



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

VAIL DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN TOWN OF VAIL, COLORADO

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

VAIL DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Town of Vail, Colorado seeks professional services to develop a Destination Stewardship Plan to guide Vail’s management of the tourism economy within the local community. The development of the Plan will be guided by the principles of sustainability as described in Vail’s certification as a certified sustainable destination, under the Global Sustainable Tourism Council’s Mountain IDEAL standard first attained in 2017. The Town’s economic development department will lead the effort with strong support from the environmental sustainability department and the six key community partners (Memorandum of Understanding or MOU partners) who collaborate to champion Vail’s sustainable destination certification. The development of the Plan will include a robust engagement and research phase to gather and summarize data on visitor and resident tourism and recreation sentiment, an outreach phase to vet the findings with key community and economic stakeholder groups and MOU partners, and a final submittal and approval of the Plan by the Vail Town Council.

II. PROJECT BACKGROUND

As part of Vail’s designation as a top 100 Sustainable Destination by Green Destinations, and as a Mountain IDEAL certified sustainable destination, which is recognized by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, the Town of Vail is required to develop a Destination Stewardship Plan (DSP) by the end of 2022. The DSP is defined in the current Mountain IDEAL standard as “an up-to-date multiyear destination management strategy and action plan to guide planning, development and stewardship of tourism and recreation activities.” The criteria require that the Plan be based on the major tenants of sustainable tourism management practices, incorporating social and economic sustainability, cultural sustainability, and an assessment of environmental issues and risks. Each of these will integrate into and inform the recommended strategies for the tourism management and marketing plan for the community.

A key component of the Plan will be a robust community engagement process to provide an opportunity for residents and guests to weigh in on areas of interest regarding Vail’s tourism economy. The Plan will aim to achieve outcomes to support sustainable tourism in the following general categories, including but not limited to:

- Economic development that balances resource impact and economic prosperity and ensures quality of life for residents and guests
- Tourism and its effect on environmental and ecological sustainability
- World class recreation opportunity providing equitable access and an improved experience for residents and guests

- Cultural heritage as a community asset to be supported and enhanced

III. ABOUT VAIL

A. Location, History, Economy

The Town of Vail is North America's Premier International Mountain Resort Community, located approximately 100 miles west of Denver, CO at the foot of the Gore Range in the Rocky Mountains. Founded as a ski resort in 1962 and as a Town in 1966, Vail is well known for its beautiful mountains, plentiful sunshine, and quaint pedestrian villages. Surrounded by the White River National Forest, the Town of Vail totals 3,360 acres, and is 10 miles long and at most 1 mile wide. The Town itself is at 8,150 feet in elevation, while the peak of Vail Mountain is 11,450 feet. Almost 1,000 acres within the town boundaries are designated open space, with the remaining approximately 1,860 acres for residential and commercial uses. Gore Creek is the only major water body within the Town boundary, and it runs through the entire length of the Town and runs into the Eagle River just west of Vail in Dowd Junction.

Vail Ski Resort, which is adjacent to the town in the White River National Forest, is one of the largest ski resorts in North America with 5,317 acres of terrain. Vail consistently ranks as one of the most visited and favorite ski resorts in North America. Tourism is the overarching driver of the local economy. The community, like most mountain resorts, is comprised of a mix of full-time and part-time residents, and full-time and seasonal workers. Vail's population is approximately 5,000 full- and Vail receives over two and a half million visitors annually.

B. Vail Marketing

A successful Destination Stewardship Plan will holistically address and strike a balance between the ongoing management and marketing of Vail. Currently the responsibility for managing and marketing the destination is shared between the resort operator Vail Resorts/Vail Mountain and the Town. Winter season marketing is managed by Vail Resorts, while non-winter marketing is managed by the Town's Vail Local Marketing District (VLMD). The VLMD was formed in 1999 to market and promote the Vail destination and assets within the Town including natural attractions, local businesses and special events. The VLMD is funded by a 1.4% lodging tax that generates approximately \$4 million annually. Traditionally the focus of the VLMD has been to drive overnight stays and guest spend during the non-winter period. Key metrics include sales and lodging tax revenue, lodging occupancy, average daily rate and guest satisfaction. The Plan will inform future marketing efforts to focus on communication of community values and influencing behavior to mitigate impacts to natural assets.

C. Vail Sustainability Practices

Since its certification as Sustainable Destination in 2018 under the criteria set forth by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the Town has established itself as a leader in sustainability practices along with its six Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) partners (U.S. Forest Service, Vail Resorts, Eagle River Water and Sanitation District, Vail Recreation District, Holy Cross Energy and Walking Mountains Science Center). This next phase of the Mountain IDEAL Standard provides a focus on how tourism affects the local community, leading to a strategic plan to protect Vail's natural attractions, resources and quality of life. The DSP will weave together tourism management-related content from existing Town of Vail Plans, including but not limited to the Town Council Action Plan, Economic Development Strategic Plan, Environmental Sustainability Strategic Plan, Housing Plan, Open Lands Plan, and others. The Plan will also incorporate content from MOU partner Plans including the US Forest Service Forest Stewardship Plan, Vail Resorts Commitment to Zero, and the Holy Cross Energy Strategic Plan.

The Town of Vail has embraced environmental stewardship as a value since its founding charter in 1966. Since 1980, sustainability programs have been funded through a 1% Real Estate Transfer Tax (RETT), where funds are restricted for acquiring, maintaining and improving local property for parks, recreation, open space and for supporting sustainable environmental practices. In 2009 the Town developed its first Environmental Sustainability Strategic Plan, which establishes goals in waste diversion, energy efficiency, ecosystem health, sustainable economic and social development, public outreach and education and transportation. The Town of Vail has adopted the Eagle County Community Climate Action Plan which establishes aggressive goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 25% by 2025, 50% by 2030 and 80% by 2050. The Town also participates in the regional Climate Action Collaborative to move these goals forward. Refer to Appendix A for information on the Town's sustainability programs.

D. Current Environment and Challenges

The Vail community is experiencing increased visitor volumes due to factors including the global pandemic, proximity to Denver, the increase in short-term rental (STR) units, and in-migration for both remote workers and second homeowners. Recent surveys on ballot opportunities illustrated the importance to the resident community of protecting our natural attractions and assets, optimizing visitation, providing housing options for the local workforce, and protecting the quality of life for residents. The development of a Destination Stewardship Plan was met with strong support. The survey also exposed a perception that the growth of STRs has contributed to many community challenges including housing, parking, traffic, and overuse of trails. The Town of Vail has commissioned a nexus study on dispersed short-term rentals to better understand the impact of STRs on the community.

The Town of Vail recognizes that tourism is the primary driver of our economy, creating jobs, opportunities and revenue that support our municipal operations. The Town also acknowledges that it's critical to achieve a balance between the tourism economy and the protection and

preservation of our natural assets and recreational sites and experiences. Vail's commitment to sustainability sets the stage for a long-term approach to protecting our environment, climate, natural resources including wildlife and ecosystem services, and natural attractions while ensuring socio-economic balance and quality of life for our residents and guests.

E. Destination Defined

For the purposes of this study, the Vail destination is the Gore Creek Watershed as defined by the Mountain IDEAL. The focus of the study will be on the shared management of natural attractions and assets within the boundaries of the Town of Vail as described above.

IV. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

As a world leader in sustainable tourism, Vail's goal is to explore how tourism will look in the next 10+ years: how to best manage tourism impacts in our destination and how to ensure private business can succeed and support the economic vitality of our community through sales tax and employment. This Plan will work to define a mission, vision, and purpose; to gauge tourism sentiment; to inform and educate the public; to develop strategies and tactics; and to deliver outcomes in a timely manner. Through this process the following should be achieved:

- Outline an overview of the current state of tourism in Vail, including resident and visitor sentiment and the current and future social, economic, and environmental conditions as they relate to tourism,
- Define the strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results of the destination,
- Describe tourism-related management strategies and tactics to protect and maintain the quality of life for residents and guests and prevent, mitigate, and/or adapt to visitor and resident impacts,
- Document, review, and analyze current community initiatives that relate to sustainable tourism and destination management, identify gaps in current policies and practices, and set goals for the community to achieve successful implementation that is based upon and in consideration of destination and Town plans and policies already adopted,
- Develop goals and actions for a sustainable community and sustainable tourism plan that integrates various stakeholder efforts and empowers community innovation and involvement,
- Create a Plan development and implementation timeline and key performance indicators to measure outcomes,
- Outline outreach and media strategies to engage stakeholders, communicate to and educate the public on the Plan, offer opportunities to contribute and support the Plan, and leverage existing partnerships,
- Propose a 10-year vision and management plan for tourism and sustainability in Vail that includes assumptions, goals, and actions to mitigate those assumptions,

- And define a purpose and scope of work for future phases of the Destination Stewardship Plan development.

V. PHASES

Phase I:

Incorporate foundational research and existing plans that include insight from both the visitor and local community. This should include a robust community engagement process to capture tourism sentiment among Vail residents. This should also include tourism sentiment among Vail visitors.

Phase II:

Develop a Destination Stewardship Plan 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 stakeholder involvement methodology. The plan should focus on immediate priorities as well as those in a ten-year time frame.

Phase III:

Develop an Implementation and Action Plan including how the Plan will be implemented and who will be responsible for each area of implementation. This should outline how the Plan will be monitored and improved with benchmarks to optimize the Plan. The Plan will include estimated budget requirements, prioritized task lists, site by site guidance and KPIs/metrics.

VI. TERM

The terms of this Agreement shall commence on December 15, 2021 and shall expire on December 14, 2022. The parties shall have the option to renew the contract for an additional one (1) year term, such renewal is not automatic. The Consultant/company or Town of Vail may terminate this agreement at any time; provided, however, that all compensation earned or costs incurred prior to such termination shall be payable to Consultant/company.

VII. REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

An organization submitting a proposal represents that it is fully qualified, staffed and equipped to properly perform any agreed upon conditions and work as requested in this bid proposal and as represented in their proposal.

1. Direct experience in the tourism industry, including destination marketing and sustainable tourism, especially in mountain resort communities.
2. Ability to translate sustainability practices into destination resort marketing.

3. Experience in sustainability efforts and demonstrated samples of long-range Plans with a focus on sustainable tourism issues.
4. Demonstrated ability to successfully engage and align large, diverse stakeholder groups with a variety of institutional structures across boundaries.
5. Expertise in creation and facilitation of public outreach programs to garner input in a safe environment and collate results to inform development of the Plan.

VIII. SELECTION PROCESS

The Town of Vail shall contract with the organization and shall be the owner of all materials. Questions on bid submittals shall be directed to Mia Vlaar, Economic Development Director, Town of Vail, mvlaar@vailgov.com.

The selection committee will comprise representatives from the Town manager's office, environmental sustainability and economic development departments. Interviews will occur remotely via an online virtual platform with the selection committee.

All material submitted regarding this bid request becomes the property of the Town of Vail and will not be returned to the organization. Disqualification does not eliminate this ownership right. The owner reserves the right to reject or accept any or all proposals or waive any formalities, informalities, or information therein.

The Proposal should cover a 12-month period. It should specify how each element of the Scope of Work will be approached and completed and should incorporate the following:

1. The title of the proposal should contain your firm's name, address, telephone number, principal contact and email address.
2. Description and history of the Consultant/company
3. Brief of relevant prior experience of the Consultant/company
4. Links to or actual copies of previously produced relevant material showcasing the quality of your work and testimonials where applicable
5. Consulting team: name, title and a brief CV for the Team Leader and each team member, inclusive of their roles and responsibilities for the proposed project
6. Understanding of the scope of work and objectives
7. Outline of project approach, strategy for carrying out the scope of work and methodology
8. Detail the time to be spent on the project
9. Financials should include a detailed "line item" breakdown of costs for the project including hourly rates for principals
10. Identify any possible adjustments to the scope of work that would ensure a high value product
11. Propose work that could be completed by the Town of Vail and MOU partners so that budgeted dollars are focused on the highest value components of the scope of work

12. Any other information deemed appropriate for this project

The owner will award this contract to an organization based upon review of the merits of the proposals received. Criteria for these merits include but are not limited to:

- Demonstrated relative experience with similar clients in mountain resort communities
- Understanding of Scope of Work and Objectives
- Positive reference feedback from past clients
- The process, manner and methods of providing the service
- Fees and costs of the proposal

IX. SCHEDULE

RFP Issued	November 1, 2021
Written Questions Submitted	November 5, 2021
Bidders' Questions Answered	November 9, 2021
Proposal Due	November 19, 2021 at 4:00 PM (MT)
Notification of award	December 1, 2021

X. METHOD OF SUBMITTAL

All bid proposal submittals shall be submitted electronically to:
Mia Vlaar, Economic Development Director, Town of Vail, mvlaar@vailgov.com.

Submittal must be received no later than 4:00 PM (Mountain Standard Time), November 19, 2021. If a bid proposal submission is received after this deadline, it will not be considered and will be rejected without any further action by the Owner. All proposals shall be the property of the Owner and will become public record.

APPENDIX A

Town of Vail Sustainability Programs and Practices

Specific initiatives include open space preservation, Leave No Trace education to trail users, creation of Trail Host and Trail Ambassador programs to provide education to protect migrating and calving wildlife. Additional work and programs have been initiated to enhance wildlife protection and habitat restoration. Through the Gore Creek Strategic Plan, the 2016 Restore the Gore initiative improves watershed health and quality as well as riparian habitat restoration and provides education and outreach in addition to monitoring and infrastructure projects to improve the health of the Gore Creek watershed. Vail works closely with the local water district to ensure the highest level of drinking water quality and to implement water conservation measures and programs.

Waste Diversion initiatives include a Town wide ordinance requiring all residents and businesses to recycle, operation of a free recycling center, implementation of residential and commercial compost programs, Celebrate Green event requirements requiring zero waste at all events in Vail serving food and/or drinks, the Kick the Bag Habit program banning plastic bags from grocery stores, and free hard to recycle events.

Energy efficiency efforts include tracking, monitoring, and managing energy usage, Town-wide energy upgrades, and solar arrays throughout Town. The Town also purchases 100% renewable electricity from the local energy utility. Vail is a member of ICLEI- local governments for sustainability who provides resources and guidance in the development of greenhouse gas inventories. Vail also partners with Energy Smart Colorado to offer businesses and residents free home energy assessments and double rebates on energy efficiency upgrades.

Transportation efforts include a free Town-wide bus system that has four battery electric buses currently and a goal to convert the entire fleet by 2032. In addition, there are 4 Level 2 electric vehicle charging ports available to the public for free and 4 DC fast charging stations available for a nominal fee. Vail is a *Silver level Bicycle Friendly Community* with a network for multi-use paths for pedestrians and cyclists that connect to neighboring communities. Vail and Lionhead Villages are pedestrian friendly. Vail hosts the Sole Power Green Commuting Challenge to encourage active commuting. The Town also runs several electric bike programs.

In collaboration with Walking Mountains Science Center and Sustainable Travel International, the Town of Vail developed the Actively Green Sustainable Business and Certification program in 2013 to assist businesses in developing more sustainable practices. The program has spread throughout Eagle County and was the impetus to Vail earning its Mountain IDEAL certification as a Sustainable Destination.

Vail became a member of the Future of Tourism Council (FOT) (<https://www.futureoftourism.org/guiding-principles>) and the DSP will incorporate the FOT's 13 guiding principles.