

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)
City of Abilene, Texas
Planning and Development Services



Purpose

The City of Abilene is soliciting “Statement of Qualifications” for a South Downtown Master Plan, focused on the southside of Downtown, from a consulting firm or team with downtown planning, downtown revitalization, redevelopment, design, and implementation experience.

Project Location

The City of Abilene, Texas, a City of approximately 116,000, is located approximately 180 miles due west of the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. We’re situated in west central Texas near the geographic center of the state. Situated adjacent to Interstate 20, Abilene is the center of a 22-county area commonly referred to as the Big Country. Abilene serves as the county seat for Taylor County.

The Central Business District is undergoing a renaissance with the steady growth of cultural, shopping, and dining attractions centered on historic Cypress Street, stretching from the Abilene Civic Center to the restored T&P Railroad Depot and the new Frontier Texas! venue, which houses a Visitor Information Center. Trolley buses provide free transportation to the downtown. Thus far, this renaissance has generally been experienced in “North Downtown”, the area of the central business district north of the east-west railroad tracks that cut through the middle of town.

This Plan will cover the entirety of “South Downtown”, approximately 50 blocks bounded by South 1st Street on the north, South 7th Street on the south, Butternut Street on the west, and Treadaway Blvd on the east (to include properties on both sides of the bounding streets). In addition, the plan will cover a small portion of “North Downtown”. The subject area is approximately 23 blocks bounded by North 6th Street on the north, North 1st Street on the south, Pine Street on the west, and Treadaway Blvd on the east.

Project Overview

The South Downtown Master Plan is intended to guide redevelopment and revitalization of the area and provide solid recommendations for making physical improvements to downtown that would encourage redevelopment and enhance its functionality as a vibrant part of the central business area, while recognizing its function as the center of County government. The Plan for this area should be complementary to and compatible with the improvements in “North Downtown”. Consultants will be asked to explore, determine viability, and provide a professional recommendation for redevelopment strategies intended to identify development opportunities and facilitate sustained ongoing revitalization, including special districts, public-private partnerships, and other available tools.

The City anticipates that a series of public meetings and focus groups, particularly including key stakeholders, such as the Downtown Business Association, individual businesses and property owners, downtown residents, and other interested groups and individuals, will need to be facilitated by the consultant to formulate key recommendations on downtown options.

Anticipated Project Deliverable

The end result of this planning process will be a *South Downtown Master Plan* document that includes detailed recommendations for the following:

- Land Use Plan consistent with the general guidance in the City's Comprehensive Plan
- Design Guidelines & Development Standards
- Commercial/Retail Development
- Residential Development
- Infrastructure/Traffic Improvements/Circulation
- Alternative Transportation Options (Transit, Bicycle, Pedestrian)
- Connectivity with North Downtown
- Streetscaping and other aesthetic improvements
- Implementation Strategies, and SWOT analysis

Format of Submittals

In responding to this RFQ, applicants must submit a document that describes the company, consultant(s), and key staff members who will be directly involved in this planning process; a list of similar projects previously completed; a list of references from similar projects; and other information relevant to the services offered and expertise provided by the respondent.

Evaluation Committee and Selection Criteria

A committee of City staff will evaluate the submitted materials. The staff may consider but shall not be limited to the following review criteria:

- Experience and past performance of the firm and/or personnel with the type of work identified.
- Familiarity of the firm and/or personnel with downtown planning, urban planning principles, downtown development, and implementation strategies.
- Availability of knowledgeable personnel within the firm or on a consultant team.
- Capability of the firm or consultant team to complete the project in a timely manner.

The City staff may take any of the following actions after reviewing the submitted materials:

- 1) Contact respondents and request additional materials or supporting information.
- 2) Contact respondents for an in-person interview.
- 3) Prepare a Request for Proposals to be sent to one or more of the respondents.
- 4) Enter into direct negotiation with a respondent.
- 5) Re-advertise and/or reissue the original RFQ or an amended RFQ.

- 6) Determine that responses received are inadequate and/or that the services sought are no longer necessary or desired.

Rights of the City

This RFQ does not commit the City to enter into a contract, nor does it obligate the City to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals or in anticipation of a contract. The City reserves the right to:

- Make selections or solicit additional responses based on its sole discretion;
- Reject any and all proposals and enter into direct negotiations with any, all or some of the providers whether or not they provided a submittal to this RFQ;
- Issue subsequent Requests for Qualifications or Requests for Proposals;
- Remedy technical errors in the Request for Qualifications process;
- Approve or disapprove the use of particular sub-consultants;
- Enter into an agreement with any provider or negotiate with more than one provider for the provision of any, all or some of the listed services.

Timeframe

Interested firms should submit a statement of qualifications no later than 5:00 pm, Friday, August 1, 2008 to:

Jon C. James
Director of Planning and Development Services
City of Abilene
P.O. Box 60
555 Walnut St.
Abilene, TX 79602-0060

Interested parties may also forward a response by email as an attached Microsoft Word document to the following address: jon.james@abilenetx.com