



**WASHINGTON STATE TOURISM COMMISSION
FY09* COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM**

GRANT APPLICATION FORM - COVER PAGE

(Note: Using the insert key on your keypad will help to fill out this form via your computer)

Date of Application: AUGUST 27, 2008 Application Number (Office will fill in): _____

Project Title: EVENT SEASON SHUTTLE SERVICE

Grant Amount Requested: \$ 5,000 Federal Tax ID Number: _____

Name of Organization: CITY OF LANGLEY, WASHINGTON

Executive Director: MAYOR PAUL SAMUELSON

Grant Contact Person (if other than Executive Director): JOAN STANLEY, DIRECTOR, LANGLEY CHAMBER

Mailing Address: PO BOX 366 City: LANGLEY State: WA ZIP: 98260

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Name & contact info for Destination Marketing Organization contacted about this project: _____

CHET ROSS, CHAIRMAN, ISLAND COUNTY TOURISM (360) 331-1980

Authorization

We hereby certify that the facts, figures and representations made in this application, including all supplemental attachments, are true and correct to the best of our knowledge, and this application is made with the approval of the organization's board of directors or presiding elected official of the city or county managing the project. This also certifies that use of match funding is consistent with all applicable laws and complies with the requirements of the match funding source. Misrepresentation of authorization will result in dismissal of the grant application.

HON. PAUL SAMUELSON, MAYOR AUGUST 27, 2008

Signature of Responsible Official/Title Printed Name Date

*FY09 is the time period from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009.

WASHINGTON STATE TOURISM COMMISSION
COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAMS APPLICATION FOR CITY OF LANGLEY

Project Narrative:

Located on Whidbey Island, the small community of Langley, WA (pop. 1,080) has built a solid reputation as a tourism destination. The beauty of Saratoga Passage and South Whidbey Island has historically attracted travelers both by road and waterways.

Langley is a small community, nonetheless, it has created a unique colony of artists and retail services. A blend of retail and hospitality businesses are primarily independently owned and consist of 60% of all reported retail sales. A visitor can enjoy waterfront access, family entertainment, art galleries and both luxury spa and less formal accommodations. South Whidbey Island is known to contain the largest concentration of B&B ownership in Washington State.

Local leadership has promoted small mixed use development of this type within city boundaries, and Langley's residents readily adopt comprehensive policies that protect their "Unique Village by the Sea."

Major future improvements to this tourism dependent community by City and the South Whidbey Port District will continue to enhance a visitor's experience. Port expansion of the small boat harbor will increase waterborne visitation and the City's redesign of it's harborside access will add new incentives to visit this area.

As in all of our Island communities, the area's charms come with transportation limitations. This has been especially true during the recent ferry crisis. Interrupted service and the perception of unreliable crossings has forced Whidbey's communities to increase advertising and develop transportation services to many of the integral special events held in the community. One-time dollars and donations this summer season allowed a Langley event to add shuttle service for walk-on ferry passengers for one of this year's well-known activities. This service, although only a trial, met with enthusiastic response.

Sales tax figures for Island County since this interruption of ferry service have fallen 9.4% during 2008's first quarter. The City of Langley, because of its tourism dependence, has been especially hard hit. Sales revenues dropped 6.2% in this community alone in a 2007-2008 first quarter comparison.

Island residents have worked diligently to reverse this trend by joining together with coalitions of chamber, city and business organizations and have improved existing events and support attractions aimed for visitors.

This grant would assist the community in assuring an event pick-up and return shuttle service while attending the 5 major events of the area's tourism season. With increased revenues brought by additional tourism visitation, the community would have time to build a transportation account for sustainability.

Washington State's improvements to Amtrak's Sounder service serve this shuttle option well. Seattle, Edmonds, and points south have all become linkages directly to the Clinton/Mukilteo ferry service. A Whidbey Island shuttle system meeting at the Clinton ferry terminal and returning on Sundays would assure travelers of the ease of attendance for Langley's special event activities.

Public bus transportation does exist on the Island, but due to a lack of funding, it does not run during peak evening dining hours and all day Sundays; thus as events last both Saturday and Sunday, use of Island Transit is not an option for weekend event travelers.

Organizational Narrative

2. This grant was prepared by a technical team of Langley City Mayor, Island County Tourism Marketing Committee chairman, Executive Director of the Island County EDC and Director of the Langley Chamber of Commerce. Langley Mayor Paul Samuelson pledged his City's support to act as lead on this application due to the need of the community to create event shuttle service on a sustainable basis. The City of Langley has a mayor-council form of government which includes elected council members and mayor. Elections are held every 4 years.

Project Management

3. The grant's project manager will be Joan Stanley, Director of the Langley Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Stanley will work directly with the City of Langley during the duration of the project.

Ms. Stanley has an extensive background in the hotel and hospitality service industry. Langley Chamber Board of Director members are comprised of a wide range of hospitality expertise including accommodations, tourist services, gallery, and restaurant owners. This strong blend of retail entrepreneurs, elected officials and community service representatives make the Langley Chamber the perfect entity to develop shuttle schedules and set service priorities.

Alignment to Long-Term Benefits

4. The Washington State Tourism Commission references many times in its overall strategic plan the use of intermodal transportation, especially by train. This project would capitalize on passengers from Amtrak trains, Washington State Ferry systems, and pedestrians all arriving on our Island and finding adequate transportation to and from the Langley event center community.

Funds from this project will have long-term benefits which will be gleaned from increased event visitation. Increased visitation affords the community an opportunity to reverse declining sales tax revenues. Success of this sustained

shuttle will create a new revenue stream that will be used to support future event shuttle funding.

Local promotion of low impact business development is a common theme in comprehensive economic elements done for the Port of South Whidbey, City of Langley, and Island County as a whole. Our fragile environment and limited transportation options make using a public shuttle system during peak travel demands an excellent component to our valuable tourism sector.

Links to Other Projects

5. All Island marketing campaigns have focused on short 1-3 day destination markets for increased island visitations. This is perfect for Whidbey's adjacent Seattle basin visitor markets. Improved access to Amtrak Sounder service that provides the networks necessary to link our ferry service to tourists creates opportunities for this Island event shuttle service to be successful. In analyzing the success of a local shuttle provider who has on occasion provided limited shuttle service to a previous event, the City of Langley, Chamber of Commerce and area business community quickly recognized the value of a sustainable service. Visitors who boarded the train at King Street Station connected to the Mukilteo Ferry station, and proceeded to Langley directly by Shuttle. As noted in our narrative, local bus service does not exist on Saturday evenings nor all day on Sundays; and as such, return passengers could not rely on the return trip by use of public transportation. Two day shuttle schedules are imperative for travelers accessing restaurants and overnight accommodations.

Community event planners work with a dedicated staff of volunteers who were very pleased with trial event shuttle service. Although they could not advertise prior to the event, 141 event attendees rode the shuttle during the weekend period. This response is the catalyst for encouraging chamber and community officials to seek funds to create this service for the entire event season.

Community Support

6. A team of all Island marketing representatives (Langley City Mayor, Island County EDC, and Langley Chamber of Commerce) have not only worked to make this application a reality, but to align the service where it will be most effective. Event coordinators met with the director of the Langley Chamber to choose which events will assist them in the goal of increased visitation and developed a shuttle budget accordingly (see budget breakdown).

Economic Development Focus

7. Economic Development Council activities are centered on solidifying all sectors of our Island economy. Hospitality is one of the major sectors in our overall economic vitality.

According to the State of Washington's latest report, tourism overall in Island County represented \$126 million in revenue, employed approximately 2,500 and reported \$9.1 million in local and state taxes. Much of this economic activity was created in the south Island by the large concentration of hospitality businesses. Special events held in communities such as Langley most certainly add significant revenue to our local area.

In the south Whidbey Island tourism-related economy where 60% of all employment lies in Arts, Retail, Accommodations and Food spending, local government recognizes the impact increased visitor travel will have on our overall revenue streams. As noted in our narrative, the declining first quarter 2008 expenditures and stagnant employment in this hospitality sector has had a negative impact on the community economy.

Financial Breakdown

8. In creating our budget, shuttle basic costs were received from our local provider, Whidbey-SeaTac Shuttle. The project is ready to proceed as funds are awarded due to the nature of bidding for a shuttle event season package (see refer to pg. 5, with shuttle budget breakdown).

Readiness to Proceed

9. Langley's Mystery Weekend would act as the "kickoff event" for the shuttle service. Using this event deadline will allow Island Tourism destination and event kiosk marketing to occur prior to the new shuttle service option. The RFP will be developed in coordination with project administrator, the City of Langley, and members of the grant team. Contracts with our local providers will be encouraged. Contracts for event season shuttle service will be signed as funds are released. This will assure commitments for shuttle service for the entire 5 event high season.

Measuring Success

10. Success of the project will be most easily quantified by tracking shuttle ridership, visitations to the VIC and event kiosks, Chamber staff accommodation referrals, hotel/motel sales tax increases, and overall sales tax reports from Washington State Department of Revenue. Shuttle ridership data will, of course, play a prominent role in measuring the service's effectiveness.

Results will be monitored by the grant's lead, Joan Stanley, Langley Chamber Executive Director, and our grant team regularly. Service and schedule adjustments will be made as necessary to assure effectiveness.

BUDGET

INCOME:

WA State Tourism Grant Request Funds ¹	5,000
Langley Chamber Matching Fulfillment Funds ²	<u>5,000</u>
Total Project Costs	\$10,000

EXPENSES:

Grant Funds - Shuttle Service (5 events ¹)	5,000
Matching Funds - Support Fulfillment Personnel	2,500
Matching Funds - Physical Fulfillment Support	<u>2,500</u>
Total Project Expenses	\$10,000

¹ Grant-funded Langley Events Shuttle Service

Event Shuttle Service Cost Breakdown: 5 events @ \$1,000 per event = \$5,000

The grant request was developed from a cost quote by a local provider, Whidbey-SeaTac Shuttle. Minimum service levels were predicated on \$90 per hour, 3-hour Saturday evening service, 8 hours Sunday service.

Langley Events:

1. Mystery Weekend
2. Welcome the Whales Parade
3. Choochokum Arts Festival
4. Django Fest
5. Come Home for the Holidays

² Langley Matching Fulfillment Funds

Langley Chamber matching fulfillment funds will be used to operate a direct, trip planning referral service system. This includes overnight accommodations, restaurant referrals, and other scheduled activities. Staff is pledged for this project for five 2-day events or a total of 10 days to complete this event season. Physical support includes downtown Langley visitor center amenities and an off-site event kiosk. Langley event days are covered by support the Chamber directly dedicates for event referrals.