# 2021 Communications Budget - Discussion Document

## *Introduction*

The Communications Department within the City of Alexandria is brimming with new and exciting ways to reach out to and engage the city residents. The ultimate goal of the department is to break down walls internally and externally. Creation of easy communication flowing both directions for each of these unique target markets is the continuous effort. Transparency is the way we communicate, but listening is the way we succeed in communication. In the Communications Department, dedication to all forms of communications is imperative. Electronic – hardware (Phones, Computers), Electronic – software (website, social media) and Public Relations (letters, community involvement)

* Internal Communications
* External Communications
* Community Collaboration
* Information Technology
* Public Relations

## *PBB Inventory & Costing Estimate*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Program | % |
|  |  |
| Internal Communications | 10% |
| External Communications | 30% |
| Community Collaboration | 15% |
| Information Technology | 35% |
| Public Relations | 10% |
| Total | 100% |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | The following includes some of the activities within each program element noted in the PBB estimate table above:  **Activity:** Internal Communications: In this area, work is mainly in a supportive role. When people need help with presentations, public events or internal team initiatives, I am available to screen, edit or advise on their work. This work will continue to inspire and encourage teamwork through the full enterprise of vastly different teams and work.  **Activity:** External Communications: The vast majority of time working in this area is generally spent on messaging from internal to external. Each department has different goals and purposes, the communications of each of those departments to our external audience is given from the Communications Dept. Examples: snow removal, park information, open skate timing, liquor store specials, etc. The external communication work also includes the social media platform work as well as the website and sustaining current and accurate information on that site.  **Activity:** Community Collaboration: the beauty of Alexandria is that we have many dedicated, driven people and organizations working towards a better Alexandria. It is imperative that the City is part of and leads some of those conversations. Work in this area is invaluable to our long-term success.  **Activity:** Information Technology: If the city employees cannot communicate through technology like phones and computers, our work can come to a standstill. The Communications Department is always looking for ways to encourage better, more efficient work through technology.  **Activity:** Public Relations: Monitoring, addressing, researching and listening to our community is a priority that is taken seriously. The cumulative voice of the community and the residents is something we take seriously. Our concern and proactive work in Emergency Management is important for all. Every effort is made in working directly or sometimes indirectly with the public to attain communication flow. |

**How has COVID-19 changed my work?**  
 The most tangible, visible work has been to get COA staff and buildings up to 2020 standards of work. Generally speaking, our staff was not set up to work functionally at home for a longer term. Configuring the aspects of this was tough. Every situation was different and every employee had to potential to slow down the process of keeping work flowing. We now have 6 City Hall employees that are fully functional at home, and others have temporary ability. We are working on creating that ability for more as the future is uncertain.   
 Another huge undertaking was getting City Hall prepared for video conferencing. With the installation completed for Council Chambers and the Conference Room, our ability to share, train and include others in our sessions or meetings will be vastly improved.

**2021 Considerations**: Flexibility will be the main consideration for 2021. Communications, media, how people work have all drastically changed in 2020. We will need to be flexible to change and pivot as needed now that change has become the norm.