

DOWNTOWNMESA

Request for Proposals

Rebranding and Marketing Strategy

Deadline:
Proposals will be received until **October 30, 2026**, at 5pm PST.
Deliver to:
admin@downtownmesa.com

Downtown Mesa Association is seeking an experienced marketing firm to coordinate a rebranding and 3-year marketing strategy for Downtown Mesa. This project is intended to position Downtown Mesa as a recognizable, top destination to audiences throughout the Valley and state.

Background

Downtown Mesa is in the midst of an urban renaissance. The downtown square mile is experiencing significant public and private reinvestment, driven by the City of Mesa's commitment to arts and innovation, the growing presence of ASU's MIX Center, addition of 1,500 new residential units (1,500 more units in development), and a vibrant mix of local businesses and attractions; all located within an authentic, historic, and walkable setting. In recent years, downtown restaurants have earned James Beard nominations, attracted online influencers, and created distinctive visitor experiences. Festivals, family activities, and live music events now draw thousands of visitors, many experiencing Downtown Mesa for the first time. Phoenix Magazine's Best of the Valley issue just declared Downtown Mesa the 2026 best downtown in the Phoenix Metro area. Downtown Mesa Association wants to capitalize on these assets.

Brand and Marketing Opportunity

The Downtown Mesa Association sees a timely opportunity to establish a recognizable brand identity and coordinated marketing strategy that will:

- Attract visitors, residents, entrepreneurs, and investment to Downtown Mesa.
- Position Downtown Mesa as a leading destination in the Valley.
- Highlight downtown as a welcoming, safe, and vibrant place to visit, live, work, and invest.

The Downtown Mesa Association (DMA) is a 501c6 non-profit that manages the square-mile of downtown, providing a variety of services including clean and safe programs, marketing services, event production, placemaking and public space management, advocacy, and parking management. DMA will be leading this rebranding for the downtown area and will be the primary point of information and contact for efforts contained within the scope of work identified in this RFP.

NOTE: DMA desires to clearly separate Downtown Mesa from the rest of the Valley. As such, clever, distinctive, and authentic are the guiding principles for the Scope of Work described below.

Scope of Work

- Develop a unified, refreshed brand identity that represents the unique character and long-term vision for the square mile area of Downtown Mesa and the Downtown Mesa Association.
    - The brand will be influenced by Downtown Mesa's history as well as its present, and future vision including:

        - Significant reinvestment in award-winning multi-family housing, hospitality, restaurants, and retail
        - Significance of arts and culture in the community including; being the home of the world-class Mesa Arts Center, multiple live music venues, significant public art works, and growing Downtown Mesa's identity as a destination for live music.
        - Growing higher-education presence the and burgeoning Downtown Arts and Innovation District anchored by the ASU MIX Center
        - Retail mix based around unique, locally owned small-business and the community's support for local business and entrepreneurship
        - Growing dining and nightlife destination featuring James Beard Award Nominated restaurants as well as other award-winning bakeries, breweries, distillery, and cidery – all focused on authenticity.
- Deliver a written positioning strategy that articulates DMA's vision and communicates Downtown Mesa as a top Arizona destination for living, working, playing, hospitality, and investment
    - Strategy should identify key market segments that Downtown Mesa should be targeting
    - This strategy should **differentiate** Downtown Mesa from other urban areas and faux-urban lifestyle centers throughout the state
    - Understanding Downtown Mesa Association's role, services offered, and working within non-profit budget constraints
- Outline a 3-year marketing plan to implement the positioning strategy and support the brand
    - Marketing strategy should include recommended methods of communication, how to implement a plan, and how to work within organization's financial structure
    - Being clever and different should drive this exercise in content and platforms
    - 3-year plan to include recommended content calendar with suggested pacing, templates, and examples for posts and communications for calendar items, including specific templates for annual events.
- Creation of brand assets and standards including (but not limited to) organization logos, event logos, collateral templates, and social media guidelines
    - Review existing marketing tools and messaging including digital assets (website, newsletters), social media, collateral materials, banners and signage, sponsor outreach materials, campaigns, and media outreach
    - Create profiles and testimonials of Downtown businesses, residents, and visitors to be used in campaigns to help DMA promote downtown.
    - Examine the events lineup to determine whether each event aligns with the strategy and how to best reach audiences and sponsors
    - Recommendations for additional assets to help with communications (ex: outdoor kiosks, gateway signage)

- Conduct focus groups/interviews with key downtown stakeholders including property owners, businesses, city leadership, residents, and potential audiences to support rebranding and strategy
    - Create profiles on stakeholders identifying who they are, how they prefer communications, etc.
- Coordination and collaboration with the City of Mesa staff and brand/marketing consultant responsible for the City's concurrent brand repositioning and marketing effort.
    - Ensure DMA and City brand, collateral, and marketing efforts are coordinated and complementary, while avoiding duplication of efforts.
- Ongoing meetings with DMA for communication and input throughout the process
    - Plan for an initial research and discovery phase to discuss findings
    - Review conceptual work for rebranding and messaging

<u>Proposal Requirements</u>

Firms submitting to this request should supply an overview of qualifications and a basic price structure associated with each item identified within the scope of work. Downtown Mesa Association will evaluate responses to this opportunity based on the following criteria:

- Background and experience in rebranding and marketing strategy and results of those efforts including samples of work and references
- Understanding of place management organizations and destination marketing
- Detailed outline responding to Scope of Work including estimated cost of services related to each item
- Thoroughness, quality, and conciseness of the submitted proposal
- Project understanding and approach for achieving the stated objectives
- Projected timeline for full rebranding and strategic plan development from beginning to final deliverables
- Finalist presentation: firms selected as finalists may be asked to present their proposal to a selection committee and answer questions about their experience.

To submit: Send proposal to admin@downtownmesa.com

Deadline for submissions is October 30, 2026, at 5pm PST.