



CITY AUDITOR 345 6th Street, Suite 100, Bremerton, WA 98337-1873 & Phone (360) 473-5369

December 2, 2025

To Audit Committee Members:

Anna Mockler, Audit Committee Chair and Council Member
Deborah McDaniel, Audit Committee Vice-Chair and Citizen Member
Jennifer Chamberlin, Council Member
Marwan Cameron, Citizen Member
Rosalind Medina, CPA

Re: Employee vs Consultant: Public Outreach and Community Engagement

Dear Audit Committee Members:

Audit Committee members expressed concern about the cost of consultants performing public outreach and community engagement work on projects, and the lack of consistency between projects and vendors. I was asked to evaluate whether the City could reduce the outreach/engagement cost and improve consistency by hiring a communications employee to perform this function as part of their job.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Cost: Based on the research and analysis performed, if the City hired another communications employee, it is estimated the total annual compensation (salary and benefits) would be approximately \$131,000 to \$203,000 depending on experience, and that the City could reduce its annual outreach consulting fees by approximately \$45,000 based on the current type of outreach and engagement performed on projects. Alternatively, the City could consider modifying its outreach and engagement strategy to make better use of a communications employee.

Under the current strategy, the theoretical employee would only be utilized part time in public outreach and community engagement; thus, the City would need to consider what additional skill set the ideal candidate should possess so the individual's talent matches other City needs.

Consistency: Greater consistency would likely be achieved with a communications employee performing outreach and community engagement rather than multiple contractors. However, greater consistency can also be achieved by having existing staff develop procedures for outreach and community engagement consistency.

The following comments summarize the results of our review.



BACKGROUND

To best understand and meet the needs of Bremerton residents, as well as meet state and federal grant requirements¹, the City retains consultants to inform and engage the community about certain projects perceived to be of public interest. Most City projects with significant public outreach and community engagement involve Public Works transportation or streets; and to a much lesser extent, the Department of Community Development (DCD). The City's public outreach and community engagement efforts are primarily intended to communicate the benefits of projects to City residents and key stakeholders and solicit their input.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Public outreach is one-way communication that tells community members about an issue, problem, opportunity, or decision. Examples of outreach include postcards sent to homeowners, fliers placed throughout a community, website postings, and meeting announcements. It may involve informing the public of an upcoming discussion and inviting them to comment or participate. Outreach can be an effective means of expanding messaging to the residents.

Community engagement is the process of actively involving community members in discussions and decision-making. It involves building relationships and bringing residents and organizations together for a specific purpose. Effective community engagement fosters collaboration between the City and community residents and organizations so the City can understand and address the needs and issues of the community, and community members can become a part of community change. The engagement process includes listening, discussion, deliberation, and decision-making. Engagement processes may include visioning sessions, forums, charettes, open houses, and more. Community engagement should be neutral rather than advocating for a certain view.

People employed in these fields come from diverse education and work history backgrounds including communications, public affairs, public relations, political science, journalism, marketing, and planning.

¹ Recent Executive Orders issued in 2025, including E.O. [14168](#) and [14224](#), could affect federal grant requirements and future public outreach and community engagement. Reviewing and analyzing the potential impact of the E.O.s on the City's outreach and engagement is beyond the scope of this report.



COMMUNICATIONS

Services that a communications person or department sometimes provide include:

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS	INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS	PRODUCTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication strategy – general and specific • Strategic guidance and advice on external messaging • Support for priority City initiatives • Pushing information to the community • Stakeholder engagement planning • Response to City events and issues • Website content • Social media • Media relations • Council messaging • Public meeting messaging • Telling the Story of the City • Crisis management • Communication tools • Media monitoring and data analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee notifications • Information about employee events • Employee news • Alignment/interpretation of external messaging • Building employee connection to City government • Information about City priorities • Communication about City culture • Guidance and guidelines for City-sanctioned communication • Employee engagement in external messaging as City ambassadors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand management and style • Social media templates and branding • Basic, rapid-turn graphic design and copy editing • Collateral ordering and production • Communication tools and technology training • Printing and vendor management • Writing assistance and content generation • Graphic design • Video production • Photography • Writing and content assistance

INVENTORY OF BREMERTON’S CURRENT DEDICATED COMMUNICATION STAFF

Spread across three departments, the City currently has five [FTEs](#) plus one less-than-half-time position whose job function is related to communications, as follows (salary range in parentheses):

- Finance/Bremerton Kitsap Access Television (BKAT):
 - Public Access Manager (\$86,688 to \$102,432)
 - Production Administrator (\$72,492 to \$88,332)
 - Video Specialist (\$51,396 to \$62,508)
 - PT Associate Producer (\$20,000 estimated)
 - PT Other (Position vacant)

- Executive Office:
 - Diversity and Community Engagement Manager (\$97,500 to \$118,788)

- Information Technology:
 - Technology Communication Specialist² (\$65,832 to \$77,484)

² This position was previously reported in the Executive Office.



Using the mid-point of the above ranges, the City's current communications salaries total approximately \$432,000. Assuming an estimated 40% to 47% for payroll taxes and benefits, the City currently spends a total of approximately \$605,000 to \$635,000 on salaries and benefits for personnel with communications as their primary job function.³ Not included in the above amounts are the salary and benefits for employees who perform communications as a less significant part of their job, e.g. public works project managers, the budget analyst who prepares budget narrative, etc.

The roles and responsibilities of the City's current communication functions are summarized below:

- **BKAT:** A Public, Education and Government (PEG) channel provided to the citizens of Kitsap County through franchise agreements with local cable providers. BKAT provides PEG programming on the cable system in COB and Kitsap County. Additionally, BKAT provides training to the public in television production.
- **Diversity and Community Engagement:** Build and maintain relationships with community organizations and leaders, and City departments. Design and implement training programs for organizational and employee development. Design, coordinate, and measure leadership, professional development, and manager training to enhance performance and build managerial skills with a lens of diversity and inclusion. Serve as a subject matter expert on diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging, providing leadership and guidance to City staff, the Mayor, and City Council and attend meetings as directed by the Mayor. Report demographic data, identify programmatic gaps, and measure the effectiveness of targeted recruitment, sharing insights with key partners and government bodies. Help departments with communication messaging, including working with Public Works to strategize engaging the community for outreach with the 6th Street Project. Has also created a communications plan for the City and a crisis communication toolkit.
- **Technology Communication:** Manages the City's website, providing daily maintenance, technical programming and creative design. Coordinates cross-platform distribution of information between the City's website, e-mail marketing and social media accounts. Manages the development and distribution of electronic and print communication media including brochures, flyers and presentations.

Although City project managers and other public works staff sometimes perform public outreach and community engagement, the City does not have an employee dedicated solely to this effort.

ORGANIZATION

Analyzing the organization of the City's communications is outside the scope of this review. If the City wanted a professional assessment of its communication staffing levels and talent, that would be best performed by someone with a background in communications.

³ [BKAT revenue](#) offsets a significant portion of BKAT expenditures.



With that said, it was noted that the City's communications function is spread across three departments. In comparison, the City of Olympia, Washington's capital city with a population of 57,450, has a dedicated communications department led by a Strategic Communications Director, an expensive position. The City of Bremerton may want to begin by defining its communication goals and strategy, designating a leader (current employee, new hire, or consultant) to orchestrate the various communication components, assessing how the City can position its current staff to best achieve its goals, and identifying additional skillsets needed to fill any gaps.

NUMBER OF COMMUNICATION EMPLOYEES

In 2021, the City of Olympia retained Communication Resources Northwest (CRNW) to assess their communication needs. CRNW's research found cities that were satisfied with their city-provided communications function (Boulder Colorado, Eugene Oregon, and Boise Idaho) have one communication staff member per between 4,000 and 8,000 population. Other than satisfaction, CRNW's report did not state the criteria for selecting these three cities as a benchmark. If the "4,000 to 8,000" benchmark held true for Bremerton, the City, with five FT and one less-than-half-time communication employees, is slightly below CRNW's proposed range. (Bremerton population 45,390 divided by 8,000 yields 5 2/3 communication employees.) As previously noted, it is beyond the scope of this review to assess whether the City's communication talent is aligned with the City's communication goals and priorities.

CITY OF BURIEN

The City of Burien has a Communications Division that includes a communications manager and a communications specialist who spend approximately two thirds of their time supporting public outreach and community engagement efforts on public works projects. On these projects, they help with the outreach strategy, branding, managing output to platforms, blog posts, and support at open houses. Consultants are still needed for the technical aspects of outreach and engagement, including surveys. The Communications employees do not bill their time to the public works projects for reimbursement through grants. The Communications Division total 2026 budget is approximately \$550,000. Included in the budget are professional services for "[connectors](#)", who serve as liaisons between the City and community, including ethnic specific connectors.

CITY OF OLYMPIA'S COMMUNICATION STAFFING

The City of Olympia appears to have a well-rounded communications department, which is comprised of two programs: a Strategic Communications Program and a Visual & Design Production Program. [Additional details](#) about Olympia's Communications Department are provided below to offer ideas on how communications employees might be utilized by the City of Bremerton.

The 2025 expenditure budget for Olympia's Strategic Communications Program is \$1,284,000 and the Visual & Design Production Program expenditure budget is \$443,000 for a total expenditure budget of \$1.7 million.⁴

⁴ The Olympia 2025 department budget includes \$562,000 of revenue from charges for goods and services and \$170,000 of revenue from other financing sources.



The Strategic Communications program has four FTEs with 2025 salaries as follows:

- Strategic Communications Director (\$177,455)
- Deputy Public Information Officer (\$147,799)
- Social Media/Content Strategist (\$101,361)
- Community Engagement Senior Program Specialist (\$91,552)

The Visual & Design Production Program has two FTEs with salaries as follows:⁵

- Senior Designer & Brand Manager (\$104,838)
- Graphic Designer (\$101,361)

Olympia's Strategic Communications Department is charged with leading the City's external and internal communications. Per Olympia's budget narrative, the Strategic Communications Department focuses on the following areas:

- Narrative Building: Produce a podcast, support a City blog, and use a virtual town hall model to do more engaging and listening to the community on important issues.
- Media Relations: Proactive and reactive media handling, content creation, and media monitoring and analysis.
- Website: Manage and maintain the City's website, develop website guidelines, train and support content editors.
- Digital Engagement: Manage and operate the City's online public engagement platform, Engage Olympia.
- Crisis Communication: Lead citywide crisis communications and retain crisis communication consulting firm to increase capacity.
- Social Media: Develop social media strategy, amplify the City's voice across multiple social media platforms, and support designated staff on department-level social media.
- Public Engagement: A leader in engaging the community on City direction and policy. Public engagement opportunities help shape and support the City's narrative and tell its story.
- Visual Design: Develop, design and deliver communication materials/collateral that support City initiatives.
- Community Access Television: Manage and program the City's government and education access television channel, support cablecasting and livestreaming of City Council meetings and original programming about the work of the City.

The Visual Design & Production program provides professional writing, graphic design, branding, photography, and videography services.

PROS AND CONS: EMPLOYEE VS CONTRACTOR

There are several pros and cons with both hiring employees and retaining contractors. Some of the pros and cons are noted below:

⁵ In 2024, this program also had a Production Manager/Senior Writer. This position was lost due to budget cuts.



Employee Pros/Contractor Cons:

- **Quality Control:** Although employees and contractors should always be managed closely, there tends to be greater control over employees' quality of work. With employees, you can set clear expectations, provide ongoing training and monitor performance closely. It is also generally easier to manage changes in strategies with employees.
- **Consistency in Messaging:** A reason cited by the Audit Committee members for hiring a communications employee versus retaining consultants and using a variety of City staff (i.e. project managers) is to achieve better consistency in messaging. Although consistency is generally considered a benefit of an employee versus a consultant, this can also be achieved through procedures. Even with a procedure, messaging is likely to be more consistent with an employee versus multiple consultants. Based on a discussion with Dr. Jeneise Briggs, the City's Diversity and Community Engagement Manager, I understand she is planning to develop a community engagement and communication strategy.
- **Loyalty and Commitment:** A communications employee who closely understands the City's values and has a sense of loyalty to the City is more likely to create communication strategies targeting the City's goals. A consultant may not be as immersed in the City culture or have that same sense of loyalty.

Contractor Pros/Employee Cons:

- **Utilization:** Consultants are only retained when needed. When the job is done, the pay stops. Retaining contractors offers greater flexibility by scaling the workforce up or down based on project needs. Hiring a permanent employee typically is a long-term commitment and it is important to ensure there is sufficient work and budget funding to support the position for the longer commitment. Utilization is a significant consideration when debating between hiring an employee or utilizing consultants.
- **Expertise and Skills:** Consulting firms are more likely to offer a more diverse talent pool that can provide multi-disciplinary expertise on a project. An employee is typically more limited to their area of knowledge and expertise.

DATA ANALYSIS

We reviewed 186 COB design professional services agreements and associated change orders/contract modifications from 2018 to early 2025, which were considered reasonably likely to include public outreach or community engagement services. Of the 186 agreements reviewed, we identified 29 with public outreach or community engagement. In the tables below, the costs and hours shown are for the contracted public outreach and community engagement portions of the contracts.



PROJECTS⁶

Below is the list of 29 projects identified with public outreach or community engagement. The list is sorted in descending order of cost. In terms of hours, four of the projects account for half of total outreach/engagement hours spent on these 29 projects: the SR303 Corridor Study, Joint Compatibility Transportation Plan, 2024 Transportation Element, and the Warren Avenue Bridge Pedestrian Improvement project. Most of the projects were for Public Works.

Project	Hours	Cost	\$/Hour	% of Total Hours
SR 303 Corridor Study	811	\$ 129,107	\$ 159	14%
Joint Compatibility Transportation Plan	774	125,517	162	14%
2024 Transportation Element	773	125,430	162	14%
Warren Ave Bridge Pedestrian Improvs	468	72,348	155	8%
Bremerton Naval Avenue Improvements	304	39,511	130	5%
6th St Active Transportation Improvs	351	50,635	144	6%
Eastside Mkt Analysis Subarea Plan EIS	284	47,186	166	5%
Telecom Public Needs Survey & Franchise Renew	142	41,890	295	3%
Quincy Square	285	46,915	165	5%
Shoreline Master Program Periodic Update	199	25,851	130	4%
Brownsfield Community Assessment etc	160	24,000	150	3%
Washington & 11th Roundabout	158	21,382	135	3%
View Ridge Elementary SRTS	130	19,664	151	2%
Tracyton Beach Sewer	102	18,594	182	2%
Bremerton Wayfinding	124	17,754	143	2%
Parking Study	90	12,650	141	2%
2024 Council District Comp Plan	70	12,200	174	1%
11th & Perry Construction Mgmt	84	11,000	131	1%
Washington & 11th Construction Mgmt	80	10,500	131	1%
E 9th Street Stormwater Improvements	72	10,476	146	1%
Anderson Creek Dam Removal	40	7,570	189	1%
Oyster Bay Beach Sewer Upgrade	42	5,669	135	1%
Decommission beach sewer Manette	23	4,214	183	0%
SR3 and Kitsap Way HSIP Signal Improvements	26	3,327	128	0%
6th St Preservation, Phase III Design	18	3,003	167	0%
SR303 Adaptive Signals Riddell/Sheridan	8	1,995	249	0%
Pine Rd Basin Stormwater Improvements	12	1,888	157	0%
Total	5,630	\$ 890,275	\$ 158	100%

⁶ The project labeled “Eastside Mkt Analysis Subarea Plan EIS” is now more commonly known as the Harrison Village.



CONTRACTORS

The table below summarizes the cost and hours of public outreach and community engagement by contractor/subcontractor. Our research identified a total of 25 contractors that provided these services from 2018 through early 2025. Of the 25 contractors/subs, PRR, Inc. provided 31 percent of the services in terms of hours, followed by Parametrix and SCJ Alliance at 13 and 11 percent, respectively. These three contractors provided 55 percent of the services.

Contractor	Hours	Cost	\$/Hour	% of Total Hours
PRR	1,726	\$ 223,885	\$ 130	31%
Parametrix	717	156,477	218	13%
SCJ Alliance	624	95,339	153	11%
Stepherson & Associates	452	59,133	131	8%
BERK Consulting	320	49,040	153	6%
The Watershed Company	199	25,851	130	4%
Conсор North	194	32,598	168	3%
HDR	190	33,538	177	3%
Stantec Consulting, Inc.	160	24,000	150	3%
Skillings Connelly Inc.	158	21,382	135	3%
Business Street	146	25,500	175	3%
River Oaks Communications Corp	142	41,890	295	3%
Makers	114	16,780	147	2%
Kennedy Jenks	102	18,594	182	2%
Erin Stuart Design	70	12,200	174	1%
Rice Fergus Miller	54	10,091	188	1%
Fehr and Peers	49	6,359	130	1%
Framework	45	8,775	195	1%
Toole Design Group	42	6,034	144	1%
Osborn Consulting, Inc.	40	7,570	189	1%
iHeart Kitsap	37	4,225	114	1%
Herrara	20	3,424	171	0%
Stowe Development	14	4,200	300	0%
Transpo Group USA, Inc.	8	1,995	249	0%
Transportation Solutions Inc	7	1,396	199	0%
Total	5,630	\$ 890,275	\$ 158	100%



TASK DESCRIPTIONS

Task descriptions varied by project and vendor. We created eleven task categories to summarize the services provided, as shown in the table below. Open houses, pop up events, doorbelling, and similar tasks accounted for the vast majority (41 percent) of services provided, followed by preparing materials (22 percent). (Note, City staff also perform public outreach and community engagement on these projects; staff time is not included in any of these tables.)

Task Description	Hours	Cost	\$/Hour	% of Total Hours
Open house/Pop up events/doorbelling	2,293	\$ 376,575	\$ 164	41%
Material preparation	1,255	179,591	143	22%
Survey	615	89,909	146	11%
Stakeholder meetings	528	99,913	189	9%
Other	184	28,090	153	3%
Strategy	171	23,575	138	3%
Administration	170	25,916	153	3%
Website	124	14,792	119	2%
Council and other briefings	118	22,705	192	2%
Steering Committee meetings	92	16,546	180	2%
Focus meetings	80	12,663	158	1%
Total	5,630	\$ 890,275	\$ 158	100%



DISCIPLINES

The individual consultants' disciplines were summarized from data in the contracts or from Internet research. Not all contracts provide the level of detail to determine the disciplines; thus, we had insufficient discipline information for 45 percent of the hours worked. Of the remaining 55 percent, 34 percent of the hours were billed by consultants with backgrounds in communications, engineering, or planning, as shown below.

Consultant's (Individual's) Discipline	Hours	Cost	\$/Hour	% of Total Hours
Communications	749	\$ 119,733	\$ 160	13%
Engineer	589	95,248	162	10%
Planner	638	94,462	148	11%
Principal/project manager	307	56,061	183	5%
Design	329	52,689	160	6%
Real Estate	166	30,899	186	3%
Research	240	31,080	129	4%
Other	36	4,191	116	1%
GIS	38	4,698	124	1%
Accountant	14	1,566	112	0%
Not known	2,524	399,649	158	45%
Total	5,630	\$ 890,275	\$ 158	100%

CONSULTANT WORK THAT COULD BE REPLACED

To determine the amount of consultant outreach that could be replaced by a communications employee, the following steps were taken:

1. Based on a review of contracts, we estimated how much of the outreach work summarized in the above tables was performed by year;
2. We analyzed the type of work performed and the position/discipline of the consultant performing the work to estimate the percentage of work that could be performed by a theoretical communications employee. These estimates could change depending on the qualifications of the theoretical employee;
3. We applied those percentages to the cost of the consultant's work by year.

The following tables summarize the results of the above steps:



Outreach by Year

The City does not track the cost of community outreach separately from other project costs. We therefore estimated the amount of work performed by year based on contract information. Our review shows the City has significantly increased its public outreach efforts over the past decade. The City expended an average of \$30,354 per year during the four-year period 2016 through 2019. From 2020 through 2024, in terms of cost, the City increased its public outreach efforts five-fold to a yearly average of \$149,265, reaching its highest in 2022 at \$277,050. It was noted that increasing public engagement has been on the list of City Council Goals & Priorities in recent years. The table below shows this cost trend:

Project Description	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Partial 2025
Parking Study	\$ 12,650									
Brownsfield Community Assessment etc		\$ 12,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000						
SR 303 Corridor Study			25,500							
Eastside Mkt Analysis Subarea Plan EIS				47,186						
Shoreline Master Program Periodic Update				8,617	\$ 8,617	\$ 8,617				
Oyster Bay Beach Sewer Upgrade				2,834	2,834					
Pine Rd Basin Stormwater Improvements				629	629	629				
Bremerton Naval Avenue Improvements					39,511					
SR3 and Kitsap Way HSIP Signal Improvements					3,327					
SR 303 Corridor Study					103,607					
Washington & 11th Roundabout					10,691	10,691				
Quincy Square Marketing						2,113	\$ 2,113			
Telecom Public Needs Survey & Franchise Renew						5,585	33,512	\$ 2,793		
Washington & 11th Construction Mgmt							10,500			
Warren Ave Bridge Pedestrian Improvs							72,348			
Joint Compatibility Transportation Plan							125,517			
Quincy Square on 4th Street							10,091			
Bremerton Wayfinding							17,754			
Decommission beach sewer Manette							4,214			
6th St Preservation, Phase III Design							1,001	1,001	\$ 1,001	
11th & Perry Construction Mgmt								11,000		
Anderson Creek Dam Removal								7,570		
Tracyton Beach Sewer								18,594		
2024 Transportation Element									125,430	
View Ridge Elementary SRTS									19,664	
6th St Active Transportation Improvs									50,635	
2024 Council District Comp Plan									12,200	
Quincy Square									16,299	\$ 16,299
E 9th Street Stormwater Improvements									5,238	5,238
SR303 Adaptive Signals Riddell/Sheridan									997	997
Total	\$ 12,650	\$ 12,000	\$ 31,500	\$ 65,267	\$ 169,217	\$ 27,635	\$ 277,050	\$ 40,957	\$ 231,465	\$ 22,535

Cumulative total	\$ 890,275
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Percent of Work that Can be Replaced

The table below summarizes the assumptions and estimated percentage of work (in terms of dollars), by project, that could be replaced. Notably, outreach and community engagement is often performed by individuals that work on other aspects of the projects (engineers, planners, project managers, etc.) and who are very knowledgeable about the project. Before a communications person can perform outreach, they too will need to become knowledgeable about the project.

Project Description	Cost	Consultants		Estimated Replace %	Replacement Assumptions/Comments
		Number	Position		
Parking Study	\$ 12,650	2	Proj Mgr, Planner	28%	Replace planner on open house and SH mtg.
Brownsfield Community Assessment etc	24,000	Undiscl.	Undisclosed	29%	Average of other projects
SR 303 Corridor Study	25,500	1	Real estate strategist	0%	Principal specializes in urban and economic development
Eastside Mkt Analysis Subarea Plan EIS	47,186	9	Technical/professional	10%	1/4 of community workshops and pop ups
Shoreline Master Program Periodic Updat	25,851	Undiscl.	Ecology/biology engr	0%	Too technical
Oyster Bay Beach Sewer Upgrade	5,669	4	3 Engr, 1 Communication	26%	Repl. Communication cost
Pine Rd Basin Stormwater Improvements	1,888	Undiscl.	Undisclosed	0%	2 meetings and plot table map
Bremerton Naval Avenue Improvements	39,511	7 per firm	Engr, comm, acct, real estat	22%	Assume 50% of PRR replaced
SR3 and Kitsap Way HSIP Signal Improvem	3,327	2	PM and Design Engr	24%	Assume repl design engr
SR 303 Corridor Study	103,607	Undiscl.	Undisclosed	32%	Assume 50% of PRR replaced
Washington & 11th Roundabout	21,382	5	PM, Engr (2), Comm (2)	33%	Assume repl communications
Quincy Square Marketing	4,225	2	Undisclosed	100%	
Telecom Public Needs Survey & Franchise	41,890	Undiscl.	Undisclosed	29%	City heavily involved. Percent is average of other projects
Washington & 11th Contruction Mgmt	10,500	Undiscl.	Undisclosed	100%	
Warren Ave Bridge Pedestrian Improvs	72,348	5	PM, graph design, planners	0%	Mtgs and open houses are to discuss project alternatives
Joint Compatibility Transportation Plan	125,517	Undiscl.	Undisclosed	22%	Assume 50% PRR is replaced.
Quincy Square on 4th Street	10,091	2	Principal and PM	0%	Architects. No other work on contract.
Bremerton Wayfinding	17,754	4	PM, Planner, 2 Outreach	66%	Repl. Outreach
Decommission beach sewer Manette	4,214	2	PM, Sr Graphic Designer	0%	City already involved
6th St Preservation, Phase III Design	3,003	Undiscl.	Undisclosed	0%	Providing aerial roll plot and presentation boards.
11th & Perry Construction Mgmt	11,000	Undiscl.	Undisclosed	100%	Work performed by communications company
Anderson Creek Dam Removal	7,570	Undiscl.	PM, Engr, Landscape Arch	0%	Includes easement work. Technical. Performed by civil engr firm
Tracyton Beach Sewer	18,594	5	4 EngSci, 1 CAD	0%	Technical. City hired an engineering firm to do this work.
2024 Transportation Element	125,430	10	7 PRR, 3 Parametrix	43%	Assume 50% PRR is replaced.
View Ridge Elementary SRTS	19,664	5	Engrs, Prin, Sr. PM, Planner	13%	Participate in survey and open house
6th St Active Transportation Improvs	50,635	7 or 8	5 or 6 Stepherson, 2 HDR	37%	Replace 50% Stepherson & Assoc
2024 Council District Comp Plan	12,200	1	Marketing	100%	
Quincy Square	32,598	4	Comm., design, engr	57%	Communications consultants replaced
E 9th Street Stormwater Improvements	10,476	4	3 Engineers, 1 GIS	11%	8 open house hours
SR303 Adaptive Signals Riddell/Sheridan	1,995	1	PM Engr L5	0%	Low cost doesn't justify effort to educate someone of project
Total	\$ 890,275				



Estimated Value of Outsourced Outreach that Could be Replaced with An Employee

Applying the percentages (above) to the cost of outreach and engagement consulting, the estimated amount of outreach and engagement work that could be replaced with an employee is shown in the table below:

Project Description	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Partial 2025
Parking Study	\$ 3,542									\$ -
Brownsfield Community Assessment etc		\$ 3,480	\$ 1,740	\$ 1,740						\$ -
SR 303 Corridor Study										\$ -
Eastside Mkt Analysis Subarea Plan EIS				\$ 4,818						\$ -
Shoreline Master Program Periodic Update										\$ -
Oyster Bay Beach Sewer Upgrade				\$ 741	\$ 741					\$ -
Pine Rd Basin Stormwater Improvements										\$ -
Bremerton Naval Avenue Improvements					\$ 8,495					\$ -
SR3 and Kitsap Way HSIP Signal Improvements					\$ 795					\$ -
SR 303 Corridor Study					\$ 32,678					\$ -
Washington & 11th Roundabout					\$ 3,576	\$ 3,576				\$ -
Quincy Square Marketing						\$ 2,113	\$ 2,113			\$ -
Telecom Public Needs Survey & Franchise Renew						\$ 1,620	\$ 9,718	\$ 810		\$ -
Washington & 11th Construction Mgmt							\$ 10,500			\$ -
Warren Ave Bridge Pedestrian Improvs										\$ -
Joint Compatibility Transportation Plan							\$ 27,084			\$ -
Quincy Square on 4th Street										\$ -
Bremerton Wayfinding							\$ 11,720			\$ -
Decommission beach sewer Manette										\$ -
6th St Preservation, Phase III Design										\$ -
11th & Perry Construction Mgmt								\$ 11,000		\$ -
Anderson Creek Dam Removal										\$ -
Tracyton Beach Sewer										\$ -
2024 Transportation Element									\$ 54,321	\$ -
View Ridge Elementary SRTS									\$ 2,556	\$ -
6th St Active Transportation Improvs									\$ 18,816	\$ -
2024 Council District Comp Plan									\$ 12,200	\$ -
Quincy Square									\$ 9,212	\$ 9,212
E 9th Street Stormwater Improvements									\$ 582	\$ 582
SR303 Adaptive Signals Riddell/Sheridan										\$ -
Total	\$ 3,542	\$ 3,480	\$ 1,740	\$ 7,298	\$ 46,285	\$ 7,308	\$ 61,135	\$ 11,810	\$ 97,688	\$ 9,794
Cumulative total										\$ 250,080

In other words, in 2020, of the \$169,217 spent on public outreach/community engagement consulting, it is estimated that \$46,285 could have been performed by an employee, depending on the qualifications of an actual employee.

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER SALARY AND BENEFITS

We obtained salary data for some communications positions in certain Washington cities with a somewhat comparable size/population to Bremerton. The table below shows the cities, populations, positions, and related salary ranges. As shown, the average salary range for these cities and positions is \$100,786 to \$145,429.



City	Population	Position	Salary Range	
Bremerton	45,390	Diversity and Community Engagement Manager	\$ 97,000	\$ 119,000
Bainbridge Island	25,330	Communications Coordinator	104,000	130,000
Bellingham	97,270	Communications Director	117,000	143,000
Bothell	50,670	Communications and Engagement Manager	107,000	137,000
Burien	53,000	Communications Specialist	88,000	107,000
Edmonds	43,420	Communications Strategist/Public Info Officer	101,000	135,000
Federal Way	102,500	Communications Manager	113,000	143,000
Issaquah	41,500	Communication Coordinator and Manager	83,000	160,000
Kent	140,400	Communication Tech, Coordinator, Supv & Mgr	88,000	153,000
Kirkland	96,710	Communication Specialist, Coord, and Manager	85,000	160,000
Lakewood	64,620	Communication Coordinator and Manager	79,000	146,000
Lynnwood	41,500	Manager of Communications and Public Affairs	134,000	172,000
Marysville	74,390	Communications Manager	123,000	154,000
Olympia	57,450	Public Info Ofc, Strategic Comm Dir, Soc Media Strategist, Comm Eng Program Spec	92,000	177,000
Average	64,242		\$ 100,786	\$ 145,429

Benefits are estimated to range from \$30,000 to \$58,000, bringing the total compensation range to approximately \$131,000 to \$203,000.

CONCLUSION

If the City continues outreach at the 2020 through 2024 level, the estimated annual average amount of consulting fees that could be replaced by an employee totals approximately \$45,000. This is the amount that could theoretically go toward funding the \$131,000 to \$203,000 estimated compensation of a communication employee. The remaining compensation (\$86,000 to \$158,000) would likely be a general fund expense.

Please contact me if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Jennifer L. Sims CPA/CFF, CFE
City Auditor

- cc: City Council
- Mayor Wheeler
- Andrea Spencer, Community Development Director
- Chance Berthiaume, Interim Public Works Director
- Mike Riley, Finance Director