

CITY OF NORTH AUGUSTA, SOUTH CAROLINA

November 21, 2014

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – PLANNING CONSULTING SERVICES

TO UPDATE THE 2015 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The vast majority of North Augusta’s growth over the past 50-60 years has been “greenfield” growth, and the current (2005) Comprehensive Plan focused on greenfield areas. The ultimate geographic limits of North Augusta are set by neighboring jurisdictions that may limit the future greenfield development opportunities. Potentially, within a decade or so, the last of North Augusta’s “greenfield” growth areas may be nearly gone and the City will need to transition from a community that’s mainly focused on managing rapid suburban growth to one that will need to consider more infill and redevelopment, the sustainability of its economy and the vitality of its older neighborhoods, shopping centers and employment bases.

It is in this context that North Augusta is undertaking a complete update of its Comprehensive Plan. We anticipate that the land use and growth issues for the next 10-year plan will focus on issues such as infill, redevelopment, neighborhood stabilization and succession, and (re)development along the major transportation corridors. In addition, the City may need to alter its land use vision to respond to changing demographic trends, changing housing market demands, increasing energy costs, regional and global environmental changes, and industrial and workforce globalization.

In the past couple of years, the City has encountered or experienced:

- Inquiries from developers to implement specific transportation projects from the MPO’s Long-Range Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).
- Rezoning requests for multi-family developments on both infill and “greenfield” sites.
- The loss of some anchor tenants from highly-visible, first generation shopping centers.
- Increasing numbers of development inquires for both large and small infill sections or parcels in North Augusta.
- Requests by City Council and the Planning Commission to develop land use strategies along several major transportation corridors.
- Requests by citizens and City Council to address issues posed by aging, first-generation shopping centers.
- Inquiries by public officials and residents to improve North Augusta’s older neighborhoods. The City realizes moving forward that focus needs to include a strategic approach to addressing aging infrastructure, stabilizing neighborhoods, redeveloping and reenergizing older commercial areas, and offering a high quality of life to all citizens. With this in mind,

the 2015 Comprehensive Plan should broadly speak to these issues from a targeted goals and objectives standpoint and be crafted to foster subsequent small area plans that will address these issues in greater detail based on geographic, infrastructure, economic development, and socioeconomic needs.

## SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

- A. Required Professional Products and Services. The required minimum scope of services for the 2015 Comprehensive Plan is described below.

### Scope of Comprehensive Plan

- 1.1 Identify the key project stakeholders, including policy- and decision-makers. Develop a full understanding of the project expectations of those stakeholders and document those expectations. This task should include interactive discussions between consultants and stakeholders. Consultants should be prepared to present and explore a range of project and scope options, concepts, approaches, and issues with stakeholders, in order to effectively draw out informed stakeholder input.
- 1.2 Identify and document a detailed scope of work for the plan including identification of the issues that must be addressed by the final Comprehensive Plan, based on stakeholder and staff input, and on the consultant's professional expertise.
- 1.3 Develop a description of the type and format of the final Comprehensive Plan product(s) to be delivered at the close of the entire planning project, including descriptions of the product(s)' media, format, mapping, style, etc. Depending on the recommended types of plan products, this may include things such as: the general style and layout of plan maps, layout of web page(s)/materials, style and layout of pamphlets/brochures, table of contents for a plan document, and/or other.
- 1.4 Develop recommendations for the most effective and appropriate planning process/project approach that should be used for preparing the final Comprehensive Plan. We are open to creative approaches that will generate community goodwill and buy-in; public confidence in local government; excitement and enthusiasm among community leaders; positive press; and position subsequent neighborhood, corridor, and commercial center small area plans for success. This approach should include:
  - 1.4.1 Identify and recommend methods that should be used for public engagement and participation during the plan development. This public engagement strategy should be designed to ensure broad and enthusiastic citizen and business participation in the planning process, including a wide and representative demographic. The public engagement strategy should

also identify participation strategies for some of the City's official boards and commissions, and elected leaders.

This is considered a key deliverable. It is anticipated that the consultant will work closely with City staff in developing and recommending budget-appropriate approaches. Depending on the projected costs for public engagement and outreach, the consultant may need to prepare two or three cost alternatives that can be presented for consideration.

- 1.4.2. Identify and recommend the most appropriate methods and tasks for publicizing the project and maintaining interest and communication with the public. This public communication strategy should identify each of the methods of public communication that will be used during the Plan development, the points/dates at which they will be used during the project (tied to the Project Workplan), and estimated costs for each method. (For example, if direct mailings to citizens were to be recommended, then identify the number and type of mailings, and the cost for each.) The public communication strategy should identify any optional elements that could be eliminated if necessary to reduce the project cost.

This is considered a key deliverable. It is anticipated that the consultant will work closely with City staff in developing and recommending budget-appropriate approaches. Depending on the projected costs for public engagement and outreach, the consultant may need to prepare two or three cost alternatives that can be presented for consideration.

- 1.4.3 A detailed breakdown of the project into project phases and tasks for each phase, including a recommended timeline for each task/phase, and estimated costs for each phase.
- 1.4.4 It is intended that City staff may take on some tasks in the workplan, as practical and feasible, given the projected availability and expertise of staff. The consultant should therefore work closely with staff to identify those tasks that can be performed by staff and which tasks will require special consulting services.
- 1.4.5 The workplan should also provide cost estimates for costs other than City staff and consultant costs, for each task. These costs may include postage, mailings, materials, equipment or rentals, etc.

- 1.5 Develop recommendations for branding the Comprehensive Plan project. Create an overall project identity that successfully translates into the project's community image

and includes elements such as a project name, tag line, and logo with versions appropriate for print, Web and television coverage.

1.6 Attend and present at the 2015 *North Augusta Forward* Annual Retreat, typically scheduled in early June. At this point, it is anticipated that the Planning and Development portion of the retreat will be dedicated to the Comprehensive Plan project. Respondents are not required to outline the presentation in their Proposal. Rather, it is expected that City staff will work collaboratively with the selected consultant on this presentation and retreat session. The consultant's presentation to Council is intended to highlight the Comprehensive Plan project. The consultant's presentation should:

- 1.6.1 Provide Council with an overview of the various types of planning approaches that have been used successfully by similar communities to develop their Comprehensive Plans;
- 1.6.2 Provide Council with an overview of public engagement approaches and technologies that have been used successfully by other communities;
- 1.6.3 Describe the approach that the consultant is using to develop the Project Approach and Workplan. It is expected that a group discussion with Council about the presentation will occur.

Although the requirements above identify specific written report deliverables that might be used for certain tasks, respondents are free to propose different types and numbers of reports/documents that will be delivered to satisfy the needs described above. At a minimum, the respondents must provide deliverables that satisfy the required elements specified in §6-29-510 of the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994, as amended. Please specify in your Proposal the individual reports/documents that you propose to submit in order to meet the requirements of this RFP.

- B. Modifications to the Scope to Allow Flexibility in the Development of the Comprehensive Plan.** It is possible that in developing the scope and approach for the Comprehensive Plan, the consultant may need to assess whether or not the structure and timing of the proposed scope supports the development of the best possible Comprehensive Plan. This topic may be further explored in the course of stakeholder discussions. Should such discussions lead to a decision to revise the overall project scope, the City would seek to renegotiate revisions to the scope and contract with the selected consultant.

- C. **Project Time Frame.** The scope of work under this RFP should be accomplished by October 30, 2015. The consultant will be required to assist City staff in moving the Comprehensive Plan through to adoption once the final draft is ready for the adoption process.
- D. **Consultant-City Interaction.** It is expected that development of the deliverables specified in the RFP will be based on a high degree of interaction and collaboration with City staff, Boards and Commissions. The final products and recommendations should be tailored to the needs of the City of North Augusta, informed by discussions with key stakeholders, and based on a solid understanding of the community, its people, its local government, its development and planning history, and the capacity of the City to execute the recommended workplan. Proposals should allow sufficient meetings, contact, and interaction with City staff, Boards and Commissions and the North Augusta community.
- E. **Interim and Final Products.** Submitted Proposals should include sufficient interim products, report drafts, and/or key deliverables that City staff can provide timely feedback at key milestones during the project. Key interim deliverables and/or check-in or feedback points should be identified in the Proposal.
- F. **Format of Deliverables.** It is anticipated that most of the products for this project will be developed digitally, as Microsoft Office Word, Excel, or PowerPoint products, depending on the specific deliverable. Intermediate and review copies and comments may be distributed digitally. Where hard copies are needed, such as for meetings attended by the consultants, in most cases City staff can make hard copies of documents, spreadsheets, or presentations, provided sufficient notice is received before a meeting. Otherwise, consultants will need to bring any needed hard copies to meetings. The final deliverables shall be provided in the same manner as the intermediate and review copies in digital versions of Microsoft Word, Excel, and/or PowerPoint products. Any photographs delivered for the product for the product must be delivered in an acceptable digital format (on a DVD or CD). If any large-format deliverables are proposed, please limit posters to no more than 36" x 48".
- G. **Required Proposal Content and Format**
  - a. **Proposal Format and Copies.** Respondents should provide ten (10) hard copies of the Proposal, plus a digital copy on CD or DVD in PDF format, printable on standard 8.5" x 11" paper. Proposals should be no more than 30 single sided 8.5" x 11" printed pages, excluding cover/end pages, table of contents, and dividers. Proposals should use at least 11 point font.
  - b. **Project Proposal.** Proposals should be organized into the following seven sections, each section tab-separated and labeled accordingly:

- i. **Introductory Letter.** Letter should include the designation of a contact person, with appropriate contact information, including email, to address any questions concerning the Proposal.
  - ii. **Statement of Qualifications.** Provide a brief description of the consulting firm/team submitting the Proposal, and the firm/team’s qualifications.
  - iii. **Relevant Experience.** A description of similar projects that the consulting firm/team has conducted for similar communities, including relevant Comprehensive Plans or Land Use planning projects. For no more than three (3) of these projects provide a brief 1-2 page description of the project approach, including citizen participation and outreach methods, publicity and public communications methods, and contact names and phone numbers for the client organizations. Do not exceed 10 pages in total for this section.
  - iv. **Proposed Consultant Staff.** Identify the names and qualifications of personnel proposed for the project. Identify the project manager and team structure including city staff, boards and commissions. Identify the approximate percentage of work that each staff member will contribute to the firm/team’s total project effort.
  - v. **Project Approach.** Describe the proposed project approach and process for Comprehensive Plan 2015. Identify the project stages and tasks, interim and final deliverables, and proposed sequence of tasks. This section of the Proposal should also clearly identify the number of trips to/from North Augusta required for each project phase, and personnel included.
  - vi. **Project Schedule.** Provide a project schedule, identifying beginning and end dates of each of the major phases or tasks described. Also include anticipated dates for delivery of interim and final deliverables.
- c. **Cost Proposal.** The Cost Proposal should be delivered as a sealed enclosure. The work will be performed on a fixed price basis.
- i. The Cost Proposal should specify a “not-to-exceed” amount for the entire project. The budget proposal should break this not-to-exceed cost into its component costs, including:
    - 1. The costs for each of the project stages and tasks identified in the Proposal;

2. Costs for travel, lodging, and meals. Identify the minimum number of trips to and from North Augusta that will be required, the number of persons and days for each trip, and the project phase.
  3. Costs for any optional tasks, products, or services identified in the Proposal;
  4. Costs for any additional tasks, products, or services beyond those requested in this RFP that are incorporated in the Proposal.
- ii. Provide a fee schedule for supplemental charges that would be charged for additional unforeseen work tasks beyond those proposed/anticipated in the Proposal, should such services be required, such as: fees for conducting additional meetings with City staff/general public; additional trips to and from North Augusta; additional iterations/revisions of product deliverables outside of the original scope. Provide per-occurrence, per-unit, or per-hour rates, as appropriate, for such additional services.

#### H. **Deadline and Address**

Proposal packages must be received by the City of North Augusta Planning and Development Department **on or before 12 p.m. (noon), Friday, December 12, 2014**. All Proposals must be in a sealed package marked: REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL –COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2015. All proposals must be addressed to the following:

Scott Sterling, AICP  
Interim Director of Planning and Development  
100 Georgia Avenue  
North Augusta, SC 29841

Questions and clarification requests may also be sent to the Interim Director at 803-441-4225 or [ssterling@northaugusta.net](mailto:ssterling@northaugusta.net). If questions or clarification requests result in dissemination of new or revised information, the information will be transmitted to all proposers via email.

#### I. **Proposal Terms and Conditions**

- a. **Governing Law.** Bidder consents to personal jurisdiction and venue in a state court of competent jurisdiction in Aiken County, South Carolina. For the selected firm(s), the resulting contract will be governed by the laws of the State of South Carolina.
- b. Any expenses incurred by the Respondent(s) in appearing for an interview or in any way in providing additional information as part of the response to this Request for Proposals are solely the responsibility of the Respondent. The City of North Augusta is not liable for any costs incurred by Consultants in the preparation of proposals or

any work performed by the Consultant prior to the approval of an executed contract with the City of North Augusta.

- c. The City of North Augusta also notifies all Respondents that the City has the right to modify the Proposal and final selection of work product requirements as needed.
- d. The City is bound to comply with South Carolina’s Public Records Law, and information submitted with any proposal, with few exceptions, is a matter of public record.
- e. The City shall not infringe upon any intellectual property right of any vendor, but specifically reserves the right to use any concept or methods contained in the Proposal. Any desired restrictions on the use of information contained in the Proposal should be clearly stated.
- f. The City shall not be under any obligation to return any materials submitted in response to this RFP.

**J. Proposal Evaluation Schedule and Criteria**

- a. The estimated timetable for this RFP and proposed selection process is as follows, although the City reserves the right to alter this timetable as necessary.

November 21, 2014	RFP Issued
December 5, 2014	Deadline for submitting questions about the RFP
December 12, 2014	<b><u>Proposals due at 12 p.m. (noon)</u></b>
December 18, 2014	Notification of Consultants selected for interviews, if required
January 6-8, 2015	Consultant interviews/presentations, if required
January 12, 2015	Final selection; selected firm is notified

- b. Proposals will be evaluated by a representative interdisciplinary review team. The review team will make their recommendations to the Interim Director.
- c. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
  - i. **Firm/team experience, qualification, and reputation.** Includes firm/team’s experience in similar work and record of successful results.
  - ii. **Firm/team capacity.** The firm/team’s ability and availability to complete the project based on its current workload and resources.
  - iii. **Personnel.** Experience and qualifications of the personnel assigned to the project team. Considerable weight will be given to the experience and



qualifications of the individual project team members assigned to the project, and the involvement and commitment of senior staff to the project.

- iv. **Project approach.** The approach proposed for accomplishing the scope of services described in this RFP, including project stages/tasks, timeline, methods, etc.
  - v. **Proposal format and content.** This includes the degree to which the Proposal adheres to the requested proposal format, and the instructions and specifications of this RFP.
  - vi. **Cost.** The City will consider the Cost Proposal in the overall evaluation.
  - vii. **Other.** Ability to provide a local presence during the process and/or familiarity with North Augusta.
- d. Based on the results of the evaluations, the review team may request interviews with one or more selected finalist(s). **Firms/teams submitting proposals should therefore be available on January 6-8, 2015, in the event an interview is requested.**
  - e. After identifying the selected firm/team, the City will then attempt to negotiate a contract agreement with the selected firm. If no agreement can be reached with the top ranked firm, staff may release that firm and proceed with discussions with the second ranked firm.
  - f. The City reserves the right to reject any or all bids or proposals, waive technicalities, and to be the sole judge of suitability of the proposed services for its intended use and further specifically reserves the right to make the award in the best interests of the City. Consultants may be asked to substantiate Proposal representations made in any inquiry, as well as provide supplemental information or additional information about the scope of work outlined in their Proposal.

#### K. Reference Materials

- a. Additional information about the City of North Augusta is available on the City's Web site at [www.northaugusta.net](http://www.northaugusta.net) . The Planning and Development department pages have a wealth of information related to City and regional demographics, codes, ordinances, plans, departments and maps. Questions about any of the online materials – or how to find particular materials of interest – should be directed to the Interim Director only.
- b. To learn more about the regional transit plans for North Augusta and the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA), see: <http://www.augustaga.gov/index.aspx?nid=680>