

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

October 11, 2021

TO: SBCCOG Steering Committee
FROM: Jacki Bacharach, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Review of Newsletter Costs

BACKGROUND

It has been more than three years since we have reviewed the cost of producing our quarterly newsletter. In addition, the layout vendor who worked for our current printer, has unexpectedly passed away. The SBCCOG just completed website redesign. To create a cohesive brand identity, it's important that the appearance of the newsletter match that of the website with colors, graphics and fonts. We have therefore obtained three bids for the project of a one-time template redesign, ongoing layout and printing of the newsletter.

EVALUATION

The South Bay Watch newsletter is currently printed as a six-page, full-color, trifold paper document. The printed issue serves as an important and effective tool to communicate with our audiences about the work we do as an organization. It also helps to drive traffic to our website and build our email subscriber list. The printed newsletter is mailed to legislators, elected officials and also city halls for distribution to city employees and the public. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we ordered 1,500 copies quarterly, Nearly 1,000 of these copies were handed out at 100+ community events per year—some with 500+ attendees. We normally distribute several hundred printed copies at our own General Assembly event when it takes place in person. We plan to do so again in 2022 when the in-person event resumes. Due to cancellation of other in-person community events during the pandemic, we have reduced the number of printed copies to 500 or fewer per quarter. In-person events have recently begun to resume, thus increasing our need for more printed copies. For 2022 we plan to print 1,000 copies of the winter issue for the General Assembly and 500 of the spring and summer issues.

In addition, we also e-mail the PDF to a subscriber base of 15,073 and post it to our website. As indicated in the email metrics in the chart below*, our open rates are on par with industry standard and our click-through rates are higher than average.

We have worked with Marina Graphics for many years to lay out and print our newsletter. However, following the sudden passing of the layout designer, Marina has expressed it has no interest or resources to continue laying out our project. We have thus conducted a search for a new layout designer to create a template that visually aligns with our newly launched website and brand colors, and also to lay out the publication each quarter.

The SBCCOG evaluated bids from three designers: 1) Vince Rios Designs; 2) JP Marketing; and 3) Not So Square Designs. While JP Marketing's designs and cost proposal met our objectives, it is not a local company, so we anticipate additional hard costs, including shipping. Their proposal

indicates they will bill for additional labor hours for added requests, which could include infographics and other visual elements. They also have not been quite as responsive as the others to requests made during the bidding process. Not So Square Design has been responsive and submitted a competitive bid. However, their color choices and designs did not meet our visual objectives as closely as the other two. Although slightly more expensive than the other bidders, we have selected Vince Rios Design. Their submitted designs aligned with our objectives. They were also very responsive to our requests and questions during the bidding process. They have also indicated they would not charge for added design elements, such as infographics, unless they were elaborate. Vince Rios Design is a local designer who formerly worked as a creative director for local publisher Moon Tide Media. Our communications senior project manager Colleen Farrell has previously worked with Rios and can speak for the quality of his work and his collaborative and creative work style.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board approve a contract with Vince Rios Design at a cost of \$4,500 for the remainder of this fiscal year for ongoing design/layout, plus a one-time template design charge for the first issue of \$750. Printing with Marina Graphics will cost \$3,531 (including 9.5% sales tax) for the remaining fiscal year (one issue 1,000 copies for the General Assembly + two issues of 500 copies) for a six-page trifold publication.

The total cost of the newsletter for FY 2021-2022 is \$8,781.37. This recommendation is lower than our budget of \$11,424 by \$2,642.63.

Newsletter Design/Layout Quote Summary

Company	Service Provided 6-Page Trifold	First Year 2021-22	On-going	Notes:
Vince Rios Design Vince Rios Email: vince@vrioscreative.com Phone: 310-350-0551	Template Design (X1 \$750)	\$750.00	\$0.00	Because no tangible product sold, does not charge sales tax on his design or layout work. Also will do infographics at no additional costs.
	Design, layout, project management (ongoing) (X4 ISSUES; \$1500 per issue)	\$4,500.00	\$6,000.00	
	Printing (Marina Graphics)	\$3,531.37	\$4,571.62	
TOTAL		\$8,781.37	\$10,571.62	

Company	Service Provided 6-Page Trifold	First Year 2021-22	On-going	Notes:
JP Marketing Email: Kevin Gordy Email: kevin@jpmktg.com Phone: 559-765-5059	Template Design (X1 \$3,000)	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	Price does not include additional rounds of revisions, which will be charged at rate of \$95/hr, stock images will be billed at \$20 per image, or any additional hard costs. JP does not charge tax for labor hours and for hard costs that are included in the estimate it is already included.
	Design, layout, project management (ongoing) (X4 ISSUES; \$1,500 per issue)	\$4,500.00	\$6,000.00	
	Printing (JP Marketing)	\$2,503.00	\$3,178.27	
TOTAL		\$10,003	\$9,178.27	

Company	Service Provided	First Year 2021-22	On-going	Notes:
Not So Square Design Barbara Jefferies Email: Barbara@notsosquaredesign.com Phone: 323-460-5445	Template Creation (X1 \$3,276)	\$3,276.00	\$0.00	Does charge 9.5% sales tax, but only on the production portion, which is about 25% of the project. Tax is included in charges at left. \$125 per hour would be charged for additional rounds beyond the three allotted)
	Design, layout, project management (ongoing) (X4 ISSUES; \$1,024 per issue)	\$3,072.00	\$4,096.00	
	Printing (Marina Graphics)	\$3,531.37	\$4,571.62	
TOTAL		\$9879.37	\$8,667.62	

Email Metrics*

Note: open rate industry avg. = 15 to 25%; click-through rate = 2.5% (source: campaignmonitor.com)

Issue	Exposure	Engagements (<i>clicks, shares, comments</i>)
Summer – August 24, 2021	(20% open rate – 2,558)	11% click through rate (308)
Spring – May 26, 2021	(17% open rate – 2,544)	11% click through rate (272)
Winter – March 3, 2021	(20% open rate – 2,963)	10% click through rate (305)
Fall – November 25, 2020	(19% open rate – 2,948)	10% click through rate (309)

Prepared by Colleen Farrell