



CITY OF FORT BRAGG

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COUNCIL COMMITTEE ITEM SUMMARY REPORT

MEETING DATE: September 4, 2018
TO: Community Development & Visit Fort Bragg Committees
FROM: Scott Schneider, Administrative Services Director
AGENDA ITEM TITLE: **Information Item Only. No Required Action Today:** Receive Report Regarding the 2018/2019 Visit Fort Bragg Marketing Action Plan

SUMMARY:

Due to the large number of items on today's Committee Agenda, as well as the amount of information contained in the 2018/2019 Visit Fort Bragg Marketing Action Plan ("Plan"), we are providing a draft version of the Plan in order to allow sufficient time for review and questions. The Plan will be brought back to the Committee at the September 25, 2018 meeting unless otherwise directed. If you have questions or comments after reviewing the information, please submit those to the VFB Project Manager by September 14, 2018. Staff will work with the VFB Project Manager to answer all questions in preparation for the presentation at the next meeting.

ISSUE:

At its June 12, 2017 meeting, the Fort Bragg City Council approved the 2017 – 2019 Visit Fort Bragg Action Plan. Upon approval, City staff proceeded to hire a project manager to oversee the multitude of activities throughout the Plan. On September 11, 2017, Aspen Logan of Playhouse Creative, Inc was hired to implement the approved Action Plan with a contract expiration date of June 30, 2019 – the same end date for the Action Plan. Over the past year, Ms. Logan has worked to implement as much of the Action Plan as possible but was significantly hindered by the reorganization of the Visit Fort Bragg management and administrative structure. As a result, a portion of the budgeted funds for FY 2017/2018 of \$221,500 were unspent while the reorganization took place with the official formation of the Visit Fort Bragg Committee occurring on June 11, 2018 (Resolution #4093-2018). The one main

project which was started and is still in process is the rebranding of Fort Bragg. This project is almost complete.

In an effort to complete not only the rebranding of Fort Bragg, but all of the original projects stipulated in the current Visit Fort Bragg Action Plan, Staff worked with Ms. Logan to update the Plan in order to expand upon both the unfinished tasks as well as include some new tasks. The updated Plan includes additional background information as well as specific marketing tasks, methods to measure return on investment and more in order to launch a long-awaited comprehensive, full-fledged marketing program for the City of Fort Bragg.

The updated Plan consists of a reorganization of the activities and priorities in the current Action Plan and is based on a market research project conducted in 2016 which provides specific strategies, goals and tactics forming the foundation of the updated Plan as well as the collaborative work undertaken in the development of the original Action Plan.

The updated Plan includes a huge amount of work over the next 10 months, much of which will be undertaken by outside contractors being selected through a "Promotion of Fort Bragg Request for Proposal" (RFP) which includes five scopes of work previously reviewed by the Community Development Committee: (1) Website Design, Development and Deployment, (2) Social Media Content Creation, (3) Design/Creative, (4) Public Relations and (5) Marketing/Advertising. Presentations and a recommendation of those contractors are included in a separate agenda item for today's meeting.

Staff and Ms. Logan are seeking comments and feedback on the updated Plan from the CDC and VFBC with the goal of bringing a recommendation to adopt an updated Plan and Budget (to be presented at the next CDC meeting) to the City Council at its October 9, 2018 meeting. The updated Budget will include not only funds currently budgeted for promotions in the FY 18/19 Budget (\$258,437), but also the utilization of unspent promotional funds from FY 2017/2018 (\$83,263.04).

The full draft Plan is attached to this report. The current Visit Fort Bragg Action Plan adopted in 2017 is also attached as a reference.

BACKGROUND:

Beginning April 1, 2017, lodging properties began collecting an extra 2% of Transient Occupancy Taxes (TOT) from its overnight guests (guests staying from one, but no more than 30 nights). The increase, approved as Measure AA in November 2016 allocated 50% of the increase to be utilized for the promotion of Fort Bragg (known as Measure AB) and overseen by the VFBC. These funds are used in addition to the .5% TOT allocated to the Visit Fort Bragg program over the past several years. The estimated budget for FY 2017/2018 totaled \$280,000 for the promotion of Fort Bragg - \$80,000 from the traditional funding source and \$200,000 from the new funding provided by Measures AA & AB.

To better inform increased marketing and promotions efforts, City Council approved a contract with Strategic Marketing Group (SMG) in September 2016 to prepare a Tourism Market Research Study. SMG's study, adopted by City Council on March 13, 2017, is comprised of the

Marketing Research-Tourism report, *Tourism Marketing Recommendations*, and *Visitor Survey Results*.

Using information from the *Tourism Marketing Recommendations* report as well as input from the Visit Fort Bragg committee, local hotel operators, and numerous tourism industry stakeholders, staff developed a detailed three-year *Visit Fort Bragg Marketing & Promotions Action Plan* approved by Council in June of 2017.

Due to a complete reorganization of the Visit Fort Bragg Program only part of the activities in the Action Plan were undertaken over the past 15 months. These activities include ongoing social media efforts, website maintenance and updates and the start of a rebranding of Fort Bragg as a tourist destination. Staff and the VFBC are now in a position to begin a full-fledged promotional program which will take 6 – 9 months to fully implement.

Recommendation

Submit any questions and comments the Committee would like to submit ahead of time to include as part of the discussion at the upcoming meeting be submitted to the Project Manager no later than September 14, 2018. Staff will work with the VFB Project Manager to answer any and all questions in preparation for the presentation of the Plan at the September 25, 2018 meeting.