

Request For Proposals Boroughs of Braddock, East Pittsburgh, & North Braddock, Allegheny County Joint Comprehensive Plan

August 11, 2017

The Boroughs of Braddock, East Pittsburgh, and North Braddock are seeking the services of a consultant (or team of consultants) to undertake a joint comprehensive plan. The boroughs have applied for funding for the project from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and Allegheny County Economic Development.

The comprehensive plan will focus on revitalization and reinvestment in the boroughs' business districts and neighborhoods and take advantage of emerging economic drivers and community assets across all three boroughs. The plan will be strategic and will outline workable action plans, the means of financing, and administrative capacity needed to implement those action plans.

The joint comprehensive plan will be one document, and it should serve the three boroughs collectively and individually. It should address issues common across the three boroughs and engage each one individually. Action plans should include strategic initiatives that take advantage of opportunities across the three boroughs and strategic initiatives tailored to each individual borough.

Project Description

The borough of Braddock does not have a current comprehensive plan. East Pittsburgh, and North Braddock currently operate under a joint comprehensive plan adopted in 2002. Borough officials recognize the need to develop plans containing strategies to alleviate conditions caused by long-term economic distress, to promote revitalization and attract investment that would enhance the local area.

The need is significant. Braddock, East Pittsburgh, and North Braddock experienced an economic decline in recent decades similar to other Western Pennsylvania municipalities. There were closings of major employers, loss of jobs, and a domino effect of decline in the business district and residential neighborhoods. The further effect was loss of taxes, fiscal distress on borough government, and deterioration of infrastructure. The boroughs are now in a position to take advantage of opportunities for redevelopment, reinvestment, and reversal of decline.

The borough council in each municipality has expressed a serious desire to address these issues via a strategic comprehensive plan. The councils want creative ideas and workable solutions. The boroughs seek assistance in setting priorities and focusing their limited finances via a limited series of strategic initiatives and projects the plan would identify.

The Borough of Braddock's 2015 updated Act 47 Recovery Plan requires the borough to

undertake a comprehensive plan to enhance the fiscal status of the borough. Braddock expects to leave Act 47 distressed status at the conclusion of the current plan in 2019 primed for long-term fiscal health.

Services to be Provided

The consultant to be hired will provide the full range of planning services necessary to undertake the comprehensive plan. The selected consultant will be asked to focus its work on providing informed analysis and/or intelligence for decision making (not recitations of data), providing creative ideas and workable action plans, and helping the boroughs recruit partners and create capacity to implement the plan. Interested consultants are asked to submit a scope of work describing their approach, methods, etc. for carrying out the prescribed work. Samples of previous work of a similar nature are encouraged.

Joint Comprehensive plan – The Boroughs of Braddock, East Pittsburgh, and North Braddock have two primary goals for a new comprehensive plan: 1) To create a vision for each borough in the next 5-10 years with statements of principles and guiding policies promoting a community culture and quality of life desired by borough residents; and 2) To determine a realistic series of strategic projects, programs, etc. that builds on existing opportunities and will help achieve that vision, visibly improve the community, and reverse years of decline.

The comprehensive plan should be an “implementable plan” following principles and keys currently being promoted by the PA Department of Community and Economic Development.

- The plan should focus on the boroughs’ priority needs, concerns, and opportunities:
 - Closed industrial facilities, a closed hospital, and resulting loss of taxes, jobs, and spending capacity. Opportunities for reuse/redevelopment of properties in conjunction with the Carrie Furnace development in Rankin.
 - Disinvestment in downtown buildings, loss of essential businesses, increase in absentee owners. Consider incentives to potential investors and current owners in the central business district to start/expand businesses and improve buildings. Build upon assets such as the Grand View golf course, Braddock’s Battlefield historical site, Keystone Commons, the Tri-boroughs Expressway, and recent additions like a micro-brewery, new restaurants, and public spaces.
 - Aging and deteriorating homes, abandoned properties, absentee owners, and decrease in homeownership. Market and expand housing rehab and homeowner assistance efforts. Determine how best to use new blight laws and tools. Work within and build upon a recently completed housing study in the Borough of Braddock.
 - Upgrade of deteriorating infrastructure and community facilities.
 - Transportation improvements needed, particularly to facilitate reuse/redevelopment of key properties. Take advantage of Mon-Fayette Expressway plans and potential East Busway expansion. Consultants should review current plans for both projects and identify potentially needed zoning updates if these plans come to fruition.
 - How to overcome negative perceptions about Braddock, East Pittsburgh, and North Braddock and take advantage of growth opportunities from changing demographics and markets favoring urban, walkable communities.

- Target locations and objectives for development, land use, community character, and design that will guide revisions to the zoning ordinance.
- The consultant’s work and the comprehensive plan document should be organized based on the boroughs’ priorities or related goals or themes that emerge from the planning process, not based on a traditional template of land use plan, housing plan, transportation plan, etc. The plan document should be efficient in words, avoid jargon, and be written for use by borough council, borough staff, partner groups, and citizens who will implement the plan after completion.
- The plan should provide workable action plans for top recommendations – a series of strategic projects, programs, and initiatives – that emerge from the planning process. The plan should set priorities and a timetable for action based on expected results and ability to finance and carry out. Action plans should include reasonable depth and detail – specific action steps, responsible parties, estimated costs, and proposed means of financing – to facilitate implementation after the plan is completed. The consultant is asked to include some immediate action recommendations that would provide short-term, visible results and motivate further implementation of the plan.
- The consultant will help the borough recruit partners – organizations, businesses, and individuals with expertise and resources to be involved in the plan. The plan process should invite their ideas for recommendations and action plans, and invite partners to take roles in implementing the plan.
- The consultant should facilitate a plan process whereby the community “owns” the plan, and the elected officials and community leaders are spokespersons for the plan and have a consensus commitment to implement it. There should be effective means within the limited project budget to obtain public vision and aspirations for their community. There should be involvement of elected officials so as to ensure their understanding and acceptance as the plan proceeds from issues to ideas to action plans.
- The consultant should provide a draft comprehensive plan (10 hard copies & a .pdf electronic copy) for presentation at preliminary public hearings and facilitate the plan adoption process.
- The consultant will ensure the comprehensive plan meets minimum requirements of the PA Municipalities Planning Code. The consultant may have to address minimal subject matter not addressed in analysis and recommendations presented for the borough’s priority issues.

The consultant will deliver to the borough complete comprehensive plan document(s) ready (10 hard copies and a .pdf electronic copy) for adoption in electronic format.

The project budget is expected to be supplemented by grants from state and county agencies, including DCED Act 47 funds and Allegheny County Economic Development programs. The boroughs anticipate a funding decision on the grants by September of 2017. Maximum available funding for the project is approximately \$120,000.

Completion Schedule

It is expected that the consultant will complete the requested tasks for a joint comprehensive plan within 24 months of execution of a contract, assuming the boroughs proceed in a timely manner.

Contractual Requirements

Because the project is anticipated to be funded by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Allegheny County, the consultant must comply with grant-mandated requirements to be included in the consultant contract.

Project Management

The project will be managed by Deborah Brown, Manager, Borough of Braddock in consultation with administrators in East Pittsburgh and North Braddock. Braddock's Manager will be the primary contact for communications with the consultant.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated and a consultant will be selected based on the following criteria listed in order of importance:

- The relevant qualifications, skills, and experience of the consultant(s) in performing work requested herein and working with communities similar in size and character to Braddock, East Pittsburgh, and North Braddock.
- The qualifications, skills, and experience of personnel to be assigned by the consultant(s) to the project.
- The consultant's proposed scope of work and approach, methods, etc. to carry out the project. Proposals will be competitively judged on the quantity, quality, and value of the proposed work approach, products, etc.
- The ability of the consultant to meet the expected project completion schedule.
- Evidence that a minimum of 10% of contracted work will be fulfilled by Minority Owned Enterprises and/or Women Owned Enterprises.
- The Boroughs reserve the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any irregularities or information in any RFP response, and to accept/reject any item or combination of items

Proposal Content

Consultant proposals must include:

- Brief description of the consultant(s).
- Description of relevant work experience, capabilities, skills, and expertise which qualify the consultant(s) to undertake the project. Please include relevant, recent client references.
- Personnel assignments with resumes showing individual work experience, skills, and expertise.
- A proposed scope of work and approach, methods, etc. to carry out the project.
- Proposed work schedule.
- A signed statement that the proposal remains effective for 90 days from September 1, 2017.
- A cost estimate (< \$120,000) with estimates for each section of the proposed plan.

Submission Procedures

Copies of the proposal must be submitted in .pdf format via email to:

Deborah L. Brown, Braddock Borough Manager
braddockmanager@comcast.net
415 Sixth Street
Braddock Pa 15104

Proposals must be received no later than **12:00pm, Friday, September 1, 2017** to be eligible for consideration. Any questions on the request should be directed to Deborah Brown, 412-271-1018, braddockmanager@comcast.net.

The boroughs are open to consider consultant suggestions for alterations to the work scope that would be in the boroughs' interest and not vary from the essential goals and objectives outlined in the RFP. Alterations could be considered in developing a final scope of work for contract with the selected consultant.

A short list of consultants will be asked to schedule and make presentations to a consultant selection committee. It is anticipated that consultant selection will occur within 45-60 days of the RFP deadline. A notice to proceed will be issued as soon as possible thereafter.

Appendix 1:

Consultants should review the following background sources on previous and current planning efforts in Allegheny County that may affect Braddock, East Pittsburgh, and North Braddock:

- *AlleghenyPlaces* – County Comprehensive Plan (December, 2008)
http://www.alleghenyplaces.com/comprehensive_plan/comprehensive_plan.aspx
- *AlleghenyPlaces* – Transportation Element Update (April, 2014)
<http://www.alleghenyplaces.com/pdf/TransportationElement2014Update.pdf>
- *ActiveAllegheny* – Bicycle & Pedestrian Transportation Plan (December, 2010)
<http://www.alleghenyplaces.com/alleghenyportal/public/ActiveAllegheny.pdf>
- East Pittsburgh Borough/North Braddock Borough Joint Comprehensive Plan (December, 2002)
[http://elibrary.pacounties.org/Documents/Allegheny_County/67;%20East%20Pittsburgh%20Borough/East%20Pittsburgh%20and%20North%20Braddock%20Boroughs%20-%20Joint%20Comp%20Plan%20\(Dec%202002\).pdf](http://elibrary.pacounties.org/Documents/Allegheny_County/67;%20East%20Pittsburgh%20Borough/East%20Pittsburgh%20and%20North%20Braddock%20Boroughs%20-%20Joint%20Comp%20Plan%20(Dec%202002).pdf)
- Information on recent studies, including Braddock’s Market Restoration Study, Braddock’s Housing Study, and the multi-municipal Active Transportation Plan can be found on Braddock’s municipal web site at <http://braddockborough.com/>