

*David VanLuven*  
Town Supervisor

*Robert Leslie, AICP*  
Director of Planning

**TOWN OF BETHLEHEM**  
Albany County - New York  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING**  
445 DELAWARE AVENUE  
DELMAR, NEW YORK 12054  
(518) 439-4955 x1157  
Fax: (518) 439-5808  
Email: rleslie@townofbethlehem.org



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

### **Town of Bethlehem Strategic Communications Plan for Roadway Construction Projects**

**Date: October 31, 2019**

**Proposals Due: November 22, 2019**

#### **Statement of Purpose**

The Town of Bethlehem, partnering with the Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce, invites proposals from qualified consultants (Consultants) to create a Strategic Communications Plan that would advise the Town on business communication strategies, outreach and engagement, best practices, and message templates to be implemented during roadway construction projects.

In recent years, the Town has been successful in receiving federal and state transportation funding to implement roadway improvements. While long term community benefits of the improvements are realized, the Town seeks to minimize the short term disruption to businesses during construction. The Town has two major roadway construction projects on the horizon where strong communication with the businesses and residents within the construction zone will be crucial for the success of the project and the long term health of the businesses. The Town will engage a consultant to develop a communications plan that will maximize the effectiveness of the Town's communication with businesses, and businesses' communication with their customers/clients.

The Town anticipates the final plan will:

1. Directly deal with the Glenmont Roundabout Project, with an outline for replication on future construction projects.
2. Formulate a strategy and suggested timeline for the Town's communications with businesses, residents, and commuters in the construction zone.
3. Formulate a strategy and suggested timeline for businesses' communications with customers, clients and staff, broken down by industry sector.

#### **Background**

The Town of Bethlehem communicates with residents, businesses, and other stakeholders and organizations about various Town matters, including:

- Department programs, projects, campaigns, and news
- Key issues and areas of interest
- News and events
- Town policy
- Traffic, public safety, and other alerts
- Disaster preparedness

Communications are done both at the department level and out of the Town Supervisor's Office. The Town communicates daily using the following platforms:

- Town website – Featured News
- Town monthly e-newsletter
- Seasonal printed mailed newsletter (3 times a year)
- Press releases, news media outreach
- Social media: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter
- Email, department e-Newsletters

The Town of Bethlehem's **goals** for the Strategic Communications Plan are to:

- Communicate key project and construction information to businesses, residents, commuters and other stakeholders, and organizations in the construction zone during construction
- Ensure businesses, residents, and commuters have access to up-to-date traffic routing information
- Ensure businesses, residents, and commuters have access to emergency alerts
- Establish plans and procedures for communicating with businesses and residents about temporary changes in utility services (water/sewer/electric, etc.)
- Increase overall civic engagement of businesses, residents, and commuters during the time of construction
- Establish a system for tracking and responding to comments and concerns during construction.
- Provide strategies and best practices to businesses so they can effectively communicate to their customers/clients during construction
- Strategies should take advantage of free social media platforms that are commonly used

### **Scope of Work**

The Town is looking for a highly qualified Consultant to work closely with the Town Supervisor's Office, Department of Economic Development and Planning, and Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce to create a Strategic Communications Plan for roadway construction projects. The Consultant is expected to create a Strategic Communications Plan that includes but is not limited to the items below. Please note the Plan will be specific to the Glenmont Roundabout Project, but also serve as a template going forward for other construction projects.

- Recommendations for maintaining and enhancing Town communications with businesses in the construction zone
- Established audience profiles, such as businesses, residents and commuters, and methods to reach different types of businesses and neighborhoods
- Best practices for social media, alert messages, and surveys
- Sample language for press releases and messaging for Town and businesses
- Guidance on establishing a newsletter for updates on construction activities and promotion of businesses in the construction zone.
- Creative ideas for planned social media posts and campaigns for the Town as well as for the businesses located in the construction zone
- Development of a schedule of announcement notifications timed with construction phasing and traffic control specifically for Glenmont Roundabout, and also for future roadway projects
- The most effective way to establish a Town presence on Instagram
- Guidance on how to be most effective with advertising, guidance on advertising outlets, best practices for timing and content
- Processes and standards to measure the effectiveness of each communication method
- Projections of budget and staffing time needed to implement and maintain Strategic Communications Plan

## Required Meetings

The following should be incorporated into the proposals scope and budget.

Once awarded, the consultant will be expected to take a tour (walking/driving) of the Glenmont construction area with the Town of Bethlehem's Economic Development Coordinator, to familiarize themselves with the area, as well as the nature and breakdown of businesses.

The consultant will be expected to hold a minimum of two meetings with the Communications Strategy Committee. The Committee will be composed of the following members:

- Town of Bethlehem Director of Economic Development and Planning
- Town of Bethlehem Economic Development Coordinator
- Town of Bethlehem Executive Assistant to the Town Supervisor
- Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce President and/or
- Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce Communications and Programming Associate

The following organizations have been identified as Stakeholders and will be invited to participate in meetings as needed:

- The Town of Bethlehem Division of Engineering and Department of Public Works
- Creighton Manning Engineers (design engineer and construction inspector, Glenmont Roundabout)
- Spotlight Newspaper
- Businesses in the construction zone

The consultant should also anticipate two meetings with the construction design engineer and inspector to learn about the construction project, work zone area, potential traffic routing options and the phasing of construction.

The consultant should anticipate attending (1) public meeting with businesses to gather feedback that will help to inform the strategy.

## Submittal Requirements

The Town is requesting **5 hard copies and one PDF copy** of the proposal, which must contain the following information:

1. Letter of Interest and Approach (2-page maximum): Please include a letter expressing the Consultant's interest in being considered for the project. As part of the letter, please describe your approach for establishing a Strategic Communications Plan for Roadway Construction Projects for the Town of Bethlehem.
2. Strategic Advisor/Project Manager Experience (2-page maximum): Please include information about the specific relevant experience of the Consultant or team (project manager, personnel assigned to project) who will draft the Plan.
3. Scope and Budget (3-page maximum): Based on the proposed Scope of Work, please provide billing rates, budget, and overall schedule for the project based on a project completion date of ~~April 1, 2019~~ **April 1, 2020**.

## Submittal Instructions

Responses should be submitted by mail or in person by **2:00 PM on Friday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2019** to:

Elizabeth Staubach  
Economic Development Coordinator

Town of Bethlehem  
445 Delaware Avenue  
Delmar, New York 12054

Submittals shall be clearly marked on the outside cover or envelope "Response to Request for Proposals: Strategic Communications Plan for Roadway Construction Projects."

### **Selection Process**

Based upon the qualifications of the submitted proposals, informational interviews will be conducted by a Strategic Communication Plan Advisory Committee. The Committee will then meet to review proposals, discuss interviews, and select a preferred Consultant. The Town intends to complete the contract with the selected Consultant in a timely manner so that the Consultant can commence work in early 2020.

The final selection will be based upon the following criteria:

- A. The Consultant's experience and results with similar projects and demonstrated expertise.
- B. The Consultant's demonstrated understanding of the proposed scope and the approach to create a Strategic Business Communications Plan for the Town.
- C. Qualified personnel assigned to the project. The experience of the project manager will be heavily weighted in evaluation.
- D. The Consultant's proposed budget amount for this one-time project.
- E. Ability to meet the desired schedule.

The Town will not discriminate against any interested firm or individual on the grounds of race, creed, color, sex, age, disability or national origin in the contract award. The Town reserves the right to reject any and all proposals at its discretion, including not awarding the contract to any firm.

### **Questions**

Elizabeth Staubach, Economic Development Coordinator, [estaubach@townofbethlehem.org](mailto:estaubach@townofbethlehem.org) , is available to answer questions and respond to requests for additional information. All questions must be submitted in writing.