

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The City of Ontario, Ohio seeks proposals from qualified consultants or consultant teams (consultant) to prepare a Comprehensive Plan with a twenty-year planning horizon. The plan will provide vision, goals, objectives, policies and actions to guide the City's elected and appointed officials, property owners, developers, staff, and residents on the appropriate coordinated growth and development for Ontario. Over the course of this collaborative endeavor, the consultant will work closely with the Ontario Planning Commission, Council Economic Development Committee and a Steering Committee that will be established to inform the project. The consultant will bring experience in innovative approaches to public outreach and engagement, ideally within the context of a small suburban community, along with an advanced knowledge of comprehensive planning and subdivision and land development regulation. Consultants should have expertise in the areas of land use planning, transportation, urban design, economics, and sustainability. The City of Ontario encourages creative proposals that would lead to the adoption of a plan that is innovative, practical and will generate excitement among residents, businesses and visitors

It is anticipated that work will begin in Spring 2023 and the finished product will be adopted by the City in December 2023.

This RFP is a competitive bid to select a Consultant that best meets the needs of the City based on qualifications, service, capabilities, price, as well as other factors. This RFP contains instructions governing the proposals to be submitted, the materials to be included, and the requirements that must be met to be eligible for consideration.

BACKGROUND

The City of Ontario is a community with options as diverse as a larger city with the convenience & character of a small town. Located just west of Mansfield in Richland County, Ohio, it is within an hour drive to Columbus and Cleveland.

The City's schools, colleges, and universities bring excellent education and include The Ohio State University regional campus, North Central State College, and vocational training for both high school students and adults already in the workforce.

The city has focused on its parks and offers opportunities to stay active with recreational offerings to fit each season. Marshall Park serves as the hub of local sports and the surrounding area showcases a ski resort, lakes, and a bike trail. Culturally, residents have access to touring theater performances, art shows, festivals in the larger Richland County area.

Ontario has seen a transformation from its manufacturing past to a retail and residential suburb of choice. The loss of the General Motor stamping plant in 2009 had a major impact on the fiscal and employment base of the city. It has since transformed as a shopping destination for the region with several national chains and restaurants. More recently, the city has seen considerable investment in the medical sector with Avita Hospital System redeveloping a portion of the mall as a hospital.

The City has two industrial parks served by a network of infrastructure facilities. The transportation system includes U.S. highways, a network of state routes, local roads, and a five mile spur of inactive railroad. Additionally, efforts have been made over recent years to expand public transportation options to the city.

The residents are the backbone of the community; its strength and its greatest asset. Ontario continues to grow with a 17.4% growth over the last 10 years. Today, the City of Ontario is home to over 6,650 residents.

Some of the issues challenging the city are: high levels of traffic congestion in certain corridors due to current land use pattern and development; presence of vacant industrial brownfield from the General Motors plant closure; inadequate opportunities for development of commercial and industrial properties; lack of a central downtown; missing or diverse housing choice; inadequate public facilities required for growth; missing link between college campus and city.

To assist in understanding Ontario's current conditions, consultant should consult and reference the below plans completed in the County.

CURRENT PLANS

- 2035 Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Richland County (2009)
- Direction Looking Forward 2045 (Richland County Long Range Transportation Plan)
- Richland County Strategic Activities Development and Implementation Plan
- US 30 Corridor CED (2022)
- Campus Business District Town Center Framework Plan (2016)
- Richland County Housing Needs Assessment (to be completed January 2023)
- Richland County Health Assessment (to be completed mid 2023)
- W Fourth Street Corridor Study (completed mid 2023)
- Zoning Map

PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to create a City Comprehensive Plan that includes elements of Land Use, Sustainability, Infrastructure, Open Space, and Economic Development. The plan will support the City's strategic vision of a vibrant and diverse economy that supports beautiful parks, great amenities and friendly neighborhoods.

The comprehensive plan will identify a series of key issues through studies and public engagement and then propose policies and projects aimed at addressing such concerns. It should include factors that affect the long-term development of the City. It is the City's desire to have meaningful community participation in the preparation of the Plan and that the consulting team include substantial opportunities for citizen participation in the planning process. The City's expectations for the new Comprehensive Plan can be summarized as follows:

- **Community-based:** Organized around goals developed in partnership with Ontario citizens and leaders, through a multi-faceted public participation process.
- **Action-oriented:** A strong implementation component. The plan should include policies for ongoing decision-making as well as more specific, achievable actions to undertake within a five-year and ten-year timeframe.
- **User-friendly:** A format that encourages usage by a broad audience. The plan should utilize a combination of maps, illustrations, tables and concise writing to convey its message. A web based interactive format is desirable.

PROJECT APPROACH

Extensive Public Engagement:

In order to learn about current community values and needs as well as to educate the public about market realities and sustainable growth, a major emphasis of the planning process will be on community engagement. The Consultant will:

- Research, contact, and engage with audiences ranging from small groups of stakeholders (elected officials, business owners, community leaders, neighborhood groups, students, etc.) to large events open to the public.
- Draft surveys and/or utilize online tools to distribute, collect, analyze, and report results.
- Facilitate meetings of steering and issue-specific committees.

In addition to engagement surrounding the plan areas listed, preferences and direction around the following topics/questions is desired:

- City Identity
- Housing mix
- Environmental sustainability
- Parks and Neighborhoods
- Future Growth

Sustainability and Equity Guidelines:

Opportunities for projects and/or policies related to sustainability and equity should be identified as they relate to all content areas. Principles to use as the base for sustainability and equity guidelines should be established early in the engagement process. Possible principles may include the following:

- Foster a livable built environment.
- Ensure a resilient economy.
- Promote and protect equity.
- Provide for community health.
- Promote a variety of housing options.

Regional Approach:

The City is looking to coordinate with neighboring municipalities, such as Mansfield, Village of Lexington, as well as Richland County and other regional partners in the planning process. In addition, it is hoped that targeted engagement with nearby partners and jurisdictions will lead to the identification of opportunities to develop a shared vision for adjoining areas and long-term coordination and the sharing of resources.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Consultant(s) will have overall responsibility for the creation of the City's Comprehensive Plan, lead the Plan efforts and be responsible for the timely completion. All work shall be completed in accordance with applicable City standards and within the agreed upon timeline, conducting outreach for the Plan, leading public hearings and other sessions/meeting presentations, conducting technical analysis with subsequent recommendations, and document creation

The intent of this Scope of Services is to serve as a framework which the Consultant Team can use to develop a more detailed scope of services based on their professional expertise and knowledge. The final Scope of Services will be developed in collaboration with the selected Consultant Team and City staff prior to contract approval. The following describes minimum components that should be included in the scope of work.

Project Management:

The Consultant(s) shall prepare and submit to the City for approval a project management plan that specifies a schedule of work, the roles and responsibilities of the Consultant(s) and any sub-contractors, identifies specific work tasks, milestones, review/comment milestones and a public outreach plan. Additionally, Consultant(s) shall be available to participate in meetings at least every two weeks with the City's Project Manager and meetings with specific City Departments, key stakeholders, and outside agencies, as necessary.

Coordination of City Departments, Outside Agencies, Stakeholders and Residents:

The Respondent(s) will primarily coordinate with the City's Mayor for the Plan. However, there are several City Departments that have a vested interest in the outcome of the Plan. A staff working group will be created and may include members from the following Departments: Parks and Recreation, Police, Public Works, Economic Development, etc.. The Respondent(s) will be responsible for running these meetings to coordinate input from these City Departments.

The Respondent(s) will coordinate with outside agencies that provide services and/or expertise within the City of Ontario.

The Respondents will coordinate with key stakeholders and residents from the community to provide input on the Plan and the community vision. Citizen advisory taskforces or other committees made up of representatives from existing Boards, residents, developers, the School Board, Universities, etc. should be incorporated into the process.

Plan Development:

Develop Comprehensive Plan policies and strategies and a land use plan that accomplish community goals yet are rooted in an understanding of market and fiscal realities. The process of plan development will include:

- Key goals or policy platforms around which the Comprehensive Plan will be structured, developed in the initial stages of public participation and adopted by the Ontario Planning Commission and City Council.
- Preliminary concepts and alternatives for meeting the community goals for review by City staff and the general public.
- Detailed policies and strategies for land use, transportation and infrastructure, community character, housing and neighborhood revitalization, economic development, public facilities, including parks and open space, and utilities that meet community goals and incorporate best practices and emerging, innovative tools and techniques in the planning and development fields.
- A future land use and development plan that graphically integrates recommendations for land use.
- “Sub-area” development plans with detailed recommendations for critical parts of the City where significant change in the built environment is expected or desired. This could include undeveloped growth areas or redevelopment/revitalization areas.

Plan Adoption/Implementation:

Assist City staff in developing an action plan for implementation and presenting the plan for formal adoption.

- Determine a specific implementation plan for immediate, short- and long-term action items, with identified responsibilities, policy measures, priorities and potential partnerships and funding sources.
- Develop strategies for ensuring continued support for and usage of the Comprehensive Plan by City staff and leadership following plan adoption, including recommended procedures and schedules for keeping the plan up-to-date.
- Assist City staff with presentation of the plan to the Planning Commission and City Council for formal adoption.

PLAN CONTENT

The Plan will be a combination of elements and should include the following at a minimum:

Principles, Goals and Community Vision

Through community engagement establish a shared community vision, key goals and policy platforms around which the Comprehensive Plan will be structured.

Existing Conditions and Community Needs Assessment:

Review, research, and identify current conditions, trends and future predictions on demographic, socioeconomic and land use. Identify unique qualities and geographies. Consider adopted planning studies/plans, and trends specific to the City that will affect Comprehensive Plan considerations for the future. The list below should be used as a guide, but not considered to be limiting in the scope of topics.

- 1) Population and Income
- 2) Housing
- 3) Education
- 4) Transportation
- 5) Parkland & Trails
- 6) Economics & Employment Conditions, Trends and Forecasts
- 7) Utilities
- 8) Land Use

Existing and Future Land Use Plan:

Analyze current uses and development patterns to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

- Create a Future Land-Use Plan balancing commercial, industrial, residential and mixed uses
 - Specific recommendations for zoning and infrastructure to support housing and economic development needs.
 - Policies and Action Steps for implementation to guide future development and land-use decisions
 - Address the following Community Facilities
 - Government
 - Schools
 - Utilities
 - Fire & Rescue
 - Law Enforcement

- Develop sub-areas to target strategic locations.
- Proposals and policy for land annexation.

Transportation Network Analysis:

- Create a Major Street Plan, by surveying existing streets, identifying potential street expansion or street diet projects, proposing capital improvement plans, and researching alternative funding.
- Consideration should be given to address emerging trends in transportation including electric vehicles, ridesharing services, autonomous vehicles. Opportunities for effective public transportation solutions need to be explored with a focus on bicycle and pedestrian connectivity consistent with a complete streets approach.

Implementation Plan:

- Create metrics to monitor progress and outcomes.
- Integrate a mechanism for maintenance and updates at regular intervals.

DELIVERABLES AND EXPECTATIONS

Consultant(s) will develop and deliver a professional Plan that the City can realistically implement to provide clear direction for development of policy decisions, City services, and City projects for the next twenty years. The scope of work for this update includes, but is not limited to, the plan content described above, and the deliverables listed below. A detailed and agreed upon scope shall be outlined in the final contract with the selected Consultant(s).

Deliverables:

1. Plan document including existing conditions and recommendations with specific policies or projects for implementation.
2. Data gathered through various engagement strategies.
3. Updated base layers compatible with ESRI GIS system

Expectations:

The successful Consultant(s) will be responsible for a Plan that does the following:

1. Assesses strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
2. Establishes a community vision of the future.
3. Set goals in support of that vision.
4. Sets objectives in support of those goals.
5. Defines actions to carry out the Plan.
6. Uses clear organization and compelling graphics to present the Plan.

PROPOSAL RESPONSE EVALUATION AND SELECTION SCHEDULE

The City will perform an evaluation to determine whether each Proposal is responsive to this RFP. The selection committee, consisting of City leadership and invited participants, will evaluate and rank proposal responses, may select qualifying entities for interview, and may negotiate with any selected entity for contract execution. The selected entity will be recommended by approval of the Ontario City Council.

The City will be evaluating the Proposal based on, but not limited to, the following selection criteria:

- The professional and ethical reputation of the company.
- The company's demonstrated qualifications and expertise in performing the services required.
- The qualifications and experience of the staff that will oversee the project.
- The extent to which the services offered most closely match the City's needs.
- The past record of performance with city projects with respect to quality of work, control of costs, and ability to meet schedules.
- References from past clients.
- Fair and reasonable cost of services.

The review and selection of the company shall be made without regard to race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, or political affiliation. The City of Ontario is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages proposals from qualified minority and woman-owned businesses.

The following is anticipated as the evaluation and selection schedule:

RFP issue date March 16, 2023

Proposal Responses due April 14, 2023 by 3:00PM EST

Consultant interviews, if conducted May 1, 2023

Consultant entity selected May 3, 2023

Execute contract May 10, 2023

PROJECT BUDGET

The City of Ontario budget for the project is not to exceed \$90,000. The City will provide staff support as needed in order to make this project manageable within the indicated budget. The proposers may include additional value-added services they can provide with cost for the City's consideration.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES & OTHER REQUIREMENTS

These instructions outline the guidelines governing the format and content of the proposal and the approach to be used in its development and presentation. Please limit the proposals to 15 pages maximum, including the required attachments/forms. Neat, legible, and clearly stated information is required and will be used in the evaluation process.

Any costs incurred by the agency in preparation or submittal of the RFP are the company's sole responsibility. All responses, inquiries, or correspondence relative to or in reference to this RFP, and all other reports and documentation submitted by the agency will become the property of the City of Ontario.

All proposals shall include and address the following items in the order listed below:

A. Company Profile

1. Include a Letter of Transmittal that introduces the company and includes an expression of the company's ability and desire to meet the requirements of the RFP: An original signature by an authorized individual able to bind the company to all items in the Proposal, as well as the contact person for the company and that person's contact information is required.
2. Include an Executive Summary that briefly describes the company's approach to meeting the City's requirements as outlined in the RFP, indicates any major requirements that cannot be met, and highlights the major features of the Proposal.

B. Project Team

1. Provide a narrative describing the role of each project team member assigned.
 - The project's assignment or role that the person will fulfill in relation to this project,
 - The years of relevant experience with the Company,
 - Professional registrations if applicable, including the field of registration and year acquired,
 - A synopsis of work experience, training, or other experience which reflects upon the individual's potential contribution to this project,
 - Include an organizational chart of all members on the team.

C. Related Project Experience and References

1. Describe experience working with municipalities to develop comprehensive plans within the last five years. For each project client include a contact name, phone number, and e-mail address.
2. Provide a portfolio of three to five references of projects with similar requirements to those outlined in this RFP. At least one reference should include a contract with a city similar in size and population to Ontario.

D. Project Plan

1. Describe the company's general approach and philosophy to comprehensive plan projects. What is a typical sequence of work, milestones, key dates, and number of meetings?
2. Recommended list of items you plan on delivering with a list of additional alternative options.
3. Describe the communication methods that your company will use to ensure project expectations are met.
4. Explain what distinguishes the company from others in the field and what makes the company a good candidate to work with the City.

E. Proposed Innovations

1. The company may also suggest technical or procedural innovations that have been used successfully on other engagements and which may provide the City with better service delivery. Discuss any ideas, innovative approaches, or specific new concepts included in the proposal that would provide benefit to the City.

F. Project Cost Estimate

1. An estimate for the total project cost and breakdown by phases based on the proposed project elements and staffing needs.
2. Identify any other potential project costs such as subscriptions, programs, printing, etc.

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

After selection but prior to contract award, the City reserves the unilateral right to negotiate any aspect of the proposal or proposed contract in any manner that best serves the needs of the City and is within the scope of the solicitation. Subject to successful negotiations and approval by the City Council a contract will be issued to the selected company.

Final contract negotiations will require the selected company to proceed with the development of a Scope of Work and costs for all components of the project. If the company fails to provide the necessary Scope of Work and cost information for negotiations in a timely manner, does not negotiate in good faith, or cannot perform the Contract for the Project, the City may terminate negotiations with that company and commence negotiations with the next ranked company. The City may accept any Proposal as submitted whether or not negotiations have been conducted between the parties.

Neither the commencement nor cessation of negotiations shall constitute rejection of the Proposal or a counteroffer on the part of the City.

The selected company will need to provide a W-9 and Workman's Compensation Certificate.

SUBMISSION OF QUESTIONS

Questions related to this Request for Proposal shall be directed to Kris Knapp, Safety Service Director, by **3:00PM EST on April 25, 2023**. Questions may be sent via email to kknapp@ontarioohio.org. All questions received will be answered and posted on the Bid Documents page of the City's website www.ontarioohio.org.

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

If the Company desires to present its proposal it shall submit Five (5) hard copies and one electronic version of the proposal. Proposals shall be delivered to City Hall, 555 Stumbo Road Ontario, Ohio 44906, in a marked envelope addressed as follows:

TO:

Service Safety Director Kris Knapp

The City is not responsible for lateness or non-delivery by the US Postal Service or other carriers to the City. The time and date recorded by the City shall be the official time of receipt. All proposals must be delivered by **3:00PM EST on Friday April 14, 2023**. Failure to comply will result in disqualification.