



SKAGIT COUNTY, WA

Strategic Plan Update

Solicitation for Consulting Services

Skagit County is seeking proposals from qualified consultants, or a team of consultants, to assist the County in the update of its strategic plan. Interested parties should submit a digital copy of their proposal to Kayla Schott-Bresler, Deputy County Administrator, at kayla@co.skagit.wa.us.

Responses must be received by 5:00pm Wednesday, December 15, 2021.

I. Introduction

Skagit County, Washington seeks consulting services to prepare an updated organization-wide [strategic plan](#). The new, updated plan will provide vision, goals, objectives, and policies to guide the County over five to ten years. Work will begin in early 2022, and the finished product will be considered for adoption by the Board of County Commissioners by **June 30, 2022**. The updated strategic plan will guide decisions about policy, operations, facility planning, and budget – beginning with the 2023 County budget process.

II. About Skagit County

Skagit County is located in the northwest portion of Washington State, between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. The majestic Cascade Range stands to the east, overlooking a fertile valley boasting a variety of agricultural crops. Running through the valley is the wild and scenic Skagit River, carrying all five native salmon species and two species of trout. World-famous tulip fields blanket the valley in the Spring. Large-scale commercial forestry is a vital industry and is practiced on more than 300,000 acres. Agriculture, a hallmark of the Skagit Valley, occupies 89,000 acres of prime farmland and yields more than 80 different crops.

Skagit County has 630 full-time employees and operates under the default form of government prescribed by the state constitution. Three county commissioners, nominated in districts and elected by the entire county, serve as the legislative and executive authority. Seven independently elected officials perform regional countywide administrative functions prescribed by statute; thirteen other administrative departments are led by Commissioner-appointed department heads who report to the County Commissioners through the County Administrator. Three District Court Judges and four Superior Court judges, elected countywide, along with the Court Commissioners they appoint, constitute the judicial branch. An organizational chart is attached.

III. Current Strategic Plan

The current strategic plan can be found at:

<https://www.skagitcounty.net/CountyCommissioners/Documents/2017%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf>

This plan was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 2016. Later, the Commissioners received feedback from elected officials and department heads that there was not enough opportunity to be involved in this process. It was suggested that the County should develop a regular process for updating the plan.

The current Board of County Commissioners wishes to engage in an organization-wide planning process for the County's updated strategic plan to inform departments' strategic work and budget requests.

The organization-wide strategic plan is separate from the County's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan, required by the Growth Management Act and adopted by ordinance, is a local law of the County. RCW 36.70A.120 requires the County to perform activities and make capital budget decisions in conformity with the Comprehensive Plan. By contrast, this strategic plan is adopted by resolution and is intended as a coordination and guidance document for County departments and staff.

IV. Scope of Work

The Consultant will work with the Skagit County Board of Commissioners, Elected Officials, Department Heads, staff, and County boards and committees to update the County’s strategic plan. A draft of the plan will be submitted to the public for comment during the update process. Work will begin in early 2022, and the finished product will be considered for adoption by the Board of County Commissioners by June 30, 2022. The updated strategic plan will guide decisions about policy, operations, and budget – beginning with the 2023 County budget process.

In drafting the strategic plan, the consultant will consider statutory responsibilities, County Commissioner priorities, operational imperatives, and community goals. While the development of a “vision” should not be constrained by the reality of the County budget, the goals and strategies must be usable, realistic, and focused. Some plan areas will focus on priorities to improve the community (i.e. affordable childcare) while others may focus on organizational needs (i.e. workforce retention, facilities priority planning, gaining operational efficiency) or over-arching themes (i.e. climate resiliency, changes in the workplace due to COVID-19). Recent community needs assessments, conducted by Skagit County Public Health and the Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County, as well as the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan, will serve as a jumping off point for policy-related discussions.

The respondent should propose a scope of work to include outreach and exercises to understand the priorities of stakeholders. Additional conversations with County staff responsible for key policy priorities, programs, human resources, and budget will be necessary to inform the plan.

The consultant will guide the development of the plan and be responsible for public comment solicitation and drafting/presenting the final plan for adoption. The final plan will clearly delineate the priorities of Skagit County government with tangible goals. The consultant will also make recommendations for when and how staff will update the strategic plan going forward.

V. Project Assumptions

The respondent should assume there will be some internal staff capacity to assist with the project, including: coordinating with the consultant, scheduling meetings, drafting communications, and interfacing with the Board of County Commissioners. The County estimates its staff will devote a total of **ten hours per week to this effort**, in addition to any review of documents and meeting attendance.

Depending on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings may be conducted in person, remote, or a combination.

VI. Proposal Submission

Proposals may be emailed to the below contact.

Kayla Schott-Bresler
Skagit County Deputy Administrator
1800 Continental Place, Suite 100
Mount Vernon, WA 98273
kayla@co.skagit.wa.us

Submissions must include:

1. Transmittal letter - Submit a cover letter signed by an individual authorized to obligate the respondent to fulfill the commitments contained in the proposal.
2. Narrative – Submit a narrative statement with responses to the following:
 - a. Experience of the Respondent: Provide a brief description of the respondent including length of time in business, services provided, capacity to undertake the project, and relevant experience conducting strategic planning, community engagement, and/or local government projects.
 - b. Project Team Organization: If applicable, describe the respondent’s team that is being proposed for the project. In particular, please describe how the proposed team will be organized to provide the requested scope of services. If any sub-consultants are proposed, indicate who these are and if they have a track record of successful projects with the respondent.
 - c. Knowledge of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Planning: Please describe knowledge of – and experience with – conducting strategic planning with a DEI lens. Please share how you would ensure the incorporation of diverse voices into the strategic planning process, recommended learning processes for key participants, and examples of how DEI may be incorporated into a final strategic planning document.
 - d. Experience Working Across the Political Spectrum: Please describe your experience working with elected officials who share diverse political beliefs. Share how you have successfully created consensus and how you have balanced their respective priorities with overarching community needs and good governance.
 - e. Proposed Scope of Work: Articulate a workplan to accomplish the strategic plan update and ensure successful completion of the project. The workplan should lay out a timeline of critical milestones, deliverables and describe how team intends to interface with key participants.
3. Budget - Submit a breakdown of the proposed number of hours for each portion of the plan development and costs associated with that portion. Provide any additional fees that may be associated with the plan development including travel, copying, subcontracting, and supplies. This should tie to an overall proposed cost for the plan. This will serve as a basis for further refinement and negotiation of costs.
4. Resumes of key personnel – Provide resumes of key personnel associated with the project
5. References – List the most significant projects (maximum of 4) performed in the last five years that are similar to the project described in this solicitation. Indicate the date, scope of services, and total

cost of the projects; and the name and telephone number of the principal client contact; the County reserves the right to contact the clients listed to perform reference checks.

VII. Consultant Selection Process

A committee of County staff and/or elected officials will review consultant proposals. The following sample of criteria may be used in evaluating and rating the proposals. Consultants will be rated on a qualitative scale for each criteria.

1. Project Team
 - a. Experience on at least two projects providing services like those described herein
 - b. Prior experience and ability to work with local government staff, elected officials, and other stakeholders
 - c. Qualifications of key individuals leading the project
 - d. Experience leading projects with a DEI lens
2. Approach
 - a. Clear understanding of project intent and articulation of tasks and approach
 - b. Appropriately scoped project based on timeline
 - c. Awareness of potential problems and providing possible solutions
 - d. Appropriately scoped stakeholder engagement plan
3. Project Cost
 - a. Allocation of costs to tasks and activities
 - b. Realistic cost of services to be provided
 - c. Reasonable fees and overall budget
4. Organizational Capacity
 - a. Current workload, availability and resources
 - b. Capacity and flexibility to meet schedules, including any unexpected work
5. Understanding of Skagit County
6. Other Factors
 - a. Presentation, completeness, clarity, organization, and responsiveness of proposal

VIII. Contact

Please direct proposals and all questions related to this solicitation to Kayla Schott-Bresler, Deputy County Administrator, 1800 Continental Place, Suite 100, Mount Vernon, WA 98273 / kayla@co.skagit.wa.us / (360) 416-1304.

Questions can be submitted any time and will be posted on a running basis to this website: <https://www.skagitcounty.net/Departments/CountyCommissioners/main.htm>.

IX. Timeline

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| Solicitation Release Date: | November 15, 2021 |
| Submission Deadline: | December 15, 2021 |
| Interviews: | May occur at any time between submission deadline and selection date. Will be conducted remotely via zoom. |
| Consultant Selection: | January 10, 2022 |

X. Declarations

The County will not pay for any information herein requested, nor is it liable for any costs incurred by those responding to this solicitation. The County reserves the right to select the proposal that best meets the needs of the County and to waive any informalities, technicalities, or irregularities in the proposal. The County further reserves the right to negotiate a contract term acceptable to the County and respondent. All submission are subject to public disclosure. Any work product developed as result of this solicitation or any contracting with the County will become property of the County.

SKAGIT COUNTY CITIZENS

