Russell County Commission

Russell County, Alabama

Request for Proposal
Comprehensive Plan
Pages 1-15

Notice of Intent to Respond

Request for Proposal Due:
February 8, 2010
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I. PROJECT INTRODUCTION

A. Community History and Need for Plan

Russell County, Alabama is seeking the services, through a Request for Proposal (RFP), of a qualified consultant or consultant team to prepare a new Comprehensive Plan. In order to understand the county from which this request for proposal is issued, it is necessary to take a look at how the area has been shaped by its efforts to overcome limited resources.

The current planning process is intended to build a better understanding of the potential growth impacts; and to build a better understanding of different policies toward regulation of the private sector and investments in the public sector. A new (county-wide) comprehensive plan will provide a substantive basis for decision making and establish a specific action plan that reflects the goals and objectives of the community and government. It will be a document that recognizes the character, cooperative spirit and quality of life for which Russell County is known throughout the region, state and nation.

Russell County has identified a group of growth-related issues to be addressed through the development of a new comprehensive plan: Affordable housing for all income ranges, preservation of existing residential areas and subdivisions to include infrastructure development, appearance and quality of life and continued competitiveness in a changing economy. As a part of the Columbus, Georgia, Phenix City Metropolitan Statistical Area, Russell County has some of the growth problems and opportunities of larger cities, as well as, many of the positive qualities associated with the smaller towns. Russell County would like to develop a plan for growth that preserves the small town charm, while also making room for more urban amenities, living choices and enhancing a potential future vibrant business climate. Specifically, the community is looking for compatible, practical ways to grow more densely while providing for managed growth in the areas identified. The potential impacts of the Fort Benning Army Base expansion into Russell County are having and will continue to have a great impact on Russell County’s growth potential, which is evident now in the Fort Mitchell areas.

During the development of the Plan, the consultant will interact with the county’s many stakeholders, including the County Commission, various committees and county department heads, as well as recommended citizen boards and community and economic development organizations. The Consultant(s) will also have to interact with the officials at Fort Benning at the beginning of the contract award. The goal is to create numerous avenues and opportunities for public input, community ownership and the strategic planning process.
The consultant will be under the guidance and supervision of the County Commission, with coordination through the County Administrator. Final approval of the County-Wide Comprehensive Plan will rest with the County Commission, pending revenue availability.

B. Community Background

- Location:
  Russell County is located in East Central Alabama, along the Chattahoochee River. At the region’s eastern border is the State of Georgia. To the north and south and west of the region are the Alabama counties of Lee, Chambers, Tallapoosa, Macon, Bullock and Barbour. The region’s location and proximity to major cities is considered to be an area of strength and a continuing source of opportunity for Russell County.

- Population:
  Russell County’s rate of growth has not been dramatic, until recently. With the Military Base Realignment expansions of Fort Benning, as well as the addition of a new automotive manufacturing plant(s) and other commercial and industrial manufacturers, this development is expected to have a major impact on the growth of Russell County. Assuring infrastructure keeps pace with population growth is a critical issue.

  The 2005 population of Russell County was estimated to be 50,936. Russell County is the 25th most populous county in Alabama. Between 1990 and 2000, the population of Russell County increased by 6.2%. Sixty-four percent of the county’s population is located in the urban and suburban area(s) of the county. The remaining 36% live in the more rural areas of the county.

- Economic Characteristics:
  In 2004, Russell County per capita income was $22,661. The Alabama state average income is $27,695.

- Planning History:
  Russell County Comprehensive Plan
  Report: November 1985
  Author(s): Candeub, Fleissig and Associates, Inc. of Georgia
• County Sewer Study Completed – Report 2002
  Author(s): Goodwyn Mills and Cawood

New issues have surfaced requiring a new Comprehensive Plan. These include, but are not limited to, problems with sub-standard rental property, military expansion, protection of historically and architecturally significant areas, potential for mixed use developments of 500 acres or more, promotion of tourist attractions, industrial expansion, impact on public education, infrastructure (water, sewer, communications), educational and recreational needs, lack of mass transit, need to assess all forms of transportation looking into the future and the potential impact of energy prices on transportation and the tax base.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Working Structure for Plan Process

The consultant selected for the project will work under the supervision of the County Commission through the County Administrator. Consultation with the major stakeholder organizations, citizen boards and the public will be essential to the process. Progress will be regularly reported by the County Administrator to the County Commission, which will have final approval of the plan and of major implementation measures.

The consultant will be responsible for:

- General management of the project
- Drafting and preparation of plan documents
- Graphic and other support services
- Data collection, maps, analysis and presentation (with support from planning department staff)
- Organization and facilitation of public meetings
- Budgeting project funds
- Collaborating with other area consultants on other area plan studies
- Insuring that the results and recommendations from recent studies are reviewed and considered for inclusion in this comprehensive plan, as appropriate

B. Scope of Work

A nine-month time frame has been established for completion of the project. The County Administrator will determine the priority of focus within the county, due to significant issues associated with ongoing growth.
The consultant will propose methodologies and services to complete the following tasks:

1. **Issue identification and synthesis of results of research and public participation (Report 1)**

   The consultant will review current plan(s) and meet with the County Administrator and the Commission-appointed Request for Proposal Committee and key personnel; herein, “RFP” committee members and other key stakeholder groups in order to understand the background and direction of Russell County’s current growth related concerns:

   - A more effective approach to the strengthening of existing development;
   - More flexible development regulations without compromising the integrity of the county’s development plans;
   - NEPA recommendations/assessments;
   - The possible land use impact of transportation changes;
   - Recreational and cultural amenities targeted to attract people with the skills needed in the changing economic environment;
   - Recommendations preserving character of area/region to enhance destination developments;
   - An ongoing capital improvements planning process, to include infrastructure, amenities and information technologies;
   - The need to make more intensive use of the available land and infrastructure service areas;
   - Law Enforcement;
   - Recommendations concerning the projected ongoing growth associated with Fort Benning.

   During this phase the consultant will establish a structure for working with the major citizen-based organizations in the county.

   Completion of this phase will be determined on the submittal and acceptance of (Report 1), by the County Commission, outlining the major initial findings on the status of these issues, describing the process to maintain open and ongoing communications with stakeholders and setting forth the consultant’s initial thoughts on the possible direction of Russell County’s growth.
2. Data collection and analysis

The proposal will include a strategy for data collection and analysis focused on the initial set of issues and the available information resources. County staff will facilitate access to existing data and GIS resources and assist with mapping. This strategy will include review of the economic/demographic and existing current projections. It may also include hearings, surveys, or other direct methods for clarification of the community’s development priorities.

The consultant will develop an analysis of current conditions, growth capacity and growth trends, to include at a minimum the following:

- Identify priority planning/zoning areas
- Plain protection, mapping and mitigation
- Environmental conditions and hazards (NEPA), including flood, transportation infrastructure for all modes, including any airport, railroads, pedestrian/bike facilities and possible future transit service as well as streets, unpaved roads and interstates
- Utility systems; to include impacts on current utility system(s) associated with most recent State Legislation and population growth
- Fire protection
- Cultural and tourism resources
- Community appearance, open space, recreation and amenities
- Current land use, including underdeveloped and redevelopment areas
- Property ownership and values
- Building permits activity and distribution
- Employment by sector and location
- Housing market
- County Subdivision Regulations
- Regional Development
- School Systems (Public & Private)
- Tax base and revenues
- Regional patterns of trade, commuting, relocation and intergovernmental problem solving
- Surface and ground water, including local water use, environmental issues and water availability for the projected period
- Population trends, including demographic structure and distribution
- Land use plans of surrounding communities to include the unincorporated and incorporated area(s) of Phenix City, Hurtsboro and other communities in Russell County
- Base Realignment & Closure Impact
3. **Preliminary statement of strategies:**

Based on analysis of community information and initial issues, the consultant will present a mid-point draft report (Report 2) to the Russell County Commission and Commission appointed RFP committee, which will outline alternative general strategies to address community-identified growth needs. These strategies will outline the major implementation measures that would be involved, provide a general idea of the investments required and describe the differing land use patterns that could be expected to result from each strategy. The report will evaluate the feasibility of each alternative, according to the analysis of economic and demographic forces affecting Russell County and the resources available for implementation. The consultant is encouraged to be creative and to make strategy recommendations that reflect the best available models for counties with comparable issues and resources. The planning committee will consider the proposed strategies and select the alternative with the best combination of feasible implementation and desirable results for further development.

4. **Draft goals and objectives:**

After the mid-point review, the consultant will refine the selected strategy with more detailed analysis to set specific goals and objectives for:

- Economic development strategies and programs for making the county attractive for growth of existing businesses, new business recruitment and investment leading to a balanced tax base, long term fiscal stability and continuing new job opportunities for the citizens of Russell County
- Transportation (including streets, roads and highways, railroad, airport, water, bicycle trails and pedestrian components)
- Utility system(s)
- Fire protection
- Infrastructure coordination
- Open space and Green space preservation
- Community beautification
- Recreational facilities
- Housing
- Law Enforcement
- Government services (i.e. county water, garbage) etc.
- Residential neighborhoods
- Land use planning including maps
- Surface and ground water
- Environmental conditions and hazards
• Cultural and heritage tourism opportunities and development
• Education and workforce

5. Prepare a master plan incorporating implementation strategies

Working with stakeholder groups previously identified, consultant(s) will draft implementation measures the county can use to move toward its new goals and objectives. Recommendations should include as a minimum:

• Priorities for infrastructure investments
• A unified capital improvements program structure
• Special investments for areas of need or opportunity
• Revision or changes of the County’s subdivision regulations
• Community education and publicizing of policy changes
• Neighborhood-specific plans, to be implemented by government and neighborhood associations
• Recommendations for Economic Development within the County

6. Final draft plan

Consultant will present an overview of the final draft plan and deliver (bound copies) (Report 3) at a public meeting with the Russell County Planning Commission for review and discussion along, with review copies provided to the staff; appointed RFP committee, county commission and county administrator, a minimum of two weeks before official public hearing.

C. Public Participation Process

The consultant selected for developing Russell County’s plan will be expected to make use of the county’s existing base of public involvement through citizen oversight boards and help coordinate the objectives of these separate groups into a unified growth strategy.
III. PROPOSAL AND CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

A. Submittal information
   - Letter of intent and submittal address: Russell County Commission, Russell County Administrator, P.O. Box 969, Phenix City, Ala 36868-0969
   - Street address: 1000 Broad Street, Phenix City, Alabama
   - Proposal submittal date: February 8, 2010
   - Contact person: LeAnn Horne, County Administrator
   - Number of RFP proposal copies: (7) and 1 unbound
   - Length of technical proposal: not to exceed 20 pages
   - County appointed evaluation committee’s recommendation date: February 2010
   - Contract award will be made by County Commissioners
   - Dates maybe adjusted if necessary by the County Commission or the County Administrator with a written request for the extension from submitter

B. Proposal format requirements

1. Title Sheet

   The title sheet must provide the name(s) of the team submitting with the name of the prime contact and complete contact information clearly identified.

2. Table of Contents

   Provide a Table of Contents that lists the application sections with page numbers.

3. Background Information on Firm and Team Members.

   Summarize the firm’s background and focus. Document professional membership in organizations or certification of training related to community, economic, and/or strategic planning list and describe the principals of the firm and general background. Include a description of each team member along with their respective roles and responsibilities. List subcontractors or partnerships that will take an active role in this project.
4. Qualifications and Experience

Include a detailed statement of qualifications that is concise, well organized and demonstrates the qualifications and experience of the firm and firm team. Provide an organization chart for the team assigned to the project, which indicates which tasks they will perform in the project. The proposal shall also include a certification that the people identified above will be available and assigned to this project.

Also, include a brief description of similar experience in developing municipal style comprehensive plans that the firm has undertaken. List three to five (3 to 5) examples of planning/design projects that are comparable in program, process and function to this RFP. The Consultant, or team, must have adequate knowledge of Fort Benning, to understand its impact on Russell County and should have a working knowledge of their key personnel in order to insure continuous coordination of this effort.

Planned as well as completed projects are eligible. Include drawings, photographs or published materials to illustrate the nature and scope of each example project. In addition, provide a list of projects; include the name, type of project, location, firm’s role in the project and status of the project. For all projects listed as relevant experience, include the following:

- Location
- Contact information
- Date of project involvement
- Project description and relevance to this master planning project
- Cost and scope the project
- Specific services performed by the firm

5. Professional References

List a minimum of three (3) professional references preferably within the last three years. List references for the example projects. For each reference list the contact’s name, address, phone number and relationship to the firm.
6. Technical Proposal

The Consultant shall provide a written plan outlining their understanding of the project provisions and scope of work described in the RFP. This plan will serve as the draft work plan for the project and shall include a description of the methods that will be used to complete the scope of work, the task or steps the Consultant will undertake to complete the project and a timeline for completing each task in the project. Sub-sections to include are:

a. Approach and Methodology

Define specific techniques and experiences clearly in its proposal and should relate them directly to the project being considered, especially the methods to be used to solicit public input.

b. Work Plan

The consultant should outline a work plan that identifies the major tasks needed to accomplish project objectives efficiently and expeditiously. The work plan should distinguish between technical tasks, such as design and production steps, and such administrative tasks as coordinating meeting during product review periods, and it should indicate the completion date for each task. It should be integrated with the schedule the completion date each task. It should be integrated with the schedule of product deliverables to better outline the resources and personnel to achieve project objectives.

c. Schedule of Products Deliveries

Develop a schedule of product deliveries that will achieve client’s objectives. This schedule should identify any features that may be problematic, which may require the Planning Commission other county department(s), or local organizations to provide special input or resources, or which otherwise require special attention.

d. Timeline

Include a timeline outlining project activities and an anticipated schedule for deliverables. The timeline may be a text and/or graphical format.
7. Statement of Philosophy and Project Understanding

Explain what piqued the consultant’s interest in submitting a proposal for this project and why the consultant desires to work with Russell County. Also provide a concise statement outlining the philosophy of the teams in approaching projects of this nature and the team’s grasp of issues and goals to address in the study.

8. Overall project schedule

Provide a proposed timeline for completing the scope of services. Identify project milestones that will be reached during the plan study.

9. Project Budget

Present a proposed line-item budget to complete the plan study. A budget narrative should be task-based (related to the proposed work program) and must break down the deliverables. The budget section should include a description of approaches that will be used to contain cost and ensure quality control. Include a budget narrative that explains the amounts requested for each element and explain how each cost contributes to meeting the plan of work objectives/goals. The basis and terms for any additional services or deliverables requested by the county must be described.

C. Request for Proposal Terms and Conditions

1. The County reserves the right to amend the request for proposals at anytime. The County Administrator, to include appointed RFP Commission committee members and/or County Commission reserves the right to determine the successful respondent. The County reserves the right to reject any or all proposals. If for any reason the selected firm is not able to commence services within thirty (30) days after the award of the proposal, the County of Russell reserves the right to award and negotiate the contract to another qualified consulting firm.

2. Expenses incurred in the preparation of submittals, presentation and other incidental activities related to this solicitation are the responsibility of the respondents.

3. All data, documents and other information provided to the County of Russell by the consultant because of this RFP shall become the sole property of the County of Russell.

4. The County expects the consultant to respond to routine questions, which do not require considerable research on a complementary basis.
D. Contract Information

1. The Consultant will be reimbursed on a time and expense basis in accordance with the County’s accounts payable processes. Consultant/firm will provide a fixed price, description of work and any required information by the Administrator in order to process payment. This price must include costs and expenses for all tasks needed to complete the project.

2. The County Commission will not reimburse the Consultant for expenses beyond the cost figures submitted in proposal and fee schedule. The only exception would be an amendment to the contract as a result of a substantial and approved change in the scope of work, as directed by the County Commission or its agent or for extra copies of plans or extra meeting(s).

3. The fixed, not-to-exceed price, for the County Comprehensive Plan must be substantiated in the proposal by a cost breakdown that includes hours of effort as outlined in the RFP for a total cost. These rates will also be used to compute any additional cost that may be incurred as a result of an approved contract amendment.

4. The consultant shall at no time pursue additional compensation for work not previously agreed to in writing by the County Commission through a contract amendment. It is the obligation of the Consultant to identify items of additional work and to submit a written request with a cost proposal prior to the performance of any additional work.

5. The consultant shall not engage any subcontractor not identified in the proposal without prior approval of the County Commission or County Administrator.

6. The consulting firm shall not assign any interest in the proposal and shall not transfer any interest in the same, without the prior written consent of the County Commission or County Administrator.

7. For the purposes of this agreement, the consultant shall be deemed to be an independent contractor and not an employee of the county.

8. Ten percent (10%) of the total contract price will be withheld until the County Commissioners adopt the final plan.

9. The administrative contact for contractual matters will be the Russell County Administrator.

E. Evaluation Criteria and Process

The evaluation as criteria factors are outlined and stated above. The evaluation will be determined by the Russell County Commission’s appointed RFP committee members and a recommendation made to the Russell County Commission for award of contract and final comprehensive plan approval.
F. **Awarding of Contract**

Upon completion of the evaluation process, the County of Russell will enter into negotiation with the responder(s) whose proposal offers the best solution and best value possible, as determined in the evaluation process.

The County Commissioners reserve the right to simultaneously negotiate with more than one responder or to ask for the best and final proposals from one or more responders. The County Commissioners reserve the right to reject any or all proposals submitted in response to this RFP.

The award will be made to a qualified Consultant whose proposal is deemed to be in the best interest of Russell County.

G. **Performance Bond**

The County Commission will require a performance bond from the awarded contractor/consultant to cover the total cost of the proposed County Comprehensive Plan.

IV. **WATER AND SEWER STUDY**

A. Russell County is experiencing significant and rapid growth in the Fort Mitchell area. **Because of the imminent need of water and sewer in the Fort Mitchell area(s);** it is the preference of the Russell County Commission to be able to advance the Fort Mitchell/Cotonton area(s) as priority; especially the water and sewer portion in this planning process. Then, the Ladonia/Crawford, Seale/Pittsview, Hurtsboro areas to follow.

**PRICING CONSIDERATIONS**

There may be some cost reduction to the Consultant(s) and could result in a discounted price, due to recent available studies, for this proposed comprehensive plan. Submit your cost proposal for this comprehensive plan and indicate how utilizing recent studies may provide a cost reduction for the County.