



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
("RFP")**

**Strategic Communications Consultant**

Date Released: February 22, 2021

City of Burlingame  
City Manager's Office  
501 Primrose Road  
Burlingame, CA 94010  
[www.burlingame.org](http://www.burlingame.org)

**Proposals Must be Received by 2:00 p.m. PST on March 24, 2021**

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## **SECTION I – SCOPE OF WORK**

The City of Burlingame (“City”) is seeking proposals from highly qualified consultants (“Consultant”) to work closely with the City Manager and her staff to provide strategic communications consulting, graphic design services, marketing, and general communications support to the City.

The City of Burlingame communicates with residents, businesses, and other stakeholders and organizations about various matters. The Consultant will provide general support for the various ongoing communications in the form of content development, graphic design of necessary campaign elements, and message strategizing with the City Manager and applicable management staff.

The three primary types of communications support sought are listed below:

### **1. One-Time Consulting Services**

- a. Analyze the City’s existing public communication platforms and tools. Identify and recommend opportunities for improvement, and propose metrics for measuring success.
- b. Update the City’s internal and external social media policy.
- c. Develop a standard strategic communications playbook for the types of issue-specific, strategic communications support listed in item 3 below.

### **2. Ongoing Strategic Communications Support**

- a. Monthly Metric Reporting – compile data and report metrics about City communication platforms
- b. Schedule and lead monthly, 30-minute “check-in” calls with City Manager and Assistant to the City Manager
- c. Media outreach
  - i. Maintain and update contacts at media outlets
  - ii. Monitor coverage of Burlingame and work with media outlets to ensure accuracy in their reporting
  - iii. Encourage coverage of key City messages and responses to various news items

### **3. Ongoing, Issue-Specific, Strategic Communications Support**

From time to time, the City will need “issue-specific” strategic communications support related to a **crisis** (e.g., police or health/safety emergency), **special event** (ribbon cutting), **emergency** (air quality impacts or COVID-19 measures), **project** (new Community Center project), or **other topic** (drought).

The Consultant and City will follow the strategic communications playbook created for the City. For these issue-specific situations, as an example only, the Consultant **may** need to provide the following types of strategic communications support. This is not an exhaustive list, and the Consultant will need to be flexible.

- Be on-call and respond to the City within agreed to response times outlined in the

- scope of work and playbook.
- Provide frequent updates to the City Manager
- Prepare Council and staff responses to media inquiries
- Draft press releases
- Monitor local publications and online alerts including newspapers and digital media stories where the City of Burlingame is mentioned
- Coordinate with other leaders and communication staff in sister agencies and organizations that serve Burlingame residents (utility agencies, school districts, community service groups, etc.) when needed
- Prepare Communication Calendars, which will include, for example, daily/weekly/monthly communication content and graphics suitable for different types of communications tool (i.e. electronic newsletter, social media, press releases, mailers, website, etc.)

## **SECTION II – ABOUT THE CITY OF BURLINGAME**

### **Organization**

Burlingame is approximately six square miles and is located in San Mateo County, on the western shore of the San Francisco Bay approximately 10 miles south of San Francisco and close to the San Francisco International Airport.

It is a California general law city incorporated in 1908 and operates under the Council-Manager form of government. A five-member City Council is elected at large to four-year terms and serves as the board of directors. However, the City recently started the process of transitioning to district elections; the first district elections will be held in 2022.

The Council annually selects a Mayor and Vice Mayor from its members. The City Council appoints a City Manager, who serves as the chief executive officer and is responsible for all municipal functions. The City Council also appoints a City Attorney to serve as chief legal advisor for the governing body and the administration.

The City of Burlingame offers the following municipal services: general government (City administration, finance, and human resources), public works (engineering, water and sewer, and streets and storm drainage), public safety (police and the Central County Fire Department), leisure and neighborhood services (library, parks, and recreation), and community development (building, planning, and economic development).

### **Community**

Burlingame's total population of approximately 30,400 residents identifies as 55% white, 25% Asian, and 12.5% Hispanic. More than half of the city's residents are renters, and the median home value is \$1,710,000. Burlingame's residents are highly educated and engaged in community and City events and initiatives.

## Current City Communications

The City Manager acts as the City's chief public information officer and is responsible for issuing press releases and responses to media inquiries. The City employs a part-time Assistant to the City Manager, who supports the City Manager and produces a popular weekly eNewsletter ("eNews"). The eNews contains information about relevant citywide and department news, events, initiatives, and projects. It also includes a "Community Events" section that contains news and events not sponsored by the City.

The City's other primary methods of communicating with the public include its website ([www.burlingame.org](http://www.burlingame.org)), and social media such as Nextdoor, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Each department is responsible for its own content and posts on the website and social media.

From time to time, communications support and tools will be included with specific City projects such as the General Plan update ([www.envisionburlingame.com](http://www.envisionburlingame.com)) and the City's recent launch of the [district elections process](#).

## **SECTION III – RFP SCHEDULE, INSTRUCTIONS, AND PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS**

The proposals submitted in response to this RFP will be used as a basis for selecting the Consultant for this project. The Consultant's proposal will be evaluated according to the criteria provided in Section IV, "Consultant Selection Criteria and Process" of this RFP.

### **RFP Schedule**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Estimated Date</b>
RFP Release Date	Feb 22, 2021
Deadline to Submit Questions – 2:00 p.m. PST	March 8, 2021
Release of Responses to Questions - 2:00 p.m. PST	March 10, 2021
Proposal Submission Due – 2:00 p.m. PST	March 24, 2021
Email Verification of Receipt of Proposal by City – 5:00 p.m. PST	March 24, 2021
Reference Checks and Interviews Completed	April 9, 2021
Consultant Selection	April 16, 2021

### **Questions, Changes, and Clarifications**

Any questions regarding this RFP, should be emailed to Ms. Nil Blackburn at [nblackburn@burlingame.org](mailto:nblackburn@burlingame.org). Ms. Blackburn will respond to the requester via email. In addition, the original question and the City's answer will be posted on a Google Sheet on the City's RFP web page: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1aEwL9ouPSmSSa69Scrd\\_2HWcdD-rCRDnKAWM4tZSwCw/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1aEwL9ouPSmSSa69Scrd_2HWcdD-rCRDnKAWM4tZSwCw/edit?usp=sharing). The City will do its best to answer questions about

the RFP as soon as possible. However, some questions may require input from City staff or other individuals, so your patience is appreciated.

The City may also post changes and clarifications to the RFP on the Google Sheet.

**It is the Consultant's responsibility to review all questions, answers, changes, and clarifications posted on the Google Sheet by the due date of March 10, 2021.**

Furthermore, the Consultant must acknowledge it has viewed the RFP questions, answers, changes, and clarifications, if any, in its transmittal letter included with its proposal.

## **Instructions**

Proposals must be emailed to [nblackburn@burlingame.org](mailto:nblackburn@burlingame.org) by 2:00 p.m. PST on Wednesday March 24, 2021. Ms. Nil Blackburn will confirm receipt of the proposal by sending an email to the sender(s) of Consultant's proposal by 5:00 p.m. PST on the same day.

Proposals received after the time and date specified above will be considered nonresponsive. Any proposals received prior to the time and date specified above may be withdrawn or modified by written request of the Consultant prior to the deadline to submit proposals. Unsigned proposals or proposals signed by an individual not authorized to bind the prospective Consultant will be considered nonresponsive and rejected.

## **Proposal Requirements**

All proposals should adhere to the specified content and sequence of information described by this RFP. Proposals shall contain at least the following information in the order listed:

### **1. Transmittal Letter**

The electronic transmittal letter shall be addressed to:

City of Burlingame  
Lisa K. Goldman, City Manager  
501 Primrose Road  
Burlingame, CA 94010

The letter shall be on the Consultant's letterhead and include the Consultant's contact name, mailing address of the office from which the project will be managed, telephone number, and email address.

The letter will address the Consultant's understanding of the services being requested and any other pertinent information the Consultant believes should be included.

Consultant must acknowledge it has viewed the RFP questions and answers submitted to the City on the City's webpage as of 2:00 p.m. March 10, 2021.

The Consultant shall provide a brief statement affirming that the proposal terms shall remain in effect for ninety (90) days following the date proposal submittals are due.

The letter shall be signed by an agent authorized to bind the Consultant to the terms of the proposal.

## **2. Consultant Information, Qualifications, and Experience**

The City will only consider proposals from consultants that demonstrate they have successfully completed comparable services for similarly sized **cities**. Proposals shall include a detailed description of a minimum of three (3) similar service engagements within the past five (5) years and provide the following information: contracting agency name, contracting agency project manager and contact information, contract amount, date of contract, date of completion, Consultant project manager and contact information, and project description.

## **3. Consultant Organization and Project Management**

- Describe the roles and organization of your proposed team for this project. Indicate the composition of subcontractors, if any, number of project staff, and experience of your team as it relates to this project.
- Describe your project management approach. Provide a detailed description of how the team and scope of work will be managed.
- Describe the roles of key individuals on the team. Provide resumes and references for all key team members. Resumes shall show relevant experience related to the Scope of Work, as well as the length of employment with the proposing Consultant. Key members, especially the project manager, shall have significant demonstrated experience with this type of strategic communications consulting, and should be committed to stay with the project for the duration of the project.
- Explain your team's ability to adapt to changes and existing conditions throughout the process that may affect the program outcome and schedule. Identify any "value-added" services that your firm may provide.

## **4. Scope of Work – Additions, Modifications, and Exclusions**

The City has included a proposed scope of work and expected deliverables in "Section I – Scope of Work" above. For this section of the proposal, include any tasks or deliverables that may have been overlooked by the City, or any other modifications the Consultant would recommend to the Scope of Work. Please also include any services that are specifically excluded such as multilingual press releases, copy services in the case of mailers, etc.

## **5. Response Time Information**

As explained in the "Ongoing, Issue-Specific, Strategic Communications Support" of the

Scope of Work above, “Consultant must be on-call and respond to the City within agreed upon response times for issue-specific situations that may arise”. Please provide an explanation of how quickly the City can expect the Consultant to respond after the City’s initial outreach for assistance with issue-specific communications support during weekday work hours, weekday evening hours, national holidays, Consultant’s additional holidays, Consultant’s vacation, etc.

## **6. Cost Proposal**

Consultant’s proposal shall include a cost proposal. The City chose not to prescribe a specific type of cost proposal (time and materials, fixed, etc.) because of the range and variety of services requested. It is up to the Consultant to provide a cost proposal that makes sense for the three service types listed in the Scope of Work in Section I above **and** any proposed additional scope or modifications per “Section 4: Scope of Work- Additions, Modifications, and Exclusions” above.

## **7. Standard Professional Services Agreement**

Consultants will be required to enter into a Professional Services Agreement (Agreement), which is available in Exhibit 1, “Standard Professional Services Agreement”, and provide the level of insurance prescribed by the “Insurance Requirements” in Exhibit 2 of this RFP.

**Consultant’s proposal shall include a statement that it is prepared to sign the Agreement unaltered should it be the successful proposer, or provide redlined changes using Microsoft Office’s “track changes” feature.**

## **SECTION IV – Consultant Selection Criteria and Process**

All proposals will be evaluated by the City Manager and the Assistant to the City Manager. A City Council subcommittee may also be involved in the evaluation and selection process. Proposals submitted in response to this RFP must be complete. Proposals that do not at least include the seven (7) proposal requirements identified above will be considered incomplete and will receive no further consideration.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Experience with similarly sized cities and scopes of work
- Proposed project management approach
- Cost
- References
- Number and scope of proposed changes to the Standard Professional Services Agreement, if any.

The consultants submitting the top three to four proposals will be invited to an interview. The interview will help to clarify each proposal and the approach and qualifications for the services



requested. The City may choose to submit the contract for the top-ranked consultant to the City Council for approval.

## **SECTION V – GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

### **1. Proposal Costs**

The City is not liable for any costs or expenses incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP. All costs in preparing and submitting a proposal shall be borne by the proposer.

### **2. Selection of Consultant**

This RFP does not commit the City to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal for this request, or to procure or contract for services. The City reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request, to negotiate with any qualified Consultant, or to modify or cancel in part or in its entirety the RFP if it is in the best interests of the City to do so. Furthermore, a contract award may not be made based solely on price.

### **3. Award of Agreement**

If the City determines, after further evaluation and negotiation, to award the Agreement, a Professional Services Agreement in standard city form shall be sent to the successful proposer for the proposer's signature. No proposal shall be binding upon the City until after the Agreement is signed by duly authorized representatives of both the Consultant and the City. Liability and workers compensation insurance in standard City form shall be required for all consultants.

### **4. Retention and Use of Proposals**

The City reserves the right to retain all proposals, as well as any reports, data, or other material prepared or assembled by bidder and submitted to City in response to this RFP, and to use any idea in any proposal regardless of whether that proposal is selected.

### **5. Public Records Act**

All products used or developed in the execution of any contract resulting from this RFP will remain in the public domain at the completion of the contract. Submission of any materials in response to this RFP constitutes a waiver by the submitting party of any claim that the information is protected from disclosure. By submitting materials, (1) the Consultant consents to release of such materials by the City if requested under the Public Records Act without further notice, and (2) the Consultant agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the City for release of such information.

## **6. Failure to Execute Contract**

If the Consultant to whom the award is made fails to enter into the contract, the award will be annulled, and an award may be made to the next proposer who will fulfill every stipulation as if it were the party to whom the first award was made in the City's discretion.

## **7. Insurances**

Consultants are to obtain and keep, for the duration of the project, Commercial General Liability, Automobile Liability, Employer's Liability, and Professional Liability Insurance in the amounts and pursuant to the requirements specified in Exhibit 2, "Insurance Requirements", of this RFP.