

Request for Proposal (RFP) for the  
Design, Development and Implementation of a “Fully Transactional”  
Destination Grande Prairie Website

Issued: September 27, 2010

RFP Deadline: October 8, 2010

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## **Executive Summary**

Tourism marketing has fundamentally changed as the internet has evolved from an information distribution platform to one that supports full e-commerce functionality. Personal e-networks now support consumer's ability to learn from one another and influence future purchasing decisions. User generated content on sites such as YouTube and MySpace (Web. 2.0.) demonstrate that consumers – more than the companies who are trying to sell product and services to them – have significant influence over corporate brands, value proposition and pricing decisions. New technologies, such as metasearch, also make it easier to consumers not family with the web to locate what they require with little effort.

Unlike the traditional travel agent booking relationship, the world of online tourism marketing and fulfillment puts consumers in control of their own research and package design. Travel websites like TripAdvisor, Kayak and Farecast not only provide industry and consumer generated reviews on a host of hotels, attractions and destinations worldwide, they also empower consumers through technological innovations to predict whether destinations worldwide, they also empower consumers through technological innovations to predict whether airfare and hotel pricing, for example, are likely to rise – or fall – looking forward by one to several days. Not only can consumers expect increased transparency in pricing, it is leading to much shorter booking timelines.

As the stakes grow higher to attract tourism consumers, so too does the attention on e-marketing solutions. In fact, Tourism Montreal has made the decision in the past 2 years to focus 100 % of its tourism marketing efforts on the web. Traditional marketing efforts will capture fewer traditional tourism consumers as the power of the web continues to redefine how commercial transactions are executed. The opportunity before the Grande Prairie region is to create a common platform for all tourism partners to sell the 'Northern experience'; one that also enables participating tourism stakeholders to measure, with statistical and financial certainty, the value of conjoined marketing efforts (eg, a packaged attraction, hotel and dining opportunity).

A new destination website will act as the clearing house for tourism information and will be the hub from which marketing fulfillment can occur with Grande Prairie hoteliers, attraction partners, festival organizers, cultural events, dining establishments, etc. Every component of the new Grande Prairie destination website will be assessed against one simple objective – “how will the content provided convert lookers to bookers.”

Proximity marketing (push-to-PDA/mobile phone) messaging technology and PDA/mobile phone-supported micro website content are burgeoning opportunities for destination marketers looking to more readily connect consumers to product. By having a destination website that supports consumer fulfillment, opportunities to sell additional product/experiences are expanded through PDA/mobile phone marketing platforms.

The Grande Prairie Destination Marketing Fund Cluster Project is researching the development of the e-strategy recognizing that the strategy is the very foundation on which future destination marketing efforts must be built. The e-strategy may also incorporate marketing campaign performance metrics that validate partner investments and lead to the creation of new and exciting marketing opportunities.

There are five primary user audiences that will access the Destination Grande Prairie Region Website. (DGPRW)

**1. Independent Travellers**

- individuals and families

**2. Business Travellers**

- MC&IT (corporate/association meetings & conventions & independent/group business travel).

**3. Travel Trade & Media**

- travel agents, tour operators and a variety of media stakeholders.

**4. Service Provider**

- individuals and companies with tourism product to sell

**5. Administrators**

- Contractors or 3<sup>rd</sup> party (s) that maintain all operational aspects of the website including: full partner support for e-booking transactions, uploading of new editorial and video/imagery content, new package offerings, performance metrics (eg. packages sold and to which geo markets), new e-marketing campaigns, etc.

## **Responding to this RFP**

This project is described as Section 1 – Destination Grande Prairie Region Website Requirements:

### *ABOUT THE DESTINATION MARKETING FUND*

*The Destination Marketing Fund Committee is a committee comprised of seven industry representatives selected from the accommodation sector that are participating in Grande Prairie's Destination Marketing Fund, and, one member from the Grande Prairie Regional Tourism Association. The Committee's primary objective is to commit to increasing and diversifying year-round tourism to Grande Prairie and the surrounding area.*

## **SECTION 1 – Destination Grande Prairie Region Website Requirements**

There are three pillars to the new Destination Grande Prairie Region Website (DGPRW) that the consultant shall be responsible to address under the direction of the DMF Cluster Development Coordinator and in close consultation with the DMF Destination Grande Prairie Region Website Advisory Committee (DGPRWAC)

- **Design, Content & Functionality** – responsible for overall architecture of the site, ensuring the site captures the Grande Prairie Regional brand elements, is visually inviting, intuitive and highly interactive. Fresh and inspiring content/imagery/video will be developed with is targeted to Grande Prairie's various consumer buying groups and promotes a 'two clicks to booking' solution no matter where visitors find themselves on the website.
- **Data Capture** – the data captured by the DGPW shall be able to differentiate new form returning website users, ensuring valuable information about geo-market of origin and "conversation" factors by geo-market are embedded in the system for future report purposes.
- **Technical and Booking Engine (IT)** – consultant shall be responsible to understand the full requirements of tourism partners and research/address all issues relative to development/acquisition of booking engine solution that meets the collective interest of tourism partners.

## **Design, Content and Functionality**

### **DESIGN**

**User Friendly** – the new DGPRW will be visually inspiring and incorporate intuitive links that ensure consumers are never more than '2 clicks' away from being able to execute a travel booking decision.

**Inspired Content** – content shall be developed with our core travel segments in mind. Timely educational and motivational pieces will demonstrate an understanding of the wants and needs of these travel segments. Websites we've visited that embody the design, content and functional aspects desired in the DGPRW include:

- [www.visitcalgary.com](http://www.visitcalgary.com)
- [www.tourismcanmore.com](http://www.tourismcanmore.com)
- [www.seetorontonow.com](http://www.seetorontonow.com)

**Consistent Design Theme** – The site design shall be consistent through all pages of the website. The website will leverage the Grande Prairie brand (color palette, tag lines, etc..) to ensure a consistent presentation of the Grande Prairie regional story.

**Image & Video Library** – the DGPRW will support ease of managing image and video files and tagging of these files to facilitate searches across multimedia files.

**Events Calendar** – Ensure a full calendar of events is maintained with interactive functionality attached to those with the greatest potential of converting online lookers to bookers through the DGPRW booking engine.

**Articles and Features** – DGPRW will have capabilities to post articles from various audiences. Content shall be tagged in a manner that it is displayed on relevant pages or searches.

**Contests and Surveys** – The DGPRW may use surveys, opinion polls or contests to raise interest in the Grande Prairie Region as a destination. The website will allow for individuals to participate, ensuring only one entry per email address. Real time reporting will also be an available option for site Administrator(s).

**Weather Reports / Webcams** – Provide live weather information and webcam feeds from popular locations within the Grande Prairie region.

**About Grande Prairie Region**–Provide a wide-range of information to tourists to help them plan their trip to Grande Prairie (eg. culture, events, history, seasonality issues, etc...)

**Consumer and Travel Trade & Media RSS Feeds** – The DGPRW will generate RSS Feeds for any consumer, travel trade or Media content updates to the site and will further allow these audiences to subscribe to RSS Feeds.

**FAQ** – General information about Grande Prairie & Region and commonly asked question. Available to all users. Downloadable version (.pdf) of content should be available in a branded, professional format.

**Research Resources** – A section on the DGPRW will be dedicated to research and report specific to the Grande Prairie region’s tourism industry. Some of this information will be made available to the general public and the general travel and trade media., where other information will be reserved for ‘registered user’ and/or participating tourism partners who require a much higher level of research detail about the destination.

## **FUNCTIONALITY**

**Booking Functionality** – The DGPRW will develop a proprietary booking engine that supports the shared needs of accommodation, events and attraction partners, and others. The booking engine shall be capable of supporting static and dynamic package offers put forward by hotels and/or tourism partners. Only “approved” tourism partners shall be able to submit package options and manage their particular portion of the content management system. This reservation booking system will be developed by Meridian Reservation Systems.

**Maps (Itinerary Routes)**– Enable consumers to view a detailed map of the city and its various tourism amenities which can be printed to include driving direction sand other interesting stops along the way. Maps should be dynamic (eg. mouse roll-over to highlight region of the city and its various tourism offerings).

**RSVP Planner** – Build a RSVP itinerary planner that enables individuals to create and share proposed vacation itineraries with friends/family/business colleagues. When the Planner has been sent to other invited guests by email, it will embed information about the itinerary (events, hotels, restaurant sections) and point individuals back to the website to confirm their attendance and booking of the suggested activities.

**Consumer Segment Vacation Search** – Build a consumer segment search that returns information results specific to the visitor profile (eg. A male, “Urban Explorer” search would return results specific to current product offerings that fit the profile). Searchers should be further segmented by theme and adventure (eg. Girlfriend Getaway with a “Spa” then, Adrenaline Seekers weekend with a “Sports” focus)

**Promotions & Campaigns**–The DGPRW shall become a primary repository of destination promotions and campaigns. The website will support Grande Prairie regional tourism operators to create and implement campaigns in a timely manner, targeting those packages to geo-markets of interest. Tourism operators should also be able, in a restricted information sharing environment, to suggest to other targeted partners (eg. Select hotels) the details of their proposed campaign and determine whether the ‘hotels’ might be prepared to become involved.

Content Management – DGPRW content management shall be accessible to and capable of being maintained by a variety of authorized stakeholders with responsibly to update content. Varying degrees of administrative privileges are to be assigned to different parties. (eg. DGPRW primary administrative contact would maintain complete site privileges while a tourism partner may only have access to update their own content and make changes to their tourism packages.) Key objective is to ensure minimal dependence on third parties to manage content. Those granted administrative privileges should be able to make the following content additions/deletions:

- Multi-media files (images, video, sound)
- Upcoming Events
- Dynamic and static tourism packages
- Information About Grande Prairie Region
- Corridor Information and provincial information (Travel Alberta)
- RSVP Interactive Vacation Planner
- Tourism Products
- Articles & Features
- Competitions & Polls
- Media Releases
- Media Resources
- Research Articles
- Frequently Asked Questions & Answers
- Trade Tools / Marketing Mix
- Testimonials
- Example Itineraries

**Testimonials** – The DGPRW will incorporate visitor testimonials by consumer segment or vacation type (eg. Spa getaway) for the benefit of Travel and Trade Media. This feature will be reserved for Travel and Trade Media who are registered users on the DGPRW.

**Destination Grande Prairie Educational Resources** – Online resources aimed at non-resident travel agents and tour operator. Available to registered site users, the educational resources will better equip these audiences to sell Grande Prairie region tourism partners' products.

**Content Management (Tourism Partners)** – As a principal object of the new DGPRW is to enable participating tourism partners to create and maintain their own destination packages and information content (eg. Adjust content for seasonality).

**E-Newsletter** – Trade & Media subscribers shall be able to subscribe to a Destination Grande Prairie Region Newsletter. Only available to registered users.

**Reports** – the DGPRW shall be providing the following level of reporting detail to those identified Administration Users. Details include, but shall not be limited to:

- Referral domains of website visitors
- Time website visitors spend on each page
- Geo-markets where web traffic is coming from
- Breakdown of new visitors versus return visitors
- Most visited pages
- Banners, E-Ads, Promotional pieces clicked most often
- Unique page Hits
- Reports on which tourism package offerings are receiving the most activity (looking)
- Reports on which tourism package offerings are being booked most often – and geo-markets where highest number of bookings originate.
- Marketing Campaign Analytics – how many users show an interest on a particular campaign or promotion through clicking for more information, etc.

**Generate E-Newsletters of Registered Trade & media users** – Approved Administration users shall be able to generate e-newsletter content (eg. Targeted promotional/campaign piece) for target audiences.

- User Information – When registering a user, the following information shall be captured:
  - User Name (If email address is not used as user name)
  - Email Address
  - Password
  - First Name & Last Name
  - Male or Female
  - Country of Residence (Town/City if possible)
  - Primary motivation for Travel to Grande Prairie (Business or Leisure)
  - Consumer Segment & Specific Experience Sought (Urban Explorer: Shopping Experience)
  - Motivations for Travel (Do you want to be kept informed of future offers?)

**Approved Suppliers (Tourism Partners)** The following information shall be required of all Approved Suppliers who build and manage content on the DGPRW.

- User Name (if email address is not used as user name)
- Email Address (Password)
- Organization Name or Name
- Type of business (hotel, attractions partner, tour operator, etc.)
- Full Mailing Address
- Office Telephone Number
- Office Fax Number

**Travel or Trade Media Users** – The following information shall be required:

- User Name (If email address is not used as user name)
- Email Address (Password)

- Organization name or Name & Full Mailing Address
- Office Telephone Number (not compulsory)
- Office Fax Number (not compulsory)
- Opt-in options (eg. Request to receive trade newsletter on Calgary Tourism industry)

## **Technical Requirements**

**Dynamic Functionality** - DGPRW will promote a visually-engaging consumer experience using technologies such as: Adobe Shockwave (supports graphical animations) and scripting technology to generate webpages dynamically.

**Browser Compatibility** – The DGPRW will be functional on all the latest versions of browsers including: Internet Explorer, Firefox/Mozilla, Safari and Google Chrome.

**Hosting** – The DGPRW is to be hosted on a dedicated web server housed in Grande Prairie, Alberta.

**Domain Name** – The DGPRW is in the process of identifying and securing appropriate domain names(s) for registration. This will be completed within the first phase of the website project.

**Search Engine Optimization** – The DGPRW will be well positioned among major search engines utilizing meta-tags and other web tools.

**Expandability** – The DGPRW will be constructed with a view to supporting emerging technologies and new communication capabilities. The DGPRW needs to be capable of supporting 'spikes' in visitor volume, as well as the rapid addition or removal of content to support the marketing objects of destination partners.

**Search Functionality** – The DGPRW content, attachments and tagged multimedia files shall all be searchable and enable users to quickly locate the desired information. Advanced search capabilities will enable users to provide additional search parameters to narrow-down the list of desired options.

**Tracking Website Visits** – Those with the approved access shall be able to determine the number of unique website visits by way, week, month etc./ and moreover, shall be able to see where webpage visits are originating by geo-market.

**Cookies** – Cookies shall be leveraged to optimize a returning visitor's web visitor experience.

**Content Sharing** – The DGPRW shall allow users to share any content on the website through integration with social networking sites such as Facebook, etc.

**Restricted Content** – Some DGPRW content shall be available to all users (general audiences and registered users) while some content shall only be available to registered users. For example, media resources made available to travel and trade media (eg. Multimedia files, articles, industry contacts, etc....) may not be the same resources made available to the general public.

**PDA-Mobile Proximity Marketing** – The DGPRW must be built to support PDA – Mobile proximity marketing initiatives. Scaled-down DGPRW content should be available in a mobile web format and this should readily connect consumers to product booking options. Opt-in marketing messages should also be developed. Opt-in marketing would enable the DGPRW content system to push-out last minute or ‘new’ event /product offerings to individuals who are not –n-market and are looking for last minute things to do in the Grande Prairie Region.

**Description of Approach, Methodology and Work Plan**

Interested consultants are required to provide a comprehensive description of the processes it will use to deliver the desired project outcomes. Your company’s response to the RFP should address the following:

1. Understanding of Scope of Work
2. Approach and Methodology
3. Detailed Work Plan and Critical Path *(including proposed process for interaction with the Destination Grande Prairie Region Website Advisory Committee)*
4. Qualifications and Experience
5. Client Examples an References
6. Financial Proposal

Proposals are to be submitted using a “two envelope” procedure: one envelope which contains the technical component of the proposal (items 1 – 5); and one which contains the financial proposal (item 6). The cost estimate shall be broken down according to the tasks of the work plan and shall include staff hourly rates and all fees and disbursements necessary to complete the work plan. For added clarity, the following disbursements are considered to be included in the cost estimate: telephone, fax, printing, courier, travel and meals.

Criteria	Weighting
1. Understanding of Scope of Work	10 %
2. Approach and Methodology	15%
3. Detailed Work Plan and Critical Path	20%
4. Qualifications and Experience	10%
5. Client Examples an References	25%

## **Deadline for Submissions**

The closing date for the receipt of proposals is 5:00 pm MTN on Friday, October 08, 2010. Email submission will be accepted by the deadline provided an original copy of the proposal (+12 copies) is received at our offices no later than Monday October 11, 2010 at 12:00 noon MTN. Incomplete submissions (those that do not address in detail the requirements listed above) will not be considered.

Submissions must also respond to the Design, Technology and Development Process questions posed in the 2-pages that follow.

Submissions are to be sent by registered mail to the attention:

**Terri Ellen Sudnik  
DMF Cluster Development Project  
C/O Community Futures Grande Prairie & Region  
#104, 9817-101 Ave  
Grande Prairie, AB T8V 0X6  
terri@cfofgp.com**

\*\* One original copy of your submission with one dozen (12) copies will be required.

*The DGPRWAC reserves the right to postpone or amend the RFP or agreement pending the quality of proposals received.*

## **Additional Background Information**

### **REQUIREMENTS & FEATURES**

#### **Design**

1. Does your company have in-house capabilities in the area of photography, video and audio production and broadcast? Please also clarify whether these services will be provided at net cost to the Grande Prairie Destination Marketing Fund, and included as part of your overall budget proposal.
2. Do you have qualified content development specialists on staff, or do you contract his work out? If the former, how much experience have the content developers had working on projects of similar nature?
3. What protocol would be used to resolve ongoing technical issues and more specifically, what protocol would be used if the entire site went down?

#### **Technology**

1. What experience does the development firm have integrating other website technologies, third party software tools and applications into web development projects? Provide some background on the scope of e-commerce platforms and the back-end systems used to support them. Please provide specific examples.
2. Has your firm developed interactive websites that support full e-commerce functionality? Has this experience extended to include development of websites for mobile / PDA applications? Please provide specific client examples.
3. Has your company created software applications and online tools for other clients? Can you explain what those features were and how you went about implementing them?
4. Does your proposal involve using 'off-the-shelf' software packages? If so, what up-front / annual licensing fees are involved and are the software upgrades to be budgeted for? If proprietary systems are developed, why would they be considered superior and how would the ongoing cost of development and support be rationalized relative to using off-the-shelf software?
5. Will your company conduct all of the work required to fulfill this RFP, or will portions of this be contracted to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties. A complete list of primary and secondary (subcontracted) players must be included in your RFP response. Please also provide details on the following:

- Does your company have dedicated staff resources for search marketing?
- Does your company have experience in planning, creating and executing integrated online/offline marketing & advertising campaigns that include the coordinated integration of the following channels/mediums:
  - Broadcast TV and radio
  - Cable TV
  - Online video advertising & pod casts
  - Print (newspaper & magazine – space advertising and inserts)
  - Interactive CD/DVD & kiosk
  - Direct mail
  - Website
  - Mobile
  - Social networking & blogs
  - Game development
  - Public relations
  - Online optimized press releases
  - E-mail campaigns
  - E-news distribution
  - Search
  - Pay – per – click
  - RSS
  - Landing pages (unique, track-able URLs)

### **Development Process**

1. Who on your staff will be dedicated to his project and what are their technical capabilities (qualifications) and experience with similar projects?
2. Does your company have the ability to post draft components of the website online so DGPRW Advisory Committee can view the design, copy and functional aspects of the evolving website?
3. Has your company worked on a website project like this before? If so, please provide background and client testimonials.

September 24, 2010

Subject: Request for Proposal – Design, Development and Implementation of a Fully Transactional Destination Grande Prairie Regional Website

To Whom It May Concern:

The Grande Prairie Destination Marketing Fund (DMF), is requesting proposals from qualified e-strategy/web development firms for the design, development and implementation of a fully transactional destination website for the Grande Prairie & Region.

Submissions must meet the minimum content requirements specified in the RFP. Proposals will be weighted in accordance to an understanding of the scope of work; methodology; consultant qualification; consultant experience; references; and financial proposal.

The closing date for the receipt of proposals is 5:00 pm MTN on Friday, October 08, 2010. Email submission will be accepted by the deadline provided an original copy of the proposal (+12 copies) is received at our offices no later than Monday October 11, 2010 at 12:00 noon MTN.

Under no circumstances will proponents claim for compensation as a result of participating in this RFP process. Submission on an RFP will serve as acknowledgement of this condition. If you have questions concerning the RFP, please direct those questions in writing to my attention at [terri@cfogp.com](mailto:terri@cfogp.com)

Regards,

Terri Ellen Sudnik, Coordinator  
DMF Cluster Development Project