



SUMMARY

The City of Olympia is seeking a qualified individual or firm with professional consulting expertise to assist with the development of an economic resiliency plan. The emphasis will be on actionable strategies for building a resilient, inclusive, thriving economy and economically secure residents. Final deliverables include revision of the 20-year goals and policies in the Economic Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan and a 6-year action plan.

The City of Olympia is an Equal Opportunity Employer, committed to a diverse workforce. Women, people of color, and people with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

The successful candidate will demonstrate proven skills and technical competence in economic analysis, planning, policy and strategy development, and community engagement

Submission deadline:

The deadline for this RFI/SOQ is **Monday, February 28, 2022 at 5:00 pm Pacific Standard Time**. Earlier responses are welcome.

Electronic submittals should be sent to:

City of Olympia

Attn: Amy Buckler, Strategic Projects Manager

abuckler@ci.olympia.wa.us

See "Guidelines for Submittal" for more information on response requirements.

A. BACKGROUND

About Olympia

Olympia is the capital of the State of Washington and the county seat of Thurston County. With its beautiful natural setting, easy access to a wide range of recreation activities and strong sense of community, Olympia is a highly desirable location to live, work and play.

Olympia's estimated population is 55,600 people, with an additional 12,500 people living in the unincorporated urban growth area. The city's population is expected to grow at a rate of approximately 2% per year over the next 20 years.

Olympia is an employment center in the area. In 2017, nearly 12,000 Olympia residents worked in the city, while close to 37,000 workers who live in other jurisdictions were employed here, resulting in a total workforce of approximately 49,000 people - the majority of whom are non-residents. Top employment industries include public administration, health care and social services, education services, retail trade, and accommodation and food service.

Olympia has two major hospitals, a regional mall and an auto mall. Along with its award-winning public school system, there are three institutions of higher learning within the area that add to the local economy and quality of life, including: The Evergreen State College, South Puget Sound Community College and St. Martin's University.

Downtown Olympia is the cultural heart of the community. It is home to a thriving arts scene including the Washington Center for Performing Arts, Capitol Theater, State Theater, Olympia Family Theater, a burgeoning Creative District and numerous galleries and restaurants. Downtown also plays host to a growing list of family-friendly events, including a biannual Arts Walk and the world-famous Procession of the Species.

About Olympia's Economic Development Program

Olympia created an economic development program and hired its first Economic Development Director in 2015. In collaboration with other City departments and community partners, the City's economic development program plays a significant role in implementing the community's vision and goals.

The Economic Development Department's work plan has been informed by several local and regional plans as well as City Council priorities. Key activities include strengthening small businesses; retaining and expanding major employers; workforce development; capacity building for arts, culture and heritage programs; Downtown placemaking; and real estate development.

Since March of 2020, efforts have focused on community response and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes working with the Thurston Regional Economic Recovery Task

Force to develop a 2-year recovery plan called Thurston Strong, for which the City of Olympia plays a strong role in implementation.

See the section “Resources” for links to major guiding plans.

B. PROJECT PURPOSE & SCOPE OF WORK

While existing plans provide a strong framework for economic development efforts in Olympia, recent events have highlighted gaps and a need to reexamine previous assumptions about our economic future. Over the next 12-18 months the City aims to develop its first economic resiliency plan. This plan should:

- Emphasize actionable strategies for building a resilient, inclusive, thriving economy and economically secure residents.
- Result in updated 20-year goals and policies for the economic element of Olympia’s Comprehensive Plan.
- Include a 6-year action plan, including the action, partners, timeline and estimates on near term implementation costs.

Major Lens

Community resiliency and equity go hand-in-hand and will be the leading lens through which we develop this plan.

- **Resiliency:** This refers to the capacity to adapt and recover quickly from difficulties, as well as thrive when faced with long-term challenges. Identifying the City’s role - including partnerships, investments and other strategies - in strengthening the economic resiliency of Olympia residents, businesses, our overall community and organization is the foundation of this planning effort.
- **Equity:** The City of Olympia is committed to advancing a community that is just and equitable for all, regardless of race/ethnicity, sexual identity, religious belief, disability or income status. We approach this planning effort knowing that not all Olympians have equal access to resources that help meet basic needs or opportunities to improve their quality of life, and that discriminatory barriers persist in our community. This planning process and resulting strategies to improve economic resiliency should strive to reduce economic barriers and expand opportunities for all community members, with emphasis on Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQ+, disabled and low-income communities.

Focus Areas

While looking through the lens of resiliency and equity, there are three areas the City would like to focus on in this work:

- **Adapting to and Thriving in a Dynamic Economy:** Communities are dynamic and complex systems where change is always present. In this age, rapid technological and environmental changes have major economic impacts on both a local and international scale that are not always easy to forecast. The pandemic has also upended how people shop, work, where they choose to live and their relation to public spaces; we expect to see a shift in long term trends that impact the economy as a result. We'd like to explore these trends further as part of this work and how we can position Olympia residents, businesses, our overall community and organization to adapt to and thrive in an ever-changing economy.
- **Understanding Poverty in Olympia:** In 2019 the City commissioned an *Economic Ecosystem Report* to provide baseline information to guide policy and strategy development. The report highlighted issues of higher poverty rates and lower earnings in Olympia compared to Lacey, Tumwater and Thurston County as a whole. While some factors were identified that appear to contribute to Olympia's high poverty rate, the report identified additional research questions to explore as part of this effort. We would like to better understand poverty in Olympia and identify how the City can act with partners to reduce barriers to and expand economic opportunities for those who face poverty in our community.
- **Improving Community Vitality and Pride:** Olympians desire a community that offers a variety of entertainment, culture, arts and recreation opportunities. We also know that employers and entrepreneurs often choose to locate in cities with a rich mix of activities and culture because talented workers want to live in such places. Thus, we see community vitality as both a benefit to those who already live here, and a way to attract quality employment opportunities and expand on Olympia's reputation as the unique place in South Puget Sound. As part of this effort, we would like to explore ways in which the City and partners can foster the necessary features, as well as a local sense of pride and broader reputation for Olympia as a place of un-matched vitality.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Review & Assessment:

- Review and assess existing demographic and socio-economic data, labor force characteristics, sales tax revenue, other economic data and key financial indicators.

- Gather and assess additional data based on recommendations from the *Olympia Economic Ecosystem Report*, much of which will further our understanding of poverty in Olympia. This includes:
 - Analyze employment and labor market structure: what explains lower earnings for high school graduates and regardless of education?
 - Further analyze labor force participation rates: What factors determine labor force participation and length of employment? Identify who has withdrawn from the labor force and gender differences.
 - More detailed analysis of household family characteristics and needs: the impacts of gender, children/childcare, transportation and cash assistance.
 - Educational outcomes: what makes a difference?
 - Housing demographic analysis.: Spatial mapping of distribution of owners, renters, by status; spatial distribution of income and poverty and relation to the geography of the local labor market, mobility patterns.
- Review existing plans and reports. With stakeholder input, identify what is still relevant for Olympia and what is a priority, obsolete or missing based on current conditions and trends. (See “Resources” at the end of the document for some relevant plans.)
- Identify and document economic trends, strengths/assets, opportunities, weaknesses and threats affecting Olympia’s current and long-term economic resiliency.
- Identify and document economic trends and questions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic that likely have long term effects on the economy of Olympia and the Thurston region.
- Perform analysis to determine impacts—both positive and negative—of economic development in Olympia, including but not limited to, job retention, childcare, and elements related to individual neighborhoods and/or communities.
- Other study may be needed to provide relevant background and achieve requested assessment. The City would like to work with the selected consultant to determine needed areas of study (examples include: a market study, community profile, business retention, expansion and attraction study.)

Stakeholder & Public Engagement:

- Develop and implement a public engagement plan, using the City of Olympia Comprehensive Plan Public Participation element as a guide.
- Gather input from partners and stakeholders from around the community, including traditionally marginalized groups.
- With staff, consider convening a steering committee made up of community volunteers to help guide the process and outcome.
- Engage with the City Council, staff, and the City’s Social Justice and Equity Commission

Identify Goals, Policies and Actions:

- Identify a community vision for Olympia’s economic future.
- Review and evaluate the goals and policies in Olympia’s Comprehensive Plan Economic Development element and recommend changes.
- Identify specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, timely objectives to move these goals forward over the next six (6) years. Establish a clear pathway that Olympia and partners can follow to leverage opportunities and overcome challenges.
- Identify initiatives and best practices from cities around the nation and world that could be applied in Olympia, and outline steps.

Identify Metrics for Measuring Success

- Assist with the identification of key economic indicators to best measure the outcomes of the strategies and actions identified in the resiliency plan.

Additional Considerations

All maps and Geographic Information Services (GIS) data will need to meet the requirements of the City of Olympia’s GIS Data Preparation and Delivery Exhibit (Exhibit B)

C. CONSULTANT SELECTION CRITERIA

The successful candidate will have ...

- Specific experience and expertise to carry out the Scope of Services
- Expertise with regard to economic development, strategic planning, and workforce planning
- Substantial experience assisting other cities similar to Olympia
- Ability to weigh economic and demographic data from research, analysis and forecasting
- Knowledge of future market trends and industry advances
- Knowledge of poverty issues
- Experience with public and stakeholder engagement processes, and proven ability to:
 - Facilitate constructive dialogue among a diverse array of stakeholders
 - Effectively communicate actionable advice about economic development strategies to public and decision makers
- Excellent communication skills to build rapport and trust with public, officials and staff
- Understanding of political realities
- Demonstrated adherence to, and ability to stay on task, schedule, and budget as part of similar efforts
- Demonstrated capacity and capability to perform the work within the specified timeline

The ideal candidate will have ...

- Knowledge of the Thurston County region economic development ecosystem
- Experience, familiarity or connections with regard to engaging Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQ+, disabled and low-income communities
- Experience working with government on poverty reduction initiatives

EVALUATION PROCESS

The Selection process will consist of the following stages:

- 1. Review of qualifications:** City staff will evaluate consultant qualifications and develop a short list of qualified firms.
- 2. Interviews:** Selected firms will be invited to appear for interviews in March (most likely on zoom.) Interviews will be conducted by a panel of City staff. The panel will make a final ranking and will make a recommendation for selection based on qualifications, demonstrated competence, and technical response to the Request for Qualifications.
- 3. Consultant selection:** The panel will make its recommendation to the Economic Development Director and Strategic Project Manager, who will make the final decision. The preferred consultant will be invited to enter into contract negotiations with the City.

The Statement of Qualifications will be evaluated as follows:

- 1. Demonstrated experience of the consultant team, individually and collectively, in developing similar plans or studies and experience assisting other cities similar to Olympia, including examples of projects that have been successfully implemented. (20 points)*
- 2. Demonstration of expertise with regard to economic development and strategic planning. Knowledge of future market trends, industry advances and the issue of poverty. (20 points)*
- 3. Demonstration of success in engaging residents, the business community and other community stakeholders in strategic planning processes. Experience, familiarity or connections relating to engagement of traditionally marginalized groups. Some creativity or innovative thinking in prior approaches as well as the ideas provided for public and stakeholder involvement. (20 points)*
- 4. Demonstrated experience and ability to weigh economic and demographic data from research, analysis and forecasting (20 points)*

5. *Description of why the consultant would be the best fit to accomplish the Scope of Work and project goals. Demonstrated ability to work positively with City staff and community stakeholders. If the applicant team represents multiple firms, demonstrated ability to work well together. (10 points)*
6. *Quality of the submittal, including organization, completeness, relevance and clarity. (10 points)*

D. CONTRACT

The selected consultant will be required to enter into a professional service agreement with the City. The City of Olympia's Professional Service Agreement (PSA) will be the business arrangement for these services.

All prospective consultants are advised that when applicable, the Equal Benefits Compliance Declaration Form will be used on this project. These contracts are subject to certification of equal benefits supplied to all employees.

If the City and the selected firm are unable to agree on the terms and conditions of the contract, the City will terminate negotiations and the next best qualified firm will be contacted for contract negotiations. The City reserves the right to award the contract in whole or in part, if deemed in the City's best interest.

E. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Deadline:

Parties wishing to be considered must email a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) no later than **5:00 pm PST on Monday, February 28, 2022.**

Format:

- Only electronic applications will be accepted
- Must be in WORD or PDF format
- All pages must be submitted as one document
- No faxed or mailed submittals will be accepted
- Limit the application to a total of twenty (20) pages (excluding the cover letter, front and back covers and City of Olympia Equal Benefits Compliance Declaration Form, Exhibit A)

Email and Address Cover Letters to:

Amy Buckler
Strategic Projects Manager, City of Olympia
abuckler@ci.olympia.wa.us

Questions:

For questions about this RFI, please email Amy Buckler at the above address. Questions via telephone will not be accepted.

All questions to this RFI must be received by 5:00 pm PST on February 14, 2022. Questions received after this date may not be answered. All submitted questions will be addressed via addendum on February 16, 2022. The addendum will be posted on the City's [RFQ/RFP webpage](#).

Information Required

Provide the following information in the sequence listed below:

Cover Letter

The cover letter should demonstrate your firm's understanding of the requirements related to the submission and summarize your firm's qualifications and relevant experience. Describe why you are the best fit to accomplish the Scope of Work and achieve project goals. Include acknowledgement of the addendum (Frequently Asked Questions) that will be posted to the City's RFQ/RFP webpage on February 16. Also, include confirmation that the consultant will comply with the City of Olympia Equal Benefits ordinance (see Equal Benefits Compliance Declaration Form attached as Exhibit A to this RFI). The letter should be signed by someone authorized to enter into an agreement with the City of Olympia.

Company Background

Provide a brief firm history including the number of years in business, names of members of the firm leadership, organizational structure and a description of the firm's philosophy.

Qualifications of Consultant Team

Identify all members of the team, including all proposed consultants and sub-consultants. Provide a summary of qualifications of the assembled team and resumes of key personnel who will be assigned to the project. Specify individuals' potential roles and responsibilities for this project and how your team will be organized. Description of prior work experience should be specific to the individual's actual tasks performed on other projects.

If the team is comprised of more than one firm, please describe any the experience of the team in working together collaboratively.

Prior Experience

Demonstrate your firm's prior experience with economic development/resiliency planning. Include similar relevant projects which best illustrates your team's qualifications for this project. Provide details on each project including project name, location and description.

General Approach

Describe your project team's general approach to delivering the necessary services identified in the scope, including some ideas for public and stakeholder involvement. Also include a general time schedule to complete the plan.

References

Provide a list of at least three (3) references for similar projects with summary scope of work, estimated project cost, names and contact information.

Other

Include the signed Equal Benefits Compliance Declaration Form. Provide any other information you deem appropriate and useful in assisting in the team selection.

F. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The City estimates the value of this work to be in the range of \$45,000-\$90,000, and anticipates a 12-18 month process. The City is eager to begin this planning process; we will pursue negotiation of a service agreement immediately upon selecting the preferred consultant, and expect the process to kick off soon thereafter.

The City reserves the right to:

- Reject any and all responses
- Negotiate with more than one consultant
- Waive minor irregularities in a response
- Cancel, revise or extend this solicitation
- Request clarification or additional information on any response beyond that required by the RFI

RESOURCES/ATTACHMENTS

Economic Ecosystem Analysis (Available by request)

Key guiding plans:

- [City of Olympia Comprehensive Plan - Economic Development Element](#)
- [The Sustainable Development Plan for the Thurston Region](#)

- [Thurston County Economic Development Strategic Plan](#)
- [Thurston Strong Economic Recovery & Reset Program](#)
- [Olympia's Downtown Strategy](#)

EXHIBIT A – EQUAL BENEFITS COMPLIANCE DECLARATION

EXHIBIT B – PREPARATION AND DELIVERY OF GIS DATA

Exhibit "A"
EQUAL BENEFITS COMPLIANCE DECLARATION

Contractors or consultants on City agreements or contracts estimated to cost \$50,000 or more shall comply with Olympia Municipal Code, Chapter 3.18. This provision requires that if contractors or consultants provide benefits, they do so without discrimination based on age, sex, race, creed, color, sexual orientation, national origin, or the presence of any physical, mental or sensory disability, or because of any other status protected from discrimination by law. Contractors or consultants must have policies in place prohibiting such discrimination, prior to contracting with the City.

I declare that the Consultant listed below complies with the City of Olympia Equal Benefits Ordinance, that the information provided on this form is true and correct, and that I am legally authorized to bind the Consultant.

Consultant Name

Signature

Name (please print)

Date

Title

Exhibit B

Preparation and Delivery of GIS Data

GIS file formats

Deliver the correct file format for the purpose:

- GIS data (such as feature classes or tables) should always be within file geodatabases (.gdb) compatible with ArcGIS Desktop 10.8.1
- Symbology should be delivered in layer files (.lyr)
- Scripts should be written in ArcPy (.py) compatible with Python 2.7
- ModelBuilder models should be sent in a toolbox file (.tbx) and should not include custom tools
- Rasters should be stand-alone files, not within a geodatabase; acceptable formats include IMAGINE (.img), MrSIDE (.sid), and TIFF (.tif). Format should be agreed upon before delivery
- Map Packages (.mpk) and layer packages (.lpx) should only be used in cases when both new data and symbology need to be delivered simultaneously and should never include basemaps

The City will not accept Shapefiles, PDFs, or compiled python scripts (.pyc) except by prior mutual agreement.

Methodology documentation

Consultants should provide clear documentation of settings used in geoprocessing performed outside of Python or ModelBuilder. For example, when buffering a line, documentation should include buffer distance, side type, end type, method, and whether it was dissolved and on which attribute. When Python scripts or ModelBuilder are used, the script itself should be provided to the City. Within Python, comments should be used to explain the purpose of the code.

Metadata

Every feature class and table should contain brief metadata that include:

- An explanation of each unintuitive attribute. For attributes that are the result of a calculation, briefly explain the process. (Example: LaneScore awards 0 points for a 2-lane street, 10 points for a 3-lane street, or 25 points for a 4-lane street.)
- The date the data was created.
- The name, phone number, and email of the person and company who created the data, as well as the person at the City of Olympia who is the point of contact and will assume responsibility for the data.
- A description of the process used to generate the dataset or the name of the script.

Schema standardization

Naming convention

Attribute names and aliases should be short and easy to interpret. Do not add spaces or underscores. Use capital letters at the beginning of words. In general, aliases should match the field names.

Attribute order

Order attributes logically from left to right. For example, where TransitScore, WalkScore, and BikeScore are added together for a total score, the attributes should be in that order left to right:

TransitScore	WalkScore	BikeScore	TotalScore
10	10	5	25

This is incorrect:

TransitScore	TotalScore	BikeScore	WalkScore
10	25	5	10

Attributes to exclude

Remove irrelevant attributes that are legacies of geoprocessing.

Domains

Whenever an attribute contains a limited set of options, a domain should be used. The name of the domain should begin with a lowercase d and continue with an intuitive name (e.g. dAlleyMaterial). The code of the domain should be a short version of the human readable description (e.g. Code = Grav, Description = Gravel). The field length of any attributes using domains should be 2 characters longer than the longest domain code.

If the attribute is a boolean (yes/no), use a domain of dBoolean with a field type of short integer, the Code 0 has the description of No, and the Code 1 has a Description of Yes.

File transfer format

Files may be transferred between the City and the consultant by FTP.

Files to be provided by the City

Unless data acquisition is part of the contract, any fundamental data needed as the basis of analysis will be provided by the City. All data provided should be used only for City projects.

Symbology

Layer files should use colors that are accessible to people with color blindness.