
TO: Mayor Mitch Colvin, Mayor Pro Tem Theodore W. Mohn, and Fayetteville City Council Members
CC: City Manager Doug Hewett
Kevin Arata, Corporate Communications Director – City of Fayetteville
FROM: Robert Van Geons, President & CEO
DATE: November 19, 2018
RE: *Community-wide Collaborative Branding Project - Request for Funding*

We are grateful for the guidance and support City staff have provided our Fayetteville Cumberland Collaborative Branding Committee (FCCBC) over the past year. Working together, we have engaged top tier experts and have identified a highly-qualified and experienced agency to lead our efforts in developing a dynamic brand platform, designed to unify and advance our shared efforts to promote the best assets of Fayetteville, Cumberland County, and our community as a whole.

As you may recall, a working group was formed in 2017 to discuss collaborative marketing. By early 2018, the group expanded and became, what we now call, the FCCBC. Partners include the City of Fayetteville, Cumberland County, the Tourism Development Authority (TDA), Cumberland County Schools, Crown Complex, Greater Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce, The Arts Council of Fayetteville/Cumberland County, Fayetteville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Vision 2026, Cool Spring Downtown District, and the Fayetteville Cumberland County Economic Development Corporation (FCEDC).

We are pursuing the development of a community-wide branding strategy to:

- Establish a clear and common brand that encapsulates and leverages the community's strengths, assets, diversity, vision, and potential;
- Develop a common branding platform that all partners may incorporate and expand upon in their individual promotion, messaging, and marketing strategies.

The creation of this centralized messaging and brand identity is intended to:

- Aggressively promote Fayetteville and Cumberland County as a superior destination in which to live, work, visit, explore, create, or grow a business;
- Differentiate our community, by elevating our brand above others with similar names and demographics;
- Demonstrate the unity and collaboration that exists between our public, private, and non-profit partners to the local community and external audiences.

This summer, the committee developed a Request for Proposals (RFP) and sought solicitations from highly qualified agencies experienced in branding both governments and community organizations. The RFP generated nine proposals which the FCCBC reviewed based on 10 criteria including relevant experience/qualifications, local engagement models, demonstrated brand integration across partners with multiple verticals, originality, quality of creative work, and value for the price. After the committee identified four finalists, references and past clients were contacted to gauge methodology and overall satisfaction. The FCCBC then interviewed each finalist before selecting the best agency for our community's branding effort: North Star Ideas.

North Star Ideas will advise FCCBC during all stages of the project and will:

- Review /analyze all data and research that has been previously compiled;
- Conduct research among community stakeholders and external audiences to identify existing assets, advantages, perceptions, opportunities, and challenges regarding our area's image;
- Create a common brand guide and resource/promotional content library;
- Facilitate brand implementation, promotion, and stakeholder engagement;
- Recommend long-term implementation and evaluation methods.

The committee recognizes that without consensus and advocacy from all partners, our community will not realize the full benefits of collaboration. The proposed budget of the branding project is \$150,000-\$200,000. We respectfully request the City of Fayetteville provide \$25,000 to support this initiative. To date, the following requests and commitments have been made:

TDA	\$50,000 (Committed)
FCEDC	\$25,000 (Committed)
Vision 2026	\$25,000 (Committed)
City of Fayetteville	\$25,000 (Request in Progress)
Cumberland County	\$25,000 (Request in Progress)
Other Sources	\$25,000 (Pending)

Regarding use of City funds, your contribution will only be used to pay for direct expenses related to the contract with North Star Ideas. Funds would be restricted for approved uses, and we will specifically account for those expenditures in reports to the City. Additionally, we look forward to providing regular updates throughout the process.

As previously discussed, developing the brand and brand platform sets the foundation for community-wide adoption and implementation. While this funding request will complete the branding process, each partner will be responsible for the costs associated with their organization's implementation. For the City of Fayetteville, we recommend committing \$75,000 - \$100,000 in FY2020 and 2021, toward this outcome.

We recognize that this is a substantial request that may require additional discussion. FCEDC, with the support of your Communications team, would be happy to present the full scope of this project at a future meeting, if desired.

Sincerely,



Robert M. Van Geons, CECD