

# GOLD RIVER

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:**

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

RFP Number: 2024-RFP-003

Request Issue Date: Thursday, July 4, 2024  
Closing Date: 4:00 pm PST Thursday, August 15, 2024

Contact Person:

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## Definitions

Throughout this Request for Proposal, the following definitions will be used:

*“Consultant”* means the person(s), firm(s), or corporation(s) appointed by the Town to carry out all duties, obligations, and services outlined in this RFP. Both *“Consultant”* and *“Proponent”* are complementary in terms of duties, obligations, and responsibilities at the RFP stage, through the evaluation process and performance of the services;

*“Plan” “Project”* means the Village of Gold River Economic Development Plan;

*“Project Manager”* means the Village staff member appointed to coordinate the Plan work;

*“Proponent”* means Economic Development consulting firms responding to this RFP;

*“RFP”* means this Request for Proposal;

*“Shall” “Must” “Will”* means a requirement that must be met;

*“Village”* means the Village of Gold River

## 1. Purpose

The Village of Gold River, located on the west coast of Vancouver Island, is seeking proposals from qualified consulting firms to develop a comprehensive Plan. The scope of the project will include but not be limited to, achieving a framework that is conducive to attracting and retaining diverse investment to create employment, expand the municipal tax base, and create a resilient local economy.

By serving as a decision-making tool, the Plan will inform priorities and investment decisions made by the Village, businesses, non-profit groups, and other stakeholders, and will enhance community well-being, economic prosperity, and position Gold River as a great place to live and do business. The Plan will focus on a community-centred engagement process that will build upon existing assets. Embracing principles of sustainability and collaboration, the Plan will identify opportunities to work effectively with neighbouring communities of Tsaxana, the local First Nation community, and the Village of Tahsis toward a shared economic future.

The selected firm will have expertise in economic development, community engagement, sustainable development, economic resiliency, and community economic development. This RFP document intends to provide a general overview of the work required as part of this project.

## 2. General Submission Information

Submit proposal by email to Michael Roy, Chief Administrative Officer [mroy@goldriver.ca](mailto:mroy@goldriver.ca). Email subject line should read: **Economic Development strategy**

The issuance of this RFP and the acceptance of a Proposal do not constitute an agreement by the Village to pay for the costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal submitted in response to this request and, where applicable, to cover costs associated with the subsequent negotiation process.

Proponents are responsible for reviewing all sections of this RFP and are expected to make all necessary inquiries and reviews prior to submitting a Proposal.

Proponents are responsible for ensuring that they receive any and all addenda that the Village may issue in conjunction with this RFP from time to time.

All proposals submitted to the Village in response to this RFP will become the property of the Village.

All proposals are confidential and will be so treated. The information outlined in this RFP must be held in confidence by recipient firms.

All proposals must be firm offers and valid for sixty (60) calendar days following the last day to accept proposals.

The Consultant will be required to hold a valid Village of Gold River business licence for the duration of the project and will be required to produce a copy of the business licence on or before the commencement of the project.

The Village reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals;
- Decline to go forward with this RFP or reissue the RFP;
- Extend the proposal submission deadline;
- Request more information from any/all Proponents;
- Reject any Contractor or subcontractor proposed by the Proponent; and
- Accept the proposal deemed most favorable in the interest of the Town.

Unless specifically outlined in the proposal, the services or any part thereof may not be sub-contracted, transferred or assigned to another firm, person, or company without the prior written authorization of the Village.

Proposals may be amended or withdrawn by written notice to Michael Roy, Chief Administrative Officer [mroy@goldriver.ca](mailto:mroy@goldriver.ca) before proposal closing time.

Late proposals will be marked with their receipt time at Village Hall. Only complete Proposals received and marked before the Closing Time will be considered to have been received on time. Proposals received late will be marked late and not considered or evaluated. In case of a dispute, the Proposal receipt time as recorded by the Village at the Village Hall will prevail whether accurate or not.

### **3. Inquiries**

All inquiries shall be made in writing, directed to:  
Michael Roy, Chief Administrative Officer  
Email: [mroy@goldriver.ca](mailto:mroy@goldriver.ca)

Any interpretation of, additions to, deletions from, or any other corrections to the Proposal document, will be issued as written addenda by the Village of Gold River. It is the sole responsibility of the potential Bidders to check with the Village of Gold River's website, and/or BC Bid to ensure all information has been received prior to submitting a proposal.

#### **4. Background**

Carved from wilderness in the 1960s, the resource-based community of Gold River is located on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, 90 km west of Campbell River. This area is the traditional territory of the Mowachaht and Muchalaht people of the Nuuchahnulth First Nation. When Gold River was built in 1965, it was Canada's first all-electric town, and the first in Canada to have all wiring underground.

Taking advantage of its deep water and abundant forests, the Village of Gold River developed as a prototypical logging and pulp/paper industry community. Gold River quickly sprang into prosperity and established excellent community facilities. When shifting world markets brought the mill closure on February 16, 1999, a new era was born, the village has capitalized on its idealistic setting among picturesque mountains, lakes, rivers, ocean and forests developing tourism and sport fishing as economic supports.

Today the Village of Gold River is a small community of 1,246. The Village nestles on the western edge of Strathcona Park, British Columbia's oldest provincial park. It is also road access to Nootka Sound. Surrounded by steep tree-clad mountains, nourished by cold, clear rivers and lakes teeming with fish, basking in the temperate west coast climate.

#### **5. Objective**

The Village, through the creation of this Plan, is looking to bring community voices with common interests together for a shared economic vision. With the COVID-19 Pandemic, the current economic landscape in Gold River has identified a need for a new Plan and looks to strengthen existing assets and develop new initiatives to support a framework focused on equity, inclusion, sustainability, and development that benefits the whole community and looks for synergies with our neighbors.

The goal of the Project is to develop a comprehensive Plan that is clear, concise, and easily understood, with implementable recommendations and action items that will guide the Village's decision-making over the subsequent 5-year period. Guided by an inclusive, flexible, and meaningful community engagement process, the Plan will reflect the needs and desires of all members of the community. The Plan should serve as a compelling summary findings document.

The Objectives of the Plan include:

- i) Define the vision, goals, and objectives for Economic Development that align with Council's priorities, reflecting the varied needs, interests, and priorities of the community;
- ii) Complete a community assessment of the existing assets in the local economy, including both private and public features;

- iii) Using the assessment findings, determine the current and future economic priorities of the community, identify opportunities for enhancing the local economy and developing place-based Economic Development initiatives;
- iv) Ensure strategic coordination of the Village's Economic Development initiatives with economic development for the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation and Village of Tahsis;
- v) Create prioritized short-term, intermediate, and long-term action items to guide economic community investments in the community; and
- vi) Develop recommendations and an implementation strategy that will support sustainable development in the community through both short-term and long-range initiatives while maximizing community and regional benefits. These recommendations will highlight the benefits of collaboration in community economic development, economic investment, placemaking, and support growing the economic pie in the community.

## **6. Principles**

The following principles will provide the foundation for implementing this Plan:

- Community Wellbeing
- Business Expansion
- Economic Resiliency
- Placemaking
- Sector Diversification
- Sustainability

## **7. Community Engagement**

The preparation of the Plan will be guided by an organized and community-centred process. An essential component of the project will be a transparent, equitable, and innovative public participation process, that will effectively allow for all sections of the community to be engaged with the process and provide feedback.

Proposals must outline a detailed overview of how the community, stakeholder groups, Council, and staff will be engaged at various stages during the creation of the Plan. Proponents shall outline the tools to be implemented as part of the Project's consultation and engagement. The proposals must include sufficient time to ensure meaningful engagement and quality feedback. The Village strongly encourages Proponents to include an education component in the engagement plan to help the community understand the significance of the Plan and the incorporation of their feedback.

## **8. Scope of Work**

This section provides a list of tasks that the successful Proponent is expected to complete as part of the Project. Proponents are encouraged to present their own unique solution to producing a comprehensive Plan based on best practices and areas generally covered in a Plan document. The work plan should

appropriately integrate the use of electronic technology to ensure effective and inclusive communication and stakeholder engagement in a cost-feasible manner. The major project tasks include:

### **8.1 Outreach and Engagement**

The successful Proponent will:

- i) Develop and administer a robust public engagement process, Communications Plan, and measure community engagement and deliverables. Each community/stakeholder engagement activity should be customized to achieve the project goals and objectives identified;
- ii) Identify, consult, and engage with parties involved by organizing and facilitating in-person and virtual meetings and other engagement activities. At a minimum, this shall include:
  - Village Council, staff, and residents of the Village
  - Local stakeholder groups, including chamber of commerce, local business owners, education providers, and local non-profits;
  - Staff responsible for Economic Development in the village and Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation;
- iii) Meet with the Village's Project Manager and team throughout the course of this Project to finalize project parameters, understand community issues, and to develop the Plan;
- iv) Use creative and innovative public engagement strategies to ensure that the project offers various measures to reach out to those who are less civically engaged, residents of different ages and demographics, and those who face barriers to public access for various reasons;
- v) Prepare all engagement materials, including handouts, infographics, maps, agendas, displays, public notices/advertisements, and other materials necessary for conducting the project meetings, workshops, presentations, Project webpage, and social media content;
- vi) Discuss with staff communication strategies for promoting engagement activities and prepare engagement summary reports at various stages of the Project; and
- vii) Prepare and deliver presentations, as needed, to Village Council at various stages of the Project for discussion and feedback.

### **8.2 Research and Background Analysis**

The Consultant will review background documentations and share details on established standards and practices to contextualize the issues of unique concern to the Village. The review and analysis process will contribute to helping to develop a common understanding of the context surrounding Economic Development in Gold River. This will include:

- i) A review of the relevant plans and policy documents to understand the economic landscape of the Village and region, which includes the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation and the Village of Tahsis;

- ii) Review of the general local trends and best practices in Economic Development, including performance measures and comparison of relevant benchmarks from comparable communities;
- iii) Analyze local bylaws, processes, and regulations and provide recommendations on customized programs, where necessary and appropriate, to support sustainable economic growth and diversification;
- iv) Research economic assets and the competitive advantage of the local economy, with proposed activities and programs, to be incorporated into the Plan;
- v) An analysis of the current and projected statistics to identify gaps in the local economy; and
- vi) Review of available funding and financing strategies that are available for funding future developments and projects.

### **8.3 Define Plan Vision, Goals and Objectives**

Incorporating key Plan principles to establish a vision statement, goals, and objectives of the Plan. In this process, the Consultant will consider best planning practices, community feedback, and the unique needs of Gold River and surrounding region.

### **8.4 Develop Recommendations, Priorities, and Implementation Strategies**

Develop a Plan that includes strategies, priorities, and an analysis of funding opportunities for the short, intermediate, and long-term for Economic Development projects and services. The Plan should prioritize strategies by their level of community impact on employment, social wellbeing, and place-based outcomes and shall include estimating costs to implement recommendations, including startup and ongoing cost.

## **9. Deliverables**

The successful Proponent will be responsible for providing the Village with the following items:

- i) A comprehensive Engagement Plan providing details of the proposed engagement activities, including scope, duration, and resource considerations;
- ii) Materials for distribution to update online and printed platforms;
- iii) Final Plan to be presented to the public & Council, including statistics and other information, in digital format. The final report shall identify the methodology and criteria used in the development of the Plan, detail existing gaps, and identify community economic needs. The Plan will include cost implications of implementing the Plan and a prioritized funding strategy. A separate Appendix with any additional information or individual engagement received will be provided in a .xls format. With the final report, the Consultant shall provide infographics and marketing material to highlight the Plan and main themes identified.

The Village will have ownership rights of all materials that the Proponent will create in this project, including any project-specific information that may be hosted via any digital platform accounts owned and managed by the Proponent.

## **10. Timeline**

The anticipated timeline for completing this project:

- i) RFP Issued: Thursday, July 4, 2024
- ii) Proposals Due: Thursday, August 15, 2024 at 4:00 pm PST
- iii) Proponent Selected: September 3, 2024
- iv) Project Start: October 1, 2024
- v) Project Completion: No later than September 2, 2025.

## **11. Project Budget**

The Village has an approved budget of \$75,000 for completing the plan. amount is inclusive of all Consultant salary costs, general and overhead expenses and disbursements, including costs associated with promoting and organizing community engagement events, advertisements, but excludes GST.

Payments will be made in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Professional Service Agreement to be entered between the Consultant and the Village. The Consultant shall be solely responsible for effectively implementing the project proposal; as such, the Village shall not be responsible for covering any costs incurred toward fixing errors or omissions in implementing the Project Proposal.

No over-expenditure or timeline extension will be permitted without prior written authorization from the Village's Project Manager.

## **12. Evaluation and Selection Criteria**

Staff will conduct a screening of all proposals properly received before the deadline to ensure that they are complete and meet the minimum requirements of this RFP. Subsequently, all the complete, eligible proposals will be reviewed by the Review Committee.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria provided on Schedule "A" of this document. The six key assessment criteria are:

- Project understanding and methodology (35 points)
- Proponent's work experience and past work performance (20 points)
- Project timeline and availability (10 points)
- Local Knowledge (10 points)
- Proposal Quality (10 points)
- Fees (15 points)

Note that the Project fee is only one of the several factors to be considered; as such, proposing the lowest project fee does not guarantee success in the evaluation process.

Where more than one proposal receives the highest score, the Village may request Proponents to submit additional information to help in determining the most suitable Proponent for this Project.

The Review Committee will shortlist and rank proposals in the order of scores secured and determine awarding of project to the Proponent with the highest score.

The decision taken by the Village shall be final. Staff shall notify all Proponents of the decision.

### **13. Professional Consulting Service Agreement**

The successful Proponent will enter into a Professional Service Contract with the Village that outlines the mutually agreed upon scope of work, project cost, and other terms related to the services provided by the successful Consultant.

The Village will have the right to negotiate with the successful Proponent over the final terms and conditions of the contract in the best interest of the Village and the community. The primary objective of the negotiations is to maximize the Village's ability to obtain the best value, based on the requirements and evaluations relating to this RFP. If an agreement cannot be reached between the successful Proponent and the Village, the negotiations will be terminated, and similar negotiations will occur with the next-ranked Proponent on the list.

### **14. Conflict of Interest**

It is the responsibility of the Proponent to identify current and proposed conflict of interests that the firm, or individuals in the firm, has. The Proponent must outline a strategy to effectively mitigate the conflict of interest issues identified over the course of the Project for which this RFP is issued.

The Village reserves the right to disqualify a Proposal on the ground of an existing or potential conflict of interest regarding the Proponent and the intended Project.

The Proposal submitted to the Village shall have original content, prepared by the Consultant (and team) in a fair manner, without collusion or fraud.

The successful Consultant shall work in the best interests of the Village and ensure the successful and timely completion of the Project

#### **14.1 Gifts and Donations**

Proponents will ensure that no representative of the Proponent will offer or extend any entertainment, gift, gratuity, discount, or special service, regardless of value, to any employee of the Village.

## Schedule A: Proposal Assessment Criteria

Assessment Criteria	Description	Score
Project understanding and methodology	• Workplan meets the Project scope and timelines	10
	• Suitable and comprehensive methodology	10
	• Creative, feasible community engagement approach	10
	• Respectful of Village's considerations and constraints	5
Work experience and past work performance	• Demonstrated expertise of key personnel in relation to the scope of this project	10
	• Past Projects (mostly) completed by the same team in past three years	5
	• Recent references from comparable projects	5
Project timeline and availability	• Proposed schedule/timeline and availability to complete the Project within the given timeline (including times that the Consultant would not be available and will be involved in other projects that could potentially interfere)	5
	• Availability to attend in-person engagement sessions and important meetings, when necessary	5
Local knowledge	• Experience undertaking projects with similar scope of this project in BC	5
	• Knowledge on the local community including past experience working with the Village	5
Quality of proposal	• Responds to the need of the RFP (completeness and clarity)	5
	• Quality and organization of contents	5
Fees	• Project cost within budget	10
	• Value of Proposed Services, including cost breakdown by tasks and personnel	5