

City of Newaygo, Michigan  
**Request for Qualifications / Request for Proposals**  
**Branding and Marketing Project**

**Introduction**

The City of Newaygo seeks qualifications and proposals from experienced branding and marketing firms to create a compelling and authentic community brand for use in a comprehensive, ongoing marketing campaign. This branding and marketing initiative project will incorporate existing economic development and tourism-draw related priorities and activities as identified in the attached “City of Newaygo Branding and Marketing Strategy” document, which was developed in connection with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) initiative.

The Branding and Marketing Strategy document has been approved by all city Boards, departments, and public engagement forums in 2020, and includes: “Newaygo: The Heart of the Muskegon River” as its approved written brand. Therefore, any successful proposal will include this written brand as the core message, and the visual brand to be created through this process will support and expand on it. For the sake of clarity, the city of Newaygo will not entertain starting a new process for identifying a new written brand.

**Oversight and Key Goals**

The City of Newaygo office of Economic and Community Development as well as the City Manager will provide immediate oversight for this project. The city has identified two primary goals for this campaign: First, the creation and implementation of a strong visual community brand, ensuring the visual identity “agrees” with the written brand and also meets economic growth goals and the Master Plan, and secondly; presenting Newaygo as a regional and state leader for outdoor adventure tourism, business opportunities, and a community with desirable housing opportunities --single, multi-family, and second homes.

**Desired Brand Qualities**

The primary objectives of the visual branding initiative include, but are not limited to:

- a. Authenticity - The visual brand must be authentic and resonate with citizens, businesses and community groups within the Newaygo Community and throughout the region in order to gain the broadest possible support for the initiative. It must be relevant, but also reflect the desire to continue to grow and progress as a community.
- b. Community Identity/Pride - Identify and illuminate the “One Big Thing” what makes the Newaygo community appealing to residents, investors, businesses, retailers, and visitors- the Muskegon River.
- c. Consistency - The visual brand should convey a common message and image to audiences both within and outside the Newaygo community.
- d. Community and Economic Development Promotion - Promote a healthy lifestyle and economy; attract private investment; attract new residents and young professionals; retain businesses and creative talent. Present a defined message to promote Newaygo locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally as a desirable place to live, work, play, and do business, as well as the right location for development, redevelopment and investment, the perfect combination for a business-friendly community.
- e. Flexibility - The visual brand must be flexible and adaptable in order to meet the needs of a variety of partners, including agencies within the Newaygo community, as well as groups and businesses with their own specific marketing initiatives, while maintaining consistency with the overall brand. It must also be flexible enough to evolve in order to adapt to changes in the marketplace.

## Scope of Work: General

The respondent should provide a response to the following:

- Link to written brand- Process to further refine a genuine story and narrative within the written brand so it connects to local citizens and tourist stakeholders.
- Messaging & Voice- Associated copy and content based on research delivered in a voice that resonates as authentic so the new brand is embraced.
- Approach to Project Management- Directing and organizing communication so subsequent brand-related projects are on schedule, on budget, and within scope.
- Separate pricing for each of the three phases, as outlined below. Please note that each of the three phases may be selected by the city independently from one another. In other words, selecting a vendor for the creation of a brand does not obligate the city to purchase collateral material on an ongoing basis from the same vendor.

### Deliverables: Phase One

- Logo Suite, to include:  
Primary Logo + Variations  
Sub-mark / Watermark + Variations  
Favicon  
Font System / Typography  
Color Palette  
Complete Brand Guidelines System
- Recommended specific elements to convey the message going forward, i.e. visual elements, printed collateral, print advertising, web elements, media placement, public relations, events, etc.
- Develop strategies to position the messaging statements based on qualitative research and analysis of quantitative data. Cite data sources.
- Define how the core message may be shared and leveraged with existing partner initiatives and expandable to the broader regional partners and assets, such as the River Country Chamber of Commerce.
- Provide clear direction to help ensure message is appropriately tailored and woven throughout the city's web and social media presence.

**Deliverables: Phase Two:** Prepare a budget with imagery for acquiring the following:

#### Print Collateral

Stationary  
Brochures / City Guides  
Media Kits  
Direct Mail

#### Signage

Banners  
Monuments  
Vinyls & Decals

#### Digital Collateral

Website  
Web Ads  
Email Templates  
Social Media Launch Pack

### Deliverables: Phase Three: Campaign Execution

Please provide your plan for the creation and implementation of community signage, social media engagement, billboards, a new or refreshed website, radio ads, print advertising, a revised brand guide to ensure messaging and creative consistency, branded merchandise, and other marketing materials. The successful respondent will develop a plan for ongoing evaluation of the brand's effectiveness and report results of the branding initiatives to Newaygo City Council, key stakeholders, and the public.

## **Desired Qualifications & Requirements**

The proposal should provide in detail the respondent's experience in marketing for economic development, relocation and tourism, in addition to a brief synopsis explaining the respondent's philosophy on Destination Branding.

The respondent should demonstrate expertise in project management, research, marketing, and creative design as it relates to development of a community brand. To be eligible to be awarded this project, the respondent must demonstrate significant experience with branding initiatives.

Newaygo desires to issue a single contract to a qualified respondent to lead the project. Proposals based on a consortium approach in which more than one firm provides support or services within a consulting team are acceptable. List the key personnel and their individual responsibilities for this project. Include the extent of each person's participation and their related experience.

## **Specific Proposal Preparation Instructions**

The ideal candidate will be able to either perform these tasks in-house or operate as the lead contractor and subcontract the individual work items and create a final, comprehensive product. Newaygo reserves the right to approve or reject any sub-contractor of the lead contracting firm's team. Please include examples of previous work produced for similar projects in a sample portfolio.

**Proposed Action Plan, Time Frame and Expectations:** The proposal should include an Action Plan, along with applicable timeline. Please keep in mind Newaygo's general expectations are that a visual brand be finalized in Fall /Winter 2020/2021, with hard deliverables to follow in early Spring 2021. Newaygo desires the work to begin within 30 days of approval and for the project to conclude on or before April 1, 2021.

**Client References:** Each party should provide three professional references for similar work which has been performed by your firm including the names, addresses, titles and telephone numbers of the person most familiar with the work. Project profile of other brands the agency has developed are highly recommended.

## **RFQ/RFP Submission & Other Details**

This RFP does not obligate Newaygo to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of the response to this Request for Proposal or to award a contract for services. Newaygo reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals received, to negotiate with any qualified source(s), or cancel, in part or entirely, this RFP, deemed in the best interest of the City of Newaygo. All work performed on behalf of the City of Newaygo becomes the intellectual property of the City of Newaygo including, but not limited to, digital copies, hard copies, CD's, DVD's, databases, research, etc. All final reports prepared under the contract shall be the property of Newaygo and may not be used or reproduced in any form without the explicit written permission of the City of Newaygo.

In addition to responding to all requirements above, the respondents shall include a not-to-exceed fee for all services required by this RFP for each of the three phases. Three hard copies and a PDF file of the proposal shall be included for the City of Newaygo's review. Once the proposals are received and opened, the city may request some or all of the respondents to provide additional information or invite them for interviews with the City.

**Proposals are due and will be opened on October 23, 2020 at 11am EDT at City Council Chambers, City of Newaygo.**

Proposals shall be delivered in a sealed package clearly labeled "Branding RFP" and shall be addressed to:

Jon Schneider, City Manager  
City of Newaygo  
28 State Road  
PO Box 308  
Newaygo, MI 49337

Proposals delivered after the deadline will NOT be accepted.

Any questions regarding this request for proposal should be directed to Scott Faulkner, Economic and Community Development Coordinator, who may be contacted by calling or emailing at:

[scott.faulkner@newaygocity.org](mailto:scott.faulkner@newaygocity.org) or 616.206.2350 (m)