



**Report Number:** EC2025-0529

**Meeting:** Executive Committee

**Meeting Date:** 2025 May 13

## NOTICE OF MOTION

**RE:** *Combatting Misinformation, Disinformation, and Malinformation in Local Government*

**Sponsoring Member(s) of Council:** Councillor Courtney Walcott

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WHEREAS...

**Misinformation** refers to false information that is not intended to cause harm.

**Disinformation** involves the deliberate creation and dissemination of false information designed to manipulate, damage, or mislead individuals, organizations, or countries. Disinformation is crafted with the explicit goal of deceiving its audience to achieve a specific agenda

**Malinformation** refers to information that stems from the truth but it is often overexaggerated in a way that misleads and causes potential harm.<sup>i</sup>

**AND WHEREAS...**

With the growing threat and impact of misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation on democracy at the local, provincial, national, and international level, the need to protect well-informed democratic decision making at the local level is paramount to ensuring the City of Calgary is a leading municipality protecting itself from the growing threat misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation has on our local democracy and decision-making processes.

**AND WHEREAS...**

In a 2024 poll by Abacus Data, 84% of Canadians expressed concerns about the spread of misinformation and disinformation in Canada, this issue was second only to cost of living concerns.<sup>ii</sup> Following the 2025 Canadian Federal Election, a survey found 77% of Canadians think believe misinformation had an impact on the outcome.<sup>iii</sup>

**AND WHEREAS...**

The Code of Conduct for Elected Officials Bylaw (26M2018) states that Councillors must “act in the best interests of the City taking into account the interests of the City as a whole, and without regard to the Member’s personal interests.”<sup>iv</sup> Councillors are required to not act in a way that “in the eyes of a reasonable Calgarian, undermines, or has the potential to undermine, public confidence in City governance.”<sup>v</sup> It is often under this provision that allegations of a Councillor spreading MDM are reviewed by the City of Calgary’s Integrity Commissioner.

**AND WHEREAS...**

Spreading misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation is a violation of the City of Calgary’s Code of Conduct for Elected Officials Bylaw (26M2018) as it actively undermines public trust in government<sup>vi</sup>, and is widely perceived as being a threat to our democratic institutions nationwide<sup>vii</sup>.

Instances of local government officials spreading misinformation that have been validated by either internal or external Integrity Commissioners can be seen in, but are not limited to, Calgary AB,<sup>viii</sup> Edmonton AB,<sup>ix</sup> Pickering ON,<sup>x</sup> and Hanwell NS.<sup>xi</sup>

The Alberta Government has proposed the removal of local codes of conduct with Bill 50, the Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act.<sup>xii</sup>

## AND WHEREAS...

Public discourse influenced by misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation (MDM) can create undue pressure on elected officials, including Councillors, by politically swaying their voting decisions through the amplification of false or exaggerated narratives. This would ultimately undermine principles of evidence-based decision-making and public trust in municipal governance.

And there's broad recognition that the world we live in, how we get information, who creates that information and shares it, is distorting our sense of reality, our ability to solve problems collectively and ultimately might be influencing at some level the kind of democracy we end up having.<sup>xiii</sup>

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that Council direct administration to:

1. Scope, develop and release a Request for Proposals seeking third-party consultant(s), by the end of Q4 2025 to:
  - a) Develop a misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation (MDM) review for the City of Calgary to be presented to Council by Q2 2026 that could include, but is not limited to:
    - I. The role of Administration in relation to identifying and correcting MDM and in educating the public on media literacy;
    - II. An assessment of the current Administration processes, procedures and structures in place to assess and respond to MDM key trends, and any opportunities for improvement;
    - III. A summary of key trends in MDM e.g. the role of artificial intelligence (in both creating and identifying and/or addressing), the efficacy of current strategies and the resources required to see success given the global nature of MDM;
    - IV. Exploring the feasibility of a reporting framework to support future assessments of the state of MDM and associated impact on The City of Calgary;
    - V. Conduct an analysis of a recent issue in retrospect, as an example that supports strategy development, that identifies the use of MDM by elected officials, Administration, members of the public, and other groups (e.g. Non-profit organizations, Community Associations, Think Tanks, media) in Council and committee meetings or when participating in public discourse or advocacy (on line or in person), and an analysis of the impact of this MDM on the democratic decision making process related to the issue.
2. Authorize funding of a resource in Customer Service & Communications to complete the scope of a Request for Proposal and include required a funding request to complete the RFP as part of the 2026 budget.

<sup>i</sup> [How to identify misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation \(ITSAP.00.300\) - Canadian Centre for Cyber Security](#)

<sup>ii</sup> [Majority of Canadians concerned about spread of disinformation and its impact on democracy | CPAC.ca](#)

<sup>iii</sup> [Canada election: 3 in 4 Canadians say misinformation affected race](#)

<sup>iv</sup> <https://publicaccess.calgary.ca/ldm01/livelink.exe?func=ccpa.general&msgID=WTTccKKcyqF&msgAction=Download>

<sup>v</sup> <https://publicaccess.calgary.ca/ldm01/livelink.exe?func=ccpa.general&msgID=WTTccKKcyqF&msgAction=Download>

<sup>vi</sup> [Calgary councillor refuses to apologize after breaching code of conduct with misleading Facebook post | CBC News](#)

<sup>vii</sup> [Canadian elections are threatened by disinformation](#)

<sup>viii</sup> [Calgary councillor refuses to apologize after breaching code of conduct with misleading Facebook post | CBC News](#)

<sup>ix</sup> [filestream.ashx](#)

<sup>x</sup> [OPP investigating after Pickering mayor, council file criminal harassment complaint against fellow councillor | CBC News](#)

<sup>xi</sup> [Hanwell councillor suspended for 3 months over accusations of spreading misinformation | CBC News](#)

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<sup>xii</sup> [Alberta government moves to eliminate municipal codes of conduct | CBC News](#)

<sup>xiii</sup> [Majority of Canadians concerned about spread of disinformation and its impact on democracy | CPAC.ca](#)

Attachment:

1. Notice of Motion Checklist