

**Answers to Questions Received from potential Respondents to the City of South Portland's  
Request For Qualified Proposals (RFQP) for Marketing Services**

**Posted: July 29, 2019**

**All Answers are in blue and immediately follow each question.**

**Scope of Work**

1. What is the timeframe that the City expects to work with the selected respondent?  
The City is looking for a Marketing Plan focused on Economic Development and the City more broadly, that will cover the next three (or more) years.

NOTE: The City has budgeted and set aside funding to cover the cost of the development of the Marketing Plan. A separate budget allocation has been approved for the current fiscal year (July 1, 2019 thru June 30, 2020) to implement the first year of the Marketing Plan that is finalized as an outcome of the Request For Qualified Proposals (RFQP) for Marketing Services. Future year funding is expected, subject to review and approval of the South Portland City Council, as part of the City's annual budget process.

2. Should respondents describe a scope of work for the initial engagement as well as for any on-going work?  
Yes, proposals submitted in response to the RFQP should detail all components to be included in the Marketing Plan and the costs associated with each component. On-going implementation work/services and the costs related to such work/services should be clearly detailed.
3. What would entail "on-call basis for emergency situations"?  
It is unlikely that the City would need to call upon its marketing consultant for an emergency. In the highly unlikely event that there is a future need for the City to consult with its marketing services provider outside of the parameters of the Contract/Services Agreement that is ultimately executed for a Marketing Plan or ongoing marketing services; it would be handled separately from the Contract/Services Agreement contemplated above.
4. Has the City determined possible meeting and presentation dates?  
No, not as of the date of this response. It is the City's desire to review all submitted proposals in as expeditious a manner as is practical. As that review process progresses, selected Respondents will be invited to an interview to present an overview of their submission and to answer questions.
5. Will the selected respondent give a presentation to the City Council?  
The Selection Review Panel will be making a recommendation(s) to the City Council as to whom the Panel recommends the City enter into a Consulting/Service Contract(s) or Agreement(s). As part of the recommendation to the City Council, the Respondent(s) who are being recommended by the Panel may be asked to make a presentation at a City Council meeting where the Panel's recommendation(s) are considered for action.
6. Will respondents in Maine be given preference over those based outside of State?  
No, responses to the RFQP will be reviewed on:
  - the overall quality of the respondents submission,
  - the experience of the respondent,

- how well each Respondent's submission articulates and sets forth a Marketing Plan that furthers the City's goals to expand and enhance the City's overall external communications efforts, with a focus on economic development and developing/building the City's brand equity

However, ease of access to the respondent should and will be considered.

7. The Request For Qualified Proposals states, "In evaluating proposals, the City of South Portland reserves the right to accept or reject any or all parts of a proposal and further negotiate specific services." Our business provides marketing merchandise products and clothing to represent your organization with appropriate logo / marketing messaging. We do not provide all of the services described in the Request For Qualified Proposals. Should we submit a response for just this portion of your marketing needs?

Yes, while it would be most efficient to work and coordinate with one marketing consultant and that is our desire; we understand that some Respondents focus in just one or a few aspects of the broad spectrum of products and services that would be part of a robust marketing program. For this reason, the language quoted in the question above was included in our Request for Qualified Proposals for Marketing Services. This was done to encourage submissions from Respondents that have a niche; in that they do one, a few, or some - but not all – services along the spectrum of marketing services very/exceptionally well and or are able to deliver their niche product or services for a compelling price point while delivering high quality.

8. Would long distance prevent the City from working with partners through virtual means, provided partners could perform discovery and periodic meetings in person?

No, see response to Question #6, above.

9. Is the City currently working with an agency on marketing/communications projects that it expects will submit a proposal based on this RFQP? If so, is this RFQP due to the expiration of available contract extensions?

No. The City has worked with marketing and advertising firms on specific projects from time to time but it has not solicited a broad Marketing Services proposal in the last several years or possibly ever.

10. Do you have an in-house marketing team? If so, what will a partner's role and relationship look like with the City's in-house team?

No. Our City Clerk acts as the City's Webmaster. She also assembles, edits, and publishes our online municipal newsletter. This request, while coordinated by the City's Economic Development Department, is intended to provide a citywide Marketing Plan. The principal point of contact will be the City's Economic Development Director.

11. If respondents do not provide all of the services listed in the RFQP, will they be excluded from consideration?

No, see response to Question #7, above.

12. If respondents have limited or no experience with municipal or public marketing, will they be excluded from consideration?

The Request for Qualified Proposals states, "Qualified for purposes of this proposal shall mean that the Proposer has prior experience working with municipal or other public entities within the last five (5) years, providing such services as identified in this RFQP." The Selection

committee will review all submissions to determine if the Qualification criteria, as stated above, has been met or not.

## **Budgetary**

1. What is the total allocated budget for the project?

The City has purposefully not disclosed a specific amount to cover the cost of the development of the Marketing Plan. This has been done so as not to compel or dissuade any potential responder from submitting based upon an arbitrary number. The City has budgeted and set aside funding that we believe will be adequate to complete the task.

A separate budget allocation has been approved for the current fiscal year (July 1, 2019 thru June 30, 2020) to implement the first year of the Marketing Plan that is finalized as an outcome of the Request For Qualified Proposals (RFQP) for Marketing Services, see answer to the following question.

2. Has the City allocated a portion of the budget for ongoing marketing services?

For the Fiscal Year July 1, 2019 thru June 30, 2020, the City has budgeted a total of \$57,400 for marketing related costs broken down as follows:

- \$31,500 for Marketing Services,
- \$19,900 for Advertising and Sponsorships, and
- \$6,000 for participation in various events / trade shows

Note: The only commitment that has been made against this budget is an insertion order with Mainebiz for ad placements thru June 30, 2020 totaling \$5,540; leaving \$51, 860 available for the implementation the City's Marketing Plan for the remainder of the fiscal year.

3. What is the breakdown of the allocated budget?

See response to Question #2, above.

4. Will there be a monthly retainer as a part of ongoing marketing services?

A Services Agreement / Contract will be negotiated with the selected vendor(s). See responses to Questions #1 and #2, above for more detail.

5. Should respondents propose a one lump sum or list out hourly rates?

Respondents should provide as much detail as possible on the component costs included in their proposal. They may choose to do so as a lump sum for each component/service aspect of the proposal or on an hourly basis for each component/service aspect with a not to exceed limit for each component /service aspect. It will be helpful to provide lump sum and hourly cost rates for specific implement action services.

6. Should respondents list third-party partners with a quote for each in the RFQP?

Yes.

7. How should respondents list the costs of working with third-party vendors that may be unknown at this time (i.e. printing brochures)?

Respondents should note that a third-party sub-contractor will be employed to do specific tasks/provide certain services. To the extent possible, it will be helpful to detail fees for third-party sub-contractors. However, if this is not possible please so state and provide a "placeholder" estimated cost for their services. Please also state if any third parties are to be paid directly or thru the respondent.

8. Is there a list of projects for creating the schedule of fees for specific deliverables?

No.

9. Can respondents access annual marketing expenditures for the past 2-5 years?

Prior year marketing expenditures were primarily limited to print advertising and the expenditures were minimal, not more than a few thousand dollars a year.

### Marketing Services

1. Does the City have a current marketing plan and if so, can this be provided?

No, the City does not have a current Marketing Plan.

2. What are the City's specific, measurable marketing goals in relation to the Scope of Work?

The City of South Portland is looking to:

- Develop/enhance and build positive brand equity for the City of South Portland and the larger community,
- Increase both the number and quality of the communications with our residents, businesses, prospective businesses, and visitors.

Direct measurement of some of these goals is not without some challenges, however, we are hopeful this can be done most cost effectively using online platforms/portals and the analytics available on our municipal website and the City's various social media outlets.

Some of the ways we can measure are changes in activity and behavior on social media outlets. Examples include: the number of individuals subscribing and reading our newsletter, website visits, social media followers, page visitors (unique and repeat) - as well as how long they visit – where such analytical tracking statistics are available, the number of comments on posts.

- We are also seeking guidance on the best social and other media platforms/portals that we should use to reach our target audiences of all ages and demographics. We want feedback on the most appropriate uses: where, when, frequency, etc. to use or not use the following:
  - o LinkedIn
  - o Facebook
  - o Twitter
  - o Instagram
  - o Mail Chimp
  - o YouTube
  - o Vimeo
  - o Blogs
  - o Podcasts
  - o Blogs
  
  - o Print Ads
    - Portland Magazine
    - Maine Magazine
    - Mainebiz
    - Maine Sunday Telegram / Portland Press Herald

- Earned Media
  - Scene and Heard
  - Snapshots. . .
    - Send Party Invitations or photos to  
Leslie Bridgers, Maine Sunday Telegram  
295 Gannett Drive  
South Portland Maine 04106
- Television Ads
- Other – please provide specific suggestions.

All online items should be developed for Search Engine Optimization and seamlessly interface for mobile devices.

The City wants a greatly enhanced and expanded Economic Development Website that includes but is not limited to the following components/aspects:

- Development Incentive information,
- A listing of community, regional, state and national economic development resources,
- A survey, feedback portal,
- Demographic information,
- A searchable database of available (lease or sale) commercial/industrial buildings and sites within the City – the portal will allow property owners and brokers to self-list,
- Workforce statistics,
- Comparisons to competitor locations – only positive comments attributes,
- Major employer list,
- Quality of life information,
- Staff contact information,
- Target industries and related information,
- Maps of the community,
- Quick link to City GIS portal,
- Current press releases,
- Announcements,
- Educational institution information (K-12 & post-secondary),
- Testimonials from local employers,
- Video content
  - A community snapshot video – something like the one found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llakr9wkiKI> from Grand Rapids, Michigan is a good example.
  - Others that tell the stories of South Portland

How and what are you proposing for content creation/content marketing?

How will you generate earned media coverage? Please give examples.

What do you think about the value of murals and public art as part of branding?

See: <https://parade.com/899760/kristinluna/best-murals-street-art-every-state/>

3. Is this project trying to solve an overarching problem or set of challenges?  
No, better communication, building positive brand image, retention, and attraction of residents and businesses to the community.
4. Does the City have a website developer that would buildout the mini website?  
No.
5. Will the City require assistance with ongoing website management?  
Possibly, depending upon ease of use of the site.
6. Has the City considered a full City website update or replacement?  
For the purpose of this RFQP, we are looking primarily at the Economic Development Page / section of the website. However, the topic of a full update of the Municipal website has been discussed. If a decision is taken to do that, a separate Request For Proposals (RFP) will be issued. Please send a separated communication if you wish to receive such an RFP if one is issued.
7. Who are the primary and secondary audiences that the City is trying to reach?  
Current and prospective: residents, businesses, and visitors. Other groups to reach out to include:  
Commercial Real Estate Brokers  
Site Selection Consultants  
Attorneys  
Accountants
8. Are there any internal insights or research findings that would help proposers tap into the mindsets of the targeted audiences?  
See materials posted at:  
[https://www.southportland.org/files/4715/6175/0909/Marketing\\_RFQP\\_06\\_28\\_19.pdf](https://www.southportland.org/files/4715/6175/0909/Marketing_RFQP_06_28_19.pdf) and  
<https://southportland.sharefile.com/d-s999d0bde3ff4ff09>.
9. What are the current communication challenges with targeted audiences?  
There are a couple of opportunities:
  - We have an ever more diverse population living, working, and/or visiting our community – we want to make a greater effort to meet them where they live so to speak – to be sure we are communicating through communication channels / media they are using to get their information.
  - Also, on a broader note we want to step-up the level of our communications – especially with the residents and business who already call South Portland home.
    - o We want our communications efforts to reinforce a positive brand image about their home community.
10. Are there any desired behavior changes to be influenced?  
Address SWOT analysis found in Economic Development Plan found at  
<https://southportland.sharefile.com/d-s999d0bde3ff4ff09>.

11. What are the key messages that need to be creatively conveyed?

Suggestions – will need refinement.

**What differentiates us as a City?**

- We are an authentic City, a community of distinct neighborhoods – each with their own personality. A community where residents of limited, some, and significant economic means all live and respect each other. We are an accepting and welcoming melting pot. We care about our community and one another.
- Other messages:
- We are one of, if not the most Sustainable community in Maine.
- We are Maine’s technology capital / center.
- We are Maine’s retail headquarters.

**Why should the Audience care?**

Because many places say these nice things like those above. In South Portland, we live them, and that simply does not happen everywhere.

Great location - Atlantic coast - near State’s largest city; but we are like a classic New England small town. We are close to Boston and New York.

See SWOT analysis found in Economic Development Plan found at:

<https://southportland.sharefile.com/d-s999d0bde3ff4ff09>.

Other key messages relate to:

Our efforts to be the most sustainable community in the state and our related care of / for our environment.

Our efforts to provide 21<sup>st</sup> century amenities such as a high speed fiber-optic Broadband thorough out the City – working on.

12. What are the value propositions for these messages?

Great question and we look forward to working with the selected respondent(s) to develop that messaging.

13. Should the proposal be geared towards all City marketing or be specific (i.e. for tourism)?

As noted above, the focus will be economic development and strategic messaging and brand building /enhancement. How the City is friendly, helpful, and makes doing business here as easy as possible. The effort will also serve to promote the City’s overall brand, and certain other strategic messages relating to our sustainability efforts and goals, our environmental and climate action initiatives and goals, and our recreation amenities and resources.

14. What social media platforms will the City utilize?

See response to Question #2, above.

15. Will the City need ongoing support with managing social media?

Yes, design symmetry, content development, and possibly other aspects as well.

16. Is the City requesting editorial services?

Yes, assistance with content development and earned media development, perhaps others as well.

17. How can respondents access examples of existing / recent marketing and branding materials?

Go to: <https://southportland.sharefile.com/d-s999d0bde3ff4ff09>.

18. What types of internal templates does the City need? (I.e. PowerPoint, Excel, Google Doc etc.).  
We have several guides and forms that need to be updated. Reference the Items In Need of Updating folder at: <https://southportland.sharefile.com/d-s999d0bde3ff4ff09>.
19. How will success be measured? How often and by whom?  
See response to Question #2, above for response to the first portion of your inquiry.  
As to the how often and by whom, various City Staff, primarily the Economic Development Director and City Clerk. The public and our various constituencies will no doubt weigh in with feedback.
20. Are there any mandatories/considerations in regards to execution/media?  
Just the MaineBiz commitment, mentioned above.

## Branding

Our brand is built on what others say about our community – not what we say!

It should:

- demonstrate and articulate how the proposed Marketing Plan will present the City of South Portland's brand\* to leverage our community's strengths, raise our profile among target audiences, increase recognition of the City's brand and unify the our various audiences and constituencies around a clear and consistent brand and marketing campaign.
- capture the: character, diversity, and authentic attributes of the City of South Portland, and
- present the City accurately, fairly, and positively to current and prospective residents, businesses, and visitors.

\*Another word about Brand – while we are not explicitly looking to change our logo or tagline, we are open to the possibility. Whether you propose keeping, altering, or replacing either the logo and/or tagline, what is important is how and why your recommendation will elevate and enhance, and in some cases create a positive feeling for how individuals feel about the City and community of South Portland.

1. Would the City prefer leveraging South Portland's existing brand strategy to developing a new brand?  
Yes, but open to discussion of new or modified brand.
2. Would the city be open to a complete rebranding for the City of South Portland if that is the firm's recommendation?  
If the reasoning is sound, compelling, and it helps promote our value propositions!
3. Does brand advancement in section C of the Scope of Work refer to a brand refresh? What does brand advancement mean to the City?  
It could mean building upon the existing brand or it could mean renewing the brand.  
Brand advancement is intended to mean – promoting higher positive resonance when you hear the name South Portland, the City of South Portland, see our logo or see / hear the City motto: *Making all Things Possible* or any replacements thereto. It means you have a positive view and connotation that you feel/experience and the level of positivity grows over time. That is what we mean when we say brand advancement.

What do you think it means or should mean? We want your ideas and input. Enlighten us.

4. What are some of the bigger business challenges driving the need and initiative of brand advancement?
  - Generally, raising the overall profile and undertaking efforts to positively enhance the connotation / feeling people have for and about the City of South Portland.
  - We are undertaking the implementation of a large Wayfinding sign program. These will be visible signs and they are a great opportunity to reinforce/augment our brand messaging. We want to work with our selected marketing services provider to be sure we get it right.
5. How is the City's brand currently positioned in the market?  
See SWOT analysis found in Economic Development Plan found at:  
<https://southportland.sharefile.com/d-s999d0bde3ff4ff09>.
6. Are there any associated branding documents to outline the positioning rationale?
7. See SWOT analysis found in Economic Development Plan found at:  
<https://southportland.sharefile.com/d-s999d0bde3ff4ff09>.

#### **Contract**

1. What are the anticipated dates for the selection and commencement of the contract? What is the anticipated end date?  
September and October, respectively.
2. If a Respondent requires mutual indemnification, can this be included in the contract with the City?  
If the selected Respondent has such a request, we will consider and take the advice of our City's legal counsel on how to address.
3. Is it possible to change the language of the contract to 90 days notice?  
If the selected Respondent has such a request, we will consider and take the advice of our City's legal counsel on how to address.
4. If the termination is for cause, can the City change the language to pay for services prior to the receipt of notice, just as it is written for convenience termination?  
Yes.