

Request for Proposals (RFP)

The seal of the City of Mobile, Alabama, is a circular emblem. It features a central shield with a blue field containing a white eagle with wings spread, perched atop a globe. The shield is flanked by two crossed anchors. Below the shield is a banner with the text "FROM ENLIGHTENED TRADITION". The outer ring of the seal contains the text "THE CITY OF MOBILE, ALABAMA" at the top and "FOUNDED 1702" at the bottom, with three fleur-de-lis symbols at the very bottom. The seal is rendered in a light, semi-transparent yellow and blue color.

“A *New* Plan for Old Mobile:
An Urban Planning, Design,
and Economic Development Plan”

Issued by:
City of Mobile, Alabama
Urban Development Department
Planning Section

Request for Proposals (RFP)
“A **New** Plan for Old Mobile: An Urban Planning,
Design, and Economic Development Plan”
City of Mobile, Alabama



Objective

The City of Mobile seeks the services of a qualified planning-research-design consultant team with considerable experience in citizen involvement/participation, visioning, planning, community design, market analysis, and sustainability, to develop a new plan for the Downtown and its adjoining neighborhoods. The selected firm will be responsible for providing specific professional services to support the formulation of the proposed *New Plan for Old Mobile Plan* (hereinafter referred to as *The Plan*). This plan is expected to be an extensive and forthright assessment of the potential and liabilities of development for the next 15 to 20 years. This plan will include a written implementation strategy, a phasing plan with associated costs, graphic illustrations, and a matrix outlining the plan implementation components. The City, private sector interests and others will utilize this plan in marketing properties and attracting investment in the core Downtown area and adjacent neighborhoods.

Project Purpose

The purpose of *The Plan* is to provide a comprehensive and detailed growth analysis that establishes a sustainable long-range plan for development, in order to make Mobile the premier city along the Central Gulf Coast to live, work and play. Although there are numerous development proposals, plans and studies which currently exist or are underway within the Downtown area, what the City of Mobile lacks is an up to date, publicly responsive comprehensive development plan that addresses growth for this defined area from a broad planning perspective.

Study Area Characteristics & Background

Located in the southwestern region of the state of Alabama, at the head of the Mobile Bay, thirty-one miles from the Gulf of Mexico, and at the junction of Interstate 10 and Interstate 65, Mobile is a 300-year old city which prides itself on its rich history and the living monuments of its past. There are nine Historic Districts recognized by the National Register of Historic Places, as well as Heritage Districts recognized only by the City of Mobile. Historic treasures grace the parts of the city with the presence of antebellum mansions, culturally rich neighborhoods, tree-lined streets, and an abundance of natural amenities distinctive of historic Mobile Bay. These treasures are fragile and the City is

eager to equip itself with the tools necessary to balance preservation of these resources with the need to create and foster compatible in-fill development in the older portions of the city, promote social and economic diversity, and sustain positive economic growth.

The principal focus of the project will be the core Downtown area and its adjacent neighborhoods, generally referred to as the Midtown area, within which there is a diverse arrangement of land uses. The city proper is approaching build-out, thus redevelopment and in-fill development opportunities in the study area will be even more important. Within the last few years, Downtown Mobile has experienced a renewed resurgence of development activity, specific examples include: the FBI Building, the Social Security Administration building, the Mobile Press Register office plaza, Mobile Landing, \$19 million in renovations to the historic GM&O Building, and most recently the construction of the 37-story RSA Office Tower and Battle House Hotel. In addition to commercial development activity, residential development has also increased considerably in the downtown area. Historic preservation efforts and public/private investment ventures are in large part responsible for increased residential and commercial redevelopment activity in the downtown urban core; however, specific strategies are needed to continue the development of a vibrant urban core.

Picking up where the City's existing Downtown Comprehensive Plan (String of Pearls Plan) left off, *The Plan* should emphasize a unified development program to expand upon Mobile's current vision for its downtown and include the expanded area. A copy of the study area map is enclosed.

Related Studies and Programs Existing, Currently Underway or Proposed

- String of Pearls (Downtown Development Plan and Program & Downtown Revisioning and Plan Update)
- Smart Growth for Mobile
- Public Space Action Plan
- Bring Back Broad
- Mayor Sam Jones' Transition Task Force Report
- Medical Area Study
- Downtown Residential Study (prepared by Planning Staff, City of Mobile)
- Residential Market Potential – Downtown Mobile Study Area
- Plan and Program for Public Improvements In & Around the Lower Dauphin Street Historic District
- City of Mobile Graphic Standards Manual
- Downtown Parking Management Study
- Green Spaces Comprehensive Plan
- SARPC Bike Plan
- HOPE VI Grant for Public Housing

- RSA Construction
- Historic Battle House Hotel Renovation
- The Downtown Mobile Self-Help Business Improvement District (BID)
- Alabama Cruise Terminal
- Maritime Center at Mobile Landing
- Western Shore Waterfront Access Study
- Dr. MLK, Jr. Avenue Heritage Neighborhood
- Church Street East Zoning Study
- Downtown Parking Plan
- 2003 Consolidated Plan and subsequent annual Action Plans
- National Register nominations and archaeological studies
- Village of Springhill Plan (a community based project and the consultant will need to be cognizant of its development, and communications with that consultant will be coordinated through UDD)

Desired Planning Outcomes

The desired outcomes for *The Plan* are as follows:

- Provide a rational and comprehensive guide for Downtown and Midtown development that fosters sustainable economic growth, and encourages compatible and high quality land development.
- Promote sustainable development measures that will utilize green-friendly, aesthetically-pleasing design standards and land-use combinations;
- Develop ways to revitalize brownfields/grayfields as a means of slowing/managing urban sprawl;
- Develop, maintain, and manage an adequate, safe, accessible, and environmentally-sound transportation system for people of all ages, abilities, and transportation modes, to provide for the efficient movement of people and goods within and through the City of Mobile;
- An evaluation of public infrastructure to determine if additional public infrastructure is needed to support new or expanded economic development as well as the aging population of the area;
- Strengthen the pedestrian link between the cruise terminal, Fort Conde Village, and Downtown;

- Incorporate policies and initiatives from the Smart Growth for Mobile Initiative, New Urbanism, USGBC LEED-Neighborhood Design, and other best-practices, as incentive-based options for development;
- Establish development regulations that are reasonable and flexible to promote upgrading of existing sites. Create effective design solutions that will provide businesses and property owners with unique and productive opportunities for redevelopment;
- Develop specific provisions for a designated pedestrian/bicycle link from West Mobile to link Government and Dauphin Street corridors. These provisions should incorporate amenities such as bike lanes, landscaping, seating areas, pedestrian-scale lighting and directional signage. The objective is to provide a designated path leading visitors and hotels guests to the downtown core.
- Review and update locational and design criteria for directional signage (City of Mobile Graphic Standards Manual). There is currently a lack of directional signage to inform visitors of available parking areas in the Downtown core, as well as public facilities in the plan area. Also should consider some sort of entry monuments.
- Create a program with guidelines to utilize some public areas and/or right of way for commercial uses, such as sidewalk dining, carts/kiosks, street performers and artists.
- Analyze the current and future market potential that promote a healthy mix of land uses within the Downtown core, including the need for additional open space.
- Develop a parking plan for the Downtown core. Possibly modifying the Core Parking requirements to allow the opportunity for more public parking.
- Design an implementation strategy that will develop policy tools that can be used by staff and the Administration to insure that development results in the desired physical form.
- Be a relevant, readable visioning guide for the study area;
- Emphasize practical means of marketing and implementing the plan;

- Update and further implement the City of Mobile Open Space Plan and include needs assessment for additional parks recreational facilities within the study area;
- Support revitalization of downtown area and surrounding core communities, and address growth that will promote strong economic development and identify potential growth areas;
- Use and update existing, on-going downtown plans and establish framework for design criteria taking into consideration the unique historic character of the surrounding area;
- Establish a public/private sector partnership program to incrementally enhance public amenities and designated capital improvements within the Downtown and surrounding areas of the city;
- Identify Focused Public Improvement Areas (FPIA's) and Desired Development Zones (DDZ) designating targeted areas for future growth;
- Use existing commissions/committees as a vehicle for informing the public and interested stakeholders about the plan and getting them involved in the planning process and implementation phase;
- Involve all interested parties, such as the Chamber of Commerce, regional planning/development groups, Downtown Mobile Alliance, neighborhood groups/coalitions, general public, et al in the planning process;

Program Elements

The overall work program for the *The Plan* will focus on a broad based inventory and assessment of the physical, institutional and financial resources for the City of Mobile. This inventory and assessment will serve as the basis for analyzing future land use, development alternatives and for defining plan implementation strategies.

The comprehensive planning process will be guided by an Advisory Committee that represents governmental, private sector, non-profit and citizen concerns. Public and stakeholder involvement is also deemed critical to ensuring that the Plan enjoys widespread support.

The Plan shall encompass the following elements:

- Areas Subject to Natural Disasters and Hazards

- Citizen Involvement
- Community Vision
- Downtown Development and Redevelopment
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Land Use Planning
- Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Natural Resources
- Public Facilities and Services
- Open Spaces and Scenic Areas
- Historic areas and Resources
- Environmental and natural resources
- Recreational Needs
- Transportation
- Urban Design

To address the above elements, it is envisioned that the work program will include:

- Background Research, Data Collection and Mapping
- Community Input
- Overall Market and Land Use Assessment
- Downtown-specific Market, Land Use & Parking Analysis
- Demographic and Development Trends
- Capital Improvement Recommendations
- Implementation Plan & Timeline
- Compatibility & Relation to Other Projects and Plans Affecting the City overall and the Downtown area specifically

Consultant Responsibilities

- Review existing plans, assessments and current revitalization efforts and evaluate appropriateness and applicability.
- Work with the Advisory Committee throughout the project to refine the work program, define districts and establish a vision.
- Organize a series of charettes/public meetings with key stakeholders and the community to obtain ideas suggestions, and create a vision for the city.
- Develop a matrix to show future development components, associated costs and the responsibilities of different agencies for implementation of the plan.

- Prepare conceptual development plans and graphics for the study area, and specific development plans and graphics for key nodes and sites.
- Meet with the Advisory Committee to obtain input regarding the proposed work plan. The Consultant will ultimately work with the Committee to discuss conceptual development scenarios and create mid-and long-term visions of what the area should become.

City Responsibilities

- Provide Geographic Information System (GIS) data with various mapping themes and information.
- Assist in coordinating meeting locations and scheduling meetings.
- Provide all relevant documents, reports, list of property owners, businesses, and contact names if known.

Submittal Requirements

Each applicant must demonstrate in their submittal that they have the professional capabilities and the organizational and administrative experience needed to accomplish this project.

The Statement of Qualifications should contain specific responses to the following requested items:

- **Statement of Understanding**
A statement describing the applicant's understanding of the objectives defined for the proposed Plan.
- **Specific Project Experience**
Provide information on similar or relevant projects, which the applicant has executed. Note: please identify projects completed within budget and schedule.
- **Proposed Project Team Members**
Submit a written description of the applicant's organizational composition, disciplines and the primary role of each firm or individual on the team. Also, include an organization chart. The information must clearly indicate the applicant's designated team leader for this project and the responsible party in each firm who will be providing the required professional experience.
- **Individual Experience**
Provide a description of the background of the key members of each firm in the team and their specific participation in previous

projects that would directly relate to this project. This may be done in descriptive text or in a shortform (one page or less) resume.

- **List of References**
Provide a minimum of 5 client references with which the applicant has provided similar planning/design services within the last three years. Reference shall include name and telephone number of the contact person. The applicant may include additional references from earlier work if the applicant feels it is pertinent and better defines the team's capacity. Each listed reference shall include a description of the services provided to client and specific role (lead or sub).
- **Project Approach**
Describe the applicant's approach and understanding of the project, specifically addressing each of the tasks included in this RFP. Indicate the estimated hours to be spent on each task with a brief supporting explanation. Also, provide a timeline and proposed budget that is consistent with the information provided in the RFP.
- **Additional Information**
Provide other information you feel is relevant to indicate the applicant's abilities to successfully complete a project of this nature.
- **Basis for Compensation**
The proposal shall include a detailed cost estimate for completing the Plan project. Hourly cost for additional time should also be provided.

Selection Criteria

Consultant proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria as a measure of the applicant's ability to successfully complete the project scope of work. Cost will not be the sole basis for selection.

Each submission will be evaluated generally using the following evaluation criteria:

- Depth of relevant experience of the consultant team with efforts of this type, and in technical areas required to successfully complete all previously identified plan element. Experience with past projects utilizing interdisciplinary skills related to urban design, and land use planning and analysis. (25 points)
- Understanding of project goals, and local issues and needs. (20 points)
- Qualifications and previous related work of key personnel and or subcontractors, particularly experience with municipalities of similar size, government structure, complexity and issues (15 points)
- The demonstrated ability of key personnel and or subcontractors to organize and lead effective, productive public meetings and in-house project meetings. (15 points)
- Responsiveness to submission requirements. (10 points)
- Time frame required to complete the plan and phasing of deliverables. (10 points)
- Quality of sample materials and qualifications package submitted. (5 points)

Old Mobile Plan Advisory Committee

A Plan Advisory Committee will be established to review proposals and determine the applicants who meet the minimum requirements pursuant to the Consultant Selection Criteria listed above. The individuals serving on this committee will consist of City staff, appointed officials and other technical professionals.

Deliverables

- Ten hardbound copies of the Plan and one unbound copy of the Plan.
- The Plan should be submitted in booklet form using standard size sheets including selected text, photographs, graphics, tables, charts, and renderings.
- All deliverables should be compatible with Windows operating systems, Microsoft Office, ArcMap and other formats as determined during the project work program.
- All deliverables should be presented to the City of Mobile in both hard copy and electronic formats whenever possible.
- Rights to all data, work products, etc. revert to the City of Mobile upon completion of contract.
- Professional assistance initiated at the start of the project extending through the adoption of the Plan by the City Council.
- The Plan accessibility in its entirety via the Internet.

Submission Procedures

- **Submittals must be received by the City of Mobile's Urban Development Department no later than 4:00 P.M. CST, Thursday, May 24, 2007.**

In order to be considered a valid proposal, each proposal must meet the following requirements:

- Each proposal must be signed by an officer of your company who can be held accountable for all representations.
- The City will review the proposals and may schedule interviews for finalists.
- Proposers are prohibited from contacting any representatives of the Planning Commission or City Council regarding this proposal.
- Fifteen (15) copies of the application package as well as one complete copy of the proposal in portable document format (PDF) on a compact disk must be submitted no later than the above-mentioned deadline. (The PDF file should include all maps, plats, renditions, photographs, or other graphics or materials that were included in the bound copies.).
- Submittals should be mailed or delivered to the attention of:

Laura J. Clarke, AICP, Director
Urban Development Department
City of Mobile
205 Government Street
South Tower, 3rd Floor
Mobile, Alabama 36644

Timeline

The following outlines the timeline for the RFP process. (While the timeline may be subject to change, all participating parties will be notified):

May 24th – RFP deadline

May 30th – Distribute RFP to City Staff and Old Mobile Plan Advisory Committee

Week of July 9th – Conduct interviews, if necessary, with finalists.

August 15th (tentative) – Selection of Plan consultant

- **City of Mobile Contact for Information**

Please direct any questions or comments on this RFP to:

Richard Olsen, Deputy Director of Planning, or

Bert Hoffman, AICP, RLA, Planner II

City of Mobile

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