



Council Agenda Report

From: Meg Williamson, Assistant City Manager

Subject: Service Contracts for Visitor Services for FY 2017-18

Date: June 6, 2017

Facts

1. The City has historically maintained professional service contracts with local non-profit organizations whose missions and efforts support tourism and/or generate income for the City's General Fund. These organizations and key services are as follows:
 - Paso Robles Main Street Association - to provide downtown promotion services that enhance the economic vitality of the City's historic downtown business area.
 - Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce - to operate a Visitor Center that assists visitors in scheduling their time in Paso Robles and that alerts them to attractions and visitor experiences of which they may not have been aware.
 - Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance – to host journalists and other media through a public relations campaign in order to generate third-party acclaim for our destination.
2. During the recession the City modified these contracts accordance with General Fund budget reductions in FY 2011-12, reducing each contract by 25 percent. Those contracts were reinstated to pre-recession levels in FY 2016-17.
3. Paso Robles' economy continues to benefit from and rely upon tourism.
4. With the advent of a new Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) taking over tourism marketing on July 1, 2017 (pending City Council approval), the City's current Tourism program is being discontinued and its single staff member redirected to other efforts. In light of that change, it is important for the City to continue supporting local partners engaged in tourism for the benefit of the community and local economy.
5. City Council is being asked to consider renewing these contracts for FY 2017-18 at this time:
 - a. Paso Robles Main Street Association – \$90,000 for downtown events and promotions.
 - b. Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce – \$75,000 for visitor services.
6. The Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance's contract will be considered separately prior to the start of its fiscal year, in January 2018.

Options

1. Take no action.
2. Authorize the City Manager to extend the professional service contracts for tourism related services with the Paso Robles Main Street and Chamber of Commerce through June 30, 2018 granting the requested funding level for each organization.
3. Provide alternative direction as may be appropriate.

Analysis and Conclusions

Option 1: No action by the City Council would at best, delay implementation of the tourism service contracts. Both Main Street and the Chamber of Commerce operate their service programs with the monthly revenues that these contracts provide. .

Option 2:

The City has historically supported downtown promotions, public relations, and visitor support as part of its tourism goals. With the new DMO focused primarily on marketing, especially in its first year of operation, the need for local cooperation for tourism and visitor services remains. As marketing and tourism efforts evolve, the City can continue to offer support to these established tourism partners in an effort to ensure the greatest value for the Paso Robles destination and its local tourism businesses.

To ensure that Paso Robles continues to attract new and returning visitors and to adequately serve those visitors, it is recommended that the current contracts with the Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Paso Robles Main Street Association be renewed for FY 2017/2018 as proposed.

Option 3: Should the City Council identify additional terms or conditions for tourism services related to these proposed contracts, such direction can be provided. Depending on the complexity of any suggested changes, the contract(s) may be continued to a subsequent City Council meeting to allow for adequate analysis and discussion with the respective service contractor.

Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact of the current contracts for a one-year extension is \$165,000. This amount is budgeted for in the FY17-18 Budget. No budget adjustment is required.

Recommendation

Authorize the City Manager to extend the professional service contracts for tourism related services with the Paso Robles Main Street and Chamber of Commerce through June 30, 2018 granting the requested funding level for each organization.

Attachments

1. Main Street renewal request and contract
2. Chamber of Commerce contract renewal request and contract



Paso Robles Main Street Association

835 12th St. Suite D, Paso Robles, CA 93446 805-238-4103 Fax 805-238-4029

May 25, 2017

Shonna Howenstine
Tourism Coordinator
City of Paso Robles
1000 Spring Street
Paso Robles, CA 93446

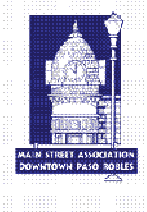
RE: Requested Contract Renewal

Dear Shonna:

As stated in our previous letter, our Board of Directors understands the limitations the City is facing and will work toward providing the City with the same level of promotions and tourism information as we have in the past while respecting the financial constraints under which we all find ourselves. As such, we previously requested the same funding amount and same contract period as last year. However, we would appreciate a cost-of-living increase, if possible.

Sincerely,

Norma Moyer
Executive Director



Paso Robles Main Street Association

835 12th St. Suite D, Paso Robles, CA 93446 805-238-4103 Fax 805-238-4029

May 25, 2017

Downtown Paso Robles Main Street Association

Contract Scope of Work Update (2017 to 2018)

Four Main Street Points: Organization, Promotion, Economic Restructuring & Design

- Completed over 20 annual promotions in the Downtown. Provide many costumes and equipment for events & storage
- Finalized 2018 Calendar of Events (attached)
- Co-Host monthly Business Mixers for local merchants, staff and city officials (sample)
- Quarterly membership newsletter (sample)
- Business Planner – a guide to locate new businesses in downtown Paso Robles (attached)
- Welcome book for new businesses (attached)
- Keep City informed on new businesses in the Business Improvement Assessment district (BIA)
- Promote downtown through radio, news media, TV, fliers, posters, email, Facebook, Twitter, Webpage
- Maintain the downtown kiosk with information on restaurants, hotels, museums, and events taking place in Paso Robles
- Provide tourist information on events and the area by telephone, mail, in person, banners and social media
- Mini-seminars from local speakers at our monthly Economic Vitality Committee meetings
- Update monthly our FOR LEASE OR SALE DOWNTOWN brochure distributed through the kiosk, our office, and to all local real estate offices (sample attached)
- Mail out a monthly calendar of events to our membership and local officials and media
- Deliver Downtown Directories through the kiosk, several boxes located in the downtown and to both the eastside and Westside wineries (attached)
- Update and print a RESTAURANT GUIDE, ANTIQUE SHOPS GUIDE, and a WINE TASTING ROOM GUIDE distributed throughout the city (attached)
- Keep the downtown and member merchants informed of activities in the downtown through weekly deliveries by volunteer Block Captains
- Provide the current Walking Tour booklets free to tourists
- Spring Clean Up by volunteers of the downtown: Commemorative Bricks placed cleaned, planter barrels placed, weeded and mulched, all by volunteers
- Provide the downtown Christmas Holiday decoration on street light poles, Santa Claus giving away toys in the City Park Playhouse
- Clean and maintenance repairs to the City Park Gazebo and Holiday House by volunteers
- Provide docent tours as requested
- Provided bike racks and bench repairs in the downtown
- Track volunteer hours for all Main Street events and volunteer projects (7,225 hours)
- Partnerships:
 - Paso Robles Promotions Coordination Committee; Paso Robles Art Association;
 - California Mid-State Fair (Free Pancake Breakfast); Paderewski Festival Committee (Elegant Evening Downtown); Central Coast Lavender Growers Association (Lavender Festival); local schools; El Paso de Robles Area Historical Society; Festival of the Arts; and Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce.
- Certified as a National Main Street City by the National Trust For Historic Preservation 2016
- Maintenance of decorative planters, including repairs and plant materials
- Docent / Concierge program
- Painting of Planter Barrels (work in progress)



May 26, 2017

Mr. Tom Frutchey, City Manager
City of Paso Robles
1000 Spring Street
Paso Robles, CA 93446

Subject: Visitor Services Contract - Renewal

Dear Mr. Frutchey,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this proposal for consideration of the Visitor Services contract renewal for the 2017-2018 FY Term between the Paso Robles City and the Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center.

As you are aware we identified three goals for the prior term that we felt would elevate the Visitor Center to a higher level of excellence. The goals were; to ensure that our visitors felt welcome, had access to community events and were connected to our tourism industry partners. As we evaluate what we accomplished over the year and determine where we want to go from here it is crystal clear that the goals we set are more relevant now than ever. In fact, they truly have shaped and strengthened our Mission for the Center and in conjunction with our efforts as the Lead Agency in Economic Development; our focus is amplified to be the connection between visitors, locals and commerce.

Currently we have the TPRA in place which will soon become a Destination Marketing Organization utilized for outside marketing efforts. With the City stepping further away from tourism at that time, we have the desire to take a leadership role in the area of internal communications including hosting bi-annual summits for our tourism partners. This will allow there to be an avenue for consistent communication and a direct link to the new DMO.

To achieve the level of excellence desired we must continue to strive to improve the resources available and accessibility to them. This will be done with further development of current marketing material including an updated relocation packet, website linkages and social media promotion. In addition we will continue to partner with our fellow partners to cross-promote and share items already created, including itineraries, maps and event calendars. Before the end of this fiscal year we will expand our retail inventory and offer our guests and locals an opportunity to show their love for Paso Robles with souvenirs in the Center.

As we continue to pursue our goals we are aware that they do not happen without appropriate funding which is why we respectfully request to continue our contract at \$75,000 for this renewal term.

In the accompanying detail you will find the following supporting documents including:

Activity Report:

This report provides a sampling of the various ways and number of guests the Visitor Center has connected with over the last term.

Proposed Improvements Report:

This report will outline the proposed changes and upgrades in services the Visitor Center will provide assuming funding is granted.

We are excited to continue connecting visitors to our Community and are pleased to have this partnership available to us to make that happen.

Sincerely,

Gina Fitzpatrick, CEO/President

Activity Report

Operational Hours: To better serve the visitors, we extended our hours this past term and kept the Center open 7 days a week, year-round which allowed more opportunity for guests to stop in and take advantage of the information available during the weekends and evenings when our visitor numbers are highest.

Visitor Center by the Numbers: The graph below shows the number of individuals assisted by our Visitor Center in a variety of methods during the first three quarters of the term of our agreement which will put us on par to increase our touch rate over the prior term.

Visitor Center Activity Report					
	2016 Q3	2016 Q4	2017 Q1	16-17 YTD	Mo. Avg.
Walk-Ins	2932	2695	2129	7756	862
Phone Requests	989	791	841	2621	291
Email Requests	241	246	248	735	82
Mailed Requests	21	25	20	66	7
Relocation Packets Distributed	8	13	4	25	3
Visitor Guides Distributed	384	11	174	569	63
Visitor Guides - Bulk Requests	335	275	72	682	76
Wine Guides Distributed	2199	1015	1597	4811	535

World Travelers: We have seen tourists from all over the world including 17 different countries and representatives from almost every state in the Continental U.S. The majority of which traveled to our town for the very first time! The top reason for their journey was to experience Wine Country followed by the great year-round weather (escape from the highs/lows where they live) and proximity to the beaches, lakes and mountains. Over the years we have become a true vacation destination (#7 according to Expedia as a Top Destination in North America) versus a quick stop while passing through. In a tech-savvy world, we're still surprised many guests verbalize their appreciation of having a Center available to them to provide recommendations from a local's perspective and information that doesn't require the use of their data plans.

Visitor Data Capturing: Over the term we have shared over 400 unique email addresses of our guests, as well as where they are traveling from, with our partners at Travel Paso Robles Alliance and Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance. This system was put into place to help analyze the current marketing efforts and organically promote return trips to the area by keeping tourists in the know of what is happening in Paso once they return home.

Community Involvement: We focused on increasing our community involvement by participating in the Downtown Main Street Halloween and Elegant Evening events. In addition, we participated in the New Year's Eve Celebration & Bonfire in the City Park. Our hope as we move forward is to expand our Community involvement to further connect visitors and locals to the resources offered in our Center.

Itineraries: In addition to connecting visitors with information to develop their own itineraries during their stay we have partnered with Travel Paso Robles Alliance to bring the Maverick Itineraries to our guests. These itineraries have taken a local with a specific interest, like cycling, and developed a day full of destinations that others with similar interests will likely enjoy. To date, the feedback from guests is one of gratitude to not have to come up with a plan and excitement to try the journey laid out by someone with their same passions.

Internships: We participated in two key internship programs through Eckerd Workforce Development and Cuesta College to provide opportunities for students to gain invaluable experience and further develop their skills in a community and tourism oriented business.

Visitors Concierge Service: Currently we provide guests with information to make their reservations during their stay. With additional staffing and online access in our Center that visitors have been able to utilize we have expanded this service to assist them with their bookings and custom itineraries to ensure they have an enjoyable stay.

TPRA Collaboration: We have again partnered with Travel Paso Robles Alliance on our annual Visitor Discovery Guide and are coordinating with them to distribute a city map that is currently being developed. In addition we will accompany them to the 2017 IPW convention in Washington D.C. to assist in interviews with travel writers and market Paso Robles to prospect tour groups, allowing them to put a face to a name for recognition purposes once they arrive.

Proposed Improvements Report

In addition to continuing to develop and improve the programs being offered by our Visitor Center, our focus will be to work towards bringing to fruition the following improvements that are currently in development.

Communication Campaign: In the next term we plan to do a campaign to get the word out to the community of our extended hours as well as the various services we offer which will include improved signage.

Tracking Mechanisms: Current tracking systems allow us to capture many things, such as, the number of walk-ins and phone calls we receive in the Center. The data, while relevant, is generic. Our plan is to improve our methods and tracking mechanisms to capture more detail including what days/times traffic is the heaviest, what type of accommodation the person is utilizing, and where they are from. This will ensure the correct data is being obtained and able to be shared accordingly, allowing us to make better decisions regarding scheduling and resources.

Staff Development: We are working to clarify the duties and functions of the visitor center staff, including volunteers, to elevate the level of service in the Center. Offering staff trained in the area of tourism and hospitality would ensure a higher level of satisfaction is obtained and a return visit becomes a guarantee. For example, with new flights to Seattle and Denver, our staff is working to become more familiar with these areas in order to offer “like” amenities so our guests feel at home as well as offer a wide variety of new adventures not able to be experienced in their communities. Our purpose is to be prepared for every possible request that could come our way.

Retail Items: One of the most sought after items by our guests is for souvenirs to take away from their journey to our great City. In June we will be installing a point of sale and inventory tracking system in order to officially launch this endeavor starting with a sampling of items most requested which includes t-shirts, hats, mugs, key chains, water bottles, wine bags and much more. We have partnered with the Travel Paso Robles Alliance to ensure consistency in the branding of our town.

Facility Upgrades: Appearance of the Center will become even more welcoming by adding a new awning over the front door and better lighting inside. In addition we have begun the process to rearrange the Center for better utilization of the space and allow for the new retail items. We will also replace the current desk with a raised welcome desk that will be easily approachable and more interactive for offering our concierge services.

Tourism/Hospitality Promotion: With our desire to become the lead in internal communications, the focus of our efforts will be the promotion of hospitality by creating and distributing a Hospitality 101 Kit and hosting summits for our tourism partners to ensure open communication and clear messaging.

Economic Development: In supporting the goals of the Chamber and City's Economic Development efforts, our Visitor Center will act as reception for this program and will continue to distribute relocation packets as needed. The staff will also assist in identifying industry gaps and under representation based on data captured organically from our guests (both locals and visitors) to determine additional prospects for new businesses needed in our community.

DMO Partnership: As the Destination Marketing Organization “DMO” forms we will collaborate with the new entity to develop mutual goals and working opportunities. We plan to continue to partner on marketing material – sharing one logo and supporting the Travel Paso brand, we will carry on with sending requests for group travel and media FAM trips to the DMO.