



# Gold Coast City Reputation Strategic Plan

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**2013 -2023**

29 July 2013

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# Executive summary

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## Why do we need a city reputation strategic plan?

Global reputation is strongly correlated with a city's success in attracting investment, business and trade, a skilled workforce, international students and visitors for tourism and events.

Research has identified that perceptions about the Gold Coast don't always align with how we would like to position the city nationally and internationally and that misconceptions and negative beliefs persist, as evident in ongoing media coverage.

A new, broader story needs to be told to change mindsets and differentiate our city through our genuine competitive advantages.

This story needs to be told in a strategic, integrated and consistent way by all Gold Coast city image makers, not only City of Gold Coast, and should reflect the actions we take 'on the ground' to enhance our reputation through city-building projects and service improvements.

The 2018 Commonwealth Games, and the projects and actions that will transform our city over the coming decade, provide a unique opportunity to reposition our city and unify marketing in line with global best practice.

With the adoption of a new city vision and the launch of the new brand logo, the stage has been set to establish shared ownership of our city reputation by City of Gold Coast, businesses and the broader community, and integrate whole-of-city marketing and promotions to drive reputational change.

## What does the strategic plan deliver?

The strategic plan sets out how we will align city marketing and promotions with those plans, strategies and actions of City of Gold Coast and its partners that will transform the Gold Coast and our city reputation over the next ten years.

Building on existing research into brand values and perceptions, it identifies nine competitive advantages – effectively the building blocks of reputation that will help our city stand out positively from others.

It supports prioritisation of investment in transformational projects and actions that reinforce and enhance our competitive advantages, along with the associated promotion of these positive attributes.

Together our competitive advantages have been distilled into a single clear position for the Gold Coast that differentiates us from all other cities.

This position contains an implicit promise to deliver 'the opportunity of a lifestyle' - because the Gold Coast offers a unique balance of opportunity and lifestyle not available anywhere else. The position, or brand promise, aligns closely with our city vision 'inspired by lifestyle, driven by opportunity'.

From here the plan defines the people, spaces and moments in time that are the ingredients of the brand story we will tell in order to 'bring to life' our competitive advantages. It then sets out the strategic actions we will take to live up to our positioning promise and so, deliver reputational change.

## How will we deliver it?

Strategic actions are both **internally-focused** within the city – those things we do to develop shared pride and ownership of our reputation and integrate marketing efforts, as well as the delivery of transformational projects and actions that build city reputation 'on the ground'; and **externally-focused** – those things we do to promote our desired reputation.

## There are four main ways the strategic plan will be delivered:

- Defining and building the Gold Coast story
- Building ownership of reputation
- Integrating delivery of the Gold Coast story (primarily through a new digital hub)
- Reputation tracking and management

We will align City of Gold Coast decisions to the driver's of the city's changing reputation, engage business and the community to consider the city's reputation in how they operate and encourage community pride.

This is not about large print and television advertising campaigns. It's about taking a shared reputation focus to all that we do and smarter, integrated city marketing.

In an increasingly digital world, creation of a strong digital presence for the city – primarily through a digital hub – will engage shared reputation ownership and be the key means of delivering reputational change.

It will be a portal to virtually represent the city in all its diversity to the world – a genuine community and business channel curating content from a range of partners and integrating with social media.

It provides a modern, cost-effective means of integrating messages with maximum reach in order to drive reputation change, and will be supported by leveraged off-line marketing and promotional initiatives with key partners.

## How will we measure success?

Success will be judged against our strategic intent and measured through tracking change in perceptions over time as well as global benchmarking with other cities.

Our future actions will be aligned to the global drivers of city reputations – advanced economy, appealing environment and effective administration and this will allow us to track our evolving reputation against competitor cities across the world.

# Gold Coast City Reputation Strategic Plan

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## 1. Background

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# 1.1 Background

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## A summary of the reputation development work to date

The need to change the city's image to drive economic transformation has been recognised by City of Gold Coast for several years, and is backed by research into perceptions and beliefs.

Research identified major gaps between the perceptions of the Gold Coast held by local businesses and residents, and people from interstate. This is self-evident in ongoing negative coverage, particularly by national media, that continues to reinforce misconceptions.

Work to develop a unified brand platform for the Gold Coast culminated in 2012 with the alignment of brand development with a new City Vision and commencement of a new Corporate Plan.

The purpose was to position the Gold Coast nationally and internationally as a competitive and aspirational environment for business, education, tourism, skilled professionals and general investment.

### Significant work has been completed to date, including:

- research into perceptions and beliefs of the Gold Coast (Dec 2010)
- testing of draft brand characteristics (Jan 2011)
- development of brand essence, values and personality statements (June 2011)
- peer reviews of strategic brand work (Feb 2012)
- draft City of Gold Coast Vision (Dec 2012)
- development of new City Brand Identity (Oct 2012 – Feb 2013)
- launch of new City Brand Identity (Feb 2013)
- draft Brand Guidelines and commencement of roll-out of new identity including logo integration with partner entities (Jan – May 2013)
- draft City of Gold Coast Economic Development Strategy (Nov 2012 – Aug 2013)
- draft City of Gold Coast City Plan (now Corporate Plan) – (Sep 2012, ongoing)
- initial Local Pride campaign – (Jun – Jul 2013)

A city's reputation evolves and is not contingent on the launch of a brand or logo, but is comprised of the sum of perceptions which change over time, and combine to form beliefs that then become entrenched.

A real opportunity exists to significantly improve the reputation of the Gold Coast through a City Reputation Strategic Plan that evolves work on brand development and perceptions to date, aligns with Council's future decision making framework and establishes a clear differentiated position for the city based on competitive advantages and the strategic actions that support them.

# Gold Coast City Reputation Strategic Plan

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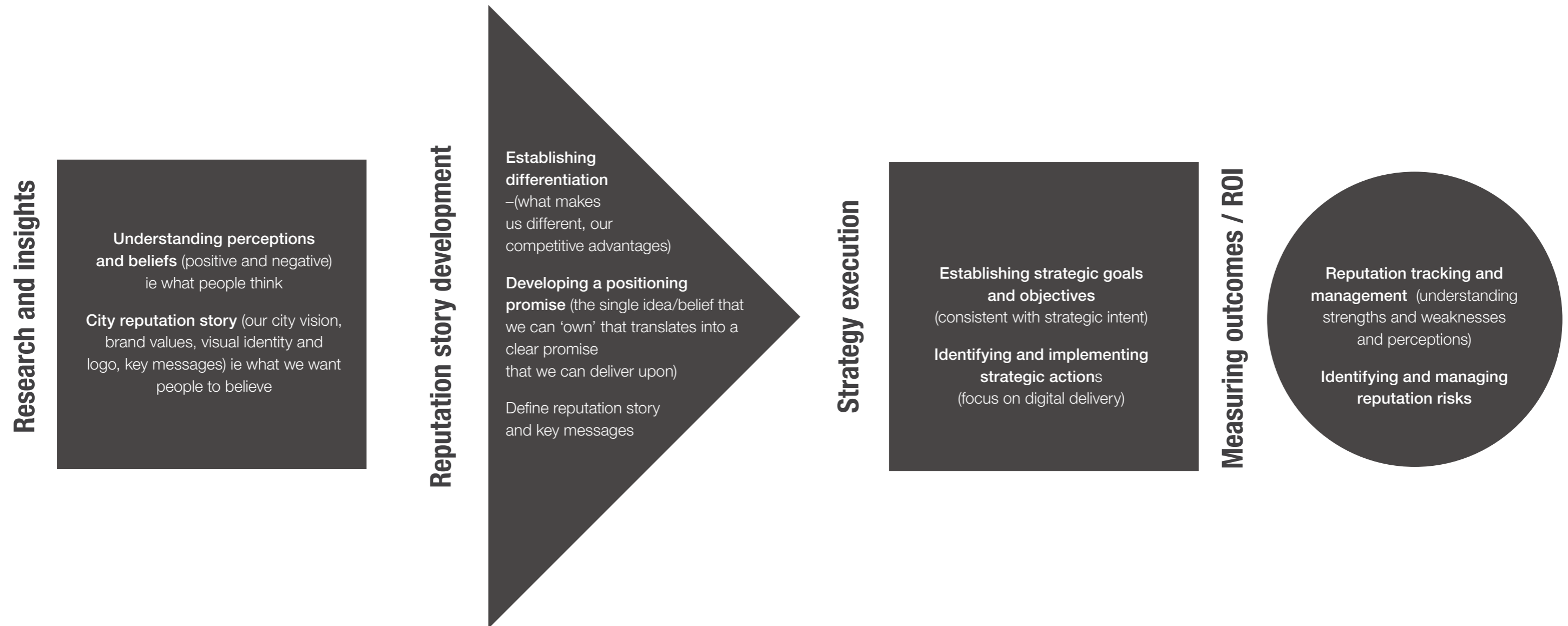
## 2. The reputation building process

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# 2.1 The reputation building process - how are city reputations built?

A general framework for reputation building - used to align existing and future activities



## 2.2 Global benchmarking - what makes a great city reputation?

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According to The Reputation Institute (RepTrak®)

We have chosen the Reputation Institute framework as the key city benchmarking framework. Future actions will be mapped against the framework so they can be easily benchmarked according to a recognised and widely used framework.

**A highly reputable city has an:**

### **Advanced Economy**

1. Produces many unique and well-respected products and services
2. Is the headquarters location of many leading companies
3. Is technologically advanced
4. Is financially stable and has great potential for future growth
5. Offers a favorable environment for doing business

### **Appealing Environment**

1. Is a beautiful city
2. Offers a wide range of appealing experiences, including food, sport, architecture, and entertainment
3. Is home to many well-known artists, scientists, inventors, writers, athletes, and politicians

### **Effective Administration**

1. Offers a safe environment for visitors and residents
2. Has a well-developed structure of political and legal institutions
3. Follows progressive social, economic, and environmental, policies
4. Has an adequate infrastructure of transportation, communications, and public institutions
5. Is run by well-respected leaders



**A 5 Point (%) increase in place reputation  
leads to a 12% increase in tourism receipts  
and 7% increase in foreign direct investment**

Source: The Reputation Institute. 2013

# Gold Coast City Reputation Strategic Plan

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## 3. The strategic plan

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## 3.1 City reputation strategic intent

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This is a clear guiding statement behind our strategic actions, expressing what we hope to achieve. It is not an outward statement.

In **2023 Gold Coast City** will be;

1. Realising the benefits of the once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape the city foundations through the major city-building initiatives of 2013 to 2023.
2. A city highly regarded across all of our target markets. We will have achieved the greatest improvement in reputation over the previous 10 years of any city in Australia.
3. Unified in purpose and in process. Our growth is achieved through shared ownership of our city reputation, fostered through a strong and united digital presence that drives community pride and partnerships, and supported by an integrated city marketing approach.

# 3.2 The primary strategic components

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## Reputation story development

### Strategic competitive advantages

These are the building blocks of reputation – the city attributes that are desirable to our target audiences and which we can demonstrate through our projects and actions and promote in our marketing messages. All our reputation-building activities will hinge on whether they support one or more of our competitive advantages.

Nine competitive advantages have been identified.

- A world class tourism destination
- Business friendly
- An economy of opportunity
- Education choice
- A city investing in the future
- Beauty, lifestyle and location
- Access
- Relative affordability
- A vibrant innovation culture

*(Refer 3.3)*

### Strategic position and promise

This is our unique position or point of distinction, distilled from our competitive advantages and conveyed as an implicit promise in order to differentiate what our city has to offer. It is the single idea we can ‘own’ in the minds of our audiences.

This position contains an implicit promise to deliver:

**‘the opportunity of a lifestyle’**

It aligns closely with our city vision ‘inspired by lifestyle, driven by opportunity’ and reinforces our unique balance of opportunity and lifestyle not available anywhere else.

This strategic promise will be inherent, but unstated, in all the value propositions we make to different markets. For example, our core proposition to business investors is a business-friendly economy of opportunity, however it will always be supported by our underlying strategic promise.

### Place differentiation

Reputations are built on reality not promise and articulated through the genuine and believable things that differentiate a city from its competitors. We will differentiate our city through the ingredients or assets that always differentiate places - spaces, moments in time and people.

We will use stories about our successful people, signature moments in time and iconic spaces to demonstrate our competitive advantages and dispel misconceptions.

Examples of people would include sports champions, successful and emerging business people, leading scientists and researchers, international students, successful alumni and community heroes.

Examples of spaces would include beaches, hinterland, Surfers Paradise, light rail, canals and waterways, Cultural Precinct, Southport CBD and the Broadwater.

Examples of Moments in Time would include the Commonwealth Games, Opera on the Beach, the commencement of Light Rail, the opening of the new University Hospital, key events and festivals and such potential moments as the attraction of a new international airline and the Suns and/or Titans winning a premiership.

### City reputation story

We will evolve our city story from expressing ‘who we are’ and ‘where we’ve come from’ to the persuasive language of ‘what we have to offer’ because of who we are. In this way we will move beyond defining our city brand, to building our city reputation.

We will do this by focusing our messages on our competitive advantages, reflecting our brand values (forward thinking, vibrant, balanced, connected, warm) and demonstrating what makes us uniquely different. *(Refer 3.4)*

## 3.2 The primary strategic components (continued)

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### Strategy execution

#### Decision alignment

It is important that we align our reputation building activities and communication messages with City of Gold Coast decisions that affect our city reputation, starting from our City vision 'Inspired by Lifestyle, Driven by Opportunity' and working outwards, in alignment with our Corporate Plan priorities and key strategies. In this way our decisions are aligned to our brand values and reinforce our competitive advantages in order to deliver on our strategic positioning promise. *(Refer 3.5)*

#### Strategic actions

We have developed a range of strategic actions that:

- demonstrate our brand values and competitive advantages
- support our strategic positioning promise
- differentiate our city and evolve our city reputation story
- align with Council decisions affecting the drivers of reputation
- enable tracking of perception growth and global benchmarking with other cities.

Strategic actions will be executed internally (through shared ownership of city reputation) and externally (through how we promote our reputation). *(Refer 3.6)*

Over the next two years we will focus on building initial shared ownership of city reputation through community pride, partnerships and alignment with decisions taken by City of Gold Coast.

Externally our focus will be on the establishment of a digital hub as the primary means of promoting reputation and establishing a base library of city stories and content from partner contributors.

Once initial stories and collateral have been developed, the digital hub established and partnerships commenced we can begin the process of measuring and benchmarking reputation. *(Refer 3.8)*

### Measuring outcomes/ROI

#### Perceptions and mindsets

It's important to continue to track perceptions and mindsets about our city.

Reputation is most effectively changed by bringing positive perceptions to the fore, displacing some of the impact of prevailing negative mindsets over time.

For example, research has identified a common mindset that the Gold Coast is a 24/7 party destination with the associated perception of high rates of crime. While this mindset is difficult to shift, by highlighting positive attributes of our city in line with our competitive advantages, we can balance out the messages and lessen the sway of this negative mindset over time.

### Global benchmarking

Whilst our reputation is uniquely our own, it's desirable to be able to demonstrate how our city compares to others.

Using the Reputation Institutes RepTrak we have identified the key elements or drivers that build a city's reputation and provide a framework for benchmarking. These are broadly grouped as:

- 1 Advanced economy
- 2 Appealing environment
- 3 Effective administration

It's important to measure changes in perceptions about our city over time and adjust our strategic actions accordingly. A global benchmarking framework provides the ability to track the evolution of our reputation over time and against other cities. *(Refer 4.1)*

## 3.3 Strategic competitive advantages

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These are the Gold Coast's strategic competitive advantages informed through workshops and identified perception issues

Our strategic competitive advantages articulate the core ideas that need to be:

- a) believed by our target audiences
- b) delivered by Council and partners in alignment with our City Vision, Corporate Plan and key city projects and strategies; and
- c) communicated as strategic messages through all our marketing and communications.

### A world class tourism destination

From Australia's best beaches, rainforests and waterways to world class theme parks, stadiums, convention services, events, cultural activities, hotels and resorts; our tourism assets provide an enviable lifestyle and a platform for growth.

### Business friendly

City of Gold Coast is committed to delivering a business environment to create long term prosperity. We will do this through creating conditions favourable to investment attraction, business growth and business relocation.

### An economy of opportunity

The Gold Coast economy is growing from a platform of tourism and construction to the diversity of a knowledge economy. Over the next 10 years there will be between 35,000 and 56,000 new jobs created. As a young city the opportunity to participate in shaping our city is open to all.

### Education choice

Our city offers the greatest educational choice of any city of our size. The Gold Coast has three universities that are among the leaders in their field, a diversity of technical and training colleges and some of Australia's best public and private schools.

### A city investing in the future

The Gold Coast is investing in strategic projects to improve our lifestyle and create opportunities for long term prosperity. These include the City Light Rail Network, CBD invigoration, Health & Knowledge Precinct, proposed City Cultural Precinct, proposed Cruise Ship Terminal, and infrastructure for the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

### Beauty, lifestyle and location

As South East Queensland's premier coastal location, the Gold Coast offers residents an unmatched balanced lifestyle. With our subtropical climate and biodiversity, together with our beaches, waterways, rainforests and large areas of open space, the city delivers a healthier and more active lifestyle than any other city in Australia.

### Access

Gold Coast is strategically located within close proximity to Asia. The city is serviced by two international airports which fly direct to all major Australian cities and strategic locations across Asia, the Middle East, US and the Pacific. Access into the Gold Coast is simple by road, train or air. The M1 provides easy access to Brisbane or Northern New South Wales. High speed internet will also increase digital access and capabilities.

### Relative affordability

For both commercial and residential markets the Gold Coast delivers high value and relative affordability compared to Australia's other major cities. As a city we are very commercially competitive.

### Vibrant innovation culture

There is a vibrant innovation culture built from the dynamic combination of start-up opportunities, education and research institutions and co-working spaces available within the city.

## 3.4 Strategic city reputation story

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### Building a strategic city reputation story

We have already defined a brand story that is built on shared brand values and expresses where we have come from as a city and who we are now.

A city reputation story moves the language into the future, evolving the story to express what we can uniquely offer because of who we are.

The language of 'I' that was associated with defining and launching our brand is replaced with the language of 'we' that builds pride and acts as an offer to our markets to join us (to visit, do business, study etc)

### Gold Coast City story (draft)

Our history is rich in the 'get up and go' attitude typical of innovative Australians. We dream large, build big and rise to emerging opportunities.

Our purpose is clear; we are creating the opportunities to experience a lifestyle no other city can offer.

Our enviable natural environment - beaches, hinterland and open spaces - allows us to enjoy work-life balance in a different way to almost every other city in the world.

Our values are clear; we are a forward thinking, vibrant, balanced, warm and connected people.

We're a young city. And that means our people actively participate in shaping our future. Our youth and energy deliver endless opportunities to all who live, work, do business, study and visit.

Our commitment to a diverse economy is clear; we are creating opportunities to attract and retain businesses, investors, skilled professionals and students through a vibrant innovation culture, infrastructure investment, business friendly initiatives and diverse careers.

Our future lies in harnessing the forward thinking attitudes of our early pioneers and transforming our city - a vibrant, diverse and multicultural collection of villages - into Australia's greatest urban coastal city.

We're creating a balanced city. We do things differently because of who we are.

We don't live to work, we work to live.

The Gold Coast is the opportunity of a lifestyle.

There's no other place in the world like the Gold Coast.

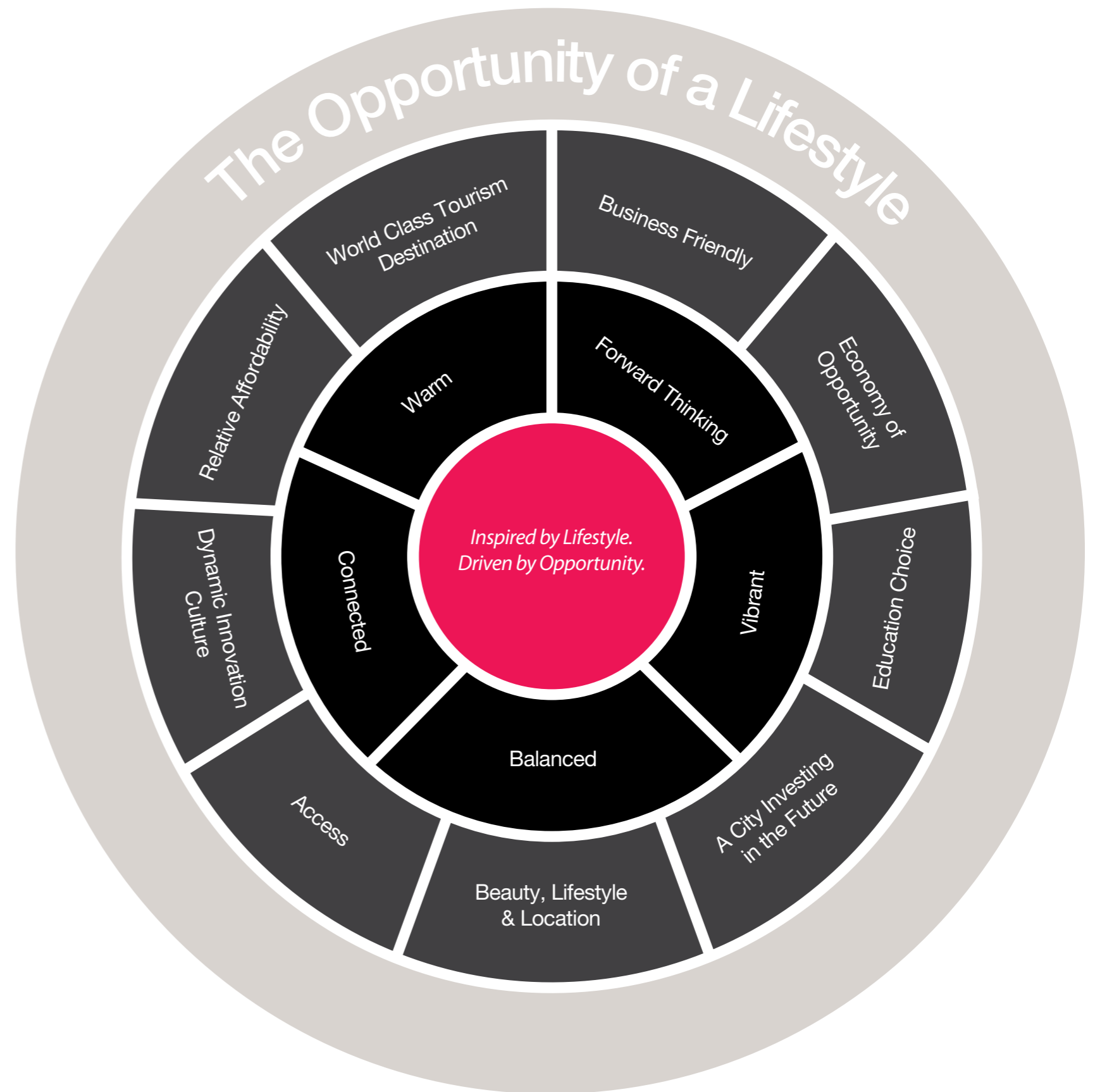
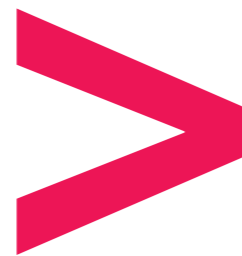
# 3.5 Decision alignment

## Reputation Decision Wheel

This tool is a practical cross checking framework to ensure that any future action delivers on;

- City Vision
- Brand Values
- Competitive Advantages
- Promise and Positioning

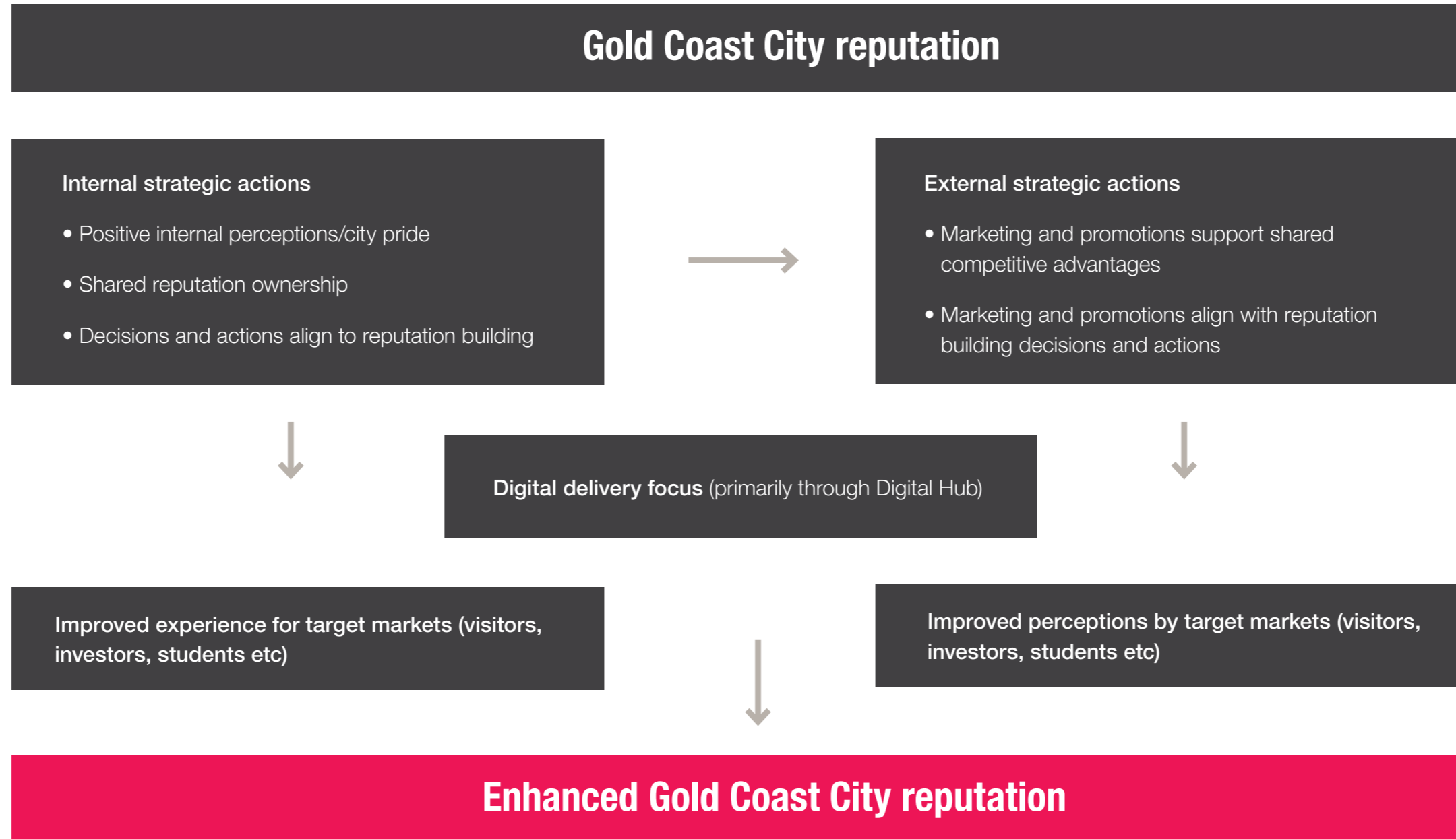
Each layer of the decision wheel should be considered and decisions should come from the core moving out from vision to values to competitive advantages to delivering on our promise as a city.





## 3.6 Executing strategy

Internal and external execution with a focus on digital delivery



# 3.6 Executing strategy (continued)

## Internal and external execution with a focus on digital delivery

### Strategic actions

Actions are both **internally-focused** within the city – those things we do to develop shared pride and ownership of our reputation and integrate marketing efforts, as well as the delivery of transformational projects and actions that build city reputation ‘on the ground’; and **externally-focused** – those things we do to promote our desired reputation.

City of Gold Coast decisions will align with the drivers of changing city reputation and affirm competitive advantages. Businesses will be engaged to consider city reputation in how they operate, while the community

will be encouraged to represent our city with pride. We want to build strong relationships with businesses, key city institutions, alumni and key individuals who can be our ambassadors throughout the world.

By creating a shared reputation focus and aligning decisions, the outward (marketing and promotional) actions we take can have real persuasion.

#### There are four main ways the strategic plan will be delivered:

##### 1. Defining and building the Gold Coast story - priority actions include:

- developing different value propositions for each key market
- creating an initial library of city stories through photography, video and testimonials
- sourcing and promoting third-party content that supports competitive advantages

##### 2. Building ownership of reputation (inward-focus) - priority actions include:

- developing a reputation focus across City of Gold Coast planning, policies and projects including risk management and engaging staff to champion city reputation
- inspiring and educating partners and establishing partnership program
- establishing alumni network and awards program
- licensing brand usage to businesses

##### 3. Integrating delivery of the Gold Coast story (primarily through a new digital hub). Priority actions include:

- digital hub online portal establishment. Phase one will involve integration of business, cultural, events and education content, establishing initial content partners and integrating social media channels. Phase two will expand content contributors and integrate visitor content, booking functionality and 3D models.
- strategic packaging of City of Gold Coast services and key projects with a reputation focus, including delivery of reputation building activities via the Global Connections and International Relations programs

##### 4. Reputation tracking and management:

- perceptions tracking and global benchmarking (to be delivered from year two)

# 3.6 Executing strategy (continued)

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## Internal and external execution with a focus on digital delivery

### A digital delivery focus

In an increasingly digital world, creation of a strong digital presence for the city – primarily through a digital hub – will both engage shared reputation ownership and be the key means of delivering reputational change. It will be a portal to virtually represent the city in all its diversity to the world.

Globally competitive cities are increasingly using digital hubs to aggregate their marketing and build city reputation around business and investment attraction, living, working, visiting and studying.

This will be a genuine reputation-building community and business channel, collating content from a variety of partners that supports our competitive advantages and integrating with social media channels.

City of Gold Coast will be one ‘contributor’ amongst a range of content partners. The hub will package existing events, cultural programs and business initiatives and bring the achievements of individuals and business to life through a city stories program.

### Why a digital hub?

- Cost-effective marketing and promotion channel
- Effective use of social media integration across the city
- Hosting third party content with the ability to share on user’s social networks
- Takes advantage of shift to digital only media consumption worldwide

### What will it deliver?

- Deliver city reputation building content through an authentic and apolitical channel
- A channel that lets key entities and stakeholders across the city take control of the way we tell the story of the Gold Coast
- Makes visible partnerships within the city
- Cultivate community pride and citizenship

**“Reputations are not built on attributes but relevance. What we do for people matters more than what we say.”**

Simon Anholt, Place Branding Expert

# Gold Coast City Reputation Strategic Plan

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## 4. Reporting framework

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# 4.1 Reporting framework

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## When do we know if we've achieved?

The establishment of a clear and succinct reporting framework will ensure smooth operations.

### 1. Benchmark

Establish a benchmarking reputation study to set a beginning. This should be conducted across key markets and identify strength of reputation by market and by attribute.

We will use The Reputation Institute framework for major milestone reviews at two, five and 10 year intervals.

These will be supplemented with a qualitative and quantitative research program to track perceptions from the target audiences and the community.

### 2. Combined scorecard

Create a combined scorecard which integrates reputation tracking insights from each marketing sector (Tourism, EDMP, Council Leadership etc).

#### Example marketing metrics

- a. Total media \$ value (positive and negative)
- b. Total # of media releases
- c. ROI / media release (total \$ value / total # media releases)
- d. Total # of campaigns
- e. Average reach of campaigns
- f. Average frequency of campaigns
- g. Latest reputation index score and attribute score by market

Plus include commentary of key issues which are affecting reputation management.

#### Example city metrics

- a. Population growth %
- b. Job creation - unemployment rate and business starts
- c. Value of development approvals
- d. Visitor numbers
- e. Visitor spend

#### Timing

- a. Quarterly

### 3. Strategy status

Report half yearly on the status of the reputation growth strategy.

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## **In 2023 Gold Coast City will be;**

1. Realising the benefits of the once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape the city foundations through the major city-building initiatives of 2013 to 2023.
2. A city highly regarded across all of our target markets. We will have achieved the greatest improvement in reputation over the previous 10 years of any city in Australia.
3. Unified in purpose and in process. Our growth is achieved through shared ownership of our city reputation, fostered through a strong and united digital presence that drives community pride and partnerships, and supported by an integrated city marketing approach.

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