



THE HERITAGE AREA OF
ANNAPOLIS,
LONDON TOWN,
AND SOUTH COUNTY

ALTSCHA, Inc.

Request for Proposals

Organizational Rebranding

Release Date: July 9, 2021
Proposal due: July 30, 2021

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

Carol Benson, Ph.D., Executive Director
ALTSCHA, Inc. (Four Rivers Heritage Area)
Phone: 410-627-6018 – E-mail: PZBENS00@acounty.org

Background: About ALTSCHA, Inc.

Annapolis London Town & South County Heritage Area, Inc. (ALTSCHA, DBA Four Rivers Heritage Area) is one of 13 certified heritage areas in the State of Maryland. Maryland Heritage Areas are locally designated, locally managed regions where public and private partners make commitments to preserving historical, cultural, and natural resources for sustainable economic development through heritage tourism. It is a partnership of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, Anne Arundel County, The City of Annapolis, the Town of Highland Beach, and heritage-related nonprofit organizations and businesses that encourages economic development through resource enhancement and heritage tourism. Certified by the State of Maryland in 2001, the Heritage Area incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 2003.

The mission of the Four Rivers Heritage Area is to advance, support and promote the natural, historic, and cultural resources of the region.

Heritage tourism is a dynamic force in the regional economy of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, incorporating elements of destination marketing, hospitality, historical and cultural preservation, and open-space conservation essential to the sustainable viability of this diverse area. ALTSCHA works in close collaboration with our Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) partner, Visit Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, and our marketing efforts are closely allied; however, ALTSCHA's mission is distinct, as our deep commitment and goal is to advance, support and promote all our nonprofit heritage partners no matter their size, their budget, or their resources, through our visitor products and our web-based activities, including our websites.

The Marketing identity of "Four Rivers Heritage Area" or "Four Rivers: The Heritage Area of Annapolis, London Town & South County" was established in 2004 as a brand to replace the acronym ALTSCHA, Inc., which was perceived as lacking in popular appeal. The introduction of the Four Rivers identity at the time stated: "These two words describe both the environment fashioned by the Severn, South, Rhode, and West Rivers, and the cultural landscape that has been created over the centuries. These four rivers have fostered direct connections to the Chesapeake Bay, the region, the nation, and the world. The people who settled here and the history that has played out along its shores are all an essential part of our understanding of the rich heritage encompassed by the name four rivers and the area it represents. Our new logo showing the Annapolis waterfront is adapted from the famous 1850 Sachse engraving, 'A Bird's Eye View of Annapolis.'"

Maryland's Heritage Areas have dual functions, and ALTSCHA is no exception. We are an umbrella organization that serves our stakeholders, through our activities such as grant programs, collaborative events, workshops, networking, and more; but we are also a consumer-facing entity that promotes heritage attractions and events for the public. Our website was upgraded in March 2017 with this dual character. ALTSCHA has a fully mobile, visitor-friendly website (www.fourriversheritage.org) designed primarily for visitors, with resources for partners and stakeholders also included (but less prominent on the homepage). The goal of all communications efforts is to drive public traffic to and across stakeholder websites and increase visitation to heritage attractions, in person and through virtual experiences. The homepage and major sections of the site (including attractions listings, a calendar of events, and an interactive map) are designed to inform the visitor -- and potential

visitor using the internet to plan a trip -- of things to do and see while they are here. This aspect is crucial for the marketing name that we use – it should appeal to the visitor and reflect the character of our area and themes.

ALTSCHA utilizes a Marketing and Communications strategy designed for reaching its two audiences:

- (1) Visitors, through a Visitor-Facing Website: The current website provides listings for “Things To Do” at several dozen non- profit heritage attractions; through a dynamic, responsive, image-rich, easy-to-navigate website, ALTSCHA aims to appeal to visitors and potential visitors of all ages, including young students and families planning vacations to central Maryland and/or the D.C./Baltimore area, as well as our target audience of heritage tourists, who “travel to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past.” An active Events Calendar includes at least 50 monthly event listings during the tourist season of May to October. For local awareness, ALTSCHA utilizes social media outlets Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, to optimize local awareness of our heritage partners and events. The target audience for this entire section of the website wants to find what they are looking for quickly and directly, without wading through “Who We Are” information.
- (2) Stakeholders, through a subsection of the website with resources: ALTSCHA partners and stakeholders use the website to access information related to the heritage area’s grant programs, educational programs, research resources, and publications, and to learn more about historic preservation initiatives and programs. Staff frequently makes announcements and edits stakeholder information on these pages, which are frequently updated. The target audience members for this section of the website seek out what they want and return frequently for updated information.

Statement of the Problem to be Solved: ALTSCHA has a Marketing identity (Four Rivers Heritage Area) that has been effective since 2004, but in April 2021, our officially-approved boundaries were expanded to nearly twice the original size, and that name and brand no longer serves the organization and partners. Our original area was a long, thin, north-south oriented area that fronted on the Chesapeake Bay, and the maritime character of the geography was reflected in its heritage stories of transportation, settlement, commerce, recreation, and ecology. Our new areas are more inclusive and diverse, adding indigenous sites, African American communities, natural areas and parks, railroad heritage that has been incorporated into popular rail trails, and nationally-oriented museums that reflect technical and STEM topics. While still contained within the borders of Anne Arundel County, many of these areas (and additionally, some non-contiguous individual attractions) are inland, and the river-focused Marketing identity (name) no longer characterizes our Heritage Area. The successful determination of the new Marketing identity (name) is the MOST IMPORTANT component of the Project. Once that Marketing identity (name) has been determined, our organization will need the Brand, Logo, Branding Guidelines, and in the next phase, the Marketing Products to go with it.

Project Objectives

The purpose of the project is to develop a consumer-appealing Brand image for the "new" (expanded) ALTSCHA/Four Rivers Heritage Area while at the same time connecting and engaging with stakeholders and motivating them to collaborate in their planning of cohesive and marketable visitor experiences within the Heritage Area. Upon development of a strategy

for a new brand, action items will be implemented to create new products and to efficiently and effectively market the Heritage Area experience to the most viable domestic consumer targets.

Project Constraints – Timeline and Budget

The project is grant-funded. The timetable is one year, which can be extended if necessary. The funding amount is limited to \$25,000. For this reason, the “Scope of Work I: Process” includes five (5) steps.

The Vendor may, at its option, submit one (1) alternative work proposal (i.e., including fewer than the 5 steps outlined), but that proposal must specify the work proposed and justify in detail the cost breakdown for each individual scope item included. ALTSCHA reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject or accept any alternative work proposal.

Project Background

In its rebranding process, ALTSCHA’s goals – as reflected in the grant application narrative -- include:

- Position the heritage area as a leading heritage tourism destination.
- Present our cultural, historical, and natural resources (including heritage sites, museums, historic districts, and the Roots & Tides Scenic Byway), in a dynamic, consumer-friendly way that educates and informs about our unique area and results in multi-day visitation to the region.
- Facilitate seamless promotional integration with Visit Annapolis and Anne Arundel County (ALTSCHA’s Destination Marketing Organization), the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, and the Maryland Heritage Areas Program.

Scope of Work I -- Process: The vendor response shall include a breakdown of the work utilizing the steps as follows.

1. Discovery & Strategy Development

- Brand Audit of Current Brand
- Establish Branding Goals
- Conduct an early-stage, enjoyable Brainstorming Session with stakeholders (virtual, using advanced notetaking techniques) to hear themes, priorities and resonance to frame the naming process
- Convene small groups (up to 3 people, as many as 6 groups) to develop a full brief on the character of the revised Heritage Area and collect suggestions for brand (name)
- Develop three alternatives for proposed name (e.g with or without tagline)
- Convene large groups of stakeholders (up to 15 people from different categories of stakeholder) to gauge appeal and accuracy of three proposed names
- Discuss results of stakeholder meetings with Board to select final name

2. Name and Brand Development

- Propose and obtain Board approval for planned new name
- Create Moodboards
- Develop two to three brand alternatives
- Once a single brand direction is chosen, allow for three rounds of edits

3. Multimedia Strategy Development

- Development of Logo and Imagery
- Development of Messaging Document
- Development of High-Level Media Plan
- 4. Final Development & Delivery of Brand Strategy and Guidelines
 - Brand Guideline Document
 - Review Existing Photography and Identify Needs
 - Delivery of final items (see below)
- 5. Website Update
 - Review and evaluate the feasibility and process of updating the website with the new Logo, Brand and Brand Guidelines
 - Update website with new Logo and Brand

Scope of Work II – Deliverables:

Logo:

- Moodboard
- Corporate Logo -- Provide final logo in a scalable vector format that can be converted to EPS, JPG, and PDF
- Font & Color Package (Digital & Print)
- Brand Guidelines for Website & Marketing Materials

Brand Guideline:

A set of standards for the design of documents, signage, and any other brand identifier. To be used to ensure complete uniformity in style and formatting wherever the brand is used to ensure no dilution of that brand.

- Color Treatments
- Approved fonts: Print and Web
- Designer to be available for brand consultation for up to 12 months (meaning, responding to questions of usage or clarification on style guide).
- ALTSCHA will retain copyrights to all images, logos, style guides, designs, color treatments, fonts and templates created by the designer and/or firm.

Website:

The website (www.fourriversheritage.org) is built on Wordpress, hosted on WP Engine. The theme is Hudson, with significant customization. Listings of partner sites and offerings are managed by a Portfolio structure. The site is designed so that content updates can be fully managed in-house by ALTSCHA staff.

Team:

The project will be overseen by an 8-person Board of Directors (all-volunteer), informed by a working Subcommittee of 6 people that includes 4 Directors, the Executive Director, and the part-time Communications Coordinator. This is a subset of the very active Subcommittee that achieved the successful Boundary Amendment proposal that recently concluded (January 2021).

Schedule:

Activity	Date
RFP Issued	July 9, 2021
Deadline for Questions from Agencies	July 16, 2021 by 5 p.m.
Vendor Meeting (Optional) via Zoom for Additional Questions	July 19, 2021
Responses to Questions published	July 23, 2021
Proposals Due	July 30, 2021 by 5 p.m.
Selection of Agency	August 11, 2021

Work on the project will begin immediately upon finalization of contract arrangements between the selected bidder and ALTSCHA management. A Brand package will be completed and approved by ALTSCHA no later than June 30, 2022.

Ideal Candidate

Our ideal candidate should be flexible. They should have outstanding design skills, a portfolio of successful branding projects, experience in leading focus-style groups, both small and large, and have a familiarity with the Maryland Heritage Areas (MHAA) program (<https://mht.maryland.gov/heritageareas.shtml>). Our organization and its meetings are active, engaged, lively, and enjoyable, and we expect your company to be easy to work with and capable of adding a “fun factor” to group meetings.

Proposal Submission

Candidates should submit their information listed below by 5 PM, July 30, 2021, via E-mail to heritage_area@aacounty.org, with any supplementary materials mailed to the heritage area office, Four Rivers Heritage Area, Arundel Center, 44 Calvert Street, Annapolis, MD 21401. Candidates can also utilize Dropbox or its equivalent to share submitted information.

Technical Proposal Response Requirements

The following areas should be addressed in your proposal:

1. Name of company, point of contact, email address, address, and telephone number.
2. An overview of the company and its history (one page). If applicable, note minority or women business enterprise (MBE/WBE) designation. If not MBE/WBE designated, how would you characterize the diversity of your staff?
3. A brief (no more than one page) description of the relevant experience of the principal(s) who will perform the work. A copy of their bios and any appropriate product examples may be included.
4. A concise (no more than four pages) description of the approach to the work, including the tasks defined in “Scope of Work I: Process” and a definition of deliverables for each of the 5 steps, a schedule and any suggested modifications to elements of the scope of work if deemed appropriate.
5. Submission of a portfolio that reflects the vendor's quality of work. Relevant samples of similar work that illustrate the contractor’s ability to meet the technical and design qualities required. Provide examples of previous works demonstrating the design and technical

- capabilities outlined in this request for proposals, to include examples of your Style Sheet Design Work, examples of your Logo Design Work, and examples of your Web Design work.
6. Written explanation of one logo design sample and/or how you derived design from concept to end product.
 7. Cost estimate: totaled and subtotaled for each task and proposed deliverables.
 8. Schedule for completing the development of the creative concept.
 9. The principal location from which you propose performing the services.
 10. The quoted price should be inclusive. If your price excludes certain fees or charges, you must provide a detailed list of excluded fees with a complete explanation of the nature of those fees. Also, please describe any ongoing fees or charges associated with the proposal. Note that ALTSCHA will not pay for any travel costs incurred by the vendor.
 11. If the execution of work requires the hiring of sub-contractors, please state this in your bid. ALTSCHA will not refuse a proposal based on the use of sub-contractors; however, the organization retains the right to refuse the sub-contractors you have selected. If applicable, note minority or women business enterprise (MBE/WBE) designation for any subcontractors.
 12. Your Maryland Tax ID Number
 13. Three current or prior client references

SELECTION CRITERIA AND CONTRACT TERMS

A vendor will be selected based on a combination of creativity, vision, technical approach, professional experience, sensitivity to our mission, price/value relative to the deliverables, and evaluation of vendor's references. Additional consideration will be given to firms based in Anne Arundel County.

ALTSCHA will negotiate terms upon selection. All contracts are subject to review by legal counsel and will be considered awarded only upon signing of an agreement or contract, which outlines terms, scope, budget, and other necessary items. This RFP does not obligate ALTSCHA or the selected contractor until a contract is signed and approved by both parties. ALTSCHA will not be responsible for work done, even in good faith, prior to the final approval of the proposed contract.