

**CITY OF CARTERSVILLE, GEORGIA  
CARTERSVILLE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
FOR  
DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN**

**Date of RFP Released – January 4, 2024**

## **General**

The City of Cartersville is seeking Proposals from qualified and experienced firms to update the city's Downtown Master Plan. Responding firms should have a strong record in successfully assisting local governments with preparing plans for downtowns and experience in working on Federally Assisted Projects. Responding firms should be qualified to provide a comprehensive master plan for the community and conceptual plans for the to serve as a blueprint to direct resiliency, growth, investment, tourism, and economic development in the downtown area over the next 5-10 years.

## **Scope of Work**

Intentions are to contract, within a year from the date of this notice, a reputable firm to prepare a city-wide Downtown Master Plan. This plan shall address recommendations regarding economic development, transportation, public spaces (connectivity, parks and recreation, cultural arts/civic center), tourism, and marketing and branding. The Cartersville Downtown Development Authority has applied for and been awarded an Appalachian Regional Commission grant to procure a firm to complete a Downtown Master Plan. The selected firm would be expected to prepare the Downtown Master Plan within twelve (12) months of receiving the award. This procurement action may also lead to additional project contracts and/or contract addendums for planning, administrative, and other related services.

The development plan's goals are to: 1) engage community stakeholders to seek input on the development and growth of the downtown and surrounding areas; 2) establish a vision for the physical development of the area including illustrated best practices for design standards that establish aesthetic guidelines supported by the stakeholders; 3) develop goals and strategies for implementing and accomplishing the vision; 4) identify key redevelopment sites and strategies to jumpstart development; 5) list and prioritize implementation strategies, specifically for public investment in the downtown area; and 6) review and update zoning regulations within the study area with emphasis placed on regulations that support priority areas.

At a minimum, the Downtown Master Plan should address the following areas of focus:

1. Summary of existing conditions and issues, including land use, zoning, transportation, housing, and infrastructure conditions;
2. Assessment of current city and county plans as well as other relevant plans;
3. Vision and goals for the downtown area; including ways to connect to and improve adjacent districts/corridors;
4. Recommended policies and programs to implement community vision;
5. Housing and Market Analysis;
6. Detailed implementation strategy and action plan to move the plan forward that includes recommendations from the Market and Housing Analysis
7. Transportation assessment and recommendations

8. Site specific recommendations for 2-3 catalytic sites in the downtown area
9. Funding Opportunities

### **Task 1 – Existing Plan Assessment, Inventory and Recommendations**

For this Task, the Consultant will conduct a thorough review and assessment of existing conditions within the study area including a review of current plans and other relevant studies. The focus of the assessment will include, at a minimum, the following:

- Review existing plans' proposals for future land uses, development, zoning, transportation, and public facilities and compare to conditions "on the ground" today;
- Conduct additional technical analysis on subareas that have changed significantly since the last plan update;
- Analyze and document existing conditions and issues related to land use, transportation, stormwater, housing, and infrastructure.
- Land Use and New Development
- The Consultant shall inventory existing land uses in the study area, particularly in the downtown corridor and account for possible new developments or land uses that may impact future development. The data analysis should be based on community Land Use Plans and interviews with local governments, the public, the business community, ARC data, etc.

Some new developments and initiatives to be included in the study include:

- Economics of Higher Density - The study should identify probable impacts to traffic and the economy associated with low, moderate and high future density study area.
- Catalytic Development Site – The study should identify 2-3 sites in downtown that include a market analysis, regulatory recommendations, and visualization of key concepts.

#### Overlay Zone

The Consultant shall evaluate the existing Downtown Overlay Districts (BID, DDA, Zoning, etc) standards and provide recommendations and different approaches that will facilitate the revitalization of the downtown corridor. Subject matter to be considered includes permitted uses, zoning setbacks and buffers, landscaping, architectural standards, building heights, signage, parking, the use of sidewalks, etc.

### **Task 2 – Housing and Market Analysis**

For this Task, the Consultant will prepare a market and housing analysis that will support the plan recommendations and ensures the proposed plan is realistic.

The focus of the assessment should include the following:

- Level of market opportunity and depth by land use and product type (i.e. how much and what type of retail is needed)
- Demand and feasibility assessment for housing (by type and cost), retail, offices, and other uses within the downtown area, and an assessment of competing uses in districts near the downtown area;
- Develop customer profiles, which should include detailed demographics, lifestyle segmentation data, commuting patterns, actual customer spending habits, or other pertinent information;
- Identify where new development can be located to most effectively catalyze further reinvestment;
- Identify new housing development type that can be introduced within the downtown study area that align with the guidance for development types, scale, and character in the study area;
- Develop the recommendations that identify best practices(s) and/or development incentives of financing mechanisms for housing and economic development that align with local community.

### **Task 3 – Public Input**

For this Task, the goal is to develop a local planning outreach process that promotes the involvement of all stakeholders in the study area, with efforts and accommodations made to include low to moderate income, minority, and elderly or disabled citizens. As one of the first steps in the project, the Consultant shall develop a *Public Engagement Plan*. This document shall establish the means and methods for conveying information and encouraging and incorporating input from the aforementioned target groups, other stakeholders, property owners, elected officials, etc. The use of technology, social media and/or other progressive ideas for engaging the public is encouraged.

The plan shall have a schedule and description of the public/community engagement activities anticipated during the project and identify responsibilities. The plan shall identify all stakeholders and facilitate their involvement in the study process. These tasks will be documented through meeting notices, meeting summaries and other written communications. Responses and acknowledgement of public comments must be addressed in the study reports. The public involvement process shall, at a minimum, include the following components:

#### a) Project Management Team

A Project Management Team must be established that includes a representative from the City of Cartersville, the consultant, and the DDA. This team shall meet or hold a conference call monthly to discuss the study progress and advise on public involvement and other planning process issues.

b) Core Team

A Core Team must be established to include the members of the Project Management Team along with representatives from key stakeholder groups in the study area. The Core Team must include representatives from relevant state, regional, and local government departments responsible for land use planning, transportation, and housing (including applicable housing authorities/agencies). The key responsibility of the Core Team is to review and comment on materials to be presented at public meetings, help advertise meetings, provide strategic direction to the plan, and distribute information to the larger community.

c) General Public Engagement

During the study process, the Consultant shall make a reasonable effort to involve all stakeholders in the study area, including property owners, residents, business owners, and employers/employees. The public involvement process should include a variety of methods, times, and techniques to reach the broadest range of stakeholders possible (i.e. workshops, charrettes, forums, surveys, open houses). The Project Management Team and the Core Team must be notified of all meetings taking place in a timely manner.

A minimum of three (3) public engagement activities, in a format determined by the Project Management Team, the following topics/milestones should be covered by the public engagement activities (at a minimum):

- Provide an overview of the study process, the goals of the study, key dates, and opportunities for public input;
- Solicit opinions on goals and objectives of the study, stakeholder needs, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the study area
- Review preliminary findings, present a draft plan, and gather comments
- Seek approval of final plan documents and concepts

d) Final Plan Review and Transportation Coordination Meetings

A transportation project coordination meeting is required to be conducted prior to finalizing the plan recommendations. To ensure the transportation projects are feasible, the coordination meeting should include all affected organizations (such as GDOT, the local MPO, City Public Works, etc.) to discuss potential projects prior to the transportation improvement list being finalized.

**Task 4 – Updated Plan**

Review the existing Downtown Plan and update the goals, policies and action strategies based on the findings of Task 1, 2, and 3 and prepare a detailed development concept plan. At a minimum, this plan will assess and update the study area’s current land use patterns, environmental constraints, transportation patterns and urban design elements, including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access; access to jobs, retail and neighborhood services; diversity

of dwelling types; and design for healthy living and social interaction. This analysis should be coordinated with other completed studies, programs, developments, and organizations. At a minimum, this plan and study will contain the following components:

1. Summary of existing conditions and issues identified in Task 1. This includes land use, zoning, transportation, housing, and infrastructure conditions.
2. Assessment of current community plans and other relevant plans that have an impact on the plan update, also covered in Task 1.
3. Vision and goals for the downtown, and adjacent area, area that address the following:
  - a) Mix of land uses appropriate for future growth including new and/or revised land use regulations needed to complete the development program
  - b) Mixed-income housing, job/housing match and social issues such as access to healthy foods and aging in place
4. Recommended policies and programs to implement community vision.
5. Recommended revisions to the zoning ordinance and development of regulations to support the vision which includes street design standards.
6. Detailed implementation strategy and action plan to assist the city in moving the plan forward that includes the recommendations from the Market and Housing Analysis
7. Site-specific recommendations for 2-3 catalytic sites in the downtown that include a market analysis, regulatory recommendations, and visualization of key concepts.
8. Short-term and long-term Creative Placemaking Strategies
9. Transportation assessment and recommendations which include:
  - a) Transportation demand reduction measures
  - b) Internal mobility improvements including traffic calming, pedestrian and bicycle circulation, transit access, and safety and security of all modes
  - c) Placemaking strategies including but not limited to public art, wayfinding, lighting, and streetscapes
  - d) Continuity of local streets in study area and extension of the street grid
  - e) Conceptual renderings of the key transportation recommendations
  - f) Temporary and interim transportation improvements
  - g) Opportunities for green infrastructure within transportation recommendations
  - h) Parking analysis

#### **Task 5 – Prepare Project Deliverables**

The goal of this task is to compile the results of the overall work effort, the study process, relevant findings, and recommendations into a final study/plan document. The final study document shall include the following (not necessarily in this order) into an easy to read format:

## **I. Executive Summary**

### **II. Assessment of Existing Plan and Conditions from Task 1**

- a. A description of the findings from Task 1 including the status of key recommendations from the relevant plans.

### **III. Summaries of the plan development process from Task 3:**

- a. A description of the study process and methodology, data gathering techniques and findings, and general outcomes.
- b. A description of the public participation process used to achieve a community-supported program of improvements.

### **IV. Updated Concept Plan and Study, including:**

- a. Maps, concept illustrations, and other graphic representations to support the plan including (but not limited to): the study area, existing land use, future land use, existing transportation facilities, and proposed transportation improvements.
- b. Catalytic Projects locations with renderings to depict the redevelopment concept of the sites
- c. Identify locations of transportation recommendations.

### **V. Housing and Market Analysis from Task 2:**

- a. Include a summary of the Housing and Market analysis and economic development recommendations in the planning document and executive summary and provide the full report as an appendix.

### **VI. Implementation Strategy:**

- a. Describe the organizational structure and processes that will be used to ensure the action plan items are implemented. Focus should be given to collaboration opportunities with other organizations and strategies to ensure continued support from local elected officials, citizens, and businesses.
- b. Recommendations from the Market and Housing Analysis
- c. A 100-day Action plan shall be developed to include no-cost or very low-cost actions and organizational steps needed to keep momentum going and the stakeholders involved and sharing responsibility for the plan's success. This action plan should include short term creative placemaking measures and temporary transportation installations that the City of Cartersville can undertake to test out concepts in a lighter, cheaper, faster manner.
- d. A description of the changes required within the zoning ordinance, development regulations, and/or other locally adopted policies to support the concept plan and street design standards, with revised language for adoption.
- e. An evaluation process used to monitor plan implementation and update the action plan every five years (or more often if need), should be identified.

**VII. Five-year Implementation Plan (aka Schedule of Actions):** Create a list of all actions and projects that are planned in the study area to implement the study goals, programs, and projects. Schedules should include estimated start date, completion date, cost estimate and responsible party. This short-term implementation plan should include specific actions with start and end dates, including, but not limited to:

- a. A prioritized description of transportation improvement projects (local, state and federal) that will support the study area goals;
  - i. A prioritized description of housing strategies, particularly for affordable and mixed income housing developments, that support a job-housing match, aging in place, and efficient utilization of transportation facilities in the study area.
  - ii. A prioritized description of economic development and placemaking strategies
- b. A prioritized description of transportation improvement projects that are long term in nature five-year implementation plan.

#### **Appendix**

- The full market/fiscal feasibility report
- Detailed transportation assessment
- Revised Land Development regulations to implement the concept plan including the street design standards.
- Assessment of existing plan.

#### **Format of Final Deliverables:**

- Four (4) printed copies of the final report and appendices (8.5"x11")
- PDF file of Final Report and all appendices
- The 5-Year Implementation Plan in Excel
- All electronic files in their original formats (e.g. MS Word, Excel, InDesign, etc.) with supporting graphics and GIS shape files.

### **PROPOSAL FORMAT**

All proposing consultants shall submit an original and four copies of their proposal that include the following information and documents in this order:

#### Cover

#### Table of Contents

#### Qualifications

- A brief history and overview of the firm and its general areas of practice summarizing the consultant's interest in the Project. If a firm has multiple office locations, please identify the office location from which this project will be undertaken. Please include the number of years the company has been in existence and the firm's specific experience with Federally Assisted Projects.



- Firm's experience preparing similar Downtown Master Plans.
- Names and résumés (including an email address) of a principal, the project manager/key contact (if different) and key staff members who will work on the Project, if selected, including their qualifications and relevant experience.
- Names of any subconsultants (including key personnel and résumés) and a summary of their scope of services.

#### Scope and Methodology

- A statement of project approach that addresses methodology, an approach for planning services, and how the consultant will accomplish the identified scope of work.
- Scope and level of service proposed (must include discussion of proposed deliverables).
- A proposed schedule to complete the Project (timeline including key milestones for deliverables after Notice to Proceed).
- Organizational chart which identifies the project manager, key team leaders, support personnel, and reporting structure.

#### Ability to Complete the Project

- Statement of current workload and availability for this project.
- Statement of the company's financial strength to perform the project. *(Please provide suitable documentation to establish financial stability. Acceptable documentation includes audited or reviewed financial statements, partnership or corporation tax returns, bank or financial institution commitments, or other verifiable information demonstrating financial stability.)*
- Statement concerning any previous projects that the firm was unable to complete, unable to complete in a timely manner, or unable to complete as budgeted in the last ten years.
- Statement of any previous, existing, or pending litigation of the company.

#### Budget and Fees

- A project budget and fee itemized by each work task/phase that identifies:
  - The standard hourly billing rate for each staff member (or employee classification) anticipated to work on the Project;
  - The number of hours worked per staff member;
  - The percentage of total work completed by the prime consultant and any subconsultant(s);
  - Total cost for all anticipated reimbursable expenses.

#### Additional

- Proof that the firm is authorized to do business in the State of Georgia. Firm MUST have all the necessary, valid and current licenses to do business in the State of Georgia as issued by the respective State Boards and Government Agencies responsible for regulating and licensing the services to be provided and performed.

- In an Appendix, please provide any other pertinent information you believe will assist the Downtown Development Authority in assessing the capability of your firm to undertake the project (i.e. letters of recommendation, certifications or awards, etc.). Please limit to no more than an additional 5 pages.

### **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The City of Cartersville shall at its sole discretion select the most qualified firm(s) for each project, based on the best value evaluation of the following criteria:

- Relevance and amount of previous experience providing recreation planning services for similar projects.
- Relevance and amount of previous experience with Federally Assisted Projects (extra consideration will be given for experience with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) in the state of Georgia).
- Methodology and approach.
- Scope and level of services;
- Demonstrated capacity to complete assignments and manage complex projects;
- Cost effectiveness of proposed remuneration schedule.

### **GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

There are no expressed or implied obligations for the City of Cartersville or the Cartersville Downtown Development Authority to reimburse responding companies for any expenses incurred in preparing proposals in response to this RFP.

The City/DDA reserves the right to request clarifications regarding information submitted as well as request additional information from one or more companies submitting qualifications.

Ownership of all data, materials, and documentation prepared for and submitted in response to this RFP shall belong exclusively to the City of Cartersville and will be considered a public record and subject to public inspection in accordance with the Georgia Open Record Act, O.C.G.A. 50-18-70 et. seq. unless otherwise provided by law.

The City reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, extend the deadline for submission of proposals, and call for new proposals. The City reserves the right to accept, reject and/or negotiate any and all proposals or parts of proposals deemed by the City Council to be in the best interest of citizens of the City of Cartersville.

The contract between the Downtown Development Authority and the successful proposing firm will be on the form approved by the City of Cartersville.

By submitting their proposal, responding companies certifies that it has fully read and understands this RFP and has full knowledge of the nature, scope, quantity and quality of the work to be performed; the detailed requirements of the services to be provided and the conditions under which the services are to

be performed. Failure to do so will not relieve the successful proposing company of its obligation to enter into a contract and to completely perform the contract in strict accordance with this RFP.

This RFP and any resulting contract shall be governed in all respects by the laws of the State of Georgia and the successful proposing company shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

By submitting their qualifications, all proposing companies certify that their proposals are made without collusion or fraud and that they have not offered or received any kickbacks or inducements from any other person or party in connection with their proposals, and that they have not conferred with any City of Cartersville or Downtown Development Authority employee having official responsibility for this procurement transaction of any payment, loan, subscription, advance, deposit of money, services, or anything of value of more than nominal value, present or promise, unless consideration of substantially equal or greater value was exchanged.

The proposing companies specifically certify that by submitting their qualifications that they are not in violation of O.C.G.A. §§ 16-10-2 and 16-10-22 for acts of bribery, and/ or conspiracy in restraint of free and open competition in transactions with state or political subdivisions.

By submitting their qualifications, all proposing companies certify that they are not currently debarred from submitting bids or proposals on contracts by any agency of the State of Georgia and the federal government, nor are they an agent of any person or entity that is currently debarred from submitting bids on contracts by any agency of the State of Georgia or the federal government.

The proposing companies must be in compliance with the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act of 2007 and Georgia Code § 13-10-91 and § 50-36-1, and remain in compliance throughout the term of any contract that is awarded.

The proposing companies shall be required to be registered for and comply with Federal E-Verify requirements and the requirements of the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act, O.C.G.A. § 13-10-91. If awarded the contract, the proposing company shall submit the required affidavit promulgated by the Georgia Department of Labor to affirm its compliance. "E-Verify" is an internet-based employment eligibility verification program, operated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA), that allows employers to electronically verify through an online government database the work eligibility of newly hired employees. E-Verify is administered by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

## **ASSIGNMENT**

The successful firm shall not assign or transfer any interest in the contract or subcontract any part of the contract without prior written approval of the City of Cartersville.

## **INQUIRIES ABOUT THIS RFP**

All inquiries and questions regarding this RFP shall be in writing and directed to:

Lillie Read, Executive Director  
lread@downtowncartersville.org

The deadline for submission of any questions shall be February 1, 2024. and no questions shall be answered until after the deadline has elapsed. Do not call or email any employee or elected official seeking answers to questions. If a person or entity violates the prohibition against calling or emailing with questions, the City of Cartersville/Downtown Development Authority reserves the right to immediately remove said person or entity from consideration. Questions and answers will be distributed to all interested parties through a formal written addendum to the RFP prior to the submittal deadline. All addendums will be posted on the city's web site, [www.cityofcartersville.org](http://www.cityofcartersville.org) and the Downtown Development Authority's website, [www.downtowncartersville.org](http://www.downtowncartersville.org).

## **QUALIFICATIONS SUBMITTAL**

Proposals are due no later than February 29, 2024. All proposals, delivered by hand or other methods, should clearly indicate the information below on the outside of the sealed package or envelope. One (1) unbound and four (4) bound original copies of the complete proposal are required. Hand delivery will only be available during office hours: Tuesday through Friday from 10:00AM to 4:00PM, 3:00pm on the 29th.

### **PROPOSAL:**

Downtown Cartersville Long-Range Plan - RFP # 23-001  
Cartersville Downtown Development Authority  
1 Friendship Plaza  
Cartersville, GA 30120  
Attn: Lillie Read, Executive Director

A representative of the City of Cartersville government will publicly read the names of the companies submitting qualifications at 1 Friendship Plaza, Cartersville, GA 30120. Any proposals received after the deadline date and time will be returned unopened. Incomplete proposals may not be considered if the omissions are determined to be significant.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

Once a firm is selected for the project and fee negotiated, that fee will be included in the application's budget. Although fund obligations cannot be made before the official award of the grant, a contract with the selected firm will be executed upon release of funds by ARC after the grant award.

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is a regional economic development agency that represents a partnership of federal, state, and local government. Established by an act of Congress in 1965, ARC is composed of the governors of the 13 Appalachian states and a federal co-chair, who is appointed by the president. The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) program in Georgia is administered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). All project elements must conform with ARC requirements.

The City of Cartersville also abides by the following laws as they pertain to Federally Assisted Projects: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Section 109 of the HCD Act of 1974, Title 1; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); and the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968.