REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR A NEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
FOR HANCOCK COUNTY, INDIANA
Released: 4 January 2021

I. INTRODUCTION

The Hancock County Area Plan Commission, in close cooperation with the Hancock County Highway Department and Hancock Economic Development Council, is requesting proposals to prepare a new comprehensive plan (the “Project”). The purpose of soliciting these proposals is to identify those planning/design firms that are best capable of delivering the requested services. Hancock County representatives will review the proposals and establish a short list of qualified firms. The County will then interview the key firm representatives assigned to the Project prior to making the final selection.

Evaluation of the RFP responses will be based upon qualifications, completeness, clarity, delivery time, cost, follow-through on directions, and the demonstrated ability of the firm to complete the Project. However, the County reserves the right to solely determine which firms are best suited to be selected and included on a short list of potential candidates.

Five (5) copies of your response to this RFP should be sent to the following address by 26 February 2021.

Hancock County Area Plan Commission
Attn: Mike Dale, AICP, Planning Director
111 American Legion Place, Suite 146
Greenfield, Indiana 46140

II. BACKGROUND

The Hancock County Area Plan Commission has zoning authority and planning jurisdiction for all of Hancock County except the City of Greenfield and the Towns of Cumberland, Fortville, McCordsville, New Palestine, and Wilkinson. The county’s jurisdiction includes the towns of Shirley and Spring Lake according to an interlocal agreement established between the county and town councils. The west half of the county is located adjacent to the cities of Fishers, Indianapolis and Lawrence. The county is growing rapidly and experiencing significant development pressure. The county is seeking a consultant who can identify and assess the factors contributing to the development pressure and prescribe a comprehensive growth-management strategy pursuant to the following scope and statutory requirements of Indiana Code 36-7-4-500 et seq. The new comprehensive plan should identify and assess the unique qualities of each town and community within the county, seek to preserve their individual identities, yet weave the towns and communities into one county fabric. The new comprehensive plan must provide clear direction to staff and decision-makers for purposes of evaluating and modifying development proposals in the county. The new comprehensive plan must provide clear guidance and the tools needed to achieve the “vision” established within the plan.

The project shall include a new thoroughfare plan that will be a progressive, county-wide, multimodal transportation plan. The thoroughfare plan will be a component of the comprehensive plan and determine routes for new or modified public rights-of-way within the county’s territory pursuant to IC 36-7-4-506. The thoroughfare plan must be compatible and commensurate with the vision, goals, policies, and objectives of the comprehensive plan. Development of the thoroughfare plan will be guided and monitored by the County Highway Department in cooperation with the County Planning Department.
In addition, the new comprehensive plan will include an economic development strategy that will evaluate and harness the county’s existing and future assets to promote a robust and sustainable business community within the county. The economic strategy will help to establish the goals and policies that guide the land use and thoroughfare sections of the comprehensive plan. The strategy will focus on the livability and preservation of residential neighborhoods, non-residential growth that is sustainable and viable, preservation of natural habitats and agricultural uses, and areas for future development according to their highest and best use. Development of the growth strategy will receive significant guidance from the Hancock Economic Development Council in cooperation with the County Planning Department. More information about this aspect of the project is provided in Attachment B.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The proposal shall include a description of the Scope of Services as referenced in Attachments A & B. In addition, the proposal shall discuss the Project management tools and procedures that would be used to complete the Project. The consultant shall be responsible for the acquisition and management of any special consultants needed to complete the Project Scope. The proposed planning process and products shall meet the guidelines of laws as set forth by the State of Indiana pursuant to IC 36-7-4 for comprehensive plans and thoroughfare plans.

The approach used for the Project shall be segmented into various tasks. The tasks shall be used to describe the process and to acknowledge completion of necessary planning milestones. It is understood that the tasks, though presented in sequence, will overlap in varying degrees. The Scope of Services for the new comprehensive plan shall contain, at a minimum, the elements listed in Attachments A & B. The proposal should describe how the firm would approach each of these services.

IV. CONTRACTUAL INTENT

The work shall be performed on a lump sum fee basis.

V. PROPOSAL FORMAT

A. Firm Description.

1. Provide general background information about your firm, including firm history, number of employees, and disciplines represented.

2. Identify any proposed sub-consulting firm names and locations.

B. Planning Team.

1. Provide a brief description of the proposed planning team, identifying each key member in your firm or any proposed sub-consultants, their respective responsibilities, and the anticipated percentage of time to be allocated to the Project. At a minimum, the following key positions should be addressed: Partner or Principal in charge, Project Manager, and sub-consultants.

2. Provide resumes for the members indicated in B-1, above. Clearly state their expertise and why their experience is relevant to the Project. Data on previous employers and projects should be included for key members who have been with the firm for less than five (5) years.
C. **Scope of Services.**

Describe in detail how your firm will approach the scope of services as outlined in **Attachments A & B.**

D. **Proposed Schedule.**

Submit a proposed schedule for completing the tasks identified in **Attachments A & B.**

E. **Fee Proposals.**

Provide the estimated cost per task outlined in **Attachments A & B.**

F. **Comparable Projects.**

Provide a list of comparable projects completed within the last five (5) years in which the key team members have been involved. Please include the role of the firm and the respective roles of your firm members who would be involved in the Project. Include project names, client names, locations, brief project descriptions, and other appropriate information including a copy of one of the said plans.

G. **References.**

Provide a list of references for the Project team.

H. **Supplemental Information.**

Include any supplemental information you feel pertinent to your firm’s capabilities to complete the Project.

## VI. **POINTS OF CONTACT**

Questions regarding the nature and scope of the Project may be addressed to Mike Dale, Planning Director for the Hancock County Plan Commission at 317-477-1134 and/or mdale@hancockcoingov.org.

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ATTACHMENT A

SCOPE OF SERVICES
Comprehensive Plan
Hancock County, Indiana

1. Production of Comprehensive Plan as follows:
   a. Formation and coordination of a steering committee (officially established by the County Plan Commission)
   b. Analysis of Existing Conditions
      i. Land use inventory - including agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, recreation, public land, undeveloped/vacant ground
      ii. Road designations and carrying capacities with traffic counts (conducted in coordination with the County Highway Department)
      iii. Utility district boundaries and service capacities (electric, gas, sewer, water)
      iv. Zoned acreage inventory - developed/undeveloped with build-out projections
      v. Existing school enrollment figures
      vi. Current population demographics and densities
   c. Community Participation
      i. Identification of Goals, Objectives, and Priorities
         1. Public Meetings – minimum three (3) community workshops distributed throughout the County
         2. Interviews of Public Officials – including but not limited to Board of Commissioners, County Department Heads, County Plan Commission, County Council
         3. Interviews of Local Jurisdictions – including but not limited to all municipalities, INDOT, school districts, utility districts, parks departments
         4. Interviews of Stakeholders – including and not limited to County Economic Development Council, Greenfield Chamber of Commerce, Indiana Builders Association, local land surveyors, business owners, path & trail advocates
      ii. Public Hearings
         1. County Plan Commission meetings leading to endorsement of the comprehensive plan
         2. Board of Commissioners meetings leading to adoption of the comprehensive plan
   d. Identify and assess areas to be protected and preserved
      i. Historic places and structures
      ii. Natural and flood prone areas
      iii. Visual elements such as prominent topographies and streetscapes
   e. Identify and assess growth strategies
      i. Highest and best land uses
      ii. Optimal balance and mix of land uses
      iii. Recommended population and employment targets within a regional context
      iv. Best management practices for intensive commercial and industrial development
      v. Sustainable residential densities and development patterns
      vi. Capital improvement plans for roadway construction, management, and maintenance
   f. Thoroughfare Plan that contains the following elements:
      i. Meet state requirements for a thoroughfare plan
      ii. Create a classification system
         1. Develop a classification system for all transportation modes and facility types
         2. Propose cross sections for the developed classification system
         3. Take into account the fact that most streets are existing and will be retrofit projects as opposed to new design
         4. Include minimum to preferred design scenarios and mode information for cross sections and classifications.
         5. Identify, propose, and map locations for possible new street connections as well as pedestrian and bicycle connections
6. Include connections that range from small scale network enhancements (pedestrian and bicyclist path) to large scale proposals for new streets, where the contexts vary from developed to undeveloped areas.

7. Identify regional connections and corridors through review of and coordination with the local MPOs, INDOT, and Indiana University transportation plans

iii. Trails Plan
   1. Revise the existing trails plan to incorporate the recommendations of the new thoroughfare plan
   2. Update the classification system for the various bicycle and pedestrian path and trail locations in the county

h. Preparation of Plan Elements
   1. Components pursuant to IC 36-7-4-502
   2. Land Use – include discussion of land use types, categories, development patterns and trends, broad-based goals, policies, and objectives
   3. Land Use Map – depict land use designations based on growth projections, build-out scenarios, special planning areas and corridors, and established TIF districts
   4. Thoroughfare Plan - include analysis of circulation/transportation system and policies for expansion and management
   5. Thoroughfare Map – depict existing and future circulation/transportation system, dedicated and proposed street rights-of-way, pedestrian ways, bikeways, transit systems, airports, and railroads
   6. Housing Supply and Demand – provide a forecast of housing demand and preferred locations based on projected growth
   7. Conservation and Open Space – identify areas and tools for the preservation and management of pre-historic, historic, natural, and cultural resources
   8. Health/Safety – provide policies that will accommodate flood control, mitigate contamination associated with hazardous waste, and promote air and water quality
   9. Public Facilities/Services – identify the location and capacity of municipal and/or private services including: water, sewer, drainage, schools, fire stations, libraries, parks, etc.
   10. Economic Development – a strategy that promotes sustainable residential, commercial, and industrial growth based on sound economic analysis and policies (Attachment B).
   11. Community or “Specific” Plans – recommend goals and policies the preserve and promote platted communities and towns including, but not limited to: Shirley, Spring Lake, Philadelphia, Maxwell, Eden, Charlottesville, Mohawk, Finley, Warrington, and Willow Branch
   12. Strategies and Implementation Guidelines – provide directions in terms of how to use the comprehensive plan and related documents

i. Production and Submittal
   1. Provide at least twelve (12) draft comprehensive plan documents in notebook format.
   2. The first draft document(s) shall be completed and submitted to the County Plan Director by 29 April 2022. Final draft document(s) shall be completed and submitted to the Director by 30 June 2022 or as mutually agreed upon by both parties.
   3. A minimum of twelve (12) hardcopies and five (5) digital copies shall be submitted with the final draft.

2. Education and Training Sessions: The consultant shall provide for concurrent and post-production training sessions with members of the plan commission as needed to ensure correct and optimum utilization of the new comprehensive plan and related documents.

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ATTACHMENT B

SCOPE OF SERVICES
Comprehensive Plan
Hancock County, Indiana

Economic Development Strategic Plan

The Economic Development Strategic Plan is anticipated to be an integral part of the Comprehensive Plan and will include the following components, although the actual extent of the final scope of services will be determined through the Hancock County Area Plan Commission (“Plan Commission”). Candidates responding to the RFP shall offer additional insight into the approaches and strategies that have been gained from similar projects and confirm whether the following approach is appropriate given your understanding of the county’s conditions.

A. Phase 1 — Data Collection: The Consultant shall collect demographic, business, and workforce data in the county in order to assess local economic conditions, which will be necessary in developing and evaluating economic strategies and implementation tools in Phase II and III. Data collection is to be used for educating the Plan Commission and the public on the county’s current economic conditions. The data will yield the existing economic development challenges and opportunities. Phase I shall consist of, but not be limited to, the collection and analysis of the following data:

1. Demographic Data: The Consultant will collect detailed data to glean insights on population shifts/changes in the region and general market data (income levels, housing values, etc.) of the region and the county to ascertain local trends and compare them to national data.

2. Existing and Available Business Spaces: The Consultant shall collect data on existing businesses such as the county’s workforce and employment data (top industries, largest employers, etc.), sales data, consumer and purchasing trends, workforce locations, and demand forecasting of various retail categories. In addition, the Consultant shall identify and create an existing tenant space vacancy report for properties within the county.

3. Special Area Analysis: The Consultant shall provide an analysis of the four major special areas throughout the County: the U.S. 40 Corridor, the Mt. Comfort Road Corridor, the State Road 9 Corridor, and the area near the county jail facility along east US 40. The data gathered should identify the challenges and opportunities of each area, general trends, and highlight economic development opportunities.

4. Presentation of Data to the Plan Commission: The Consultant shall produce a Data Collection Report with the information collected in Phase I (items 1-3) and present the findings to the County Plan Commission.

B. Phase 2 — S.W.O.T. Facilitation: The Consultant shall lead the County Plan Commission through a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (S.W.O.T.) analysis. This analysis will be used in developing economic development strategies and the corresponding tools to implement the chosen strategies, which shall be the focus of the Economic Development Strategic Plan. Phase II will require the services of the Consultant in the following areas:

1. S.W.O.T. Facilitation: Utilizing the Data Collection Report information from Phase I, a dynamic facilitator from the Consultant team shall develop and lead the County Plan Commission through a S.W.O.T. analysis. A preliminary draft worksheet will be generated by the Consultant to serve as a guide for the types of issues that should be discussed with the Plan Commission as part of the S.W.O.T. analysis.
2. S.W.O.T. Findings: The Consultant shall utilize the findings of the Plan Commission S.W.O.T. process to help guide the County's economic development strategy recommendations in Phase III.

C. Phase 3 — Economic Development Strategic Plan: The Consultant will craft an economic development strategic plan including the implementation tools needed to realize the plan. Phase III will require the services of the Consultant in the following areas:

1. Strategy Recommendations: Upon analyzing the data collected from Phase I and the S.W.O.T analysis findings from Phase II, the Consultant shall recommend implementable strategies (i.e. stimulation of the economy, recruitment and/or retaining of businesses, job creation, site specific redevelopment, special area plans, etc.) for the County Plan Commission's consideration to meet the county's economic development goals.

2. Economic Development Toolbox Recommendations: The Consultant shall recommend specific tools that can be utilized to implement the identified economic development strategies. Such tools would include, but are not limited to the following: incentives targeting preferred industries/business sectors, encouragement of "green" initiatives, tenant improvement grants/loans, Tax Increment Financing district(s), façade improvement programs, gap financing programs, direct incentives, etc.

3. Public Engagement: The Consultant will conduct a minimum of three (3) open houses during this process to gather public input. The Consultant will be responsible for the public engagement, with the county staff providing a supporting role as needed. The Consultant will create an online portal to gather input from county residents throughout the process to gauge community interest and feedback on proposed strategies and implementation tools. The Consultant shall also conduct a business survey to better understand the issues and opportunities impacting the county's business community.

4. Economic Development Strategic Plan Final Draft Recommendations: The Consultant will draft an Economic Development Strategic Plan, with assistance from the County staff, for presentation to the County Plan Commission.

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