

Addendum 2
City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan RFP
Summary of Responses to Written Questions
February 28, 2023
FINAL

Questions Received at Mandatory Virtual Pre-Application Meeting 1/23/2023

Question 1: How can firms access to background documents including the previous comprehensive plan?

Response: The RFP is posted on the City website (altoonapa.gov/compplan). On the bottom of the page, the link to the most recent comprehensive plan, “Positively Altoona,” is posted under the section called, “Plans to be Considered.” The rest of relevant background documents can be accessed by selecting the “View More” button below the Comprehensive Plan link. Most links are live. The City just received the updated strategic plan for the Altoona Blair County Development Corporation (ABCD) which will go live by the afternoon.

Question 2: To what extent is visioning an explicit task on this assignment. You talked about prior types of goals and then developing an implementable action plan to allow you to get there but it doesn’t specifically say in the scope of work that you are looking to define together with the stakeholders in the community what Altoona will be in the future and perhaps the types of economic development that you are looking for as you continue through its ongoing renaissance?

Response: The City is requiring firms to provide a public participation plan. Firms should provide their approach to gaining public input in order to bubble up ideas and potential solutions to problems which then can be included in the final comprehensive plan, as well as ensure that there is buy-in from City Council and the general public in the final document. A Visioning Process can be incorporated in this section of the proposal.

Question 3: Will there be any grading/points for any Minority and Women’s Business Enterprise firm participation?

Response: The plan is being funded with federal CDBG funds. All firms are required to complete Appendix A, which is a document whereby firms assure their compliance with federal and state requirements. One of these requirements is outreach to MBE/WBE firms. This is an RFP process, so MBE/WBE participation will be considered among many other elements in awarding the contract, but no specific points will be applied. Note that some sections of the Appendix A documents may not apply (labor standards). If a section does not apply, indicate N/A.

Questions Received Via Email 1/27/2023

Question 1: Page 5 of the RFP states that “Attendance and presentations at public meetings, the Altoona City Planning Commission (ACPC) meetings, ACPC Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee meetings, and Altoona City Council meetings are required throughout the process... While attendance can often be virtual to save time and travel costs, the consultant shall assist in organizing two city-wide meetings, and attend a minimum of two ACPC meetings, two City Council meetings and one public hearing before Council in person.”

While the number of in-person meetings required is clear, can you provide an estimate of the number of virtual APCP, Steering Committee, and City Council meetings that will be part of this planning process?

Response: The number of virtual meetings will depend on the length of the planning process and the firm’s approach to participation.

Question 2: Page 9 of the RFP states that a proposed schedule is required as part of the proposal. Do you have a rough project schedule in mind? For example, do you expect this to be a 12-, 18-, or 24-month process? Also, we see on page 10 that this project is intended to be funded in phases, with \$100k to be spent by June 30, 2023. Can you elaborate on this and how it may impact the schedule?

Response: The project schedule will depend on the firm’s approach to preparing the City of Altoona’s comprehensive plan. As noted in the RFP, the City is looking to identify visionary and holistic strategies and solutions that will utilize limited resources in innovative ways to move the City into mid-century. This will require an extensive effort with significant public input. That said, the City also expects to complete the plan in a timely manner in order to update its subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) and zoning ordinance. The City therefore expects that the plan will be completed no later than the fall of 2024. The lump sum fee will be paid in increments according to a regular schedule agreed upon between the City and the successful proposer. This contract will be paid with federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) administrative / planning funds. The estimated cost schedule noted in the RFP (\$100,000 prior to June 30 and \$100,000 after July 1) is based on a 12- to 15-month project and is designed to split planning costs to avoid exceeding the 20% administrative / planning cost cap mandated under the federal CDBG Program. This split of funds is negotiable but will be agreed upon in advance of executing the contract. Funds paid will reflect the firm’s actual schedule and progress in completing the project, with an initial payment allowed to initiate the project. The costs proposed by the proposer should demonstrate an understanding of this requirement while reasonably tying payment requests to timing of the project schedule. The project may affect two or three CDBG cost assessment cycles, depending on the schedule proposed by the firm.

Questions Received Via Email 2/17/2023

Question 1: The RFP mentions coordination with City staff, Planning Commission, and a Steering Committee. Is the Steering Committee formed?

Response: Yes. The Steering Committee was formed comprised of community leaders from across the various topical areas of the comprehensive plan prior to developing the RFP and was instrumental in developing the document.

Question 2: Is it the goal of the City that the consultant communicate regularly with City staff (the required monthly meetings/conference calls), keep the Planning Commission informed of the process (through the two required meetings), and then use the Steering Committee as more of an advisory role?

Response: Yes.

Question 3: Do you anticipate the consulting team mailing a survey to residents for a statistically valid survey?

Response: Yes. We developed this survey in advance based using another survey as a model, but we are not married to using this specific instrument:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/5b9259886f4f409b985a4a936f5254b7?portalUrl=https://altoonapa.maps.arcgis.com>

Question 4: Per the RFP, costs for GIS services shall be specifically broken out. To help us do so, it would be helpful to know what existing GIS data is readily available. Will the GIS data used to prepare the 2013 Comprehensive Plan maps (and any updates) be provided to the consultant? (specifically interested in the following data: existing land use, future land use, and housing conditions).

Response: The City has GIS files available from the 2013 comprehensive planning process. Below are links for the three maps that address the three areas you are specifically interested in. Our GIS coordinator can provide other maps as well. Please note that there was a housing conditions survey conducted in 2017-18 in the low-income areas but it is not in GIS and needs to be updated. No updates to the maps from 2013 have been done that our GIS coordinator is aware of. More city specific data is available now than from 2013 and can be provided.

Generalized Housing Conditions Map:

https://altoonapa.gov/getmedia/ad991e6e-6f05-4a07-924b-1e305f7c6fe0/2089_Housing-Condition_3-14-12.pdf

Generalized Land Use Map:

https://altoonapa.gov/getmedia/80f413cb-dc42-493d-92d1-f45f30ad1897/2089_Generalized-Land-Use_2-28-13.pdf

Infrastructure Analysis Map:

https://altoonapa.gov/getmedia/524109e4-c38f-4061-9708-d886f023badd/2089_Infrastructure-Analysis_3-14-12.pdf

Question 5: Are you able to say if the City prefers to continue to use Positively Altoona as the title and branding for the Comprehensive Plan update?- Or do you foresee a new phrase/title being developed resulting from the planning process?

Response: We are open to suggestions regarding an effective title resulting from the planning process.

Questions Received Via Email 2/22/2023

Question 1: Within your description of the Public Participation plan you mention "broad outreach efforts to the City's you people and Penn State Altoona students." Would you be able to clarify your definition of young person by age range?

Response: The City of Altoona is requiring the consultant to describe an effective approach to elicit input from young audiences to ensure that the comprehensive plan remains relevant into the next 20 years for the citizens of the community. At a minimum, this approach should include outreach to youth under the age of 25 and young adults between 25 and 40. This should include students at Penn State. Further, the City is clarifying that this should include students at the recently opened Downtown campus of St. Francis University at the Curry Innovation Center.

Question 2: You also mention the need for a scientific survey. Could you provide clarity on how you would like this information to be used? (e.g. Does this need to have a specific margin of error?)

Response: The City of Altoona is requiring a randomized community survey to assess needs that will help inform and direct the planning process. The survey will meet standard survey practices to ensure that there is a 95% level of confidence in the results. The acceptable margin of error will depend on the sample size. The City has developed a survey for this purpose but is open to suggestions on how to improve it:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/5b9259886f4f409b985a4a936f5254b7?portalUrl=https://altoonapa.maps.arcgis.com>