



July 12, 2023

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
Tourism Research and Strategic Planning Firm

San Diego Tourism Authority

2024 Tourism Master Plan Update

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a major economic driver and San Diego's number one service export. The travel sector has a far larger economic footprint than many realize. More than transportation and lodging, visitors to San Diego generate spending at restaurants, museums, parks, and retailers throughout the region. Tourism spending is also amplified through a ripple effect as tourism employees spend their paychecks in other sectors of the regional economy and as vendors and suppliers receive contracts from travel businesses.

Travelers boost the regional economy, stimulate job growth, and generate local tax revenues. Residents enjoy the benefits of the tourism infrastructure and have civic pride in living in a top travel destination. A strong tourism industry means a strong San Diego.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, California's travel and tourism businesses were declared nonessential businesses and were shut down as a result. The gradual re-opening of the tourism sector happened in waves, with leisure travel, attractions such as zoos and aquariums, and restaurants and transportation among the first sectors to re-open. By July 2021, large-scale events and meetings re-opened for business. As a result of these closures, San Diego's tourism industry lost 20 years of economic gains in visitors, visitor spending, tax revenues, and employment. The region has been rebuilding the key pillars of the economy over the past three years.

Key Indicator:

	2019 pre-Pandemic	2022 post-Pandemic
Total Visitors to San Diego	35.1 million	28.8 million
Total Visitor Spending	\$11.6 billion	\$13.6 billion
Total Leisure & Hospitality Sector Employment	198,400 (Dec 2019)	200,700 (Dec 2022)
San Diego County Hotel Occupancy and ADR	76.6% \$166	72.6% \$205
Total Enplanements at SAN	12.6 million	10.8 million



As stewards of the San Diego tourism industry, the San Diego Tourism Authority has been awarded a grant through Visit California’s U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) funds to develop an updated Destination Master Plan update to guide post-pandemic recovery and ensure a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable future for the community.

San Diego Tourism Authority

The San Diego Tourism Authority (SDTA) is the sales and marketing engine for the San Diego region. The organization is recognized as San Diego’s umbrella Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), which monitors the health of the tourism industry and promotes the health of the tourism industry and all areas of the region. Incorporated in 1954, the SDTA is a private, not-for-profit 501(C)(6) member organization comprised of over 900 businesses and is governed by a 19-member board of directors composed of industry and non-industry representatives.

The SDTA serves the local community by stimulating inbound travel to San Diego. The annual operating budget includes private source revenue (primarily in the form of member dues and advertising) and funds from the San Diego Tourism Marketing District (self-assessed by hotels located within the City of San Diego as a percentage of room revenues). Listed below are the vision and mission of the organization along with its diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility statement:

Vision

Leading San Diego to be the most desirable destination.

Mission

To drive visitor demand to economically benefit the San Diego Region.

Our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Statement

In San Diego, all are welcome, and differences are celebrated. The San Diego Tourism Authority is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility to promote unique San Diego experiences and elevate voices in the community that speak to travelers from around the world. We aim to be a thought leader in our industry, city, and community.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2014-2015, the San Diego Tourism Marketing District (SDTMD) developed a 20-year Destination Master Plan, [“Experience San Diego: Destination 2040”](#). The plan became the roadmap to guide SDTMD’s investment in sales and marketing programs to stimulate hotel room night demand and lodging revenues. The SDTA is the largest recipient of SDTMD funding and has implemented programs in accordance with the recommended strategies.



Since 2015, technological advances, social changes and the COVID-19 pandemic have radically reshaped the travel industry. The SDTA solicits a vendor to research, prepare, and design an update to the Destination Master Plan to include resident sentiment, visitor insights, considerations for sustainable tourism, tourism sector resiliency, and more. Inputs to the plan include a new 2023 Leisure & Hospitality Employment Sector Study, 2022 Destination Analysts San Diego Visitor Profile Study, YTD Visitor Industry Performance Analysis, and a 2023 Tourism Diversity Matters Research Analysis. The Research and Strategic Planning consultant will work with SDTA staff and the Communications and Community Engagement consultant to shape key messaging related to the Destination Master Plan and enlist engagement and feedback with community stakeholders including San Diego residents.

This Request for Proposal seeks a consultant/agency partner to develop an update with a 10-year horizon for the San Diego Destination Master Plan. The selected contractor will develop and design a 10-year Destination Master Plan that evaluates the new tourism industry landscape and helps the SDTA to better educate the public on our region's tourism industry future.

This work should help SDTA:

- Establish stronger links between tourism and its economic impact in the San Diego region, while identifying opportunities to mitigate negative impacts between tourism and local communities.
- Facilitate the ability for the SDTA to strengthen brand perceptions for San Diego as a tourism destination.
- Establish a sustainable tourism roadmap to support safe, clean, and responsibly managed destinations.
- Encourage destination development that maximizes diversity, equity, and inclusion for all visitors.
- Develop priority recommendations for infrastructure projects that support the tourism sector, in addition to advocacy recommendations for projects in process.
- Strengthen workforce development initiatives for the tourism industry and industries surrounding tourism.

BACKGROUND – STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

It is the intention of SDTA to contract with a firm to develop a comprehensive destination development strategy. SDTA estimates that the scope of work will be completed in an 8-month timeframe. We aim to select a firm and begin the process in September 2023. If deemed appropriate, SDTA could extend the agreement to include work on the implementation of the plan. This decision would not be made until after the plan has been designed and presented.



SCOPE OF SERVICES

1. Destination Assessment and Analysis Update
 - Evaluate current products, resources, experiences and identify gaps/opportunities with current offerings, destination experience and infrastructure.
 - Identify new product/experience opportunities and infrastructure needs; including arts, culture, sports tourism, venue development, transportation development, etc.
 - Provide an assessment of San Diego tourism's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the new landscape and amongst .

2. Destination Master Plan Update
 - Develop a revised 10-Year Destination Master plan, building from the previous plan and incorporating new research findings.
 - Provide a clear roadmap for SDTA's investment in sales and marketing programs to stimulate hotel room night demand and lodging revenues.
 - Include actionable recommendations for enhancing brand perception, promoting sustainable tourism, maximizing diversity and inclusion, supporting workforce development, and event programming.
 - Integrate priority recommendations for infrastructure projects that support tourism growth and advocacy recommendations for ongoing projects.

3. Community Engagement and Resident Research:
 - Collaborate with SDTA staff and the Communications and Community Engagement consultant to shape key messaging related to the Master Plan.

 - Develop a comprehensive community engagement strategy to involve stakeholders, including residents, local businesses, and community organizations in the planning process.

 - Conduct public meetings, workshops, or forums to gather feedback on resident attitudes towards tourism.

 - Collaborate with the Communications and Community Engagement consultant to develop key message points for communications materials such as brochures, presentations, and reports to educate stakeholders and the public about the tourism industry's future and the benefits of the Destination Master Plan.



4. Sustainable Tourism and Workforce Development:
 - Provide recommendations for conducting a Sustainable Tourism audit in San Diego to preserve environmental and cultural resources.
 - Prepare recommendations for tourism sector resiliency and crisis management.
 - Evaluate strengths and weaknesses within workforce development and identify opportunities.

5. Neighborhood Tourism Development and Cultural Appreciation:
 - Review current City of San Diego initiatives including the new Creative Cities and the World Design Capital San Diego Tijuana 2024 initiatives to build cultural tourism opportunities for San Diego's "City of Villages".
 - Provide recommendations on how the SDTA can help support, promote, and preserve San Diego's rich cultural diversity.
 - Consider existing master plans and publicly noticed projects in relevant areas (Port of San Diego, Chula Vista and the South Bay, San Diego/Tijuana border region, Snapdragon Stadium, Gaslamp Quarter, Little Italy, and beach communities, for example.)

INPUTS

SDTA staff will be able to provide the Research and Strategic Planning consultant with a variety of research insights including the following:

- 2023 Leisure & Hospitality Employment Sector Study
- 2022 Destination Analysts San Diego Visitor Profile Study
- Visitor Industry Performance Analysis
- 2024 Tourism Diversity Matters Analysis

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. Develop a revised 10-Year Destination Master Plan, building from the 2015 version while incorporating new findings from the research and analysis phase.
2. Provide new insights to effectively communicate the economic impact of the tourism industry and role that the tourism sector plays in the broader regional economy.
3. Include actionable recommendations for enhancing brand perception, promoting sustainable tourism, maximizing diversity and inclusion, supporting workforce development, and advocating for infrastructure investments that support tourism sector growth.



4. Develop and implement a comprehensive community engagement strategy to involve stakeholders, including residents, local businesses, and community organizations, in the planning process.
5. Provide design services or support for the Master Plan update that adhere to SDTA branding guidelines and capture the essence of San Diego's brand identity.

SCOPE OF WORK

This request seeks to identify the tools, format, timeframe, strategy and budget the proposer would use to deliver a successful scope of work during Fiscal Year 2024. All tasks must be completed by April 30, 2024.

BUDGET

The current budget for this project must not exceed \$575,000.

FUNDING

This project is funded through a grant provided by Visit California through an award under Federal Grant Award 07-79-07802 by the Economic Development Administration under §703 and 209 of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended, 42 U.S.C. §§ 3149 and 3233. As a result, all vendors awarded contracts must be willing to abide by all required provisions of federal laws and regulations, including without limitation 2 CFR §§200.326 and 200.327.

In accordance with 2 CFR 170.200 (Federal awarding agency reporting requirements), Federal awarding agencies are required to publicly report Federal awards that equal or exceed the micro-purchase threshold (\$10,000) and publish the required information on a public-facing, OMB-designated, governmentwide website and follow OMB guidance to support Transparency Act implementation.

San Diego Tourism Authority hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, minority business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, national origin or any other basis protected by applicable law.



Any Contract awarded through this RFP/RFQ is dependent on a federal grant award, the San Diego Tourism Authority reserves the right to reduce the level of services to match reduced levels of funding, or at its option, may terminate this Contract, should the funding source no longer be available, or the amount be reduced.

BID DELIVERABLES

1. Scope of work narrative description with an Executive Summary – please explain how you would recommend approaching this assignment including technical approach, proposed process, planning timeline and proposed budget.
2. Overview of consulting firm background and services (not to exceed one page).
3. Biographies of key staff members that would be assigned to the SDTA account (not to exceed half-page per person).
4. Qualifications/Experience background in tourism and destination master planning.
5. Qualifications/Experience/Relevant background in sustainable tourism initiatives.
6. 3 Case Studies, format of your choosing.
7. Standard hourly rate sheet by function and proposed 2023 and 2024 project rate sheet.
8. Project budget broken down by functions and hours; estimated out-of-pocket expenses; and proposed billing structure (by milestone achievement; monthly hours; or other.)
9. Indicate if you charge any mark-up in the purchase or management of outside products or services such as research.
10. Three client references.



RESPONSE

Please respond with your qualifications, portfolio, and proposed hourly rate sheet by the end of the day Friday, August 18. Proposals can be sent electronically or delivered via courier/FED EX. Please, no phone calls.

RFP SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

DEADLINE	RFP EVENT
July 12	RFP public announcement
August 4	Deadline for firms to submit questions in writing
August 18	Deadline for firms to submit proposal
August 21	Committee review begins
Week of August 28	Finalists selected and notified
Weeks of August 28 – September 4	SDTA conducts interviews (if needed; virtual will be available)
September 8	Selected proposer announced
September 15	Estimated commencement date of new contract

RESPOND BY AUGUST 18 TO:

Gaby Arroyo, Administrative Assistant
 San Diego Tourism Authority
 750 B Street, Suite 1500
 San Diego, CA 92101
 garroyo@sandiego.org

All costs for developing proposals are entirely the responsibility of the proposer and shall not be reimbursed by SDTA.



PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Following receipt of proposals, the review committee will select finalists based on the following criteria:

1. Experience and Expertise: 25%
 - a. Demonstrated experience in conducting research and developing strategic plans in the tourism industry.
 - b. Expertise in analyzing tourism trends, economic impact, community relations, and sustainable tourism practices.
 - c. Familiarity with workforce development initiatives and diversity, equity, and inclusion in the tourism sector.
 - d. Knowledge of the San Diego region and its unique tourism landscape.
2. Methodology and Approach: 25%
 - a. Clarity and comprehensiveness of proposed research methodology.
 - b. Sound approach to updating the Master Plan, including the development of strategic initiatives, goals, and objectives aligned with project objectives.
 - c. Ability to provide actionable recommendations for sustainability, and resiliency in the tourism industry.
 - d. Strong community engagement strategy, including plans for stakeholder involvement and communication.
3. Project Timeline and Deliverables: 20%
 - a. Achievable timeline for the research, Destination Master Plan update, and community engagement phases.
 - b. Clearly defined deliverables, including interim progress reports, draft, and final versions of the Master Plan, and communications materials.
4. Budget: 15%
 - a. Reasonable proposed budget in relation to scope of work and expected deliverables.
5. Past Performance and References: 15%
 - a. Demonstrated track record of successful projects in the tourism industry, specifically related to research, strategic planning, and community engagement.
 - b. Positive client references.

The committee reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or accept what is, in its judgment, the firm which is best suited for the project(s) based on the proposal which best demonstrates the criteria listed above. If required, finalists might be asked to travel to San Diego, at their own expense, to conduct an in-person presentation. Specifics about the presentation will be shared with the finalists at the time of their notification. The winning agency(s) shall be selected based on a combination of the proposal and their presentation.



This Request for Proposal in no way commits the committee to award a contract, to pay any costs in preparation of a proposal, or to contract for the work offered. Selection shall be made of one or more agencies deemed to be fully qualified and best suited among those submitting proposals based on the evaluation factors stated above.

PLEASE NOTE:

SDTA Contractor Standards

All contractors must be in compliance with Contractor Standards established by both the SDTA and the City of San Diego.

Contractors must certify compliance with the city's standards regarding:

- Equal opportunity outreach
- Fair employment practices
- Drug free workplace
- Living wage ordinance (unless exempt from its provisions)

If the execution of work to be performed by your company requires hiring subcontractors, you must clearly state this in your proposal. Sub-contractors must be identified and must follow compliance standards; the work they will perform must be defined. In your proposal, please provide the subcontractor's name, address, and EIN. The San Diego Tourism Authority will not refuse a proposal based upon the use of subcontractors; however, we retain the right to refuse the sub-contractors you have selected.

The provisions of this RFP and the contents of the successful responses are considered available for inclusion in final contractual obligations.

STATEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE

SDTA receives the bulk of its funding through a services agreement with the San Diego Tourism Marketing District (SDTMD). SDTA and the SDTMD are separate and independent organizations. Prospective contractors receiving this Request for Proposal are hereby informed of the independent status of the SDTA and the SDTMD and that the selected Contractor, along with SDTA, will retain this independent status in the performance of its duties and obligations arising from a subsequent agreement or contract between the Contractor and SDTA. Nothing in this Request for Proposal should be construed to imply that funding obtained through the services agreement between the SDTA and the SDTMD will be used to satisfy SDTA's obligations arising from the purchase of goods or services contemplated or described in this Request for Proposal.

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING LOWER TIER COVERED TRANSACTIONS

Applicants should review the instructions for certification included in the regulations before completing this form. Signature on this form provides for compliance with certification requirements under 15 CFR Part 28, "New Restrictions on Lobbying."

LOBBYING

As required by Section 1352, Title 31 of the U.S. Code, and implemented at 15 CFR Part 28, for persons entering into a grant, cooperative agreement or contract over \$100,000 or a loan or loan guarantee over \$150,000 as defined at 15 CFR Part 28, Sections 28.105 and 28.110, the applicant certifies that to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, 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.

(2) If any funds other than Federal 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 undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure occurring on or before October 23, 1996, and of not less than \$11,000 and not more than \$110,000 for each such failure occurring after October 23, 1996.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

In any 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 commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.

Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure occurring on or before October 23, 1996, and of not less than \$11,000 and not more than \$110,000 for each such failure occurring after October 23, 1996.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the applicant will comply with the above applicable certification.

NAME OF APPLICANT

AWARD NUMBER AND/OR PROJECT NAME

PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

SIGNATURE

DATE