



City Council Agenda Item Report

FROM: Ryan Cummins, City Manager

MEETING DATE: December 8, 2025

SUBJECT: Logo and Branding Refresh Project - Formation of a Branding Advisory Committee and Request for Proposals

DESCRIPTION:

The City's current logo was created in 2007, nearly two decades ago. Today, the City's branding is inconsistent across platforms, including the website, social media, email, and signage. The lack of cohesive and modern branding creates challenges as we look to invest in website upgrades, wayfinding improvements, and upgraded signage.

Brand refreshes have been common in our region. In recent years, the Saugatuck-Douglas Area CVB, City of the Village of Douglas, and Saugatuck Township have each completed their own logo and branding updates, underscoring the importance of refreshing our visual identities.

I recommend that we refresh our logo and branding by forming a Branding Advisory Committee and issuing the attached Request for Proposals (RFP).

Branding Advisory Committee

To guide the project, I recommend forming a Branding Advisory Committee composed of individuals who bring relevant expertise, represent multiple stakeholder groups, and can support the consultant throughout the process.

I have discussed the formation of an advisory committee with the Mayor and obtained her recommendations. Given the nature of the project and the need for members with specialized knowledge, it is recommended that Council suspend the City's Board and Commission Selection Policy and appoint the following individuals:

Ryan Cummins – City Manager

- Represents the City's operational needs, staff considerations, and administrative requirements.

Chris Peterson – City Council Member; Government Experience

- Adds a direct Council voice, brings significant government experience and perspective, and assists in aligning the project with the broader community.

Lauren Stanton – Business Owner; City Council Member; Liaison to Parks & Public Works Committee; Previous Media Experience

- Brings perspectives from business, media industry, parks and public works committee, while being another representative from Council.

Tim Straker – City Resident; Chair of the Historic District Commission; Communications & Branding Experience

- Brings professional communications expertise and ensures our historic identity remains represented.

Kristin Armstrong – Executive Director, SCA; Board Member, CVB

- Represents both the arts community and tourism sector, ensuring alignment with regional partners.

Request for Proposals

The attached draft RFP seeks qualified firms to update the City’s logo and develop a comprehensive branding system, including color palettes, typography, templates, signage guidelines, and a full brand standards manual. The project includes community engagement through a short public survey developed by the selected consultant, and multiple review touchpoints with the Branding Advisory Committee.

Key project components include:

- **Discovery & Research**, including analysis of current branding materials, public survey, and insights from Branding Advisory Committee.
- **Logo Design**, including three initial concepts and two rounds of revisions.
- **Full Branding System**, covering colors, typography, templates, signage guidance and brand usage manual .
- **Meetings with Branding Advisory Committee**, to review and refine concepts. Committee will recommend a brand package to City Council.
- **Meetings with City Council**, to review recommended brand package for approval.

BUDGET ACTION REQUIRED:

None at this time. Dollars were budgeted for a firm to assist with a logo and branding refresh project.

LEGAL REVIEW:

N/A at this time.

SAMPLE MOTION:

Motion to issue the request for proposals for the logo and branding refresh project, form a Branding Advisory Committee, suspend the Board and Commission Selection Policy for the committee, and appoint Chris Peterson, Lauren Stanton, Ryan Cummins, Tim Straker, and Kristin Armstrong to the committee.



Request for Proposals

Logo & Branding Refresh Project

Introduction

The City of Saugatuck is seeking qualified firms to develop a refreshed City logo and comprehensive branding system that reflects the community's unique character, natural environment, artistic identity, and historic charm. This work will support the City's communications, signage, printed materials, vehicles, uniforms, and digital presence with a modern, cohesive, and professional brand identity.

The City's existing logo has been in use for many years and we lack branding consistency across platforms. The City intends to maintain familiar elements and community character while modernizing the brand.

This project will involve community input, development of multiple design concepts, and the creation of a full brand guidelines package for long-term implementation.

Project Objectives

- Refresh and modernize the City's logo while honoring core elements that reflect Saugatuck's identity.
- Develop a comprehensive, flexible branding system suitable for all communication and operational needs.
- Engage the community through a short survey designed by the selected firm.
- Incorporate feedback from our Branding Advisory Committee throughout the process.
- Provide staff with clear guidelines, templates, and tools to apply the new brand consistently.

Scope of Work

Discovery & Research

The selected consultant shall:

- Review existing City branding materials, signage, website, communications, and visual assets.

- Meet with the City Manager and key staff to understand brand priorities and operational needs.
- Meet with the City's Branding Advisory Committee to confirm project goals and gather insights into the attributes the refreshed brand should reflect.
- Draft a short public survey to collect community input on brand values, visual preferences, themes, and identity perceptions.
- Revise survey based on feedback from staff and the Branding Advisory Committee.
- Provide graphics or descriptions suitable for posting on the City's website and social media to promote survey participation.
- Analyze and summarize results of the community survey, identifying key themes, visual preferences, values, and identity attributes expressed by respondents.
- Prepare a concise written summary and present findings to City staff and the Branding Advisory Committee to help inform the direction of the logo concepts and overall brand identity.
- Incorporate survey insights into the design rationale for initial and refined branding concepts.

Logo Design & Concept Development

The consultant shall:

- Develop 3 initial logo concepts, each with a brief narrative explaining the design rationale.
- Present concepts to the Branding Advisory Committee.
- Conduct up to two (2) rounds of revisions based on committee and staff feedback.
- Provide a final recommended logo for City Council consideration.
- Develop variations such as:
 - Full-color primary logo
 - One-color version
 - Reverse/white version
 - Horizontal and vertical layouts

Branding System & Identity Guidelines

The consultant will create a unified brand identity package, including:

1. Color System

- Primary and secondary color palettes
- Pantone, CMYK, RGB, and Hex codes

2. Typography

- Recommended fonts for print, digital, signage, and internal documents
- Hierarchy and usage rules

3. Visual Elements

- Graphic elements, patterns, or icons (if applicable)
- Photography style guidelines

4. Applications & Templates

- Letterhead
- Press Release Template
- Memo Template
- Business cards
- Email signature standard
- PowerPoint/meeting template
- Social media graphics templates
- Newsletter templates (including for email)

5. Signage & Operational Guidelines

- General guidance for street signs, facility and parks signage, uniforms, and vehicles to ensure long-term consistency

6. Brand Usage Manual

A comprehensive PDF document including:

- Logo usage rules
- Minimum size and clear space
- Incorrect usage examples
- File organization instructions
- Template and color/typography usage
- Guidance for contractors, designers, and staff

Meetings & Check-Ins

The consultant must be available for the following (virtual or in-person where specified):

- Project kickoff with staff and Branding Advisory Committee
- One meeting with Branding Advisory Committee to review and finalize public survey
- One meeting with Branding Advisory Committee to review initial logo concepts
- One (or two) meetings with Branding Advisory Committee to review revised concepts
- One meeting with Branding Advisory Committee to review the draft brand guidelines
- Two meetings (1 workshop and 1 regular) to present the recommended brand package to City Council

Additional check-ins may occur via email or quick virtual touchpoints as needed.

Deliverables

- Community survey (final version + shareable promotional materials) and written summary of findings
- 3 initial logo concepts
- Final refined logo with all variations

- Full brand guidelines manual (PDF)
- File package including:
 - Vector files (AI, EPS, SVG)
 - High-resolution PNG/JPG
 - Web-optimized assets
- Templates as specified in the scope

Proposal Requirements

Proposals must include:

- 1. Firm Introduction & Qualifications**
 - Overview of firm
 - Experience with municipal or community-based branding
 - Identification of project team
- 2. Relevant Portfolio**
 - Minimum of three (3) comparable branding projects, preferably for cities, towns, or public agencies
- 3. Approach & Methodology**
 - Description of how the firm will engage with the City, community, and Branding Advisory Committee
 - Planned approach to rounds of revisions and collaboration
 - Proposed project schedule
- 4. Cost Proposal**
 - Detailed cost breakdown by task and deliverable
 - Optional elements (if any)
 1. Cost for additional concepts beyond three initial.
 2. Cost for additional revisions beyond two rounds.
 - Hourly rates for team members
- 5. References**
 - Three (3) references from similar projects

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on:

- Experience in municipal/community branding
- Quality and creativity of previous work
- Understanding of Saugatuck's identity and project goals
- Approach to community engagement and committee collaboration
- Project schedule and ability to meet timelines
- Cost/value
- Quality and clarity of the written proposal

The City reserves the right to interview top firms before selection.

Timeline

A general selection timeline is anticipated as follows:

- RFP issued: December 9, 2025
- Proposals due: January 9, 2026 at 4:00 PM EDT
- Interviews (if needed): January 16, 2026
- Selection/award: January 26, 2026
- Project Kickoff: February 2026

Project timeline will be established with the selected firm.

Cost Structure

The City is requesting that proposers supply a cost structure based on the scope of work outlined in this RFP.

Submission Instructions

Proposals must be received by **January 9, 2026 at 4:00 PM EDT**. Late proposals will not be considered. Proposals should be submitted electronically to the contact person listed below.

City Rights

The City reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, to waive any informalities or irregularities in the proposals received, or to award the contract in any manner deemed to be in the best interest of the City. The City may also negotiate with the most qualified firm(s) prior to award. The City will own all rights, titles, and interests, including all copyrights, to the final logo, brand assets, and all working files.

Questions and Contact Information

All questions regarding this Request for Proposals should be directed in writing via email to:

Ryan Cummins

City Manager

City of Saugatuck

E-mail: rcummins@saugatuckcity.com

Phone: 269-857-2603