The City's website is not a public forum for expressive activity. The City employs this website expressly for the purpose of expressing the City's messages and its vision of the City. This website thus constitutes an exercise of the City's government speech and not the creation of a public forum.¹

Background

Having a presence on the World Wide Web allows the City to link to other organizations' websites consistent with the above purpose. This is typically done in order to provide related information to someone coming to the City's website. The City exercises no editorial control over any of the information contained in these other organizations' websites. In addition, the City has no control over decisions made by these other organizations as to what websites to which they decide to link. As a result, it is possible that someone starting with the City's website could eventually link to information which may not be related to the City, or that the viewer may find offensive, or which may negatively impact the City's Vision Statement. Such links may interfere with the purpose to which the City's website is dedicated. While this cannot be totally prevented, we can attempt to minimize the probability of it happening by developing some guidelines that can be used in determining whether the City should link to an organization's website.

This APM applies to all City agencies.

Guidelines For Site Inclusion

- Government sites
- Tourism sites related to the greater Madison area
- Sites which contain community information, e.g., civic, recreational, educational and the like, for the greater Madison area
- Local news media sites or articles of relevance to the City of Madison
- School sites
- Library sites
- Sites which contain regional cultural information
- Benevolent and charitable organizations' sites that provide or promote local community services
- Sites for organizations which are funded by the City, e.g., through Community Services or CDBG
- Sites of non-profit professional organizations of which the City or its agencies are members

¹ See Pleasant Grove City, Utah v. Summum, 129 S.Ct.1125, 172 L.Ed.2d 853 (2009).

- Sites which contain information related to the greater Madison area deemed to be of use to the City, its citizens, visitors, or businesses
- Sites of a similar character to sites listed above which would likewise support the City's Vision Statement

Guidelines For Site Exclusion

- Sites containing information promoting any illegal activities
- Sites for which the focus is to market a particular commercial service or product (see Acknowledgements below)
- Sites containing information which would violate any of the City's Affirmative Action Policies, Equal Opportunity Ordinance, Ethics Ordinance, or which may be in violation of any other City ordinances, or State or Federal laws
- Sites unrelated to the City of Madison and the surrounding community
- Sites for a specific political candidate or political party—rather, the City may link to independent organizations such as the League of Women Voters
- Sites containing material which is harmful to minors
- Sites which are not consistent with the purpose of the City's Internet Website set forth above
- Sites containing material which is obscene, profane, defamatory, libelous or fraudulent

Acknowledgements

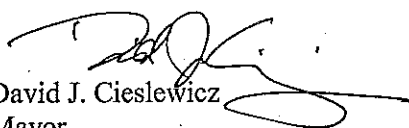
From time to time, a for-profit commercial company may partner with the City on a particular project and/or they may contribute towards a project. An acknowledgement for that company's contribution can be made. Including the company's logo along with the acknowledgement is also acceptable. In keeping with the above guidelines, no direct link should be made to the company's web pages.

Disclaimer

The City of Madison is not responsible for the content of any website to which it provides a link.

Decision Making Authority

Individual Department or Division Heads or their designees are responsible for deciding whether to include a link to another website on their department/division webpage. Prior to making this decision, such person shall consult with the Information Technology (IT) Director or his/her designee. The decision of the City as to whether to link to another website is a matter purely within the discretion of City officials and is not subject to review or appeal. However, any denial of a request to provide a link should be documented and forwarded to the IT Director. Links will be removed if found to violate this APM.


David J. Cieslewicz
Mayor

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