

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS 2021 VALDEZ BRANDING STRATEGY FOR COVID-19 RECOVERY

I. INTENT

The City of Valdez (COV) is seeking proposals from qualified firms or individuals to help research, develop and implement a strategically driven destination brand that represents Valdez, Alaska. The brand should resonate with visitors and residents alike, Valdez Convention and Visitors Bureau (VCVB) partners and community stakeholders. The branding strategy will be used for marketing and promotional activities by the City of Valdez, including those performed by the Port of Valdez, Valdez Harbors, Parks and Recreation, as well as the VCVB for the community of Valdez, Alaska. The dramatic negative impacts to the visitor industry in Valdez due to the COVID-19 pandemic must be addressed in the implementation of the destination brand and community marketing strategies.

II. DUE DATE

Proposals are due no later than **February 26, 2021 at 5:00 pm**. Proposers should make arrangements to have a representative available for a virtual follow-up interview (if requested) March 1-4, 2021.

Submit proposals by email in PDF format, to mbarberio@valdezak.gov with the Subject Line: RFP Branding Project no later than 5:00 PM ADT, February 26, 2021.

Questions are due by February 10, 2021 at 5:00 PM and should be directed to Martha Barberio, Economic Development Director for the City of Valdez at mbarberio@valdezak.gov. Answers will be posted and available to all perspective bidders as an addendum to the RFP at <https://www.valdezak.gov/Bids.aspx> by Friday, February 12, 2021 at 5:00 PM.

III. BACKGROUND

As the COVID-19 pandemic closed businesses, restricted travel and decimated the retail and tourism market in Valdez. The City of Valdez, in partnership with the VCVB, began developing a new marketing strategy to prepare for the reopening of businesses and travel in 2021. The City of Valdez City Council formed the Mayor's Task Force for Economic Recovery who identified gaps in marketing efforts and developed a plan to implement in response to the significant impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic created. One of these activities is a branding strategy to better define what sets Valdez apart from other communities in Alaska and how to turn that into a marketing opportunity which will serve to attract visitors, new residents and industry.



The community of Valdez (population 3,900) is located in the Chugach Census area in South Central, Alaska. The City of Valdez has a total area of 277.1 square miles of land and 55.1 square miles of water. Valdez is located near the head of a deep fjord in the Prince William Sound in Alaska. It is surrounded by the Chugach Mountains, which are heavily glaciated. Valdez is the northernmost port in North America that is ice-free year-round. The northernmost point of the coastal Pacific temperate rain forest is in Valdez, on Blueberry Hill. The only road access is via the Richardson Highway, which traverses Thompson Pass and Keystone Canyon to end at Valdez.

Valdez is also known for its fishing, both for commercial and sport fishing. [Freight](#) moves through Valdez bound for the interior of Alaska. Sightseeing of the marine life and glaciers, together with both deep-sea fishing, and heli-skiing support a tourist industry in Valdez.

More information on the City of Valdez can be found at <https://www.valdezak.gov/Bids.aspx>

There is a need to develop a comprehensive brand and marketing strategy for the community, resources inclusive of the assets managed by the Port of Valdez, Valdez Harbors, Valdez Parks and Recreation, and external resident and visitor resources. Ideally, the brand and brand implementation plan would celebrate Valdez and the benefits of visiting and living in the community

IV. SCOPE OF SERVICES

a. Community Engagement.

- The consultant will be expected to work with a stakeholder Branding Committee comprised of three members of the Economic Diversification Commission, three VCVB members and two members of COV Department Directors.
- The Branding Committee will serve as an advisory body and provide feedback and input on the assessment, development, and implementation phases.
- An approach to engage the committee should be included in the proposal along with other recommendations for obtaining community input and support.

b. Research and Assessment.

- The process should include interviews/surveys with key stakeholders to determine existing assets, attitudes, perceptions, strengths, and weaknesses of the community's image and an examination of why visitors, businesses, residents, and fisherman are choosing Valdez or why they're not choosing Valdez.
- Contractor should outline the methodology and resources to be used to objectively assess the community, the customer and the competition.



c. Brand Development.

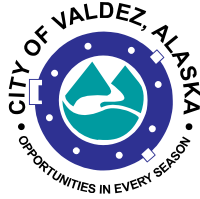
- The brand should speak to our community as a whole and identify ways we can differentiate ourselves from our competitors and identify and provide rationale for target audiences.
- The contractor is expected to develop at least three options for the brand, based on the results of the research and assessment, and work closely with the steering committee to ensure the selected brand is both realistic and motivational.
- Deliverables include a hard copy and digital versions of the brand name, graphic representation with and without a tag line, tag line, story of the brand, and brand messages. Graphics should be production ready and suitable for printing. Brand should be unique to our community, and available to be trademarked if the community so chooses.
- Contractor should outline their methodology to develop the brand image and list any subcontractors.

d. Brand Implementation Strategy.

- The implementation strategy should serve as a roadmap for adopting the brand by the City of Valdez and the VCVB and insert its use into marketing and promotion efforts to target audiences outside the city.
- The strategy should include a prioritized list of tasks with cost estimates. Tasks should be appropriate for the financial and marketing resources available in our community.
- The strategy should include recommendations and examples of how to use the brand to reach target audiences, including preferred media and message.

e. Outcomes.

- The consultant will submit time frames and recommend metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of the brand and marketing campaign.
- Provide all data, analysis, multi-media materials, master copies (hard and digital) of final products and all other relevant documentation to the City of Valdez.
- Provide a recommended evaluation methodology with metrics to determine effectiveness of the brand.
- The City of Valdez will retain sole ownership of and rights to the brand and all work product resulting from the contract for 2021 Valdez Branding Strategy.



V. RFP SCHEDULE

The dates listed below are estimates and subject to change with appropriate notice.

EVENT	DATE
RFP Release	February 2, 2021
Questions on RFP due	February 10, 2021
Answers to Questions posted	February 15, 2021
Proposals Due	February 26, 2021
Branding Committee Recommendation	March, 2021
Council Decision	April, 2021
Contract/Award	April, 2021
Contract Completion	June 15, 2021

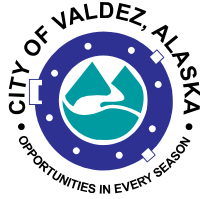
VI. BUDGET

The budget for these services is approximately \$75,000, including fees and expenses. The funding source is the Mayor's Task Force for Economic Recovery.

VII. PROPOSAL SPECIFICATIONS

In order to be responsive to this solicitation, written proposals must contain *at least* the following information and consist of no more than 10 pages, not including cover:

- A. Please provide a 60 second video addressing, "What excites you about this project and why would we make a good team?"
- B. An identification of the consultant and any subcontractors proposed for this study.
- C. Qualifications and experience of the person(s) who will be personally working with the Branding Committee in the performance of this contract. Must provide 3-5 portfolio links.
- D. A representative study prepared by the consultant team for a similar engagement.
- E. Proposed scope of work outlining responsibilities of the Consultant and the Branding Committee; the percentage of effort to be dedicated to community engagement, research and assessment, brand development, development of implementation strategy, and evaluating outcomes, and listing any services not anticipated in the scope of services for this RFP. Outline will identify deliverables, with corresponding schedule and cost breakdown.
- F. Schedule for implementing deliverables in the proposed scope of work.
- G. Proposed fee for the scope of services with a cost breakdown of staff time and salary, travel costs, and overhead by deliverables.
- H. Identification and phone numbers of at least three clients acquainted with the past work of the consultant team on similar engagements.
- I. *Optional*, Alternative approaches or methodologies that meet the project intent, but if adopted would reduce project costs and generate additional cost savings.



VIII. SELECTION CRITERIA

Responsive proposals will be reviewed and rated by the Economic Diversification Branding Committee (EDBC). Each proposal will be analyzed to determine overall responsiveness and qualifications under the RFP. The EDBC may select all, some, or none of the respondents for follow up virtual interviews. The EDC may also request additional information from respondents at any time prior to final approval of a selected respondent

Evaluation and selection criteria will include the following:

- A. **Methodology and Approach:** Proposal shows a clear understanding of desired outcome and describes an approach to the branding process that is complete, comprehensive, and clearly outlined. (30 points)
- B. **Qualifications and Experience:** Provide information which demonstrates the firm, and/or all individuals rendering services under the proposal, have adequate qualifications and experience with a branding process to provide the services required. Include the names and phone numbers of three (3) references. Extra points awarded to Alaskan firms. (30 points)
- C. **Ability to work through project timeframe:** Award of contract and issuance of “Notice to Proceed” is anticipated in early April. Due to the funding source, all funds must be expended before December 31, 2021. Please describe, in detail, the individual’s or firm’s capability to work throughout this timeframe. (20 points) Due to the pandemic, some meetings will be virtual
- D. **Flexibility:** The Branding Committee is made up of a very dynamic and busy group of individuals. It may be necessary to change regular meeting dates to accommodate the work and travel schedules of the Branding Committee. It is necessary for this position to be flexible and adapt to changing meeting dates. Please describe the individual’s or firm’ ability to be flexible. (20 points)
- E. **Cost Schedule:** Please provide a detailed cost schedule of each aspect of the proposal. (20 points)

IX. FIRM OFFER

For the purpose of award, offers made in accordance with this Request for Proposal must be held firm for a period of sixty (60) calendar days from the date of the proposal opening.

X. REJECTION OF PROPOSAL

The City of Valdez reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any informality or irregularity in the bids received whenever such rejection or waiver is in the best interest of Valdez. The City of Valdez reserves the right to modify the contract after its award.

XI. POSTING

This RFP can be found at <http://www.valdezak.gov/bids.aspx>

Date:

Project Name:

Project #

Contract #

REQUEST FOR ADDENDUM & PLAN HOLDERS LIST

To receive addendums associated with projects, interested contractors must submit a Request for Addendum form for EACH project. Fill out above highlighted section. Incomplete requests will not be considered.

**City of Valdez - Capital Facilities
Attn: Wendy Robertson PO Box 307
Valdez, AK 99686
Fax: (907) 835-5574
email: wrobertson@valdezak.gov**

Company:

Contact:

Address:

Phone No.:

Fax No.

Email: **(REQUIRED)**

**Bid Documents will not be available in Valdez for purchase,
but may be downloaded from the City of Valdez website at www.valdezak.gov**