



DOWNTOWN ALBANY

Business Improvement District

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS | BRAND UPDATE

Issue date: May 2, 2022

Deadline date: May 31, 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary.....3

1. Background of Organization.....3

2. Proposal Overview3

3. Contract Terms.....4

4. Purpose and Objectives.....4

5. Budget.....5

6. Staff Resources5

7. Timeline.....6

8. Evaluation Criteria.....6

9. Format For Proposals.....7

SUMMARY

The Downtown Albany, New York Business Improvement District (BID) is accepting proposals for creative services to implement a brand update defining the District as a destination. The purpose of this RFP is to provide a fair evaluation for all candidates and to provide the candidates with the evaluation criteria against which they will be judged.

The BID has experienced significant residential growth in recent years, transforming from a primarily 9-5 Central Business District to Albany's fastest-growing neighborhood and as a result, we are seeking updating branding. The chosen firm will create a visual representation of the changing demographics that effectively communicates Downtown as a Central Social District destination for living, working, and exploring.

Questions or inquiries regarding this RFP must be directed to Rebecca Hughes, Marketing & Communications Manager, by email at rhughes@downtownalbany.org.

1. BACKGROUND OF ORGANIZATION

Overview

Established in 1996, the BID operates as a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization. The organization partners with businesses, property owners, arts and cultural institutions, social service providers, government agencies, and elected officials in a united effort to revitalize downtown Albany. Playing a vital role in business recruitment and retention, visual improvements, and safety, the BID represents an area of approximately 50 square blocks of Albany, NY's primary and concentrated Downtown and commercial area. A map of the District boundaries can be found here: <https://downtownalbany.org/about/bid-boundaries>

Mission

To restore, promote and maintain the character and vitality of downtown Albany and improve the quality of life and overall image for those who live in, work in, and visit New York's Capital City.

Demographics

The BID serves its Stakeholder population consisting of 1,000 residential units, 5 hotels, and 250+ offices. Businesses within the District range from small, independent retailers and cafes to fine-dining establishments to small and large professional office tenants.

2. PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

This is an open and competitive RFP process. Proposals received after May 31, 2022 will not be considered. The BID reserves the right to accept or reject any or all responses to the RFP, even if all of the stated criteria are met.

3. CONTRACT TERMS

The BID will negotiate contract terms upon selection. All contracts are subject to review by the BID legal counsel, and a project will be awarded upon signing an agreement or contract, which outlines terms, scope, budget, timeline, and other necessary items.

4. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Purpose

When the Downtown Albany BID was formed, the purpose was to support the revitalization of the Downtown area. The BID is funded by property owners within a specifically defined geography, and it has become more important that our initiatives be associated with this clearly defined geography rather than the concept of downtown Albany in general.

With this RFP, the BID seeks a firm with a proven track record for creative excellence in brand development and execution to create a new visual identity that reflects the vibrancy of downtown Albany as an attractive place to live, work, and explore. Please note that assets created will be separate from the BID's existing organizational branding.

The selected firm will lead market research and focus groups to develop the creative for updated branding that pushes the downtown Albany brand forward, creating excitement for Downtown through a clear branding strategy targeting key audiences that include BID Stakeholders, existing and prospective residents and commercial tenants, surrounding residents, and visitors.

Objectives & Deliverables

The BID intends to highlight the vibrancy of downtown Albany and specific attributes that make it compelling to visit, live and maintain business. To achieve this goal, we need to maintain a consistent brand look and voice in all marketing and communication efforts. In pursuit of this effort, the selected firm will:

- Research existing perceptions, misconceptions, and brand awareness of Downtown Albany among key constituencies.
- Identify key elements and assets of downtown Albany (within District boundaries).
- Present 2-3 logo concepts based on research.
- Develop approved new logo and tagline that are current in look and feel, articulating the vibrancy of the District, with versions for various applications (vertical/horizontal/square) in a full suite of formats (.eps, .jpg, .tiff, .ai, etc. and color, black, white).
- Develop brand style guide for print and online use including color suite and specifications, typography, photography, and messaging.
- Develop new names for biannual magazine and weekly e-newsletter.
- Develop a brand voice and personality for the District to influence future messaging, initiatives, and events including Restaurant Week, Hot Chocolate Stroll, and Placemaking exhibitions.
- Develop a design elements package including guidelines for consistent and effective implementation.

- Propose positioning statements, strategies, and tactics that will help position the Downtown Albany District as an attractive and vibrant community among key constituencies.
- Propose strategies and tactics that will unify the Downtown brand across all Stakeholders and constituents.
- Determine implementation strategies for an effective, phased launching and building awareness of the new brand, and what should be prioritized for marketing purposes.
- Develop measures that will be used to determine success of branding effort.
- Provide launch material/giveaway suggestions for key audiences, including digital and/or print materials for Stakeholders that will explain the new brand identity, messaging, and how Stakeholders can utilize the new narrative through their own channels.

For purposes of template preparation and design, please note the new logo and tagline will be used in various formats and special projects, potentially to include:

- Lightpole banners
- Barricade covers
- Staff and Clean Team shirts, hats, vests, and jackets
- Branded trash receptable wrapping

5. BUDGET

As part of a Strategic Plan, the BID's Board of Directors has given preliminary approval to spend the necessary funds to invest in updated branding.

In responding to this RFP, provide a detailed fee proposal which outlines the Scope of Work that will be performed during the brand process. This includes research and design development. The proposed budget should be itemized by phase.

If the execution of work to be performed by your company requires the hiring of sub-contractors, please clearly state this in your proposal. Sub-contractors must be identified and the work they will perform must be defined. In your proposal, please provide the name and address of the sub-contractor(s). The BID will not refuse a proposal based upon the use of sub-contractors; however we retain the right to refuse the sub-contractors you have selected.

Optional: Please include a contract retainer price to continue creative services beyond the scope of this RFP.

6. STAFF RESOURCES

A successful planning effort is driven by an interdisciplinary team of participants. The team will be driven by:

- Project Lead: Rebecca Hughes will be responsible for sign-off on key decisions, providing project steering, keeping the project on schedule within the budget, and maintaining communication between other team members.

- Other stakeholders including: BID Executive Director and members of the BID's Marketing & Communications Committee.

The BID has a one-person marketing team responsible for public relations, marketing, communications, and branding. The consultant and/or firm should take into consideration the limited resources of the BID and make recommendations that are feasible with the organization's resources and achievable in phases.

7. TIMELINE

- This RFP is dated May 2, 2022
- Questions in relation to the RFP will be addressed until Noon on Friday, May 20, 2022. Please email questions to Rebecca Hughes, Marketing & Communications Manager rhughes@downtownalbany.org.
- Proposals are due via email to rhughes@downtownalbany.org no later than 12:00 PM, on Tuesday, May 31, 2022
- Proposals will be evaluated immediately thereafter. During this time we may require interviews at our office with our evaluation committee beginning the week of June 13, 2022. You will be notified if this is requested.
- The name of the candidate firm who has been selected will be decided on or about July 6, 2022 pending the approval of the BID's Board of Directors. Negotiations will begin immediately with the successful candidate.
- All other candidates will be notified on or about July 11, 2022.
- The project will be completed and delivered by January 16, 2023.

8. EVALUATION CRITERIA

With this RFP, the BID seeks a firm with a proven track record for creative excellence in brand development and execution, preferably with experience in place branding. Proposals will be evaluated by BID staff and Marketing Committee members before presenting a recommendation to the BID Board of Directors for project approval. Many aspects of the proposal will be evaluated, and the cost of the project will not be the sole determining factor for selection. Evaluation criteria are:

- Suitability of Proposal. The proposed creative approach meets the needs and criteria set forth in the RFP.
- Expertise in Branding. Prior work demonstrates a creative and thorough approach to branding as evidenced by the proposal, references, and/or prior work.
- Staff. The candidate has appropriate staff and/or partnerships to execute the project in the time frame needed. Staff bios should be included with proposal.
- Proposed Budget. Price is commensurate with the value offered and reflective of expertise.

- Passion for Downtown. Proposal demonstrates a genuine enthusiasm and knowledge of downtown Albany.

Your proposal must be received no later than Noon on Tuesday, May 31, 2022 to Rebecca Hughes, Marketing & Communications Manager, at rhughes@downtownalbany.org. Your proposal must include a cost proposal as described above.

All costs associated with the delivery of the project should be presented in a flat rate, fee-for-service format.

NOTE: The BID reserves the right to accept or reject any or all responses to the RFP, even if all of the stated criteria are met. An initial preference will be given to candidates located within the BID boundary (Clinton Avenue on the north, Madison Avenue on the south, Broadway on the east, and Eagle Street on the west) for specific addresses visit: <http://www.downtownalbany.org/pages/about/boundries.asp>

9. FORMAT FOR PROPOSALS

The information requested in this section should describe the qualifications of the Proposer, key staff, and sub-consultants performing projects within the past five (5) years that are similar in size and scope to that requested in the RFP.

1. Provide at least three (3) relevant case studies of your firm providing similar services. These case studies should include a brief description of the brand identity services provided, methodology, and a discussion of the outcome.
2. Provide at least three (3) references that received similar services from your organization. Local references preferred. The BID reserves the right to contact any organizations or individuals listed. Information should include:
 - Client name
 - Project description
 - Project start and end dates
 - Client project manager's name, email, and telephone number
3. Budget and fees as outlined in Section 5.