

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Developing a Comprehensive Place Brand for Fort Collins, Colorado

May 6, 2022

Due Date & Time: June 10, 2022; 4: 00 PM MST

Purchasing Contact: Katy Schneider - katy@ftcollins.com

1.1 Project Overview

A consortium of organizations and municipal departments in the Fort Collins community has established a place-branding task force to develop a shared brand for the area.

The task force consists of individuals representing the following organizations and institutions:

- City of Fort Collins
- Colorado State University
- Downtown Development Authority
- Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce
- Fort Collins Tourism Improvement District
- Larimer County
- Philanthropic not-for-profit
- Private Industry
- Visit Fort Collins

The group is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify a firm or agency with place-branding expertise to assist in creating a community brand for the area.

Visit Fort Collins, the City's destination marketing organization, is guiding the process on behalf of the task force and will issue the RFP, coordinate submitted responses, contract with the selected agency, and manage the brand development work that follows.

KEY DATES:

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| 1. | RFP ISSUED: | May 9, 2022 |
| 2. | INTENT TO RESPOND DUE: | May 18, 2022 |
| 3. | QUESTIONS DUE: | May 18, 2022 |
| 4. | RESPONSES DUE: | June 10, 2022 |
| 5. | FINALISTS INTERVIEW/PRESENTATION (if needed): | Week of June 27 th |
| 6. | BEGIN CONTRACT: | Week of July 18 th |

1.2 Background

In 2019, The City of Fort Collins and Visit Fort Collins partnered to develop a Destination Master Plan which identified opportunities to drive greater levels of visitation and increase visitor spending. The Plan sought to leverage the activity and draw of Colorado State University, the city's dynamic corporate base, its proximity to Rocky Mountains National Park, the Cache la Poudre Canyon, Horsetooth Reservoir, its role as a craft beverage leader, and the signature events and burgeoning music, arts, creative, and entertainment scene that make the area special and unique.

The Plan examined how Fort Collins residents and businesses possess a naturally authentic disposition for sharing their love of the community. This trait was apparent during the creation of the Destination Master Plan and remained visible throughout the pandemic.

Encouraging residents to exude the character and culture of the destination in the minds of potential visitors is an effective motivator when considering a visit. It was determined that the deep love of place among the city's residents and businesses serves as differentiator to set Fort Collins apart from other communities.

This dynamic love of place has the associated benefit of ensuring that local hospitality and service businesses are supportive of one another as recovery from the pandemic continues to take place. The passion for place translates into Fort Collins being a very involved and engaged community. Fort Collins is routinely listed in numerous best places lists. The City of Fort Collins is a past recipient of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

To further leverage the passion of residents and businesses around the strong quality of place the city exudes, the community seeks a comprehensive brand that will:

- Translate the city's brand promise into an evocative look and feel by engaging a firm or agency to confirm and interpret Fort Collins' brand promise.
- Assemble brand icons or individual local ambassadors who are engaged in various aspects of the community to personify the Fort Collins' "sharing the love" passion.
- Integrate the developed brand promise into all messaging, marketing, management & economic health.
- Encourage businesses and community partners to adopt the brand promise and assimilate it into their marketing and communications where appropriate.

1.3 Project Goals

The goals of this project include:

- **Uniformity** – The brand should convey a common message and image to audiences both within and outside of Fort Collins.
- **Community Identity/Pride** – The brand should build off the findings of the Destination Master Plan to identify and promote what makes Fort Collins distinct and appealing in a competitive environment for a diverse and inclusive blend of investors, businesses, retailers, visitors, students, talent, faculty, and residents.
- **Community and Economic Development Promotion** – The brand must promote a healthy economy, entice private investment, attract/retain new residents and young professionals, and support key businesses by creating a defined message that markets Fort Collins locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally as a recognized leader in innovation and as a community that organically combines being a great place to live, work, play, learn, and do business.
- **Endorsement** – The brand must be authentic and resonate with citizens, businesses, employees, and community groups within Fort Collins. It must be relevant to and honor the neighborhoods and diversity of the area as a component of moving forward. It must be able to win the endorsement of the community at large.
- **Flexibility** – The brand must be flexible to meet the needs of a variety of organizations, businesses, and municipal functions within Fort Collins as well as groups and businesses within the overall brand. It must also be adaptable enough to grow and evolve with any changes in the market.
- **Diversity** – The brand must represent the diverse group of citizens, neighborhood, and community groups across Fort Collins. It should easily and holistically identify how the overall brand will help tell the story of the entire area to different audiences.

1.4 Scope of Work

The purpose of this initiative is to develop a brand to market Fort Collins to recruit and retain investors, businesses, retailers, visitors, students, talent, faculty, and residents across a diverse and inclusive variety of market segments.

The chosen firm/agency shall provide Fort Collins with an in-depth market analysis to determine how to tell the area's story to both residents and visitors.

The firm must create a brand/story that can be utilized easily and effectively across multiple platforms and mediums, including signage, print collateral, digital marketing materials and websites.

The firm is expected to facilitate the research process to determine or confirm the image of Fort Collins or at minimum test the brand promise concepts through a detailed community engagement process. The consultant must employ creative means of public involvement to ensure that all segments of the community are aware of and involved in final delivery of the brand.

Research – Fort Collins expects that research will be the basis for developing the brand concept, defining the elements of the community's brand promise, creative elements, and the overall brand initiative. The firm will create and implement a brand research plan, which may include qualitative and quantitative research to identify the following:

- a. Key stakeholders, both groups and influential individuals, including a cross-section of community members and business owners in Fort Collins and those outside of the area that have a vested interest in the branding initiative and need to be involved in the process
- b. Defining characteristics of Fort Collins' image
- c. Analysis of competitor communities' marketing or branding strategies
- d. Measures to determine if the branding effort is successful

Development of Brand – The firm will develop creative elements that tie to the identified brand promise. These creative elements will be finalized following agreement on the brand promise direction and potentially include design concepts, logos, messages, tagline, flag, fonts, and other elements to support the overall brand initiative. Regardless of the derived elements, this process is first and foremost focused on a truly definitive and evocatively moving brand promise.

The firm will be expected to provide up to two rounds of revisions to any concepts developed to ensure community support. The selected creative elements must be placed into a final style manual that is adaptable to use in the following areas:

- Print and electronic advertising
- Media placement
- Public relations
- Events
- Templates
- Websites

It is desired that the style manual provide guidelines that are rigid enough to ensure consistency yet flexible enough to ensure widespread adoption.

Brand Activation – The firm will develop strategic objectives that will include implementation, management, and ongoing promotion of the community brand to include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Launch of the community brand
2. Promotion of the brand among Fort Collins community agencies, groups, and businesses while maintaining brand integrity
3. Maintaining the consistency of brand image and messaging while providing suitable flexibility for the target audiences of the participating agencies
4. Recommendations of ways to articulate the brand, define markets and promotional avenues and strategies to better promote and create brand awareness
5. Recommendations of ways to customize community brand into sub-brands for the area
6. Utilization of the brand across multiple target audiences within a number of formats including advertising, media relations, out-of-home, digital outreach, and others

The overall project timeline is estimated to be between 8-12 months from vendor selection.

1.5 Submission Requirements

1. Respondents must adhere to the following guidelines to be considered:
2. Notify Katy Schneider of the intent to submit a proposal by May 18, 2022, so that the firm/agency will be placed on a proposer's list for any addenda and/or possible changes to this submittal process.
3. Proposals must be submitted in electronic format to the attention of Katy Schneider at Katy@ftcollins.com by the submittal due date of June 10, 2022, by no later than 4:00 pm MST.
4. Proposals must include fees and an estimated timeline.
5. The Response shall be in written format. Failure to include all of the elements specified below may be cause for rejection. Additional information may be provided but shall be succinct and relevant to this RFP.
6. Submittals shall be limited to 30 pages, 15 double-sided pages 8-1/2 inches by 11 inches in size or folded to such a size (11-inch x 17-inch pages are acceptable for graphical representations and will be counted as a single page).
7. The page limit applies to Sections 1 through 4. The cover letter and documentation required as attachments shall not be considered in the page count.
8. The Response shall be provided in one (1) Adobe PDF format submitted electronically to Katy@ftcollins.com.
9. Failure to acknowledge all addenda on the form provided may cause the Response to be considered non-responsive.
10. If the Respondent is a joint venture firm or partnership, the Respondent must provide all identification information for all parties and all requirements for all parties (i.e., licenses, insurance, etc.) as requested. As part of the proposal submission, the Respondent must identify the responsibilities of each joint venture or partnership party with respect to the scope of services/work inclusive of the requirements for each entity based on such services as described in this RFP document. All joint venture/partnership parties will be held responsible for the contract obligations.
11. Questions regarding this RFP can be directed to Katy Schneider at Katy@ftcollins.com by May 18, 2022. All responses to the questions received will be sent to the full intended proposers list by May 24, 2022.

1.7 Proposal Components & Evaluation Metrics

The submitted proposals must include the following sections and details:

(The sections that will be scored by the Brand Development Task Force are noted with the percentage of value towards the overall score)

- **Cover Letter**

The cover letter should include the name and contact information of the individual who will serve as project manager, as well as a summary of the firm's qualifications.

- **Firm Overview and Background**

This section should include a brief overview of the firm's origin, background and size, an organizational chart, the overall capabilities of the organization, appropriate credentials, licenses, certifications, and proximity of company's resources to Fort Collins.

The following information must be included in this section :

- Name of proposer
- Proposer address
- Proposer telephone number
- Proposer federal tax identification number
- Name, title address, telephone number, fax number and email address of contact person authorized to contractually obligate the proposer
- Name of the person assigned and accountable for the delivery of this brand

- **Proven brand building expertise, implementation, and results**

Proposals should include a description of the company's expertise related to the services described and examples of the last three completed, similar projects demonstrating the firm's current brand development and implementation experience working with municipalities and other public agencies similar in size, scope, and purpose. Special emphasis should be given to those examples that developed a meaningful brand promise that worked to bring disparate community partnerships together under a unified emotionally compelling appeal.

Scoring weight – 35%

- **Approach to research, develop and test the brand promise**

Explain the proposed methodology that will be used and demonstrate a clear understanding of the project's objectives. The Fort Collins team wants to understand the firm's creative process and approach to branding, how the project would be managed, and how the firm would produce the most impactful results. A detailed description of both the research process planned to develop the brand and the testing process to confirm the brand direction is required as part of this section.

Scoring weight – 25%

- **Project Team**

Profile the individual team members that will be assigned to research and develop the brand. Present how each member is relevant to the Fort Collins brand

opportunity and their individual understanding and commitment to this brand development engagement. Establish and communicate their experience and qualification for developing this type of brand promise.

Scoring weight – 20%

- **Fort Collins Integration**

Fort Collins is a uniquely appealing community that is committed to understanding and building its brand promise. This brand development process must deeply connect to the essence of the community pride that defines this community. The agency must be able to convey a knowledge of Fort Collins, an adherence to being focused on brand promise, and a system for successfully involving the community in the adoption and use of the developed promise.

Scoring weight – 20%

- **Project Schedule**

Outline the anticipated schedule of the project, ideally broken down by each major step of the process. Suggestions for how to keep the project on track and efficient are welcome.

- **Projected Costs**

The proposal should contain all pricing information relative to performing project expectations as described in this RFP, including but not limited to the number of meetings with stakeholders, travel expenses and document production costs. If the price excludes certain fees or charges, please provide a complete explanation of the nature of those fees. The taskforce has agreed to invest up to \$125,000 for the development of this brand.