

Question and Answer Document for RFP 22-63320-001.

For reference in the questions, the full text of the legislative proviso is as follows:

(101) \$225,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2022 and \$225,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 are provided solely for the department to convene a task force to make recommendations regarding needed reforms to the state's growth policy framework, including the growth management act, state environmental policy act, and other statutes related to growth, change, economic development, housing, social equity, and environmental conservation. The process will build upon the findings, concepts, and recommendations in recent state-funded reports, including the "road map to Washington's future" issued by the William D. Ruckelshaus center in 2019, the report of the environmental justice task force issued in 2020, and "updating Washington's growth policy framework" issued by the University of Washington in 2021. The task force must involve diverse perspectives including but not limited to representatives of counties, cities, special districts, real estate, building, and agricultural industries, planning and environmental organizations, tribal governments, and state agencies. Special effort must be made to include in these discussions the lived experiences and perspectives of people and communities who have too often been excluded from public policy decision-making and unevenly impacted by those decisions. The work group must report on its activities and recommendations prior to the 2022 and 2023 legislative sessions.

Note that a maximum of \$ 435,000 is available for the work of the consultant.

Role of consultant relative to Task Force member role? Will Consultant report stand alone or be authored with Task Force?

The consultant will be responsible for facilitating the task force and for the production of the reports. Deliverables include two reports, due 11/15/21 and 11/15/22. The task force itself will participate in forming the recommendations and it should reflect the views of the task force, but the consultant will be the author of the report.

What type of format will be required for the reports? Are they legislative report format or the Consultant's format?

The reports will be in the form of a written report, along with potential reports to the Legislature in a work session if requested. The written report will be in the Commerce legislative reports template provided by Commerce to the contractor. Commerce will coordinate with the contractor in the formatting of the report and the development of any presentations.

Will environmental recommendations be determined through consensus or can alternate views also be identified?

The ultimate goal is to support continued progress toward legislative reforms through discussing and vetting various ideas for change to the statutory framework. The project proviso does not require consensus for recommendations to be considered fully vetted. Ground rules on what broad agreement is necessary for a recommendations is something that may be resolved with participants, perhaps with a preliminary identification in the technical proposal. The process in 2020 identified “broad agreement” instead of consensus as a goal for a recommendations.

Would the focus of the report and recommendations be based on the previous reports?

The reports, listed in the RFP, would be the starting point. The purpose of using previous reports is to build on past progress and prevent revisiting old issues so that the results can make further progress. See page 14 of, in the RFP, for a list of these reports. The list is not a binding scope that precludes new issues emerging from the discussion, but the process is not starting from scratch.

Will this include the Collaborative Road Map/University of Washington work conducted in 2020?

Yes, the Task Force work will determine how to make meaningful use of past reports and work on this same or similar GMA projects. See page 14 in the RFP for a list of prior source materials and recommendations.

What is the format or involvement envisioned for the Task Force meetings and input? Will there be alternative engagement options? There have been a lot of meetings already.

The Consultant and Task Force will develop the final project timeframe together. In developing the technical proposal, it is up to the consultant to propose formats for engagement. Some participants have suggested they are growing weary of lengthy meetings and the time commitment involved. In commissioning the study, the Legislature directed that:

Special effort must be made to include in these discussions the lived experiences and perspectives of people and communities who have too often been excluded from public policy decision-making and unevenly impacted by those decisions.

We are open to alternatives to large multi-stakeholder facilitated meetings, especially if the format facilitates inclusion of diverse lived experiences and makes the best use of participants’ time. The technical proposal may include a combination of approaches as appropriate to achieve the overall project goals.

The goal for the first report to the Legislature in 2022 will be to explain the process and approach of the project. The report for the August-November 2021 period will progress report.

A “Survey” is described under Section 1.2 Objectives and Scope of Work, subpart (b) “Review or Prior Studies and Findings” (RFP, page 5). Will this be a Consultant conducted survey?

In this context, the term “survey” is best understood to mean “literature review” it will primarily consist of reviewing the past studies mentioned and preparing a synthesis. This will be an analysis document, describing the key findings, legislative changes to address those findings and identify opportunities to use that work to inform and make further progress in this process.

Does the Department of Commerce see the scope of the project including the significant issues raised in the report "Road Map to Washington's Future", which identified topics critical to Washington’s future like a new water strategy or more focused on legislative improvements to how GMA is administered?

The technical proposal should include a proposed strategy for refining, prioritizing and docketing issues for discussion and recommendation. The consultant will work with the task force to develop a scope, considering the interests of the task force, an assessment of what issues are most ripe and where progress is possible. The Actions (page 81) and Key Reforms (page 92) can serve as a starting point for scoping. However, issues such as a fundamental change in the state water code would require participants and expertise not envisioned in the proviso.

The RFP includes deadlines for products by September 15th which is a month after the expected contract start date. Does the Department of Commerce envision a new task force is involved in review of these products or the related issues before the documents are produced?

It is unlikely the task force itself will be assembled in time. These documents will be some of the preliminary work of the consultant to serve as a starting point for the task force’s deliberations.

Does the Department of Commerce have thoughts on the make-up of the task force?

The proviso identifies specific participants. The task force should include representatives for those groups sufficient to get a cross section of interests needed to fully vet proposals. The study design should balance the need to get broad perspective with the need to avoid an overly cumbersome size. Participants should include participants that have insight into the legislative process as well as participants that understand the practical aspects of planning well enough to assess the practicality of proposed changes.

Will the University of Washington Center for Livable Communities or the William Ruckelshaus Center be involved in this phase of the work?

No. The university centers are not a named participant or a contractor on the study. However, involvement of the centers is not prohibited.

What support will be provided by Commerce and what is the level of capacity to coordinate the work and develop substantive information in regard to the priority issues?

Commerce will be actively involved as a participant in the study and as a coordinator, as needed, for the input of other state agencies. Commerce will also be the contract manager, receiving deliverables and paying invoices to the contractor. Coordination with other stakeholders and overall facilitation of the work, including standard logistics, such as support staff, scheduling, agenda and meeting materials, and communication will be the primary role of the contractor.

What are the expectations for level of detail in the first legislative report given the timing? What do you see as the priority issues?

Given the timing, the first legislative report will necessarily be a progress report. It will provide the Legislature a progress report on work completed to date. Given the general timeline, the report should be able to include the results of the survey work, a review of the study design and a report on the engagement so far and any preliminary findings on scope or recommendations achieved at that point of the process.

Considering the common barriers and special efforts needed to include the lived experience of highly impacted communities, how would you view a contractor's role to provide providing support for community-based organizations to enable them to participate in the workgroup? This is a common barrier.

This barrier was identified in the Environmental Justice Task Force. The technical proposal should identify the proposed method for including in these discussions the lived experiences and perspectives of people and communities who have too often been excluded from public policy decision-making and unevenly impacted by those decisions. Support for community-based organizations is one option for achieving this goal. Keep in mind that people and communities who have often been excluded exist in both urban and rural areas.

As we add more on to the planning process, how do we ensure the east-west, urban-rural perspective is taken into consideration and integrating the whole state?

The original collaborative road map, the visioning stage, did look at both Eastern and Western Washington perspectives. The proposed study design should identify methods that allow for including regional perspectives and input. One facet of any new or amended statutory requirement is applicability: To whom does this requirement apply? If you look at how GMA applies across the state, reading the GMA as whole, there are generally 5 classes of jurisdictions based on size, location and growth rate.