

**Strategic Communication, Community Outreach and Stakeholder
Engagement for the Route 28 Bypass Project**

Scope for Contract

BACKGROUND AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

Virginia's Route 28 is a primary state highway that traverses Loudoun, Fairfax, Prince William counties. The Prince William County (PWC) Board of County Supervisors (BOCS) recently voted to move ahead with a plan to build a bypass to relieve congestion on Route 28 from Manassas into Fairfax County. This vote did not come without tensions and controversy related to the impact on residents and business owners who will be displaced.

Success for the Route 28 Bypass plan requires an enterprise perspective and navigation of politics, personalities, and dynamic tensions that often hamper transportation efforts. As decisions around this effort become more tangible, they also become riskier as unexpected and powerful resistance inevitably distracts from progress. The Clearing will design productive communication strategies and facilitate intentional collaboration with stakeholders and community members so that the County is able to quickly execute its transportation plan while managing the tensions of social and political complexity.

The County seeks The Clearing's support in designing and implementing a comprehensive communication, outreach, and engagement process to gather input and consensus on the Route 28 Bypass plan. The Clearing consultants' experience navigating social complexity and political challenges will facilitate productive and intentional collaboration among the diverse stakeholder groups. Our depth of experience in stakeholder alignment and engagement, strategic communication, organization and team effectiveness, and meeting design and facilitation will allow us to effectively execute the duties and tasks outlined in this Scope of Work (SOW). Our past PWC experience gives us a unique lens so we can hit the ground running, leveraging our relationships, insights, and knowledge of past challenges and opportunities.

One element of The Clearing's distinctive approach is that we recognize that there are no cookie-cutter solutions, no off-the-shelf set of formulas for working with groups of human beings in a business context or any other. Using both past experience with PWC and dedicated work to build an understanding of the current community context, we will tailor an approach specific to the Route 28 Bypass effort today. The level and frequency of strategic communication, community outreach, and stakeholder engagement activities listed in this SOW will be determined based on the project status, the amount and type of input needed, and the political factors impacting approval.

SCOPE OF WORK

The Clearing proposes to partner with key members of the Route 28 Bypass project to design and facilitate a comprehensive communication, outreach, and engagement process to increase awareness and minimize resistance to the Route 28 Bypass plan. The Clearing's approach will first focus on gaining a deep understanding of the community and project stakeholders to develop project messaging and branding that will be referenced throughout the life of the project. The Clearing will implement the communication, outreach, and engagement strategy and address emergent challenges and opportunities. Below are the proposed tasks and concurrent lanes of work to will support effective community outreach and stakeholder engagement for the Route 28 Bypass project:

Task A: Understand the Community, Engagement & Content Needs

- Lane 1: Project Launch and Management
- Lane 2: Background and Ongoing Research
- Lane 3: Project Branding and Messaging
- Lane 4: Outreach Campaign and Engagement Plan
- Lane 5: Project Website and Content Plan

Task B: Engage Stakeholders and Key Community Members

- Lane 1: Stakeholder Assessment
- Lane 2: County Leaders and Decision Makers
- Lane 3: Community Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement

The Clearing anticipates the level of intensity for communication, outreach, and engagement to vary based on the technical project phases - Planning, Preliminary Design and Environmental Review, Final Design and Right-of-Way Acquisition, Construction, and Operation.



*Darker shades indicate higher level of effort

There will be some level of communication and engagement in effect throughout the life of the project; however, The Clearing will have lighter touches during highly technical project phases. For instance, The Clearing's level of effort (LOE) will be more intense during Planning as we identify, engage, and enroll key stakeholders and define project messaging and approach. As PWC selects the engineering firm (estimated Spring 2021) and the project moves into the preliminary design and environmental review, The Clearing's LOE will decrease. Then, it will increase again as PWC prepares for Right-of-Way Acquisition.

TASK A: UNDERSTAND THE COMMUNITY, ENGAGEMENT, AND CONTENT NEEDS

Lane 1: Project Launch and Management

- Conduct a kick-off meeting to:
 - Review the project scope and schedule
 - Establish goals and objectives and establish overall guiding principles
 - Discuss the political environment and key concerns/issues/risks involved
 - Identify influential stakeholders and relevant stakeholder groups/civic organizations
- Participate in project team meetings
- Develop and distribute weekly/monthly reports to ensure project team is tracking measures of success, as needed
- Conduct ongoing analysis of project effectiveness, as needed. Possible assessment mechanisms may include:
 - Design and deploy surveys and micro-pulses to gather community/stakeholder sentiments and feedback about the communication, outreach, and engagement efforts
 - Solicit feedback and recommendations from project team and key stakeholders
- Analyze data to determine effectiveness of reaching critical stakeholder groups, and make data-driven decisions for future endeavors
- **Outcome:** Clarity around the effectiveness of project activities and flexibility to adjust course as needed

Lane 2: Background and Ongoing Research

- Research media stories about the 28 Bypass study and 28 widening from 2017 - 2020
 - Document common themes and patterns in the media's portrayal of the project and how it has evolved from the beginning of the feasibility study until today
 - Possible news outlets: NBC 4, Univision, News 7, InsideNOVA, Telemundo
- Review relevant background documents, plans, studies, website, and data
 - Document the Board perspective (i.e., current state, interests, and positions)
 - Review public feedback from previous engagement sessions
 - Document the public/citizen perspective (i.e., current state, interests, and positions)
 - Summarize critical issues and points of interest and validate with key team members
- Continue to research and monitor media stories, press releases, community feedback, and other project updates throughout the period of performance

- **Outcome:** Understand the project activities, key messages, and how the media has characterized the project

Lane 3: Project Branding and Messaging

- Leverage data gathered during stakeholder and community engagement activities (Task B) to develop a clear and consistent Route 28 Bypass project brand, which may include mission, vision, values/guiding principles, tagline, logo, and overall aesthetics.
 - Validate brand with project team and key stakeholders
- Develop an initial set of community member personas based on stakeholder assessment (Task B) and background research, including what issues they're interested in, problems they want to solve, benefits that would resonate, etc.
 - Document customer journeys, experiences, pain points, and opportunities
- Develop consistent project messaging/narrative/story that will be used in all communication materials throughout project implementation. Communications and messaging will address:
 - Project vision and intent
 - Drivers and benefits (e.g., environmental, financial, community, traffic)
 - Key project milestones (including major decision points)
 - Environmental concerns and how the County will handle them
 - Common challenges faced by key stakeholders and how the Route 28 Bypass could help them with those challenges
 - Community outreach and engagement approach (e.g., tackling a topic a day for multiple days)
 - Connection to the Comprehensive Plan Amendment to widen Route 28
 - Where/how to get more information
- Collaborate with technical consultant to translate project engineering processes and information into easy to understand communications for different audiences
- Translate all communication and messaging for Spanish-speaking community members
- **Outcome:** A common, consistent project brand and key messaging

Lane 4: Outreach Campaign and Engagement Plan

- Develop a comprehensive strategic communication, community outreach, and stakeholder engagement plan that includes recommendations on target audiences, what information they need, and how they need to get the information
- Map recommended communication, outreach, and engagement activities to the overall Route 28 Bypass project plan; sequence all outreach mechanisms/materials to key moments/milestones in

overall project plan (e.g., coordinate outreach schedule to occur in advance of official public hearings)

- Gain approval on strategic communication, outreach, and engagement approach
- **Outcome:** Comprehensive approach strategic communication, community outreach, and stakeholder engagement

Lane 5: Project Website and Content Plan

- Evaluate current project website and determine what changes are needed to effectively share the project's message with key audiences (Route28study.com)
- Conduct initial planning and prioritize target audiences (reference stakeholder assessment)
- Draft the site Information Architecture (IA) to define the overarching structure and relationships between all areas of a site
- Develop wireframes that will address the need for various content types and showcase them visually
- Develop a homepage design concept/mockup based on the selected wireframe concept
- Develop website content (available in English and Spanish) that includes communication messages tailored for target audiences (e.g., Board members, community members, key stakeholder groups). Possible content may include:
 - General project information
 - Technical project details
 - Community connection - how to engage in the process
 - Right of way process
 - Frequently asked questions
 - Links to Route 28 Bypass social media channels
 - Relevant news stories related to the project (Newsroom Feature)
- Develop and configure the website and migrate content
- Test website functionality and conduct user testing for usability
- Deploy "soft launch" of Website & provide quality assurance testing
- Maintain iterative website updates and ongoing refinement of content and features based on website metrics. Possible content upgrades may include:
 - Interactive map to determine which homes will be impacted
 - Testimonials
 - Relevant news stories related to the project (Newsroom Feature)

- **Outcome:** Refreshed Project Website that informs community stakeholders and answers common questions

Task A Deliverables:

- Documentation of high-level themes, patterns, and evolution of the media story
- Summary of key community member personas and customer journeys
- Route 28 Bypass branding products (i.e., campaign, aesthetics, tagline, logo)
- Ongoing, dynamic project messaging that will be used throughout implementation
- Route28study.com Website design and content tailored to targeted audiences
- Strategic communications, community outreach and stakeholder engagement approach/plan

TASK B: ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS AND KEY COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Lane 1: Stakeholder Assessment

- Conduct stakeholder and social networking mapping to assess the level of influence and support that key individuals and groups of individuals have for the Route 28 Bypass project, such as:
 - Citizens - Residents impacted directly and indirectly
 - Community/Neighborhood Groups
 - Board of County Supervisors
 - Project Team Members
 - PWC Department of Transportation
 - PWC Government Agencies
 - Federal/State/Local Transportation Agencies
 - Neighboring Cities/Counties
 - Civic Groups/Environmental Groups
 - Chambers of Commerce, Businesses and Professional groups
 - Transportation Providers (Public and Private)
 - Social Service and Population-focused Providers
 - And select other stakeholders as identified by the project team
- Interview select project team members and stakeholders to gain insight into lessons learned, the biggest objections to the Route 28 Bypass, and opportunities that the Bypass provides
- Conduct listening sessions (i.e., interviews) with each Board member to understand their desired outcomes

- Conduct community focus groups (i.e., Discovery Sessions) to gain an understanding of communication and outreach preferences, including:
 - What does the community care most about? What are their aspirations, fears, and goals?
 - How do they communicate with the County?
 - Have the previous communications been helpful?
 - Where do they live? work?
 - What type of technology do they use?
 - Where/how do they get their information/news?
- **Outcome:** Understand who the community is, what they care about, and how they prefer to communicate with the County

Lane 2: County Leaders and Decision Makers

- Design and facilitate alignment with project decision-makers and the Board of County Supervisors (BOCS)
- Prepare project team for BOCS interactions, public forums, and meetings
- Advise project team on operating effectively and appropriately transparent to:
 - Reach decision points with little to no issues
 - Make sure people feel heard
 - Help people understand the process and rationale for decisions (even if they don't agree)
 - Clarify facts
- **Outcome:** Establishment and maintenance of a sustainable governance structure and efficient decision-making process.

Lane 3: Community Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement

- Create touchpoints with leaders and board members to understand the current state of messaging and information sharing, and plan for future communication structure
- Develop and distribute communication materials for target audiences, which may include:
 - Videos
 - Infographics
 - FAQs
 - Flyers/Postcards/Letters/Emails
 - Education resources and reference materials

- Develop recommendations on approach to social media strategy to distribute content and drive constituents to the project website
- Establish and manage meeting cadence and approach for effectively informing and engaging various stakeholders. Possible stakeholder engagement activities may include:
 - Inter/intra departmental meetings within PWC government
 - Planning meetings with state and federal transportation agencies
 - Alignment sessions with neighboring jurisdictions
 - Input and education sessions with environmental/civic groups
 - Community meetings, workshops, focus groups, and input and education sessions
- Participate in planned community events and stakeholder information sessions, as appropriate
- Prepare project team for BOCS interactions, public forums, and meetings
- Create touchpoints with leaders and board members to circulate plans and manage feedback
- Establish and maintain relationships with relevant media channels
- **Outcomes:** Clear and consistent bilingual communication messaging and cultural frames that reaches targeted audiences in a variety of ways; enhanced relationships and support from key stakeholder; community members and stakeholders feel informed and heard throughout the Route 28 Bypass design/engineering process

Task B Deliverables:

- Map of critical stakeholders and relevant stakeholder groups/civic organizations
- Communication and outreach materials
- Community outreach and stakeholder engagement events
- Content strategy for Route 28 Bypass social media campaign

PRICE

The Clearing recognizes this project is a long-term effort with broad reaching impact for PWC government and citizenry. We have outlined the level of effort based on requirements of projects of similar scope and complexity.

We will deliver the tasks as listed in the scope above in a phased approach as a Time and Materials contract during a period of performance of 30-months from October 01, 2020 through a target completion of March 31, 2023, with an optional to extend for nine months through December 31, 2023. The proposed phases may be adjusted to align with the project schedule created by the selected engineering firm.

The Clearing recognizes four distinct phases based on the overall Project schedule.

- Phase I October 2020 - March 2021 (6 months)
- Phase II April 2021 - March 2022 (12 months)
- Phase III April 2022 - March 2023 (12 months)
- Phase IV April 2023 - December 2023 (9 months) - [Optional]

The cost represents a dedicated level of effort throughout the period of performance with access to a variety of skills necessary to address stakeholder and community needs. The Clearing anticipates a greater level of intensity during Phase I, October 2020 - March 2021.

Our staff mix includes consultants with deep expertise and experience in research and analysis, project management, strategic communications, stakeholder engagement, community outreach, meeting design and facilitation, transformation/change management, content and knowledge management, and leadership alignment. Our partners have extensive experience in web design and development.

	PHASE I			PHASE II		PHASE III		TOTALS
	Rate	Hours	Cost	Hours	Cost	Hours	Cost	
Task A - Understand the Community, Engagement & Content Needs								
Staff Consultant	118.75	0	\$0	480	\$57,000	0	\$0	\$57,000
Sr. Staff Consultant	137.50	216	\$29,700	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$29,700
Sr. Consultant	206.25	480	\$99,000	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$99,000
Principal Consultant	243.75	472	\$115,050	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$115,050
Sr. Principal Consultant	275.00	240	\$66,000	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$66,000
Executive Director	300.00	96	\$28,800	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$28,800
Sr. Executive Director	340.00	0	\$0	144	\$48,960	0	\$0	\$48,960
SubTotal			\$338,550		\$105,960		\$0	\$444,510
Task B - Engage Stakeholders and Key Community Members								
Staff Consultant	118.75	920	\$109,250	480	\$57,000	360	\$42,750	\$209,000
Sr. Staff Consultant	137.50	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0
Sr. Consultant	206.25	600	\$123,750	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$123,750
Principal Consultant	243.75	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0
Sr. Principal Consultant	275.00	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0
Executive Director	300.00	0	\$0	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0
Sr. Executive Director	340.00	792	\$269,280	400	\$136,000	200	\$68,000	\$473,280
SubTotal			\$502,280		\$193,000		\$110,750	\$806,030
TOTALS			\$840,830		\$298,960		\$110,750	\$1,250,540
Other Direct Charges (ODCs)			\$60,000		\$0		\$0	\$60,000
CUMULATIVE TOTALS			\$900,830		\$1,199,790		\$1,310,540	\$1,310,540

Pricing Assumptions:

Successful completion of the tasks outlined in this document assume the following:

- Dates associated with the project tasks will be determined by The Clearing in consultation with the PWC Project Team. Regular update meetings with the Project Team shall be included with the establishment of the project schedule.

- The Clearing treats all work as confidential. The products and all related materials shall be the sole property of Prince William County, exclusive of pre-existing intellectual property of The Clearing, to which the County will be provided a non-exclusive, perpetual right to use in service of the Route 28 Bypass Plan.
- Appropriate staff and stakeholders will be accessible to The Clearing Team. Appropriate senior leadership will own the outcomes and remain engaged to remove roadblocks and ensure on-time completion.
 - The County assigns a point of contact to provide project direction and coordinate action/activity on project team's behalf
 - The County assigns a point of contact for outreach/social media updates/communications activities (i.e., to distribute/disseminate project materials and messages)
- Work will be performed virtually with select on-site visits in Prince William County. Meetings will be conducted through a combination of in-person and remote means utilizing a variety of collaboration technologies.
 - The Clearing can host participants using our web-conferencing tools (Zoom, Google Meet) or the County's preferred tool.
 - If in-person participation is requested, the County will be responsible for providing a physically safe location adhering to the CDC's COVID-related social distancing guidance and Virginia's relevant Public Health Emergency Order(s) and guidelines.
- County staff will support the scheduling, logistics, and planning processes for stakeholder engagement activities (e.g., interviews, focus group sessions, surveys, community sessions), and will conduct the initial outreach to connect The Clearing to key stakeholders; the facilitated session(s) will be scheduled at a location designated and secured by the County.
- The Clearing Team will deliver work products on time at the end of each project task or as the project demands. The County will adhere to approval timelines and provide edits within agreed upon time schedules.
- The Clearing will provide the County with electronic copies of all final products, with hard copy reports delivered to the County as requested. The costs of reproduction/ distribution of additional products are not included in the price for this proposal.
- The Clearing bills separately for other direct costs (ODCs) such as work permits, materials and extraordinary printing costs, and costs incurred for travel outside of the D.C. metropolitan area. We will seek advance, written approval from the County before incurring such ODCs.
 - The ODCs included in the price estimate are to cover website design and development.

ABOUT THE CLEARING, INC.

The Clearing, Inc. is a Washington, DC-based consulting firm specializing in strategic communication, stakeholder engagement and outreach, strategy development, leadership development, culture transformation, process improvement, and meeting facilitation services. We help private and public-sector organizations anticipate, respond to, and adapt to dynamic changes in the marketplace.

Our company was built and continues to grow on the foundation of our expertise in engaging, enrolling, and aligning individuals into coalitions who must come together to cause meaningful, impactful outcomes. We combine our own innovative thinking with our clients' existing organizational knowledge and expertise to develop comprehensive solutions that blend strategy and design with implementation.