



## **Request for Proposal – Marketing Strategy & Plan**

**CORSO ITALIA BIA RFP# M20190607**

### **About the Corso Italia BIA:**

The Corso Italia Business Improvement Area (CIBIA) was established in 1984. The BIA is comprised of 200 member local businesses that share a strong commitment to the preservation and promotion of our unique and diverse neighbourhood along St. Clair Avenue West. Its boundaries are Westmount Avenue to the east and Lansdowne Avenue to the west. The location is accessible by car and public transit. The Gardiner Expressway is about a 15 minute drive south, via Lansdowne and Jameson Avenues. Highway 401 and Yorkdale Mall are a 15 minute drive north via Dufferin Street. Dufferin Mall is only a 5 minute drive southbound. You can also get here by TTC. The 512 St. Clair streetcar runs eastbound to St. Clair West Station and St. Clair Station at Yonge St, and runs westbound to Keele Street. The Dufferin bus runs north to Wilson Station and south to Exhibition Place with both regular and express service, both of which stop at St. Clair and include stops at Yorkdale Shopping Centre and Dufferin Mall. The Lansdowne bus travels south from St. Clair West to Queen Street with its busiest stop at Lansdowne Subway Station.

The CIBIA's mandate is to beautify, maintain and help make safe the public realm, as well as promote the business community and the neighbourhood as a whole. The BIA works in partnership with the City to create thriving, competitive area to run a small business, and a safe community that attract shoppers, diners, tourists, and new businesses. It's one of 85 BIAs in the City of Toronto and one that has a distinct identity and heritage beyond its geographic boundaries.

### **History & Observations**

Once a predominantly Italian neighbourhood well known for its Italian merchants (fashion apparel, textiles, footwear, bridal, restaurants, housewares, flowers, grocers, butchers, bakers, etc), Corso Italia would not only draw people from the local community but from all across Toronto and even beyond (tourists from Buffalo would visit by the busload to shop the unique Italian shops).

Over the last 20-30 years, the "Italianness" of Corso Italia has faded. The Italian and Italian-Canadian demographic now represent a little less than 50% of the local population and possibly even less represented at the merchant level. Many of the once vibrant Italian shops have closed or faded as younger generation offspring lose interest in carrying on the business. Growth in their

place has been largely service-based or professional businesses. The population of Corso Italia neighbourhood has become much more mixed with the Italian residents aging and a broader demographic of young families moving into the area of mixed ethnicity and backgrounds due to more affordable pockets of housing. As the area's Italian heritage becomes less apparent, the Corso-Italia brand is becoming more diluted and less effective as a draw in-and-of-itself.

*Terminology note: the terms vendor, agency and proponent are used interchangeably and all refer to the bidding individual or organization*

### **Objectives:**

We see several areas of focus to help revive the Corso Italia merchant area.

1. Build a shop local mentality among residents within walking distance of St. Clair to drive more foot traffic to the merchants to raise awareness within the local community of what Corso Italia already has to offer.
2. Strengthen and build awareness of Corso Italia and build/maintain customers and residents' loyalty to the neighbourhood and build a personal connection between customers and the neighbourhood.
3. Help develop Corso Italia as a popular destination for local and non-local residents where they can meet, shop, dine and wine.
4. To have a vision and strategy for building up the Corso Italia brand in general; the vision should act as a guide and litmus test for all activities undertaken by the BIA.
5. "If you build it they will come". Identify target business types that will attract increased foot traffic (as above) and create a campaign / incentives to attract these merchants to open shops and businesses along the St. Clair stretch of Corso Italia. This will entail working with property owners / landlords to help them understand how the value of their properties and the rent they can charge is closely tied to the success of the business area as a whole. It may also involve forming partnerships with Economic Development, chambers of commerce, retail associations, etc to get the message out.
6. Establish and maintain strategic corporate and community partnerships that help elevate Corso's brand.

### **Project Scope:**

The CIBIA is seeking a marketing agency to help us develop an overall marketing strategy and long term plan to refresh/revive our branding and put us on track to deliver messaging and initiatives that align with the BIA's mandate and objectives. The firm selected will also be expected to produce and deliver design creative and direct, produce or assist as appropriate with content for digital & print marketing.

The agency selected will undertake the following responsibilities:

- The selected vendor will conduct research, including the development of merchant and consumer surveys as appropriate, and provide direction to CIBIA coordinator and marketing sub-committee for effective execution.
- The selected vendor will assist and provide recommendations for a brand audit – to include focus groups made up of stakeholders (merchants, property owners and consumers). We are interested in a better understanding the BIA’s perceived brand awareness and brand identity. Based on the above noted research findings and our BIA’s history / heritage, mandate, & current strengths, suggest future marketing initiatives that enable the BIA to better attain its goals.
- Develop an overall brand strategy and 3-5 year marketing plan.
- Advise on brand strengthening and positioning techniques, strategies and messaging.
- Provide recommendations on current event marketing initiatives and partnerships and fit for our brand and any recommended changes and/or additions.
- Examine current social media profile / platforms, create SOP and make recommendations for new images, content writing, campaigns and corresponding hash tags consistent with the brand strategy, timeline images and make recommendations for new images (visual content) and corresponding tag lines consistent with the brand strategy.
- Assist with creating a vision and plan for implementation of new branding/messaging.
- Create press release templates, design & develop promotional and marketing materials/ collateral branding/messaging.
- Attend our Marketing Committee meetings as needed throughout the duration of the contract, offering advice and making recommendations for ongoing and future programming and marketing.
- Making recommendations for media buys and offer available agency discounts/referrals which would be useful to our marketing needs.
- It must be understood that all materials and designs which are created for our organization by your firm, at our cost, become the property of the BIA and no additional fees will be paid to the design firm or illustrators etc. for their use, with the exception of changes quoted and approved in advance for each project.

## **PROJECT BUDGET**

- Interested bidders must provide a firm, fixed, all-inclusive price for all services proposed. The BIA will not pay for any costs or expenses not included in the proposed price, unless it is a change in scope directed by the BIA and expressly approved in advance by the BIA board. Additional costs and fees may be presented as menu pricing (eg. cost for attending each additional BIA marketing or board meeting beyond the stated number in the proposal response).

- Corso Italia's entire annual operating budget is roughly \$200,000 of which 20% has been allocated to cover ALL marketing activities and initiatives. The BIA has set aside approximately \$30,000 for this specific initiative in the 2019 budget with the remaining earmarked for ongoing initiatives. Firms may recommend a multi-year proposal plan based on identified priorities and our limited budgets.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used to select a successful consultant:

- Quality of written proposal and understanding of the scope of the assignment
- Proposed fees and total cost of proposed services
- Extent of work proposed in relation to costs
- Expertise and relevant experience and time contribution of the team members
- Samples of relevant work and references related to involvement in similar types of work

## REQUIRED CONTENT FOR PROPOSAL

All proposals must contain a minimum of the following information:

**Vendor Background & Experience** – Provide a description of your general experience (i.e. company history, experience, expertise, list of services provided)

**Legal & Insurance** – Provide your legal company name, mailing and physical address, email and phone contact info. Indicate whether your firm holds E&O liability insurance and the amount carried to protect your client's interests.

**Examples** – Provide examples of relevant projects completed in the past 5 years that are similar in scope to ours. Preference given to firms who have worked with local BIA's in the past.

**References** – Provide 2-3 references with contact information where your firm has provided services for marketing strategy, creative design, methodology and approach.

**Approach & Project Management** - Provide a brief description of your firm's approach and the services to fulfill the requirements of this RFP; a list and explanation of the activities the firm will engage in to research data; a depiction of the preferred methods by which your firm measures the results of its work and how the firm envisions tracking the activities results of this project.**Team** – List the team members who will be assigned to our project, their roles and experience; indicate who will be the project lead and point person with the BIA. **Timeline and Pricing** – Detailed plan on the timeline for the completion of the marketing strategy; description of the general compensation structure for this type of project and costs required to complete the project including any out-of-pocket expenses.

*Note: The primary vendor shall be responsible for carrying all sub-contractors, consultants and vendors in their proposal pricing. Where reasonable estimates cannot be determined, the*

*primary vendor shall carry an allowance or budget based on specifications and recommendations.*

**Timeline for this RFP Process**

- Friday June 7                      Release open call with dissemination of RFP Document via TABIA and City of Toronto BIA office and other sites as appropriate
- Monday June 24, 5pm      Deadline for expressions of vendor interest and questions. Please respond not later than this date with your intent to submit a response to the RFP.
- Wednesday June 26, 5pm      Issue responses to vendor questions to all proponents who expressed intent to respond.
- Friday July 5, 5pm              Deadline for submission of vendor Proposals
- Wednesday July 10              Selection of successful vendor

All inquiries, responses and Proposals are to be submitted to [corso@torontocorsoitalia.com](mailto:corso@torontocorsoitalia.com)