

February 19, 2008

CITY OF BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
UPDATE OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

CLOSING DATE: MARCH 28, 2008, 5:00 P.M.

SUMMARY

The City of Beaufort, South Carolina is requesting qualifications from qualified planning consultants interested in preparing a new Comprehensive Plan for the City and its growth area.

Seven (7) hard copies and one digital copy of the team's qualifications must be provided and should be hand-carried or delivered by traceable means by March 28, 2008 to the following address:

By Mail:

City of Beaufort Planning Department
Attn: Libby Anderson, Planning Director
P.O. Drawer 1167
Beaufort, South Carolina 29901

By Hand Delivery:

City of Beaufort Planning Department
Attn: Libby Anderson, Planning Director
701 Craven Street
Beaufort, South Carolina 29902

All responses should be clearly marked on the outside of a sealed envelope with the following: "RFQ Comprehensive Plan Update."

PLANNING AREA DESCRIPTION

Beaufort, the second oldest city in the state, is located in the South Carolina's Lowcountry. The City is the county seat of Beaufort County, one of the fastest growing counties in the state. The City includes a 300-acre National Historic Landmark District and a Marine Corps Air Station. The City's resident population is estimated at approximately 13,000; the daytime population is much larger. The Intracoastal Waterway forms the south edge of the City's downtown area. Government services and tourism form the base of the City's economy.

The City, Beaufort County, and the Town of Port Royal all recently adopted the Northern Beaufort County Regional Plan. This plan sets out mutually-accepted growth areas for the City and the Town of Port Royal. The effect of the plan is to open up wide areas of Port Royal Island and Lady's Island for annexation into the City and development under the City's development standards ordinance.

PROJECT GOALS

The City's new comprehensive plan should achieve the following goals:

- Meet the requirements of the state planning enabling law, including the new Priority Investment Act.

- Establish a clear vision for how the City desires to develop. This includes defining where and how development should occur and how this development will be efficiently serviced. Developing this vision will involve significant and creative public input. Several recent annexations and project approvals have generated considerable public concern. This is in large part due to the lack of consensus on a community vision.
- Lay the groundwork for additional form-based development codes and possibly “transect” type zoning.
- Serve as the guide for operations and capital improvements planning and as the basis for any major policy decision.
- Identify specific changes that should be made to the Unified Development Ordinance and other regulations to achieve the goals of the plan.

PLANNING PHILOSOPHY

The new comprehensive plan should incorporate the following planning principles:

- Traditional town planning
- Smart growth
- Compact development
- Sustainable development

MAJOR ISSUES

While there are a number of challenges facing the City, the new comprehensive plan should specifically address the following critical issues:

- The City of Beaufort is the county seat; however, several important government offices have recently moved to areas outside the city. A number of others have threatened to do so. The new comprehensive plan should contain goals and strategies for retaining and strengthening Beaufort’s role as the center of government, commerce, and urban living.
- One of the goals of the City’s current comprehensive plan is to increase densities in existing neighborhoods in an effort to curb sprawl and develop an active urban environment. The new comprehensive plan should include specific strategies for increasing density in the urban area while enhancing neighborhood livability.
- The Boundary Street Master Plan proposes significant new commercial and residential development outside the core downtown area. The new comprehensive plan should demonstrate how the traditional downtown core and emerging uptown area can be integrated and become mutually supportive.
- The recently adopted Northern Regional Plan opens up large areas in the County for upzoning by the City. The Northern Regional Plan contains a Future Land Use Map that contains very general guidance for land development. The new comprehensive plan should take the general land use recommendations in the Northern Regional Plan and develop a detailed land use plan that includes all areas within the City’s growth boundaries, so that elected and appointed officials, and the public at large, know exactly where and how the area is to develop.
- The Northern Regional Plan will encourage the annexation of areas geographically distant from the city center. The new comprehensive plan should contain strategies as to how newly annexed areas can be integrated into the community fabric. In addition, the plan should evaluate how these areas can be efficiently serviced, understanding that urban design impacts

service delivery. The goal is not to create competing communities in outlying areas, but to ensure that new development adds to the health, vitality, and economic growth of the City.

- The City's economy is based on tourism, government services, particularly the military, and housing development. The new comprehensive plan should contain goals and strategies to build on the City's assets and diversify the economy. The plan should also address challenges that may be posed by military expansion or contraction.
- Preserving the area's sensitive natural resources is critical to the long-term viability of the area. The comprehensive plan should include a land use plan and related strategies for guiding growth to appropriate locations in sustainable densities.

FUNDAMENTALS

In preparing the new comprehensive plan, the consultant should consider the following:

- The City has a long planning history. There are numerous existing plans and reports, some very recent, which should be used as the basis for the data collection and general policy direction. These include the Northern Regional Plan, the Boundary Street Master Plan, the previous Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Plan Update, and the forthcoming Preservation Plan Update. While certain information may need to be updated or gaps filled, there should be no duplication of data collection and analysis.
- The plan should be design-based rather than policy-based. Beaufort's history, identity, and economy are based in large part, on the City's visual appearance. The plan should contain detailed design objectives and strategies for preserving and enhancing the City's urban design.
- The Historic District is the physical and emotional heart of the City and is the character-defining feature of the community. New development should preserve and enhance the City's historic character, and support the Historic District's role as the core of the City.
- The plan should identify specific changes that should be made to the Unified Development Ordinance and other regulations to achieve the goals of the plan.

FORMAT

The new comprehensive plan should:

- Be a user-friendly document available in both written and digital form, containing high quality graphics and maps. The plan should be visually attractive and pleasurable to read.
- Contain an executive summary or other such summary document that can be easily and widely distributed.
- Be prepared in a format that is easy to update.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The project is to prepare a comprehensive plan for the City of Beaufort and its growth area as set out in the Northern Regional Plan. Changing conditions in the area dictate that the planning effort goes beyond the typical plan update and result in a new comprehensive plan. A steering committee and staff will work with the consultant to guide the planning process. The project should take no more than 12 months.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Teams shall submit written qualifications which clearly demonstrate their ability to provide quality services in a timely and cost effective manner. Submittals should include the following:

- General background and resources;
- Documentation of experience on similar projects (include client references);
- Outline of proposed work-plan and schedule;
- Organization of personnel and contractors;
- Unique qualifications and methodologies; and
- Additional related information.

The team must be licensed to do business in the City of Beaufort and provide proof of General Liability Insurance and Workers Compensation.

SELECTION PROCESS

City Staff will review all submitted qualifications. The intent is to select three to five firms that will be invited for an interview. Selection criteria will include: qualifications of the firm based on previous performance with similar projects; qualifications of key personnel; understanding of the project; project management capabilities; clear indication work will be completed in a timely manner; and previous performance with similar projects.

The selection committee's rankings shall be forwarded as a recommendation to the City Manager for review and consideration.

The City shall not be responsible for any of the costs associated with responding to this request for qualifications and all submitted materials shall become the property of the City. Furthermore, the City expressly reserves the following rights and options:

- To reject any or all teams and re-advertise if deemed necessary;
- Waive any or all formalities and technicalities; and
- Approve, disapprove, or cancel all services associated with the project;

For information or questions concerning this solicitation, please contact Libby Anderson, Planning Director, City of Beaufort, at (843) 525-7011 or at landerson@cityofbeaufort.org.

The City of Beaufort does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services.