

VIP SLV Branding Initiative Project White Paper / 2.0 Blueprint / OEDIT Grant

**I. Introduction**

What began as a discussion on a valley wide marketing effort, has become a genuine economic development exercise lead by an ad hoc group called the Valley Initiative Partners (VIP) in conjunction with Governor Hickenlooper's 2.0 Blueprint initiative through OEDIT. VIP chose to write a grant that was approved and we're now four months into a ten month project deliverable. Valley resident Eric Grossman, former Mayor of Creede, 2015-16 COG Chairman, and past CML Executive Board Member is the designated Project Lead facilitating the grant and the SLV Brand development on behalf of VIP. At the conclusion of this OEDIT Grant, we are to have developed a Valley Wide Brand along with the machine to administer it, a logo, tagline, target list of industries to engage, and a budgeted marketing plan to implement subsequent phases.

**II. Background**

In early 2015, Gabrielle Aragon was a San Luis Town Trustee in addition to being enrolled at Adams State University. Upon a conversation that took place in Denver, Sam Mamet, Executive Director of the Colorado Municipal League (CML) along with ASU Professor Ed Crowther, convened in March an initial "wild idea" meeting of valley leaders. The "idea" was to foster more cooperation between ASU, DOLA, CML, along with other SLV partners, to explore better cooperation / communication, look at gaps, and new ways those indentified gaps might be filled. Within a few short months an ongoing resource guide was developed and shortly thereafter, an MPA program was begun at ASU to promote homegrown valley leadership from within.

A third Project, the "SLV Branding Initiative," was identified, researched, and launched via an approved OEDIT grant from Governor Hickenlooper's "2.0 Blueprint" in the late summer of 2016. The grant has given VIP training and mentor access through OEDIT along with a professional firm contracted by the state of Colorado. Development Counsellors International (DCI) works exclusively with regions & government agencies in developing brand machines for their clients, and is guiding VIP through this grant deliverable.

**III. Need**

The VIP SLV Branding Initiative is the culmination of numerous publicly funded studies and documents developed over the years and combines them into a condensed project that is doable in a short amount of time with low development costs, is shovel ready and very implementable upon conclusion. This project is the vehicle & opportunity to bring an economic development purpose and unification valley wide for adequately competing in a 21<sup>st</sup> century, global world.

#### **IV. Solution**

The Branding Project will be accomplished by looking at the SLV and all of its assets as a whole, while simultaneously undertaking a methodical outreach plan on a level we have not seen in a long time, perhaps if ever in the modern era for any valley wide project. By traveling to every single community at the same time VIP works on the mentors creation template in real time, it will ensure the brand buy in for the future implementation to be successful. Therefore, attending every County & Municipal meeting, Kiwanis, chamber, cultural groups along with any other local stakeholder, we solidify a consistent, professional message that is of the genuine one on one, look each person in the eye type of approach we are known for here. As a by product, a foundation for trust on future projects will be developed which helps the COG, DRG, ASU and others moving forward deeper into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century..

#### **V. Benefits**

As a stand alone project, simply having a legitimate Valley Wide Brand will be a positive development. The long term benefits also come in the type of outreach pursued with the public and the ownership in healing a silo mentality that has had us competing with ourselves for decades. All the while, keeping individual community identification.

#### **VI. Evaluation**

Part of the OEDIT Branding Project will be to establish, with our mentors advice, the metrics necessary to evaluate as needed how successful or unsuccessful we have been on our economic targets and the story we have used to attract or not attract them. Everything about the project will be available to relevant valley partners both public and private yet will be proprietary to the Valley and not to outside regions.

#### **VII. Cost**

Outreach and final development is expected to be many hours of needed face time, travel, fuel and expenses but with a team dedicated to frugality VIP is budgeting a complete OEDIT Grant deliverable for only \$10,000. With the help of numerous in kind contributions the fundraising effort is achievable at only \$500 from 20 key contributors.

VIP decided their preference is to continue to be an ad hoc group, thus through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the SLV Development Resources Group agreeing to provide fiscal sponsorship, it makes each and every donation a tax deductible and meaningful valley wide contribution.

#### **VIII. Conclusion**

This Project will be an economic game changer for the SLV, and the timing couldn't be more poignant with the progress of numerous groups valley wide. In addition, as a stand alone shovel ready project it has success written all over it. Thanks for your time, consideration, and contribution.