

Request for Proposals City of Port Townsend Tourism Marketing

Introduction

The City of Port Townsend is requesting proposals from qualified consultants to provide professional services in tourism marketing in 2024. The funding is being provided by the City of Port Townsend Lodging Tax, and the strategy direction is being provided by the City of Port Townsend Marketing WorkGroup. Firms interested in this project are advised to carefully review the information outlined in this Request for Proposals (RFP) and respond accordingly. The City has earmarked \$35,000 for consulting and implementation of the marketing services.

Deadline for Submission

Statements of Qualifications are **due by Friday, August 9, 2024**, by 5:00 p.m. All proposals shall be submitted electronically, in Adobe PDF format, to:

Shelly Leavens, Director of Communications & Marketing
City of Port Townsend
sleavens@cityofpt.us

Overview

Following extensive efforts by our Marketing Workgroup and Lodging Tax Advisory Committee in 2023 and 2024, the City of Port Townsend recently updated our strategy for marketing the City of Port Townsend to visitors in the shoulder seasons. The strategy builds off the overarching Olympic Peninsula brand and is focused on storytelling to visitors who identify as artists and explorers, and who are seeking deep and meaningful experiences to connect to place, self, wellness, joy, and community. The strategy, driving visitation at a time where there are vacancies in lodging, will not only encourage overnight stays, but will also drive business to retailers, restaurants, and experiences that link our communities across the Olympic Peninsula.

Objective

The City of Port Townsend is looking to engage with a branding/marketing firm to partner collaboratively with the City of Port Townsend, Marketing WorkGroup, and Lodging Tax Advisory Committee to create a new Port Townsend, Washington destination tourism brand that meets the City's strategic objectives.

Scope of Work

The City of Port Townsend is initiating this Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify a qualified agency that will work collaboratively to create a new Port Townsend destination brand identity. The new destination

brand will serve as a foundation for destination marketing programs, advertising, communications, and more.

Scope should support:

- Development of a new brand identity for tourism marketing use over the next 3 – 5 years.
- Assisting the City in developing environmental sustainability objectives/outcomes in marketing, including connecting City tourism marketing with opportunities to address environmental sustainability challenges through strategy implementation.
- Assist the City in developing equity objectives/outcomes in tourism marketing, including connecting tourism marketing with opportunities to address equity challenges through strategy implementation.
- Identifying opportunities to connect Port Townsend to regional communities and the Olympic Peninsula brand.
- Assist in developing a campaign for launching the brand.

The project scope extends through successful brand launch. Future creative agency partnerships to implement the brand in 2025 and related Port Townsend marketing/advertising programs may be considered subsequently. The Marketing WorkGroup will seek recommendations from the selected agency for how the brand could be used for campaigns, updated for industry usage, and successfully sustained in the tourism marketplace.

Proposals should describe an approach for brand development that includes, but is not limited to:

- Research on regional destination brands that reflect a strong connection to place
- Stakeholder engagement
- Brand platform elements (personality, a destination promise, and positioning statement)
- Name recommendations
- Visual identity (logo/mark/colors)
- Narrative/brand story and other key communications
- Brand guide
- Recommended time frame for development, testing, and launch within 2024
- Provide guidance on approach of brand launch, assist in launch implementation

The City is interested in working with firms that have experience in and specialize in authentic storytelling, environmental sustainability, and inclusivity. Preference will be given to individuals or creative agencies that are local and familiar with Port Townsend and Olympic Peninsula. The City aims to build off of existing plans and efforts in Olympic Peninsula arts and tourism (see Olympic Peninsula Tourism Master Plan, and Port Townsend Creative District Arts & Culture Plan) and will give higher scores to firms with an understanding of these plans.

Budget

The City of Port Townsend has earmarked \$35,000 for consulting services with the contract ending December 2024. The final dollar amount, tasks, and schedule will be negotiated with the selected firm/team as part of the final contract. The City will not be liable for any costs incurred by the consultant in preparation of a response to this RFP, in conduct of a presentation or other activities related to



responding to this RFP. No costs chargeable for work under the proposed contract may be incurred before receipt of either a fully executed contract with the city or specific written authorization from the City.

Please provide as part of the submission a detailed budget for scope of work and billing structure (e.g. retainer, hourly rates for work outside of scope, time and materials, project based, etc.) and estimated cost and timeline against deliverables.

Submission Requirements

Statements of Qualifications should include, as a minimum, the following information:

- A. An introduction to your firm, what is your agency's key differentiator, names and qualifications of key personnel who will be assigned to this project. Identify the person who will be responsible for this project and who will be your firm's primary contact.
- B. A brief narrative of your understanding of the project and approach to include examples of how City of Port Townsend Marketing could prioritize equity and environmental sustainability, and inform future decisions to allocate resources, and why your firm is best qualified to perform the work.
- C. A portfolio of at least three projects similar to this that your team has completed in the recent past. Provide references and work samples for each.
- D. Statement of experience working with Lodging Tax funds for marketing and your understanding of how Lodging Tax funds may be used. Please include specific examples of success with other destination tourism marketing entities.
- E. The name, title and telephone number of individuals with authority to negotiate and execute contracts and who may be contacted during the evaluation process.

Right to Reject Submittals

The City reserves the right to reject any submittals at any time with no penalty or to waive immaterial defects and minor irregularities in any submittal.

Submittal Disposition

All material submitted in response to this RFP shall become the property of the City. All submissions shall be submitted ELECTRONICALLY ONLY, in Adobe PDF format.



Project Contract

The selected firm will be required to execute the City of Port Townsend Professional Services Agreement [Attachment A] and accept all language contained within. The City reserves the right to make any changes to this agreement. Any firm that has significant reservations concerning using this agreement should not submit this request.

Evaluation Criteria and Selection Process

The City expects to select a consultant based on the Statement of Qualifications submittals. The City may, however, elect to conduct follow-up interviews with a smaller subset of consultants. The selection committee may consist of, but is not limited to, the City of Port Townsend Marketing WorkGroup, a subcommittee of the City's Lodging Tax Advisory Committee.

The City of Port Townsend is committed to a program of equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, sex, age, nationality or disability.

Negotiation/Scope Development:

The top-ranked firm will be notified in writing and be asked to meet and submit their prospective scope of services, schedule, and a fee proposal.

If, after negotiation and consideration, the City is unable to reach an acceptable agreement with the top-ranked firm, the City will terminate negotiations with the top-ranked firm and, at its sole discretion, may enter into negotiations with the second ranked firm and/or withhold the award for any reason and/or elect not to proceed with any of the proponents and/or re-solicit via a new RFQ.

Timeline for Final Selection:

July 26, 2024: RFP posted to city website

August 12, 2024: Proposal review begins

August 20, 2024: Candidate Interviews, if needed, finalist selection and contracting

August 23, 2024: Contracting and Notice to Proceed

Once an agreement is reached with a preferred firm, the City will provide a Professional Services Agreement for signatures and full execution. A Notice to Proceed will be issued to formally begin work.

Where to Get More Information

Questions can be directed to:

Shelly Leavens, Director of Communications & Marketing

City of Port Townsend

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