

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Consultant Services

**Comprehensive Planning and Five-
Year Strategic Implementation Plan**

June 2024

Qualifications Due August 5, 2024

Mandatory Pre-Proposal Meeting July 18, at 2:00 PM.



I. INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Uniontown (RACU) is to enhance and improve the recreational, residential, and commercial areas within the city. RACU works towards redevelopment, replanning, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of blighted areas using various programs such as demolition, rehabilitation, historic preservation, brownfield cleanup, land banking, and planning. By doing so, RACU is committed to creating a safer, more vibrant, and prosperous community for Uniontown residents.

2. PURPOSE AND INTENT

RACU is seeking proposals from qualified planning consultants to provide professional services to develop a new, implementable comprehensive plan in compliance with the latest edition of the PA Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) and guided by the planning principles and objectives set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) regarding creating an implementable plan. The implementable comprehensive plan will present a vision for the City's future and a context for attaining its goals. The plan will be strategic and will outline workable action plans (focusing on the next five years), means of financing, and capacity to implement. The consultant to be hired will provide the full range of planning services necessary to undertake the implementable comprehensive plan.

3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

RACU has been awarded funds from the Local Share Account (LSA) in partnership with Uniontown Downtown Business District for strategic planning in addition the Uniontown Planning Commission has come together to improve an existing Comprehensive Plan and participate in developing the five-year strategic implementation plan. The existing Comprehensive Plan must be reviewed to ensure that it follows MPC and DCED guidelines as referenced above. Specific attention must be given to land use (53 P.S. Section 10301(a)(2)) housing needs of present residents and those individuals and families anticipates to reside in the municipality (53 P.S. Section 10301(a)(2.1)) and a statement about the existing and proposed development the municipality is compatible with the existing and proposed development and plans in contiguous portions of neighboring municipalities (or any of the alternative statements) ((53 P.S. Section 10301(a)(5)) The consultant must review this plan and make recommendation as to areas that should be included in the Strategic Implementation Plan.

This RFP seeks qualified consultants to help shape this Strategic Implementation Plan and once that work is complete, the RACU and its partners will implement the actionable items. This effort will enlighten future activities and grant applications

to support the aims of community and economic development. Ultimately, the project aims to inform the City of Uniontown of the potential avenues for redevelopment. The final work product could be considered a guidebook for the next five years.

4. QUALIFICATION

Consultants must demonstrate prior experience in research, analysis, and public policy. Consultants with experience in developing recommendations including demonstrative charts, graphs, maps, and other anecdotal data to be used as part of later grant submissions are preferred.

5. SCOPE OF WORK

The consultant or consulting team will provide the planning services necessary for the completion of an implementable Comprehensive Plan for City of Uniontown. The following sections describe the scope of work and specific deliverables. The successful firm shall be responsible for completion of the project up to and including adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

A. Public Engagement and Participation

Attendance and presentations at public meetings, City of Uniontown Planning Commission meetings, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee meetings, Redevelopment Authority, Uniontown Downtown Business District, and City of Uniontown Council meetings is required throughout the process. Additional advisory/work group meetings should also occur during the process. The consultant shall assist in organizing one neighborhood meeting in each of the City's seven (7) neighborhoods (City staff may host). Additional attendance is required at two (2) Uniontown Planning Commission meeting, one (1) Redevelopment Authority Meeting, one (1) Uniontown Downtown Business District meeting, and two (2) City Council meetings, and one public hearing before Council in person.

The City of Uniontown recently completed a Comprehensive Plan with missing components. It will be critical for the selected consultant to understand this strategy and integrate it into the implementation of plan goals.

There should be a concerted effort to stimulate and obtain public input and response during the preparation of the draft and to involve appropriate elected officials and municipal staff. The public participation process should be designed to engage as broad an audience as possible and provide real-world challenges and issues that the Strategic Implementation Plan will address. The consultant shall describe its proposed strategy for public participation and outreach. The public participation plan should at a minimum include:

- an outline of the meetings held with each specific entity

- a scientific survey of City residents in collaboration with City staff
- a series of neighborhood public meetings

Creativity in outreach efforts is encouraged. In consultation with the Steering Committee, the consultant shall develop press releases and may be required to engage local media as part of the public participation process. Public engagement efforts should target stakeholders throughout the City in various settings, such as at community events or social gatherings. Feedback gathered from the public will be summarized and incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

B. Focus Areas

RACU continues its mission to provide safe, sustainable, and growing neighborhoods in the City. The Comprehensive Plan should focus on how to implement and achieve plan goals while meeting the requirements of the MPC. Specific focus areas shall include:

1. **Goal Statement and Priority Goals Summary.** A statement of objectives of the municipality concerning its future development, including, but not limited to, the location, character and timing of future development. A summary of five to seven goals (listed below) shall be given with 3-5 achievable objectives to meet those goals.
 - I. **Organized Land Use** - Proposals for improvements in land use, which include provisions for the amount, intensity, character, sustainability and timing of land use proposed for residence, industry, major traffic and transit facilities, utilities, community facilities, public grounds, parks and recreation facilities, flood plains and other areas of special hazards and other similar uses.
 - II. **Improvements to Zoning Map and Regulations** - A comprehensive review of the City Zoning Ordinance shall be conducted, recommending improvements to zoning regulations and zoning maps that align with neighborhood and stakeholder goals.
 - III. **Housing Stabilization** A plan to meet the housing needs of present residents and of those individuals and families anticipated to reside in the city, which include conservation of presently sound housing, rehabilitation of declining housing in neighborhoods, and the accommodation of expected new housing in different dwelling types and at appropriate densities for households of all income levels.
 - IV. **City Asset Management** - A plan for City facilities, which shall include municipal buildings, fire and police stations, recreation facilities / areas, and infrastructure. This item shall also include discussion of short- and long-range plan implementation strategies to assist in capital improvements programming and identification of public funds potentially

available.

- V. **Growth of Industry and Residency** - A strategic assessment of the shrinking of the City of Uniontown both via population and industry that has occurred over the previous 100 years. The plan shall provide deliverable and executable plans / goals to attract new industry and residents into the City.

C. Identify, articulate and prioritize goals, objectives, strategies, and performance metrics

The plan document shall be efficient in words, avoid jargon, and be written for use by City Council, Uniontown Planning Commission, RACU, UDBD, City staff, partner groups, and citizens who will implement the plan after completion. The plan must provide workable action plans for focus areas and goals – a series of strategic projects, programs, and initiatives – that emerge from the planning process. The plan will set priorities and a timetable for action based on expected results and ability to finance and implement. Action plans shall include reasonable depth and detail – specific action steps, responsible parties, proposed means of financing, and measurements of performance – to facilitate implementation after the plan is completed. The consultant shall include immediate action recommendations that would provide short-term, visible results and motivate further implementation of the plan with specific focus of the strategic five-year implementation.

6. PROJECT COORDINATION

Throughout the project, coordination will be maintained between RACU and the consultant.

The consultant’s approach and method must include, at a minimum:

1. An initial meeting with the planning commission, the steering committee, and City staff to review the project scope and establish the project delivery schedule and public engagement program.
2. Regular meetings with the Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Uniontown and Steering Committee.
3. Input gathering from the public through a variety of techniques to include but not necessarily limited to public workshops and surveys that will result in a wide cross section of people having been consulted.
4. At a minimum, bi-monthly project review meetings/conference calls with key staff.
5. Preparation and presentation of draft and final plans.
6. Presentation of the final plan to the public and the City of Uniontown Council and participation in a public hearing to formally present the plan for approval and adoption if necessary.

7. DELIVERABLES

The consultant shall submit the following products to the City of Uniontown in accordance with the approved Project Completion Schedule:

1. Five (5) printed and bound color copies of the final comprehensive plan and executive summary.
2. Three (3) Complete Electronic Copies of the final plan in PDF format. Files shall be indexed for simplified review. Copies shall be on individual thumb drives.
3. The consultant will be responsible for providing all necessary materials including drafts of the Comprehensive Plan at all meetings, workshops, and hearings. The consultant shall submit electronic copies of all materials, research, data, GIS shapefiles, maps, etc. developed or collected over the course of plan development to the City in editable formats for the City's future use. The software packages used will be agreed to prior to any work being produced. Maps should be developed for easy integration into an ArcGIS Online system.
4. Completed community survey identifying the priorities of each neighborhood and the City as a whole.

8. INTERVIEW

The Executive Director expects to schedule interviews with any or all of the applicants submitting a proposal, as agreed upon by both parties. Although interviews are expected, the proposal should be comprehensive and complete on its face. RACU reserves the right to request clarifying information subsequent to submission of the proposal.

Scope of Services and Responsibilities shall be documented by Letter Agreement and shall include the following:

- Research and analysis of successful models for community redevelopment specific to blight removal and aligned with similar community makeup, demographics, and economies
- Successful models identified should also have demonstrated results by engaging the communities via listening sessions, responsiveness to vision and needs as well as community buy-in and support.
- Conduct listening sessions in the target communities.
- Recommendations for action recognizing the particular needs and circumstances of the ARPA Qualified Census Tract communities.
- The final report of best practices should include but not be limited to: a detailed program identifying the lead organization and public/private partners'

participation and investment; a project timeline demonstrating when the project moved from concept to implementation; outcome measurements; and lessons learned.

9. BUDGET AND TIMELINE

The budget for the project is \$40,000.00. The project timeline would begin upon consultant selection and end prior to May 2025

10. FORMAT OF PROPOSALS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Introduction (5-20)

- a. Cover sheet with Firm name, Address, Contact information, and Project Title.
- b. Letter of Interest (1 page).
- c. Executive Summary (1 page).

2. Organization (5-20)

Brief organizational profile, including background and experience of the firm(s). Location of office from which the project management will be performed. Project organization chart including key staff to be assigned and their roles in the project. A statement shall be included indicating the current workload of assigned staff and their capacity to undertake this project in a timely manner.

3. Basic Understanding of the Work (5-20)

Narrative addressing the consultant's understanding of the scope of service/activities to be provided, timeline of completion including a public meeting schedule, and overall project approach / process to be employed.

Narrative proposing innovative solutions and approaches to address the City's challenges can lead to more creative and impactful comprehensive plans. This can include leveraging technology, data analytics, and best practices from other municipalities.

4. Consultant's ability to comply with all relevant laws and regulations (5-20)

Listing of proposed deliverables for each work step in compliance with the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Code. Consultants must provide a work program for all tasks within each phase of the project.

5. Knowledge of Applicable Regulations (10-30)

Consultant firm's experience and references, including Comprehensive Plan (as defined by the PA Municipalities Planning Code) experience and

knowledge of Federal, State and local code and regulations.

6. Consultant's relevant experience and past performance (5-20)

Listing, description, and link to similar projects that have been completed in the past 5 years by the prime consultant and/or proposed subcontractors. Reference list (minimum of three) that may be contacted by the city for recently completed similar projects.

7. Qualifications of Consultant staff to be assigned (10-20)

Key Personnel to be utilized on this project and their expertise in developing comprehensive plans, as well as capacity to complete the project in a timely manner. Resumes shall be included here. A listing of the percentage of total project hours worked by each employee in relation to the total project shall be included.

8. Equity Lens (5-20)

Narrative incorporating an equity lens throughout the planning process ensures that the comprehensive plan addresses disparities and prioritizes equitable outcomes for all residents, particularly those from historically marginalized communities.

9. Consultant's commitment and ability to complete work within designated time schedule and financial limitations (10-30)

This project is funded through the Local Share Account (LSA). The funding will expire June 2025 and therefore this project must be completed no later than May of 2025.

10. Schedule of Rates (5-15)

The Proposal shall include hourly rates of staff, resumes and references for all engineering staff which are expected to provide services if selected.

11. Insurance (0-1)

Certificate of insurance detailing the amounts of all insurance coverage. Electronic submissions should include:

11. DATA TO BE PROVIDED BY RACU

At a minimum, the RACU will provide GIS data regarding the Qualified Census Tracts, recreational areas, sewage lines, zoning, and subject properties for the program. Any other requests for relevant datasets should be outlined in the proposal.

12. MANDATORY PRE-PROPOSAL MEETING

To provide more explanation of the project, and answer questions, a mandatory Pre-Proposal Meeting will be held virtually on Thursday July 18, at 2:00 PM. To register for the Pre-Proposal Meeting, please complete this registration form [HERE](#) by Friday July 11, 2024 at 4:00 PM. If a consultant does not attend the meeting, they will not be invited to submit a proposal.

13. ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF PROPOSALS

RACU reserves the right to reject any and/or all Proposals when such rejection is in the interest of RACU. RACU also reserves the right to waive any information and technicalities in the process. The contract will be awarded on the basis of the factors which are listed below. However, the RACU reserves the right to award a contract in its best interest.

- Understanding of the proposed outcomes and ARPA Vacant Buildings Program
- Previous experience with similar types of work
- Personnel qualifications
- Approach and capacity
- References
- Cost

Depending upon the competitiveness and number of proposals received, the RACU may elect to conduct interviews of consultants.

14. GENERAL INFORMATION

Questions about this RFQ will be answered during the mandatory Pre-Proposal Virtual Meeting. Questions and their responses may be shared with other consultants. Proposals will be received electronically until **3:00 pm on August 5, 2024**, Proposals received after the time and date stated will not be accepted. It is expected that RACU will choose among the proposals within 16 days after the proposal due date. Proposals will be evaluated to determine the respondent who is responsive to the solicitation and is most advantageous to RACU in terms of capacity, experience, and other factors considered.

**RACU RESERVES THE RIGHT TO WAIVE IRREGULARITIES AND TO
REJECT ANY AND ALL QUALIFICATIONS**