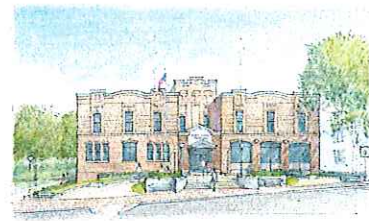




Town of North Andover
Office of the
Town Manager
North Andover Town Hall
120 Main Street
North Andover, MA 01845
amaylor@northandoverma.gov



Andrew W. Maylor
Town Manager

Telephone (978)688-9510
Fax (978)688-9556

July 12, 2017

Mr. Juan Vega
Assistant Secretary of Housing and Economic Development for Communities
Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

Juan
Dear Assistant Secretary Vega,

In 2007, several communities in the Merrimack Valley formed the Merrimack Valley Mayors and Managers Coalition. That Coalition along with the regional planning authority (Merrimack Valley Planning Commission or MVPC) established an economic development initiative called Merrimack Valley Means Business (MVMB) which was launched in 2009. The goal of the MVMB initiative was to emphasize a regional approach to economic development. In 2014 the Coalition demonstrated a desire to enhance and reinvigorate MVMB which originally achieved only limited success. The result was an additional financial commitment and an aggressive timeline for improvements. While technically sound, the greatest challenge facing MVMB was its transition into a broader and more in-depth regional marketing and business assistance program.

The Coalition is predicated on the concept of regionalization. Therefore, it was natural that partnering with the Commonwealth as part of the Community Compact program we would focus on a **"Best Practice of Regional Cooperation/Shared Services"** to develop a marketing strategy to promote the region and enhance the MVMB initiative. The Town of North Andover was the lead municipality regarding this regional initiative which also included the communities of Amesbury, Andover, Haverhill, Methuen, Newburyport, and Salisbury. The project was awarded a \$25,000 state grant to fund a consultant with an expertise in marketing and branding to complete Phase I of the project. After issuing an RFP, Brand One Strategies & Solutions was selected to deliver the agreed upon Scope of Service (Attachment 1).

What follows is a presentation made by Brand One to the Mayors and Town Managers of the seven cities and towns representing the Coalition which satisfied "Task 3" of the Scope of Services, "Create a Logo and Tagline". Also included is a document (Attachment 2) which provides an Executive Summary of the research that was conducted by Brand One to develop a Logo and Tagline for the region. I am excited to announce that the

Coalition has already begun Phase II of the Marketing and Branding project which is the implementation of the "Marketing Playbook" (Attachment 3) created as part of Phase I (Task 4).

On behalf of the Coalition I would like to thank the Baker-Polito Administration for their support of this project and their commitment to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all municipalities in Massachusetts through the Community Compact Program. Specifically, the leadership of the Lieutenant Governor, Secretary Ash and the staff at EOHED, and Senior Deputy Commissioner Sean Cronin has made our project a notable success which will positively impact the Merrimack Valley for years to come.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. W. Maylor", is written above the printed name.

Andrew W. Maylor

Town Manager

The background of the slide is an aerial photograph of a city, likely Los Angeles, showing a mix of urban development and green spaces. A large, semi-transparent blue geometric shape, resembling a stylized 'M' or a series of overlapping triangles, is overlaid on the image. The text is primarily contained within a white rectangular box in the center, with some elements placed outside it.

FINAL PRESENTATION

1 . 12 . 17

**MVPC BRAND
AWARENESS
CAMPAIGN
PHASE ONE**

Presented by

Brent Beckett

Brand One

Strategies & Solutions

LOGO / TAGLINE



MERRIMACK VALLEY



MERRIMACK VALLEY

Option A

01



FEEDBACK FROM THE ROUNDTABLE

- ☒ Modern, sans serif typeface
 - ☒ Rich, saturated shades of green and blue
 - ☒ Sub-tagline in green
-



MERRIMACK VALLEY



MERRIMACK VALLEY

Option B

03





MERRIMACK VALLEY

Option A



MERRIMACK VALLEY

Option B



MERRIMACK VALLEY

Built for Business. Feels like Home.

Opportunity is Here!

Option A

05





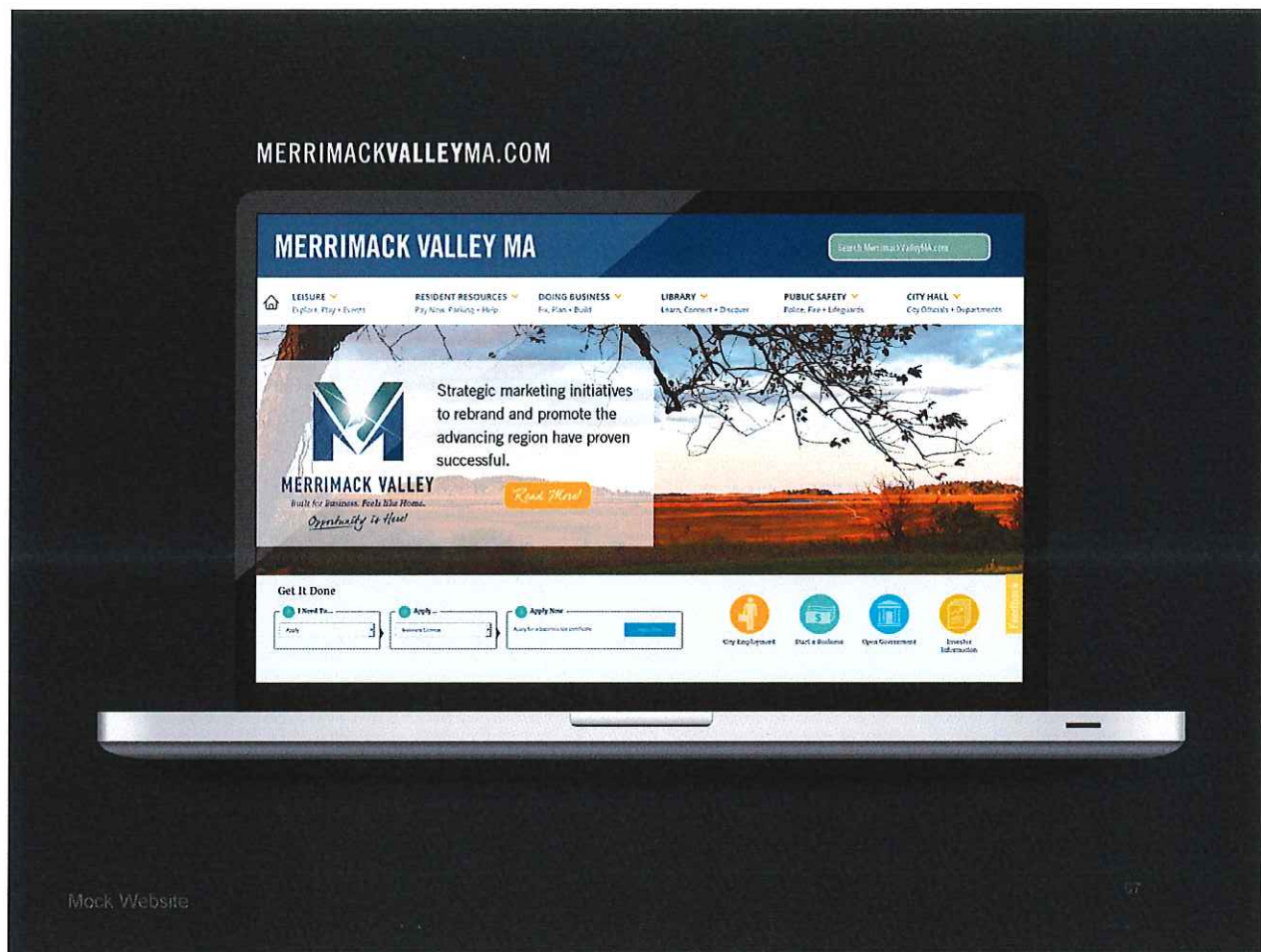
MERRIMACK VALLEY

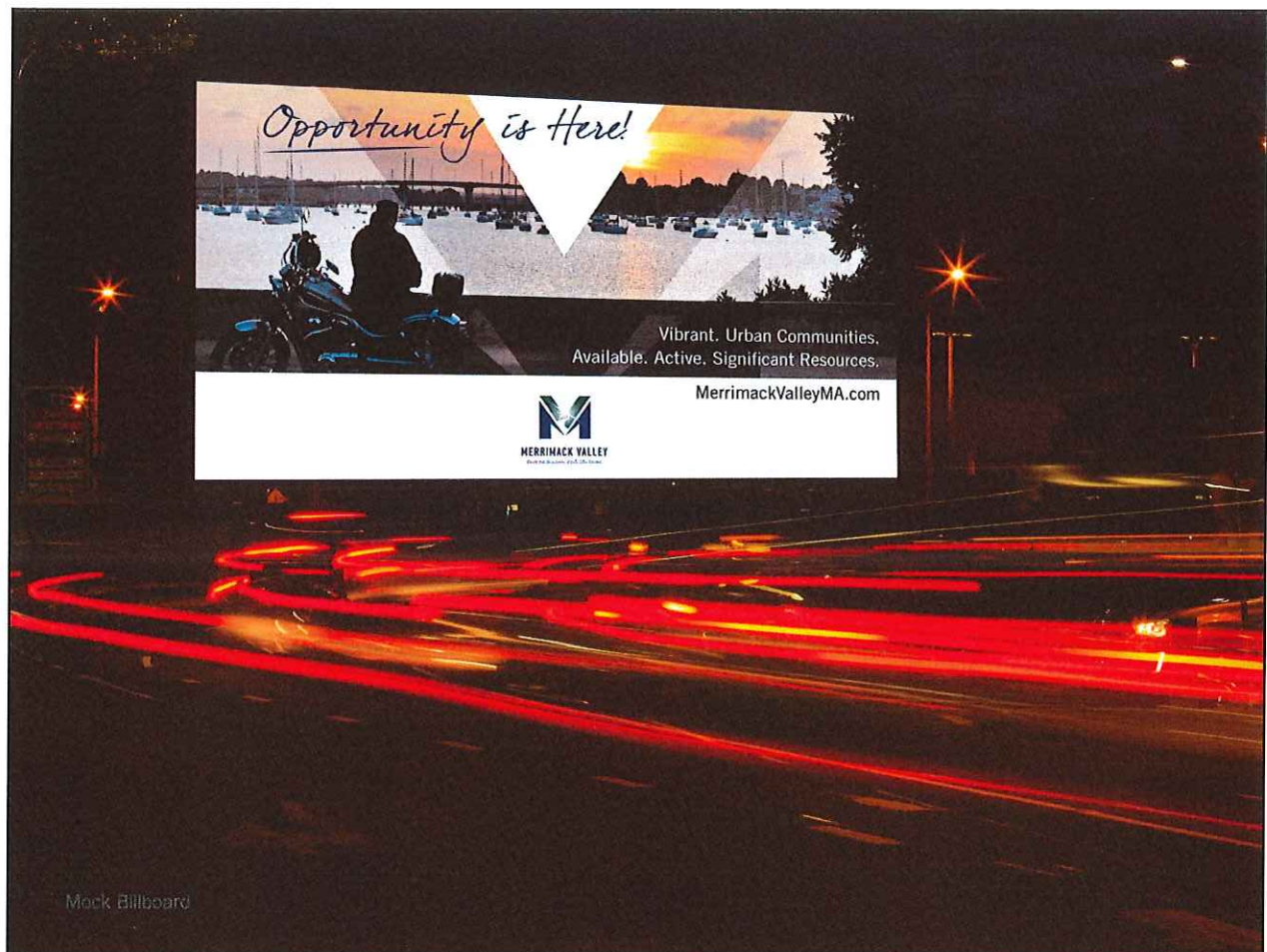
Built for Business. Feels like Home.

Opportunity is Here!

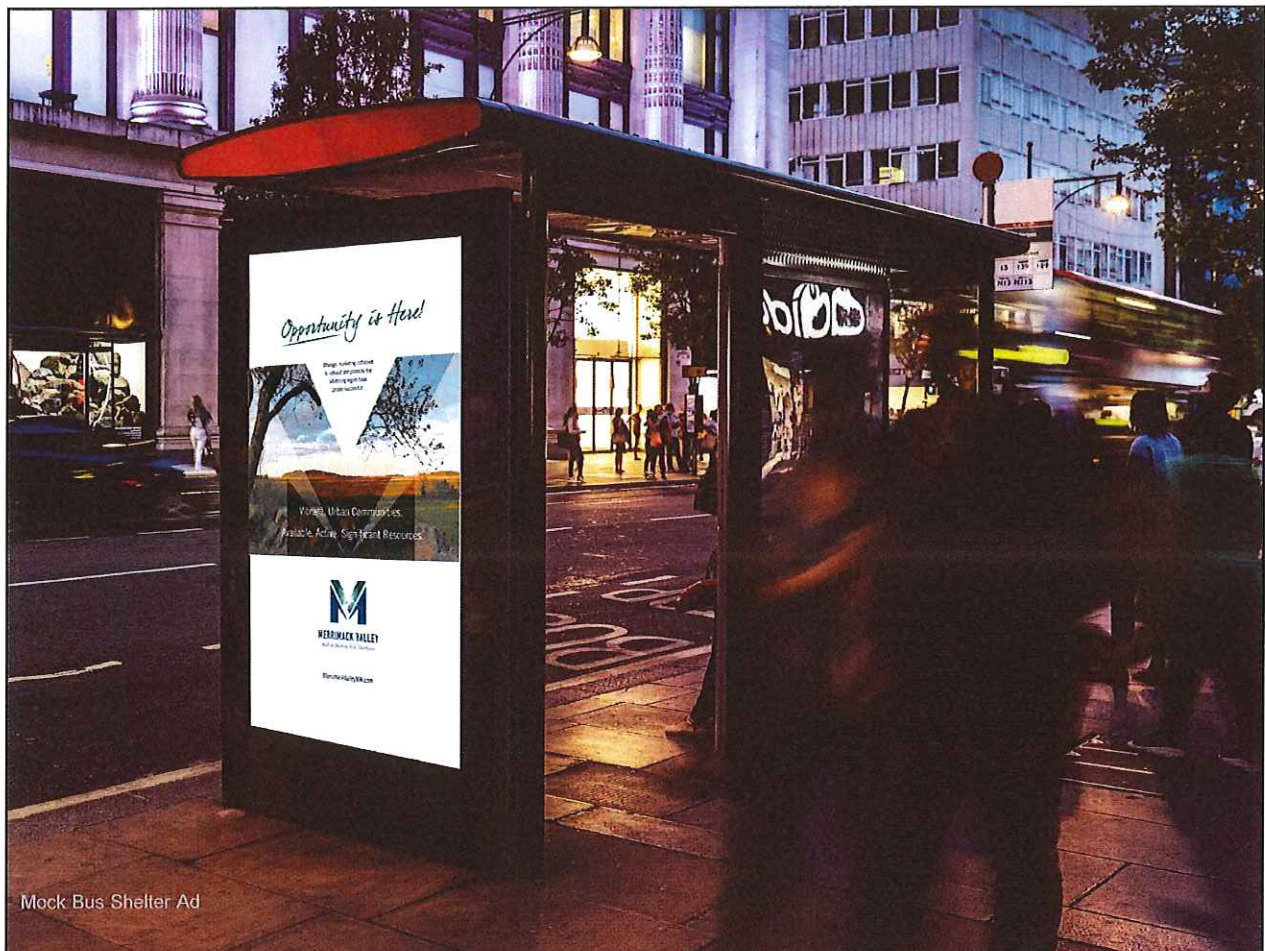
Option B

06  Brand





Mock Billboard



Mock Bus Shelter Ad

GOAL

To implement the new logo and tagline in strategic marketing initiatives that promotes the Merrimack Valley Region.

INITIATIVES

Strategic marketing initiatives are the vehicles used to drive your organization in the direction of your goal.

Three to five initiatives are typically a strong starting point.

INITIATIVES FOR MERRIMACK VALLEY

The following initiatives are listed in order of recommended implementation based upon capabilities, budget and effectiveness.

- 1 Create and Launch a Public Relations Campaign
- 2 Distribute the new logo and tagline to all relevant businesses and organizations associated with the Merrimack Valley
- 3 Create a contemporary website that is user-friendly and compels users to utilize it as a resource of information about the Merrimack Valley
- 4 Incorporate effective Social Media designed to promote, align, support, inspire collaboration and be a resource for the Merrimack Valley for users
- 5 Create a Promotional Video
- 6 Implement Digital Marketing programs.
- 7 Design outdoor/public advertising such as billboards, airport, mall and transit signage

ATTACHMENT 1



Scope of Services for the Merrimack Valley Region Marketing Project

Phase I: Baseline Research

Phase I of the Merrimack Valley Region Marketing Project (the Project) will use research and interviews to develop a theme, imagery and a framework for promoting the Merrimack Valley Region [defined as the fifteen (15) communities served by the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission] as a place where people can do business, find a home, and have fun. There are several key tasks to accomplishing Phase I, including:

- Task 1: Develop a Phase I Action Plan

This step will outline the specific techniques that Brand 1 will use to accomplish the deliverables in Phase I. It will include the specific goal(s) of Phase I, the initiatives necessary to achieve the goal(s), and a timeline for completion. This will be undertaken in partnership with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (hereafter, MVPC) and be presented to the Merrimack Valley Region Marketing Roundtable (hereafter, Roundtable) at their Kick-Off meeting) This Roundtable will be developed by MVPC and will include representation from the Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition (MVMMC). The Roundtable will be the decision-making group for this Project. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee will also be invited to attend any and all Roundtable.

Deliverables: Phase I Action Plan document forwarded electronically to MVPC upon completion of this Task, agenda and minutes for Merrimack Valley Region Marketing Roundtable

- Task 2: Research and Evaluate the Merrimack Valley Region

This task will involve several research methods to understand what makes the Merrimack Valley attractive to business, residents, and visitors. Economic development is not just retaining and luring businesses; it is creating an atmosphere of work-live-play. The Action Plan in Task 1 will include the final methodologies to be used in Task 2, but they could include:

- Evaluating the effectiveness of the existing regional "brand" utilized for the Region (Merrimack Valley Means Business);
- Profiling the Region's current and potential markets;
- Obtaining individual communities' marketing slogans within the Region (if applicable)
- Interviews and field trips in each of the communities in the Region;

- Reviewing MVPC's photo library (and other existing photo libraries) for images of the Region that could be used in the branding and marketing framework; and
- Conducting quantitative and qualitative research to determine existing attitudes and perceptions of the Region as well as opportunities and challenges to enhance the Region's image.

Deliverables: Synthesis of the research that was conducted including the methodology used and survey/interview questions and responses. All electronic files collected or created will be forwarded to MVPC upon completion of this Task.

- Task 3: Create a Logo and a Tagline

Using the information collected in Task 2, Brand One will create a logo and tagline for the Merrimack Valley Region. The process for developing the logo and tagline will be outlined in Task 1, but will involve collaboration with MVPC and final approval by the Roundtable. Once approved by the Roundtable, this stage will also include a media campaign to launch the new logo and tagline and begin scaled promotion about this project. Brand One will be responsible for the development and release of all press releases, upon approval from MVPC.

Deliverables: The Merrimack Valley Region Marketing logo and tagline. The final logo will be made available to MVPC as EPS, JPG, and any other formats necessary for posting in various media outlets. The final logo, tagline, and media blasts will be forwarded to MVPC upon completion of this Task.

- Task 4: Develop the Merrimack Valley Region Marketing Playbook

The final deliverable for Phase I is a framework, or Playbook, that outlines next steps for the Merrimack Valley Region Marketing Project. The Playbook will include, but not be limited to:

- Specific objectives and tasks associated with the next Phase(s) of this Project;
- A timeline for next steps;
- Responsibilities for each step;
- A strategy for rolling out the campaign (i.e., market to the business community first, then residents, then visitors);
- A Social Media Strategy and suggested platforms; and
- A menu of marketing options and the associated prices (i.e., TV spot, billboard, website, etc.)

The culmination of Phase I will be at a Roundtable meeting to present the Playbook and discuss next steps.

Deliverables: Final Playbook forwarded electronically to MVPC upon completion of this Task, agenda and minutes for Merrimack Valley Region Marketing Roundtable.

ATTACHMENT 2



MERRIMACK VALLEY

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Executive Summary of research, focus groups and field trips

Merrimack Valley Marketing Project.

Deliverable: "Key Findings"

Phase 1 of this project occurred between June 2016 and January 2017.

Note: Angela Vincent was in attendance at each of the field trips, focus groups, round table discussions and presentations as a representative of the M.V.P.C. and witness to the attendance of Brent Beckett and other members of Brand One Strategies & Solution at each of these events.

To note that nothing regarding focus group or ongoing insight has been presented is not accurate as conceptual thinking and related feedback from focus group meetings was included in each presentation. Specific power point slides were dedicated to quotes and commentary from our interviews with members from the Merrimack Valley. A M.V.P.C. representative prior to the presentation approved presentations.

Additional notes should include that Brand One Strategies & Solutions assisted the previous point person from M.V.P.C. in the writing of scope of work and R.F.P.s.

Brand One Strategies & Solutions acquired additional business insurance and auto insurance to include The City of North Andover.

Brand One Strategies & Solutions worked diligently for six months without fail.

Summary of Process:

The first step of our work on Phase I was a meeting between Brent Beckett and Angela Vincent in Newburyport to establish a working outline of how we would approach the project including all steps and protocol. This outline was presented and approved by the M.V.P.C.

During the six-month period for Phase 1 of the Merrimack Valley Marketing Project Brent Beckett and additional members of the Brand One team:

Visited eight of the towns in the Merrimack Valley including:

- Newburyport
- Haverhill
- Amesbury
- Salisbury
- Lawrence
- Methuen
- Andover
- North Andover

During these field trip visits we met with a variety of community members including city officials, entrepreneurs, home-owners, real-estate professionals, small business owners, educators, people who have lived in the Merrimack Valley their entire life and people who recently moved to the valley. Discussions were productive, insightful, varied and diverse.

- We organized and utilized a round-table group consisting of the same variety of people in order to gain additional feedback and support/buy-in on the progress and thinking behind the logo and tag-line(s) concepts. This roundtable group met in Haverhill at the M.V.P.C. office on three occasions. The roundtable participants all received an introductory phone call from Brent Beckett to introduce the project and purpose of the roundtable. Each participant then received an invitation to the first roundtable meeting.
 - The first roundtable discussion was a brainstorm and conversation based meeting
 - The second roundtable discussion was the presentation of logo and tagline concepts
 - The third roundtable discussion was to present the final two logo and tagline concepts and get majority approval

We updated and presented to the Mayors and Managers throughout the process to keep everyone abreast of progress, get additional feedback and present final concepts.



MERRIMACK VALLEY

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Opportunity is Here!

Creative Thinking Applied to the Tag Line:

Built for Business. Feels like Home.

Being an economic development marketing project there were three decidedly important targets:

- Business
- Home Buyers/Home Life
- Visitors/Tourists

From the start of this project there was a general consensus from the focus group interviews and roundtable participants to not incorporate history into the logo or tagline with the idea that it is over used and already a recognized attribute of the region. However, it is also recognized as a progressive region for entrepreneurs and companies to start or grow their business. We did not feel it was right to disconnect the region from having been and remaining to be an industrious place.

Conversations that moved beyond business opportunities were focused on the affordability of housing, recreational opportunities, great schools and additional qualities that make the Merrimack Valley a livable place.

It is the combining of business opportunities and livability that established our confidence in the tagline being applicable to all of the communities within the Merrimack Valley.



MERRIMACK VALLEY

Built for Business. Feels like Home.

Opportunity is Here!

Creative Thinking Applied to the Secondary Tag Line:

Opportunity is Here!

The biggest challenge of creating a logo and tag line for all 15 communities that make up the Merrimack Valley is creating an image and statement that represented all of the communities despite the diversity between them.

The secondary tag line noted as Opportunity is Here! Can be revised to be relevant to the application. For example, if the logo and taglines are being used to promote recreation then the secondary tag line will read: Recreation is Here!

Additional examples, but not limited to can include:

Entertainment is Here!

Education is Here!

Great Food is Here!

This secondary tag line 'finishes' and makes a complete statement when aligned with the logo and tag line to speak directly to a targeted market and work in all scenarios in each of the communities within the Merrimack Valley.



MERRIMACK VALLEY

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Opportunity is Here!

Creative Thinking Applied to Final Logo:

Reflection upon all of the feedback and exploration during the six months we determined that an Iconic Logo is the right style of logo for the Merrimack Valley. To include all of the geographic and diverse attributes into a picture based logo would be impossible. We knew that a strong symbol that represented the region is necessary, of which the M & V allow, but we also wanted to the visual elements of:

- A Valley
- A River / Roadway
- Starburst

By positioning the V into the wedge of the M we are able to establish a Valley with a river or roadway running through the center of the image just as the Merrimack Valley River does within the Merrimack Valley region. There was some debate about the river being important to the logo, but majority thinking proved it should be included. We determined our use of a river is subtle, but effective.

The starburst is an element of energy and there is a lot of commentary about the region being energetic, growing, filled with opportunity, alive, forward moving and so forth. The inclusion of the starburst provides the visual emotion of energy while working to finish the visual of a valley, a river and a sunburst.

Color choices were ultimately decided upon by the roundtable committee and mayors/managers preference based upon feedback. However, there was a clear intent on not using red or colors aligned with brick. The decision to use blue and green is based upon an outdoor, recreational and natural feel.

ATTACHMENT 3



MERRIMACK VALLEY

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Merrimack Valley Region Strategic Marketing Plan 2017

This plan is delivered as part of Phase I of the Merrimack Valley Region Marketing Project for use in Phase II.

A Strategic Marketing plan serves as a 'Playbook' for implementing and executing marketing initiatives that support a clear and concise goal. Effective strategies are the action items that move the plan forward. This plan is based upon our professional recommendations to serve as a starting point. This plan is based upon seven initiatives that span a variety of marketing applications. This plan is designed to keep marketing efforts on track, but please note that Strategic Marketing plans are constantly evolving and adapting based upon market conditions, what proves effective or ineffective, budget, human resources and so forth. Therefore, this plan should be updated accordingly.

GOAL:

To implement the new logo and tagline in strategic marketing initiatives that promotes the Merrimack Valley Region

INITIATIVES:

Strategic marketing initiatives are the vehicles used to drive your organization in the direction of your goal. Three to five initiatives are typically a strong starting point. The following initiatives are listed in order of recommended implementation based upon capabilities, budget and effectiveness.

1. Create and Launch a Public Relations Campaign
2. Distribute the new logo and tagline to all relevant businesses and organizations associated with the Merrimack Valley
3. Create a contemporary website that is user-friendly and compels users to utilize it as a resource of information about the Merrimack Valley
4. Incorporate effective Social Media designed to promote, align, support, inspire collaboration and be a resource for the Merrimack Valley for users
5. Create a Promotional Video
6. Implement Digital Marketing programs
7. Design outdoor/public advertising such as billboards, airport, mall and transit signage

STRATEGIES:

Applicable, implementable and relevant strategies for each of the seven initiatives are used to fuel them toward the goal. Effective strategies are what will differentiate your brand from others within the market and put your brand at the forefront of the consumers mind.

○ Launching a Public Relations Campaign

Professional Public Relations efforts should begin immediately on gaining media attention for the new logo and tagline and the reason for creating them. The media needs stories and the angle of the Merrimack Valley establishing a holistic marketing approach to the region is a very strong story line for:

- Television report
- Print media
- Tourism media
- In-flight magazine media
- Bloggers
- Social media

○ Distribute the new logo and tagline to all relevant businesses and organizations associated with the Merrimack Valley

- A digital copy in all file formats including jpeg, vector and pdf will be emailed to business owners, H.R. departments and other associated organizations for them to begin applying the new logo and tagline alongside their own
- Included with the file will be a written directive on the purpose of the logo and tagline including the how and why it has been created
- Downloadable versions of the new logo and tagline should be made available on the website. A new website can include a navigation button specifically for the new logo and tagline that includes the purpose for them

○ Create a contemporary website that is user-friendly and compels users to utilize it as a resource of information about the Merrimack Valley

Web design has changed rapidly during the past couple years leading to sites that are primarily based upon strong visuals and less copy.

○ Design a new website incorporating:

- Usable on all desktop and mobile devices
- Powerful visuals from the Merrimack Valley Region
- User-friendly real-estate listings
- A Calendar of events
- Links to social media platforms
- Links to collaborative businesses and organizations
- A Google based map with search functions
- Designed with organic S.E.O. copy
- Powered by Google key words

- **Distribute and market the new Website**
- **Incorporate effective Social Media designed to promote, align, support, inspire collaboration and be a resource for the Merrimack Valley for users**

Social Media is much more than simply posting content onto a platform. Effective social media for a business or organization is based upon becoming a resource of information for a user. Merrimack Valley social media content should include information such as:

- What is happening in the region
- Feature various businesses and regional products
- Alerts
- Humor
- Cultural insights
- Showcase and highlight specific various elements of the region
- Fun Facts or Did you know? Q & A about the region

Social Media is a daily commitment, but also extremely particular in how the content is managed and regulated. A qualified social media expert is recommended as companies such as Facebook have incorporated filters and obstacles for businesses and organizations. Most people are not educated on how to work around these obstacles.

- Integrate Merrimack Valley Social Media with other regional, relevant business and organizations. The growth of social media followers is fueled by collaboration.
- Include Social Media Icons on all marketing collateral

○ **Create a Promotional Video**

We live in a video based world. Nobody reads anymore – they watch. A professionally filmed and edited two to four minute video with compelling visuals and content will be a powerful promotional tool that can be incorporated into the following:

- Social media
- The new website
- YouTube and Vimeo (Google owns You Tube so great for organic S.E.O.)
- Shared with associated business and organizations
- Real-estate marketing efforts
- Edited into a cable based T.V. commercial

○ **Implement various Digital Marketing programs**

Digital marketing is an umbrella term for the marketing of products or services using digital technologies, mainly on the Internet, but also including mobile phones, display advertising, and any other digital medium. There are many options for digital marketing, but for the purpose of marketing the Merrimack Valley we recommend:

- Paid boosts on social media
- Banner ads on websites and social media such as:

- Airports/airlines
- Event venues
- Festivals/Fairs
- Appropriate businesses
- Appropriate Not-For-Profits
- Calendar-based websites/Social Media
- Print Media Websites
- Radio and T.V. Stations

- **Design outdoor/public advertising such as billboards, airport, mall and transit signage**

Outdoor and public based standing advertising can be very effective with the right image and powerful message. This type of advertising is seen when people are on the move and highly distracted. We recommend this application for promoting the Merrimack Valley because municipalities can sometimes get free access or very negotiable rates. However, it is recently noted that in the case of Logan Airport, the culmination of several ads in one location proved ineffective. Our recommendation is slightly different than traditional outdoor advertising and puts the effort onto each community within the region.

- Each community within the Merrimack Valley positions a sign at the location of their 'welcome' sign announcing they are "A proud community in the Merrimack Valley"
- Each community can include a 'claim-to-fame' fact specific to them, but also pertaining to the Merrimack Valley

***Associated Costs with recommended marketing initiatives:**

INITIATIVE	IN-HOUSE	CONSULTANT
Distribute New Logo & Tagline	<i>Optional</i>	\$1,000
New Website		\$8,000
Social Media	<i>Optional</i>	\$1,200 per month
PR Campaign for New Logo & Tagline	<i>Optional</i>	\$2,500
Digital Media: <i>Phase III</i>		
Outdoor Advertising: <i>Phase III</i>		
		Total: \$25,900

*Note: As with anything, costs vary depending on demand and application. The costs listed on this document are real costs based upon previous buying or contracted services. This plan is also based upon eight different marketing initiatives that do not all need to be implemented at one time or within a specific time period, but rather noted as potential initiatives for future implementation.

The immediate elimination of digital marketing and outdoor advertising should prove to allow Phase II to be financially achievable.