

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS WHITLEY COUNTY

Professional Services needed for the Whitley County Comprehensive Plan

Whitley County, Indiana is seeking a consultant to provide professional services to assist the County with the preparation of a Comprehensive Plan update. After selection, Whitley County and the consultant will negotiate a contract and complete a scope of services. The consultant will work closely with the Whitley County Plan Commission and its Director, and any other responsible party that the County Commissioners designate.

Included in this request is the following:

1. Preliminary Schedule of Activities
2. Requirements for Statement of Qualifications
3. Preliminary Scope of Work

Six (6) copies of your Statement of Qualifications must be forwarded to the following address no later than January 31, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. local time. The Qualifications will be opened during the Commissioner’s meeting on February 3, 2020 in the Whitley County Government Center in the Commissioner’s meeting room. Please see the attached project scope of activities for the timeline of the procurement process.

Whitley County Plan Commission
220 W. Van Buren Street, Suite 204
Columbia City, IN 46725

Envelopes should be clearly marked “Statement of Qualifications – Whitley County Comprehensive Plan”.

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Issue Request for Statement of Qualifications	January 16, 2020
Statement of Qualifications Due	January 31, 2020
Complete Interviews of Qualified Firms	February 14, 2020
Select Firm	February 17, 2020
Tentative Adoption of Plan	November, 2020

REQUIREMENTS FOR STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

Your Statement of Qualification should include the following information:

- Name, address and brief description of firm
- A description of expertise
- Experience and resources directly relevant and available for the proposed project
- A list of similar projects previously completed
- A list of references
- Resumes of professional staff members that will work on this project
- Name of person to be in charge of project
- Description of scope of services
- A project timeline
- Name, title, address, e-mail address, and telephone number of individuals with the authority to negotiate and bind the proposer contractually, and who may be contacted during the period of proposal evaluation.

Consultants should have demonstrated experience undertaking similar projects in other jurisdictions with growth and development characteristics similar to Whitley County.

The selected consultant team should be multi-disciplined with staff experience in visioning, facilitating community meetings and working with multiple jurisdictions.

It is the intent of this project to perform a potentially extensive update to the existing Comprehensive Plan for the unincorporated area of Whitley County. Specific emphasis for the plan should focus on agricultural conservation, enhancement of rural communities, natural resources, educational opportunities and job production, economic and industrial development/tourism, transportation and infrastructure, community facilities, and community planning, protection of rural areas, and rural development design criteria.

PRELIMINARY SCOPE OF WORK

A selection committee has been appointed to evaluate qualification statements and to select a professional firm for this plan. A preliminary scope of work is as follows: The final scope of services and related fees will be negotiated with the successful firm. Whitley County goals for this project:

- Reviewing the existing Comprehensive Plan and Planning Studies completed previously.
- Identifying the steps necessary to adopt updates/amendments to the Plan.
- Assigning tasks necessary for project completion to either Whitley County personnel or consultant.
- Adopting a Comprehensive Plan that will guide the future growth and development of Whitley County.
- Providing for better cooperation with City and Town planning jurisdictions within Whitley County.
- Educating decision making bodies, Whitley County Offices and the general public about the County Plan and the planning process; and
- Establishing guidelines to assist in updating existing ordinances/drafting new ordinances to implement the plan.

Whitley County Jurisdiction and Comprehensive Master Plan Ordinance Overview

Located in northeast Indiana, Whitley County encompasses approximately 336 square miles. There are currently 19,917 land tax parcels in the County. Whitley County is home to a population of 34,100, according to the 2018 Census estimate, only up from 33,292 in 2010. The City of Columbia City and the Towns of Churubusco, South Whitley, and Larwill are located within Whitley County.

Whitley County Jurisdictional Overview

Whitley County is served by a nine-member advisory Plan Commission and a three-member Board of County Commissioners. The County Plan Commission has planning jurisdiction over the unincorporated areas of the County and the Town of Larwill. Columbia City, Churubusco and South Whitley each have their own local Plan Commission and zoning ordinance. Additionally, these incorporated areas each exercise extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction.

Whitley County Comprehensive Master Plan Overview

Whitley County's Comprehensive Master Plan was initially adopted in 1969. The Comprehensive Master Plan Ordinances initially included a Zoning Ordinance and Zone Maps, a Major Street or Highway Plan and a Subdivision Control Ordinance. In 1993, a new Comprehensive Plan was adopted. Whitley County adopted a new zoning ordinance in 2006, which is still in effect.

In late 2009, a request was made for a new Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2011. However, no significant subsequent changes to the zoning or subdivision ordinances or the zone map were undertaken to draw the planning recommendations and regulatory processes together. While biannual status reviews of the Comprehensive Plan have been done by the Plan Commission since 2011, no subsequent amendments have occurred over the past ten years.

The age of the current Plan being half of its 20-year planning horizon, changing conditions and priorities in the County, and inadequacies of the Plan document observed during zoning code amendment proceedings indicate that a major update or overhaul should be undertaken. It is anticipated that many of the components and recommendations of the existing Plan will be retained, while completed, lowered priority, and unclear parts will be replaced/updated.

Whitley County Issues

Since the current Plan's adoption, a number of issues and concerns have surfaced through Plan Commission and BZA meetings concerning development in the unincorporated areas of the County. Some of those issues and concerns are as follows:

- Conservation of prime agricultural farmland
- Protection of agricultural operations
- Minor subdivisions located within agricultural areas away from municipal services
- Encroachment of suburban development into historically agricultural areas
- Refinement of major residential development growth locations and types
- Definition of growth areas
- Minimal recommendations for (re)development around the lakes
- Planning for an interstate-level U.S. 30
- Lack of population growth within the County and the municipalities
- Availability of jobs outpacing availability of qualified workers
- Compatibility to and between existing surrounding uses
- Density of individual septic systems
- Availability of utilities to unincorporated towns and population centers

- Environmental concerns: water quality, solar energy, storm water drainage/MS4 rules, etc.
- Consideration for non-motorized transportation
- Increased traffic on county roads
- Some components and recommendations of the existing Plan are unclear

AWARD OF CONTRACT

Proposal Evaluation criteria shall include:

1. Experience or technical expertise of the organization and its personnel in connection with the scope of services.
2. Past record of performance on contracts, including quality of work, timeliness and cost control.
3. Past performance in similar communities.
4. Capacity of the organization to perform the work within time limitations, taking into consideration the current planned workload of the firm.
5. Familiarity of the organization with this type of project or problems applicable to the project.

Questions regarding this RFQ or requests for information may be submitted by email to:

Nathan Bilger, AICP
Executive Director
Columbia City/Whitley County
Joint Planning and Building Department
wcplanning@whitleygov.com