



Request for Proposal

Marketing, Advertising & Destination Strategy

June, 2026

Submission Timeline

RFP Release Date:	June 8, 2026
Questions Due:	June 22, 2026
Responses to Questions:	June 25, 2026
Proposals Due:	June 29 2026
Finalists Notified:	August 5, 2026
Finalist Presentations:	TBD
Agency Selection:	TBD
Contract Start Date:	ASAP
Submission Format:	PDF via email
Submit To:	Frank Johnson, Executive Director
Email:	Director@VisitGilroy.com

Overview

Visit Gilroy, the official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Gilroy, California, invites qualified agencies to submit proposals to serve as its Marketing, Advertising, and Destination Strategy Agency of Record.

We are seeking a partner with a point of view — one who brings independent thinking, creative leadership, and a deep understanding of destination marketing dynamics. The right firm will help us sharpen our positioning and drive measurable increases in overnight visitation.

Respondents are encouraged to go beyond what is outlined here. Propose alternatives, identify gaps, and challenge our assumptions where your expertise warrants it. We value vision over conformity to a brief.

It is not a requirement that all services be delivered in-house. Agencies with strong, established partnerships in areas such as PR, media buying, or strategy are welcome — and may be preferred over firms stretching their own staff to cover every function.

About Visit Gilroy

Visit Gilroy is a non-profit DMO funded through a Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID), with supplemental city funding supporting operations of the California Welcome Center Gilroy — one of approximately 20 such centers statewide, located within Gilroy Premium Outlets since 2011.

Total annual budget: approximately \$740,000, with \$200,000–\$300,000 allocated to marketing and media buying.

Mission: Visit Gilroy enhances the image and economic well-being of Gilroy by leading the promotion, marketing, and facilitation of the region as a viable day-trip and overnight destination — generating revenue, jobs, and tax base through regional partnership.

The Destination

Gilroy sits at the geographic crossroads of the Bay Area, Central Coast, and Central Valley — within easy reach of some of Northern California's most compelling destinations:

- Monterey & Santa Cruz — 45 miles
- San Jose — 30 miles
- San Francisco — 71 miles
- Pinnacles National Park — 45 miles

With mild year-round weather, affordable lodging (14 properties, 840 rooms), and a charming Historic Downtown, Gilroy is positioned as an ideal home base for regional exploration.

Key Assets

- Wine Country: 16 wineries in Gilroy's zip code, part of the historic Santa Clara Valley wine region
 - Gilroy Gardens: 40+ rides and attractions across majestic gardens; 450,000+ annual visitors
 - Gilroy Premium Outlets: 145+ stores, including the California Welcome Center
 - Downtown: independent dining, arts, murals, antiques, and a thriving local events calendar
 - Outdoor Recreation: trails, redwoods, rolling oak hills, and regional parks
 - Ale Trail, Taco Trail, Mural Trail, and Wine Trail
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Strategic Priorities

The agency partner will be expected to support the following core positioning objectives:

1. Gilroy as Regional Home Base

Establish Gilroy as the smart, affordable overnight base for travelers exploring Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Jose, Pinnacles, and the Santa Clara Valley wine region. We are at the crossroads of the Bay Area, Central Coast and Central Valley

2. Meetings & Weddings

Grow awareness and bookings for Gilroy's small-market meeting spaces and destination wedding venues — an underutilized revenue segment with strong existing infrastructure.

3. Authentic Experiences

Shift the narrative beyond retail and theme park traffic toward Gilroy's authentic assets: outdoor recreation, Gilroy Gardens, award-winning wineries, historic downtown, Ale and Taco trails, arts and culture, festivals, and agriculture

4. Brand Clarity & Digital Presence

Sharpen Visit Gilroy's brand voice and improve digital performance to better compete in a crowded Bay Area and Central Coast destination landscape. We are more than garlic, more than a budget destination. Stop driving through Gilroy and stay!

Scope of Work

The selected agency, in coordination with Visit Gilroy's in-house team, will lead the following:

Core Responsibilities

- Overall brand strategy and destination positioning
- Integrated campaign development (leisure, meetings, weddings, and groups)
- Media planning, buying, optimization, and performance reporting
- Digital and programmatic advertising
- Analytics, reporting, and data-driven insights
- Email/newsletter marketing and database management
- Content creation from Visit Gilroy's existing asset library (reels, posts, graphics)
- Identification of earned media, Visit California co-op, and placement opportunities
- Graphic design for collateral and print ads support as needed
- Light website support as needed
- Collaboration with social, creative, and PR partners
- Invoices must be generated early in the month, generally by the 7-9th day

- Creating 4 video reels and 4-5 social media posts a month using our branding (we have a substantial library of assets)
 - Reasonable and ongoing updating of our event calendar
 - Arrange photo and video shoots if necessary
 - Additional support for City Council reports
 - Work with and recommend influencers
 - Some copywriting, proofing and optimizing blogs for SEO
 - Lead Be aware and recommend opportunities from Visit California
 - Identify placement opportunities beyond social media boosts and google placement
 - Be aware of regional events and trends we may leverage.
 - Recommended and possibly organize fam trips
 - Follow copyright and intellectual property protocols with suggestions on SEM, SEO and AI optimization
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Expectations & Desired Qualifications

The selected agency is expected to:

- Provide a dedicated account lead with strong communication skills and DMO fluency
- Bring genuine tourism expertise — ideally including experience with small-market DMOs
- Ground all recommendations in data, traveler insights, and regional market knowledge
- Collaborate closely with Visit Gilroy staff and coordinate effectively with external partners
- Deliver clear, timely reporting and fully transparent monthly billing
- Negotiate aggressively on Visit Gilroy's behalf with media vendors and partners
- Monitor regional events, travel trends, and Visit California opportunities proactively
- Maintain flexibility as organizational priorities evolve

Minimum five years of demonstrated experience in areas relevant to Visit Gilroy's mission and strategic priorities. Strong familiarity with Northern California, Central Coast and Central Valley markets preferred.

Budget

Visit Gilroy's annual marketing and media buying budget is \$200,000–\$300,000, depending on organizational priorities and TBID revenue. This budget is intended to cover agency fees, account management, media planning and buying, digital advertising, creative development, analytics, and email marketing support.

Budget levels are reviewed annually based on TBID revenue and organizational performance. Visit Gilroy reserves the right to adjust allocations in advance and in collaboration with the selected agency.

Website

We use Simpleview and, for the most part maintain the site inhouse. In addition to updating the event calendar, we will need occasional assistance uploading blogs and adding, updating new pages.

Proposal Requirements

Submissions must include:

- Executive summary
- Firm profile and ownership structure
- Tourism and DMO experience (minimum 5 years)
- Case studies with measurable outcomes
- Strategic and creative approach for Visit Gilroy
- Media philosophy
- Website support capabilities
- Team structure and named account lead
- Pricing model (retainer, media, and any variable fees)
- Client references (minimum three)
- Conflict of interest disclosure

Submissions should also include company portfolio samples or links to relevant work.

Additional Information

Judging Criteria

DMO experience, pricing, team/account lead, creative and strategic approach, Social media and reel production acumen, ability to understand Gilroy.

Some existing resources

Visit Gilroy has a large image and video library; formats include professional crews and equipment with the majority being video and photos competently shot with an iPhone.

We are very happy with our 00:30 and 00:15 videos:

[Branding 00:30](#)

[Branding 00:30](#)

[Branding 00:15](#)

[Branding 00:15](#)

[Branding 00:15](#)

[Branding 00:15](#)

As we have a welcome center, we have a large amount of [collateral](#) ([Visitors Guide](#), Taco Trail, Wine Trail) etc that need to be periodically updated.

Visit Gilroy reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, modify the RFP timeline, request additional information, and negotiate terms and fees with the selected agency. Shortlisted agencies will be invited to present to the Visit Gilroy team prior to final selection.

Questions and proposals should be submitted via email to Frank Johnson, Executive Director, at Director@VisitGilroy.com. Visit Gilroy — California Welcome Center, 8155-6 Arroyo Circle, Gilroy, CA 95020 | 408.842.6436