



CITY OF PLEASANT HILL
RETAIL MARKETING INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Request for Proposals/Qualifications from Marketing Strategy Consultants

PURPOSE. Retail sales and restaurant businesses in Pleasant Hill are an integral part of the community and are important in creating and maintaining the high quality of life that is experienced by Pleasant Hill residents and visitors alike. Due to a declining economy, many Pleasant Hill businesses, in particular smaller, independent retail businesses located in smaller neighborhood shopping centers, have suffered from declining consumer spending.

Often one of the first reductions a business will make in the face of declining revenues is to their marketing or advertising programs. However, in a recession economy it becomes even more important for retailers to use marketing and advertising to retain existing customers and to ramp up efforts to attract new customers.

In response, the City of Pleasant Hill is implementing a retail marketing incentive program to assist Pleasant Hill retail and restaurant businesses. The City seeks qualified marketing consultants to assist in the development and implementation of a marketing incentive program for eligible sales-tax producing retail sales businesses.¹

PROGRAM VISION. The Retail Marketing Incentive Program will provide eligible sales tax-producing Pleasant Hill retail businesses and shopping centers with incentives to engage in new targeted, effective marketing campaigns that are tailored to customer demographics, using both traditional and new media. In addition, individual retailers can take the opportunity to assess and update their product offerings, and to enhance customer store experience. Property owners/managers will be encouraged to support cooperative advertising programs for whole retail shopping centers or shopping areas. Individual businesses will also be eligible for marketing implementation funds.

¹ Retail sales businesses are defined by the Pleasant Hill Municipal Code Title 18 Planning & Land Use 18.15.040 Commercial use classifications – Retail Sales. These businesses, which typically collect sales tax, include: medical supplies sales, pharmaceutical sales, food and beverage sales (sit-down and take away), automobile service and gasoline sales.

Participation is incentivized with Economic Development grant funds for assistance with the costs of professional marketing consultation to devise a new marketing strategy, and with implementation of advertising. Grant funds for advertising and promotions will require matching funds from the participating shopping center or business. The initial Retail Marketing Incentive Program is being launched as a “pilot program” with a total budget allocation of \$47,500 available to eligible retail businesses on a first come, first served basis. The initial launch of the “pilot program” will provide the City with the opportunity to assess the demand for this type of retail marketing incentive program, and to determine future budget allocations.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS. The following describes the proposed program scope and general responsibilities of the pre-qualified Marketing Consultant. City of Pleasant Hill will provide a list of pre-qualified marketing consultants from which restaurants and retailers can choose. Marketing Consultant(s) will develop marketing programs for eligible local retail and restaurant businesses. Marketing Consultant(s) will provide thorough professional consultation to assess existing marketing approach, and formulate new, targeted marketing strategy for businesses. Elements of the program include **Element A. Program Pitch**, **Element B. Marketing Audit and Strategy Report**, and **Element C. Advertising**, as follows:

Element A. Program Pitch:

Pre-qualified Marketing Consultant(s) will be responsible for recruiting and soliciting participation of whole shopping centers (preferably) or individual businesses into the program. The City will provide assistance with contact information. The program pitch will provide eligible Pleasant Hill business owners or property managers an opportunity to learn about the Retail Marketing Incentive Program in person, by phone, and/or with a written description directly from the Marketing Consultant(s). Consultant will also describe the City’s www.ShopPleasantHill.org Advertisement Offer.² Marketing Consultant shall accurately describe all marketing offers.

Element B. Marketing Audit and Strategy Report:

Businesses with an existing sufficient marketing plan may choose to bypass **Element B. Marketing Audit and Strategy Report** and move directly to **Element C. Advertising** and may do so by providing their marketing plan to City for review. Within five business days of plan receipt, business will be advised if existing advertising/marketing plan is sufficient and business

² All businesses participating in the in the program will be added to the City’s Interactive Community Guide. This service is the responsibility of the City, not the Marketing Consultant.

can bypass **Element B. Marketing Audit and Strategy Report** and immediately take part in **Element C. Advertising**.

Businesses without an existing marketing plan will select a pre-qualified marketing consultant to prepare a thorough marketing strategy report. The Consultant will conduct one-on-one session(s) with businesses, which will include assessment of merchant's existing products and offerings, store experience, competitive advantages, and assessment of current marketing approach. The Consultant will devise a marketing strategy to promote the retailer's competitive advantages, as well as identify opportunities for strengthening the retailer's position. The strategy report will also include an action plan to implement developed strategies.

Funding Assistance For Strategy

A Marketing Consultation Grant in the amount of \$1,000 is available to assist with the cost of the Marketing Audit and Strategy Session and Report. Grant will represent compensation for 10 hours of work at a maximum cap of \$100 an hour and 2 free hours of service from consultant.

PRELIMINARY SCOPE OF WORK

Consultant will create and submit a Marketing Audit and Strategy Report with two Portions as described.

Assessment Portion

Assessment Portion will provide, in writing, the following for each individual business participant:

- Audit of the current retail experience, competitive advantage(s), and current marketing approach of the business, in context of local/regional shopping, dining offerings and local/regional demographics, and compared to relevant up and coming trends.
- Evaluate merchant's existing product offering.
- Identification of business's existing resources that maintains/strengthens market position.
- Identification of retailer's competitive advantages and provides direction on how to modify identified disadvantages of current marketing approach.
- Written conceptual slogans, marketing themes, and drawn draft graphic designs for print and online advertisements/websites.
- Demographic-specific media recommendations and campaign concepts relevant to the customers of the retailer/shopping center.

Implementation Strategy Portion

Implementation strategy will briefly describe, in writing, the following (related to the Cooperative and Individual Advertising, see following page, **Element C. Advertising**):

- Written, explicit action steps necessary to implement the strategies identified by the strategy document, both in the short-term and long-term for both individual and cooperative advertisement vehicles.
- Recommendation of an appropriate individual marketing vehicle(s) for the business, per the assessment.
- Promote a Cooperative Advertising Method (an appropriate type of advertising media that can be shared between multiple businesses).
- Information about how to implement the recommended advertising mediums.

Element C. Advertising:

Businesses which participated in **Element B. Marketing Audit and Strategy Report** are obligated to participate in **Element C. Advertising** by implementing advertising strategies of the report. Businesses which have been approved to bypass **Element B. Marketing Audit and Strategy Report** may immediately take advantage of **Element C. Advertising** funding assistance for their existing advertising efforts.

Funding Assistance For Advertising

Two grants are available for implementing advertising, the Cooperative Advertising Approach Grant and the Individual Advertising Approach Grant, and businesses may choose to apply for both. Consultant is directed to encourage businesses to take advantage of the Cooperative Advertising Approach. Both Consultant and businesses are strongly encouraged to solicit financial support from property management or owners for advertising implementation. City grant funds are available on a reimbursable basis, as follows:

Table 1. Implementation Funding

Type Of Advertising	Minimum Business or Shopping Center Match	City Match	Minimum Budget
Cooperative Advertising	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$7,500
Individual Advertising	\$ 625	\$2,500	\$3,125

Participant must provide the minimum amount listed to receive the City match. The City's match is a flat amount, and does not scale with the participant match. For Cooperative Advertising vehicles, eligible shopping areas must provide a minimum of \$2,500, which the City will match with \$5,000. This provides a shopping center with a minimum advertising budget of \$7,500. For Individual Advertising, the minimum amount provided must be \$625, which the City will match with \$2,500. This provides a minimum budget of \$3,125 for an individual business. Private contributions can be made with any combination of funds from property owner(s), property management companies, or businesses.

Eligible Actions

Actions eligible for the grant funds are those which are directly related to developing an individual or cooperative advertising vehicle to promote sales tax generating businesses (i.e., retailers and restaurants) in the shopping area. Specifically, this can include advertising fees, graphic design fees, and printing and distribution of materials. For businesses to be reimbursed with the grant funds, the www.ShopPleasantHill.org URL must be integrated into the advertisements.

Cooperative Advertising Approach (preferred method)

Cooperative Advertising Vehicles for an entire shopping center (or business category, city corridor, etc.) are the preferred method for Pleasant Hill businesses to advertise because the combined budget of several small businesses allows for access to media (i.e., radio or television, catalogs, etc.) that the budgets of individual businesses would not allow. Commercial property managers/owners will be strongly encouraged to add their financial support to the advertising efforts of their tenant businesses. All retail and sales tax generating merchants within an eligible shopping center can participate in the cooperative vehicle.

Individual Advertising Approach (alternate method)

If a Cooperative Advertising Approach is not appropriate or feasible, then Pleasant Hill businesses participating in the Retail Marketing Incentive Program may wish to advertise individually.

PROPOSED PROGRAM TIMELINE and LOGISTICS

- 1) **March 12, 2012** - Establish list of pre-qualified consultants.
- 2) **March 16, 2012** - Consultants begin to solicit businesses and shopping centers to participate. Businesses wishing to by-pass audit and strategy phase submit existing marketing plan to City.

3) **Within 5 business days of receipt**, each application/marketing plan will be evaluated by the City against established eligibility criteria and either deemed approved or rejected. Applicants will be accepted until program budget is fully allocated.

4) **Within 30 days** after City's initial approval of program participation, businesses developing a new strategy will have met with Consultant for strategy session (s), and businesses which have bypassed strategy report phase will have initiated advertising.

5) **Within 45 days** after initial participation approval, Consultants provide draft report. City/retailer will review and comment (in relation to the scope of work) within 5 business days.

6) **Within 60 days** of the City's initial approval of program participation, Marketing Audit and Strategy Report shall be finalized and provided to City and business.

7) **Within 15 days** of submission of appropriate reimbursement materials, City will directly provide grant funding to consultant for Marketing Audit and Strategy Report.

8) **Within 30 days** of approval of finalized Marketing Audit and Strategy Report or submission of existing marketing report, business will initiate advertising recommendations. (This can also be described as within **90 days** of approval of program participation.)

9) **Within 15 days** of submission of appropriate reimbursement materials for Advertising implementation, City will provide grant funding directly to business owner for advertising.

HOW TO BECOME A CANDIDATE FOR THE LIST OF PRE-QUALIFIED CONSULTANTS

The City seeks to develop a list of qualified firms to provide marketing assistance to individual retail businesses and shopping centers in Pleasant Hill, promoting them as some of the many quality local restaurant or retail options in Pleasant Hill, a retail shopping destination of choice. The scope of services sought by this RFQ/RFP is one-on-one Marketing Strategy Sessions with qualified Pleasant Hill retailers.

A. SCHEDULE

The selected qualified Pleasant Hill firms must have the resources and ability to work within the following program development schedule:

Action Item	Dates
RFP/RFQ release date	February 8, 2012
RFP/RFQ due date	February 22, 2012
Interviews for prospective consultants	March 5-9, 2012
Pre-qualified consultant list final	March 12, 2012

B. BUDGET FOR MARKETING AUDIT AND STRATEGY SESSION REPORT

The Retail Incentives Program will provide a maximum grant amount that shall not exceed \$1,000.00 per session per business, representing a minimum of 12 hours of work effort for this maximum amount, with ten hours paid at a maximum cap rate of \$100 per hour and two hours free. Advertising implementation grant funding will be provided as long as the business initiates the advertising actions outlined in the Marketing Audit and Strategy Report within 30 days of report approval.

C. RFP/Q RESPONSE CONTENTS and FORMAT

All submittals shall provide the following information for consideration:

- a. **Description of Firm, Management, and Team Members:** Provide a brief description of your organization and the team that will be assigned to work on and deliver the product. State their qualifications, indicating the relevant educational background and work experience. The description shall identify the project manager and the day-to-day contact person for the job. Include full contact information for project manager(s) and day-to-day contact person.
- b. **Description of Subcontractors:** Identify any portion of the scope of work that will be subcontracted. Identify key personnel and their qualifications, telephone number, and contact person for all subcontractors. The City reserves the right to approve or reject all consultants or internal staff performing consulting services.
- c. **Firm Qualifications:** Provide a list of projects with relevance to Pleasant Hill's Retail Marketing Incentive Program.
- d. **Scope of Work:** Provide an explanation of how each work task, as described under heading "Deliverables" in this RFQ/RFP will be approached.
- e. **Project Schedule and Logistics:** Provide an explanation of how your project manager would be able to visit with merchants in person during their business hours, and assess their store in person. This section shall also sufficiently address the ambitious time schedule identified in this RFQ/RFP.
- f. **Marketing the Program to Business Owners and Shopping Centers:** Provide a description of the intended approach to soliciting, facilitating and/or encouraging multi-business cooperation in Cooperative Advertising Approaches.
- g. **Product Value:** Explain how you intend to offer businesses valuable information on their industry, trends, competitors, and customers. Demonstrate your firm's understanding of

the issues relevant to local individual businesses and shopping centers, and your firm's ability to address them.

- h. **Work Samples:** Provide brief descriptions of at least two recent marketing audit and advertising/marketing strategy projects (or similar projects) prepared by your firm. Include in your description the techniques utilized during the assessment and strategy creation process, and the outcome of the process.
- i. **Proposed Budget:** Budget shall not exceed \$1,000.00 per individual business for the development of the marketing strategy, as outlined in the program elements section. Please provide a breakdown of how the task will be accomplished within this budget.
- j. **References:** Provide at least three client references relevant to this type of project.

D. DEADLINE AND DELIVERY

Three (3) copies of the Summary of Qualifications & Proposal shall be submitted in hardcopy and on CD to the City of Pleasant Hill, 100 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523, Attention: Kelly Calhoun, Economic Development Manager. The deadline for the submittal is **February 22, 2012 at 5:00 p.m.** No information submitted by fax or e-mail will be accepted, unless otherwise requested by the City during the proposal review process. Submittals received after 5:00 p.m. on February 22, 2012 will not be accepted.

CONTACT:

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