



# MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

TIM WILLIAMS

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## Content

SCOPE OF WORK	4
SELECTION	9

## BACKGROUND

Astoria, Oregon is located in the northwestern corner of Oregon at the mouth of the Columbia River, within a few miles of Pacific Ocean beaches. It has a population of 9,477. As the oldest American settlement west of the Rocky Mountains, Astoria has close historical ties to the Lewis & Clark Trail. In 1811, John Jacob Astor, a New York financier, sent fur traders to the area and the trading post of Fort Astoria was established. Surrounded on three sides by the Columbia, Young's, and Lewis & Clark Rivers, the steep hillsides of Astoria contain beautiful Victorian and Craftsman homes. Art galleries, restaurants, eclectic shops and the restored 1920's Liberty Theater reflect a revitalized, vibrant downtown. The City has constructed and has promoted a six mile River Walk, forested hiking trails, an aquatic center, numerous parks, boat moorages, the Columbia River Maritime Museum, the Astoria Riverfront Trolley and the Astoria Column. Just outside City limits are ocean beaches, Lewis & Clark National and State Historical Park, Fort Stevens State Park and multiple opportunities for the northwest outdoor experience including, fishing, hiking, surfing, boating, camping and beach exploration.

The Parks and Recreation Department consists of three divisions, Recreation, Aquatics, and Parks/Cemetery Maintenance and provides a wide range of services and offerings to the community and surrounding region. Youth and adult sports, childcare, a municipal cemetery, rental halls, a large-scale aquatics facility, and much more are all amenities the Department oversees. The Department is led by a Director, who manages all administrative and operational activities and directs a full-time team of three managers, an

administrative assistant, five coordinators, and approximately 100 part-time staff.

The City of Astoria employs a volunteer Parks Advisory Board made up of citizens who assist in the direction of the Department and provide recommendations to the Astoria City Council and Mayor, who are ultimately responsible for decisions and actions of City staff under the supervision of the City Manager.

## *MISSION*

The mission of Astoria Parks & Recreation is to provide life-long learning, wellness, and well-being through recreational opportunities and is dedicated to the preservation of natural resources, open spaces and facilities that inspire and bring neighbors and Astoria's many visitors together.

Adopted in July 2016, the City of Astoria Parks and Recreation Department's Comprehensive Master Plan recommends developing an annual communication and marketing plan as well as increasing community awareness of parks and recreational facilities and services. Further details regarding these goals are below:

### Goal: Develop an Annual Communications and Marketing Plan

This plan would assess the Department's various methods of information delivery annually, to reach and maintain benchmarks for communications and marketing established by the Department and community.

### **Action:**

- Measure the impact that communications and marketing strategies have on attendance, program registration, customer satisfaction, and revenue. Use this information to develop a plan annually

### Goal: Increase Community Awareness

Survey and public meeting results showed a strong desire for better delivery of information from the Parks and Recreation Department about its facilities and services. These results tended to occur more frequently in late 2015. A part-time Communications Coordinator was hired around the same time, and by early 2016 there were fewer negative and more positive

responses regarding information delivery, particularly the Department website and social media profiles. Progress is being made, but it will need to be sustained, and there are still many areas with room for improvement. Staff continues to express a need for more effective communication with the public, and it remains a priority.

#### Actions:

- Continue to develop and improve the Astoria Parks & Recreation website, social media pages, and periodicals
- Provide materials in print at key locations such as schools, the Astoria Senior Center, Astoria Library, Chamber of Commerce, and other public facilities, community organizations, and healthcare providers
- Provide communications and marketing materials in Spanish and coordinate with local community groups such as the Lower Columbia Hispanic Council and Lower Columbia Tourism Committee
- Increase awareness of scholarship opportunities, discounts, giveaways and free events
- Increase awareness of the Parks and Recreation Department's operations, amenities, and services

### 29 Percent of Residents Are Unaware of Park and Rec Offerings

Community awareness of park and recreation amenities and programming is a key factor in whether a park and its facilities will be utilized. NRPA's new [\*Awareness and the Use of Parks\*](#) report explores the role awareness plays in driving park and recreation usage and presents a series of steps that park and recreation leaders should consider when executing an awareness strategy. The report also studies the steps taken by two cutting-edge park and recreation agencies to promote greater awareness of their offerings.

## SCOPE OF WORK

The City of Astoria is seeking proposals from qualified marketing and communications professionals specializing in parks and recreation and/or community based promotion.

The following is an overview of marketing and communications work anticipated to be completed for the Astoria Parks and Recreation Department July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020. Note: One-year contract extension optional up to two additional years will be available with both parties in agreement.

### Website

The Parks and Recreation Department page: [astoriaparks.com](http://astoriaparks.com), is a focal point for community outreach and involvement. Consistent formatting and relevant and timely informational updates are essential for the success of the Department

- Weekly content updates and promotion of current and upcoming services
- Adding events to the Events page
- Maintaining event Slider Image on landing page
- Adding press releases to the news and announcements link
- Updating the Employee and Park Partner of the Month bios on the first of every month
- Keeping all content on all pages and sections accurate and reflecting most current information

### Web Presence:

Specific needs for Web Presence or WebTrac

- Recreation activity description written content *coded in html*
- Webtrac also has a slider - promotion should be provided in consistent dimensions compatible with the WebTrac splash page and the Website template for both the slider and thumbnails. (this would be implicit if the above suggestion were implemented)
- Develop suggested upsell management

- Oversee transition from Constant Contact to RecConnect for more targeted communication.

Webtrac is the online registration and rental platform used by the Department for household and individual access to all paid programs. Integration with website content and ease of data sharing is required

- Coordinate with Department staff for accuracy of information
- Provide links and photos for insertion into Webtrac

#### Program Guide

The Department uses seasonal outreaches and an annual guide to provide an overview of services offered and specific information in advance of seasonal events and registrations

- Obtain annual and seasonal information from staff including classes, schedules, changes, updates and recurring events.
- Develop and design guide(s)
- Proofread, provide advance drafts for Department staff review/edits, finalize draft, and facilitate printing through internal or external services
- Distribute on website, newsletter, in print at predetermined locations, and social media outlets
- Ensure all events and listed items are included in all Department communication platforms

#### SWOT Analysis:

Requesting a SWOT analysis for both our social media and our marketing plan

#### Newsletter

A weekly emailed newsletter is a key component to reach users and keep them abreast of current activities within the Department

- Create weekly e-newsletter that is reviewed and approved by the Director in advance for release on Monday mornings by 10am
- Include at least one item or update from each of the Department's divisions and a promotion or special event announcement

- Ensure distribution to existing recipients and expand this reach
- Coordinate with Department Administrative Assistant to update and grow the distribution list utilizing Webtrac

#### Social Media

The Department employs a variety of social media outlets for outreach including: Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter

- Manage all social media platforms and create and update relevant content daily
- Create events for upcoming Department-sponsored activities
- Cross-promote events and facilities of partners and community-based organizations that serve the mission of the Department
- Promote regional and local attractions
- Create original content, including photographs, and obtain appropriate user-generated content of Astoria Parks and Recreation programs and locations for use on social media platforms

#### Branding

The Department's brand as a unique identifier must be consistently advertised and featured throughout all outreach and must be present in external and internal documents and posts

- Define brand of Department and develop improved logos for increased recognition
- Assist with the development of marketable merchandise, give-aways, and contests to grow public awareness of Department's mission and services
- Develop consistent logos and branding to be used across the Department's areas of service to communicate ownership, define rules and practices, and to better advertise Park locations

#### Flyers

Flyers and other print materials are used to capture interest and disseminate information to groups lacking access to digital content

- Develop and distribute flyers promoting Department-related events
- Provide platform for staff to request and participate in the development of flyers and outreach materials

- Flyers should be packaged and made available to a wide audience of groups including: the Astoria School District, Senior Center, Lower Columbia Hispanic Council, Astoria Downtown Historic District Association

#### Press Releases

Develop press releases at the request, and with the final approval of, the Director or staff to promote Department and City related events and occasions

#### Marketing Plan

An annual marketing plan assists the Department in planning and scheduling outreach and provides templates and processes to ensure the reach of advertisement for services is being maximized. The plan will be drafted immediately following the notice of this contract's award, reviewed and approved by the Director no later than October 1, 2019, and presented for final approval to the Parks Board and Astoria City Council by November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Implementation of any and all aspects of the plan are dependent on funding and final approval by the Director. The plan should include, but is not limited to the following components:

- Executive Summary
- Discussion of Branding and Recommendations
- Target Customers
- Distribution Plan
- Special Offers
- Marketing Materials
- Promotion Strategy
- Proposed Partnerships
- Retention and Growth Strategy

#### Bilingual Marketing

All printed materials must be produced in both English and Spanish. As requested, Spanish translations must be made of all online and digital content, as feasible.

#### Internal Communication

Communication must be facilitated internally to all staff of the Department to ensure accurate information sharing and promote culture of inclusivity and ownership of roles

#### Reporting

Regular reporting is key to providing metrics for successes and areas to be improved

- Provide monthly report to the Director on all marketing campaigns and external communications; including, facility signage, branding, social media, email newsletter metrics, print marketing distribution, and all other marketing outlets utilized.
- Provide an annual report to the Director on all marketing related topics and external/internal communication efforts.
- Provide monthly and quarterly Department status updates including administration, planning, marketing, aquatics, recreation, and maintenance to be posted on the Department's website and distributed to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and City Council.
- Draft and provide to the Director an annual department report on all programs and services; including administration, planning, marketing, aquatics, recreation, and maintenance to update and inform the City Council

## Selection

Proposals received by the City will be reviewed by a selection committee. The selection committee will use the following criteria and point system to evaluate all the proposals received.

### CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated and ranked based on proven experience, expertise, and technical merit for the requested services. Added consideration will be given to those applicants who have successfully completed similar projects in Astoria.

1	Demonstrated knowledge of the City of Astoria's Parks and Recreation programs and facilities, Comprehensive Master Plan, annual goals, and the vision and mission of the Department.	30 Points
2	Demonstrated ability to produce and distribute targeted marketing and communication materials and successfully and positively engage the community.	30 Points
3	Educational and professional record, including past record of performance on contracts with governmental agencies and private parties with respect to cost control, quality of work, and ability to meet schedules.	20 Points
4	Evaluation of how the cost of the proposal aligns with the City's proposed budget and how the proposed cost compares with the services and products provided.	20 Points
	TOTAL	100 Points

Proposals should include no more than three (3) professional references

### EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Following the evaluation of the proposals, the selection committee may request an interview and/or demonstration from proposers. The selection

committee will make a recommendation to the Director who will make a final decision.

#### CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

Following the evaluation, interview, and demonstration, the selection committee will recommend a vendor to move forward with contract negotiations. The City will begin negotiations with its first preferred contract at this point in the process, but may meet with other contractors, if contract negotiations are not amicable. Attached to this outreach is a sample contract that will be used, contractors must comply with all requirements listed.

#### DELIVERY OF PROPOSALS

Proposals are to be emailed to Tim Williams, Parks and Recreation Director, [twilliams@astoria.or.us](mailto:twilliams@astoria.or.us) no later than 12:00 pm on June 28, 2019.

RE: RFP to provide Marketing and Communication Services

Any qualification statements received after the above specified time will not be considered.

Electronic submittals will not be accepted.

The City reserves the right to cancel this request in whole or in part at any time, or otherwise reject any and all submissions for reasons deemed by the City that such an action would be in the City's best interest.

Address questions, comments or concerns regarding the project directly to Tim Williams, [twilliams@astoria.or.us](mailto:twilliams@astoria.or.us)