

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

City of Salinas Ballot Measure Polling and Public Outreach Consulting Services



October 1, 2025

CITY OF SALINAS
200 LINCOLN AVENUE
SALINAS, CALIFORNIA 93901

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Salinas (City) is requesting proposals from qualified consultants to provide ballot measure polling and public outreach consulting services. The City is in the process of evaluating the feasibility of a November 2026 ballot measure proposing the extension of an existing sales tax. The City is seeking expertise in evaluating the feasibility of such a ballot measure, advising on a measure that aligns with community priorities, and educating and informing the community throughout the process.

II. COMMUNITY PROFILE

The City incorporated as a charter city on March 4, 1874 providing all typical City services including: Public Safety (police and fire); Public Works (engineering, transportation, and environmental and maintenance services); Community Development (permit services, planning, housing, and code enforcement); Library and Community Services (parks, community services, and library); and General Administrative Services. Business-type City services include: a Municipal Airport; Industrial Waste System; Sanitary Sewer System; Permit Services; a property-based district and business assessment districts. As of the 2020 census, 79.8% of the Salinas population is Hispanic or Latino with many residents being monolingual Spanish speakers. The United States Census Bureau reports the City's population at 161,039 as of January 1, 2024. The City employs approximately 660 full-time employees.

The City of Salinas operates under the Council-Manager form of government. The City Council is governed by a six-member Council elected by districts for four-year alternating terms and a Mayor elected at large for a two-year term. The City Council acts as the legislative and policymaking body. Council appoints the City Manager and the City Attorney. The City Manager serves as the chief administrator and is responsible for implementing the policies and priorities of the City Council.

III. BACKGROUND – MEASURE G

On November 4, 2014, the voters of Salinas approved Measure G, an ordinance imposing a one-cent general transactions and use tax. Measure G has a fifteen-year term (set to expire in 2030) and requires the City Council to establish an Oversight Committee. Measure G was premised upon and was presented to the voters as an opportunity to restore services to the community; to provide for a “safer, better Salinas.” Consistent with that purpose, the following question was presented to the voters:

“To improve our quality of life, maintain and enhance city services and facilities, including: crime and gang prevention; neighborhood policing and school safety; safety inspections; police, fire and paramedic response; fixing potholes, streets, and sidewalks; recreation and programs for youth and seniors; and other city services, shall the City of Salinas enact a one cent sales tax, that can't be taken by the State, with citizens' oversight, annual independent audits, with all funds dedicated to Salinas?”

Today, based on the current budget and assumptions for future growth, the City should expect positive net revenue through 2029. However, in FY 2030, there would be a significant drop in net revenue based on the expiration of Measure G. The City will have significant challenge with funding operations at current levels should Measure G not be extended.

The FY 2025-26 Approved Budget reflects budget balancing strategies and the use of one-time funds and the City will need to reconcile service levels to actual revenues. The City will continue facing deficits with a current Financial Forecast ranging from \$1.8 million in FY 2026-27 to \$45.5 million in FY 2030-31 without Measure G. Without Measure G, the City can anticipate a reduction in revenues of approximately 37.8%.

The City needs to plan for the potential extension of Measure G in the coming years in advance of its expiration in 2030.

IV. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The following generalized task descriptions are presented as information only to assist the consultant in preparing the proposal. The final scope of services will be incorporated into the negotiated agreement. If any information is unclear, please provide assumptions and state these assumptions within your proposal.

Feasibility Assessment/Messaging:

1. Review of past ballot measure data and polls, current and historical City policy documents and video recordings of relevant City Council and Measure G meetings/discussions to understand the issues under consideration;
2. Develop education and information, and assist City staff with informational messaging needs related to the ballot measures extension consistent with the City's Communication Strategy (APPENDIX 2);
3. Provide for the translation of materials into Spanish;
4. Design, conduct and analyze polling (Spring 2026) of voters in Salinas to assess the feasibility of a ballot measure;
5. Analyze past election results in the City and region to understand voter turnout trends and other relevant voting patterns;
6. Research other local, regional and state ballot measures that may be heading to an upcoming ballot that could compete with City's ballot measure(s);
7. Make specific recommendations regarding a ballot measure that best reflects the priorities of Salinas residents, and provide other important ballot measure features; and
8. Prepare and make recommendations regarding press releases and other project-related City communications.

Ballot Measure Development:

1. Work with legal counsel and City staff to develop the polling survey questionnaire;
2. Work with legal counsel and key City staff to develop or update the 75-word ballot question as needed;
3. Work with the City Clerk's Office to make sure all steps are taken to have measure placed on the November 2026 ballot;
4. Work with staff and legal counsel to develop and refine the full text of the ballot measure and other materials that will appear in the ballot and voter guide mailed to all voters;
5. Present recommendations, documents and resolutions to the City Council and the Measure G Oversight Committee; and
6. Develop a recommended timeline and calendar from contract start date through November 2026.

Public Information to Raise Awareness and Educate and Inform of the Potential Ballot Measure:

1. Develop informational messaging and fact sheets;
2. Provide talking points, frequently asked questions, and messaging for staff;
3. Provide content related to proposed ballot measure to be added to City's website, used in social media, included in email updates and added to newsletters within the parameters of the law;
4. Prepare PowerPoint presentations for public and community meetings;
5. Write, design, and produce mailings and advertising to inform residents;
6. Develop plans to inform internal stakeholder groups, including commissions, staff, employee groups, and others; and
7. Develop plans to inform external stakeholder groups including elected leaders, business leaders, ethnic community leaders, faith community leaders, neighborhood groups and others.

V. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposers who wish to be considered for this project must submit an electronic copy of their proposal to the City for review. Electronic documents should be submitted in PDF form. Proposals should be clear and concise. At a minimum, each proposal must include the following information in sections as outlined below.

Submittal Cover Form and Cover Letter

The proposal shall be submitted with a cover letter. The letter accompanying the proposal must provide the name, title, address, telephone number, and signature of the individual(s) authorized to negotiate and bind the consultant contractually. An unsigned proposal or one signed by an individuals unauthorized to bind the consultant may be rejected. The cover letter shall provide a summary of the consultant's capabilities and availability of staff, information and qualifications of the proposed lead who will be representing the consultant.

Project Approach and Proposed Scope of Work

Provide a detailed description of the consultant's proposed approach to implementing the Scope of Services described in Section IV. At a minimum, the approach shall include an implementation plan for the tasks described in the scope of services and any recommended revisions or additions to the list of tasks.

Project Schedule and Timeline

Outline a proposed project schedule and timeline starting from a kickoff meeting to development of draft documents and final reports in line with a November 2026 ballot measure.

Experience and Qualifications

Provide a brief history of the consultant, including name of the consultant, general services, experience, the year the consultant was established under the current name, the principal place of business, and the location of local office(s). Indicate any other previous names for the consultant during the last five years.

References

Provide a list of at least three prior projects/contracts within the last ten years in which the consultant provided relevant services similar to this assignment. Provide the name of client, location, proposed staff who worked on the example projects, description of services, schedule, contact information, etc.

Resumes and Qualifications of Proposed Personnel

This section should list key team members who will be assigned to the project, their role on the project, primary office location, relevant experience, and applicable licenses and certifications. This section should also include brief resumes for all key personnel proposed for the Project.

Fee Schedule

Proposers shall attach a copy of the standard hourly rate, fee schedule by task, and minimum cost per task, if applicable, for their consultant.

The method of payment to the successful proposer(s) shall be on a time and expense reimbursement basis for actual work performed. Fee schedule shall include direct costs and overhead such as, but not limited to, transportation, communications, subsistence, and materials. Progress payments will be based on actual hours, hourly costs and support service costs charged to the project, typically on a monthly basis.

Conflict of Interest

Provide names of individuals associated with the consultant that have a potential conflict of interest. The City may not contract with a proposer if the proposer is an employee, officer, or director of the proposer's consultant, or any immediate family member of the preceding, has served as an elected official, employee, board, or commission member of the City who influences the making of the contract. Proposals are subject to disqualification based on such a conflict of interest as determined by the City.

Terms and Conditions

The proposal shall stipulate that it is predicated upon all the terms and conditions of the Request for Proposals. In addition, it shall contain a statement to the effect that it is valid for a period of ninety (90) days from the date of receipt thereof by the City. It shall be signed by an official authorized to bind the organization.

VI. CONDITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF REQUEST

- a. **General Conditions.** The City of Salinas reserves the right to (1) reject any or all responses, (2) waive informalities in the responses, and (3) take whatever action or make whatever decision it determines to be in the best interest of the City. All responses will remain in effect for at least ninety (90) days from the date of submission. Any contract agreement shall not be binding or valid with the City unless and until it is executed by authorized representatives of the City and of the selected consultant.

The City reserves the right to request additional information from any and all prospective consultants as deemed necessary by the City in order to evaluate the responses. This process

may not be used, however, as an opportunity to submit missing documentation or to make substantive revisions to the original response. A prospective consultant may withdraw their proposal at any time prior to the date and the time which is set forth herein as the deadline for submittal of proposals.

- b. **Liability of Costs and Responsibility.** Each prospective consultant submitting a response to this Request for Proposals (RFP) agrees that the preparation of all materials and presentation for submittal to the City is at the prospective consultant's sole cost and expense, and the City will not, under any circumstances, be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by a prospective consultant.

Prospective consultants are responsible for making necessary investigations and examination of records. Failure to do so will not act to relieve any condition of the proposed agreement or the requirements set out in the RFP. It is mutually understood and agreed that the submission of a statement of qualification shall be considered conclusive evidence that the prospective consultant has made such examinations and investigations. No request for modification of a statement of qualification shall be considered after its submission on the grounds that the prospective consultant was not fully informed as to any fact or condition.

The selected consultant shall be required to assume responsibility for all services offered in the statement of qualification whether or not they possess them within their organization. The selected consultant will be the sole point of contact with regard to contractual matters, including payment of any and all charges resulting from the contract

- c. **Standard Agreement.** A sample professional services agreement is attached for the proponent's reference. (Appendix 1) It is the responsibility of the prospective consultant to be familiar with and be prepared to accept the terms of this standard contract (if awarded future services). Any requested changes to the City's Agreement must be submitted with the proposal and will be evaluated as part of the proposal. Contract provisions may be modified after review and approval of the City during final contract negotiations. However, the provisions in this contract are those preferred by the City for the engagement of consulting services relating to the RFP. If any of the terms and conditions contained in the standard agreement are not agreeable, these should be identified specifically, otherwise it will be assumed that the Consultant is willing to enter into the agreement as it is written. Failure to identify contractual issues can be a basis for City to disqualify a consultant. The method of payment to the successful proposer shall be in accordance with the payment clause of the executed agreement with the selected consultant as shown in Section 3, "Compensation" of the sample agreement.
- d. **Insurance.** Consultant shall, throughout the duration of project, maintain comprehensive general liability and property insurance covering all operations of Consultant, its agents and employees, performed in connection with the project in the amounts and in the types of coverages shown in the sample professional services agreement.
- e. **Non-Discrimination/Non-Preferential Treatment.** The successful Consultant shall not discriminate, in any way, against any person on the basis of race, sex, color, age, religion,

sexual orientation, actual or perceived gender identity, disability, ethnicity, or national origin, in connection with or related to the performance of City contracts.

- f. **Rights to Submitted Materials.** All responses and related correspondence, reports, charges, schedules, exhibits and other documentation submitted with the proposal (electronically or physically) will become the property of the City and a matter of public record. All documents submitted in response to the RFP will be subject to disclosure if requested by a member of the public. There are a very limited number of narrow exceptions to these disclosure requirements. Any information that a prospective consultant considers confidential, the disclosure of which would be an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, should be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CONFIDENTIAL; NOT PUBLIC RECORDS." During the selection process, the City will keep such information confidential and will not disclose it except as may be required under applicable law, including the California Public Records Act. This means that, depending on the nature or timing of the request, or future court decisions, that information may not remain private and may be publicly disclosed. Once the selection process is completed, the City will return this information to the Consultant if not selected. Budgets and cost proposals submitted by proposers shall not be considered confidential or proprietary and may be subject to disclosure.
- g. **Prohibition of Gifts.** City staff and officials are subject to several legal and policy limitations regarding receipt of gifts from persons, consultants, or corporations either engaged in business with the Agency, or proposing to do business with the City. The offering of any illegal gift shall be grounds to disqualify a Consultant. To avoid even the appearance of impropriety, Proponents and Selected Consultant should not offer any gifts or souvenirs, even of minimal value, to City officers or employees.
- h. **Use of Subcontractors.** Consultants must obtain the City's prior written approval to use any consultants while performing any portion of this Agreement. Such approval must approve of the proposed consultant and the terms of compensation.

VII. SUBMISSION OF THE PROPOSAL

Proposals are due on or before the date/time listed in the RFP Selection Timeline. Late submissions will not be considered. Responses shall be submitted electronically in pdf format to:

Patricia Barajas, City Clerk
patricib@ci.salinas.ca.us
(831) 758-7383

All submittals shall be received by the City Clerk's Office no later than **October 24, 2025** by 5:00 p.m. PST.

In addition to name and address of Consultant, include name, title, e-mail address, and telephone number of the individual the City should contact regarding a response. Include individuals within the consultant, authorized to commit the consultant to a contract.

VIII. SELECTION PROCESS

An evaluation committee of City staff will review and evaluate submitted proposals based on the specified response format. After the submittals are evaluated and ranked, the City, at its sole discretion, may elect to interview one or more respondents. Please note, staff may reach out to reference agencies for feedback on previous work experience. In addition, the City reserves the right to select a proposal without conducting interviews.

After the review of proposals, the City may invite some or all proposers to be interviewed or may decide to select proposers without conducting interviews and enter contract negotiations directly. Proper interviews, if necessary, are anticipated to be conducted according to the RFP Selection Timeline. Details of the interview process will be provided along with the invitation to present. The City will assess the best scope and budget and negotiate a mutually acceptable professional services agreement. If the City and the selected consultant cannot reach an agreement, the City will consider the next highest-ranked consultant.

The City reserves the right to cancel the RFP process or to reject any and all responses and/or submittals, or parts thereof, and to waive any technicalities or minor informalities if it determines, in its sole discretion, that such cancellation or rejection is in the best interest of the City.

IX. EVALUATION CRITERIA

City will evaluate all proposal submittals. Such evaluation will include, but not be limited to, experience (10%), overall qualifications (10%), project approach (50%), and cost (30%). This RFP does not commit City to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of the submittal, or to procure or contract for services or supplies. All proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Quality and completeness of proposal.
- Project cost
- Quality of the proposed services to be provided.
- Ability and experience of team members assigned to work on the project.
- Technical experience in performing work of a closely similar nature.
- Methodology and work program, including knowledge of local needs and the ability to work closely with City staff and the project team.
- Consultant availability, including ability to attend and make presentations.
- Timing of work program and ability to perform the work in condensed timelines.
- Ability to produce high-quality and easy-to-read graphic information.

X. SELECTION TIMELINE

The City has designated the following activities and dates as key to the project schedule. City reserves the right to change the schedule at its own discretion.

Anticipated Schedule for Selection Timeline	
Issuance of Request for Proposals	October 1, 2025
Deadline for Questions	October 10, 2025
City's Responses to Questions Released	October 15, 2025
Deadline to Submit Proposals	October 24, 2025
Interview of Consultants	November 6, 2025
Anticipated Contract Award	November 18, 2025

XI. DOCUMENTS AND QUESTIONS

The Request for Proposal is available electronically as a free download at <https://www.salinas.gov/Business/RFP-RFQ>. Addenda will be available as a download at the same web location. Proposers are responsible for determining if any addenda have been issued.

Questions regarding this RFP should be submitted via email to Patricia M. Barajas, City Clerk with the subject "Ballot Measure RFP Question - [CONSULTANT NAME]". Questions must be received by date/time displayed in RFP Selection Timeline, above. Questions received after the date and time stated will not be accepted.

Questions will be answered by the City via an upload onto the City website by the date indicated in the Selection Timeline above. The source of any questions will remain anonymous.

XII. ATTACHMENTS

APPENDIX 1: Sample Agreement

APPENDIX 2: Communications Strategy

AGREEMENT
FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
BETWEEN
THE CITY OF SALINAS AND
[CONSULTANT'S LEGAL NAME]



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**AGREEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES BETWEEN
THE CITY OF SALINAS AND [EXACT LEGAL NAME]**

This Agreement for Professional Services (the “Agreement” and/or “Contract”) is made and entered into this ____ day of _____, 20__, between the City of Salinas, a California Charter city and municipal corporation (hereinafter “City”), and [legal name], a [type of organization] (hereinafter “Consultant”).

RECITALS

WHEREAS, Consultant represents that he, she, or it is specially trained, experienced, and competent to perform the special services which will be required by this Agreement; and

WHEREAS, Consultant is willing to render such professional services, as hereinafter defined, on the following terms and conditions.

NOW, THEREFORE, City and Consultant agree as follows:

TERMS

1. **Scope of Service.** The project contemplated and the scope of Consultant’s services are described in Exhibit B, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.
2. **Term; Completion Schedule.** This Agreement shall commence on [xxx], and shall terminate on [xxx], unless extended in writing by either party upon (30) days written notice. This Agreement may be extended only upon mutual written consent of the parties and may be terminated only pursuant to the terms of this Agreement.
3. **Compensation.** City hereby agrees to pay Consultant for services rendered the City pursuant to this Agreement on a time and materials basis according to the rates of compensation as set forth in Exhibit B. The total amount of compensation to be paid under this Agreement shall not exceed [\$_____].
4. **Billing.** Consultant shall submit to City an itemized invoice, prepared in a form satisfactory to City, describing its services and costs for the period covered by the invoice. Except as specifically authorized by City, Consultant shall not bill City for duplicate services performed by more than one person. Consultant’s bills shall include the following information to which such services cost or pertain:
 - (A) A brief description of services performed;
 - (B) The date the services were performed;
 - (C) The number of hours spent and by whom;
 - (D) A brief description of any costs incurred; and

- (E) The Consultant's signature.

Any such invoices shall be in full accord with any and all applicable provisions of this Agreement.

City shall make payment on each such invoice within thirty (30) days of receipt; provided, however, that if Consultant submits an invoice which is incorrect, incomplete, or not in accord with the provisions of this Agreement, City shall not be obligated to process any payment to Consultant until thirty (30) days after a correct and complying invoice has been submitted by Consultant. The City shall process undisputed portion immediately.

5. Meet & Confer. Consultant agrees to meet and confer with City or its agents or employees with regard to services as set forth herein as may be required by the City to ensure timely and adequate performance of the Agreement.

6. Additional Copies. If City requires additional copies of reports, or any other material which Consultant is required to furnish as part of the services under this Agreement, Consultant shall provide such additional copies as are requested, and City shall compensate Consultant for the actual costs related to the production of such copies by Consultant.

7. Responsibility of Consultant. By executing this Agreement, Consultant agrees that the services to be provided and work to be performed under this Agreement shall be performed in a fully competent manner. By executing this Agreement, Consultant further agrees and represents to City that the Consultant possesses, or shall arrange to secure from others, all of the necessary professional capabilities, experience, resources, and facilities necessary to provide the City the services contemplated under this Agreement and that City relies upon the professional skills of Consultant to do and perform Consultant's work. Consultant further agrees and represents that Consultant shall follow the current, generally accepted practices in this area to the profession to make findings, render opinions, prepare factual presentations, and provide professional advice and recommendations regarding the projects for which the services are rendered under this Agreement.

8. Responsibility of City. To the extent appropriate to the projects to be completed by Consultant pursuant to this Agreement, City shall:

(A) Assist Consultant by placing at its disposal all available information pertinent to the projects, including but not limited to, previous reports and any other data relative to the projects. Nothing contained herein shall obligate City to incur any expense in connection with completion of studies or acquisition of information not otherwise in the possession of City.

(B) Examine all studies, reports, sketches, drawings, specifications, proposals, and other documents presented by Consultant, and render verbally or in writing as may be appropriate, decisions pertaining thereto within a reasonable time so as not to delay the services of Consultant.

(C) City Manager, or his designee, shall act as City's representative with respect to the work to be performed under this Agreement. Such person shall have the complete authority to transmit instructions, receive information, interpret and define City's policies and decisions with respect to materials, equipment, elements, and systems pertinent to Consultant's services. City may unilaterally change its representative upon notice to the Consultant.

(D) Give prompt written notice to Consultant whenever City observes or otherwise becomes aware of any defect in a project.

9. Acceptance of Work Not a Release. Acceptance by the City of the work to be performed under this Agreement does not operate as a release of Consultant from professional responsibility for the work performed.

10. Indemnification and Hold Harmless.

Consultant shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City and its officers, officials, employees, volunteers, and agents from and against any and all liability, loss, damage, expense, costs (including without limitation costs and fees of litigation) of every nature arising out of or in connection with Consultant's performance of work hereunder, including the performance of work of any of Consultant's subcontractors or agents, or Consultant's failure to comply with any of its obligations contained in the agreement, except such loss or damage which was caused by the sole negligence or willful misconduct of the City.

11. Insurance. Consultant shall procure and maintain for the duration of this Agreement insurance meeting the requirements specified in Exhibit A hereto.

12. Access to Records. Consultant shall maintain all preparatory books, records, documents, accounting ledgers, and similar materials including but not limited to calculation and survey notes relating to work performed for the City under this Agreement on file for at least three (3) years following the date of final payment to Consultant by City. Any duly authorized representative(s) of City shall have access to such records for the purpose of inspection, audit, and copying at reasonable times during Consultant's usual and customary business hours. Consultant shall provide proper facilities to City's representative(s) for such access and inspection.

13. Non-Assignability. It is recognized by the parties hereto that a substantial inducement to City for entering into this Agreement was, and is, the professional reputation and competence of Consultant. This Agreement is personal to Consultant and shall not be assigned by it without express written approval of the City.

14. Changes to Scope of Work. City may at any time, and upon a minimum of ten (10) days written notice, seek to modify the scope of services to be provided for any project to be completed under this Agreement. Consultant shall, upon receipt of said notice, determine the impact on both time and compensation of such change in scope and notify City in writing. Upon agreement between City and Consultant as to the extent of said impacts to time and compensation, an amendment to this Agreement shall be prepared describing such changes.

Execution of the amendment by City and Consultant shall constitute the Consultant's notice to proceed with the changed scope.

15. Ownership of Documents. Title to all final documents, including drawings, specifications, data, reports, summaries, correspondence, photographs, computer software (if purchased on the City's behalf), video and audio tapes, software output, and any other materials with respect to work performed under this Agreement shall vest with City at such time as City has compensated Consultant, as provided herein, for the services rendered by Consultant in connection with which they were prepared. City agrees to hold harmless and indemnify the Consultant against all damages, claims, lawsuits, and losses of any kind including defense costs arising out of any use of said documents, drawings, and/or specifications on any other project without written authorization of the Consultant.

16. Termination.

(A) City shall have the authority to terminate this Agreement, upon ten days written notice to Consultant, as follows:

(1) If in the City's opinion the conduct of the Consultant is such that the interest of the City may be impaired or prejudiced, or

(2) For any reason whatsoever.

(B) Upon termination, Consultant shall be entitled to payment of such amount as fairly compensates Consultant for all work satisfactorily performed up to the date of termination based upon the Consultant's rates shown in Exhibit B and/or Section 3 of this Agreement, except that:

(1) In the event of termination by the City for Consultant's default, City shall deduct from the amount due Consultant the total amount of additional expenses incurred by City as a result of such default. Such deduction from amounts due Consultant are made to compensate City for its actual additional costs incurred in securing satisfactory performance of the terms of this Agreement, including but not limited to, costs of engaging another consultant(s) for such purposes. In the event that such additional expenses shall exceed amounts otherwise due and payable to Consultant hereunder, Consultant shall pay City the full amount of such expense.

(C) In the event that this Agreement is terminated by City for any reason, Consultant shall:

(1) Upon receipt of written notice of such termination promptly cease all services on this project, unless otherwise directed by City; and

(2) Deliver to City all documents, data, reports, summaries, correspondence, photographs, computer software output, video and audio tapes, and any other materials

provided to Consultant or prepared by or for Consultant or the City in connection with this Agreement. Such material is to be delivered to City in completed form; however, notwithstanding the provisions of Section 15 herein, City may condition payment for services rendered to the date of termination upon Consultant's delivery to the City of such material.

(D) In the event that this Agreement is terminated by City for any reason, City is hereby expressly permitted to assume the projects and complete them by any means, including but not limited to, an agreement with another party.

(E) The rights and remedy of the City and Consultant provided under this Section are not exclusive and are in addition to any other rights and remedies provided by law or appearing in any other section of this Agreement.

17. Compliance with Laws, Rules, and Regulations. Services performed by Consultant pursuant to this Agreement shall be performed in accordance and full compliance with all applicable federal, state, and City laws and any rules or regulations promulgated thereunder.

18. Exhibits Incorporated. All exhibits referred to in this Agreement and attached to it are hereby incorporated in it by this reference. In the event there is a conflict between any of the terms of this Agreement and any of the terms of any exhibit to the Agreement, the terms of the Agreement shall control the respective duties and liabilities of the parties.

19. Independent Contractor. It is expressly understood and agreed by both parties that Consultant, while engaged in carrying out and complying with any of the terms and conditions of this Agreement, is an independent contractor and not an employee of the City. Consultant expressly warrants not to represent, at any time or in any manner, that Consultant is an employee or servant of the City.

20. Integration and Entire Agreement. This Agreement represents the entire understanding of City and Consultant as to those matters contained herein. No prior oral or written understanding shall be of any force or effect with respect to those matters contained herein. This Agreement may not be modified or altered except by amendment in writing signed by both parties.

21. Jurisdiction and Venue. This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of California, County of Monterey, and City of Salinas. Jurisdiction of litigation arising from this Agreement shall be in the State of California, in the County of Monterey or in the appropriate federal court with jurisdiction over the matter.

22. Severability. If any part of this Agreement is found to be in conflict with applicable laws, such part shall be inoperative, null and void insofar as it is in conflict with said laws, but the remainder of the Agreement shall continue to be in full force and effect.

23. Notices.

(A) Written notices to the City hereunder shall, until further notice by City, be addressed to:

Patricia M. Barajas, City Clerk
City of Salinas
200 Lincoln Avenue
Salinas, California 93901

With a copy to:

City Attorney
City of Salinas
200 Lincoln Avenue
Salinas, California 93901

(B) Written notices to the Consultant shall, until further notice by the Consultant, be addressed to:

[Contact Information for Consultant including Title, Address, Email, and Phone # (in same format as (A) above)]

(C) The execution of any such notices by the City Manager shall be effective as to Consultant as if it were by resolution or order of the City Council, and Consultant shall not question the authority of the City to execute any such notice.

(D) All such notices shall either be delivered personally to the other party's designee named above, or shall be deposited in the United States Mail, properly addressed as aforesaid, postage fully prepaid, and shall be effective the day following such deposit in the mail.

24. Nondiscrimination. During the performance of this Agreement, Consultant shall not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, ancestry, creed, sex, national origin, familial status, sexual orientation, age (over 40 years) or disability. Consultant shall take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment without regard to their race, color, religion, ancestry, creed, sex, national origin, familial status, sexual orientation, age (over 40 years) or disability.

25. Conflict of Interest. Consultant warrants and declares that it presently has no interest, and shall not acquire any interest, direct or indirect, financial or otherwise, in any manner or degree which will render the services required under the provisions of this Agreement a violation of any applicable local, state or federal law. Consultant further declares that, in the performance of this Agreement, no subcontractor or person having such an interest shall be employed. In the event that any conflict of interest should nevertheless hereinafter arise, Consultant shall promptly notify City of the existence of such conflict of interest so that City may determine whether to terminate this Agreement. Consultant further warrants its compliance with the Political Reform

Act (Government Code section 81000 et seq.) and Salinas City Code Chapter 2A that apply to Consultant as the result of Consultant's performance of the work or services pursuant to the terms of this Agreement.

26. Headings. The section headings appearing herein shall not be deemed to govern, limit, modify, or in any manner affect the scope, meaning or intent of the provisions of this Agreement.

27. Attorneys' Fees. In case suit shall be brought to interpret or to enforce this Agreement, or because of the breach of any other covenant or provision herein contained, the prevailing party in such action shall be entitled to recover their reasonable attorneys' fees in addition to such costs as may be allowed by the Court. City's attorneys' fees, if awarded, shall be calculated at the market rate.

28. Non-Exclusive Agreement. This Agreement is non-exclusive and both City and Consultant expressly reserves the right to contract with other entities for the same or similar services.

29. Rights and Obligations Under Agreement. By entering into this Agreement, the parties do not intend to create any obligations express or implied other than those set out herein; further, this Agreement shall not create any rights in any party not a signatory hereto.

30. Licenses. If a license of any kind, which term is intended to include evidence of registration, is required of Consultant, its representatives, agents or subcontractors by federal, state or local law, Consultant warrants that such license has been obtained, is valid and in good standing, and that any applicable bond posted in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

31. Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute a single agreement.

32. Legal Representation. Each party affirms that it has been represented, if it so chose, by legal counsel of its own choosing regarding the preparation and the negotiation of this Agreement and the matters and claims set forth herein, and that each of them has read this Agreement and is fully aware of its contents and its legal effect. Neither party is relying on any statement of the other party outside the terms set forth in this Agreement as an inducement to enter into this Agreement.

33. Joint Representation. The language of all parts of this Agreement shall in all cases be construed as a whole, according to its fair meaning, and not strictly for or against any party. No presumptions or rules of interpretation based upon the identity of the party preparing or drafting the Agreement, or any part thereof, shall be applicable or invoked.

34. Warranty of Authority. Each party represents and warrants that it has the right, power, and authority to enter into this Agreement. Each party further represents and warrants that it has given any and all notices, and obtained any and all consents, powers, and authorities, necessary to permit it, and the persons entering into this Agreement for it, to enter into this Agreement.

35. No Waiver of Rights. Waiver of a breach or default under this Agreement shall not constitute a continuing waiver or a waiver of a subsequent breach of the same or any other provision of this Agreement. The failure to provide notice of any breach of this Agreement or failure to comply with any of the terms of this Agreement shall not constitute a waiver thereof. Failure on the part of either party to enforce any provision of this Agreement shall not be construed as a waiver of the right to compel enforcement of such provision or any other provision. A waiver by the City of any one or more of the conditions of performance under this Agreement shall not be construed as waiver(s) of any other condition of performance under this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have made and executed this Agreement on the date first written above.

CITY OF SALINAS

René Mendez, City Manager

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

☐ Christopher A. Callihan, City Attorney, or
☐ Rhonda Combs, Assistant City Attorney

CONSULTANT

By (Printed Name): _____
Its (Title): _____

Exhibit A- Insurance Requirements

Insurance Requirements

Consultant shall procure and maintain for the duration of the Agreement insurance against claims for injuries to persons or damage to property which may arise from or in connection with the performance of the work hereunder and the results of that work by the Consultant, his agents, representatives, employees, or subcontractors. With respect to General Liability and Professional Liability, coverage should be maintained for a minimum of five (5) years after Agreement completion.

MINIMUM SCOPE AND LIMIT OF INSURANCE

Coverage shall be at least as broad as:

- (A) Commercial General Liability** (“CGL”): Insurance Services Office Form (“ISO”) CG 00 01 covering CGL on an occurrence basis, including products and completed operations, property damage, bodily injury, and personal & advertising injury with limits no less than **\$1,000,000** per occurrence. If a general aggregate limit applies, either the general aggregate limit shall apply separately to this project/location (ISO CG 25 03 or 25 04) or the general aggregate limit shall be twice the required occurrence limit.
- (B) Automobile Liability**: ISO Form CA 0001 covering any auto, or if Consultant has no owned autos, hired and non-owned, with limits no less than **\$1,000,000** per accident for bodily injury and property damage.
- (C) Workers’ Compensation** insurance as required by the State of California, with Statutory Limits, and Employer’s Liability Insurance with a limit of no less than **\$1,000,000** per accident for bodily injury or disease.
- (D) Professional Liability** (also known as Errors and Omissions) insurance appropriate to the work being performed, with limits no less than **\$1,000,000** per occurrence or claim, **\$2,000,000** aggregate per policy period of one year.

If the Consultant maintains broader coverage and/or higher limits than the minimums shown above, the City of Salinas requires and shall be entitled to the broader coverage and/or higher limits maintained by the Consultant. Any available insurance proceeds in excess of the specified minimum limits of insurance and coverage shall be available to the City.

OTHER INSURANCE PROVISIONS

The insurance policies are to contain, or be endorsed to contain, the following provisions:

Additional Insured Status

The City of Salinas, its officers, officials, employees, and volunteers are to be covered as additional insureds on the CGL policy with respect to liability arising out of work or operations performed by or on behalf of the Consultant including materials, parts, or equipment furnished in connection with such work or operations. General liability coverage can be provided in the form

of an endorsement to the Consultant's insurance (at least as broad as ISO Form CG 20 10, CG 11 85, or **both** CG 20 10, CG 20 26, CG 20 33, or CG 20 38; **and** CG 20 37 forms if later revisions used).

Primary Coverage

For any claims related to this Agreement or the project described within this Agreement, the **Consultant's insurance coverage shall be primary coverage** at least as broad as ISO Form CG 20 01 04 13 as respects the City, its officers, officials, employees, and volunteers. Any insurance or self-insurance maintained by the City, its officers, officials, employees, or volunteers shall be excess of the Consultant's insurance and shall not contribute with it.

Notice of Cancellation

Each insurance policy required above shall provide that coverage shall not be canceled, except with notice to the City.

Waiver of Subrogation

Consultant hereby grants to City a waiver of any right to subrogation which any insurer of said Consultant may acquire against the City by virtue of the payment of any loss under such insurance. Consultant agrees to obtain any endorsement that may be necessary to affect this waiver of subrogation, but this provision applies regardless of whether or not the City has received a waiver of subrogation endorsement from the insurer.

The Workers' Compensation policy shall be endorsed with a waiver of subrogation in favor of the City of Salinas for all work performed by the Consultant, its employees, agents, and subcontractors.

Self-Insured Retentions

Self-insured retentions must be declared by Consultant to and approved by the City. At the option of the City, Consultant shall provide coverage to reduce or eliminate such self-insured retentions as respects the City, its officers, officials, employees, and volunteers; or the consultant shall provide evidence satisfactory to the City guaranteeing payment of losses and related investigations, claim administrations, and defense expenses. The policy language shall provide, or be endorsed to provide, that the self-insured retention may be satisfied by either the named insured or City.

Acceptability of Insurers

Insurance is to be placed with insurers with a current A.M. Best's rating of no less than A:VII, unless otherwise acceptable to the City.

Claims Made Policies

If any of the required policies provide coverage on a claims-made basis:

1. The Retroactive Date must be shown and must be before the date of this Agreement or the beginning of Agreement work.
2. Insurance must be maintained and evidence of insurance must be provided ***for at least five (5) years after completion of the Agreement of work.***
3. If coverage is canceled or non-renewed, and not ***replaced with another claims-made policy form with a Retroactive Date*** prior to the Agreement effective date, the Consultant must purchase "extended reporting" coverage for a minimum of ***five (5) years*** after completion of Agreement work.

4. A copy of the claims reporting requirements must be submitted to the City for review.

Verification of Coverage

Consultant shall furnish the City with original certificates and amendatory endorsements or copies of the applicable insurance language effecting coverage required by this Agreement. All certificates and endorsements are to be received and approved by the City before work commences. However, failure to obtain the required documents prior to the work beginning shall not waive the Consultant's obligation to provide them. The City reserves the right to require complete, certified copies of all required insurance policies, including endorsements required by these specifications, at any time.

Subcontractors

Consultant shall require and verify that all sub-consultants and/or subcontractors maintain insurance meeting all the requirements stated herein, and Consultant shall ensure that City is an additional insured on insurance required from such sub-consultants and/or subcontractors.

Special Risks or Circumstances

City reserves the right to modify these requirements, including limits, based on the nature of the risk, prior experience, insurer, coverage, or other special circumstances.

Maintenance of Insurance

Maintenance of insurance by Consultant as specified shall in no way be interpreted as relieving Consultant of its indemnification obligations or any responsibility whatsoever and the Consultant may carry, at its own expense, such additional insurance as it deems necessary.

Exhibit B- Scope of Service



COMMUNICATION, OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

A framework for inclusive citywide communications and engagement.



City of Salinas
Administration Department
August 2025

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PURPOSE

Communication is an Essential Service

Community outreach and engagement are essential services provided by the City of Salinas. The Communication, Outreach & Engagement Strategy (Communication Strategy) is designed to establish standards and best practices in communication and is tailored to equip staff with the knowledge, tools, and strategies required to facilitate inclusive outreach and engagement with the community.

The purpose of the Communication Strategy is to make citywide communications and engagement consistent, unifying, and centralized in a way that fosters cooperation within the organization and with residents. The City's approach to inclusive communication and engagement hinges on an understanding of the unique challenges, needs, and priorities within the Salinas community. It is about actively listening, acknowledging historical contexts, and partnering collaboratively with our community to help us achieve that goal.

Communication is an essential service to the community and central to the effective operation of the City. The Communication Strategy aims to support and enhance operations through ethical and equitable outreach by increasing transparency, expanding community reach, breaking down information silos, and providing staff with tools to effectively inform and engage the community.

The Community Relations Manager will update the Communication Strategy as needed, but at a minimum, every two years, to support and enhance effective operations through ethical and equitable outreach and engagement while keeping up with best practices in communications, outreach and engagement.

COMMUNICATION GOALS

Overarching Goals



The overarching goals of the Communication Strategy are to:

1

Inform the public as an essential service to the community

2

Encourage civic engagement

3

Support and advance equity through outreach and engagement

4

Ensure consistent and strategic branding and messaging

5

Define leadership and staff roles and responsibilities in communication, outreach, and engagement efforts

GOAL 1

INFORM THE PUBLIC AS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Clear, consistent, and accessible communication is a fundamental responsibility of the City. Ensuring that residents are informed about City operations, services, and initiatives is not only an essential service, but a key factor in fostering civic engagement and trust. Whether communicating routine updates, sharing information on community meetings/events or disseminating information on urgent matters, the City must prioritize transparency and clarity (sharing information in common language) to ensure information reaches all segments of the community effectively.

Economic Development

Strategy 1.1: Proactive Dissemination of Information

Effective communication goes beyond responding to inquiries and requires a forward-thinking approach to ensure that information reaches residents before they have to seek it out. Proactive dissemination is a strategy that delivers timely, relevant information and updates in a clear, accessible manner, which means utilizing a multi-channel approach that meets residents where they are, whether through digital platforms, printed materials, in-person outreach, or partnerships with trusted community organizations.

Proactive dissemination also means anticipating information needs. Rather than waiting for questions or concerns to arise, the City should regularly assess what residents need to know and strategically distribute information accordingly. This is especially important for topics such as City budgeting, infrastructure projects, and emergency communications, where early engagement can improve community understanding and effective participation. Additionally, ensuring that information is presented in plain, common language—free from jargon and unnecessary complexity—will make City communications more approachable and inclusive.



By embracing this proactive approach, the City can strengthen transparency, build trust, and empower residents with the knowledge they need to engage with the City effectively.

Strategy 1.2: Using Multiple Methods of Sharing Information

Informing the public is not simply a task of disseminating information (the traditional “checking the box”); it is a commitment to proactive outreach engagement, inclusivity, and accessibility. The City’s communication efforts must reflect the diversity of Salinas, ensuring that residents receive relevant updates in formats and languages that meet their needs. The approach must be adaptable, acknowledging that no single communication method will serve all audiences or situations.

Strategy 1.3: Providing Access to Public Information

Public access to information is a legal and ethical obligation under the California Public Records Act (PRA). As a guiding principle of government transparency, the PRA ensures that residents can request and review public records related to City business. The City upholds this responsibility by maintaining public records under the PRA and offering access for public inquiries to foster a culture of transparency and trust.

GOAL 2

ENCOURAGE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



Effective communication helps residents and stakeholders connect and work productively with their City. Civic engagement is more than participation; it requires fostering ongoing relationships with the community built on trust, accessibility, and meaningful dialogue. By ensuring that communication is service-oriented, responsive, and inclusive, the City can empower residents to engage in the governance process in a way that is informed and impactful.

This approach also recognizes that engagement is not one-sided. Collaboration, shared investment, and sustained partnerships are foundational to effective outreach and engagement. By removing barriers to participation, addressing community concerns transparently, and proactively supporting engagement efforts, the City can strengthen civic involvement and build a governance model that reflects the needs and priorities of Salinas residents and stakeholders.



Strategy 2.1: Encouraging Service-Oriented, Responsive Engagement

Take a service-oriented approach to communication by engaging with the community proactively, responding to questions/comments, and providing accessible information that encourages informed civic participation. Clear and supportive communication fosters trust and engagement, even in difficult conversations.

- ***Clear and concise written and verbal communication*** – Refrain from technical terms and jargon. In order for residents to effectively participate, they need to understand the information being shared.
- ***Accessible and inclusive communication*** – Consider diverse language, cultural, and accessibility needs when sharing information. Use multiple formats and outreach methods to ensure all residents have equitable access to City communications, including those with accessibility needs or limited digital access.
- ***Active listening and adaptive messaging*** – Approach community interactions with a listening-first mindset, ensuring responses are not just informative but also tailored to the concerns and perspectives of the community. Adapt messaging based on community feedback to keep outreach efforts relevant and effective.
- ***Timely and transparent responses to inquiries*** – Acknowledge and address community questions and concerns in a timely manner to demonstrate accountability and encourage ongoing engagement. Consistent and responsive communication builds trust and reassures residents that their voices are valued.

Strategy 2.2: Building Relationships to Strengthen Trust and Engagement

Cultivate strong, reciprocal relationships with local organizations, schools, and businesses to expand communication efforts. True engagement (connection and participation) goes beyond outreach (dissemination of information). Effective engagement requires ongoing support, collaboration, and a shared commitment to community well-being. Strengthening the relationships with our community partners ensures that engagement is not just a one-way request for their support but a genuine partnership.

Strategy 2.3: Strategic Design of Outreach and Engagement Plans

Engagement must be approached with cultural awareness and sensitivity, prioritizing sustained relationships that recognize the leadership and insights of local voices. Use the Spectrum of Community Engagement (page 43 of the Alisal Vibrancy Plan) and other tools to assess the appropriate level of outreach for programs, projects, and services, ensuring community engagement goes beyond minimum legal requirements to maximize impact.

Spectrum of Community Engagement

Stance towards community	0 IGNORE	1 INFORM	2 CONSULT	3 INVOLVE	4 COLLABORATE	5 EMPOWER for IMPACT
Impact	<i>Marginalization</i>	<i>Placation</i>	<i>Tokenization</i>	<i>Voice</i>	<i>Delegated Power</i>	<i>Community Control</i>
Community Engagement Goals	Deny access to decision-making processes	Provide the community with relevant information	Gather input from the community	Ensure community assets, needs & concerns are integrated into process & inform planning	Ensure community capacity to play a leadership role in implementation of decisions	Foster democratic participation and equity by placing full decision-making in the hands of the community
Message to the community	<i>"Your voice, needs and interests do not matter"</i>	<i>"We will keep you informed"</i>	<i>"We care what you think"</i>	<i>"We can't do this well without you"</i>	<i>"Your leadership and expertise are critical"</i>	<i>"We want this to work so we support democratic and equitable processes led by community"</i>
Examples of tools	Closed door meetings	Fact sheets Open Houses Presentations Billboards Videos	Public comment Focus Groups Community Forums Surveys	Interactive Workshops Polling House Meetings Community forums	MOU's with Community-Based Organizations Consensus building Citizen Advisory Committees Participatory Action Research	Community-Driven Planning Community Organizing Open Planning Forums with Citizen Polling Participatory Budgeting Participatory Action Research
Resource allocation ratios	100% systems admin	70-90% to systems admin 10-30% to promotions and publicity	60-80% to systems admin 20-40% to consultation activities	50-60% to systems admin 40-50% to community involvement	20-50% to systems admin 50-70% to community partners	0-20% to systems admin 80-100% to community partners and community-driven processes

- **Outreach vs. Engagement:** Outreach focuses on sharing and disseminating information through multiple platforms to inform stakeholders about key issues, decisions, and opportunities. Engagement, on the other hand, is a collaborative process that meets people where they are, fostering meaningful participation and strengthening relationships between the organization, residents, and stakeholders.
- **Informing vs. Achieving Consensus or Consent:** Outreach can be designed either to inform, gain consensus or gain consent, each serving a distinct purpose. The decision on which approach is most appropriate should be strategically applied based on engagement goals.
 - **Inform** – sharing information transparently
 - **Consensus** – working toward agreement
 - **Consent** – acceptance through informing with dialogue
- **Equality (Sameness) vs. Equity (Fairness) in Outreach & Engagement:** Equality provides the same level of resources to all, while equity acknowledges different circumstances and allocates resources based on needs to ensure fair participation. Truly inclusive outreach recognizes disparities and adjusts engagement efforts accordingly to create opportunities for all voices to be heard.
- **Inclusion as an Outcome:** Engagement efforts must be intentional in reaching diverse populations equitably, ensuring that all communities, especially historically underrepresented groups, are meaningfully included. Inclusion is not just about participation numbers but about fostering a sense of belonging in decision-making.
- **Collaboration as a Foundation for Trust:** Successful engagement is built on authentic partnerships with community partners, organizations, and residents. Active participation should not just seek input but to foster co-creation of solutions that reflect the priorities of the community. A relationship-driven approach ensures that engagement is rooted in trust and not transactional.
- **Partnering with Community Messengers:** Recognize the role of community partners in facilitating engagement, especially where there may be engagement hesitancy or limited trust with the City as an organization. Collaborating with leaders and partners in the community can strengthen outreach efforts by ensuring communication is culturally relevant, relationship-driven, and accessible to all segments of the community.



Strategy 2.4: Data – Driven Engagement

Regularly evaluate and refine communication strategies using surveys, feedback channels, and engagement metrics. Leverage data analytics to identify community needs, measure outreach effectiveness, and guide future improvements. Track engagement levels across platforms and use post-event surveys to assess whether community members felt engaged, gathering insights to shape more impactful communication efforts.

Strategy 2.5: Identify Barriers to Participation

Effective communication between the City of Salinas and its diverse communities is essential for fostering trust, civic engagement, and equitable access to resources. However, several persistent barriers complicate meaningful outreach and participation, including the need to build trust-based relationships, language access, and intimidating bureaucratic processes. These challenges demand more than a standardized approach; overcoming them requires intentional, adaptive strategies that acknowledge the nuances of each barrier and the diverse needs of Salinas residents.

By recognizing that communication is not a one-size-fits-all effort, the City can create a more inclusive and responsive system that ensures every resident has access to the information, services, and opportunities they need to engage fully in local governance.

A. Trust

Any effective relationship is built on trust, and communication with the community is no different. The reasons we need to build trust can vary. It could be based in experience where residents felt there was a lack of communication and engagement with past initiatives. It could also stem from limited awareness or knowledge of laws or regulatory requirements/processes. Little to no past engagement with the City could be another reason that trust needs to be established. When trust has not been established, the desire to participate can be seen with lack of value, suspicion and scrutiny, possibly discouraging participation, compromising trust and hindering effective collaboration and progress.

To build trust, Salinas must prioritize transparency, consistency, and relationship-building through genuine, sustained outreach rather than transactional communication.

B. Language Access

Salinas is home to a large Spanish-speaking population, as well as Indigenous language speakers and other linguistic minorities. Without consideration for language access, information fails to reach our diverse community, including critical city updates, emergency alerts, and community resources and programs. The City must ensure that messaging is not just translated but adapted for clarity, cultural relevance, and accessibility.

C. Digital Divide

While online platforms have become essential outreach tools, reliance on digital communication alone risks exclusion of residents with limited internet access or digital literacy skills. Aging community members, linguistically diverse communities and lower-income households face disproportionate barriers in engaging with online City resources. A successful strategy must incorporate consideration of the need for multilingual printed materials, in-person meetings, and partnerships with trusted community groups to bridge this gap, particularly as it relates to information or initiatives that impact community members with a limited to no digital access or digital literacy skills.



D. Intimidating Bureaucratic Processes and Complex Regulations

Even for the most seasoned community participant, navigating City processes can be daunting. Complex government procedures, such as permitting, public comment forums and means for participation, and grant applications, can feel overwhelming to many, thereby discouraging participation; this includes understanding when and how to participate and why participation is important.

Simplifying these processes through clear, step-by-step guidance, accessible formats, and community partners can help ensure more residents can confidently engage with City services. Communicating these regulations and processes in plain language, with community-led educational sessions, can make engaging with the City more approachable.

E. Engagement Hesitancy

Some residents may hesitate to engage with local government due to past negative experiences or uncertainty about how their voice will be valued. Traditional outreach methods that feel performative or rigid often fail to inspire meaningful participation. The City must foster dialogue that empowers residents and communicate how the feedback has led to actionable outcomes.

While a staple of municipal governance is to deliberate forums like town halls and public hearings, it often is not suited to meaningful dialogue with the community. The type of forum for participation should be determined based on the needs of the segment(s) of the community the City is informing or engaging. The needed level of community engagement can be determined based on the type and impact of project/initiative, and the Spectrum of Community Engagement (pg. 9) , a tested and effective tool to define those needs.

F. Location, Time and Services

Where and when community engagement opportunities occur matters. Conducting community engagement during inconvenient times, for example, during the workday or when it is difficult to arrange care for family members, can be limiting for many individuals. However, if the audience we are engaging is the business community or other agencies, before work hours or during lunch may be more accommodating.

The location of an engagement event can also be a barrier. Considerations for transportation limitations and access can be utilizing a space that is closer/centralized for the communities we need to engage and/or considering including an additional remote/virtual engagement opportunity. Additional services should also be considered like food and childcare.



GOAL 3

SUPPORT AND ADVANCE EQUITY THROUGH OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

City communications must ensure that all residents have equal access to information, services, and civic engagement, acknowledging the diversity of the population across language, age, access, and background. Thoughtful, strategic outreach must proactively address these disparities, including awareness of implicit bias, to ensure equitable, inclusive engagement that reflects the needs and priorities of all community members.

Strategy 3.1: Equitable Access to Information and Participation

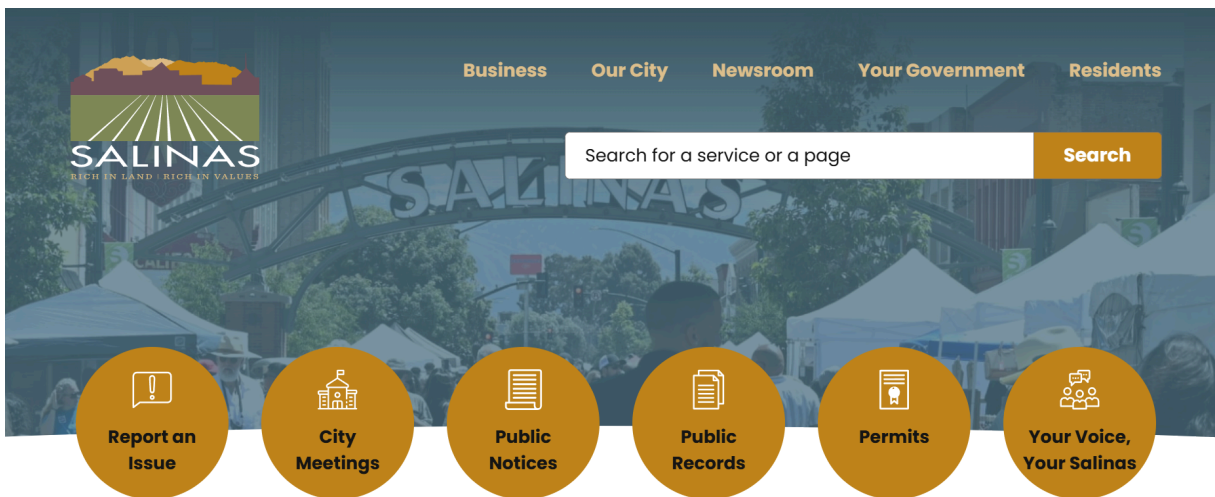
- ***Integrate accessibility and engagement into outreach planning*** – Prioritize equitable access by allocating adequate time, budget, and resources to ensure outreach efforts reach residents effectively.
- ***Leverage the expertise of the Community Relations Team*** – Consult with the Community Relations team for support in developing inclusive and responsive outreach and engagement strategies that address our diverse community needs.

Strategy 3.2: Language Access and Cultural Inclusion

- ***Bilingual communication materials*** – Provide all public-facing content – social media posts, brochures, and flyers – in both English and Spanish, ensuring accessibility for the City's large Spanish-speaking population. Information in other languages should also be considered when thinking about the audience we are engaging and with accessibility in mind.
- ***Maintain bilingual forms and services*** – Offer Spanish-language forms and translation services at City facilities and meetings.

Strategy 3.3: Digital and Accessibility Standards

- **Ensure digital accessibility for residents** – Follow WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) to make digital content more inclusive and user-friendly.
 - [w3.org/TR/WCAG22](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG22)
- **Train staff in accessible content creation** – Provide training and resources for staff to ensure City digital communications meet accessibility best practices and remain compliant with federal standards.



GOAL 4

ENSURE CONSISTENT & STRATEGIC BRANDING & MESSAGING

The City's brand represents its identity, values, and commitment to the community. Consistency in public communications, including the appropriate use of the City's logo and seal, ensures clarity, professionalism, and trust in the City's messaging. All branding efforts must align with established guidelines to maintain a unified brand across departments and outreach initiatives.

Strategy 4.1: Represent the City's Brand with Consistency & Purpose

- Ensure branding consistency across public communications – All consultant-led work involving public communication must include the Community Relations Manager to ensure compliance with the Communication Strategy, review branding elements, and provide guidance on outreach and engagement strategy.
- Use approved templates for official documents – Plans, documents, letterhead, email signatures, and other branding templates available on the City's Intranet must be used to maintain a unified identity.

Strategy 4.2: Proper Use of Logos and Visual Identity

- ***Maintain consistency in logo usage*** – The City's official logo must be used across all City communications with the following exceptions:
 - City Council, Board, Commission, & Committee Agendas
 - Legal notices that require use of the City seal
 - Documents where use of the seal is required
- ***Departmental logo exceptions*** – The Fire and Police Departments may use their official logos without the City logo, except in crisis communications, where citywide brand alignment is essential.

- Coordinate branding approval for public signage – The Community Relations Manager must approve any replacement or addition of signage in public spaces, including building signs, doors, and the use of the City's logo or seal.
- Design of new logos - The more logos that exist, the greater the potential to dilute the brand recognition of the City. This means that the more department or project specific logos that exist, the more challenging it can be for the community to know whether the logo is connected to the City. To that end, design of new logos is discouraged and requires pre-approval and final approval by the City Manager or designee.

Strategy 4.3: Staff Training and Brand Stewardship

- ***Equip staff with branding and communication best practices*** – Regular training on content creation, marketing, and citywide communication standards ensures consistency and reinforces the principles of the Communication Strategy.



GOAL 5

DEFINE LEADERSHIP & STAFF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES IN COMMUNICATION, OUTREACH, & ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Community Relations is part of the Administration Department under the City Manager's Office. The Community Relations Manager serves as the Public Information Officer (PIO) for the City, and the Communications Specialist in Community Relations serves as the City's Assistant Public Information Officer (APIO). The Community Relations team oversees public communication and serves as the primary point of contact for media inquiries and management of the City's social media accounts and websites. While departments may manage department-level accounts and webpages, the Community Relations Manager will conduct regular reviews to ensure consistency with branding, messaging, and communication style, reinforcing a unified voice across all platforms that aligns with the City's values and strategic goals.

Public Information Officer Access to Information

A key function of the Community Relations team is to provide public news releases through the City's communications channels, including social media, the website, email, and text messages. To create this content and provide updates, there must be an open exchange of information. In most instances, the Community Relations team will reach out to staff to obtain information several weeks or more in advance. However, there will be occasions where information is needed on a more immediate basis.

While not an exhaustive list, here are some examples of common instances where information may require a quick turnaround:

As soon as possible:

- Information for media inquiries
- Emergency situations
- High dollar value and key grants that have already been announced by the issuing agency when Community Relations Manager was not apprised in advance

Other examples:

- Information tied to items going to Council that may be highlighted before the Council Meeting or after the Council takes action
- Special projects like road closures, traffic impacts, or special updates that the Community Relations Division has been directed to release with a quicker turnaround time





Media Contact

Departments should coordinate media-related communications with the Community Relations Manager as far in advance as feasible to allow time to draft, prepare, and obtain necessary information. Examples of media-related items include:

- Media inquiries should be directed to the Community Relations Manager as the City's PIO or designee for information and interview coordination
 - Exception: Public safety personnel unless otherwise directed to work through the Community Relations Manager due to the emergent need to share information at all hours of the day
- Press Conferences and media coverage at events, including ribbon cuttings
- Press Releases (releasing information) and Media Advisories (requesting attendance) are sent by the Community Relations team
- Grant awards: The Community Relations Manager should be advised as soon as the Department is aware of an upcoming award, even if advised that the information is confidential, to allow adequate time for the release of information as soon as the State or Federal agency authorizes the release.

As a best practice, not every announcement should be a press release. If you're unsure if a press release (sent to the media directly) or a news release (widely shared) is appropriate, contact the Community Relations Division for guidance.

Social Media Management

The City's social media accounts are managed by the Community Relations Division. Although departments have direct oversight and primary content management access, it is the responsibility of the Community Relations Manager to ensure that staff are maintaining a public image of the City that aligns with the values and brand of the City and follows best practices for social media communication. This includes messaging, public communication, and branding.

The Community Relations Manager's social media role is to:

- Ensure that all content posted on the City's social media accounts adheres to the City's adopted Social Media Policy
- Conduct regular reviews of departmental social media accounts to ensure consistency with branding, messaging, and communication style
- Provide guidance and training to staff on best practices for social media communication, including effective use of visuals, tone of voice, and engagement strategies
- Maintain full administrative access to all social media accounts, including YouTube, NextDoor, LinkedIn and other less common and emerging social platforms
- Open or create a new social media accounts approved by the City Manager or the Community Relations Manager to maintain full administrative access rights
- Perform periodic audits to ensure social media accounts are not connected to individual, personal social media accounts
- Ensure all social media activities comply with relevant laws, regulations, and ethical standards
- Safeguard the City's social media accounts from security breaches and unauthorized access

Accounts that are not in compliance with the Communication Strategy or the City's social media policy within one month from being notified by the Community Relations Manager may be suspended or closed.

Any City social media account may be suspended/closed at any time at the direction of the City Manager, or department accounts may be suspended/closed at the direction of the Department Director.

Website

The Community Relations Manager plays a pivotal role in overseeing the City's website to ensure clear, consistent, and accessible communication. While individual departments may manage their respective webpages, the Community Relations Manager ensures alignment with branding, messaging, and strategic communication objectives. The Community Relations Manager serves as the webmaster for the City of Salinas and will regularly review the website for content and accessibility and provide direction, guidance, and recommendations to staff to ensure the website is an effective tool for residents to access information.

Crisis Communication

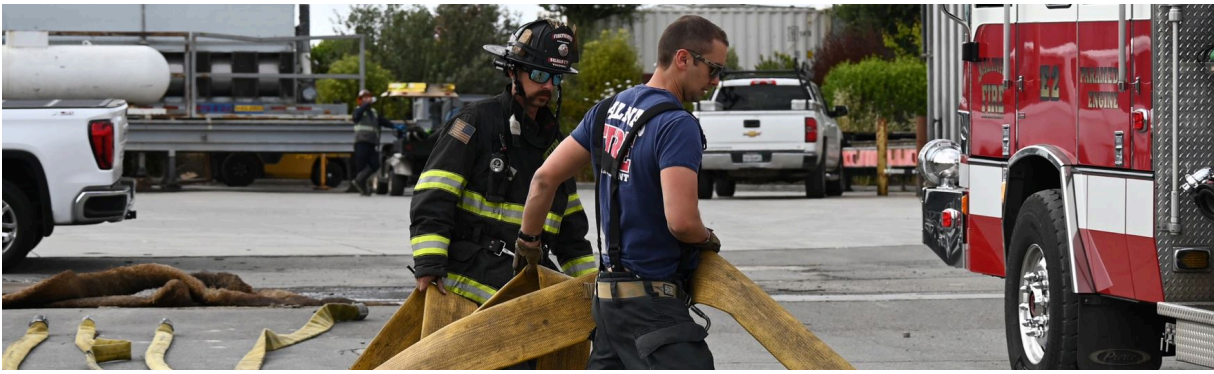
As the City's PIO, the Community Relations Manager serves as the lead PIO for the City during emergencies that lead or may lead to the activation of the City or County Emergency Operation Center. In this capacity, the Community Relations Manager will:

- Ensure centralized coordination of crisis communication – The Community Relations Manager serves as the lead for emergency communication efforts, ensuring that messaging is timely, accurate, and aligned with the scale of the incident. Departments must keep the Community Relations Manager informed of emerging crises to maintain consistency and coordination in public communication.
- Adapt communication strategy based on incident scale – Crisis response requires flexibility in timing, tone, and outreach approach. While some emergencies demand immediate public messaging, others require more measured communication to ensure clarity and prevent misinformation. Coordination across departments ensures that outreach is responsive, transparent, and appropriately scaled to the situation at hand.
- Develop and maintain an emergency communication plan – The Community Relations Manager will create and maintain a Crisis Communication Plan that will guide communication processes in to ensure residents receive timely, accurate information during crises, with special consideration for language accessibility, digital inclusivity, and equity-focused outreach.

DEPARTMENTS

By fostering an open exchange of information and embracing communication best practices, departments play a vital role in strengthening community engagement and promoting transparency. Departments serve as the primary source of information on City initiatives, programs, and services and play a crucial role in effective communication by ensuring timely, accurate, and consistent communication and engagement, and building relationships within the community. Each department is responsible for identifying key updates, projects, and public-facing information that may require outreach and engagement. To maximize the effectiveness of communication efforts, departments are responsible for:

- **Ownership of Departmental Communication:** While the Community Relations team leads citywide communication efforts, departments are responsible for day-to-day communication from the department. Staff should leverage the Communication Strategy to enhance their communication, outreach and engagement efforts and rely on support from the Community Relations team to guide these efforts as needed. This includes managing departmental social media accounts, webpages, and other communications in alignment with established messaging guidelines.
- **Proactive Information Sharing:** Departments should proactively provide updates to the community, ensuring key project milestones, events, and initiatives are communicated early for strategic outreach.
- **Collaboration on Messaging:** Departments should work collaboratively with the Community Relations team if assistance is needed to refine messaging, ensuring consistency with branding and strategic goals.
- **Timeliness in Response:** When information is requested, whether for media inquiries, council-related updates, or urgent matters, departments should prioritize a timely response to facilitate effective communication.
- **Accessibility and Inclusivity Considerations:** Departments should ensure public communications consider accessibility, multilingual outreach, and culturally relevant messaging, reinforcing the City's commitment to inclusivity.



Social Media

All staff must adhere to the City's adopted Social Media Policy, which can be found on the City's website, and work collaboratively with the Community Relations team to ensure compliance with the Policy, the guidance in the Communication Strategy, and accessibility and other regulations.

Accounts that are not in compliance with the Communication Strategy or the City's social media policy within one month from being notified by the Community Relations Manager may be closed.



Website

Departments are responsible for maintaining accurate and timely information on their webpages. While the Community Relations Manager oversees website management and ensures alignment with branding and strategic communication objectives, departments should proactively update their content and collaborate as needed. Regular coordination with the Community Relations Manager helps ensure accessibility, clarity, and consistency, making the website an effective resource for residents.

