



REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Dorothy Ann David, City Manager

DATE: September 23, 2022

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY MARKETING CAMPAIGN – SS 2022-026

A. Introduction: The 2021-2023 City Council Goals include a Key Project to “Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing campaign to promote Champaign’s positive attributes and strengthen community pride.” The purpose of this report is to share staff’s recommendations to accomplish this Key Project and seek Council direction on how to proceed.

B. Recommended Action: The Administration seeks Council direction regarding the Administration’s recommendation to use a competitive Request for Proposals process to select a professional marketing firm to develop a community branding and marketing campaign to accomplish the campaign objectives outlined in this report.

C. Prior Council Action:

- [SS 2019-036](#) – On October 7-8, 2019, the City Council held a Special Study Session to discuss the Council’s Vision and Goals for the 2019-2021 Council term.
- [SS 2019-043](#) – On November 14, 2019, the City Council held a Study Session to refine Council’s Vision and Goals for the 2019-2021 Council term.
- [CB 2019-212](#) – On December 17, 2019, the City Council approved a Resolution Adopting the City Council Vision and Goals for the 2019-2021 Council term.
- [SS 2021-027](#) – On September 28-29, 2021, the City Council held a Special Study Session to discuss the Council’s Vision and Goals for the 2021-2023 Council term.
- [CB 2021-162](#) – On December 7, 2021, Council approved a Resolution Adopting the City Council Vision and Goals for the 2021-2023 Council Term.
- [CB 2022-109](#) – On June 21, 2022, Council approved an Ordinance Approving and Adopting the Annual Budget for the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2022, and Ending June 30, 2023.

D. Summary:

- The City Council Goals for the 2021-23 Council term includes a Key Project to “Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing campaign to promote Champaign’s positive attributes and strengthen community pride.”
- A community marketing campaign can be used to strengthen community pride, spur economic development, and boost tourism.
- The Administration seeks Council direction regarding staff’s recommendation to use a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to select a professional marketing firm to develop a professional marketing campaign.

- The Administration seeks Council direction regarding the draft campaign objectives, RFP evaluation criteria, and timeline.
- The City has allocated \$140,000 in one-time funding for a two-year pilot project to initiate the community marketing campaign.

E. Background:

1. Council Goal. In the fall of 2019, the City Council held Study Sessions to establish Council Goals for the 2019-21 Council term. In December 2019, the Council adopted a Vision Statement, seven Guiding Principles, four Council Goals, and 19 Key Projects (see complete list in [Council Bill 2019-212](#)). Under the Council Goal “Our City Expands Economic Opportunity”, the Council established a Key Project to “Develop a public communication and marketing campaign that highlights the City of Champaign as a great place to live, work, learn, and play.” Due to a shift in City priorities and resources during the COVID-19 pandemic, staff worked to develop a new marketing campaign to promote and support local businesses that were negatively impacted by pandemic-related shutdowns. In the summer of 2021, the City provided grant funding to and worked collaboratively with the Champaign Center Partnership to develop the “Heart of it All” marketing campaign. This campaign focused on promoting the City’s business core as a must-visit destination for dining, shopping, and entertainment and included use of a local marketing firm to develop and implement a comprehensive marketing campaign. The marketing firm created and managed a new webpage, social media campaign, website advertisements, a television commercial and other promotional videos, and developed printed collateral including posters, t-shirts, window stickers, and other promotional materials.

In September 2021, the City Council again met in a Study Session to discuss the Council’s Vision and Goals for the 2021-23 Council term. In December 2021, the Council adopted a Vision Statement, seven Guiding Principles, five Council Goals, and 28 Key Projects (complete list online at champaignil.gov/goals). Under the Council Goal “Our City Expands Economic Opportunity” the City Council established a Key Project to “Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing campaign to promote Champaign’s positive attributes and strengthen community pride.” This report outlines the Administration’s recommendations to work towards accomplishing this Key Project and seeks Council’s feedback and direction on the recommended approach.

2. Community Marketing Campaign. To accomplish the Key Project adopted by Council, staff will manage the development and implementation of a unique and authentic marketing campaign to promote Champaign’s positive attributes to City residents as well as persons from outside the City who work and visit here. In addition to boosting community pride for residents, an effective marketing campaign can be used to boost tourism and spur economic development. A community marketing campaign can also be a useful tool to encourage people and new businesses to remain in or relocate to Champaign.

Unlike advertising for products and services, community marketing campaigns are about connecting and engaging with people. To be successful, the campaign must accurately reflect and promote the authentic spirit of the Champaign community. This involves researching and engaging with residents and stakeholders to identify what makes Champaign unique and

attractive to others. Using this information, a branding campaign is built which typically includes a tagline/slogan, logo, and other marketing assets which will be used to promote and reinforce Champaign's unique identity to residents and visitors. The branding campaign will promote the greater City of Champaign community, not the municipal government.

Once a community brand is developed, a community marketing campaign is used to promote Champaign to meet established goals and reach various target audiences. Depending upon the specific target audience (i.e. residents, visitors, businesses), different types of advertising and promotional opportunities are used to share Champaign's brand identity to attract the attention and interest of that audience. Typical marketing strategies include the use of paid advertising (i.e. website ads, social media ads, billboards, television and radio commercials, print ads, direct marketing), printed promotional materials, a community-branded website, coordinated social media campaigns, partner and sponsorship opportunities, promotional giveaway items, and other strategies to promote Champaign's unique brand.

The cost to develop and implement a community marketing campaign varies widely based upon the size, goals, and budget for the campaign. City staff reviewed eleven Request for Proposals (RFP) that other municipalities have published which sought professional assistance to develop branding and marketing campaigns. These communities include Rochester, MN; Overland Park, KS; Shawnee, KS; Gillette, WY; Manassas, VA; Wheatridge, CO; Cleveland Heights, OH; Bay City, MI; Lewisville, TX; McKinney, TX; and Montgomery County, VA. The RFPS included branding and marketing projects similar to that proposed in this report, though some also included additional requirements (i.e. goal setting, strategic planning, public relations services). Five municipalities disclosed their maximum project budgets in their RFPs, which ranged from \$60,000 to \$250,000. Each RFP differed in its specific requirements and the communities researched had populations ranging from approximately 32,000 to 193,000 residents.

3. Professional Marketing Assistance Recommended. To successfully implement this Key Project the Administration recommends the City secure the services of a professional marketing firm. City staff do not possess the skills and expertise needed to create and launch a comprehensive marketing campaign at the high level required for this project to be successful. In the FY2022-23 annual budget, the City Council allocated \$140,000 in one-time funds to initiate a two-year pilot project to accomplish this Key Project. City staff recommend using the budgeted funds to hire a professional marketing firm to develop the branding and marketing campaign, including the cost of advertising and promotional materials.

City staff recommends using a competitive RFP process to identify and select a professional marketing firm to assist with accomplishing this project. Pending Council direction, City staff will incorporate Council feedback then create and issue an RFP this fall. Staff will evaluate all vendor submissions and identify the firm which provided the best proposal to accomplish this Key Project. Staff will then finalize a written agreement with the selected vendor which will be presented to the Council for its review and consideration of approval.

After a contract is approved by Council, City staff will work collaboratively with the vendor to gather community input prior to developing the branding and marketing campaign. Staff recommends the vendor be required to gather community input through a survey and other public engagement tools. Staff also recommends requiring the vendor to conduct focus groups with

community stakeholders to gather additional information that will be used when developing the branding campaign. The City will work with the selected vendor to ensure they gather valuable public input and ideas from across our diverse community. This includes working with neighborhood groups, the Champaign County Black Chamber of Commerce, the New American Welcome Center, and other community stakeholder groups to promote broad community participation. After gathering and analyzing this information, the vendor will develop a branding campaign that is both unique and authentic to Champaign. After the vendor develops the branding campaign proposal, it will be presented to the Council during a Study Session meeting to gather Council's feedback and direction prior to moving forward.

Following the Study Session, the vendor will incorporate Council's feedback to finalize the branding campaign and then develop and implement an effective marketing strategy to promote Champaign's positive attributes and strengthen community pride. After implementation, the vendor will track various metrics (i.e., ad campaign reach/impressions, click-through rate, website hits, etc.) to monitor the effectiveness and reach of the marketing campaign. This data will be regularly reviewed with City staff so that adjustments can be made as deemed appropriate.

This two-year pilot project was budgeted with one-time funds to develop and initiate the community marketing campaign. Staff proposed a two-year pilot to give the marketing campaign enough time to begin to grow and resonate with residents and visitors before analyzing the data and making decisions about extending, discontinuing, or expanding the campaign in subsequent years. Near the end of the initial two-year period, the Administration will evaluate the overall effectiveness of the marketing campaign and present the evaluation to Council prior to seeking additional funding to extend or expand the duration or reach of the campaign.

4. Draft Campaign Objectives. The branding and marketing campaign needs to not only be authentic and resonate with residents, it also must be flexible and strong in order to catch the attention of travelers and promote business retention and attraction. To ensure success in all these areas, the City needs to clearly identify the primary objectives of the marketing campaign. City staff reviewed Council direction concerning this Key Project and reviewed campaign objectives identified by other communities in their RFPs. City staff then developed the following draft campaign objectives for Council review and feedback:

- Promote Champaign as a wonderful place in which to live, learn, work, visit, and explore.
- Identify and promote what makes Champaign unique and appealing to residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Develop an authentic branding campaign that resonates with residents and stakeholders.
- Strengthen the pride residents have in calling Champaign "home."
- Promote Champaign as an ideal community for individuals, families, travelers, and businesses looking for a place to live, visit, or locate.

5. Proposed RFP Evaluation Criteria. Pending Council direction, staff anticipates issuing a RFP to identify and select a professional marketing firm to complete this project. Prior to reviewing any vendor proposals, staff will establish a scoring matrix to aid in evaluating and comparing the proposals. The scoring matrix will help staff to identify the proposal that best

meets the needs of the City as outlined in the RFP. Each vendor proposal will be evaluated on multiple criteria, which is anticipated to include: vendor’s familiarity and knowledge of the Champaign community, vendor’s proposed public engagement strategy, vendor’s experience creating unique and authentic community branding campaigns, vendor’s experience developing and managing effective community marketing campaigns, vendor’s proposed budget, vendor’s proposed implementation timeline, and vendor’s ability to meet the City’s workforce participation goals. City staff will ensure that the vendor selected for this project complies with the City’s Equal Opportunity in Purchasing Ordinance and Champaign Diversity Advancement Program (CDAP) Good Faith Efforts requirements. Staff will also contact all CDAP-registered vendors that provide marketing services and invite them to review the RFP and consider submitting a proposal.

6. Next Steps. Pending Council direction, staff will begin writing the RFP that will be used to select the marketing firm to accomplish this Council Key Project. Below is a tentative timeline which outlines the action steps and anticipated completion dates for each step of the project:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| • Council Study Session - Community Marketing Campaign | September 2022 |
| • City Issues Request for Proposals | November 2022 |
| • Review of Vendor Proposals and Vendor Selection | January 2023 |
| • City Council Review/Approval of Vendor Contract | February 2023 |
| • Public Engagement/Survey/Focus Groups | April 2023 |
| • Vendor Develops Community Branding Campaign | May 2023 |
| • Council Study Session - Proposed Branding Campaign | June 2023 |
| • Vendor Develops Community Marketing Campaign | July 2023 |
| • Implementation of Community Marketing Campaign | September 2023 |

F. Alternatives:

1. Direct staff to issue a Request for Proposals and select a professional marketing firm to develop a community branding and marketing campaign as outlined in this report and inclusive of Council direction.
2. Provide alternative direction to staff.

G. Discussion of Alternatives:

Alternative 1 would direct staff to use a Request for Proposals process to select a marketing firm to develop and implement a community branding and marketing campaign.

a. Advantages

- Advances work on a Council Key Project to develop a marketing campaign to promote Champaign’s positive attributes and strengthen community pride.
- Uses a competitive process to gather proposals from professional marketing firms with the knowledge and expertise needed to accomplish this Key Project.
- Clearly defines the City’s objectives for the marketing campaign.

- Provides Council the opportunity to provide direction regarding the proposed procurement process and scope of work to be included in the RFP.

b. Disadvantages

- Funds spent to develop and implement the marketing campaign cannot be spent on other City projects.
- Staff time spent managing the development and implementation of the community marketing campaign cannot be spent on other City projects.

Alternative 2 would direct staff to not proceed with the community marketing project as proposed and allows Council to provide staff with alternative direction.

a. Advantages

- Provides an opportunity for Council to provide other directions on how best to accomplish this Key Project.
- Budgeted funds for this project could be reallocated to other City priorities.
- Staff time could be reallocated to other City projects.

b. Disadvantages

- Progress advancing this Key Project may be delayed or less successful without the assistance of a professional marketing firm.
- City staff lacks the expertise needed to develop and implement the type of marketing campaign required to accomplish this Key Project.

H. Community Input: Public input was not sought on this topic, but members of the public will have an opportunity to provide public comment during the Study Session. As proposed in this report, the selected marketing firm will be required to gather community input prior to developing the branding and marketing campaign. Staff recommends the vendor be required to gather community input through a survey and other public engagement tools. Staff also recommends requiring the vendor to conduct focus groups with community stakeholders to gather additional information that will be used when developing the branding campaign. The City will work with the selected vendor to ensure they gather valuable public input and ideas from across our diverse community.

I. Budget Impact: Council approved a one-time allocation of \$140,000 in the FY2022-23 budget to fund a two-year pilot project to accomplish this Key Project. If the pilot project proves to be successful, additional, recurring funding to expand the duration or reach of the marketing campaign may be sought in future City budget proposals.

J. Staffing Impact: Approximately 35 hours of staff time were spent researching other community branding projects and preparing this report. If Council authorizes staff to proceed with this project as proposed in this report, it is estimated an additional 120 hours of staff time will be spent to prepare, release, and evaluate responses to the RFP. Additional staff time will

also be required to manage the project, including public engagement, branding development, and implementation of the marketing campaign.

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

Jeff Hamilton
Communications Manager

Joan Walls
Deputy City Manager