



# REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

The City of Dawsonville, Georgia  
Comprehensive Downtown Strategic Plan

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## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL:**

### **CITY OF DAWSONVILLE COMPREHENSIVE DOWNTOWN STRATEGIC PLAN**

The City of Dawsonville, Georgia will receive sealed proposals from qualified firms for services in the City Manager's Office, 415 Highway 53 East, Suite 100, Dawsonville, Georgia 30534 until **February 6th, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.** The City is seeking the services of a firm, partnership, joint venture or team to produce a Downtown Development Strategic Plan to begin in 2023 for the City of Dawsonville, Georgia.

Any questions and/or misunderstandings that may arise from this proposal should be submitted, in writing, and forwarded to all of to the following parties: Bob Bolz, City Manager, at [bob.bolz@dawsonville-ga.gov](mailto:bob.bolz@dawsonville-ga.gov); Amanda Edmondson, Downtown Development Director, at [amanda.edmondson@dawsonville-ga.gov](mailto:amanda.edmondson@dawsonville-ga.gov); and Robin Gazaway, Finance Administrator at [financeadministrator@dawsonville-ga.gov](mailto:financeadministrator@dawsonville-ga.gov). Answers to such questions that materially change the conditions and specifications of this request for proposal will be posted to the City of Dawsonville's website as an addendum.

The City of Dawsonville anticipates making a single award for this strategic plan within a month of proposal deadline. A qualifications-based selection process will be used. Evaluation of proposals will be based on the following criteria in order of importance:

1. Proposed price to complete the project: 25 Points
2. Capacity to complete the project based upon education, training and experience: 25 Points
3. Capacity to complete the project in a timely manner based upon staffing, training and experience: 20 Points
4. Evaluation of references from other local governments for which similar projects have been completed: 20 Points
5. Understanding of the project and proper completion of RFP materials, which may also include an additional request for in-person presentation: 10 Points

Responses to this Request for Proposals (RFP) shall include technical and fee proposals along with all other information requested in this RFP. The fees shall be the full cost to the City of Dawsonville and shall in all instances be broken down based upon the tasks to be completed.

Submittal of a proposal indicates acceptance of the conditions contained in the RFP. The City of Dawsonville reserves the right to reject all proposals submitted. All proposals are public records to the extent required by the Georgia Open Records Act. The City of Dawsonville reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, to waive formalities, technicalities, and to negotiate changes in the price, scope of work or services to be provided pursuant to law.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

The City of Dawsonville is currently accepting proposals for a Comprehensive Downtown Development Strategic Plan. The plan should, by way of a community visioning process, establish a shared community mission, goals and objectives, propose funding and implementation strategies to guide asset-based transformative community improvement projects, include a Master Plan for the development of a 17+ acre mixed-use town center, and revitalization or redevelopment within the existing historic downtown area. It must seek to establish cohesive connection to newer eastward community spaces including the City Hall shopping center complex, the Main Street Park, and the Farmer’s Market. The plan must include guidelines and recommendations for providing both pedestrian and vehicular connectivity between these existing areas and proposed development or redevelopment. The plan must seek to achieve measurable outcomes demonstrating increased downtown social and economic viability, increased tourism, creating “sense of place” and enhanced quality of life for City residents. Key project intents include strategies to assure conceptual cohesiveness and functional connectivity between new and existing downtown areas in terms of aesthetic identity, multi-modal transportation prioritizing walkability, connectivity, and access to social and economic activity across all downtown areas. The City intends to use the plan to guide future public, private and public-private development / project implementation for a minimum five-year period beginning in 2024. The plan must be sustainable, smart, creative, and futuristic (linking past with present and future).

### **DELIVERABLES:**

1. A qualified consultant shall deliver a **Comprehensive Downtown Development Strategic Plan** that includes the following processes, analysis, or finished product:
2. Staff and necessary materials for planning and executing a **process for public participation** and comment to guide strategic plan community visioning. Desired methodology includes, but is not limited to, a steering committee, a retreat, meetings with governing body, stakeholders, key staff members and civic groups, surveys, and joint City-Consultant outreach efforts to increase public engagement. Visual aids such as a design charrette or other presentation forms are also desired.
3. Identify and develop an overall **community transformation strategy** with associated goals, inputs, objectives, and outcomes influenced by the visioning process, considering but not limited to the following identified needs:
  - a. Local social and economic vitality, tourism and resilience – consider market inputs and identify industry-leakage gaps (targeting unrealized market potential) in the City/region to drive 17-acre tract development and existing downtown infill or redevelopment planning, improve accessibility to quality employment opportunities, support and leverage local educational opportunities, increase revenues, increase income, and reduce poverty. Consider the opportunity for a new city hall, hotel and/or conference center.
  - b. Beautification, design, historic preservation and place-making – enhance downtown aesthetic qualities through architecture and landscape design, foster community “sense of place” and identity, increase local resident enjoyment and tourism resulting in greater commercial viability. Seek cohesive architectural concepts across new and existing downtown areas, including historical influence whether literal or symbolic to establish distinctive aesthetic and cultural identity.

- c. Transportation and pedestrian experience – create a more walkable downtown experience involving pedestrian-scale design, hardscape, lighting, safety measures, and traffic calming devices where necessary; consider greenways; focus on connectivity between new and existing downtown areas including associated infrastructure. Address parking needs, especially in relation to the existing historic downtown, allowing for safe and walkable proximity to shops.
  - d. Quality of life – Focus on identifying desired potential uses for public spaces in the new 17-acre development or downtown redevelopment: determine whether use of such space should prioritize opportunities for conservation through open space, entertainment, public engagement, public art, health and wellness, heritage preservation, or environmental applications to enhance overall site energy efficiency or stormwater management.
  - e. Any other issues which the consultant identifies as a strength, opportunity, weakness or threat needing attention in order to benefit the City.
4. Provide a **proposed implementation plan** including a short-term and long-term work program consisting of plans, specific projects, policy changes, organizational changes, ordinance creation and/or changes, or other activities recommended by the consultant to achieve community improvement strategies; prioritized in order of greatest achievable impact toward plan goals.
5. **Analysis and recommendation** for the creation of any new zone, district, or changes to the boundaries of existing districts to facilitate proper plan implementation (for example a redevelopment district, or rural zone): examine any issues with overlapping districts that may have competing interests, and how these should be addressed.
6. Recommendations for **communication strategies** and specified platforms by which to inform community members, promote projects, encourage volunteers, gain support, encourage public engagement, promote special events, promote local business, and market the 17+ acre town center to potential developers: such as the creation of specific web-pages, social media, formation of a hype-team, etc.
7. Provide additional analysis including **proposed funding strategies** tied to work program items considering the fact that the City of Dawsonville maintains a millage rate that results in \$0 property tax collections. Incorporate any recommendations for future asset-management or Capital Improvement Planning that should be considered or implemented prior to beginning project.
8. **Recommendation of property acquisition, or easements** that may be considered to achieve both pedestrian and vehicular connectivity or provide necessary infrastructure between the proposed 17+ acre development, the historic downtown, and previously developed eastward areas, or related infill.
9. Analysis regarding **proposed metrics the City should collect** or analyze to measure project performance outputs, and benchmarks to determine future project or goal outcomes including but not limited to the following performance measures:

- a. New visitors per day;

- b. New visitors per night;
- c. New businesses created;
- d. New housing units created;
- e. Existing housing units rehabbed;
- f. New commercial units created;
- g. Existing commercial units rehabbed;
- h. Commercial SF available to lease;
- i. Commercial SF leased;
- j. New jobs created;
- k. Existing jobs retained;
- l. Existing business expansion;
- m. Increased revenues;
- n. Leveraged private investment (LPI);
- o. Programs implemented;
- p. Any other metrics which the consultant believes warrant consideration for assisting the City of Dawsonville to qualify for Georgia Mainstreet accreditation.
- q. Any other metrics which the consultant believes warrant consideration for assisting the City of Dawsonville become eligible for grant opportunities.
- r. Any other metrics which the consultant believes warrant consideration for assisting the City of Dawsonville successfully promote a healthy and resilient local economy.

10. The final **Comprehensive Downtown Strategic Plan document** should be a culmination of the deliverables specified above, in full or summary form as determined appropriate by the consultant.

11. Under separate cover: **A Master Plan** to guide development of the 17+ acre mixed use development, reflecting the community transformation strategies determined through the strategic planning public participation process, market data, and mechanisms for connectivity between new and existing development, which is desired to include the following materials:

- a. A **site plan or detailed rendering** delineating the location of suggested roads, sidewalks, parking, major stormwater or landscape / hardscape features, connections to existing modes of transportation or infrastructure, conserved open or shared public spaces to promote social vitality (such as a central landscaped courtyard, gazebo, playground, passive open space, pocket parks, trails, gardens, fountains, pavilion, bandshell or amphitheater indicating specific uses as determined by community interest through the strategic public participation process); also building footprints identifying the location and suggested square footage mix of residential, restaurant, retail, medical, and office space, to capitalize on community industry-leakage (targeting greatest unfulfilled market demand to increase economic vitality), with associated parking calculations. Parking placement must favor pedestrian experience utilizing traditional urban town center practices and consider location in the rear of structures, parallel along roadways, or take the form of shared parking lots or a parking deck to allow for larger pedestrian-only areas. Roads and hardscape must prioritize pedestrian access and may include suggested traffic calming devices. Residential-over-retail space is desired in a vertical mixed-use format, however townhomes may be considered if necessary at property edges to transition density, or mitigate risk for development purposes. Consider a new city hall location as well as a boutique hotel in view from Highway 53, potentially with a conference center

component. Plan must identify phases for construction in connection with associated funding strategies proposed in the implementation and work plans and be respectful of market realities, levels of associated risk, and how that may be shared throughout the process between public and private partners. Special attention should be given to property edges: such as mitigating any potential negative impacts to adjacent properties by way of transition areas, buffers, fences or walls, and how connectivity may take place in appropriate locations to allow for both vehicular and pedestrian access from existing City areas. Plan must ultimately create a memorable and sustainable public realm, that invites both social and economic activity, integrates diverse uses, functions properly, and connects the community in terms of cohesive identity as well as physically between the 17+ acre proposed development, the historic downtown, and existing eastward development.

- b. A **supplemental charrette to the Master Plan** including renderings of the overall development as well as streetscapes in elevation view to convey architectural styles as informed by the public participation process and the stated intent to achieve a cohesive identity between new and existing development and the historic downtown area. Architecture should include a diversity of styles and materials similar to the manner in which town centers develop over time, while maintaining key elements for visual cohesiveness such as an appropriate range of façade heights (although they should be varied), doorway and window heights / proportions, and a general balance in structure or architectural feature mass. Unifying elements such as lighting, hardware, trim, signage styles, hardscape and landscape elements should be utilized to maintain a cohesive identity across diverse architecture as well as promote a pedestrian scale environment that creates a safe and interesting place to walk. Architecture is desired to include influences from the historic downtown district and reflect community heritage. Charrette should include guidelines addressing performance standards for development (in conjunction with any recommended ordinance changes or districts created) such as setback or height restrictions or exceptions and provide any necessary “typical” examples. Standards should aid in achieving desired product outcomes while respecting the flexibility needed to manage risk and meet market demands for development.
  - c. Master plan choices must be feasible and **supported by market data**.
  - d. **Three-dimensional digital model** once the plan is approved, marketing materials, or any additional materials recommended by the consultant to properly implement the proposed plan.
12. Interim or final deliverables may also include records, narratives, or other **documentation necessary for reporting purposes** pursuant to Appalachian Regional Commission grant administration and performance reporting requirements.
13. **Final project deliverables may be negotiable** based on City staff or selected consultant recommendation to customize the process as needed, pending City approval.
14. **All final project deliverables must be complete within 9 months of award date due to grant timeline restrictions.**

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Intent: It is intended that these Instructions and the Schedules and Specifications shall define and describe the complete services to be provided.
2. Examination: Firms are advised to examine all documents and current descriptions of the services in order to become fully informed as to their conditions. This includes conformity with specific standards and the character, quality and quantity of the services provided. Failure to examine these areas will not relieve the consultant of its obligation to furnish all products and services necessary to carry out the provisions of the contract.
2. Selection of Consultant: The contract will be awarded to the firm or team that in the City's opinion is the most responsive and responsible according to the criteria provided in this RFP.
3. Responsiveness: The City will consider the degree to which each firm has submitted a complete proposal without irregularities, exclusions, special conditions, or alternative proposals for any item unless specifically requested in the RFP.
4. Submission of Proposals: It is the firm's responsibility to have its sealed proposal at the City Manager's Office by the deadline for submission. Proposals received after the deadline will remain unopened and will not be considered. The following address should be used on the outside of the envelope containing the proposals:

Office of the City Manager  
City of Dawsonville  
415 Hwy 53 East  
Dawsonville, Georgia 30534

Request for Proposals  
Comprehensive Downtown Strategic Plan

5. Proposals: An original copy of the proposal shall be submitted in paper format with one flash drive containing digital copies of the proposal in Microsoft Word and PDF file formats. Proposals should be limited to no more than 10 single sided pages and should be bound in an 8 1/2" x 11" format. All submitted materials will become property of the City.
6. Successes



## **CONTACTS**

Should a consultant have any questions, please submit them in writing and forward to the following parties: Bob Bolz, City Manager, at [bob.bolz@dawsonville-ga.gov](mailto:bob.bolz@dawsonville-ga.gov); Amanda Edmondson, Downtown Development Director, at [amanda.edmondson@dawsonville-ga.gov](mailto:amanda.edmondson@dawsonville-ga.gov); and Robin Gazaway, Finance Administrator at [financeadministrator@dawsonville-ga.gov](mailto:financeadministrator@dawsonville-ga.gov).

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL SCHEDULE**

- Evaluation Period
  - Questions may be submitted in writing to each of the following parties: Bob Bolz, City Manager, at [bob.bolz@dawsonville-ga.gov](mailto:bob.bolz@dawsonville-ga.gov); Amanda Edmondson, Downtown Development Director, at [amanda.edmondson@dawsonville-ga.gov](mailto:amanda.edmondson@dawsonville-ga.gov); and Robin Gazaway, Finance Administrator at [financeadministrator@dawsonville-ga.gov](mailto:financeadministrator@dawsonville-ga.gov); until **2:00 p.m. on the 3rd day of February, 2023.**
  - Answers to such questions that materially change the conditions and specifications of this request for proposal will be posted to the City of Dawsonville’s website as an addendum.
- Submission Deadline: **February 6th, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.**
- Anticipated Award Date: **March 6th, 2023 at the City Council Meeting.**

## **FEES**

Firms will consider all costs (labor, material, overhead, administration, profit, travel, etc.) associated with providing the services listed in the scope of work. The City anticipates ordering all tasks; however, it reserves the right to modify the tasks described.

Proposed fees should be listed by phase and task as well as a total for all phases and tasks. The City of Dawsonville reserves the right to request a specific breakdown of item costs within each task. Costs shall be inclusive, with materials, printing, copying, postage, deliveries, travel and all other categories included. Proposed costs should be itemized to show the number of hours of direct labor for each task.

## **TECHNICAL AND FEE PROPOSALS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Overview: Firms shall provide detailed information so as to demonstrate its understanding of the services requested.

Documents: Proposals should be limited to no more than 10 single sided and should be in an 8<sup>1/2</sup>" x 11" format. An original copy of the proposal shall be submitted. Fewer copies of extensive materials covering the firm's work are acceptable. Please also submit proposals in Microsoft Word and PDF file formats on a flash drive. Proposals shall include the forms provided in the RFP.

Submission: The firm shall package and seal its proposal so that it will not be damaged in mailing or shipping. All proposals and supporting documents will be submitted in accordance with the "Instructions" Section.

### **QUALIFICATIONS**

Firms responding to this RFP must have been engaged urban and regional planning, engineering and/or design, fiscal impact, or project management services for at least five years.

References: Firms shall provide references from similar assignments from other local governments within the past ten years.

Insurance: Firms shall carry a minimum of Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000) professional liability policy to protect the City in case of negligent errors, acts or/and omissions of the firm.

### **TECHNICAL APPROACH**

Methodology: Explain the methodology you propose to successfully perform the services outlined in the scope of works giving special attention to public participation and data collection.

Schedule: Include in your proposal a project schedule indicating key milestones related to the firm's methodology.

### **FIRM EXPERIENCE**

Projects: In this section, the firm shall provide a detailed description of similar assignments, on behalf of local governments or similar clients.

- Client name
- Contact person
- Telephone and fax numbers, email address
- Brief description of the projects, their costs and services provided on each.
- Describe in detail whether project was/was not completed on time, within budget, and adopted by the client.
- Copy or working web link to plan

Company Capabilities: The firm shall provide a description of its limitations relative to facilities, staff personnel, on-going projects/contracts, etc. Specifically, what priority it intends to place on this project and how it intends to “staff up” if necessary, should it be chosen as the consultant.

Company Primary Business: Provide the firm’s primary business interest and/or operations including organization and affiliations.

Company Information: Provide the following:

- List firm name, address, telephone number, fax number, and email address.
- Name of firm’s primary contact person(s) and telephone number(s).
- List firm’s total number of employees, by discipline.
- List year firm was established.
- List amount of professional liability (errors & omissions) insurance carried.
- Confirm whether firm is or has the ability to register on GSA’s System for Award Management (SAM) and that the firm has never been debarred or suspended pursuant to 2CFR Part 180.

#### PERSONNEL EXPERIENCE

##### Project Team Information

Organizational Chart: Show an organizational chart for this project.

Personnel: Include resumes of proposed personnel showing education, qualifications, and experience.

#### FEE PROPOSAL

Reasonableness: Fee Proposals will be evaluated for completeness and reasonableness as it relates to the technical proposal.

Best Value: The Fee Proposal is important. However, it will not be the determining factor in the selection process. It is not the intent of the City to limit innovative solutions by budget constraints, but rather to determine which proposal has the potential of providing the best value for the services required.

Financial Report: The Fee Proposal shall include the firm’s last annual report or financial statement that will demonstrate its financial stability and ability to undertake this project.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Provide a statement explaining any exceptions taken to this RFP. In every case, the City will assume compliance unless a specific exception is taken.

## EVALUATION FACTORS

The City will evaluate the proposals based on the matters identified earlier in the RFP based on the weighting as indicated. It is the intent of the City to choose the firm whose proposal provides the best value to the City. The City reserves the right to waive any irregularities, technicalities, reject any and/or all proposals, in whole or in part, when, in the City's opinion, such rejection is in the best interests of the City.

Evaluation Method: An evaluation team will review each proposal. Its review and evaluation will be based on the factors described, *supra*:

Oral Presentations and Interviews: Following the evaluation of the proposals, the Evaluation Team may request a limited number of firms to make oral presentations and/or be interviewed. If a determination is made that presentations are necessary, the presentations will take place in the City of Dawsonville at a mutually acceptable date and time.

Negotiations: Following any presentations, the finalists shall be re-evaluated. The City may negotiate with the firm or firms whose proposals are determined to be most advantageous to the City. The City reserves the right to reject all offers and end the process without executing a contract.

Agreement: If the negotiation produces mutual agreement, an agreement shall be completed and forwarded to the firm for execution.

The City reserves the right to accept a proposal, as submitted, and enter directly into a contractual agreement with that selected firm. Accordingly, it is imperative that all submittals contain both the best technical and fee proposals in their initial submission.

Reservations: Submittal of a proposal indicates acceptance of the conditions contained in this request. The City of Dawsonville reserves the right to retain all proposals submitted. All proposals are public record to the extent required by the Georgia Open Records Act.

The City of Dawsonville reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals. The City of Dawsonville reserves the right to waive informalities, technicalities, and negotiate changes in the scope of work or services to be provided and to otherwise waive any technicalities.

**ASSURANCES (must be made in any proposal)**

**EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO)**

Firms or teams are expected to represent the diversity of the community. Such diversity should be reflected in such aspects as ownership, professional personnel, consultants and staff. Evidence of such diversity should be part of the submittal.

The firm will ensure equal employment opportunity applies to all terms and conditions of employment, personnel actions, and firm-sponsored programs. Every effort shall be made to ensure that employment decisions, programs and personnel actions are nondiscriminatory. That these decisions are administered on the basis of an evaluation of an employee's eligibility, performance, ability, skill and experience.

Statement of Assurance. The firm herein assures the City that it is in compliance with Title VI & VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, as amended, in that it does not on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, handicap, or veteran status, discriminate in any form or manner against employees or employers or applicants for employment and is in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**LEGAL AND CHARACTER QUALIFICATIONS (must be responded to in any proposal)**

Claims and Lawsuits:

1. Is your firm involved in any pending claims or lawsuits? If so, please describe.
2. Has your firm been involved in any lawsuits with a governmental entity in the last five years?



**AFFIDAVIT (must be included with all proposals)**

This proposal is submitted to the City of Dawsonville, Georgia (the City) by the undersigned who is an authorized officer of the firm and said firm is licensed to do business in Georgia. Further, the undersigned is authorized to make these assurances and certifies their validity. The firm recognizes that all assurances and representations herein are binding on the firm and failure to adhere to any of these commitments, at the City's option, may result in a revocation of the agreement.

Consent is hereby given to the City to contact any person or organization in order to make inquiries into legal, character, technical, financial, and other qualifications of the firm.

The firm understands that, at such time as the City decides to review this proposal, additional information may be requested. Failure to supply any request for information within a reasonable time may result in the rejection of the firm's proposal with no re-submittal rights.

The firm understands that the City, after considering the legal, financial, technical, and character qualifications of the firm, as well as what in the City's judgment may best serve the public interest of its citizens and employees, may grant a contract.

The firm understands that this proposal is made without prior understanding, agreement, or connection with any corporation, firm or person submitting a proposal for the same, and is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud. It understands that collusive bidding is a violation of state and federal law and can result in fines, prison sentences, and civil damage awards.

Any agreement issued will be on the basis of the firm's service and financial plans and arrangements are feasible and adequate to fulfill the conditions set forth in this project and the firm's response.

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax/email: \_\_\_\_\_