



Request for Proposals 2023-08

Cherokee County Comprehensive Land Use Plan & Unified Development Ordinance to include Implementation of Zoning

Date Issued: October 21, 2022

Due Date: December 2, 2022

RFP Opening Date: December 5, 2022

Mailing Address for Proposal Submission: Cherokee County
ATTN: Abi Reid, Administrative Specialist
110 Railroad Ave
Gaffney, SC 29340

Questions regarding RFP should be submitted via email rfp@cherokeecountysc.com

Purpose

Cherokee County is seeking proposals from qualified, professional consultants who will assist the County in concurrently updating our Comprehensive Plan and developing a Unified Development Ordinance to include the implementation of zoning.

The existing Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the County was developed in 2004, with no updates since. There have been significant changes to the County and surrounding areas since the plan's original inception.

The selected consultants will assist the County in the development of a comprehensive land use plan that is compliant with state law while creating the policy framework for intelligent growth over a 10-15-year planning horizon.

Cherokee County currently does not have zoning and only utilizes land development regulations. The County desires to implement a responsible zoning plan while protecting our most rural areas from overburdensome regulations.

Expectations of Consultant

Throughout the process the selected consultant will be expected to utilize their experience and drive the process. To achieve this goal, and utilize the experience of the selected consultant, the County will require the expectations outlined below be met and identified within the consultant's proposal.

1. Educate County Council and County staff on the different options for zoning and make recommendations based on development trends in the County.
2. Initial meeting with County staff to review a project timeline, schedule meetings, and begin the process of data acquisition.
3. Review all existing plans, maps, documents, data and other materials relevant to the project. The County will provide all available existing documentation to the consultant. The consultant will study and consolidate applicable materials into the Plan and UDO.
4. Conduct meetings with key elected and appointed officials, stakeholder groups, and the general public. The selected consultant will lead stakeholder outreach and participation efforts.
5. Plan and implement an extensive stakeholder and public outreach process using a range of methods to inform and involve stakeholders, citizen organizations and the general public. Address the public hearing process and meetings with County staff, citizen groups, applicable advisory committees, local units of government, etc.
6. Develop Plan goals, objectives and implementation strategies based on technical data and public input.
7. Draft materials for review and comment by the County in accordance with a schedule developed at the beginning of the planning process.
8. Confirm the final Plan and UDO conforms to existing South Carolina statutes.
9. Analyze consistency of current County ordinances and policies in relationship to the Plan goals and objectives.

10. Prepare draft documents for public review and comment, and present to Planning Commission and County Council. The plan and UDO should be presented in a format and language that is user-friendly and easily understood by the general public.
11. Prepare final draft documents and present at all associated meetings and public hearings for adoption of the plan and UDO.
12. Provide at least weekly updates, primarily via e-mail or telephone/video and occasionally in-person, to update County staff on project status, discuss issues and review drafts. Periodic written status reports and status update presentations may also be required to the Planning Commission and County Council.

Scope of Services

The Scope of Services described herein is a framework of major tasks as currently identified by the County for the consultant's information. This is not a comprehensive list. A complete Scope of Services and an estimated fixed fee will be developed in consultation with the selected firm based on the County's needs and the firm's experience and capabilities.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan

1. Project Meetings. The consultant is expected to meet regularly with staff. When appropriate, these meetings may be via telephone or video conference. The consultant will meet with the Planning Commission to collect input and provide updates. In addition, the consultant will solicit input and feedback from the Planning Commission and County Council and provide interim reports, presentations, and updates to each as required and appropriate, and attend the Plan's formal adoption by the Planning Commission.
2. Public Engagement and Communications. Public Participation is essential to this planning effort and must include an outreach and public participation process designed to engage the public and specific stakeholders in visioning the future of the County. Significant public input will be required throughout the process. We anticipate that a number of public meetings will be held in order to seek the opinions and views of the public at large, report on progress as the plan develops, solicit comments on specific ideas or concepts, and identify problems or barriers that must be acknowledged and overcome. Public involvement in the planning process and acceptance of the final plan is critical to the success of this effort, and respondents should explain their approach and public participation plan in detail in their responses.
3. Plan Development. The consultant will serve as the primary drafter of the plan and shall perform research and develop materials for the Plan, including but not limited to:
 - a. A baseline review of existing plans and relevant information, including current codes and policies, demographic and census data, and other information relevant to the required plan elements
 - b. Develop an inventory and assessment of issues and opportunities based on work with staff, Planning Commission, and the public participation process.
 - c. Develop a vision for Cherokee County that will serve as a focal point for goals, policy, and strategy decisions.
 - d. Draft the Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Commission review and Council adoption.

- e. Provide digital, editable, working and printable copies of all final documents including reports, maps, and final plan.
4. Plan Content. The Plan document will include assembling and analyzing data regarding existing conditions within the established planning area and utilizing that data to develop policies, actions, and an implementation plan to guide future development and decision making over a 15-year timeframe. The Plan must meet the requirements of SC Code 6-29-510(D).

Unified Development Ordinance with Implementation of Zoning

1. Conduct a comprehensive review and analysis of the land use regulations and develop a Unified Development Ordinance, including the creation and implementation of zoning in the unincorporated areas of the County.
2. Public Engagement and Communications. Public Participation is essential to this planning effort and must include an outreach and public participation process designed to engage the public and specific stakeholders in visioning the future of the County. Significant public input will be required throughout the process. We anticipate that a number of public meetings will be held in order to seek the opinions and views of the public at large, report on progress, solicit comments on specific ideas or concepts, and identify problems or barriers that must be acknowledged and overcome. Public involvement in the planning process and acceptance of the final UDO is critical to the success of this effort, and respondents should explain their approach and public participation plan in detail in their responses.
3. Identify and recommend for inclusion, text and procedures that have not been identified by County staff in the professional opinion of the selected firm and should be addressed to ensure a complete and effective ordinance that meets local needs.
4. Identify and correct any internal inconsistencies, omissions or errors, including grammatical and other issues in the plans.
5. Ensure that the UDO conforms to generally accepted land use law and principles as well as state and federal statutes and case law.
6. Create, to the fullest extent possible, a user friendly, simplified, clear and easily understood UDO, including:
 - a. Revise vague, unclear or confusing language and ensure that language, terms and intent are consistent from one section to another.
 - b. Ensure the essential words used in the text of the document are defined in the Definitions section and revise incorrect or inadequate definitions.
 - c. Revise sections of the ordinances that are in conflict with other sections, have unintended impacts on other sections or are overly complex.
 - d. Recommend improvements to the layout of the ordinance.

7. Create the Table of Permitted Uses and Development Standards which result in a more modern and comprehensive list of permitted uses tailored to the newly developed zoning districts and development climate.
8. Prepare a zoning map that corresponds with new zoning districts.
9. The firm will be required to attend and facilitate public hearings with the County Council, Planning Commission, residents, and other stakeholders and prepare multiple drafts of the proposed code and ordinance for review and comment.

Submittal Requirements

The following materials must be received by the submittal deadline for a proposal to be considered. However, during the selection process, the County reserves the right to request additional information or to seek clarification from the consultant/firm, or to allow for correction of errors and/or omissions. The submittal requirements are as follows:

1. Project Overview
 - A. General Information: Provides a brief overview of firm, including qualifications to execute the contract, and company mission or statement of beliefs.
 - B. Project Understanding: A summary of the consultants understanding of the project as described in this RFP.
2. Qualifications
 - A. Personnel Qualifications:
 1. Identification of lead project manager and their contact information.
 2. Name, proposed role, hourly rate, anticipated time commitment to the project and biography of each team member.
 - B. References: Include a list of at least three County clients for which you have conducted comprehensive planning, visioning, community engagement and /or land use analysis. Experience in working with local governments in South Carolina is preferred.
3. Proposal
 - A. Proposal Overview: Provide specific approaches, methods and assumptions that will be utilized to accomplish each task.
 - B. Proposed Work Plan and Schedule: Provide a proposed work plan with schedule based on months of project (ex. Month 1, Month 2), divided into phases identifying key tasks, milestones, approximate dates, project deliverables and resource needs.
 - C. Community Engagement Plan: Describe at least three approaches for providing innovative, effective stakeholder engagement and public participation. These alternatives should represent different levels and styles of involvement, and complexity. Provide examples of how your firm would conduct public and stakeholder that would capture input that is representative of all of the County's residents.
 - D. Budget: Identify cost estimates for completing each of the elements in the "Expectations of Consultant" and "Scope of Services" sections of this RFP. Itemized cost estimates may include more than one area in these sections provided the combination of the elements is logical or overlapping. Also identify any other anticipated budgetary needs including incidentals. Identify total not-to-exceed project cost.

Submittal Format & Deadline

Interested firms shall submit ten (10) paper copies (sealed) of the complete proposal either in person to the Cherokee County Administrator's or mailed to:

Cherokee County
RFP 2023-08
Attn: Abi Reid
110 Railroad Ave
Gaffney, SC 29340

Complete submittals must be received no later than 12:00 pm on December 2, 2022. Submissions received after this deadline may not be considered for further review.

Submittal Review Schedule

Staff will begin the review process following the submission deadline and determine if interviews are needed in order to finalize selection among top candidates. Upon selection, the Consultant will be contacted to finalize the contract, fee structure and project timeframe. Final approval will be given by the Cherokee County Council.

Method of Evaluation & Selection

Prior to making an award determination, Cherokee County may conduct consultant interviews. Interviews may be conducted virtually if necessary.

1. Firm experience/reputation/workload: Experience of the firm in similar work and record of successful results of that work. Also considered will be the firm's ability to take on additional work, demonstrated understanding of the County's goals and purposes of the project, specific management approach, how well the firm's organization structure shows sufficient depth of its present workload, and the firm's ability to offer the breadth and quality of services required for this project. Additionally, the firm's successful experience performing other services for the County on past and current projects may be considered.
2. Qualifications of the personnel assigned to this project team: The County will give considerable weight to the individual qualifications of the project team members who will actually do most of the work on the project. Consideration will include qualifications of key personnel, project team member's individual experience and other qualifications, project manager's experience, sub-consultant's (if applicable) individual experience and qualifications.
3. Schedule: Consideration will be given to the firm's availability to complete the plan updates within a reasonable timeframe.

Disclaimers

Cherokee County reserves the right to reject one or more of the proposals, to waive any deficiencies associated with the submittal, and to accept any proposals that it deems to be in the County's best interest. Cherokee County also reserves the right to re-advertise and reject any and all proposals which are deemed to be nonresponsive, do not contain all the required submittal information as herein contained, are late, or are deemed unsatisfactory in

any way. Cherokee County shall have no obligation to award a contract for services and work as a result of this Request for Proposal.

The successful bidder shall be responsible for obtaining and maintaining adequate liability insurance to complete and full protect Cherokee County. The consultant shall furnish proof of this liability insurance to be attached to the executed copies of the contract. The consultant will also complete the E-Verify Requirement.

A negotiation of the final contract price will be between the County and the chosen firm. (NOTE: Consultants shall bear all costs incurred by their firm for interviews and the RFP response preparation and shall not include such costs within the RFP response).

It is the policy of the Cherokee County to foster, maintain and promote equal opportunity for businesses. The County shall select a firm on the basis of the applicant's qualifications for the job and award them, with respect to compensation and opportunity for training and advancement, including upgrading and promotion, without regard to age, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, disability, political affiliation, or marital status. The County encourages minority and women owned business participation in the contracting process.

Questions

All questions pertaining to this Request for Proposals (RFP) shall be submitted in writing via email to rfp@cherokeecountysc.com.

Only written questions will be considered formal. Any information given verbally or by telephone will be considered informal. Any questions that the County feels are pertinent to all proposals will be included as an addendum to the RFP.