



**TRIPEPI SMITH**  
marketing • technology • public affairs

SINGLE SOURCE COMMUNICATIONS



## COMMUNICATION SUPPORT SERVICES

City of Hercules

September 12, 2024

By: Ryder Todd Smith, Co-founder & Principal  
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Tripepi Smith & Associates



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# COVER LETTER

Thank you for the opportunity to present Tripepi Smith's offerings in response to the City of Hercules's interest in outreach efforts. This proposal offers all requested information, including Tripepi Smith's understanding of your needs, our approach to addressing them, our cost proposal and more.

Tripepi Smith has a deep understanding of the unique dynamics of local communities: over 200 local government agencies, primarily in California, have chosen us to support their communications needs. Our experience spans numerous successful initiatives, where we have consistently achieved tangible, impactful results.

The team consists of over 65 communication experts — robust enough to support your goals, yet small enough to be nimble and responsive. We offer a spectrum of skills that allows us to match the appropriate resource to the task at hand, letting us execute faster at reduced engagement costs. These resources vary by both years of experience and core hard skills (graphic design versus videography versus writing versus social media, for example). Independent of skill set, each team member is active in the world of local government. The result: we have the ability to tell impactful, localized stories across communication mediums, all within our one team. The City of Hercules will need only one communications partner.

Engaging constituents and telling your agency's story is not a simple matter. It takes work, consistency, innovation and creativity to make an impact. We are confident that our dedication and proven track record make us the right partner for the City of Hercules. Thank you for considering us in this endeavor. We eagerly anticipate the chance to discuss our proposal in more detail.

## Authorization

I affirm that I have the legal authorization to bind Tripepi Smith into agreements with the City of Hercules and to make the statements below on behalf of the firm. This proposal is valid for 60 days from the date of submission.

Regards,



Ryder Todd Smith

Co-Founder & President, Tripepi Smith & Associates, Inc.

Ryder@TripepiSmith.com • (626) 536-2173 • PO Box 52152, Irvine, CA 92619

**RFP@TripepiSmith.com is our preferred point of contact throughout the evaluation process.**

# ABOUT TRIPEPI SMITH

## A Public Affairs Firm that Understands Local Government

Tripepi Smith excels in public affairs and marketing. Founded in 2000 and incorporated as a California corporation in 2002, the company is headquartered in Orange County, California, with staff throughout the western United States. We work in a complex environment where successful communications go hand-in-hand with marketing and technical expertise. As a full-service marketing and creative services firm, Tripepi Smith offers the right professionals for the job while being small enough to be nimble and responsive. Our team offers a broad spectrum of experience and skills that allows us to apply the appropriate resource to the appropriate tasks; this allows us to execute work faster and reduce engagement costs.

Tripepi Smith's team comprises over 65 full-time professionals experienced in local government. Our staff includes former municipal employees with backgrounds in creative services, public information and city management, as well as seasoned directors, analysts and practice area specialists. Accredited public relations (APR) professionals guide effective messaging while policy wonks provide counsel on public affairs. TS Creatives fashion compelling branding, websites, print and digital design, social media, photography and videography. We employ multiple FAA-certified drone pilots and operate a full-scale video production studio with extensive event and broadcast experience.

**The Result: We have can tell a complete story across mediums, all within our one team.**

## Firm Structure and Financial Matters

Tripepi Smith was founded in 2000 and incorporated in 2002 as a California S Corporation. The firm has two corporate officers, who are also the co-founders with equal ownership of the business:

**Co-Founder & President Ryder Todd Smith**  
**Chief Financial Officer Nicole Smith**

Ryder and Nicole have signing authority to bind Tripepi Smith into agreements with clients. Tripepi Smith has generated a profit every year it has been in operation. We have never had a legal claim filed against us and have never failed to fulfill a contract commitment.

In addition to the president/CEO and CFO, multiple principals and directors oversee the day-to-day operations of a team of analysts, graphic designers, photographers and videographers. All Tripepi Smith employees report directly to the President. Please refer to our Org Chart for full details.

## Grounded in Civic Affairs

CFO Nicole Tripepi Smith is a second-generation civic-affairs professional (her father was a city manager for 28 years). President Ryder Todd Smith brings over 20 years of public agency marketing and communications experience to the table.

## Office Locations

Since early 2017, Tripepi Smith has operated in a completely virtual office environment. Being virtual enhances operational resilience and grants us access to a flexible and diverse workforce. The team — composed of policy wonks, creative message developers, broadcast specialists, videography experts, technology gurus and graphic artists — resides throughout Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington, with a majority based in California.



"Hiring a firm with expertise was a move that could both save money for the City and offer a full array of talents that no single person could reasonably possess. We found a firm that could supplement staff efforts and unify City messaging so our communications are as helpful as possible."

**Dr. Daniel Jordan**  
Former City Manager, City of Duarte

## Our Services

Tripepi Smith operates at the intersection of marketing, technology and public affairs. We excel in each of these areas, but the true power lies in our ability to seamlessly integrate them. This holistic approach allows us to craft impactful solutions for our clients.

Strategy, Marketing, Communications	Creative Services
<b>Strategic development, research, surveys, messaging</b>	<b>Full-service graphic design for digital, print and outdoor</b>
<b>Social media management</b>	<b>Brand and logo development</b>
<b>Web and social media strategy, optimization (SEO), metrics</b>	<b>Content creation</b> (writing, editorial, thought leadership)
<b>Web hosting and support</b>	<b>Output services</b> (digital distribution, print management, mail management)
<b>Email campaigns</b>	<b>Illustration and information graphics</b>
<b>Relations</b> (media, stakeholders, public, government)	<b>Photography</b>
<b>Support and training for events, presentations and virtual gatherings</b>	<b>Videography, broadcasting, podcasting, drone</b>
<b>Digital, print, radio, out-of-home advertising</b>	<b>Event production, technical support</b>
<b>Staff training</b> (media, social media, photo, brand implementation)	<b>Animation and motion graphics</b>
	<b>Web design and implementation</b>

## Partial Client Roster

We have a network of 200+ satisfied clients in the local government space. We are happy to connect you with contacts at our client agencies who can share their experience working with Tripepi Smith.

California City Management Foundation	City of La Cañada Flintridge	City of Pomona
City of Aliso Viejo	City of La Palma	City of Rancho Palos Verdes
City of American Canyon	City of La Puente	City of Rancho Mirage
City of Atascadero	City of La Verne	City of Riverbank
City of Azusa	City of Lake Forest	City of Rolling Hills Estates
City of Baldwin Park	City of Lakeport	City of San Clemente
City of Bellflower	City of Laguna Hills	City of San Leandro
City of Benicia	City of Laguna Niguel	City of Santa Ana
City of Burlingame	City of Lancaster	City of Santa Clarita
City of Claremont	City of Livermore	City of Santa Paula
City of Coronado	City of Lomita	City of Saratoga
(City of) Culver City	City of Lynwood	City of Stanton
City of Cupertino	City of Malibu	City of South Gate
(City of) Daly City	City of Manhattan Beach	City of South Pasadena
City of Danville	City of Manteca	City of Tracy
City of Duarte	City of Martinez	Costa Mesa Sanitary District
City of El Cerrito	City of Menifee	West County Wastewater District
City of Fountain Valley	City of Millbrae	Del Paso Manor Water District
City of Foster City	City of Morgan Hill	Independent Cities Association
City of Fullerton	City of Murrieta	Independent Cities Finance Authority
City of Gilroy	City of Napa	Institute for Local Government
City of Grover Beach	City of Norwalk	League of California Cities
City of Hawaiian Gardens	City of Orange	Municipal Management Association of Northern California
City of Hayward	City of Orinda	Municipal Management Association of Southern California
City of Huntington Beach	City of Pacifica	Orange County City Manager Association
City of Hercules	City of Palm Desert	San Gabriel Valley City Managers' Association
City of Indian Wells	City of Palmdale	Claremont McKenna College
City of Industry	City of Paramount	
City of Irvine	City of Pismo Beach	
	City of Placentia	

## Local Government Affiliation & Support

Tripepi Smith is a longstanding partner to these institutions, the majority of which have entrusted us with supporting their communications.



**California City  
Management Foundation**



**California Association  
of Public Information Officials**



**League of California Cities**



**California Contract  
Cities Association**



**Independent Cities  
Association**



**Orange County City  
Manager Association**



**International City/County  
Management Association**



**Cal-ICMA**



**San Gabriel Valley  
City Managers' Association**



**Municipal Management Association  
of Northern California**



**Municipal Management Association  
of Southern California**



**Institute for  
Local Government**



**University of Southern California  
City/County Management Fellowship**



**California Special  
District Association**



**Texas Association of Municipal  
Information Officers**



**Texas City  
Management Association**



**Texas Municipal  
League**



**Texas Women's  
Leadership Institute**



**Urban Management Assistants  
of North Texas**



**Washington City/County  
Management Association**

## Axioms We Live By

### Introduction

In our work with over 200 local government agencies on external communications since our incorporation in 2002, we have identified many patterns, observations and insights. As a result we have developed some axioms (AKA sayings or mottos) when it comes to thinking about external-facing communications. These are just a few that we find universally true.

### Content X Distribution = Impact

The audience must see your content to be impacted by it.



Tripepi Smith was born in the digital era. We take digital seriously and recognize how critical it is to not only develop great visuals and messaging, but to ensure the audiences we want to reach actually see that content.

**“Content x Distribution = IMPACT”** is how we illustrate the point: What good is content if you aren’t properly promoting, distributing or sharing it? On the other hand, what good is distribution if the content fails to engage your audience positively? We use this principle to guide a comprehensive distribution strategy that ensures we reach our target audiences.



**If you don’t publish  
information first, someone  
else will—and they may not  
care about the facts.**

In this age of smartphones and voice-activated virtual assistants, we are used to being able to access news and information at our fingertips. When your community cannot easily find information — such as a controversial policy decision, a new housing development or a political scandal — they may resort to finding "the facts" on their own. This is especially true for crisis communications: the longer you wait to address the crisis, the more time you are giving to others to fill that void with their own research and/or opinions.

So, we strive to get your information out there first, even if it is a "holding message" such as "we are aware of the situation and will use our official channels to share more info soon." By publishing information on your agency's website or some other centralized location, you, your agency leadership and your supporters will be able to easily debunk misinformation with verifiable facts and talking points.

**Only a small percentage of the population understands local government the way we do.**



The 3% includes local government professionals like you and consultants like us—the select few who wake up daily thinking about the complexities facing public policy and municipal management. We have our own language in local government: terms, phrases and especially acronyms. Most of the population may have little exposure to or interest in local government. They just want their utilities to work, no potholes, low crime and other securities provided by their local governments that enable a high quality of life.

So, when we speak with the 97% through public outreach, we ensure our language is accessible and understandable. This mitigates any risk of alienating them; moreover, it enables an ability to build relationships and engender trust.

# TRIPEPI SMITH TEAM

## Organization Chart



# PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

## Prospect Needs

The City of Hercules is seeking a partner in reaching and engaging its community on infrastructure needs and updates as well as fiscal sustainability initiatives and recognizes the importance of the educating the public as well as collecting their input and involvement.

## Our Approach

Tripepi Smith has experience in all facets of the City of Hercules's requests. We will accomplish these goals through Project Management, Quality Assurance and Education and Outreach Methods listed below:

### Project Management

Tripepi Smith begins all engagements with a kickoff meeting with the client to: introduce personnel to one another, define Key Performance Indicators (metrics, goals and timelines); review project management processes; and ensure each stakeholder has a full understanding of their responsibilities.

Tripepi Smith primarily uses the following tools to manage projects:

- Google Workspace for email, creating real-time collaborative documents and instant messaging
- Zoom or Google Meet for conference calls
- Sprout Social for social media management: posting and monitoring comments/messages
- Meltwater for media intelligence and media relations
- Kantata for project/task management, internal project status updates and time entry

These tools enable project managers to quickly determine a project's budget status, review the schedule of tasks, send rapid notifications to the whole team if issues arise and, generally, sustain momentum on our efforts.



"Thanks to Tripepi Smith, we've made significant strides in our outreach. In four years, we've achieved several milestones with the team. Tripepi Smith fully immerses themselves in our situations to get a clear understanding of the developments and challenges that the Paramount community faces. They then provide input and recommendations, which I have found to be immensely valuable for our City's communication efforts. The team at Tripepi Smith have truly become a valued partner in our City's ongoing success."

**John Moreno**

City Manager, City of Paramount

### Quality Assurance

Tripepi Smith abides by a rigorous procedure of internal review before work product or invoices ever make it to clients for review. Principals, Directors and Senior Business Analysts are all in the upper echelon of the workflow, responsible for final quality assurance of work produced by their peers. Tripepi Smith sets clear deadlines with clients to ensure expectations are met. Every team member holds each

other accountable so that deliverables are produced in the most efficient manner possible. Real-time financials are accessible 24/7, providing the most accurate insight to adhere to a budget.

## Education & Outreach Methodology

Tripepi Smith's typical approach to education & outreach projects is to "measure twice, cut once": we work with key stakeholders (including legal counsel if the occasion calls for it) to produce approved written language upfront. Any external-facing content, whatever the medium, will only use that language. This allows us to streamline the design of various deliverables so the only new information for stakeholders to review is the look and feel, versus also having to re-evaluate the text content. The method gives us the most flexibility to speed up the education process as necessary, ensuring audiences have all the facts to effectively participate in community dialogue about local issues.

Our Creative Team of graphic artists, videographers and animators can transform this same written language into captivating visuals. When combined with digital placements — such as Boosting Posts on Facebook and Instagram — we can quantitatively prove reaching a significant portion of Hercules's stakeholders.

Throughout the engagement, we will monitor local/regional media outlets, Hercules's social media sites and community-run social media sites for opportunities to address misperceptions, correct misinformation or identify new questions/concerns. Should we find new questions/concerns that our current content does not address, we will collaborate on creating new content that does, then publish it for the public.

### Prop 218

Should the City decide to proceed with a Prop 218 effort, Tripepi Smith understands the complexities of navigating service fee increases in California. Our team brings a wealth of experience to Prop 218-compliant outreach for cities and special districts with our approach valuing transparency and trust.

- **Transparency:** Understanding the rationale behind potential rate adjustments is crucial. Factors like inflation, rising labor and material costs and the need to maintain aging infrastructure all contribute to increased expenses. Using strategic messaging and engaging visuals, we help clients clearly communicate these realities to residents.
- **Trust:** Trust is just as foundational. We help clients foment this by facilitating opportunities for residents to ask questions, voice concerns and participate in the decision-making process.

Our team's expertise in rate increases translates to actionable best practices for resident education and engagement. This includes guiding key messages that support understanding and collaboration, ultimately leading to a smoother and more successful education process.

# CLIENT WORK & REFERENCES

## Work Samples

Reference Contact Info	Ballot Results, Scope of Work, Work Samples
<p><b>City of Hawaiian Gardens</b></p> <p>Ernie Hernandez, City Manager for Commerce (formerly of City of Hawaiian Gardens)</p> <p>(323) 722-4805 EHernandez@ci.commerce.ca.us</p>	<p>Nov. 2020 Measure HG: sales tax initiative – 60.72% Yes</p> <p>2021 Prop 218 Education and outreach for increased trash rates</p> <p><b>Education &amp; Outreach:</b> Project management, strategic messaging, campaign logo development, bi-lingual informational mailers, social media posts, flyers and mailers, rate infographics</p>



Reference Contact Info	Ballot Results, Scope of Work Performed, Work Samples
<p>City of Grover Beach</p> <p>Matthew Bronson, City Manager</p> <p>(805) 473-4567</p> <p><a href="mailto:MBronson@GroverBeach.org">MBronson@GroverBeach.org</a></p>	<p>Nov. 2020 Measure F-20: 1% sales tax – 52.6% Yes</p> <p>Education &amp; Outreach: Project management, strategic messaging, news articles, website content development, social media management, technology support, digital ad placements, media monitoring, animated videos and informational mailers</p>



# COST PROPOSAL

## Time & Materials Engagement

Tripepi Smith recommends a Time & Materials payment structure for the engagement. The following scope covers a 9-month period with estimated costs.

Service/Deliverable	Scope
<b><u>Project Management</u></b>	Ongoing for 9 months
One-time Kickoff Call	Up to two (2) hours
Bi-Weekly Client Check-in Call	Up to 60-minutes per call; agenda'd meetings, with to-do item recap emails after
<b><u>Content Production</u></b>	
Draft talking points, FAQs, mailers, press releases, website, social media, video script, presentations	10 social media posts, 2 press releases up to 500 words, 2.5 minute long animated video script, talking points, FAQs
<b><u>Social Media Management &amp; Monitoring</u></b>	Ongoing for 9 months
Monitor local community-run social media groups/pages	Up to 1 hour per week
Respond to City social media site comments and messages	Unlimited
<b><u>Animated Video</u></b>	2.5 minute video with voiceover and captioning Includes 2 drafts
<b><u>Website Updates</u></b>	
Publish updated web content to City's website	Include FAQs, information on upcoming events/outreach opportunities & updated as needed
<b><u>Graphic Design</u></b>	<b>Excludes print &amp; mail distribution fees</b>
Mailer	Double-sided mailer and door hanger for residents
Door Hanger	
<b><u>Presentations</u></b>	As-needed
Develop power point presentations for use in the community	
<b><u>Community Meetings</u></b>	Two (2) virtual meetings via zoom Includes facilitation, recording and posting on website
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$61,650</b>

## As-Needed Services

Tripepi Smith will apply the following standard hourly rates and related fees for any authorized as-needed (Time & Materials) work. Such work must be clearly authorized in writing before proceeding.

2024-25 Hourly Rates	Standard	Reduced Retainer
Principal	\$370	\$295
Director	\$255	\$215
Art/Creative Director	\$255	\$215
Senior Business Analyst	\$195	\$165
Business Analyst	\$140	\$115
Junior Business Analyst	\$115	\$95
Senior Videographer/Animator	\$195	\$165
Senior Photographer	\$170	\$145
Videographer/Photographer	\$130	\$110
Junior Videographer/Photographer	\$110	\$95
Senior Graphic Designer	\$185	\$155
Graphic Designer	\$130	\$110
Junior Graphic Designer	\$110	\$95
Web Developer	\$195	\$175
Junior Web Developer	\$110	\$95
Drone Operator	\$195	\$170
Council Chamber A/V Operator	\$110	\$95

## Invoicing & Payment Terms

At Tripepi Smith, we bill on either a Retainer, Fixed Fee or Time & Materials basis, with each billing type following its own payment schedule. Regardless, terms are Net 30 days.

- Fixed Fee work is billed upon defined milestones.
- Time & Materials work is billed in 15-minute increments (i.e. 4.0, 1.25, 6.5 or 0.75 hours) at the end of the month in which work is done.
- Retainer work is billed on the 15th of each month.

## Other Cost Information

Tripepi Smith has related service fees that may come up during our engagement that we want to tell you about.

### Annual Increase

Tripepi Smith will increase the hourly rates and retainer fees for all resources by 5% or the national CPI index—whichever is higher—each year on the anniversary of the contract, starting on the first anniversary of any contract when the contract duration is longer than one year. Otherwise, new rates will be negotiated with each new contract.

### Retainer Discount

When a client's retainer exceeds \$7,150 per month, they gain access to our reduced retainer rates.

### Travel Costs

Travel costs must be pre-authorized and then will be reimbursed by the client for any requested travel to complete a requested scope of work. Travel costs may include airfare, lodging, car rentals and gas. Additionally, when client work requires that we be onsite, we will invoice for a resource's travel time at 50% of the resource's hourly rate.

### Equipment Costs

Tripepi Smith offers some services that require equipment, such as drone operations and video production. As such, in those cases, the following rates apply:

		Half Day (Under 4 Hours)	Full Day (4+ Hours)
	Video	\$400	\$600
	Drone	\$500 – Flat Fee	
	MEVO	\$400 – Flat Fee	

## Service Fees

Tripepi Smith prefers that clients pay service providers directly to avoid unnecessary administrative costs. You should also know, however, that we have no economic interest in service providers, unless otherwise specified in this proposal.

If a client asks Tripepi Smith to pay for a service provider bill, we will apply a 10% agency fee to the reimbursement expense. Typical service fees include, but are not limited to: print, mailing, digital advertising, media placements, voiceovers, translations and closed captions.

## Exclusive Access

Tripepi Smith has access to entities that may be relevant to our engagement. These partnerships allow Tripepi Smith to offer clients extra media reach or additional services at partner pricing.



**PublicCEO:** [www.PublicCEO.com](http://www.PublicCEO.com) – Digital news about public affairs, reaching over 17,500 California government executives through a daily podcast, job board, video podcast and more.



**Civic Business Journal:** [www.CivicBusinessJournal.com](http://www.CivicBusinessJournal.com) – Digital interest stories on the people, companies and solutions that make local government in California more effective.



**FlashVote:** [www.FlashVote.com](http://www.FlashVote.com) – Statistically valid surveying that helps leaders make decisions.

- Disclaimer: Tripepi Smith President Ryder Todd Smith is an investor in FlashVote.



**Tripepi Smith Talent Solutions:** [www.TSTalentSolutions.com](http://www.TSTalentSolutions.com) – A multifaceted recruitment consultancy service, combining local government access with communications to advance talent quests and build culture warriors.



**Meltwater:** [www.TripepiSmith.com/Media-Intelligence](http://www.TripepiSmith.com/Media-Intelligence) – An enterprise-class, comprehensive media monitoring solution that is best combined with Tripepi Smith's analytics team.