VISIT OAKVILLE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

1.0 Invitation

Visit Oakville invites submissions of proposal from qualified firms for a Visitor Experience Assessment and Strategy. Proposals must be submitted no later than Tuesday, July 26, 2022 to rebecca.edgar@visitoakville.com. Please refer to Appendix A for the full terms and conditions for this RFP.

2.0 Background

2.1 About Oakville

Oakville is a lakeside town in Southern Ontario, located off the busy QEW corridor between Toronto and Niagara Falls. It is bordered by Mississauga to the east, Burlington to the west, Milton to the north and Lake Ontario to the south. Its lakeside, including harbours in the downtown and Bronte areas, as well as numerous parks, trails and attractions, are popular with visitors.

Oakville's population is just over 200,000, and while being large enough to be considered a city, it remains the Town of Oakville. Traditional neighbourhoods like Bronte Village and Old Oakville maintain a quaint, small-town feel, while the town overall offers all the modern amenities and conveniences of a large city. Oakville is home to Glen Abbey Golf Course, the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame and Museum, Appleby College, Sheridan College, iFLY Toronto, Bronte Creek Provincial Park and more. As with most municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area, Oakville is experiencing rapid growth.

Oakville consistently ranks as one of the best places to live, raise a family, and retire, as well as being a welcoming place for newcomers to Canada.

2.2 About Tourism in Oakville

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Oakville welcomed over two million people each year. While most visitors are day-trippers and/or here to see friends and family, there are various other reasons people visit Oakville.

2.2.1 Sports

Oakville has a strong sporting culture with supporting facilities. It is known as the long-time home of the Canadian Open at Glen Abbey and is home to the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame and Museum. Oakville is quickly becoming a curling destination, recently hosting Sportsnet Grand Slam of Curling and Curling Canada's U-18 Nationals, in addition to a number of national and international events hosted by the Oakville Curling Club. Skate Oakville is home to a number of Team Canada athletes and hosts international and national competitions.

Oakville has some of the largest sport organizations in Canada, including the Oakville Crusaders Rugby Club, Oakville Soccer Club, minor leagues hockey clubs, baseball, softball, lacrosse and more.

2.2.2 Business

Oakville boasts a vibrant business community. It is home to three Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) that are destinations in their own right. The town is home to notable corporate head offices such as Ford Canada, PwC and Siemens Canada. The Oakville Chamber of Commerce is a hub for local business and is an avid supporter of tourism.

2.2.3 Events

Multi-day events like the RBC Canadian Open, Kerrfest and TD Song of Summer have traditionally drawn people to town and are more likely to drive overnight stays. With Oakville's proximity to Toronto and easy access to highways and the GO and competitive hotel pricing, events in the city can also draw overnight visitors to Oakville.

2.2.4 Accommodations

There are currently 10 hotels in Oakville, as well as a small boutique hotel and a few B and Bs. Bronte Creek Provincial Park offers seasonal campsites and the Residences at Sheridan College provide a moderate-priced alternative. All short-term accommodations (STA) renting for less than 28 days require a license and are regulated by Municipal bylaw.[1]

3.0 Visit Oakville

Visit Oakville is an incorporated, not-for-profit, Destination Marketing Organization (DMO). It is guided by a volunteer board of directors comprised of industry and local business members who are recruited to fulfill certain skill requirements. Visit Oakville currently has three full-time staff members, an Executive Director, Marketing Coordinator, and a Visitor Experience Specialist, plus seasonal staff in the summer.

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[1] Town of Oakville (2018). Short Term Accommodations (oakville.ca)

3.1 Visit Oakville Strategic Plan

Implementation of Visit Oakville's latest strategic plan[2] began in 2019 with a focus on three strategic pillars: marketing and partnerships, experience improvement and curation, and advocacy. Despite the challenges of the past couple years, progress has been made particularly in the marketing and partnership area.

3.1.1 Experience Improvement and Curation

One of the strategic initiatives identified in the plan is to develop a visitor experience strategy that identifies opportunities and addresses gaps in the visitor experience. This was difficult to undertake during the pandemic when visitation was low and experiences were limited.

4.0 Project Description and Scope

As we come out of the pandemic and begin to welcome visitors back with open arms, 2022 presents an opportunity to undertake visitor experience assessment and devise a plan to better meet visitor needs.

The project is to develop a visitor experience strategy through research, analysis and collaboration with our stakeholders, including various visitor touch points such as hotels, attractions and residents.

- Map the visitor experience in Oakville
- Profile visitor personas and their visitation goals
- Highlight our target visitor personas
- Consider diverse perspectives, inclusivity, and accessibility
- List visitor touchpoints – virtual and in person
- Analyze each persona's visitor experience
- Take the visitor journey
- Collect information at/on each touchpoint
- Identify obstacles and pain points
- Develop 5-10 recommendations for addressing where visitor needs are not being met or could be improved upon.

In the RFP submission, the firm should detail its approach and work-plan for the project. Any elements not identified here but which the firm considers necessary to complete the project should be identified with a rationale.

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[2] Visit Oakville (2019). [Visit-Oakville-Strat-Plan-FINAL-REVISED-1.pdf (visitoakville.com)](visitoakville.com)

5.0 Deliverables

- Project kick-off meeting with Visit Oakville's visitor experience task force
- Stakeholder engagement that may include interviews, surveys and focus groups to identify personas and touchpoints
- Present situation analysis and personas to task force
- Map the visitor experience by persona
- Develop and present a three-year visitor experience action plan to address pain points and improve the overall visitor experience to Oakville.

6.0 Visit Oakville Project Team

This project is being undertaken by a Visit Oakville task force comprised of staff and board members:

- Rebecca Edgar, Executive Director, Visit Oakville
- Tait MacInnes, Projects and Visitor Experience Specialist, Visit Oakville
- Three directors from the Visit Oakville Board

The project team will be available to provide guidance and feedback to the firm. Other staff or board members will be consulted if required.

The Executive Director will be project lead.

The project will be completed to the satisfaction of the project team.

The project team expects open communication with the successful firm which may include meetings or updates via email, phone or online.

7.0 Proposed Schedule

The draft schedule is negotiable based on the successful firm's feedback and proposed workplan.

Task	Date
Release RFP	Tuesday, July 5, 2022
Proposal Submission Date	Tuesday, July 26, 2022
Project Evaluation	July 27 – 29, 2022
Proponent Notification and Award	By Friday August 5, 2022
Project Phase	
Kick-off meeting	By end of August, 2022
Stakeholder consultation	September TBD

Present situation analysis and personas to task force	September 30, 20221
Map visitor experience journeys	October TBD
Present visitor experience action plan	November 18, 2022

8.0 Proposal Requirements

All proposals must include the following:

- Your understanding of the project needs
- An outline of your approach to this project
- Proposed workplan and schedule
- Expectations of Visit Oakville – what you need from us to be successful
- Description of your project lead and team members
- Examples of similar projects including references
- Cost before HST

Shortlisted candidates may be required to make a short (20-30) presentation to the project team.

9.0 RFP Submission Guidelines

The proposal must:

1. Be submitted electronically and should not exceed 10 pages in length, not including work samples.
2. Be accompanied by a cover letter and/or an email signed by an authorized representative of your organization certifying the accuracy of all information contained in the submission and acknowledging your firm's offer of services according to the terms of this RFP.
3. Be submitted no later than 5 p.m. on Tuesday, July 26, 2022 to rebecca.edgar@visitoakville.com

10.0 Proposal Evaluation

All proposals will be evaluated by the following criteria:

	Evaluation Criteria	Weighting
1.	Description of the firm, project team and structure - Company overview as it relates to scope of work - Identification of project lead	10

	• Team members and their experience	
2.	Project Experience • Demonstrate your firm's experience with strategic and action planning with three examples of projects	15
3.	Project Approach and Work-plan • Summarize understanding of needs • Provide a work-plan of tasks and activities that will be undertaken to complete this project • Describe roles and responsibilities of team	25
4.	Schedule of tasks and activities • Schedule • Approximate timing for meetings with *Visit Oakville* team	10
5.	Project Costs and Fee Schedule • Total fee with separate costs for disbursements, mileage, markup on sub-consultants, excluding HST • Expect staff time and fees by staff assignment, task and activities	20
6.	Presentation (presentations may be required of short-listed proponents only)	20
7.	References	PASS/FAIL
8.	TOTAL	100

12.0 Negotiable Terms

Visit Oakville may enter into negotiations with the highest-ranking consultant and, failing successful negotiations, enter into negotiations with the next highest ranked consultant until *Visit Oakville* concludes successful negotiations and a consultant has been selected.

Visit Oakville may use the negotiations process to negotiate any aspect of a proposal, the agreement, or both, that are reasonably required to reflect the terms of the proposal and the goods, services and service levels required by *Visit Oakville*.

During the negotiations process, *Visit Oakville* may request the consultant to submit various pricing options to allow for any additions, deletions or adjustments that *Visit Oakville* may

require. It is not the intent of *Visit Oakville* to negotiate lower pricing nor is it the intent of *Visit Oakville* to allow for new or significantly altered proposals, but rather to ensure *Visit Oakville* has the flexibility it needs to arrive at a final Agreement.

Visit Oakville reserves the right to negotiate modifications to any proposal with the consultant, without obligation to communicate, negotiate, or review similar modifications with other consultants.

Notwithstanding any negotiations between *Visit Oakville* and a consultant, the proposals of all consultants will remain valid and irrevocable until the expiration of the Irrevocable Time Period.

12.0 Consultant Selection

Consultant selection will be the sole responsibility of *Visit Oakville* and will be undertaken at the sole discretion of the *Visit Oakville* in accordance with its selection criteria.

Proposals may be eliminated from consideration at *Visit Oakville's* discretion for any reason, but at a minimum, including but not limited to:

- The RFP/REQUESTED OUTLINE is substantially incomplete

- The proposal is not responsive to the objectives and requirements of this RFP

- There is evidence of financial instability of the firm or team

- The RFP is inconsistent with *Visit Oakville's* policies or requirements

- A conflict of interest exists

We thank you for your interest in the project.