



Request for Proposal (RFP): Branding Services for the City of Port Alberni

Issue Date: December 1, 2025

Closing Date: 10:00:00 AM January 5, 2026

Contact: Kelly DeClercq via email to purchasing@portalberni.ca

Reference Number: RFP 025-25

1. Introduction & Background

The City of Port Alberni is seeking proposals from qualified branding agencies to develop and implement a comprehensive branding strategy. This initiative aims to create a unified, authentic identity that reflects the community's values, celebrates its heritage, and supports long-term economic development and resident attraction.

Key Dates are listed in section 7 of this RFP. Please ensure to read this section which includes important dates for submission deadlines, interview dates and other dates fundamental to the timeline for this project.

Questions are to be directed to, and only to, purchasing@portalberni.ca

Community Context

Port Alberni is a city of ~ 19,000 residents on the unceded territory of Tseshah First Nation and Hupacasath First Nation on Vancouver Island. It sits at the head of the 48-kilometer Alberni Inlet and on the estuary of the Somass River, one of British Columbia's most important salmon rivers.

The community has strong historic ties to the forest industry. However, many of the former timber processing facilities have closed or reduced operations over the last six decades.

The City's reputation as an industrial community focused on jobs and tax revenues more than the environment has lingered even though advances in forest industry practices and some diversification of the economy have been made.

Recent positive developments in the local economy include the City's purchase of a 43-acre waterfront former millsite with the intention of creating a mixed-use development there; the completion of multi-use pathways connecting Harbour Quay with Victoria Quay and Rogers Creek Park with the Scott Kenny Trail in the Rogers Creek ravine; creation of an Indigenous-themed market and gathering place at Clutesi Haven Marina; the building of a new facility to house the Nuu-chah-nulth Whaling Sculpture; the purchase of three former forest industrial sites by new owners; the tourism sector's adoption of the Municipal Regional District Tax for marketing purposes, improvements to their website and the adoption of a marketing campaign.

A distillery, three microbreweries, a coffee roaster, a couple of coffee shop/bakeries, bookstores, some restaurants and retail shops are also relatively recent.

The two largest employers in the community are Island Health with ~ 800 employees and School District 70 with ~ 550 employees. The two largest private sector employers are the Coulson Group with ~ 430 employees and Domtar with ~ 330 employees.

A branding tag line of 'Bear Tracks & Lumberjacks' was endorsed by the Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce and the City in 2007 but was never adopted by the business community or the residents. The objections centred around the idea that bears 'would scare off visitors' and the forest industry workers were 'loggers' not lumberjacks.

In 2015, a committee of 12 people met for several months to understand branding opportunities and challenges then delivered two reports to Council. A survey that yielded over 900 responses at that time concluded the community should focus on its water assets i.e. the Inlet, large lakes, rivers, creeks and waterfalls.

The Committee understood at the outset that no money was available to implement a new brand but felt the work involved was nevertheless very beneficial.

The City is part way between two tourism 'powerhouses' namely Tofino and Ucluelet to the west, and Coombs, Parksville and Qualicum to the east. The west coast communities receive ~ 1 million visitors each year, the majority of which go by road. Given our location on Highway 4, it means that visitors must pass through 'North Port' twice for their west coast visit. Despite several different attempts Port Alberni has been unsuccessful in getting most people to turn off 'the beaten path' and see 'South Port' which is where the community's 'uptown' and harbour are.

Bamfield is considered an ‘up and coming destination’ and Port Alberni is also a gateway to that community.

Links to some websites and reports that will help to provide further perspective on the community are:

- [Corporate Strategic Plan | City of Port Alberni](#)
- [2024 Annual Report - City of Port Alberni](#)
- [Home - Choose Port Alberni](#)
- [Alberni Valley Tourism](#)
- [Welcome to the Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce | Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce](#)
- www.letsconnectpa.ca

On average one new family a day is moving into Port Alberni citing affordable housing, a central Island location and ease of access to the outdoors as their primary reasons for choosing Port Alberni.

In short, the City is undergoing a transformation and seeks to accelerate that with a brand that resonates with young families, entrepreneurs, and skilled professionals.

2. Project Objectives

The branding initiative should:

- Establish a cohesive and compelling brand identity for Port Alberni.
- Reflect the community’s unique assets, culture, and future vision.
- Support economic development, tourism, and resident attraction.
- Foster community pride and engagement.
- Differentiate Port Alberni from other communities in the region.
- Provide tools and guidelines for consistent brand application across departments, platforms, business in and organizations that represent the community.

3. Scope of Work

The selected firm will be expected to:

- Conduct stakeholder engagement (e.g., workshops, surveys, interviews).
- Audit existing branding and communications materials.
- Develop a brand strategy including positioning, messaging, and visual identity.

- Create a logo, tagline, and brand guidelines.
- Provide templates for print, digital, and signage applications.
- Deliver a brand rollout and activation plan.

Deliverables include:

- i. a report on your research into the opportunities and challenges
- ii. a visual identifier i.e. logo and colour scheme
- iii. a tag line
- iv. a brand strategy and guidelines
- v. delivery of items 'ii' through 'iv' in PDF, JPEG, PNG, AI master files and fonts
- vi. rollout support

4. Mandatory Proposal Requirements

Proposals must include:

- Company profile and relevant experience.
 - Bios of the project team and their roles in this project.
 - Approach and methodology.
 - An approach for ensuring the desired engagement in a cost-effective manner
 - An identification of the opportunities and challenges this project represents
 - Timeline and milestones.
 - Budget breakdown.
 - Examples of past work (preferably municipal branding).
 - A minimum of 3 references from similar projects.
 - Submission must be in English
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5. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated in two stages with a total possible score of 100 points. Only submissions that meet the mandatory requirements listed in section 4 and that achieve a minimum evaluation score of 60 points in the first evaluation stage will proceed to the interview in the second evaluation stage.

Evaluation Stage 1: Proposal Submission (out of 80 points, minimum 60 to qualify)

- Demonstrated experience and creativity. 20 points
- Proposed approach and project plan 25 points
- Quality and relevance of references 15points
- Pricing 10 points
- Ability to meet project timelines 10 points

Total Possible 80 points

Evaluation Stage 2: Interview (out of 20 points)

- Understanding of project goals and possible challenges 5 points
- Communication style and creative adaptability 5 points
- Proposed approach and ability to deliver 5 points
- Alignment to organization 5 points

Total Possible 20 points

Overall Evaluation:

Proposal Submission 80 points (minimum 60 points to proceed to interview)

Interview 20 points

Total 100 points

6. Budget

The City has allocated a budget of \$75,000 for this project. Proposals should include a detailed cost estimate and any optional services.

Travel to and from Port Alberni included in the budget will be reimbursed as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ✓ Mileage | \$0.62 per kilometer |
| ✓ Ferry (if applicable) | as per receipts |
| ✓ Accommodation | Up to \$250 per night with receipts |
| ✓ Travel Time | @ ¾ of the consultants per diem |
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7. Project Timeline

Milestone	Date
RFP Issued	December 1, 2025
Deadline for Questions from Proponents	December 15, 2025
Final Addendum Issued (if needed)	December 17, 2025
Proposal Submission Deadline	10:00:00 AM January 5, 2026
Evaluation of Proposals	January 5-12, 2026
Interviews with Shortlisted Proponents	January 13-16, 2026
Selection and Notification of Successful Firm	January 20, 2026
Contract Finalization	January 27, 2026
Project Kick-off Meeting	February 3, 2026
Stakeholder Engagement & Research Phase	February / March 2026
Brand Strategy Development	April 2026
Visual Identity Creation	May 2026
Brand Guidelines & Toolkit Delivery	June 2026
Brand Launch & Activation Plan	July 2026

8. Engagement Expectations

The successful proponent will be expected to lead a robust and inclusive engagement process that reflects the diversity and aspirations of Port Alberni's residents, businesses, and interest groups. This process should be designed to build trust, gather meaningful input, and ensure the brand reflects the community's identity.

Although some ‘minimum requirements’ are set out below we are also open to and encourage more cost-effective approaches to engagement proposed by the consultant.

Minimum engagement requirements include:

- **Community Workshops:** Facilitate at least two in-person or virtual workshops, with key interest groups identified by the City, to gather input and test brand concepts.
- **Surveys & Online Engagement:** Develop and distribute a community-wide survey and provide digital tools for feedback. Explain how you would distribute that survey and identify the probable deficiencies that would arise in that survey.
- **One-on-One Interviews:** Conduct interviews with key interest groups such as City Council, Economic Development staff, former Branding Committee members and community leaders.
- **Youth & Indigenous Engagement:** Include tailored approaches to engage youth and Indigenous voices meaningfully.
- **Public Presentations:** Present penultimate brand strategy and visual identity to Council and the public in an open forum. After consideration and incorporation of feedback, present final brand strategy to Council and the public in an open forum.

The City encourages creative and culturally sensitive engagement methods that foster broad participation and reflect Port Alberni’s values of inclusion, innovation, and resilience.

9. Proposal Submissions

Proposals are to be submitted by the deadline listed above to purchasing@portalberni.ca by email in a pdf attachment.