

**CITY OF NORTON SHORES
NORTON SHORES, MICHIGAN**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TO CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN AND
MARKETING STRATEGY**

August 2019

The City of Norton Shores is accepting proposals from prospective firms to provide a Communications Plan and Marketing Strategy. The communications plan should incorporate any advancements in technology to establish a process for community engagement. The marketing strategy should develop a strong brand identity and unified vision for community growth and prosperity.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Purpose to be served: The purpose of the Plan is to assist in the development and implementation of a communications plan and marketing strategy for the effective outreach to city residents and other key audiences on issues related to city prosperity and services. Below is a section that is included in the City's Strategic Plan 2019 update approved in June 2019.

Communication and Marketing

Several advancements in technology have occurred since the 2009 strategic plan. Most notably is the advent of social media and the methods used for public outreach. Today, the public has numerous outlets available for information sharing. The City strives to engage the public and incorporate technology advancements into its process of community engagement. This plan will deliver guidance to develop a marketing strategy for the City to effectively promote the services offered and to provide local businesses and property owners with a distinctive sense of identity.

- *Develop a Communications Plan on how to most effectively reach city residents and other key audiences on issues related to city prosperity and services through effective use of multiple, and targeted communication channels. Consider the addition of a new staff member titled Communications and Public Involvement Coordinator to oversee this initiative. (City Council and Administration)*
 - *Timeframe: 6-12 months to develop the plan including the potential of a Communications and Public Involvement Coordinator added to city staff in 12-24 months*

- *Develop a marketing strategy for a strong brand development to be used by the City to effectively communicate “brand promises” to multi-generational audiences; including residents, employees, local industry, business owners, etc. Integrate the marketing strategy with the Communications Plan to share the City’s newly developed brand statement with key audiences within and outside of the community on a consistent basis. (City Council and Administration)*
 - *Timeframe: 12 months*
 - *The City recognizes the importance of being a welcoming community that is able to attract new residents of all ages and backgrounds. The ability to attract a diverse mix of residents and business owners will be a key component to long-term growth and prosperity. Research and develop a set of strategies that effectively promote the values, activities, and benefits of living in Norton Shores. Monitor the effectiveness of these strategies and modify as needed. (City Council and Administration)*
 - *Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing*
 - *Continue to develop and expand efforts to communicate with strategic audiences within the City and the metropolitan area; this includes both promotional strategies of the services offered and actively listening to the residents and property owners. (City Council/Administration/Employees)*
 - *Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing*
 - *Initiate a focused effort to engage civic and various residential and business groups on a consistent basis; coordinate efforts with Police and Fire Departments for community meetings and other public events. Cultivate Council and employees to serve as “ambassadors” regarding employee recruitment efforts. (City Council/Administration/Employees)*
 - *Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing*
- High Priority: Development of a Communications Plan and marketing strategy for reaching citizens regarding key issues.***

Scope of Services: The firm to which the contract is awarded will be expected to conduct the requisite research with key community segments to determine local and statewide perceptions and existing attitudes and identify the opportunities and challenges to enhancing the City’s image within and from a regional perspective.

- Propose an overall strategy to identify and promote what makes the Norton Shores community appealing to residents, business owners, investors, and visitors.
- Convey a consistent message and image to audiences both within and outside of the Norton Shores community.
- Assess and evaluate the existing communication and public outreach – internal and

external.

- Establish a unified communication plan that engages the public and promotes the essence of Norton Shores in ways that are positive, relevant, and targeted to a multi-generational audience.
- Establish criteria for evaluating communication and provide an action plan for moving forward.
- Increase awareness of a strong and vibrant economy to attract private investment, new residents, and retain existing business and industry. Present a defined message to promote Norton Shores through-out Michigan.
- Recommend specific initiatives to effectively convey the message using visual elements, printed collateral, print and web-based advertising, public relations, and community events.
- The Plan must be flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of a variety of audiences and the constant upgrades in technology.

Proposed Time Schedule: The Plan is to be completed no later than March 31, 2020.

REQUESTED INFORMATION TO BE SUBMITTED

Each firm submitting a proposal should include the following information:

1. A description of the size of firm and type of services offered.
2. A description of the training and experience of key personnel involved, including any sub-contractors who would likely be involved.
3. A representative list of similar projects which the firm has completed in the past, including the completion date and the contact persons for each project.
4. A description of any information, materials, or services which the firm would expect the City to supply or perform to complete the Plan.
5. Establish a time-line or work plan including a schedule of proposed meetings with a detail on the amount and level of assistance needed from city staff to complete the Plan.
6. A complete cost estimate including a "Not-to-Exceed" cost. All costs associated with the successful completion of this Plan must be included in the submitted proposal.
7. Expenses and fees which would be charged in the performance of all work elements described in the Scope of Services. All reimbursable costs and expenses not specifically provided for in the not-to-exceed cost shall be specifically stated.

8. The firm shall provide a description of the deliverables that will be expected upon completion of the project.

TIME AND PLACE OF PROPOSAL OPENINGS

Sealed proposals received will be accepted no later than **5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 18, 2019.** All proposals must be submitted to the City Clerk's office by the date and time indicated above and envelopes shall be clearly marked on the outside "Communication and Marketing".

Each firm submitting a proposal agrees that it shall not withdraw its proposal for a period of ninety (90) days commencing on the date of the proposal openings.

AWARD OF CONTRACT

In determining the firm to which the contract shall be awarded, the City shall include but not be limited to the following criteria as it deems appropriate:

- The firm's experience and demonstrated successful results on similar projects and references from current and former clients.
- The qualifications and experience of personnel who will be assigned.
- The ability of the firm to meet the work schedule.
- The completeness of work plan and project approach.
- The estimated and "Not-to-Exceed" costs of the firm's services.
- Other factors deemed appropriate by the City Council.

The City may conduct investigations and request additional information from any proponent of a proposal as the City deems necessary to assist in the City's evaluation of any proposal and to establish the responsibility, qualifications and ability of the proponent to furnish services in accordance with this request for proposals and to the City's satisfaction.

The City reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any informality in the submission of a proposal or non-conformity with the proposal requirements, to award the contract as the City deems in its best interests, and to negotiate with the selected proponent.

Notice of Award of Contract shall be given, if the contract is awarded to a proponent, which notice

shall be deemed rejected if not accepted within ten (10) days after receipt of the contract document.

The final decision regarding each proposal will be made solely by the City Council.

City of Norton Shores
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