

City of Mississauga Corporate Report



Date: February 23, 2022

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Jodi Robillos, Commissioner of Community Services

Originator's files:

Meeting date:
March 2, 2022

Subject

Single Source Contract Award to Destination Think for Place DNA® research for Tourism Marketing

Recommendation

That the Purchasing Agent or designate be authorized to execute a contract with Destination Think for conducting Place DNA® methodology research for Tourism Mississauga in the amount of \$167,000 exclusive of taxes, from Tourism Mississauga's 2022 approved budget (Account 24704-715640) funded by MAT tax and reimbursed from the temporarily reinstated RT05 funding.

Executive Summary

- Tourism Mississauga aspires to use a unique methodology called Place DNA® to meet its goals of generating unique tourism experiences in Mississauga. Destination Think is the only company that can offer this service.
- The Purchasing By-law No. 374-2016 provides for single source awards under these circumstances, item 1 (a) (iv) a Single/Sole Source procurement method may be applied when, "The complete item, service, or system is unique to one vendor and no alternative or substitute exists within Canada." Single source awards with a value of more than \$100,000 require Council approval.
- Tourism Mississauga is eligible for provincial funding; however, the work must be completed and invoiced by March 31, 2022.

Background

Tourism Mississauga (TM) was established following Council approval in June 2019 and has been quickly establishing a team and a plan to advance the goals of tourism in Mississauga. The key to this will be establishing a strategic destination voice that will be reflected in how TM speaks through its marketing activities. TM is focusing on aligning experiences with local identity

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in order to activate local pride. This would also turn generic experiences into something unique by using local identity as the foundation.

Place DNA® is a proprietary methodology to the research and marketing company 'Destination Think'. This methodology has been designed specifically for destination marketing organizations to help them fully understand the product that they are responsible for promoting and the opportunities for competition. The process has been refined over many years, all over the world, from destinations ranging from Auckland, Calgary, Kelowna, Ottawa, Whitsunday Islands, Colorado, Copenhagen and many more.

This methodology is built around a core concept developed by the city marketing expert Frank Cuypers. At Visit Flanders, Frank developed the concept of Place DNA®. Place DNA® uncovers the identity of a city, its self-image, and its ambition for the future. Without understanding its Place DNA®, a city runs the risk of misalignment between residents and tourism, which leads to poor experiences for all stakeholders involved. Simply stated, a destination's Place DNA® is the definition of its intrinsic character, the meaning that people ascribe to it, or more often, a mixture of both elements.

Place DNA® was developed as a precursor to destination brand strategy. A combination of qualitative and quantitative research processes, Place DNA® reveals a place's identity and purpose – the attributes that define it, the things that make it tick (or not) and the way it operates from the inside. Place DNA® consists of a remarkable set of variables: biography, history and geography, a particular attitude of the people, a unique invention, thoughts or traditions, an ambiance, an aesthetic or visual quality, and more. Place DNA® is entirely unique for destination marketing, and essential because Destination Marketing Organizations do not own and define the product that they promote. The process is inherently collaborative to ensure that all key stakeholder groups can see their input in the end result.

In the fall of 2021, the Province of Ontario temporarily reinstated funding for RTO5 as a response to Covid-19 loss in MAT revenues. Tourism Mississauga is eligible for up to \$1,203,000 and had allocated part of these funds to events that were cancelled due to the Covid-19 restrictions. This created an opportunity to add the Place DNA® research project against these reimbursable funds. In order for a project to be eligible for reimbursement, the work must be completed and invoiced by March 31, 2022.

Comments

TM aspires to use Place DNA® to assist in establishing Mississauga "USP (Unique Selling Proposition)" in tourism. Place DNA® is the jumping-off point for world-class destination marketing; it informs brand strategy, marketing strategy, and destination development. Destination Think is the only company that can offer this important service. TM has received a quote of \$167,000 from Destination Think to conduct the required research on tourism marketing.

Purchasing By-law Authorization

The recommendations in this report are being made in accordance with Schedule “A” of the Purchasing By-law 374-2016, item 1 (a) (iv), which states that a Single/Sole Source procurement method may be applied when, “The complete item, service, or system is unique to one vendor and no alternative or substitute exists within Canada.”

Tourism, Privacy, Legal Services and Materiel Management staff will collaborate to establish the detailed requirements, negotiate the final arrangements and prepare the contracts.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact as this is within the approved budget. The study will be a one-time purchase of \$167,000 exclusive of taxes, from the 2022 approved budget (Account 715640 Cost Centre 24704) funded by MAT tax and reimbursed from the temporarily reinstated RTO-5 (Regional Tourism Ontario 5) funding.

Conclusion

This report presents Place DNA® as the unique methodology that TM requires to fulfill its goals of creating unique tourism experiences in Mississauga. Destination Think is the only research and marketing company that can offer this important service to TM. The study will cost \$167,000 exclusive of taxes. The Purchasing By-law No. 374-2016 provides for single source awards under these circumstances, item 1 (a) (iv) *a Single/Sole Source procurement method may be applied when, “The complete item, service, or system is unique to one vendor and no alternative or substitute exists within Canada.”* Single source awards with a value of more than \$100,000 require Council approval. TM is eligible for Province of Ontario’s RT05 funding to be used to fund this project.



for

 Kristina Zietsma

Jodi Robillos, Commissioner of Community Services

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