



CITY OF PACIFIC GROVE

AGENDA REPORT

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Councilman Rudy Fischer & Mark Brodeur, Director, CEDD

Meeting Date: April 4, 2018

Subject: City of Pacific Grove Marketing and Branding Study

CEQA: This action does not constitute a “project” as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines section 15378.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend that City staff include funding for a City of Pacific Grove marketing and branding study within the proposed Fiscal Year 2018-19 budget.

DISCUSSION

The City of Pacific Grove is different things to different people. It has been called “Butterfly Town USA” and “The Last Home Town”. Others see it primarily as a “City of Homes” with “business and industry...compatible with its residential character.” But what is Pacific Grove to our residents and the tourists and other visitors who come to our city - and what should it be?

At its June 29, 2017 meeting the City Council removed several items from the city’s budget, including an expenditure of \$42,000 for a branding study. At the Chamber of Commerce’s Marketing Summit on September 21, 2017, it became apparent that the removal of that money may have been short-sighted.

It is anticipated that during FY 2017-18 the city’s businesses will contribute about \$9 million of the city’s \$22 million revenue total - or 40% of the city’s revenue. But hotels, restaurants, and other businesses in Pacific Grove do not enjoy the same level of recognition and reputation as similar entities in other cities.

Branding is not a logo. City Branding is part of an overall Placemaking strategy.

Branding, done correctly by combining research, strategy, creativity and long-term investment, is actually a reflection of the spirit or personality of a community. Placemaking does the same. Both can connect directly with existing residents, potential buyers and local business owners to help instill a sense of community pride, increase community cohesion, attract business investment and improve economic performance.

To brand a place, you need to determine how a community wants to see itself. This refers to all members of the community, including various age groups, socioeconomic categories, retail, local businesses and major employers. It's about tapping into that distinct persona and figuring out how to bring it to life.

City branding builds upon the assets and values of a community to create a unified and consistent place narrative targeting residents, prospective investors, and visitors. But despite being part of place development practices, it is often associated with city logos and tourism marketing campaigns. Some might even find the term rather degrading as it implies the commercialization of cities as products rather than as soulful places.

Our City's name and reputation is the property of the city and must be protected, nurtured, and grown. By growing and enhancing the city's name and reputation both our city and our businesses should benefit from more recognition and business – resulting in more tax revenue to the city.

In the commercial world, logos, slogans, and design are very important for companies so that their customers recognise their brands in a retail environment where quick purchase decisions are made. When we hear the names Pepsi, BMW, Volvo, and Lufthansa Airlines, for instance, we immediately associate the company with an experience. It could be “I prefer Pepsi over Coke” or “The best airline I ever travelled on was Lufthansa”.

But the names of Cities and Counties don't resonate in quite the same way. Pacific Grove doesn't provide a “product” in a car lot or supermarket or provide a “service” to take you somewhere. People do, however, associate some cities with an experience or a “reputation”, while not seeing others in the same way. Branding can help visitors associate a community with positive experiences or events, and that is something the city – and our business community – could use.

Most people remember the ‘I ♥NY’ and ‘I AMsterdam’ branding campaigns of years past, and instantly recognize those destinations by associating the slogan with the city. Pacific Grove suffers from people liking the city even if they don't know where it is - or even when they are in it. It is likely to take a professional and concerted “branding” campaign to change that.

Every community that wants to be a success must find a way to make the community more *identifiable* and *distinctive*. It must develop a brand. Branding is about reputation and recognition, identifying and developing that distinctiveness, and then actively managing the city's brand.

A good brand strategy builds a reputation and a good feeling about the community; not just with the outside world, but also among residents and people in other nearby communities. A good brand strategy raises awareness about the community - and may even have an impact on the community's reputation.

Pacific Grove's economic development model is focused on *placemaking* and branding is important for community identification as part of a larger economic development program. There may not be anyone in Pacific Grove, however, who knows the proper way to develop a

“brand” and then conduct a branding/ marketing campaign. For that reason alone, it is necessary to hire an outside professional firm to develop this for the City.

FISCAL IMPACT

The branding and marketing study costs of \$42,000 will be included in the Proposed Community & Economic Development Department.

GOAL ALIGNMENT

Placemaking

ATTACHMENTS

1. The Branding Process

Respectfully submitted,



Rudy Fischer
Councilmember



Mark Brodeur
Director, CEDD

Reviewed by,



Benjamin Harvey
City Manager

The Branding Study Process

The branding process begins with Placemakers gathering information about the City; including a site visit, review of any existing messaging documents, visitor information data, and a current strategic plan, if available. The consulting organization will hold meetings with city stakeholders. This may include city officials, business owners, those working in the city's tourism sector, residents, and others. A contact at the City will invite stakeholders and arrange for a meeting location. The first meeting is an informational intake meeting based on a Branding Blueprint document.

In addition to information obtained from those at the informational intake meeting, the consultant may request additional contacts to conduct phone interviews. Interview transcripts of any phone interviews will be provided to the City.

After the consulting organization has gathered information from all sources, they will identify key messages and develop the branding document. This will then be presented to the stakeholder group at the second meeting for feedback. The goal is to create messages that reach and resonate with the city's correct target audience to achieve a successful visitor attraction outcome.

What is Placemaking?

Placemaking is a way to improve a neighborhood, a city, or a region by allowing people to collectively reimagine and reinvent the public spaces as the heart of that community. This can strengthen the connection between people and the places they share. Placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize those values our community shares. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use by integrating the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and how it has evolved.

Placemaking pays close attention to how these physical, social, ecological, cultural, and even spiritual qualities of a place are intimately intertwined. Using community-based participation at its center, an effective Placemaking process capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, and it results in the creation of quality public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness, and well-being.