

# **Request For Proposals Municipality Name Implementable Comprehensive Plan [*and Zoning Ordinance*]**

[*date*]

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The Municipality is seeking the services of a consultant (or team of consultants) to undertake a comprehensive plan for the Municipality [*and prepare a revised zoning ordinance*]. The project is funded through [*funding source, if applicable*].

The comprehensive plan will focus on revitalization and reinvestment in the Municipality's business district, neighborhoods, and key economic drivers and community assets. The plan will be strategic and will outline workable action plans, means of financing, and capacity to implement. [*The zoning update will modernize the ordinance and orient it to promote revitalization as recommended in the plan.*]

## **Project Description**

The Municipality does not have a current comprehensive plan. Municipal officials recognize the need to develop a plan containing strategies to alleviate conditions caused by recent economic distress and to promote revitalization and attract investment that would enhance the Municipality.

The need is significant. The Municipality experienced an economic decline in recent decades similar to other Western Pennsylvania cities. There were closings of major employers, loss of jobs, and a domino effect of decline in the downtown and residential neighborhoods. The further effect was loss of taxes, fiscal distress on city government, and deterioration of infrastructure. On the other hand there are opportunities for redevelopment, reinvestment, and reversal of decline.

The [*Governing Body; Planning Commission; Other*] has expressed serious desire to address these issues via a strategic comprehensive plan. It wants creative ideas and workable solutions. It is interested in setting priorities and focusing its limited finances and requests for outside help on a series of strategic initiatives and projects the plan would identify. [*An updated zoning ordinance is needed to tee-up key properties for reinvestment, and for modernizing regulations to promote desired development and investment in the city.*]

## **Services to be Provided**

The consultant to be hired will provide the full range of planning services necessary to undertake the comprehensive plan and prepare a revised zoning ordinance. The selected consultant will be asked to focus its work on providing intelligence for decision making (not recitations of data), providing creative ideas and workable action plans, and helping the Municipality to recruit partners and create capacity to implement the plan. Interested consultants are asked to submit a

scope of work describing their approach, methods, etc. for carrying out the prescribed work.

Comprehensive plan – The Municipality has two primary goals for a new comprehensive plan: 1) To create a vision for the community in the next 5-10 years with statements of principles and guiding policies promoting a character of community and quality of life Municipality desires to move toward; and 2) To determine a doable series of strategic projects, programs, etc. that will help achieve the vision, visibly improve the community, and reverse recent years of decline.

The comprehensive plan should be an “implementable plan” following principles and keys currently being promoted by the PA Department of Community and Economic Development.

- The plan should focus on the Municipality’s priority needs, concerns, and opportunities [*examples follow, but your municipality may have different needs, concerns, and opportunities*]:
  - Closed industrial facilities, two closed hospitals, and resulting loss of taxes, jobs, and spending capacity. Opportunities for reuse/redevelopment of properties; for example, [*identify / list examples*].
  - Disinvestment in downtown buildings, loss of essential businesses, increase in absentee owners. Consider incentives to potential investors and current owners in the central business district to start/expand businesses and improve buildings.
  - Aging and deteriorating homes, abandoned properties, absentee owners, and decrease in homeownership. Market and expand housing rehab and homeowner assistance efforts. Determine how best to use new blight laws and tools.
  - Upgrade of deteriorating infrastructure and community facilities.
  - Transportation improvements needed, particularly to facilitate reuse/redevelopment of key properties.
  - How to overcome negative perceptions about Municipality and take advantage of growth opportunities from changing demographics and markets favoring urban, walkable communities.
  - Target locations and objectives for development, land use, community character, and design that will guide revisions to the zoning ordinance.
  
- The consultant’s work and the comprehensive plan document should be organized based on the Municipality’s priorities or related goals or themes that emerge from the planning process, not based on a traditional template of land use plan, housing plan, transportation plan, etc. The plan document should be efficient in words, avoid jargon, and be written for use by the elected and appointed officials of the Municipality, partner groups, and citizens who will implement the plan after completion.
  
- The plan should provide workable action plans for top recommendations – a series of strategic projects, programs, and initiatives – that emerge from the planning process. The plan should set priorities and a timetable for action based on expected results and ability to finance and carry out. Action plans should include reasonable depth and detail – specific action steps, responsible parties, estimated costs, and proposed means of financing – to facilitate implementation after the plan is completed. The consultant is asked to include some immediate action recommendations that would provide short-term, visible results and

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motivate further implementation of the plan.

- The consultant will help the Municipality recruit partners – organizations, businesses, and individuals with expertise and resources to be involved in the plan. The plan process should invite their ideas for recommendations and action plans, and invite partners to take roles in implementing the plan.
- The consultant should facilitate a plan process whereby the community “owns” the plan, and the elected officials and community leaders are spokespersons for the plan and have a consensus commitment to implement it. There should be effective means within the limited project budget to obtain public vision and aspirations for their community. There should be involvement of elected officials so as to ensure their understanding and acceptance as the plan proceeds from issues to ideas to action plans.
- The consultant will ensure the comprehensive plan meets minimum requirements of the PA Municipalities Planning Code. The consultant may have to address minimal subject matter not addressed in analysis and recommendations presented for the city’s priority issues.

The consultant will deliver to the city complete comprehensive plan document(s) ready for adoption, including [20 paper copies and 10 CDs].

*The following can be added if applicable:*

Zoning ordinance revision – A revised zoning ordinance is desired to immediately follow and implement the new comprehensive plan. The current zoning ordinance was enacted in [date]. It is anticipated that revisions will be substantial. The comprehensive plan will outline a vision plus community goals for the next 5-10 years that will likely suggest changes in the zoning ordinance. And the plan will make recommendations in matters that will affect zoning:

- Target locations and objectives for development, land use, community character, and design.
- Reuse and/or redevelopment of key properties [identify / provide examples].
- Promotion of investment, business starts/expansions, and building upgrades in the downtown.
- Promotion of investment and reversal of homeownership decline in residential neighborhoods.
- Modernization of the ordinance regarding current and changing character of development and regulatory best practices.

Other objectives for revision of the zoning ordinance include:

- The ordinance should be updated to meet the requirements of the PA Municipalities Planning Code and ensure it is legally defensible.
- The ordinance should be efficient in the extent and degree of regulations so as to most directly address the city’s objectives, avoid regulations for the sake of regulations, and be appropriate to the level of community resources and administrative capability.

The consultant will conduct work sessions with Municipal officials to discuss suggested revisions and review drafts of the revised ordinance. The consultant should rely on the planning done, objectives developed, and related public input obtained in undertaking the comprehensive

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plan, and should not unnecessarily repeat this work for the zoning ordinance. A proposal for work sessions should be included in the consultant's scope of services.

The consultant will deliver to the city a complete revised zoning ordinance and map ready for enactment, including [20 paper copies, 10 CDs, and 2 wall-sized zoning map prints].

### **Budget**

The project has a fixed budget for consultant costs of [amount].

### **Completion Schedule**

It is expected that the consultant will complete the requested tasks – comprehensive plan and revised zoning ordinance – within [time frame], assuming the Municipality acts on adoption and enactment in a most timely manner.

### **Contractual Requirements [if applicable]:**

Because the project is anticipated to be funded by a grant from the [funding source], the consultant must comply with grant-mandated requirements to be included in the consultant contract.

### **Project Management**

The project will be managed by [name, title]. He/She will be the Municipality's primary contact for communications with the consultant.

### **Selection Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated and a consultant will be selected based on the following criteria listed in order of importance:

- The relevant qualifications, skills, and experience of the consultant(s) in performing work requested herein and working with communities similar in size and character to the Municipality.
- The qualifications, skills, and experience of personnel to be assigned by the consultant(s) to the project.
- The consultant's proposed scope of work and approach, methods, etc. to carry out the project. Proposals will be competitively judged on the quantity, quality, and value of the proposed work approach, products, etc., given a fixed budget of [amount].
- The ability of the consultant to meet the expected project completion schedule.

### **Proposal Content**

Consultant proposals must include:

- Brief description of the consultant(s).
- Description of relevant work experience, capabilities, skills, and expertise which qualify the

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consultant(s) to undertake the project. Please include relevant, recent client references.

- Personnel assignments with resumes showing individual work experience, skills, and expertise.
- A proposed scope of work and approach, methods, etc. to carry out the project.
- Confirmation that the scope of work will be performed for the not-to-exceed cost of [amount].
- Proposed work schedule.

**Selection Procedures**

[Two (2) paper hard copies and two (2) CDs] of the proposal must be submitted to:

Name and address of Municipality

Attention: Contact person name and title

Proposals must be received no later than [time; day and date] to be eligible for consideration.

Any questions on the request should be directed to [contact person name, phone number and/or e-mail].

The Municipality is open to consider consultant suggestions for alterations to the work scope that would be in the city's interest and not vary from the essential goals and objectives outlined in the RFP. Alterations could be considered in developing a final scope of work for contract with the selected consultant.

A short list of consultants will be asked to schedule and make presentations to a consultant selection committee. It is anticipated that consultant selection will occur within 45-60 days of the RFP deadline. A notice to proceed will be issued as soon as possible thereafter.