

Town of Vail

Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Destination Stewardship and Sustainability Consultant

General Project Description/Overview

In June of 2023, The Town of Vail adopted [Vail's Stewardship Roadmap](#), a community-positive 10-year vision for a thriving visitor economy, that focuses on ensuring that tourism supports and works synergistically with local quality of life, the environment, and social equity. To begin implementation of the Roadmap, the Town of Vail is seeking a sustainable tourism professional to lead and facilitate the overall process and near-term actions for the next 16-20 months. This professional will work closely with the town's environmental sustainability and economic development departments, as well as interact closely with other town departments and community leaders, organizations and contractors.

Vail's Stewardship Roadmap Vision

Vail is the world's premier sustainable mountain resort community, renowned for its quality of life, inspiring experiences for all, and stewardship of nature.

Community Positive

New words have popped up as destinations seek relief from tourism pressures and better outcomes from and for visitors. Many are embracing "Climate-Positive" and "Nature-Positive" goals and results. The new territory we chart with the Roadmap requires a new word. "Community-Positive" signals that the plan's central goal is to deliver positive outcomes for our community.

In Vail's Stewardship Roadmap, the destination defines "community" as follows.

If you are someone who cares about Vail, you are a member of our community. It doesn't matter whether you live here full-time or part-time or if you live somewhere else and work here or if you're just visiting for a while. Our definition of community even encompasses the wildlife that lives among us. If you care about Vail, you are one of us, the Roadmap has been developed for you.

Goals

Five major actions and goals supporting community, environment and economy and must be achieved for Vail to realize its vision by 2033.

I. Make Vail more Liveable

By 2033, double the supply of deed-restricted homes – from 1,050 to 2,100 – for our year-round and seasonal Vail residents and workforce through a collaborative and regenerative approach.

II. Enhance Vail's World Class Experience

Strengthen Vail's year-round appeal as a premier international mountain resort community by embracing new opportunities to attract travelers, while managing demands on community infrastructure and extending the Vail experience to more locals.

III. Invigorate Vail's Spirit

Make Vail a stronger community by empowering place-based entrepreneurship, generating more value from tourism for the community, and creating new ways and spaces for people to share interests, build connections, and enjoy life.

IV. Continue Vail's Commitment to Environmental Stewardship

Reduce 2014 baseline carbon emissions 25 percent by 2025, 50 percent by 2030, and 80 percent by 2050 while advancing community resiliency, improving the Gore Creek watershed, and maintaining certification to a globally recognized sustainability standard.

V. Energize Vail's Brand

Develop a brand position that reflects community values, differentiates Vail in ways that build its competitive edge, and inspires all to care for Vail. Among these is an attribute that comes naturally in Vail: being welcoming to all.

Background

Founded as a ski resort in 1962 and as a town in 1966, Vail is positioned as the Premier International Mountain Resort Community. Tourism is the lifeblood of its economy and has been its reason for being since the day it was founded. Vail Ski Resort is one of North America's largest with 5,317 acres of terrain. It consistently ranks among the continent's most visited and favored ski resorts. Vail's Destimetrics reports show the resort town offers between 104,104 and 115,258 available rooms per month at its 26 professionally managed condo-tel and hotel properties. In addition, a December 2021 report of the town's short-term rental landscape identifies 2,454 vacation rentals, mostly two- and three-bedrooms, with a maximum total occupancy of 15,804. All of these properties collect a modest 1.4% lodging tax that generates about \$4 million a year to fund the Vail Local Marketing District (VLMD). Formed in 1999, the VLMD markets Vail's natural attractions, businesses, and special events, primarily for summer travelers.

Destination Description

The Town of Vail is a premier international mountain resort community located along the Gore Creek and home to Vail Mountain ski area. Vail was certified as a Sustainable Destination under the Mountain IDEAL standard, recognized by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council in 2017, achieved recertification in 2021 and is in the process of applying for recertification with the international auditor, Green Destinations. Vail has 4,800 year-round residents and welcomes 2.8 million annual visitors. Since its earliest days, the town has strived to deliver warm, exceptional customer service. But its hospitable nature has been strained in recent years by masses of visitors who trampled trails, left trash and waste, and ignored local courtesies. Rapidly rising housing costs stoked a growing gap between typical local salaries and the cost of mortgages or rents. With many workers struggling to find a place to sleep much less build a life, businesses are challenged to operate at full capacity and deliver the brand of customer service that has been a hallmark of a visit to Vail.

Despite these challenges, Vail residents give their community an excellent rating for quality of life compared with other U.S. destinations -- 8.2 on a 10.0 scale. Down-valley residents rate their quality of life even higher -- at 8.4.

Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action Commitments

To safeguard and enhance our beloved natural assets, we have embraced climate actions and protections for the Gore Creek watershed and wildlife habitat. Our next 10 years will require dedication to build energy resiliency, address vulnerabilities, and thrive as a sustainable mountain community. To reduce tourism impacts and enhance Vail's value for all, we must lead to inspire more action, locally and globally, and build partnership to expand our results. The Climate Action Plan for the Eagle County Community, which has been adopted by the partner communities, aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 25% by 2025, 50% by 2030 and 80% by 2050. Additionally, Vail's Environmental Sustainability Strategic Plan transportation goal is to reduce the environmental impact of transportation by supporting efforts within the Eagle Valley to decrease total Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) by commuters and guests by 20% below 2006 levels.

General Scope of Work

- I. **Provide oversight, organization, leadership, community building with Vail's Stewardship Roadmap implementation with a contracted third-party sustainable travel organization. The organization will design a "Community of Purpose", focused on training, education and capacity building in order to advance the goals in the Stewardship Roadmap.**

- Recruit and organize local community leaders with the goal of fostering commitment, vision, policies and projects that further the goals of the Stewardship Roadmap.
 - Organize workshops
 - Identify and engage with community members for program participants
 - Serve as liaison with third-party sustainable travel organization
 - Assist with presentations to the Vail Town Council, Planning and Environmental Commission, Vail Economic Advisory Council and Vail Local Marketing District Advisory Council as needed.

II. Stewardship Roadmap Goal IV Near Term Actions

- Sustainable Tourism Behavior Change- measures include tourism sector and outfitter guide training, reduction of single use plastics, promotion of local water quality, transportation best practices to encourage car free visitation, Leave No Trace, etc.
- Sustainability Project Lead
 - Greenhouse gas emissions reductions strategies including but not limited to:
 - Waste reduction measures – lead all related initiatives, including business and residential compost program expansion and recruitment, construction and demolition program implementation, policy initiatives and stakeholder engagement, education and outreach (including social media), data tracking, and compliance
 - Support [Actively Green](#) Sustainable Business Program implementation and certification
- [Sustainable Destination Certification](#) – reporting, organization and facilitation of audits for recertification in the first quarter of 2024 to the Mountain IDEAL standard and related [Top 100 Sustainable Destination](#) activities.

Deliverables

- Action Plan as a result of the 3rd party contract stakeholder engagement process
- Sustainable Tourism and Community
 - Training program - guest-facing sustainability practices
 - Behavior change campaign related to climate and environmental stewardship for residents, businesses and guests
 - Expanded curbside compost program to East Vail with at least 100 households, and increased number of businesses, particularly restaurants, with an additional ten participating in business compost program
- Successful sustainable destination recertifications

Timeline

Up 20 months in length, with the goal of kicking off by the end of December, 2023.

Logistics

Consultant may be partially on-site in the Town of Vail offices for relevant meetings, community locations and partially remote.

Contract Services Budget

Total project budget is estimated at \$226,500. Estimates for contracted destination stewardship and sustainability professional is estimated between \$150,000 and \$166,500 for the duration of the contract.

Contract, Licensing and Sales Tax

Selected Respondent will be required to enter into a Professional Service Agreement with the Town of Vail.

Submittal Requirements:

- A. Respondent Qualifications, including experience and at least two references for similar projects.
 - Qualifications and or CV, organization structure if applicable.
- B. Approach and innovation
 - Provide a brief overview (no more than 2 pages) of respondent and or respondent's firm's approach to the Scope of Work.
- C. Rate Schedule and Organization
 - Provide billing rate(s) for destination stewardship and sustainability professional and or team member(s) if applicable.

Selection Process

The qualified candidate will be selected by the last week of December and will be under contract in early January, 2024.

Proposal Submittals

Responses, qualifications and approach to Scope of Work must be submitted no later than December 20, 2023 at 5:00 pm MST

Proposals and materials may be emailed to:

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Director of Environmental Sustainability

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