



REGIONAL WAYFINDING STRATEGIC PLAN REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge

Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge Regional Destination Management Organization (RDMO) is seeking a qualified firm to complete a comprehensive Regional Wayfinding Strategic Plan to optimize visitor flow, navigability, safety, and regional cohesion. Phase 1 of this project includes conducting an assessment of existing wayfinding to develop a region-wide Wayfinding Strategic Plan in the form of a gap assessment with an index of recommended priority implementation projects. This RFP is for Phase 1 only. In Phase 2, the RDMO will work with local jurisdictions to fund and implement recommended signage as identified in the Regional Wayfinding Strategic Plan.

Background

Oregon's Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Region holds some of the state's most-loved natural wonders, including Mt. Hood, Oregon's tallest peak, Multnomah Falls and the waterfall corridor of the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area, a multitude of trails, farms, year-round recreation, heritage sites, and distinct communities with unique tourism needs. Each year, the region sees 4 million overnight visitors, and 20 million day visitors including many from the Portland Metro area.

The Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Region is a large geographic area with a patchwork of land management and government agencies. It encompasses parts of the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area, the Historic Columbia River Highway, many Oregon State Parks, the Mt. Hood National Forest, and the Mt. Hood Scenic Byway. The region intersects with four counties (Hood River, part of Clackamas, part of Wasco, and part of Multnomah) and the cities of The Dalles, Mosier, Hood River, Cascade Locks, Troutdale, Sandy, Boring, Estacada, and Government Camp. Major traffic routes include I-84, Historic US Highway 30, US Highway 26, and Oregon Routes 35, 212, 224, and 211.

Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge is the RDMO, funded through a portion of state Transient Lodging Tax. Our mission is to use responsible visitor management to build awareness for the region as a multi-day, year-round travel destination that benefits all communities. Our work includes visitor management, destination stewardship, and strategic marketing to optimize tourism's benefits to our communities. Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge is a program run under the Clackamas County Office of Tourism, and works closely with the five Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) in the region:

- Explore The Dalles
- Visit Hood River
- Visit Cascade Locks
- Explore Troutdale
- Mt. Hood Territory (Clackamas County Office of Tourism)

Given the large geographic area and complex patchwork of agencies involved in land management and community planning, Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge will undertake a Regional Wayfinding Strategic Plan focused on identifying gaps in existing systems. Effective wayfinding gives visitors confidence while traveling throughout a destination, as well as promotes safety and economic vitality. The Plan should meet the following three main goals:

1. Direct visitor flow, creating strong links between multiple downtown jurisdictions and travel corridors to optimize the economic impact of tourism throughout the region
2. Enhance navigability and safety with a focus on connecting rural roadways and recreation sites to major thoroughfares
3. Strengthen regional identity by creating cohesion between wayfinding systems in the Gorge and Mt. Hood

In order to meet these goals, Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge is seeking a qualified firm to create a comprehensive Regional Wayfinding Strategic Plan. This RFP is for Phase 1 of the project, considering the region's wayfinding as a holistic system and identifying key implementation projects. After completion of Phase 1, Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge plans to utilize the Regional Wayfinding Plan document to work with appropriate agencies/municipalities to help fund and implement key signage projects identified in the Plan.

Scope of Work

The contractor shall work closely with Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge staff to create a Regional Wayfinding Strategic Plan that includes an inventory of existing wayfinding systems, identifies key wayfinding opportunities and signage gaps, and provides recommendations for implementation of priority projects. The inventory should be informed by asset mapping, input from key stakeholders, and must consider existing agency signage regulations such as those in the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area. Key engagement partners in the region include: DMOs, land management organizations, transportation providers, local municipalities, Tribal groups, and others.

The final deliverable of this work will be a comprehensive Regional Wayfinding Strategic Plan. The Plan should consider the region as a whole, weaving together the patchwork of land management units and municipalities to outline a more cohesive visitor experience. By identifying gaps in the existing wayfinding landscape, the Plan will work to enhance desired visitor flow journeys to meet the goals of safety, cohesion, and economic vitality.

In order to work toward wayfinding system goals, the Plan should detail key locations that are missing wayfinding opportunities, and provide a prioritized index of recommendations for additive signage to enhance navigation throughout the region. Due to the many overlapping management areas and existing signage specifications, branding work is not included in this scope of work. Rather, the project index should provide recommendations for the type of information included in each sign, and its placement as part of a larger navigational system.

The completed document should serve as a guide to future project implementation, helping to prioritize regional investments to optimize the impacts to our communities and the safety, credibility, and vitality of our destination.

Budget & Timeline

The total budget for this contract is not to exceed \$80,000. Contract start date shall be between March 1, 2026 and April 15, 2026 (dependent on procurement processing timelines), with all work to be completed no later than May 30, 2027.

Submitting a Proposal

Proposals should address all required project elements detailed in the scope above. Additional project elements may be included but are not required. Please include in your response:

1. Detail your approach to this project. Please ensure your response includes the following:
 - a. Overall project methodology
 - b. Partner engagement plan
 - c. Client communication
 - d. Final deliverables
2. Proposed timeline
3. Itemized budget and suggested payment schedule
4. Team members assigned to this project and their relevant experience
5. 2-3 samples of similar work, regional examples preferred
6. 2 references

To submit a proposal, email all application materials to Ithaca Janzen at ithaca@hood-gorge.com. Proposals are due by 5pm Wednesday, January 28, 2026.