

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:
DESTINATION MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
Tourism Industry Recovery, II

Proposals are due on or before 5:00 PM CDT, September 8, 2023

OVERVIEW

Visit Jackson invites proposals from established consulting firms to develop a 10-year destination master plan for Jackson (Mississippi), with the possibility of one or more updates at 5-year intervals. The purpose of the 10-year destination master plan is to provide a roadmap to maintain and enhance Jackson's comprehensive competitive positioning relative to other desirable business and tourism destinations and to anticipate the future state of tourists', corporate, and resident quality of life and tourist markets. Group meetings and conventions' current and future needs are also a priority.

The ideal consulting firm will have destination and resort planning expertise and a successful record of accomplishment with the complexities of multiple public and private stakeholders. A thriving destination master planning process could result in additional services required approximately every five years to update the master plan.

Jackson Convention & Visitors Bureau, dba Visit Jackson is the official destination leadership organization for the City of Jackson. The term "DLO" shall refer to Visit Jackson. It serves the Jackson community by positively impacting the city's economy through recruitment and securing meetings and tourism activities. Visit Jackson is a quasi-independent governmental agency created by the Mississippi State Legislature. The DLO is funded by a 1% hotel & restaurant special levy tax.

Negotiations

Proposals, negotiations, discussions, demonstrations, and reports may or may not be entered into or required of bidders submitting proposals worthy of continued consideration in the sole judgment of the DLO.

Non-Disclosure

All information about Jackson (Mississippi), tourism stakeholders, and respective businesses and organizations in greater Jackson included in this Request for Proposal (RFP) and all Appendices attached hereto should be considered proprietary information. The DLO requires you to keep this information confidential. The DLO's express wish is to partner with a few select providers. No news release, public announcement, or reference to this RFP or any phase of the project described herein shall be made without the prior written consent of the DLO.

OBJECTIVE

This RFP has been issued to seek qualified firms with a working knowledge of the tourism industry and who can demonstrate the necessary experience to execute a Destination Master Plan for Jackson, Mississippi. Recent tourism research indicates that the livability of communities drives visitation; in short, people want to visit where they would like to live. One of the primary factors in achieving this goal is to enhance the livability and sense of place for those that live, work, and

play in our Capital City. Maintaining and improving our community makes it more attractive to visitors and helps create jobs and stimulate economic growth.

The goal of increasing incoming dollars and people is aligning the public, private, and civic sectors around a shared vision for the future. The more that government, community, and travel industry leaders work together, the better for all residents. It provides a wider variety of jobs, increases the local tax base, helps fund community amenities and services, supports special events, attracts corporate investment and relocation, attracts students, improves the overall quality of life, etc.

The following narrative describes a comprehensive list of services required to prepare a Destination Master Plan, specifically focusing on how Tourism and Hospitality strategies can be included in a total master plan for Jackson, Mississippi. Efficiently organizing the work will be essential to completing the project promptly. While the following narrative is organized linearly, many of the sub-tasks may proceed parallel or concurrently. The scope of work outlines interim deliverables, roles, and responsibilities.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Visit Jackson wishes to employ an outside firm to produce a comprehensive destination master plan for Jackson, Mississippi.

A destination master plan is a 10-year strategic road map to optimize how visitors can benefit the greater local community. The travel, tourism, hospitality, and event industries are a robust economic pipeline that can support a comprehensive and inclusive variety of local people, businesses, and organizations in the destination. The primary goal of a destination master plan is to increase overall visitor spending and attract more investment and talent from outside the community — and keep that in the community. Most everyone agrees that increasing the amount of incoming revenue and expertise into a destination is good; if it is inclusive. That level of agreement is critical because it provides a foundation for building consensus in the region, a key component for ensuring people from all levels of society support the strategies put forth in the plan.

Tasks and deliverables for this project are outlined in (2) two main phases:

PHASE I: DEVELOPING THE CONTEXT

TASK 1.1 – PROJECT STARTUP AND ORGANIZATION

Forming a Plan Working Group (PWG) will be one of the first steps in launching the project. This group should include a range of stakeholders, including but not limited to Visit Jackson, the Greater Jackson Chamber Partnership/corporate community, the City of Jackson, economic development authorities, lodging, hospitality, museums/attractions, recreation, sports interests, the economic development community members, restaurant association & Jackson restaurant partners, educational institutions (public & private), Downtown Partners, Community Foundation, Great City Foundation, Jackson Redevelopment Authority, Greater Jackson Arts Council, Corrections Community, convention center/meeting venues, airport authority, annual & special event community, neighborhood association, bedroom communities, banking & finance community, the Real Estate Association, and faith-based community members.

The vendor should facilitate workshops or listening tours that provide direction for stakeholder roles, prepare meeting agendas, and facilitate meetings, starting with the project kick-off.

Execute a Strategic Kickoff (SKO) work session(s) strategy to effectively launch the project and organize teams, including crucial Visit Jackson staff members and stakeholder group leadership. The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Define roles, responsibilities, and communications procedures
- Confirm a detailed project schedule and document review process
- Identify resources that may be useful to the plan creation process
- Discuss past accomplishments
- Define topics for additional research and evaluation
- Establish project goals and desired outcomes
- Review the Work Group Engagement Plan, confirming responsibilities and resources

The workshop will review relative past reports, studies, and plans and create a memo to summarize their relevant goals, initiatives, and findings. We anticipate reviewing the following document (among others that the PWG may suggest):

2018: Downtown Jackson Market Analysis
2021: Fabric Jackson Comprehensive Plan
2019: JMAA Airport Master Plan
2020: Visit Jackson Strategic Plan
2021: Individual Education Institution Strategic & Master Plan(s)
2019: Downtown Jackson Partners Development Toolkit
2022: Great City Foundation

Additional resources may encompass the following:

- Jackson Redevelopment Authority Strategic Plans,
- City Long-term and Annual Community Development Plans, including the Consolidated Plan,
- Neighborhood Redevelopment Plans & Action Plans,
- Longwoods International Visitor Profile Study.

DELIVERABLES

1. One (1) day of meetings with the project manager and staff, a facilitated workshop with the PWG, and a possible site tour if needed to become familiar with significant attractions and opportunities
2. Detailed project schedule
3. Internal project communication plan
4. Critical success factors, dilemma, thesis, and project goals documentation
5. Summary of relevant past reports, studies, and plans
6. Work Group Engagement Plan
7. Report a plan to the workgroup and Visit Jackson Stakeholders (may be virtual)

TASK 1.2– SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The Situational Analysis aims to describe the current condition of the destination and trends regarding national tourism dynamics, regional/local tourism development and operations, community, economic development, and quality of life initiatives. The result will be an

understanding the macro-level travel & economic development industry and how Jackson fits into it. The PWG will complete the following:

- Integration intelligence is critical as it relates to tourism and how it is impacted by the growth of the destination, including education, economic development (business recruitment), infrastructure considerations, image enhancement, bedroom community relationships, placemaking/wayfinding, and public safety.
- An understanding of existing facilities is essential in assessing future needs. The vendor will collect data and prepare a worksheet of visitor infrastructure items such as the number and quality of hotel rooms, meeting spaces, signature events, airport/air travel, youth sports outlets/sports venues, etc. The DLO staff will be utilized to help complete the inventory. The PWG will evaluate locations of existing and planned Jackson area tourism and hospitality resources in a diagram/map for communication purposes.
- Examine Jackson tourism and hospitality development trends, changes in travel patterns, trends in visitor statistics, duration/time of stay, etc.
- Delineate local travel patterns, visitor demographics, visitor services, infrastructure (specifically those at public event spaces with a high propensity to impact travel), etc., that can be assimilated from existing reports, studies, and plans.
- Define strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) related to Jackson's tourism, hospitality, and economic development sectors.
- Identify what entities, agencies, businesses, etc., are doing relating to visitor services and tourism & economic development (i.e., where are the overlaps and the gaps?)

DELIVERABLES

1. Visit Jackson tourism/hospitality areas, visitor services, and tourism infrastructure assessment and diagram/map
2. Jackson Lodging situation analysis
3. Tourism and hospitality trends, visitor demographics, and travel patterns report
4. Visitor infrastructure inventory worksheet
5. SWOT memorandum

TASK 1.3 –WORKING GROUP MEETINGS AND WORKING PAPERS DEVELOPMENT

The vendor/team will engage the PWG (formed at the project start-up) to draw out their collective knowledge and develop an understanding of their various perspectives. Meetings should be facilitated throughout the project schedule. We will rely on the members and work groups to participate in research, outreach, and evaluation steps between meetings.

Meetings The PWG will facilitate in-person include:

1. Project Startup
2. Evaluating Initial Recommendations and Prioritization/ Review of White Paper Findings
3. Draft Plan Review (corresponding with a public meeting)

One of the tasks will be to direct the PWG to develop Working Papers on several topics that will inform the Destination Master Plan. The Working Papers will be data-driven reports, including current conditions, challenges, and opportunities. The Working Papers are intended to be succinct and may be included in the final report's appendix.

Many topics could be included, but at a minimum, we would like to understand more fully:

- Lodging and hospitality
- Quality of Life
- Redevelopment and economic, strategic plans and projects
- Market position and strategy (including branding, identity, and wayfinding)
- Marketing, advertising, communication
- Placemaking & Wayfinding
- Visitor services and facilities
- Infrastructure
- City Planning & Development
- Transportation
- Recreation, sports, culture, arts, and faith-based relevance
- Historical Preservation & Relevancy
- Institutional and management structure
- Finance and funding

Suppose the PWG or DLO staff cannot produce a Working Paper for any of these topics (or supplementary information is needed). In that case, the consultant team will conduct interviews, research, and prepare the documents as an Additional Service.

DELIVERABLES

1. Three (3) facilitated meetings occurring at project milestones
2. Meeting agendas and meeting notes
3. Working Papers review, formatting, and editing for consistency

TASK 1.4 – COMPETITIVE AND COMPARABLE ANALYSIS

The Competitive Analysis aims to answer these questions: What are competitive cities' tourism strategies, identity, and message? What public investments have been made in these cities? What are their sources and amount of funding? What is their market positioning? Who is their primary market? Where do they see the future of their city? What are their most significant issues, and how are they dealing with them? The result of this analysis will be an understanding of how Jackson compares to other competitive destinations.

The PWG will provide a comparison of the Jackson tourism market to surrounding markets within an approximately 3-hour drive (i.e., Coastal (Mississippi) Memphis, New Orleans, Birmingham, Baton Rouge, Tuscaloosa) highlighting the factors which impact tourism and hospitality infrastructure.

The PWG will profile two cities with comparable attributes to Jackson but competing in different markets. These profiles serve as case studies and provide lessons learned that may apply to creating opportunities for Jackson.

DELIVERABLES

1. Competitive and Comparable Analysis Report profiling up to five (5) competitive cities and two (2) comparable cities.

PHASE II: DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS

TASK 2.1– RECOMMENDATIONS, PRIORITIZATION, AND RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTING GOALS

Task 2.1 provides recommendations for investing in enhancing Jackson and the tourism economy. Goals and criteria for prioritization will be reviewed with the PWG for refinement.

The PWG will develop information for the following evaluation criteria:

- Investment choices will be projected, and their potential outcomes assessed
- Lodging/hotel long-range capital improvement needs
- Facilities and infrastructure improvement needs
- Facility development recommendations
- Economic impact analysis (ROI estimates) for top priority recommendations
- For marketing, funding, and delivery of visitor services purposes, identify partnership needs among industry members, the private sector, local institutions, and neighboring municipalities.

DELIVERABLES

1. Evaluation criteria matrix
2. Goal statements informed by the PWG input
3. Initial recommendations and key initiatives report
4. Short-term and long-term priorities list, refined with the PWG input
5. ROI estimate for top priority recommendations

TASK 2.2- PUBLIC MEETING AND QUESTIONNAIRE

In addition to the PWG weighing in on the priorities and recommendations of the plan, The PWG will meet with a broader set of stakeholders and inform the public regarding the plan's direction. This will include preparing a presentation with optional keypad polling questions to gain instant quantitative feedback; the questions will be provided to the DLO staff to conduct the same online survey for people unable to attend the meeting. This meeting will be scheduled for a time that will minimize travel time and expenses. DLO staff will be responsible for meeting advertisements and setting up logistics.

DELIVERABLES

1. Public meeting presentation materials
2. Meeting planning worksheet
3. Keypad polling questions (1 draft and 1 final questionnaire)
4. Exhibit boards

ABOUT VISIT JACKSON

In 1983, the state legislature established the Jackson Convention & Visitors Bureau, now doing business as Visit Jackson. Senate Bill #3080 authorized the creation of Visit Jackson, identified its purpose, and provided funding by levying a 1% sales tax on hotels/motels and restaurants. These funds form the foundation on which Visit Jackson promotes Jackson as a tourist, group tour, trade show, and convention/meeting destination. Visit Jackson was awarded accreditation from the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) - first in 2012 and renewed in 2021 - and

was the first accredited DMO in Mississippi. DMAP is an international accreditation program developed by Washington, DC-based Destinations International, which is the world's largest resource for official destination organizations, convention and visitors bureaus (CVBs), and tourism boards.

DESTINATION WEBSITE: WWW.VISITJACKSON.COM

DESTINATION BACKGROUND & STATE OF ECONOMY

Jackson is centrally located and Mississippi's Capital City. Its population is approximately 180,000. The COVID-19 pandemic created significant disruption to businesses in the hospitality sector, including hotels, restaurants, and small businesses. Additionally, many tourist attractions experienced sharp declines in revenue and visitation. Jackson residents need to be fully aware of the tourism assets of the destinations; hence, they value the city as something other than a tourism-worthy destination.

TARGET AUDIENCE DETAILS

The following is a snapshot of Jackson's visitor profile:

- Geographical/Location
 - o Urban
 - o Southern
- Interests
 - o Culture
 - o Authenticity
 - o Education

AVAILABLE FUNDS

BUDGET: Visit Jackson will fund this contract up to \$250 thousand. This budget is based on developing the destination masterplan/strategic plan, including focus group engagement, maps, and creative production associated with the final deliverables. The funding will encompass the complete project and associated timeline. Visit Jackson reserves the right to adjust both the budget and related services.

BILLING: Visit Jackson will execute invoicing and payments at the ½ project timeline and final deliverable. All associated project expenditures must be documented with detailed invoicing. All invoices shall be on letterhead from the selected agency with details of work completed at the mutually agreed upon rate(s) or amount in the executed contract.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID

The Notice of Intent to Bid (Attachment 1) is non-binding; however, it ensures the receipt of all documentation related to this RFP. Proposals will be accepted only from applicants who submitted a Notice of Intent to Bid by August 21, 2023. Notice of Intent to Bid must be emailed by the deadline below with the subject line "**Intent to Bid: JXN Destination Masterplan Consulting Services**" to jxnrfp23@visitjackson.com.

OFFICIAL CONTACT

Visit Jackson requests that the proposer designate one person to receive all communications for clarification and verification of information related to this proposal. Please identify this point of contact on the Notice of Intent to Bid Form **(Attachment 1)**.

TIMELINE

This tentative timeline may be altered at any time at the discretion of Visit Jackson and will be funded through federal ARPA dollars for Mississippi Tourism Recovery, II.

RFP available to agencies	July 24, 2023
Final day to submit questions regarding this RFP	August 7, 2023, by 5:00 PM CDT
Questions Answered	August 14, 2023, by 5:00 PM CDT
Notice of Intent to Bid	August 21, 2023, by 5:00 PM CDT
Proposals are due by 5:00 PM CDT.	September 8, 2023, by 5:00 PM CDT
Proposals evaluated by RFP committee	September 18 - 19, 2023
Agencies under consideration may be interviewed. Follow-up interviews will be conducted during this period as needed.	September 27-28, 2023
Agency selected, and contract negotiations begin	October 10, 2023
Work begins	October 16, 2023

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS & DELIVERABLES

Your response to this RFP must be submitted in the following format and labeled accordingly:

- A.** Statement of Qualifications – Provide a written statement of your firm's qualifications for providing the work described in the Scope of Work.
 - 1. Two (2) pages or less
- B.** Tourism Experience – Provide a written statement of your involvement in the tourism industry, specifically with DMO clients, measurement methodology, industry memberships, and resources.
 - 1. Two (2) pages or less
- C.** Strategic Planning and Destination Development Experience – Provide a written state describing your work in strategic planning, destination master planning, research, and analysis.

D. Organization, Ownership, and Management

1. Name, mailing address, email address, and telephone number of the entity contracted with and all trade names to be used.
2. Name, address, and telephone numbers of the organization's principal officers and other owners.
3. Company Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Strategy
 - a. Two (2) pages or less

E. Organization's Structure and Experience

1. The company's organizational chart includes any subcontractors working with Visit Jackson.
2. The total number of employees includes full-time, part-time, and contract workers.
3. Staff demographic breakdown including gender & race, specifically in management.
4. A brief company history, especially related to work in the associated work area.
5. Summary of employees who will work on the account, including their name, title, a summary of their qualifications, and their central role in working with Visit Jackson.
6. Hours of operation that staff will be available and any satellite offices.
7. Experience as it relates to the development of strategic and community masterplans. There should be at most three relevant case studies, including project goals with measurable KPIs and results. An example of creativity should be included in each case study.
 - a. Two (2) pages or fewer per case study

F. Client Information

1. Current clients in declining order of annual billing.
 - a. Top 10
2. Name your two most recent past clients and the reason for termination.
3. Name any travel/tourism clients and their status.

G. Account Gain and Loss

1. Indicate if the agency has had a contract terminated for non-performance over the last five years, with either litigation determining the agency at fault or no litigation due to inaction on the part of the organization.
2. List accounts gained over the last two years and why your organization was awarded the work.
 - a. Less than two (2) pages
3. Three current account references with contact names, email, and phone numbers.

H. Conflict(s) of Interest - The proposer must declare and provide details of any actual, potential, or perceived conflict(s) of interest.

I. Certification Form – Certification Form **(Attachment 2)** must be signed and accompany all RFP Response submissions.

J. Budget – Please provide line-item costs for the project budget.

Note: Visit Jackson's fiscal year begins October 1 and ends September 30th. Please provide a detailed budget proposal of \$250 thousand.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

1. Submittals in response to this request and respondents' participation in the process shall be at no cost or obligation to Visit Jackson. Visit Jackson reserves the right to, at any time, abandon or terminate its efforts to contract for any or all said services without any obligation to any respondent.
2. Responses to this request and other materials submitted shall become the property of Visit Jackson and will not be returned.
3. Respondent shall not contact any Visit Jackson personnel or staff after this request has been advertised, except to ask questions as specified below under "Respondent Questions." Such contact will be considered a cause for disqualification.
4. Visit Jackson may waive any informalities or minor defects or reject all submittals.
5. Visit Jackson reserves the right to reject any submittal if the evidence submitted by, or investigation of, such respondent demonstrates that such respondent or its subcontractors, in Visit Jackson's opinion, is not properly qualified to carry out the Contract obligations or to complete the Work contemplated therein.
6. All applicable laws, ordinances, and the rules and regulations of all governmental authorities having jurisdiction shall apply to the Contract throughout.
7. This Contract is being funded through a grant provided to Visit Jackson by the State of Mississippi as part of its ARPA State and Local Fiscal Relief Fund (SLFRF) allocation received from the U.S. Treasury Department. The SLFRF program places numerous obligations on recipients and sub-recipients, which flow down to successful respondents. Each respondent is cautioned to carefully review the Supplemental Terms and Conditions, which are a part of the sample contract, and to ensure that all responsibilities and obligations are adequately addressed.
8. By executing a signature on the submittal, the respondent certifies that:
 - a. Both the respondent and any of its team members are currently debarred from submitting proposals or entering contracts issued by any political subdivision or agency of the State of Mississippi or the Federal Government.
 - b. No Federally appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the respondent, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
 - c. If any funds other than Federally appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the respondent shall complete and submit Standard Form LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.

EVALUATION & SELECTION

Visit Jackson will establish a committee to evaluate and rate all proposals based on the criteria prescribed **(Attachment 3)**.

SELECTION PROCESS – STEP 1

Proposals meeting all requirements of the RFP will be evaluated by a review committee and ranked based on the following selection criteria. Top agencies may be chosen for Step 2.

- | | |
|--|-----|
| • Tourism Industry Experience & Work Expertise | 35% |
| • Scope of Work, Timeline & Budget Plan including total cost | 45% |
| • References | 10% |
| • Evaluation of Prior Work | 10% |

SELECTION PROCESS – STEP 2

Top agencies may be invited to present (in person) their suggested framework.

The following criteria will rank presentations:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| • Consulting expertise in diverse but cohesive strategies to develop a comprehensive plan | 60% |
| • Ability to illustrate expertise and developmental strategies | 25% |
| • Suggestions to address the current environment and forecasted opportunity | 15% |

SELECTION PROCESS – STEP 3

A contract will be awarded to the organization whose proposal is the most advantageous to Visit Jackson and the destination, considering the criteria outlined in this RFP. Upon completing the selection process under this RFP, Visit Jackson will notify the winning proposer and all other proposers who were not selected. Visit Jackson's evaluations of proposals are confidential. As such, Visit Jackson cannot respond to any questions and/or requests for information about why a company was not selected.

After awarding the contract, the schedule will include a period of collaboration between Visit Jackson and the selected agency to define better, elaborate upon, and update the agency's final Scope of Work and General Terms and Conditions. For the selected agency, an employee will be designated as your contact and will coordinate any materials needed or questions answered with all other Visit Jackson employees.

STANDARD CONTRACT

The following is a copy of Visit Jackson's standard contract template **(Attachment 4)** to be referenced for this proposal. By responding to this request, the respondent is asserting its intent to accept the terms and conditions contained therein unless exceptions to the contract are provided as part of the respondent's submittal.

DELIVERY REQUIREMENTS

Please submit your responses in hard copy and electronic format. All proposals should include a clear, concise narrative. The proposal format is open to presentation style but must include the abovementioned items. It is advised, but optional, to submit seven printed proposals (7).

Printed submissions must be marked "RFP: JXN Destination Masterplan Services" and delivered to:

Visit Jackson
c/o Michael Hogg
308 E. Pearl Street
Suite 301
Jackson, MS 39201

Electronic submissions should be provided in PDF format and sent to jxnrfp23@visitjackson.com with the subject line: "**RFP: JXN Destination Development Consulting Services.**"
Proposals may not be faxed.

Submittals received in any manner not explicitly set forth above shall not be accepted or considered. Submittals received after the deadline will not be considered. The respondent is responsible for ensuring that the submittal is received by the specified deadline. The delivery date and time will be recorded upon receipt. Visit Jackson will only be accountable for timely or complete responses due to mistakes or delays of the respondent or carrier used by the respondent or weather delays. A postmark will not be considered proof of timely submission.

QUESTIONS

Note that all answers regarding questions and requests for clarification for this RFP will be responded to publicly, consistent with the schedule below, to ensure that all respondents have the same information.

Email name and title, with any questions, by August 8, 2023, at 5:00 PM CDT at jxnrfp23@visitjackson.com. No calls, please.