



# Memo

City Manager's Office

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TO: Mayor and Ames City Council Members

FROM: Steven L. Schainker, City Manager

DATE: August 6, 2010

SUBJECT: VISIONING/BRANDING

One of the City Council's top goals is to CREATE AND PROMOTE A COMMUNITY VISION. Over the years, many organizations have attempted to create a unifying vision for our community, but none of these past efforts involved leadership from the City Council. To rectify this, the City Manager was instructed to: 1) present a report on the Dubuque Foundation's effort to create a community vision and 2) draft a Request For Proposal (RFP) for distribution to potential visioning consultants.

1) **The Dubuque ENVISION Experience**

The attached memo from Susan Gwiasda summarizes the Dubuque experience. Their process was accomplished without leadership from an outside consultant with costs paid for from a \$75,000 grant from the racing industry. It would appear this effort was not designed to be a true community visioning process, but rather an effort to identify the top 10 project priorities that had the most public support. In addition, the City of Dubuque was not a major participant in this endeavor.

2) **Draft RFP**

I have prepared the attached RFP for the City Council's consideration. I want to thank Jeff Johnson, President of the ISU Alumni Association, for his guidance in developing this document. Jeff has extensive experience in providing this type of consulting service for a visioning process through his work with other private and public entities.

Most successful visioning experiences that I am familiar with have utilized the services of an outside consultant. While Jeff or perhaps others in the community possess the necessary skills to assist with this visioning process, consultants that are not from the city in which they are working are viewed as having fewer biases. Therefore, an outside consultant can have more credibility in leading this type of effort. From my research, it would appear the cost for this type of work by a consultant could range from \$50,000 to \$100,000.

If the Council decides to proceed with the distribution of an RFP for visioning consulting services, I believe it would be important to establish a citizen committee to assist the staff in reviewing any proposals that are received and make a recommendation to the Council.

I have also attached a list of possible consulting firms that should be sent a copy of the RFP. I would welcome any suggestions you might have to add to this list.

### **NEXT STEPS**

There are at least four questions that the City Council should consider when discussing this goal.

- 1) Do you still want to pursue the goal of creating a vision for the community?**
- 2) If so, when is the appropriate time to begin the process that will necessitate extensive public input?**
- 3) Who should lead this endeavor, a paid consultant or community volunteers?**
- 4) Since no funds have been budgeted for this endeavor, from where should the funds come?**
- 5) Who should be represented on a steering committee to oversee this effort? I would suggest:**
  - **Steve Schainker, City Manager**
  - **Susan Gwiasda, Public Relations Official**
  - **Iowa State University Administration**
  - **Ames Community School District/Gilbert School District**
  - **Convention and Visitors Bureau**
  - **Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development Commission**
  - **Neighborhood Representative**
  - **Smart Growth Alliance**
  - **Mary Greeley Medical Center**
  - **Jeff Johnson, President of the ISU Alumni Association**
  - **ISU Student**
  - **Others?**

attachments



# Memo

City Manager's Office  
515 Clark Avenue ♦ Ames, IA

23 a

**To:** Steve Schainker, City Manager  
**From:** Susan Gwiasda, Public Relations Officer  
**Date:** July 29, 2010  
**RE:** Dubuque, Iowa, Visioning Program

The Dubuque visioning program, ENVIS10N, kicked off with a free community breakfast in July, 2005, as a process to make Dubuque a better place to live, work, and play. The goal was to identify a top ten list of projects for the community to direct its resources. By making this initiative a grass-roots effort and allowing every citizen the opportunity to participate, ENVIS10N generated a short-list of projects that excited the residents and enjoyed broad-based community support.

By 2010, the majority of ideas identified in the ENVIS10N process had been started or completed.

ENVIS10N was a joint project of the Greater Dubuque Foundation and the Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce. It was funded through a \$75,000 Dubuque Racing Association grant. Although the City of Dubuque supported the project and stayed involved, local government was not a major participant. ENVIS10N partners believed the process needed citizen participation, citizen ownership, and citizen buy-in to be a success.

Nancy Van Milligen is the executive director of the Greater Dubuque Foundation. She explained that ENVIS10N grew out of a failed bond referendum to fund a minor league baseball stadium on riverfront property. As part of a massive riverfront redevelopment project, the City of Dubuque was approached by a business owner who would bring a Triple-A baseball team to Dubuque if the City would build the stadium. A vote was held, and the initiative failed by a large majority. At that point, it was clear the community did not have unified view on its future, Van Milligen said. As a result, the ENVIS10N project was created.

"This process was all about defining the future for Dubuque," Van Milligen said. "What did our residents want for their community for the future? We needed a plan, and we needed to identify those items."

A steering committee was formed including Van Milligen, Steward Sandstrom (former) president of the Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce, a representative of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, a business community representative and others. The Steering Committee provided direction for the marketing materials, the statistical validation studies, and helped spread the word on the program.

Through hundreds of meetings including everything from established civic group meetings, professional organization meetings, coffee clubs, hobby groups, retiree gatherings, breakfast groups, open houses, public forums, and structured focus groups, a list of 2,332 ideas developed. The ideas were sorted, summarized, and consolidated to 200 ideas. The ideas were not capital improvement projects, but broader initiatives, programs, and services.

All the ideas were submitted to the Selection Committee, a group of 21 Dubuque citizens who applied to the Steering Committee and were accepted to the position of reviewing the suggestions. The Selection Committee members were picked to represent the community by gender, race, age, profession, and geographic location of their home. The Selection Committee reviewed all suggestions and refined the list down to 100 ideas. The ideas were brought back to the community for a vote before being whittled down to 30 ideas. With the assistance of the Selection Committee, those ideas became the 10 finalists that could become community projects by 2010. (The ideas are listed in abbreviated form on last page.)

After the 10 ideas were announced in early January 2006, community groups stepped forward to become “owners” of the ideas and help build them into reality. The process was successful, Van Milligen said, “Because we did a really good job of reaching out and engaging those people who don’t usually come to the table.”

Of the \$75,000 budget, the funding was divided three ways:

\$25,000	Communications Consultant
\$25,000	Marketing materials & events
\$25,000	Vernon Research Group (confirming validity of ideas)

The process included developing a community “tool kit” to encourage groups to gather and discuss the community’s future.

Since completing the process, Van Milligen has assisted Marion, Dyersville, and Marshalltown, Iowa, as well as Galena, Ill., in their own ENVIS10N process. The budget for the Galena, Ill., process is \$10,000, and many communities have funded the program at much lower levels.

**In summary**, the Dubuque, Iowa, visioning process is an interesting opportunity to determine resident support of a variety of potential community betterment projects. Although the Dubuque project budget was completed at a cost of \$75,000, the project leaders agree it could be accomplished with less funding. The ENVIS10N process provides a wonderful opportunity to engage residents and let them share their ideas to shape their community’s future. However ENVIS10N should not be considered a community branding experience, an opportunity to bring a community’s major entities together, or a process to develop a single community vision.

## **ENVIS10N's Top 10 List:**

### **America's River Phase II**

Expand the Mississippi River Museum campus with Rivers of America Museum, large screen theater, children's museum, science center, eco-tours, water taxis and river research center. Restore the Shot Tower, utilize the Brewery, introduce canals and boardwalks with restaurants, shops and recreational activities.

### **Bilingual Education Curriculum**

Partner with teachers, parents and university faculty to develop, establish and integrate foreign language from early childhood through high school. Encourage every child to speak two languages by high school graduation. Better prepare our future workforce and attract businesses to the area.

### **Community-wide Wireless**

Make Dubuque a "wireless" city by creating community-wide wireless accessibility to the Internet available to residents, businesses, law enforcement, governments and visitors. Encourage economic growth, attract businesses and retain young people, provide technology tools to fire and police for greater safety.

### **Community Health Center**

Build a Community Health Center that would provide high quality affordable medical, dental and preventive care for all, regardless of ability to pay, for those who are uninsured and underinsured.

### **Indoor/Outdoor Performing Arts Center**

Build a state-of-the-art indoor and outdoor performing arts center to present the finest in music, opera, theater, dance and educational presentations. The facility could be constructed at The Port of Dubuque with true concert hall acoustics.

### **Integrated Walking/Biking/Hiking Trail System**

Create integrated trail system through Dubuque and Asbury to encourage recreation, wellness. Connect trail systems to the Port of Dubuque Riverwalk, Heritage Trail, E.B. Lyons and Mines of Spain. Develop safe, paved trails with website and maps, restrooms, benches, bike racks.

### **Library Services Expansion**

Expand city library services by renovating the historic portion of Carnegie Stout Library and establishing a new west-end location. Create space to expand the existing collection, increase computer/Internet resources and offer naturally lit reading areas and a coffee bar.

### **Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services**

Enhance and strengthen in- and out-patient mental health/substance abuse services, including children with ADHD/autism. Advocate for improved funding system for mental health, substance abuse services. Expand services for children with ADHD/autism.

### **Passenger Train Service**

Develop a passenger train service for business and pleasure travel to out-of-town accommodations, meetings/convention, attractions or cultural events. Explore trains with fine dining and entertainment options to areas such as Chicago. Make it easier for tourists to visit.

### **Warehouse District Revitalization**

Identify a Warehouse District by converting buildings into multi-use structures containing businesses, restaurants, shops and residences. Develop a registry defining buildings in the district, and include information regarding ownership, past usage, present status and structural integrity. Encourage investment by potential developers.

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

## **VISIONING/BRANDING SERVICES FOR THE CITY OF AMES, IOWA**

Submission Date: XXXX 1, 2010



## **Introduction and Purpose**

The City of Ames, Iowa is soliciting competitive proposals for consulting services from firms that specialize in visioning/branding. The services will include the creation of a unifying vision for the community and the identification of a brand that can be utilized to promote the community both internally as well as externally.

The specific objectives of the services are to:

- Work with the community to establish a common vision that sets our city apart from other cities;
- Create actions steps that our citizens will rally around to accomplish the proposed vision;
- Develop a brand identity that will guide a comprehensive communication strategy directed towards our current citizens as well as a marketing plan to prospective citizens who we hope to attract to our community; and
- Influence policy direction to the Mayor and City Council that will influence major policy plans such as the Capital Improvements Plan, Land Use Policy Plan, Park Master Plan, Long-Range Transportation Plan, etc.

## **City Overview**

Centrally and conveniently located in the heart of the Midwest and Iowa, Ames is known for its healthy, stable economy, flourishing cultural environment, and the world-renowned Iowa State University.

Designated as a “Five Star Quality of Life Metro” by Expansion Management Magazine, Ames is an attractive location for new businesses to locate and for existing businesses to expand. World class companies including 3M, Barilla, Becker Underwood, Boehringer Ingelheim, Hach, Sauer-Danfoss, Syngenta, and many others are located in Ames.

The City of Ames achieved the second highest grades for quality in ten areas in a new book, The New Rating Guide to Life in America's Small Cities. Ames ranked 2nd out of 189 cities that qualify in the following areas: climate/environment, diversions, economics, education, community assets, health care, public safety, transportation, and urban proximity.

Ames recently was selected as the 9<sup>th</sup> Best Place To Live by CNNMoney.com as well as one of Top 20 Best Places To Work by Employment Review Magazine and BestJobsUSA.com.

As a vibrant circle of university, community, and opportunity, Ames offers a charming small town atmosphere with all the amenities of a big city. The community's commitment to excellence is contagious.

## **The Challenge For The Selected Consultant**

The City is blessed with a highly educated citizenry who cares deeply about local governmental issues that impact their lives. Therefore, many of our residents are vocal participants in local government deliberations. At the same time, it has been difficult to gauge the opinions of the silent majority of our citizens who have chosen not to participate in these civic deliberations regarding some of our most critical issues.

Over the years, citizens who have participated have reflected diverse perspectives that have failed to result in a consensus about what the City should become. **The challenge for the selected consultant will be 1) to implement a process that will assure all perspectives of our citizens are solicited and 2) to create a clear vision for our community.**

## **RFP Process/Desired Qualifications**

All submitted proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- *Experience:* expertise of those individuals who will be performing the services specified in the RFP (See Scope of Work and Deliverables). Some experience working with cities is preferred.
- *Process:* quality of proposed process for each work step. It is important that the process 1) assures participation by a large cross-section of the Ames population in terms of numbers and differing perspectives, 2) engages new participants in the local government issues discussions, and 3) understands and works to avoid mistakes encountered in previous visioning/branding efforts.
- *Comprehension:* understanding of the City's objectives for the requested consulting services as well as the Ames community.
- *Cost:* proposed budget and fees for proposed services.

Prior to the final selection, a group of finalists may be invited to Ames to interview for the project. A contract will then be negotiated with the selected firm.

## **Scope of Work and Deliverables**

The scope of work includes 1) the identification of a clear vision statement emphasizing what our citizens hope the City of Ames will become that makes us unique among our competitor cities and 2) the creation of a brand identity that will serve as the foundation for a comprehensive marketing and communications plan.



To accomplish this work the selected firm will be expected to:

- Conduct a SWOT Analysis
- Solicit Stakeholder Input
- Perform a Competitor/Peer Analysis
- Provide an implementation plan to accomplish the vision statement and brand identity recommendation
- Make three public presentations with findings (two for general community and one for the City Council)

## **Proposal Content Requirements**

All proposals must include the following information:

*Contact Information:* The legal name of the firm, street address, and telephone number; the name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the person to whom correspondence should be directed; and the address and telephone number where the work is to be undertaken.

*Background:* A general description of the firm, including structure (i.e. individual, partnership, corporation, joint venture).

*Qualifications of Consultants:* The resume of the proposed project manager and each member of the project team who will work on the project, along with an explanation of what tasks each team member will perform. In addition, indicate the approximate number of hours each team member will commit to the project per task.

*Experience/Expertise:* A listing and description of similar visioning/branding projects completed by your firm. This should include client references that the City may contact concerning your firm's performance.

*Overview of Project Approach:* A description of how each project task will be accomplished.

*Proposed Budget/Fees:* Estimated cost of the services to be performed, including a breakdown of the cost by task of 1) the basic services described in RFP, 2) additional services (if applicable), and 3) sub-consultant fees (if applicable). This breakdown should include labor (hours and billing rates by position) as well as other costs, including travel, meals, and printing. Include an estimated timeline to complete the project. The project is expected to begin **XXXXXX 1, 2010**.

## **Submission of Proposals**

Please submit eight copies of your proposal no later than 5:00 p.m. on XXXXX 1, 2010 to the following address:

Mr. Steven L. Schainker, City Manager  
Ames City Hall  
515 Clark Avenue  
Ames, Iowa 50010

All questions related to any part of this RFP should be directed to Steve Schainker at (515) 239-5101. It is expected that a consultant will be selected by XXXXX 1, 2010.

***The City of Ames is open to non-local consulting firms and reserves the right to reject or accept any and all proposals.***

**LIST OF POTENTIAL  
VISIONING/BRANDING CONSULTANTS**

**National:**

**North Star Destination Strategies**

220 Disspayne Drive  
Nashville, Tennessee 37214  
[www.northstarideas.com](http://www.northstarideas.com)

**Total Destination Management**

20212 Sw 86<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Tualatin, Oregon 97062  
[www.destinationbranding.com](http://www.destinationbranding.com)

**City Image**

1807 Market Blvd., #300  
Hastings, Minnesota 55033  
[www.city-image.com](http://www.city-image.com)

**Brand Endeavor**

Marina Del Ray, California 90292  
[Christie@brandendeavor.com](mailto:Christie@brandendeavor.com)

**Arnett Muldrow and Associates**

P.O. Box 4151  
Greenville, South Carolina 29608  
[www.arnettmuldrow.com](http://www.arnettmuldrow.com)

**Local:**

***Flynn Wright***, Des Moines, Iowa ([www.flynnwright.com](http://www.flynnwright.com))

***Mauck-Groves***, Des Moines, Iowa ([www.mauckgroves.com](http://www.mauckgroves.com))

***Innova***, Ames, Iowa ([www.innovaideasandservices.com](http://www.innovaideasandservices.com))

***Integer Group***, Des Moines, Iowa ([www.integer.com](http://www.integer.com))

***McLellan Marketing Group***, Des Moines, Iowa ([www.mclellanmarketing.com](http://www.mclellanmarketing.com))

***Strategic America***, Des Moines, Iowa ([www.strategicamerica.com](http://www.strategicamerica.com))

***ME&V***, Cedar Rapids, Iowa ([www.meandv.com](http://www.meandv.com))

***Hellman & Associates*** Waterloo, Iowa ([www.hellman.com](http://www.hellman.com))