

## 1. GENERAL

### **Purpose:**

The Municipality of Victoria County Tourism and Recreation Department is seeking proposals from qualified consultants with expertise in tourism wayfinding, visitor information dissemination, and navigation strategies. The selected consultant will develop a comprehensive strategy for Victoria County Tourism and Recreation, incorporating best practices and innovative approaches.

For the purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP), wayfinding encompasses all methods through which visitors receive information about tourism assets upon arrival and as they explore the Municipality of Victoria County. The strategy should address how visitors navigate the community and its various attractions. Consideration should be given to multiple wayfinding approaches, including but not limited to the visitor information centre, signage within Victoria County, and directional signage beyond the municipal boundaries.

### **Objectives of the Strategy:**

- Strengthen the economic benefits of tourism by increasing awareness of attractions, experiences, and assets across Victoria County.
- Establish an intuitive, user-friendly system to help visitors locate and explore destinations and points of interest within and between communities.
- Elevate Victoria County's reputation as a premier tourist destination by driving traffic to businesses and tourism assets while showcasing the region's unique appeal.
- Utilize innovative and engaging wayfinding tools to encourage both visitors and residents to explore and discover Victoria County.

### **Strategy Requirements:**

- Incorporate diverse wayfinding methods for both visitor information access and tourism asset navigation.
- Offer a forward-thinking, adaptable approach to remain effective in the future.
- Consider accessibility needs and ensure inclusivity for visitors from diverse backgrounds.
- Provide a structured implementation plan, including timelines, phases, and budget considerations.
- Ensure that all recommendations, including signage placement or other navigational tools, align with relevant regulations.

The ultimate goal is to create a welcoming and memorable experience for visitors while also supporting local tourism businesses and informing residents. This cohesive wayfinding strategy will enhance the visitor journey and promote awareness of the distinctive tourism assets that make Victoria County unique.

## **The Municipality of the County of Victoria**

The Municipality of Victoria County is a progressive municipal government located on the Northeastern tip of Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. Bordered by the Cape Breton Regional Municipality and the Municipality of Inverness County as well as the Atlantic Ocean, Victoria County provides a gateway to adventure with many trails and outdoor adventures to be found along the Cabot Trail, the Bras d'Or Lake or through the Cape Breton Highlands. Our current staff of more than 40 serves a population of approximately 7500 people. During the summer months, our population swells with thousands of people enjoying recreational properties and attractions throughout our county.

## **Definitions**

In this Request for Proposals (RFP), any term with its first letter capitalized is defined as follows:

- **“Agreement”** refers to the contract established between the Municipality and the chosen Respondent.
- **“Council”** denotes the Warden and Council members of the Municipality of Victoria County.
- **“Municipality”** refers to the Municipality of Victoria County.
- **“Proposal”** means the set of documents submitted by an entity in response to this RFP.
- **“Proposal Review Committee”** represents the group appointed by the Municipality to assess and evaluate submitted Proposals.
- **“RFP”** refers to this Request for Proposals, including all schedules and attachments.
- **“Respondents”** are entities that submit a Proposal in response to this RFP.
- **“Submission Deadline”** is the date specified in Section 3 and Schedule “A”.
- **“Successful Respondent”** refers to the entity selected to enter into contract negotiations with the Municipality.

Any term appearing in lowercase follows its standard meaning as used in the English language.

## **2. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, SCOPE OF WORK AND CONTENTS OF PROPOSAL**

Any additional information relating to this RFP, the Scope of Work and the required contents of Proposals are set out in Schedule “A” to this RFP.

## **3. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

### **Submission of Proposals**

The Municipality of Victoria County will accept proposals **no later than 2:00 pm local time on Friday, April 11, 2025**. Submissions shall be electronic only. The proposal shall be in .pdf format and the subject line must contain: “Victoria County Signage and Wayfinding Proposal”.

Please send proposals to: Email: **colleen.whelan-smith@victoriacounty.ca**

### **Proposal Submission Format**

In addition to the main content of the Proposal, Respondents must include the following:

- A cover page displaying the Proposal Name.
- An introduction letter that identifies the Respondent and provides relevant details regarding their application.
- The Respondent’s full contact information, including name, address, phone number, email address, and the designated primary contact person.
- The date of submission.
- References.

### **Clarifications / RFP Coordinator**

If a Respondent identifies discrepancies, errors, or omissions in the RFP or requires clarification on any section, they must submit inquiries in writing to Colleen Whelan Smith at **colleen.whelan-smith@victoriacounty.ca**.

### **Confidentiality and Disclosure – Respondent Information**

Unless otherwise stated in this RFP or required by applicable law, the Municipality will maintain the confidentiality of Proposals and any information obtained through interviews conducted during the RFP process.

By submitting a Proposal, Respondents acknowledge and agree that the Municipality may disclose the following information to other Respondents and the public:

- The name and address of the Respondent.
- The pricing or rates of the Successful Respondent.
- The name and address of the Successful Respondent.

### **Municipality Confidentiality Requirements**

All prospective Respondents and those submitting Proposals acknowledge that any materials, data, or information—whether in electronic or hard copy format—provided by the Municipality during the RFP process:

- Remains the sole property of the Municipality and must be treated as confidential.
- May only be used for the purpose of preparing a Proposal in response to this RFP.
- Cannot be shared with individuals not directly involved in the preparation of the Proposal without prior written approval from the Municipality.
- Must be returned to the RFP Coordinator within ten calendar days if requested by the Municipality.

### **Respondents' Costs**

All costs and expenses associated with a Respondent's participation in this RFP process are the sole responsibility of the Respondent. This includes, but is not limited to:

- The preparation, submission, and presentation of the Proposal.
- Conducting due diligence and gathering necessary information.
- Site visits and interviews.
- Responding to questions or requests for clarification from the Municipality.
- Preparing inquiries during the clarification stage.
- Any discussions related to the Agreement.

Under no circumstances will the Municipality be responsible for reimbursing or compensating any Respondent for these costs, regardless of the outcome of the RFP process, including rejection of all Proposals, cancellation of the RFP, or any errors or omissions by the Municipality during the process.

### **Verification**

The Municipality reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to verify any statements, claims, or representations made within a Proposal or during subsequent interviews or discussions.

Verification methods may include:

1. Contacting references listed in the Proposal.
2. Reviewing information provided by the Respondent.
3. Reaching out to additional individuals or organizations beyond those identified by the Respondent.

By submitting a Proposal, the Respondent agrees that the Municipality may seek and obtain further information regarding the Respondent, including details about its directors, officers, shareholders, owners, or any associated individuals, as deemed necessary.

#### **4. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS**

Proposals shall be evaluated and selected based on the following criteria:

- a) **Understanding of the Project (15%):** This section of the proposal shall demonstrate the Proponent's understanding of the project objectives and the work to be done.
- b) **Proposed Approach and Schedule (20%):** This section of the proposal shall outline the project approach for each of the project components. The Proponent shall provide a detailed, well-conceived work plan showing the methodology and approach to be used to successfully accomplish the project within the project timeline outlined in this RFP. The proposal shall include a detailed schedule and timeline for the completion/delivery of all tasks and deliverables.
- c) **Proponent Qualifications and Experience (25%):** The proposal must demonstrate the Proponent's competence to perform the requested work as evidenced by training, and experience in providing the requested services. Resumes and experience of principal staff to be utilized in this contract shall be submitted, with their role, time commitment, and hourly rate identified. The Proponent shall also indicate whether the services of a specialty consultant(s) or subcontractor(s) will be involved in the project. This is also an opportunity for the proposal to show the bidders' commitment to Victoria County and any inclusion of Indigenous business or partners or through such things as contribution to the property tax base of Victoria County for scoring consideration.
- d) **References (15%):** Provide no less than three (3) references of private persons, clients, and officials of government agencies that have retained the services of your firm.
- e) **Value for Money (25%):** The proponent shall provide total costs associated with the work based on the proposal's tasks, deliverables, and timeline. Deliverables and costs may be negotiable with the selected Proponent, based upon the final scope of work, timetable, and needs of the Municipality.

**Schedule “A” – Additional Information for Respondents**

**Breakdown of the strategy development:**

**A) Assessment of existing wayfinding + visitor information/navigation**

(For the purpose of this RFP, Assessment means to evaluate, for each noted area, the current state of the signage overall, how to improve the signage, and future strategic alignment.)

- Signage within Municipality of Victoria County boundaries
  - e.g., Victoria County signage
- [Signs on Nova Scotia Roads and Highways | novascotia.ca](https://novascotia.ca)
  - e.g., Major Tourist Attraction Signs
  - e.g., Service Symbols
  - e.g., Industrial and Business Parks Signs
  - e.g., Community Identity Signs
  - e.g., Scenic Travelways Signs
  - e.g., Direction, Destination and Confirmation Distance Signs
- Provincial Picnic Parks
  - e.g., Cabot’s Landing Provincial Park
  - e.g., St. Ann’s Provincial Park
- Cape Breton Highlands National Park
  - e.g., Navigation and Distance Signage
  - e.g., Ingonish Beach Campground
  - e.g., Black Brook Beach
  - e.g., Mica Hill Trail
- Cabot Trail Signage
  - e.g., Small signs along trail
  - e.g., Gateway signage
  - e.g., Community signage
  - e.g., Roadside Kiosks
- Private Signs
  - e.g., Private business signs on all routes
  - Best practices for positioning of signs for private businesses vs current positioning
- Community Signage and Navigation
  - e.g., Baddeck
  - e.g. Ingonish
  - e.g., Cape North corner
  - e.g., Dingwall corner

- Community Hiking Trails and Trailheads
  - e.g., Lewis Mountain Multi-use Trail (existing trailhead signage will be copied at other trailheads)
  - e.g., Red River Trail
- Civic Addresses and Signage
  - e.g., Best practices for ensuring all residents have civic addresses posted to comply with Municipal by-laws.

**B) Assessment of emerging and new wayfinding + visitor information/navigation opportunities**

- Digital
  - e.g., Mobile app
  - e.g., augmented reality
  - e.g., virtual tours
  - e.g., Use of QR codes
  - e.g., GIS mapping/google mapping
  - e.g., Other opportunities
  - e.g., Self-serve kiosk
- Alternative and innovative future-proof wayfinding + visitor information/navigation channels
- Accessibility – Nova Scotia Accessibility Act compliant
- Diversity – multilingual

**C) Engagement Sessions**

- At least 3 public stakeholder (tourism operator) consultation engagement opportunities (2 in person sessions and 1 virtual session)
- At least 1 consultation engagement with a group of designated tourism providers and 1 strategy feedback session (in person sessions)
- Approximately 25 in-depth key stakeholder/rightsholder interviews
- Approximately 8 in-depth Municipality of Victoria County department interviews

**D) Generate Recommended Strategy**

- Modifications to existing assets – signage and digital
- Development of new assets and channels
- Rationale and intent of new assets and channels
- Technical requirements of asset and channel development
- Connection of new channels to existing Victoria County assets (signage)
- Implementation timeline with costings (see below)
- Expected impacts and measurable metrics

**E) Recommend Stages of Strategy Implementation**

- Timeline of priority asset development
- Department and human resource requirements and responsibilities
- User education and training needs for channel implementation

**F) Estimate Strategy Costing**

- Estimated costs for overall strategy implementation
- Estimated cost for each stage of strategy implementation
- Cost breakdown of individual asset and channel development and implementation
- Potential maintenance cost of physical and virtual/digital assets
- Recommended cost sharing/cost strategies for the above

**The strategy should:**

- Include alignment with municipal wide branding and messaging while differentiating experiences and locations within individual communities.
- Meet Victoria County branding guidelines.
- Be available in an Accessible format if requested.
- Identify and support key decision points in the visitor journey to enhance experiences by providing not just directional guidance, but the right level of information to facilitate informed wayfinding decisions.
- Encourage motorists, cyclists, water recreation enthusiasts, and pedestrians to explore Victoria County while effectively navigating between major attractions and communities.
- Ensure that wayfinding tools—including signage, digital platforms, and other channels—prioritize safety for all modes of travel, including vehicles, cyclists, water recreation users, and pedestrians.
- Develop a system that is scalable, adaptable, and user centered.

The successful proponent will be required to travel throughout the municipality using their own vehicle and be available as needed for stakeholder engagements, interviews with tourism operators, and discussions with municipal departments. Integration with various strategies will be essential.

<b>Reference Document</b>	<b>Title (Hyperlinked)</b>
#Rise Again 2030: Cape Breton Island Destination Development Strategy	<a href="#">#RiseAgain2030 – Destination Cape Breton</a>
Ingonish Strategic Tourism Development Program Final Report	<a href="#">Ingonish STEP – Visit Ingonish – Nature's Home</a>
Signs on Nova Scotia Roads	<a href="#">Signs on Nova Scotia Roads and Highways   novascotia.ca</a>
Recommendations on Accessibility Standard in the Built Environment: Phase 2 (Pages 17 – 30)	<a href="#">Recommendations on Accessibility Standard in the Built Environment: Phase 2</a>

Respondents must submit a portfolio showcasing their expertise in integrated community wayfinding, including visitor information services and navigation of tourism assets. Experience in developing municipal-wide strategies that incorporate multiple communities will be considered an asset. Additionally, familiarity with digital, alternative, or innovative wayfinding solutions is desirable.



The total proposed price must encompass all costs necessary to complete the project as outlined in the scope of work, including research, consultation meetings, travel expenses, strategy development, and presentations.

**Deliverables**

- A comprehensive, research-based strategy for integrated community wayfinding in Victoria County, covering visitor information services and the navigation of tourism assets.
- A detailed implementation plan outlining key stages and milestones.
- Recommendations for role assignments and responsibilities related to the proposed strategy.
- A cost estimate for phased implementation, including recommendations on responsible parties.

**Expected Services**

- Assess existing wayfinding assets in Victoria County, including visitor information services and tourism navigation methods.
- Conduct research and provide recommendations for innovative wayfinding solutions.
- Facilitate community stakeholder consultations in collaboration with Victoria County Tourism and Recreation.
- Conduct consultation interviews with key departments within the Municipality of Victoria County, coordinated by Victoria County Tourism and Recreation.
- Develop a comprehensive, integrated wayfinding strategy tailored to Victoria County's needs.
- Identify projected costs and human resource requirements for implementing the strategy.
- Provide bi-weekly progress updates throughout the duration of the contract.

**Submission Timeline**

- RFP posted to Municipal site by Monday, March 24, 2025.
- Final proposal submitted by Friday, April 11, 2025, at 2:00 pm.
- Contract decision and notification by Friday, April 25, 2025.

**Suggested Timeline**

- Research/community engagement completed no later than Friday, May 16, 2025.
- Preliminary strategy file delivered, by email, to staff by Friday, May 16, 2025.
- Preliminary strategy delivered, in-person presentation, by Friday, May 16, 2025.
- Final strategy presentation, delivered to staff by Friday, June 13, 2025.
- Presentation to Council in NS Accessibility compliant format on Monday, June 16, 2025.