

**CITY OF WALLA WALLA
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR TOURISM MASTER PLAN
Date of Request: July 20, 2023**

The City of Walla Walla is soliciting interest from consulting firms/teams with expertise in working with jurisdictions in Washington State for the development of a 10+ year sustainable Tourism Master Plan (TMP) and related research projects. The City desires to enter into a professional services agreement with a qualified individual or firm who can demonstrate competency and experience in tourism development, coordination and management services.

The City of Walla Walla reserves the right to amend the terms of this “Request for Proposals” (RFP) to circulate various addenda, or withdraw the RFP at any time, regardless of how much time and effort consultants spend on their responses. This RFP does not obligate the City to contract for services described herein.

A copy of the RFP can be viewed at [RFPs & Bids | City of Walla Walla \(wallawallawa.gov\)](https://www.wallawallawa.gov/rfps-bids).

Proposals must be received by 3:00 p.m., August 15, 2023. Proposal may be electronically submitted to rgwinn@wallawallawa.gov. Proposals will not be accepted after the designated time and date.

The City may reject any proposal not in compliance with all prescribed solicitation procedures and requirements and other applicable laws and may reject any or all proposals in whole or in part when the cancellation or rejection is in the best interest of the City.

The City of Walla Walla, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

The City of Walla Walla in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), commits to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all of its programs and activities. This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing ada-titlevi@wallawallawa.gov or calling 509.527.4540.

Por favor llame a este número 509.524.4685 si necesita más información o para recibir esta información en español.

(Advertised Union-Bulletin – July 20, 2023)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR A TOURISM MASTER PLAN

INTENT

The City of Walla Walla is issuing this Request for Proposals (“RFP”) for the development of a 10+ year sustainable Tourism Master Plan (TMP) and related research projects.

BACKGROUND

The City of Walla Walla and Visit Walla Walla (VWW) will partner in the process in a phased approach. The specific purpose of VWW is to advance, promote and foster the growth and development of tourism in the city and county of Walla Walla and market Walla Walla as a preferred visitor destination.

Located in southeast Washington, the City of Walla Walla seeks an experienced consultant and/or strategic planning firm to lead our tourism industry partners and supporters in the creation of a Tourism Master Plan.

A Tourism Master Plan will allow our community to take a strategic approach to define a competitive positioning for our region as a destination. This plan is a critical step in identifying and prioritizing those opportunities for enhancements to the resident and visitor experience that will position the community as a desirable place to live, work and visit. Working hand in hand with our stakeholders and community, we will develop a plan that ensures economic sustainability for our community while preserving the quality of life for residents and the quality of place for visitors.

In the immediate aftermath of the Covid-19 crisis, this plan will help our community and stakeholders understand the status of hospitality and tourism enterprises, identify the travel sector businesses lost to the crisis, those that were added during the event, and what to target to maximize the draw to our Region.

We must also prepare for the long-term and develop a plan to balance sustainable visitor growth with our community’s long-term health and vibrancy. The Tourism Master Plan will connect the visitor economy, economic development, and community.

The work associated with developing the Tourism Master Plan for the City should be focused on destination assessment, product retention, expansion, attraction and development, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) identified, and the methodology clearly identified, prioritization of efforts and recommendations for funding identified.

The TMP will provide a thorough plan with indicators for destination stewardship for the Walla Walla area in line with four key quality objectives:

1. Quality of the Economy – Shape and expand the economy in ways that ensures its long-term sustainability and vibrancy.
2. Quality Visitor Experience – Continue to provide an excellent visitor experience that highlights our sustainability values and keeps visitors coming back.
3. Resident Quality of Life – Maintain and enhance the elements that make the community a truly special place to reside.
4. Quality of Environmental Impact – Lead the tourism industry in implementing sustainability principals, positioning the community as a national leader in destination stewardship.

This plan will be built on a collaborative process with the public and private sector communities and will catalog actions to implement the community's vision for tourism, including the responsible parties for implementing action.

This process must include extensive stakeholder and community engagement to develop an agreed-upon strategic vision for tourism's future within our Region. The Process must engage industry stakeholders, business leaders, elected officials (on all levels), the public sector, and the broader communities within and representing Walla Walla County. Stakeholder engagement will, at a minimum, include meetings, gatherings, surveys, interviews, focus groups, town hall meetings, and workshops.

The process will be a phased approach. The process will consist of the following three phases.

Phase I: Incorporate foundational research that includes insight from both the visitor and local community. This should include visitor and resident surveys. The findings from phase one will inform the direction for Phase II and Phase III.

Phase II: Develop the Tourism Master Plan. We envision this to include visioning workshops and stakeholder engagement to develop priorities for opportunities and challenges, recommendations based on outcomes, finalizing recommendations with roles and responsibilities. Please outline what stakeholder involvement would look like.

Phase III: Implementation and Action plan including a strategy in place for how the plan will be implemented and who will be responsible for each area of implementation. This should also outline how the plan will be monitored and improved with benchmarks in place to optimize plan.

The Tourism Master Plan will serve as a critical component of City of Walla Walla and Visit Walla Walla's strategic framework. It will identify an overarching vision and the experiences, infrastructure and policies that will guide long-term sustainable, responsible development of Walla Walla's tourism industry. As the tourism industry in the city grows, it will be important for VMM to be destination stewards by balancing the interests and benefits of tourism with those of the local community. Having a holistic Tourism Master Plan will help accomplish the important goal of driving diverse demand opportunities throughout the year and mitigating highly impacted times and locations.

It is the intention of the City of Walla Walla to contract with a firm to develop a long-term destination development strategy. The City of Walla Walla estimates that the scope of work would be completed in a 6-month timeframe. Our goal is to select a firm and begin the process by September 5, 2023. If it is deemed appropriate, the City of Walla Walla could extend the agreement to include work on implementation of the plan. This decision would not be made until after the plan has been designed and presented.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

- a. Motivate and engage the stakeholders and industry partners.
- b. Invigorate and engage community leaders in the process.
- c. Employ fresh, innovative methods to lead developmental discussions.
- d. Survey and/or facilitate workshops with visitors, industry partners and residents.
- e. Conduct workshops to discuss and develop a SWOC analysis to determine strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges that will guide the destination development process.
- f. Conduct consumer, resident and industry research to determine key local and regional trends in the Tourism Sector in the Walla Walla Valley.
- g. Evaluate Walla Walla and region as a **4-season visitor destination**, including assessment of regional differences and dependencies, existing services and agencies and structures designed to support the growth of the Tourism Industry.
- h. Conduct a destination assessment through destination visits, tours, and research.
 - Identify current products, resources, experiences and determine gaps/opportunities with current offerings, destination experience and infrastructure.
 - Identify current markets and new market opportunities.
 - Identify new product/experience opportunities and infrastructure needs. product/experiences include arts, culture, sports tourism, venue development, transportation development, etc.
 - Evaluate current transportation services and provide recommendations on how we can best collaborate with transportation entities (air and ground) and mitigate roadblocks due to the distance from the major airports. How can we better leverage opportunities with train travel (Pasco Amtrak Station) and other alternatives.
 - Identify strengths and weaknesses within workforce development and identify opportunities.
 - Identify new product/experience opportunities and infrastructure needs; product/experiences include arts, culture, sports tourism, venue development, transportation development, etc.
 - Evaluate current transportation services and provide recommendations on how we can best collaborate with transportation entities (air and ground) and mitigate roadblocks due to the distance from the major airports. How can we better leverage opportunities with train travel and other alternatives.
 - Identify strengths and weaknesses within workforce development and identify opportunities.
- i. Complete a tourism asset map for Walla Walla, including a comprehensive list of saleable and non-saleable tourism products and services as well as marketing assets available to support marketing efforts. Gaps in tourism products and service offerings will be identified in this process.
 - Create comprehensive list of tourism products, services, and assets specific to Walla Walla and area.
 - Identify unique tourism strengths and challenges of Walla Walla and area.
 - Identify gaps and opportunities in tourism product and service offerings.

DELIVERABLES

The Tourism Master Plan Document will include a long-term strategic road map for developing Walla Walla as a sustainable, responsible tourism destination. It will focus on creating diverse demand opportunities. The plan will include but is not limited to the following:

- A priority list of specific product development that will enable us to grow both leisure and meetings/group business. The primary objective is to grow responsibly, focusing on diverse opportunities that will generate new business mid-week and in the shoulder season. These may include agritourism initiatives,

- sports tourism, arts and cultural venues, corporate development, etc.
- A list of policy recommendations that will allow for changes and innovation to occur, making Walla Walla relevant and more competitive in the marketplace.
- Policy recommendations on how the City Council and the City's Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) may provide lodging tax revenues for tourism authorized by Walla Walla Municipal Code and RCW, as now or hereafter amended.
- A review existing visitor resources, attractions, museums, and events and make recommendations on how VMM and the City of Walla Walla can assist with these entities, preserving, protecting, and growing their business.
- A review and identify how the destination can create new product, programs and events to drive demand for need periods.
- Comparisons and best practices with similar destinations to grow tourism responsibly with an emphasis on generating new jobs, growing the tax base and adding to the attractiveness of Walla Walla.
- A review that identifies infrastructure and beautification improvements that will improve the quality of life for residents as well as enhance the destination experience; making Walla Walla a desirable destination, year-round so we are not just impacting leisure in the summer.
- A review and recommendations on how the destination can grow market share and develop new market opportunities with a limited budget.
- An implementation plan that includes responsibilities/roles for VMM as well city staff and partners.

HOW TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS

RFP responses must be completed and prepared in a form that provides an insightful, straightforward, and concise overview of the capabilities of your company. Elaborate proposals beyond that sufficient to present a complete and effective proposal are not necessary or desired. Additional facts and information other than those listed below may be included if it will help to highlight your company's qualifications and experience.

One (1) electronic copy of the proposal shall be submitted and organized in the format indicated below. **Electronic copies shall be submitted as a single .pdf file, labeled with the name of the firm.** Proposals shall not exceed ten (10) pages in length. Page limit shall include all required submittals. Each side of each page containing text or images counts as one page. The minimum font size is 12. The City desires submittals that are clear, concise, and specific to the needs and conditions of this project.

All materials submitted in response to this RFP shall become the property of the City of Walla Walla and shall be considered a part of the public record except for any proprietary financial information that should be clearly marked as confidential.

Proposals shall not exceed 10 pages in length.

- A. Send your proposal electronically with **RFP Tourism Master Plan** in the Subject line to: Rikki Gwinn, Executive Assistant at rgwinn@wallawallawa.gov no later than 3:00 p.m. on August 15, 2023. Submittals will not be accepted after that time and date.
- B. Each proposal shall be organized using the following format:
 1. General
 - An introductory cover letter that includes a general background overview of the company/firm, identification of similar services provided for other clients and outline of expected approach for successfully undertaking the project.

2. Relevant Experience
 - A listing of recent relevant project experience. Project descriptions should include a summary of related work, including scope, project successes, location and length of time of project.
3. Proposal Schedule

This section must include:

 - A schedule for completion of the project broken down by phase and task.
 - A description of the tasks to be undertaken and methodologies to be used by the company/firm.
 - Lead, team members and sub-consultants.
4. Qualifications

This section must include:

 - Educational and professional qualifications of each individual to be assigned. Include a summary of each individual's work experience with related projects.
 - Identification and brief description of experience and relevant qualifications. Resumes may be included as an appendix.
 - Identification of availability and office location.
5. Financial Expectation

This expectation must include:

 - Company/firm maximum fee.
 - A breakdown of project costs by task in a manner that allows for easy cross-referencing of task, personnel, timing and costs:
 - for each task include the hours estimated for each individual, including sub-consultants, showing charge-out rate, total hours and disbursements per task; and
 - subtotals for each phase in the project.
 - Total hours and fees per individual, including sub-consultants, to be assigned for the entire project.
6. References

A list of references from a minimum of three (3) municipal government clients who have engaged the company/firm to complete similar projects, include the name, address and phone number of references.
7. Conflict of Interest

Assurance that the company/firm and any proposed sub-consultant are not in a position with may be perceived as a conflict of interest with respect to undertaking this project.

C. Proposal Format

1. Proposals may be either emailed with the Request for Proposal title clearly indicated in the subject line (please request confirmation of receipt of any emailed proposals), or submitted in a sealed package with the name and address of the company/firm and the Request for Proposal title clearly marked on the outside.
2. Facsimile submissions will not be considered.
3. Late Proposals will not be considered.
4. Proposals that are conditional; illegible; obscure; contain arithmetical errors; erasures, alterations, or irregularities of any kind; may, at the discretion of the City of Walla Walla, be declared disqualified.
5. The person(s) authorized to sign on behalf of the company/firm and to bind the company/firm to statements made in response to this RFP must sign the Proposal Form provided herein. Unsigned Proposals will be declared disqualified and returned.
6. Company/firm shall be solely responsible for the delivery of their Proposals in the manner and time prescribed. All submissions must be delivered according to the instructions herein. The City of Walla Walla will accept no responsibility for documents delivered to other City facilities and at the discretion of the City Manager may be declared disqualified.

D. Proposal Inquiries

1. All inquiries related to this RFP shall be directed to:

Bob Francis
Deputy City Manager
City of Walla Walla, WA
Phone: (509) 527-4540
Email: rfrancis@wallawallawa.gov

2. Inquiries will be accepted until 2:00 pm, Tuesday, July 25, 2023.
3. Information obtained from any other source is not official and should not be relied upon.

E. Addenda

1. Any questions that are received by the City of Walla Walla that affects the Request for Proposal process will be issued as addenda by the City.
2. Addenda will be published on the City website. It is the responsibility of the company/firm to monitor the website to check for updates. All addenda become part of the Contract document and must be considered when responding to this RFP.
3. Verbal answers are binding only when confirmed by written addenda.

F. Disclaimer

Each company/firm is responsible to review and understand the terms and conditions of this RFP, and the scope of work being requested. The City of Walla Walla makes no representation or warranty as to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in this RFP and the company/firm is solely responsible to ensure that it has obtained and considered all information necessary to understand the requirements of this RFP, and to prepare and submit its Proposal. The City will not be responsible for any loss, damage or expense incurred by a company/firm as a result of any inaccuracy or incompleteness in this RFP, or as a result of any misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the terms of this RFP on the part of any company/firm.

G. Evaluation and Selection Criteria

Evaluation of Proposals will be by the City according to the criteria identified below. Those Proposals passing the mandatory requirements will be further evaluated against the point-rated criteria. During the evaluation process, company/firm may be required to provide clarification to statements made in their Proposals. The City of Walla Walla reserves the right to contact any person or organization to determine the reputation of the company/firm.

1. Mandatory Criteria

- a. Proposal Form completed and signed by a person authorized to bind the company/firm to statements made in the submission.
- b. Proposals must be received at the closing location by the specified Closing date and time.

Point-rated Criteria	Points Assigned
Qualifications and experience with small municipalities	30
Methodology – detailed method/planning for: 10-year Tourism Master Plan with Prioritized Actionable Items	35
Cost to City including travel disbursements	20
Reference Checks	15
Total Points	100

RFP REVIEW AND SELECTION TIMELINE

A. The following timeline is intended to provide a tentative schedule for this project. The City of Walla Walla reserves the right to modify the timeline, without prior notice, at its sole convenience.

Publication	July 20, 2023
Questions Due	July 25, 2023. 2:00 p.m. (Local Time)
Final Addendum Issued, if necessary,	July 28, 2023. 4:00 p.m. (Local Time)
Proposals Due	August 15, 2023, 3:00 p.m. (Local Time)
Evaluation of Proposals, week of*	August 15, 2023
Council Approval/Contract Completion	August 23, 2023 (tentative)
Project Start Date	September 5, 2023
Tourism Master Plan Draft Submission	March 1, 2024
Tourism Master Plan Presentation to Council	March 11 or March 13, 2024
Tourism Master Plan Final submission	March 27, 2024
Project End Date	April 1, 2024

*Presentations will be arranged if Walla Walla is unable to select based on the proposals received. If presentations are required, they make take place via videoconferencing or in-person.

B. Acceptance of Proposals

1. This RFP must not be construed as an agreement to purchase goods or services. The City is not bound to accept the lowest priced or any Proposal of those submitted. The City is under no obligation to receive further information, whether written or oral, from any Procurement.
2. No company/firm shall have any claim for any compensation of any kind whatsoever, as a result of participating in the RFP, whether in respect of Proposal preparation costs, loss of anticipated profit, or any other matter whatsoever, and by submitting a Proposal each company/firm shall be deemed to have irrevocably waived such a claim.
3. The City reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time and for any reason, and in so doing to reject all Proposals, and will not be responsible for any loss, damage, cost or expense incurred or suffered by any company/firm as a result of such cancellation.
4. The City reserves the right to enter into negotiations with one or more companies/firms concerning the terms and conditions of the services to be provided, and expressly reserves the right through such negotiations to request changes, alterations, additions or deletions from the terms of any Proposals reached.
5. The City reserves the right to select one or more companies/firms for further consideration following the initial proposal evaluation process.
6. Acceptance of any Proposal is subject to funding and may require approval of the City Council.
7. The successful company/firm will be issued a written Notice of Award.

C. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information

The City of Walla Walla in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), commits to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability, in all of its programs and activities. This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing Rikki Gwinn at rgwinn@wallawallawa.gov or by calling collect 509-527-4540.

D. Title VI Statement

The City of Walla Walla, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

Dates of publication in the Walla Walla Union Bulletin: July 20, 2023.