



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
White River Vision Plan Branding
July 2020

I. INTRODUCTION

More than 13,000 public voices shaped the three overarching themes that serve as the foundation of the 58-mile, Hamilton and Marion county White River Vision Plan (WRVP): environment, economy and equity.

To inspire advocacy for the river's environments and ecology, increase investments where appropriate, and activate for equity and access, the plan hopes to raise awareness of what is essentially a 14,000-acre "national park" with 116 miles of shoreline divided into six focus area, featuring some of America's most prestigious cultural institutions, and home to more than a dozen parks.

A White River branding initiative will raise awareness and guide residents and visitors on how they can enjoy the river and its many adjacent amenities. Hopefully it will inspire them to become advocates for protecting this critical natural resource by serving as brand ambassadors out in the community and the state.

The branding implementation is made possible by a generous two-year grant from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust which has made the river's health a key funding priority. The creation of a central portal for information about the White River will serve as an important activation point of the White River Vision Plan. It will tie together the hard work of central Indiana's many organizations that are land stakeholders, residents, advocates, scientists, partners and communities that will collectively implement the plan and it will expand on the work already being done by the river's Pulliam Partners group which includes the White River Alliance, Reconnecting to Our Waterways and Friends of the White River, and others.

Through a shared identity, the overall brand will promote the river as a destination and serve as a portal for engagement with all of the partners. Much focus will be placed on the brand position and communications strategies that raise awareness and understanding about the river's importance to a multi-cultural and generational audience. It will communicate the complex nature of the White River system and allow curate channels to connect with the river through their own existing areas of interest and encourage them to explore and learn more about other opportunities along the river's boundaries and water adjacent spaces.

The White River Vision Plan partners seek to contract with a brand development firm to create a brand initiative that does not merely look at slogans or brand marks, but instead seeks to package the White River as an asset instrumental to improving the quality of life of residents and critical to the

future prosperity of Central Indiana. Such a shared identity must communicate not only the White River as a place or thing, but as an idea or mission.

In addition to being adopted by a wide variety of destinations, institutions, and other stakeholders, the branding development will occur parallel to an ongoing process to develop a regional governance entity charged with stewarding the plan's implementation. In this way, the branding initiative will also be adopted by a new or repurposed organization.

This Request for Proposal (RFP) process is intended to provide the WRVP with the appropriate information to properly select the best team to be our partner in an 18-month tiered contract with an opportunity for renewal should funding be available. Hamilton County Tourism (HCT) and Visit Indy will partner with the river's stakeholder groups to work with the selected team to develop the brand. The contract begins in Fall 2020 and should be completed by Spring 2022. Additional support may be needed after that but at this time there is no funding for a retainer – although that will be considered.

II. SCOPE OF WORK

The selected agency will work closely with HCT's Tourism Manager and members of the White River Vision Plan team.

The RFP seeks candidates who can:

- Develop and deliver a strategic branding plan for the White River and its many offerings.
- Work with a broad group of key partners and stakeholders involved in the original plan process and engage residents in the process as well.
- Have experience with successful brand hierarchy and brand adoption by entities and organizations that have (and will retain) an independent existing and embraced brand and mission.
- Have solid portfolio of brand/graphic design experience and expertise.
- Create a simple but expandable White River web site powered by an effective content management system that will utilize information from partners about assets, information and events along the river.
- Develop a comprehensive digital and/or print asset map/guide in a format that can evolve.
- Create a promotional materials brand package that can be easily implemented by the graphic designers at HCT and Visit Indy. This would include design guidelines for media materials, blog posts, social media standards, promotional materials, etc.
- If the budget allows, guidance on acquisition of a UGC (User-Generated Content) platform to allow shared content across multiple platforms.

III. RFP REQUIREMENTS

All proposals should be submitted in PDF format via email and include the following information.

If you are submitting as a team from various entities formed just for this program, please provide this information for each agency or individual represented.

Provide an agency overview

- What is unique about your firm – what sets you apart?

- How is the agency or team will be organized and what are its priorities, core competencies and core values?

Tell us about your talent

- Describe your team’s structure and how your company’s resources would be allocated to supply the deliverables.
- List the experience of the key agency staff (full-time only) expected to be involved in servicing the account. Include other accounts they currently service or have in the past.
- Explain how staff turnover is handled and what role clients play in the process regarding replacements. How are new account team members brought up to speed on the account?
- Explain your account team’s expected relationship with HCT’s Tourism Manager Sarah Buckner, who will serve as the project manager, and the brand development team.

Let us see your portfolio

- Provide samples of brand development and implementation and give us a little background about each.

Tell us how you work

- Include a brief description of the process used to develop a brand.
- Describe how you manage your timeline for implementation and identify milestones in the project.
- Provide references from at least 3 clients who have worked with you within the past 12 months.
- Demonstrate your ability to work with a diverse group of key partners and members of the public, including those in marginalized communities.
- Describe how you will work to accommodate a brand hierarchy scenario where existing independent brands must exist in harmony alongside a regional brand.

Draft Budget 2020-2021

Brand/Design Package Development	\$54,500
Web Site/CMS/Web Templates Development	\$75,000
Collateral/Map Development & Printing	\$30,000

Draft Budget 2021-2022

Ongoing Site Maintenance and Refinement	\$25,000
Updates on Collateral/Maps/Etc. & Printing	\$35,000

**Budget detail is draft, but funding totals remain the same.*

IV. METHOD OF SELECTION

The selection team will identify a group or agency with the experience and knowledge necessary to develop the plan. Proposals will be evaluated on creativity, a demonstrated understanding of the project’s scope and goals including an understanding of the three key themes identified earlier, ability to work within the budgeted guidelines, and results based on work produced for other clients.

Selection Timeline

All proposals should be submitted electronically in a PDF format to Sarah Buckner at Hamilton County Tourism at sbuckner@hamiltoncountytourism.com. Interviews will be conducted in person unless health concerns deem otherwise. The need for social distancing will be respected.

- July 31 – Deadline for questions to be submitted.
- August 4 – Responses to questions distributed.
- August 10 – Deadline for proposals, 5 p.m. EST
- August 17 – Finalists notified.
- August 31 – Interviews, week of.
- September 9 – Contract award announced.
- Work begins ASAP.

Modifications and Amendments

Withdrawal or rejection: Hamilton County Tourism reserves the right to withdraw the RFP for any reason. We further reserve the right to reject part or the entire proposal. Hamilton County Tourism is not liable for any costs or expenses incurred by the responder or any other person or entity in the preparation of their proposals.

V. Information

Thank you for your time and consideration. Any questions may be addressed to Sarah Buckner at sbuckner@hamiltoncountytourism.com or at 317-654-0863. All answers will be gathered and sent to all participants in a blind e-mail to ensure fairness.