

RAPID CITY REGIONAL AIRPORT

RFP ADDENDUM 1 – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS – September 25, 2025

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR MARKETING AND BRANDING SERVICES

RELEASED: AUGUST 29, 2025

PROPOSAL DUE DATE: OCTOBER 10, 2025

SCOPE This addendum forms a part of the contract documents and modifies the specifications and contract documents as further described.

1. Do you have an existing brand guidelines?

A: Yes.

2. Has any previous user or audience research been completed that can inform this project?

A: Yes. We draw on several ongoing data sources, including cell phone-based visitor studies, origin-and-destination passenger data, and enplanement trends. We track campaign performance in key markets and share insights with tourism partners. We also completed a recent economic impact study measuring visitor spending and work with state agencies to build traveler personas that shape our targeting strategy. Paid marketing is aimed mid-funnel at inbound travelers with demonstrated intent, designed to align closely with destination marketing organizations. A customer survey was also completed as part of the update process to our strategic plan.

3. Do you have a specific budget in mind for this project?

A: The annual marketing budget is set by the board of directors. We anticipate approximately \$190,000 per year allocated to the agency for the peak marketing campaign. The rebrand will be negotiated separately and will have its own budget subject to board approval.

4. What challenges has the Airport faced in the past when working to attract or retain air service, and how do you see marketing and brand positioning supporting those efforts over the next three years?

A: RAP has always battled long stage lengths, geographic isolation, and hyper-seasonality, with Denver undercutting fares. Marketing performance data is shared with airline partners for informational purposes to demonstrate community support, consistent with FAA marketing and air service development guidelines.

Demonstrating campaign performance and individual market investments gives airlines tangible evidence of demand stimulation and regional support.

5. **What level of collaboration or alignment is expected with regional tourism organizations (e.g., Black Hills & Badlands Tourism Association, South Dakota Department of Tourism) to maximize co-branded opportunities?**

A. Collaboration is close and consistent. We share passenger traffic trends, coordinate on digital tools like pixel placement, keyword selection and maintain direct leadership ties. Passenger insights gathered by the airport will also be shared with these agencies. That said, FAA guidelines and grant assurances prohibiting diversion apply to all co-branded pieces, and those requirements set the framework for how joint marketing is executed.

6. **Are there specific perceptions about Rapid City Regional Airport, positive or negative, that the Board feels must be directly addressed in the new brand identity?**

A: Traveler sentiment survey in 2024 - Surveys show passengers view RAP as small, efficient, and clean. Local residents express pride in the airport, though they cite limited nonstop options and airfare as concerns. Recent board and staff input on brand sentiment emphasized that the brand should reflect the character of the Black Hills and convey a sense of place. With a transformative terminal expansion underway, the refreshed brand should align with the project's design and complement its tones and imagery. Another brand-specific public survey can be conducted by the airport after the rebrand budget is approved - this can be facilitated by the airport marketing manager via a wifi intercept.

7. **What's driving the creation of this RFP (i.e., why now)?**

A: It is the administration's policy to rebid at the end of each contract term, the scope of work from the last contract is also changing significantly. The incumbent is Lawrence and Schiller.

8. **Do you have an annual budget range in mind for the duration of this contract?**

A: The annual marketing budget is set by the board of directors. We anticipate approximately \$190,000 per year allocated to the agency for the peak marketing campaign. The rebrand will be negotiated separately and will have its own budget subject to board approval.

9. **Have you worked with agencies in the past? If so, what kinds of processes or approaches to communication and collaboration have you found worked well in those relationships? Not as well?**

A: Yes. We've worked with several agencies in the past, with Lawrence & Schiller as the incumbent agency of record. Communication and tools - It is mandatory that our team has full editor access to all platform analytics dashboards. Beyond that, a centralized paid marketing dashboard would be valuable, giving us one place to track performance across all channels and campaigns.

10. **We're interested in whether you can elaborate more on this statement: "To achieve the objectives of this plan, the Airport will allocate a substantial budget to support campaign development, media investment, brand execution, and associated professional fees."**

A: The annual marketing budget is set by the board of directors. We anticipate approximately \$190,000 per year allocated to the agency for the peak marketing campaign. The rebrand will be negotiated separately and will have its own budget subject to board approval.

11. **Have you assigned specific measurable goals connected to the new airport brand and campaign?**

A: For the rebrand, success will be measured by positive traveler and stakeholder sentiment, consistent adoption across channels, and the ability to position RAP as the convenient gateway to the Black Hills and nearby national parks. We want to be recognized as not just "Rapid City's Airport, but as a broader, regional entity. Technically, the brand must be versatile across digital, print, signage, and limited environmental applications, while clearly reflecting the character and sense of place of the region. Past KPIs for annual campaigns can be shared upon contract award but include CTR, impressions, email signups, and attribution data such as Expedia airline tickets and bookings per campaign.

12. **Can you expand upon the affiliate marketing program mentioned in section 6.5? What are the expectations for this program? Have you done something similar in the past?**

A: We are currently an Expedia affiliate. Our current Agency of Record manages this revenue and applies it to our paid media placement budget. We are open to other affiliate and booking programs.

13. Are there any regional airports that have recently been through a rebrand that you admire their transformation? If so, which ones?

A: Regional - JAC, ROA Other - CHA, YYC, PDX

14. Are there other airports that you think do a good job of branding and marketing?

A: JAC, DFW

15. How closely do you work with Travel South Dakota or other local destination marketing organizations for various marketing efforts?

A: See question 5.

16. Can you share any additional research on Outdoor Families, Active & Affluent, Active Empty Nesters, park visitors, or any other key audiences?

A: We can share detailed existing persona research upon selection of agency of record.

17. How many team members from the airport's marketing team will be involved in final decisions on creative and other work?

A: For annual marketing campaigns, the Airport Marketing Manager will be the decision maker for creative. For the rebrand, it will be presented to the board of directors after evaluation by an airport-selected steering group.

18. Is there an incumbent the Airport has been working with, and if so, what is the reason for this new initiative to a potential different Agency?

A. See question 7.

19. Will Agencies outside of South Dakota be considered for this engagement?

A: Yes

20. Is there existing data which delineates the existing origin and destination markets and growth opportunities in the origination sector?

A: Yes

21. In the Fee for Services section, are you asking the Agency to predict the budget spend for performing the services/deliverables for each of the three years, even though no marketing plan or tactics have been decided? If so, would you

accept a budget range for this section along with hourly rates?

A: A budget range with hourly rates is acceptable. The annual marketing campaign budget is approximately \$190,000 for agency placement. Scope is negotiable and may include creative, placement only, or a mix. Work assigned to the agency of record will be determined by the airport's marketing manager, some items may be handled in-house. Plan for the majority of the budget to be allocated to paid media placement in the first year.

22. In year one (2026) you mentioned the Agency leading peak season marketing campaigns. Does this mean continuation and management of what you currently are running while strategic planning is taking place, or would the Agency be responsible to creating this peak season campaign for the year?

A: It is anticipated that the first year, the airport will heavily assist with creative and entirely manage organic social. The agency will handle paid placement. Many images used are historically provided courtesy of destination marketing organizations (DMOs).

23. If people don't use the Rapid City Airport, what other regional airports do they use? Which airport(s) would you consider your biggest competition?

A: Rapid City is geographically isolated, so leakage is limited. When it occurs, it is primarily to Denver, driven by fare differences and route options. Sioux Falls (FSD) captures some traffic, though it is uncommon. For benchmarking, we also look at similarly situated airports nationwide for social performance and enplanement trends etc. Our biggest competitor is the drive market.

24. Is the expectation that for each year/phase we should keep the budget to \$190,000 annually or is there opportunity for the rebrand to fall outside the annual \$190,000 marketing campaign.

A: The \$190,000 is the approximate annual budget for the marketing campaign, which has historically covered PPC, paid social, and similar efforts. The rebrand, upon approval by the airport board would fall outside of this budget.

25. Are there any airlines that you have co-op dollars with or trying to land any new ones in the upcoming years?

A: The airport has \$1.3 million in grants allocated for air service development, primarily for incentives such as minimum revenue guarantees (MRGs) or fuel abatement. We have successfully received Small Community Air Service

Development Program (SCASDP) funds in the past. Currently, the only incentive agreement is with Allegiant, which will expire next year. The airport is open to airline-specific campaigns tied to new route launches, provided they meet FAA and grant guidelines. We are always looking to expand and retain air service, attracting a low cost carrier is a primary target.

26. Are there key goals or outcomes you are hoping to achieve through marketing efforts we should be prioritizing? Examples: Total passenger growth, brand awareness, new market awareness, revenue, etc.

A: Our top priority is to drive high load factors of 80% or greater, protecting existing routes. Beyond that, we aim to grow total enplanements and generate awareness in target inbound markets. Campaigns should capture travel intent tied to the Black Hills and nearby national parks.

27. How do you prioritize the demand markets going into 2026?

We prioritize markets using a combination of data sources and airline input. A cell phone GPS study shows where visitors are coming from, whether they drive or fly. We also rely on airline origin-and-destination (O&D) data and direct feedback from one-on-one meetings with carriers.

28. If we link to creative examples in the proposal vs including them in the actual document will we be disqualified?

A: No

29. Should we anticipate that the current website is the site we will direct all media efforts towards?

A: The majority of media efforts will point to the airport website. You will have full access to the CMS, but most content updates will be handled in-house. The agency's role will focus on technical items such as event triggers, pixel updates, and related tracking needs.

30. Are there any current co-op dollars committed in 2026 through DMOs being utilized?

A: Agencies should not plan on accessing DMO funds, but can expect coordination that complement paid airport campaigns. The FAA rules prohibit revenue diversion and limit how we can structure formal co-op agreements with DMOs. That said, we collaborate closely with partners such as Visit Rapid City and Black Hills & Badlands,

and they often provide support like imagery, content, and research. These partnerships extend the reach of our campaigns, but there are no co-op dollars committed for 2026.

31. Do you hope to conduct any primary or secondary research to guide your rebrand?

A: Yes. While we have existing data sources (cell phone-based visitor research, airline O&D data, economic impact studies, and past traveler/board/staff sentiment surveys), we expect the selected agency to assist with additional research to inform the rebrand. This could include stakeholder interviews, traveler perception surveys, competitive brand audits, or testing creative concepts with target audiences.

32. Does the creation of a new visual identity include refreshing your logo and brand colors?

A: Yes, and possibly more than a refresh.

33. In addition to a standard visual identity refresh, are you interested in elevating your visual style through illustration, animation, character styles, data visualization direction, or any other key sections?

A: We want a cohesive system that works across digital, print, and environmental applications and could possibly include illustration similar to TravelSD campaigns. Character styles are not a priority.

34. Brand Research: Has any recent brand perception or traveler sentiment research been conducted that can be shared? Will additional stakeholder or passenger research be expected as part of this engagement?

A: Research can be shared upon award. While we have existing data sources (cell phone-based visitor research, airline O&D data, economic impact studies, and past traveler/board/staff sentiment surveys), we expect the selected agency to assist with additional research to inform the rebrand. This could include stakeholder interviews, traveler perception surveys, competitive brand audits, or testing creative concepts with target audiences.

35. Stakeholder Engagement: Are there any expectations for public engagement, community input, or stakeholder interviews as part of the brand redevelopment process?

A: Yes

36. Decision-Making Process: Could you clarify the internal structure of the review process? Will a dedicated core team or steering committee be guiding the work, and how involved will the Airport Board be throughout?

A: For annual marketing campaigns, all creative will be reviewed and approved by the Airport Marketing Manager, who will also be your primary point of contact on creative and placement direction. A year end campaign report will be presented to the board. For the rebrand, a steering committee will be formed to guide the process. The Airport Board will approve all annual budgets and the final rebrand project proposal after approval by the steering committee.

37. Brand Rollout & Signage: Will signage and environmental branding updates be handled internally or through other vendors? What level of coordination is expected from the selected agency? Signage will primarily be handled by the airport, but collaboration may be requested for specific large items including a new highway sign.

38. Affiliate Marketing: Will the agency be responsible for managing and optimizing the Expedia booking widget? Who owns the data and revenue generated through the affiliate program?

A: See question 12

39. Performance Dashboards: Is there an existing analytics or dashboard tool the Airport prefers, or should the agency recommend and implement one?

A: The airport currently has access to GA4, Meta, Google Ads (viewer only), and Sprout. We are open to the agency recommending and implementing a consolidated dashboard. It is mandatory that the airport maintain full access control to all dashboards.

40. Creative Volume & Campaign Cadence: Could you provide any guidance on the number of campaigns or creative initiatives expected annually across channels?

A: At present, the airport runs one major seasonal peak campaign each year, with creative produced in-house. Beyond that, smaller initiatives are executed as needed. We anticipate maintaining at least one large campaign annually while expanding into additional seasonal pushes, such as for the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally or promoting a new route, depending on performance and budget. The exact cadence

and creative volume will be guided by agency recommendations in coordination with the Airport Marketing Manager.

41. **Tourism & Airline Partnerships: Will the selected agency have direct access to collaborate with local tourism organizations and airline partners, or will those relationships be managed through the Airport?** The agency may collaborate with local tourism organizations and airline partners, but access is at the discretion of each destination marketing organization (DMO). The Airport Marketing Manager will remain the primary liaison and will facilitate introductions or coordination as needed for airline contact.

42. **Target Markets: Have your top origin and destination markets already been identified, or is market research and audience targeting part of the agency's scope?**

A: O&D markets have been identified.

43. **Media Planning & Reporting: What documentation or reporting is required to support media placement transparency, particularly with the 20% commission model?**

A: Detailed media plans and post-buy reports are required for all placements. Documentation should include gross spend, commission, and net placement costs to clearly show the commission model. Regular performance reporting by channel is also expected, with the airport retaining access to all platform data.

44. **Brand Evolution With your impressive 21% passenger growth, how do you see RAP's identity evolving—from a seasonal Black Hills gateway to a year-round regional hub serving diverse travelers?**

A: RAP's identity will remain rooted in tourism, with our hyperseasonal market driving how campaigns are timed and executed. We "peak the peaks" by leaning into periods of highest demand rather than trying to flatten seasonality, with summer Black Hills traffic as the anchor. The refreshed brand should capture the character of the Black Hills and create a strong sense of place, while also aligning with the design and tones of the terminal expansion now underway. Our goal is to position RAP as the airport for the Black Hills and beyond, not only Rapid City.

45. **Competitive Positioning How do you currently differentiate RAP's direct access advantage against travelers connecting through Denver or other major hubs**

to reach the Black Hills?

A: Flying direct into Rapid City eliminates the added leg through Denver or other hubs, putting visitors immediately in the Black Hills instead of hours away by car. For inbound markets, this means less time spent connecting and more time at destinations like Mount Rushmore, Custer State Park, and the Badlands. For local travelers, RAP offers the convenience of originating close to home without the drive. The positioning is straightforward: direct access gets travelers where they want to be faster.

46. Market Diversification Beyond traditional summer tourism, what emerging segments—business travel, shoulder-season recreation, cultural visitors—are driving your record growth?

A: While summer tourism remains the largest driver, shoulder-season travel is a growing contributor to record growth. Each season brings its own distinct demographic: July is anchored by active family travel, August by the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, and fall by an older leisure segment drawn to hunting, and events like the Buffalo Roundup. Beyond leisure, a new mission at Ellsworth Air Force Base has the potential to increase military-related travel, particularly from Southern California.

47. Partnership Strategy How should airport marketing coordinate with Visit Rapid City and other regional partners while maintaining RAP's distinct value proposition?

A: Coordination with Visit Rapid City, Black Hills & Badlands, and the South Dakota Department of Tourism is close and consistent. We share insights, cross-utilize tools such as pixel placement, and align campaign timing to amplify reach. This extends into keyword strategy and funnel placement, tourism partners drive broad destination awareness, while RAP focuses further down the funnel on converting that intent into booked air travel. At the same time, RAP maintains its own voice by emphasizing the airport's value - direct access to the Black Hills and time savings compared to driving. Partnerships extend market reach, while the airport brand ensures RAP is recognized as the gateway that makes those experiences possible.

48. Infrastructure Messaging How do you want to communicate your \$35M expansion to different audiences—airlines, passengers, and the community—to maximize impact?

A: The \$220M expansion will require a local campaign within the next two years, however it may be handled internally due to the complexity of the project.

49. Digital Marketing Evolution As you scale beyond your current \$190K budget, what new audience segments beyond 'Outdoor Families' and 'Active & Affluent' show the most potential?

A: We see opportunity in several additional segments: older couples 50+ with household incomes above \$100K and no children; younger families ages 25–44 with household incomes of \$70K–150K; motorcycle enthusiasts tied to the Sturgis Rally and related events; and travelers with intent to visit a National Park - start close, expand outward with parks interest.

50. Success Vision What does success look like for RAP in 3-5 years? How will you measure whether the new brand and marketing strategy is working?

A: Locally, success means a brand that is embraced by the community, approved by the board, visible on a new highway sign, and reflected consistently across airport touchpoints. The identity should complement the terminal expansion's design, be versatile across digital and physical applications, and create a clear sense of place. Externally, we will measure effectiveness through campaign performance, sustained passenger growth, and feedback from both travelers and airline partners that confirms the brand is resonating.

51. Describe your Agency's video (broadcast, cable satellite, and alternative), print, audio, direct mail, and out-of-home (OOH) experience and capabilities. Please use specific examples when describing your strategies and capabilities. For the described elements above, are you more interested in media placement strategies or creative production capabilities, or both?

A: both

52. Knowing that a rebrand would be part of the Year 2 Initiative, would there be additional budget set aside outside of the \$190,000 / year for marketing services?

A: The annual marketing budget is approved annually by the Airport Board. Additional funds can be requested by airport staff at the beginning of the year. The rebrand should be considered a separate initiative with its own budget, distinct from the \$190,000 annual marketing campaign allocation.

53. Are there any strict requirements on what order each of the proposal contents are in and how they are labeled? Or so long as everything is included is the layout and flow up to the agency?

A: The layout is up to the agency.

54. Is Attachment A to be considered as part of the 26-page limit, or above and beyond?

A: It will not count towards the page limit.

55. Will preference be given to agencies that have prior experience working with airports or destination organizations on brand redevelopment projects?

A: Prior experience with airports or destination organizations is not a mandatory requirement, nor does the RFP grant preference to such experience. However, proposers are expected to demonstrate qualifications, capabilities, and relevant past performance that align with the scope and complexity of the Rapid City Regional Airport's branding and marketing needs. All proposals will be evaluated on their merits, in accordance with the published evaluation criteria and in the best interest of the Airport.

56. Is the Airport seeking an agency of record relationship for the full three-year term, or does the Airport anticipate awarding separate contracts for brand redevelopment and ongoing marketing?

A: The Airport intends to engage a single agency of record (AOR) for the full three-year term, contingent on successful contract execution and annual board-approved budgets. The selected agency is expected to provide both brand redevelopment services and ongoing marketing support. While the brand redevelopment initiative will be scoped and budgeted as a distinct project, it is anticipated to be awarded to the same agency under the overarching AOR relationship. All work, including the rebrand, will be subject to specific project proposals, timelines, and board approval in accordance with the compensation terms outlined in the RFP and final contract.

57. For the required two sample campaigns, does the Airport prefer to see examples from aviation/tourism clients?

A: While aviation or tourism-related examples are welcome and may help demonstrate relevant experience, they are not required. The Airport is most

interested in campaigns that showcase the agency's strategic thinking, creative execution, measurable results, and ability to adapt messaging across platforms.

58. **The RFP notes that compensation is project-based with no retainer and that media commissions are capped at 20%. Could the Airport clarify whether it envisions a monthly or annual budget allocation for ongoing services (strategy, creative, reporting, etc.) outside of media spend?**

A: The Airport anticipates an annual marketing services budget approved by the board, within which campaigns and placement will be approved throughout the year by the Airport Marketing Manager. While there is no fixed monthly retainer, agencies may propose project scopes that include ongoing services such as strategy, creative development, reporting, and performance monitoring. These scopes should be tied to specific deliverables, timelines, and estimated costs. The annual allocation for these services, excluding media placement costs, will vary based on campaign needs and board-approved funding, but proposers should use the stated \$190,000 annual campaign figure as a general planning framework. The Airport reserves the right to adjust allocations as needed.

59. **Can you provide an estimated budget range for the rebranding effort (logo, identity system, messaging, rollout strategy), separate from the annual marketing budget?**

A: The rebrand will have a distinct budget, to be proposed and approved by the board following agency selection and scope finalization.

60. **Of the \$425,000 marketing budget noted in 2024 financials, how much is anticipated to be available for agency services versus media placement?**

A: The \$425,000 noted in the 2024 financials includes allocations for multiple purposes, including required match funding for federal air service development grants. These grant-related funds are not available for traditional marketing activities. For the purposes of this RFP, agencies should focus on a core marketing budget projected at approximately \$190,000 annually, which supports media planning, placement, and related agency services. The division between agency services and media spend will be determined on a campaign basis. Agencies are encouraged to propose scopes and fee structures that reflect this flexible, needs-based model.

61. How has the split between media and agency services been in the past?

A: Historically, the majority of the annual marketing budget has been allocated to media placement. Agencies should note that the Airport produces some creative and content in-house, and scopes may shift depending on available resources, campaign complexity, and strategic goals.

62. How should agencies account for the SCASD grant and other air service development marketing funds in their proposals? Will those be managed through the selected marketing partner, or separately through the Airport and Mead & Hunt?

A: The Airport and Mead & Hunt will handle these funds. These are not marketing funds in a traditional sense most are used for airline incentives like MRG's.

63. Does the Airport have a desired timeline for completing the brand redevelopment (e.g., in advance of the terminal expansion milestones)?

A: The Airport anticipates completing the core brand redevelopment, visual identity and brand guidelines by the end of calendar year 2027. This timing is intended to align with key terminal expansion milestones, ensuring the refreshed brand is ready for integration into new signage for the gate expansion portion of Project 2.

64. Will the selected agency be expected to manage all media buying (digital, OOH, print, broadcast), or will some channels (e.g., airline co-op marketing) remain outside the scope?

A: Some channels will remain outside of the scope, primarily print, local campaigns etc. These exceptions are not expected to drastically affect the core \$190,000 anticipated marketing budget.

65. Beyond the requested dashboard and reporting tools, are there specific KPIs or performance metrics that are considered critical (e.g., passenger enplanements, airline partner ROI, brand perception tracking)? :

A: The Airport's top priority is to support high load factors of 80% or greater, which helps protect existing air service and maintain route sustainability. We aim to drive total passenger enplanement growth, increase awareness and bookings in key inbound markets, and demonstrate marketing effectiveness through measurable engagement. While direct access to airline ROI data is typically limited, any metrics agencies can provide to help demonstrate return on marketing investment, such as

attribution modeling, third-party booking data, or conversion insights are highly encouraged.

66. Do you currently have an agency servicing the ongoing marketing scope of work? If so can you share who that is?

A: Outbound is handled internally by the airport.

67. Is there a current marketing strategy and current marketing plan you can share?

A: Marketing strategy tactics will be shared upon agency selection.

68. Which airports do you think have the strongest marketing programs in the US and why?

A: DFW stands out for its consistent branding and high-quality content. ATW has been a leader among regional airports, with effective, community-driven campaigns. JAC, ROA, CHA, YYC, and PDX all have a clear sense of place. The Airport aims to balance destination-style storytelling and marketing with the functional clarity expected of an airport brand.

69. Would you consider choosing an agency that has worked with your airline partners in the past an advantage for you?

A: Prior work with airline partners is not a required qualification. Agencies are encouraged to highlight any relevant partnerships that illustrate their ability to support airport goals as outlined in the RFP.

70. What is the approval process for this tender? E.g. does the chosen agency have to be approved by a marketing committee, board or other stakeholders (e.g. city)?

A: Awarding agency of record - The selection committee will evaluate proposals based on the published criteria and recommend a finalist. Final approval of the selected agency and associated contract will be made by the Airport Board of Directors. The selection is not subject to city council approval.

71. How do you currently engage with your airline partners for air service development?

A: We work closely with Mead & Hunt, our air service development consultant, to support route expansion and airline engagement. In addition, our in-house Air

Service Development Manager maintains direct relationships with airline representatives and meets with them regularly to discuss performance, explore new market opportunities, and strengthen existing service. We also host airline representatives from planning and scheduling in Rapid City for special community events.

72. What is the long-term air service development strategy—are there target hubs or airlines beyond Allegiant, Delta, and Sun Country?

A: Our current airline partners include United, Delta, American, Allegiant, and Sun Country. The top strategic priority is to maintain load factors above 80% in order to sustain and strengthen existing routes. Looking forward, we are particularly focused on attracting an Ultra-Low-Cost Carrier (ULCC) to expand affordable travel options. Additionally, we are pursuing increased hub connectivity to the West.

73. Do you see rebuilding trust and transparency with general aviation tenants amid recent lease and hangar disputes as an important part of the marketing efforts?

A: We work to foster a positive and communicative relationship with all airport tenants, including those in general aviation. Internal tenant relationships and lease negotiations fall outside the scope of the Agency of Record's responsibilities. These matters are addressed directly by airport leadership/board and are not part of the marketing or brand redevelopment scope.

74. How important do you think the airport brand is for the relationship with stakeholders like city council or legislature?

A: The Airport Board will have approval for the rebranding initiative, as it falls within their governance authority. While neither the City Council nor the state legislature has been surveyed, we may include one or more City Council representatives on the brand steering group. The state legislature will not be targeted for input, as the rebrand is not within their scope of responsibility.

75. How important is the message of the economic impact of the airport in marketing and the rebranding?

A: While the airport's economic impact is important for communicating with stakeholders like business groups and elected officials, it is not the central focus of our marketing or rebranding efforts. Our goal is to position the airport more like a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), emphasizing the experience,

convenience, and regional appeal that make Rapid City a compelling gateway. Economic messaging will be used selectively for stakeholder communications, but the primary brand narrative will be consumer-focused and tourism-driven.

76. How important is the growth of non-aeronautical revenue growth as part of the marketing strategy?

A: While non-aeronautical revenue is important to the airport's overall financial health, it is not a primary focus of the marketing and rebranding strategy. Our goal is to shift the airport's brand toward a DMO-style approach, one that prioritizes passenger experience, destination appeal, and route awareness. Revenue from concessions, parking, or advertising may benefit from increased passenger traffic and improved perception, but those gains are an outcome, not a driver, of our consumer-facing strategy.

77. How does that airport currently handle incentive packages? Are they tied to supporting airline and route specific programs and if so are those marketing programs also executed by the marketing agency?

Incentive packages are typically developed in coordination with Mead & Hunt, our air service development consultant, and are tied to specific routes and the terms of applicable grants. While some incentives may include a marketing component, these do not typically involve the agency of record. Execution depends on the nature of the campaign, some efforts are managed directly by the Airport or through partnerships with the airline. The majority of our incentives are financial in nature, such as Minimum Revenue Guarantees (MRGs), landing fee waivers, or terminal rent abatements, rather than traditional marketing campaigns.

78. What role do you see for partnership marketing with carriers (e.g., Allegiant, Delta, Sun Country) versus independent airport-led campaigns?

A: We see great value in cooperation with the five airlines that serve RAP as permitted by FAA marketing regulations and grant assurances. We invest in independent, airport-led campaigns that focus on building the airport's overall destination appeal and options. These efforts form the core of what the Agency of Record will support, with involvement in carrier-specific marketing on a case-by-case basis.

79. What role do you see the Airport brand playing in relation to Rapid City and the broader Black Hills tourism narrative? Supportive? Leading? Complementary? Complementary

80. How do you envision balancing destination marketing (promoting the Black Hills as a reason to fly here) with air service marketing (driving route utilization)?

A: We view destination marketing and air service marketing as mutually reinforcing. Promoting the Black Hills helps create demand for travel, while route-specific marketing captures that demand and supports load factor performance, particularly for new or seasonal service. The airport's role is to amplify the region's appeal while making it clear that flying is the most convenient way to get here. Our marketing strategy is intentionally designed to encourage air travel over driving, helping shift regional behavior and support route development.

81. Are there priority audiences beyond leisure travelers (business, community stakeholders, airline partners, etc.) that you want campaigns to speak to differently?

A: Leisure travelers, especially during peak travel seasons, will be the primary focus of the Agency of Record. That said, we do recognize the importance of reaching business travelers, community stakeholders, and airline partners through targeted messaging outside of core consumer campaigns. The Agency's main role will be to drive demand and inspire travel through consumer-facing efforts. Communications for other audiences, such as stakeholder updates, air service pitch materials, or economic messaging will be primarily developed in-house due to the complexity of the projects.

82. How much appetite is there for testing new platforms, tools, or creative formats versus leaning on proven channels?

A: Innovation is welcome, but it needs to be purposeful, data-informed, and results-driven.

83. You mention collaborations with DMOs, tourism groups, and airlines. What has worked well in those partnerships so far, and where are the gaps?

A: We've had positive experiences collaborating with DMOs, tourism groups, and airline partners, particularly around destination marketing and route-specific promotions and data sharing. These efforts are most effective when they align with

peak leisure travel seasons and support shared goals. As we move forward with the rebrand, we see opportunities to further align messaging and creative direction across partners, not due to existing gaps, but to strengthen cohesion.

84. Are there internal stakeholders (board members, city leadership, airline partners, etc.) whose buy-in will be especially critical during the rebrand rollout?

A: Yes, the airport will assemble a steering committee with relevant stakeholders.

85. How do you currently track ROI or impact of marketing investments, and are there metrics you wish you had but don't?

A: Marketing strategy tactics will be shared upon agency selection.

86. What does "transparency" in reporting look like to you? Dashboard access, regular meetings, detailed post-campaign recaps, or all of the above?

A: All of the above. We expect reporting to include media performance, creative outcomes, and key insights tied to defined KPIs. Full access to all placement and airport-related data dashboards is a requirement, and we value regular check-ins and thorough post-campaign recaps to ensure alignment and accountability throughout the engagement.

87. The RFP mentions growth in passengers and evolving regional role. Do you anticipate new routes or services in the next few years that marketing should be building toward?

A: Yes.

88. Beyond the three-year contract, what's your vision for how the brand evolves long-term?

A: Long-term, we want the brand to reflect more than just Rapid City, it should represent the entire region we serve, including the Black Hills and surrounding communities. Our vision is for a brand that is flexible, enduring, and scalable, one that evolves alongside our growth in air service, passenger volume, and regional importance.

89. The website currently leans heavily on flight info and external tourism links. What role do you envision the new site and brand presence playing: purely functional, or as a more integrated storytelling platform for the region?

A: While flight information and real-time tools will always be essential, we also want to showcase the broader experience of flying to the Black Hills, highlighting the destination, not just the departure.

90. What gaps do you see today between how the airport presents itself online and the experience you want passengers and partners to have?

A: Our logo is dated, which makes it difficult to use consistently and effectively across digital platforms. In addition, we see an opportunity to increase the consistency and frequency of our email campaigns.

91. Should the Airport's digital presence remain primarily functional and transactional, or evolve into a platform that both expresses brand and place? And to what extent should it own versus share the Black Hills narrative?

A: The airport's digital presence should evolve beyond a purely transactional tool into a platform that expresses both brand and place. While real-time flight and terminal information will always be essential, we also want the site to convey the spirit of the Black Hills region and inspire travelers to choose flying as their gateway to the area. We don't aim to compete with tourism agencies, but we do want to contribute to and reinforce the Black Hills narrative. Our role is to connect the traveler to the region. Our competitor is the drive market.

92. What is the annual business goal? For example, do you want to increase traveler by a certain percentage?

A: There is no published target percentage for annual passenger growth, but the strategy is clearly aligned with increasing enplanements and retaining existing service by hitting load factor thresholds. We do benchmark other similar airports and industry and aim to surpass their published KPI's.

93. Understanding that you've invested approx. \$190,000 annually in marketing specific goes, can you clarify what percentage of that budget was media placement.

A: The \$190,000 annual investment reflects a recent increase in the marketing budget approved by the Board, and is higher than in previous years. The split between media placement and agency services varies year to year, depending on the campaign mix and whether creative is handled in-house. That said, the majority of the budget typically goes toward paid digital media placement.

94. Do you have a budget allocated for the brand redevelopment?

A: The rebrand will have a distinct budget, to be proposed and approved by the board following agency selection and scope finalization.

95. Do you have recent passenger perception or brand sentiment research that could inform campaign messaging? If not, should research be part of our proposal?

A: Sources are available to inform the campaign messaging, and targeting including, but not limited to, a 2024 traveler sentiment survey, ongoing origin-and-destination passenger data, GPS-based visitor movement studies, insights from the 2023 economic impact report, and previous board and staff feedback on brand perception. In addition, the airport coordinates with DMOs who maintain robust persona-based research on key traveler segments, which further shapes targeting strategy. That said, additional research such as stakeholder interviews, brand audits, or message testing may be incorporated into the rebrand scope, and agencies are encouraged to outline any recommended approaches as part of their proposal.

96. Is there a separate or dedicated budget for the brand redevelopment effort, or should it be incorporated into the annual marketing allocation?

A: The rebrand will have a distinct budget, to be proposed and approved by the board following agency selection and scope finalization.

97. Of the diverse audiences listed (travelers, airlines, business partners, community), which is the top priority for marketing and brand messaging in the next 3 years?

A: The agency will be primarily targeting travelers.

98. What are the primary Key Performance Indicators the Airport will use to evaluate the success of media campaigns? Is the main goal to increase enplanements from specific markets, improve brand sentiment, or another metric?

A: The Airport's primary Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for evaluating media campaign success include achieving and maintaining passenger load factors of 80% or greater, which is essential for sustaining existing air service. Growing total enplanements especially from key inbound markets is a close secondary goal, supported by data from cell phone-based visitor tracking and airline O&D reports. Campaign performance is also measured through digital engagement metrics such

as impressions, click-through rates, email signups, and attributed bookings (e.g., via Expedia affiliate tracking). While brand sentiment is a factor during the rebranding initiative, media campaigns are primarily judged on their ability to drive measurable demand, support route viability, and influence traveler behavior in favor of flying over driving.

99. **Section 3.7 states "No work may commence prior to written authorization from the Airport" for each project. For media buying, which can require quick decisions to secure premium placements, what is the anticipated turnaround time for media plan approvals and possible insertion plan changes?**

A: The reference in Section 3.7 to requiring written authorization applies to overarching project scopes. Media buying falls within those approved project scopes, so individual media buys or insertion orders do not require separate board approval. Turnaround times for media plan approvals and any subsequent changes are expected to be fast and flexible. The Airport Marketing Manager will be the primary point of contact for day-to-day decisions, and once the annual campaign budget and strategy are approved, placement decisions, including time-sensitive opportunities, can be executed in coordination with that manager.

100. **The reporting requirements in Section 6.4 are clear. Does the Airport currently use a specific analytics platform (like Google Analytics 4) or ad server that the selected agency will be expected to utilize for tracking and reporting? Will the agency be granted access to historical performance data from past campaigns?**

A: The Airport currently uses Google Analytics 4 (GA4), Meta Business Suite, and Google Ads, along with Sprout for social media management and benchmarking. The current agency of record uses Adara and Sojern. The selected agency will be granted full editor access to airport-owned platforms. Yes, the agency will also receive access to historical performance data from past campaigns. You will be expected to maintain GA4 dashboard at minimum.

101. **Section 6.3 states the agency will receive a "maximum media commission of 20%" The 20% maximum commission is noted to include Search Engine Marketing. Given that industry standards for SEM management are often lower than traditional media commissions or a fixed retainer, would the Airport consider a separate fee structure for SEM and other programmatic digital services to ensure the most efficient use of the media budget?**

A: The Airport is open to considering a separate fee structure for Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and other programmatic digital services, provided that the overall compensation model remains transparent, justifiable, and within the approved annual marketing budget. Agencies may propose an alternative structure for SEM management such as a percentage lower than 20%, so long as it is clearly delineated in the proposal and reflects industry norms. The Airport's goal is to ensure efficient use of media dollars and maximize return on investment across all channels. Proposals should outline how each media service will be billed and justify any deviations from the standard 20% commission cap.

102. **As you search for the right agency partner for your rebranding efforts, I wanted to ask if you're also considering crisis media training at this time as part of your overall comms strategy.**

A: No

103. **Page 12 of the RFP says that compensation will be provided based on three primary categories of service: Strategic Marketing Consultation, Creative and Production Service (including brand development), and Media Placement. The RFP mentions a "substantial budget" and the fact that you've spent \$190k in recent years. Would that \$190k be for all three categories or is that just media placement? If just media, can you provide guidance on your total budget and whether the re-brand would be in addition to or inclusive of that number?**

A: The \$190,000 figure reflects the annual marketing campaign budget and is inclusive of agency services and media placement, but not the rebrand. It is not strictly limited to media. Depending on campaign needs, a portion of this budget may be allocated to strategy, creative, or production, though creative is often handled in-house. The rebrand will have a distinct budget, to be proposed and approved by the board following agency selection and scope finalization.

104. **The tentative schedule includes interviews (Oct. 20-22) "if needed." What factors will determine whether the Selection Committee holds interviews versus making a decision based solely on written proposals?**

A: Interviews will be held at the discretion of the selection committee. If the written proposals clearly distinguish a leading candidate based on the evaluation criteria, interviews may be deemed unnecessary. However, if multiple agencies score closely or additional clarification is needed, the Airport may invite finalists for interviews

105. **Is preference give to Rapid City and/or South Dakota advertising agencies over firms from other states? Does RAP currently work with an advertising agency? And if so, who and for how long?**

A: There is no preference given to Rapid City or South Dakota-based agencies. Agencies from any location are welcome to apply and will be evaluated based on the published criteria. The current agency of record is Lawrence & Schiller, who has served in this role for the past approximately 9 years.

106. **Why is this going out to bid? And in your mind, what will the winning agency have to demonstrate to win your trust and business?**

A: The RFP was issued due to the expiration of the current agency contract and a significant shift in scope including a new brand initiative. The Airport rebids its agency services at the conclusion of each contract cycle. The Airport is seeking a partner that brings not only strategic and creative capabilities, but also a clear understanding of tourism-driven air service marketing.

107. **In your scoring, 10 points are being awarded for "Creativity." Can you elaborate on whether that's past creative executions (e.g. case studies), spec creative and/or overall creativity in the plan we'd recommend itself?**

A: The "Creativity" score evaluates both the originality of past work (e.g., case studies) and the creative thinking shown in your proposed approach. You don't need to include spec creative, but your proposal should reflect your ability to bring fresh, effective and well-executed ideas.

108. **Can you share load factor data for your nonstop destinations? And if so, can that be broken down by month? What percentage of your inbound traffic is nonstop versus one-stop?**

A: We can provide all load and passenger data to the selected agency. For the purpose of this proposal utilize the data provided in the RFP.

109. **Historically, how closely do RAP's marketing efforts mirror those of Visit Rapid City?**

A; Coordination with Visit Rapid City, Black Hills & Badlands, and the South Dakota Department of Tourism is close and consistent. We share insights, cross-utilize tools such as pixel placement, and align campaign timing to amplify reach. This extends into keyword strategy and funnel placement, tourism partners drive broad

destination awareness, while RAP focuses further down the funnel on converting that intent into booked air travel. At the same time, RAP maintains its own voice by emphasizing the airport's distinct value proposition, direct access to the Black Hills and time savings compared to driving. Partnerships extend market reach, while the airport brand ensures RAP is recognized as the gateway that makes those experiences possible.

110. **Are you looking for a strategic plan to include budget allocations per tactic? If so, please answer the following: What is the budget for each year 2026-2028? What was your breakout of spend (%) in 2024 & 2025 by tactic/medium?**

A: Yes, we are looking for a strategic plan that includes suggested budget allocations by tactic, recognizing that these may shift annually. For planning purposes: The projected marketing budget is approximately \$190,000 per year from 2026 to 2028, allocated at the discretion of the Airport Marketing Manager. In 2024 and 2025, the majority of spend went to digital media placement (paid social, SEM, Expedia, and display), with smaller portions directed toward creative services (when not handled in-house) and technical support (e.g., pixel tracking, analytics). The specific percentage breakdown has varied depending on whether creative was developed by the agency or internally.

111. **Can you provide a list of national print publications that you have used/are using in 2025?**

A: National - we have a longstanding relationship with Outside/Yellowstone which includes some digital ads. We place in a few local print publications.

112. **What is your current marketing message(s)?**

A: Our current marketing messages focus on encouraging air travel to the Black Hills by highlighting the convenience of flying directly into Rapid City. Themes include "Rush Less, See Rushmore," "Go Where the Buffalo Roam," "Land Closer and Roam Farther," and "Fly In and Head Out (with Mt. Rushmore photos)." These messages are designed to position the airport as the fastest, most direct gateway to iconic regional attractions, and typically feature scenic imagery that evokes the spirit of the Black Hills. The overarching goal is to shift traveler behavior from driving to flying.

113. **What are your current metrics/KPIs?**

A: KPIs will be shared with selected agency. We can work with the selected agency to determine new relevant KPIs if needed.

114. **Page 6, Section 2.1.D – “Account Executive” This section is actually entitled “Executive Summary.” Please confirm if this is a labeling error or clarify what is meant.**

A: An Executive Summary is requested. Proposers should also identify the proposed Account Executive, along with their background, experience, and role on the account.

115. **Incumbent Agency Is there an incumbent agency? If so, how long have they been in place?**

A: The incumbent is Lawrence & Schiller. They have served as agency of record for approximately 9 years.

116. **2012 Rebrand Who handled the airport’s rebrand in 2012?**

A: Berberich Design

117. **Page 7, Section 2.1 – Additional Qualifications Info The RFP states that additional facts/info may be included to highlight agency qualifications. May we include an unlimited number of case studies and creative samples, or is there a limit?**

A: Proposals should be concise and focused. Creative examples and case studies should reflect relevance and quality, not quantity.

118. **Page 8, Section 2D – Knowledge of Rapid City Regional Airport For out-of-town agencies, how would you recommend fulfilling this requirement? Are there specific expectations or suggestions?**

A: Demonstrate your understanding through research and relevant project experience. On-site familiarity is not required.

119. **Page 9, Section 2H – Fee for Services / Budget Detail The RFP requests a fully detailed annual budget, including estimates from third parties. Since such budgets are typically created collaboratively after award, are you expecting this level of detail now? Would a general estimate suffice at this stage?**

A: A general budget estimate with proposed rates is sufficient at this stage. Final

scopes will be negotiated post-award.

120. **Page 21, Section 6.5 – Expedia Widget and Affiliate Program Please clarify the statement: “All accumulated revenue will be applied to any marketing efforts by Agency.” What is the scope and expected structure of the affiliate program?**

A: Revenue from the Expedia affiliate program offsets media spend. We use the partner expedia widget on the homepage of the airport website.

121. **Page 22, Section 7.1 – Scoring Guidelines The RFP says no extra points will be awarded to Rapid City or South Dakota agencies. Does this mean out-of-town or out-of-state agencies have equal standing?**

A: Yes

122. **Page 22–23 – Cost of Services and Budget Terms Does “Cost of Services” refer to agency hourly rates or the full annual budgets mentioned in Section 2H? Are we expected to submit budgets for each of the three years? Can you confirm if these budgets will be binding, based on the Signature Page which states: “Accepted prices shall remain firm for the duration of the Agreement”? Will there be opportunity for revisions post-award?**

A: “Cost of Services” refers to the agency’s proposed fee structure, including hourly rates, project pricing etc.. While proposers are encouraged to provide estimated budgets for the three-year term to illustrate planning approach and capacity, these are estimates. Final scopes and compensation for each year will be negotiated annually, contract subject to board approval.

123. **Page 17, Section 5.2 – Existing Marketing Budget The current inbound marketing budget is \$190,000. Given the expanded scope in this RFP (e.g., rebranding), can we assume the annual budgets will be higher? Can you provide expected budget levels for each of the three contract years?**

A: Pending board approval, the marketing budget is expected to be \$190,000 per year. There is planned additional funding specifically for brand redevelopment pending board approval.

124. **Page 17, Section 5.2 – Social Media Responsibilities How much organic social media is currently handled in-house vs. by the agency?**

A: All organic social is handled in-house.

125. **Page 17, Section 5.2 – Email Marketing Where do your email databases come from? What platform or software is used for distribution?**

A: The airport gathers its email marketing database from several sources including website newsletter sign-up forms, campaign-related giveaways, and partnership lists obtained through collaborations with destination marketing organizations. These DMO lists are typically generated during contests and always include explicit opt-in from participants. Mailchimp is our current distribution software.

126. **Public Relations Does this contract include public relations and/or earned media responsibilities?**

A: No

127. **Creative Samples Can you provide examples of previous creative work RAP has produced for inbound marketing and/or branding?**

A: Yes, upon agency award.