



COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	March 3, 2023
SUBJECT:	City Response to Federal Government Ban on TikTok app on Government Devices (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Matthew Grant Director, Communications & Strategic Initiatives 905-977-8045
SIGNATURE:	

On February 27, 2023, The Right Honourable Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the President of the Treasury Board Mona Fortier [announced](#) a ban on use of the popular social media app TikTok on federal government devices:

“Effective February 28, 2023, the TikTok application will be removed from government- issued mobile devices. Users of these devices will also be blocked from downloading the application in the future. Following a review of TikTok, the Chief Information Officer of Canada determined that it presents an unacceptable level of risk to privacy and security.

The decision to remove and block TikTok from government mobile devices is being taken as a precaution, particularly given concerns about the legal regime that governs the information collected from mobile devices, and is in line with the approach of our international partners. On a mobile device, TikTok’s data collection methods provide considerable access to the contents of the phone.”

For Council’s awareness, at the time of writing this update, the Ontario government has not indicated what, if any, action it may take.

Out of an abundance of caution and in consultation with the City's IT division, Senior Leadership and social media team, the City will be removing the TikTok app from City devices and will be prevented from use on City of Hamilton devices going forward. In addition, the City’s Communications TikTok account will be paused and made dormant

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OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

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SUBJECT: City Response to Federal Government Ban on TikTok app on Government Devices (City Wide)- Page 2 of 2

while staff await result of the Federal Office of the Privacy Commissioner probe alongside privacy regulators from provinces of Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta.

BACKGROUND

The City of Hamilton launched a communications TikTok account on January 25, 2023 to pilot the social media platform as an opportunity to reach residents in a new, fun way. Staff met with TikTok staff in December 2022 to set up the account, and at that time discussed related news from the United States and concerns about security. City staff also led a Canada-wide environmental scan to determine use of TikTok by government and felt comfortable based on accounts that were active across Canada.

Following the announcement by the Federal Government, staff have met and watched closely as multiple provincial governments have followed the Federal lead related to potential security risks. The City of Hamilton's IT division has not identified any specific security risks at this time.

On March 1, 2023, the City of Calgary followed their provincial and federal government lead and announced a similar ban on municipal devices.