

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Olympic Peninsula Tourism Strategic Plan

The following document outlines the specific criteria for eligible firms to submit a proposal for the purpose of consulting to Washington's Olympic Peninsula Region for a tourism strategic plan. (2023-2028)

Response must be in writing and delivered to:

Debbie Wardrop, Project Manager
E-Mail Digital (PDF): DebbieWardropLLC@gmail.com

AND

Send signed hard copy to:
c/o Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau
Mail: PO Box 670
Physical Address: 618 S. Peabody St., Suite F
Port Angeles, WA. 98362
360-452-8552 (OPVB office)
480-202-6384 (Debbie's cell)

Must be received at this office no later than **February 21, 2023 at 4:00 pm PST**
Submissions received after the deadline will not be accepted or considered.

Outlined below:

- 1. Background**
- 2. Objectives of Plan and Scope of Work**
- 3. Schedule**
- 4. Budget**
- 5. Deliverables**
- 6. Proposed Submittals**

Background

The Olympic Peninsula, as a regional tourist destination, is located west of the Seattle gateway, and is defined by the geographic area surrounding the Olympic National Park (ONP) and Olympic National Forest (ONF). It is bordered by the Pacific Ocean on the west, the Strait of Juan de Fuca

on the north, the Hood Canal on the east, and the area between Olympia and Oceans Shores on the south. It includes Clallam, Jefferson, Mason and parts of Grays Harbor counties.

The Olympic National Park, the 6th largest national park in the continental United States and ranked in the top quarter of most visited national parks (2021), is by far the most valuable tourism driver for the Olympic Peninsula. Encompassing nearly a million acres, and the only temperate rainforest in the United States, the ONP includes a vast wilderness, thousands of years of human history, and several distinctly different ecosystems, including glacier-capped mountains, old-growth forests, and over 70 miles of wild coastline.

As one of the few national parks that doesn't have a road traveling through its center, the park is further surrounded by the Olympic National Forest, as well as other public recreational lands.

Pre-COVID, annual recreational visitation to the Olympic National Park regularly exceeded three million people, and was an attractive destination for international travelers. International tourism to the area is still down significantly. (In 2021, ONP recorded 2.72 million visitors).

Key towns around the Olympic Peninsula include:

- Forks (pop. 3,295) – Clallam County
- Port Angeles (pop. 20,144) – Clallam County
- Sequim (pop. 8,308) – Clallam County
- Port Townsend (pop. 10,356) – Jefferson County
- Shelton (pop. 10,479) – Mason County
- Ocean Shores (pop. 7,114), Aberdeen (pop. 17,191) and Hoquiam (pop. 8,860) - all Grays Harbor County

Additionally, eight Federally recognized tribes continue to recognize a relationship to the national park based on traditional use, origin, beliefs and practices. These tribes are:

- Lower Elwha Klallam
- Jamestown S'Klallam
- Port Gamble S'Klallam
- Skokomish
- Quinault
- Hoh
- Quileute
- Makah

It was the ancestors of these tribes that lived throughout the Olympic Peninsula and ceded their lands and waters to the Federal government through treaties in 1855 and 1856. Citizens of these tribes now live on land along the shores of the peninsula.

Port Angeles, to the north of the park, is home to the 100+ years-old Black Ball Ferry Line which crosses the Strait of Juan de Fuca to Victoria, Canada daily. This is the Western-most Canadian border crossing in the United States. The economic impact from this ferry route on the Olympic Peninsula is over \$60M annually and carries 472,000 passengers/128,000 vehicles. (2018).

It should be noted that this route was completely shut down for nearly two years during COVID due to the extended Canadian border closure.

According to research commissioned by the State of Washington Tourism office and delivered by Tourism Economics:

- Visitor spending in 2021 on the Olympic Peninsula (as represented by all four counties) exceeded \$886 million
- State and local taxes generated by that visitor spending totaled \$71.8 million
- There were a combined 6,427 jobs in the region supported by tourism
- This generated \$195.4 million in labor income

The Global pandemic dramatically impacted tourism to the Olympic Peninsula. Initially, the destination saw a sharp drop in visitation and visitor spending. International travel dropped to zero. National travel fell precipitously.

However, as with many other rural destinations across the country, and particularly those with national parks, the trend to “get outdoors” and seek wide open spaces precipitated a sharp visitor return to the area. The addition of an influx of visitors within driving distance from large metropolitan centers contributed to a strong rebound in travel to the Olympic Peninsula.

From the 4th quarter of 2020 and throughout 2021, as travel opened again, our markets shifted to primarily in-state and regional area travelers. Outdoor enthusiasts came. Many of these visitors were new to the destination and, in fact, new to the great outdoors. This also brought new challenges. The Olympic National Park, as well as state/county parks and surrounding lands, experienced compression points in peak times and in popular locations. Area businesses, still in recovery mode from the pandemic, struggled to keep up with demand. This trend continues today.

Future concerns, in part and for consideration, include sustainable tourism practices (and defining what that means), transportation, and infrastructure. Housing and labor issues loom large, compounded by a real estate boom created by the pandemic. Compression of both weekend travel and seasonal travel urge the consideration of how to spread out the visitor visits. Length of stays also need to be considered and addressed.

So, to that end, the next section outlines the Scope of Services and Overall Objectives.

Objectives of Plan and Scope of Work

Clallam County, in partnership with Jefferson County and other communities on the Olympic Peninsula invites interested, experienced and qualified consultants to submit proposals to develop and create a 2023-2028 Olympic Peninsula Tourism Strategic Plan.

To manage the process and meet this objective, Clallam County has organized an Olympic Peninsula Tourism Strategic Planning Committee (“the Committee”) comprised of representatives from across several jurisdictions and municipalities on the Olympic Peninsula.

The Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau is the lead agent and has hired a Project Manager to oversee the Request for Proposal process in cooperation with the Committee.

The resulting 5-year Strategic Plan will serve as a guiding document for counties, municipalities businesses, organizations and the citizens living on the Olympic Peninsula to develop processes, make strategic investments in services and infrastructure, and organize more efficiently and effectively to optimize a sustainable and thriving tourism economy. The Plan will be forward-looking, actionable, measurable, and adaptable to new opportunities and technologies that emerge as important growth areas for tourism.

The intention of the Plan will be to provide this guideline with a focus on optimizing regional tourism, engaging the local communities/residents, identifying opportunities for growth and inclusion, and addressing the needs/concerns of the region including sustainability, transportation, and best practices. A clear outline which provides context for future opportunities is critical to the success of this response.

It is important to understand the existence and role of the Olympic Peninsula Tourism Commission (OPTC). OPTC is a collaborative marketing partnership of the major municipalities on the Olympic Peninsula who share a vision and financial resources for marketing the regional destination. It is affiliated with and led by the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau, which is the officially recognized regional DMO (Destination Marketing Organization). The RFP is being managed through the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau (OPVB). There are nine funding partners in OPTC, and this is the funding source for OlympicPeninsula.org website. Those partners represent three counties (Clallam, Jefferson, and Mason), five cities (Clallam Bay/Seki, Forks, Port Angeles, Port Townsend and Sequim), and the Quinault area of Grays Harbor County.

Objectives to be addressed:

- Overall view of the Olympic Peninsula to the visitor as well as residents calling this home. Include accommodation capacity/quality, tourism-related infrastructure and product offerings. Are these competitive as a destination and are they sustainable?
- Engage the residents/community leaders/industry experts in the overall vision for the Olympic Peninsula
- Identify weaknesses/threats and create a plan to improve/insulate from these
- Present emerging opportunities relative to marketing, advertising, product development and infrastructure needs
- Suggest the effectiveness of the “brand” of the Olympic Peninsula and improvements/modifications to it
- Review the current funding models/organizational structures and suggest alternatives if needed.
- Review labor/housing and suggest plans for improvements, specific to service level hospitality
- Review transportation concerns and suggest plans for communication to all stakeholders (visitors, agencies, businesses, etc.) and reduced impact to the residents
- Advise further to a five-year plan for meeting the needs of tourism on the Olympic Peninsula

Scope of Work:

1. Public facilitation and engagement
 - a. Coordinate with Project Manager on scheduling community focus groups, at a minimum, three including Port Angeles, Sequim and Jefferson County.
 - b. Coordinate with tourism leaders to review recent studies about the region and the concerns/needs, at the minimum in each of the above locations and including representation from the national/state/county parks.
 - c. Engage with the tribes as noted under background – at the minimum two of these.
 - d. These meetings can be in person or via remote options as is necessary. Recordings should be made/minutes taken for future use.
 - e. In all cases where the public is invited to participate, notices should be published appropriately and thoroughly.
2. Define sustainability for the Olympic Peninsula
 - a. Include all facets of the region, including and not limited to:
 - i. Roads, bridges and multimodal trails
 - ii. Marine facilities, waterways and port activity
 - iii. Hiking trails
 - iv. Parking options
 - v. Public restrooms
 - vi. Accommodations (traditional, seasonal, quality and quantity)
 - vii. Air travel options including seaplanes and local/regional airports
 - viii. Events, festivals, and compression of these on weekends/seasons
 - ix. Venues
 - x. Housing for workers and labor support plans
 - xi. Entertainment Opportunities
 - b. Suggest collaboration and cooperation between all stakeholders for long term success
 - c. Include infrastructure/transportation review/suggestions for plan
3. Create a tailored communication strategy
 - a. What works and what doesn't (consider current marketing plans as well as gaps within the various stakeholders' perceptions)
 - b. Discuss methods, frequency, topics
 - c. Suggest partnerships, collaborative approaches
4. Present a "Final Plan" document
 - a. Create a Tourism Strategic Plan to cover five years, making it forward-looking and realistic in terms of capacity and funding
 - b. Present both short-term action items and long-term anticipated outcomes, noting responsible parties
 - c. Create a public-facing document for the results of this investment
 - d. Create an accountability and measurability checklist and timeline

Schedule

Project Timeline (Proposed “no later than” dates)

January 17, 2023	Issue RFP
February 3, 2023	Questions / comments due in writing
February 7, 2023	Responses to questions provided in writing
FEBRUARY 21, 2023	PROPOSALS DUE BY 4:00PM PST
March 7, 2023	Review Committee evaluations
March 20-24, 2023	Review Committee presentations, as needed
March 27, 2023	Finalist Selected
April, 2023	Contract Commences
Q2 and Q3, 2023	Scope of work performed, preliminary reports delivered
By December 20, 2023	Final project reports delivered and presented

Budget

The budget for this contract, including any required travel to the area, is between \$150,000 and \$170,000 and will be paid through the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau. A clear outline of proposed payments and milestones should be included in the response.

Deliverables

Deliverables of the Tourism Strategic Plan should include:

- Executive Summary
- Situational Analysis
- Results of Interviews/Focus Groups
- Prioritized Strategic Objectives
- Action Plan and Timeline

Proposal Submittals and Evaluation Criteria

- Expertise/Referrals
 - Provide three references for similar projects in size/scope in last two years
 - Describe each project and current contact information
 - List success indicators for each project
- Qualifications/Experience of designated team assigned to OP Tourism Strategic Plan
 - Describe key personnel who will be involved in presenting deliverables and seeing project through to completion

- Describe the role of each and anticipated time devoted to the plan
- Include resume/contact information
- Identify and provide the same for any subcontractors
- Implementation
 - Describe approach in developing and implementing the OP Tourism Strategic Plan
 - How will priorities be developed/determined
 - Describe methodology for conducting research and scope of same
- Community Framework/Infrastructure
 - Provide general knowledge/connection/understandings into the Olympic Peninsula
 - Include History, Nature of Citizens, current assets
- Costs
 - Provide a detailed budget including fees for:
 - Initial proposal/plans
 - Costs associated with on-going work
 - Billing structure and expectations
- Sustainability
 - Define sustainability for the OP Tourism Strategic Plan
 - Outline strategies, practices, service, products that may reduce the environmental/economic impact of the services provided
- Agreement Terms & Conditions
 - Outline personal services agreement
- Legal Action
 - Disclose any current or recent (within last five years) legal action in progress or taken against the firm or individuals
- Disclosure
 - List any/all business transactions/relations within the past five years that may create or be perceived to create a conflict of interest

Proposal Evaluation

- The Committee will evaluate each written response to the Request for Proposal and determine whether oral discussions with the firms are necessary.
- Based on the content of the written proposal and any oral discussions, the Committee will select the best qualified for the assignment and which is most advantageous to the Olympic Peninsula's budget and all other factors considered.
- The Committee may, at its discretion, select a firm strictly on the basis of the initial proposals, without short-listing firms or conducting oral interviews.
- The checklist below will be the guiding document for this evaluation.
- Any response received after the closing date of the request will not be considered.
- Further, the Committee has the option to reject all proposals, request clarifications, or to waive irregularities in any proposal.
- The final two-three vendors succeeding in the response may be asked to conduct either an in person or remote interview with the committee, or with select members of the committee.

RFP Questions/Clarifications

- Questions/clarifications must be submitted via e-mail to: DebbieWardropLLC@gmail.com by 2:00 pm PST on Friday, February 3, 2023. Questions will be answered in writing by 5:00 pm on Tuesday, February 7, 2023. All questions and answers will be shared with all responders to this RFP.
- Silent Period: A silent period is established between the time the RFP is issued by the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau and the time that the Committee awards the RFP. All proposing firms, consultants, or individuals acting on their behalf are hereby prohibited from contacting or lobbying any Clallam County or Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau employee, official, or representative, or any member of the Committee regarding the RFP during the silent period.

The Committee will evaluate all eligible responses based on the following criteria:

A.	Firm and principal qualifications	10%
B.	Qualification & Experience of the project team responsible for this project	15%
C.	Relevant prior experience with similar projects	15%
D.	Project understanding, approach, strategy and methodology	30%
E.	Cost: Evaluation of proposing firm's budget and plan for how it will be utilized	10%
F.	Consideration for community impact, sustainability and infrastructure, including DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion)	20%
G.	Contract Acceptance/Exceptions	Y/N
H.	Legal action	Y/N
I.	Disclosure	Y/N
J.	Transmittal Page (front cover of RFP)	Y/N
TOTAL		100%

Special Conditions

A. General Terms. This request for proposals does not commit Clallam County or the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau to enter into an agreement, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of the proposal or subsequent negotiations, or to contract for the project. All information furnished in this request for proposals was gathered from sources deemed to be reliable. No representation or warranty is intended as to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained herein and the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau reserves the right to alter or cancel this request for proposals.

B. Reservation of Rights by Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau. The issuance of this request for proposals does not constitute an agreement by Clallam County or the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau that any services agreement will be executed by Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau.

C. Negotiation Rights. The acceptance of a proposal and invitation to negotiate an agreement does not commit Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau to accept any or all of the proposal terms.

Final terms of any agreement will be agreed upon during negotiations. Negotiations may be terminated for failure to reach mutually acceptable terms.

D. Preparation Costs. Each respondent will be responsible for all costs incurred in preparing a response to this request for proposals. All materials and documents submitted by the respondents in response to this request for proposals will become the property of the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau and will not be returned. The selected respondent will be responsible for all costs incurred by it during negotiations.

E. Affirmative Action Requirements. Respondent, by submission of a response, agrees to not discriminate against any worker, employee, subcontractor, or any member of the public because of age, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), race, color, religion, creed, marital status, familial status, national origin, honorably discharged veteran or military status, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, or use of a service animal by a person with disabilities, or otherwise commit an unfair employment practice and further agrees to comply with all Federal, State, and City equal employment opportunity requirements.

F. Ownership of Work. The work completed by the selected contractor shall be fully owned and retained by the Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau.

Submission Requirements

Please communicate your intention to submit an RFP by email to DebbieWardropLLC@gmail.com. Include your firm's primary contact.

To be considered for this project, no later than February 21, 2023 at 4:00 pm PDT, one digital (PDF) via e-mail to: DebbieWardropLLC@gmail.com

AND

One signed hard copy of the proposal must be received at the offices of
Debbie Wardrop, Project Manager

c/o Olympic Peninsula Visitor Bureau

Mail: PO Box 670

Physical Address: 618 S. Peabody St., Suite F

Port Angeles, WA. 98362