



## **Request for Qualifications Visioning and Master Plan Downtown Morganton, NC**

**Issue Date: November 29, 2016**

**Qualifications Submittal Due Date: Friday, January 13, 2017, 5:00pm**

**Submit Questions and Qualifications to:**

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**Parcel Delivery**

City of Morganton /Main Street  
112B W. Union Street  
Morganton NC 28655

## **GENERAL BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION:**

The City of Morganton (population 16,800) is situated in the foothills of western North Carolina approximately 20 miles west of Hickory and 50 miles east of Asheville along the I-40 corridor in central Burke County. Morganton is the County seat and home to a significant number of State Institutions. Downtown Morganton is the commercial, civic, and cultural center of Burke County. The implementation of the comprehensive Downtown Masterplan adopted in 1997 profoundly impacted the vibrancy of downtown Morganton. With the introduction of downtown living, a seven screen multi-plex theater, live music venues, top rated restaurants, breweries, a children's park, a soon-to-be built skateboard park and tourism growth at 12% a year, downtown Morganton is often referred to as "little Asheville".

Downtown Morganton was awarded the honor of being a Main Street Program in 1982 by the North Carolina Main Street Program, which is a division of the Department of Commerce's Community Assistance Program. Main Street is a nationally known program developed and now governed by the National Main Street Center, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Downtown Morganton is one of 53 designated NC Main Street programs and one of the four oldest programs in NC. The mission of the Main Street Program is to promote economic development through Historic Preservation.

The Morganton Main Street Program operates in a 36 block area bounded by railroad tracks to the south, White Street to the east, East Catawba Street to the north and Burke Mission Station to the west. Also in effect in the downtown area is a Special Tax District or Municipal Service District which carries an additional 14 cent per one hundred dollar valuation of property tax within the district. Yielding \$117,790.00 in fiscal year 2015, the revenue is matched in excess of two to one by the City. The Main Street Program is a department of the City of Morganton and has offices on the second floor of a building, owned by the City. The Main Street Department collaborates very effectively with all other City of Morganton staff and employees and elected officials.

Since adoption of the the original Downtown Masterplan in 1997, \$34 million dollars in private investment and \$8 million dollars in public investment (in excess of a 4:1 return on investment) has been realized. The City of Morganton has led the way in public/private endeavors with the following projects:

- Downtown Mill Restoration Mixed Use
- Downtown New Construction Mixed Use
- Downtown Non-Profit Offices
- Downtown Senior Living Facilities
- Downtown Multi-Plex Movie Theater
- Downtown Second Floor Residential
- Downtown Multi-Family Residential
- Amateur Sports Facility
- Greenway/Commercial Center
- Single-Family Subdivisions

## **PURPOSE:**

The City of Morganton is seeking a dynamic consulting firm and/or team to lead and facilitate visioning sessions with community and business leaders, elected leaders and staff members and to prepare an innovative, cutting edge, and comprehensive Downtown Masterplan. This plan is intended to expand on the 1997 Downtown Masterplan and to build upon the existing energy that has revitalized Downtown in a way not seen since the 1950's. The plan should fit in with the Mission 2030 Citywide Comprehensive plan. Additionally, this plan should incorporate the master plan findings of the Morganton Recreation Masterplan, where appropriate with the Downtown Masterplan. The Recreation Masterplan will run concurrent with the Downtown Masterplan.

This Downtown Masterplan is intended to further spur investments in downtown housing, retail and commercial development, the arts, historical activities, and the proposed Downtown Greenway Connector, to provide stable and continued economic growth. This plan should engage a full cross-section of the community and accomplish consensus on growth and development policies for Downtown for the next 15 years. The successful firm should be able to demonstrate an understanding of changing demographics as we shift from baby boomers to millennials. The plan should take in to account the (Re) Imaging Broughton Reuse Study and the planned Western Campus of the North Carolina School of Science and Math.

The City seeks to utilize this new Masterplan as a policy and visual guide for downtown's growth and development throughout the 36 block downtown area with consideration of how adjacent neighborhoods integrate and grow to support the overall success of downtown. The Plan will examine how the present built environment should be changed over the next 15 years given the current demographic profiles, economic conditions and community goals. The plan will examine international, national, regional and local trends that will impact development patterns in the community. It will provide growth implementation strategies and graphically illustrated visions to help guide development decisions for decades.

The following plans should be considered in the overall picture of Downtown:

- (1) 1996 Redevelopment Area Plan
- (2) 1997 Thoroughfare Plan
- (3) 1997 Recreation Master Plan (*A new Recreation Masterplan will start in 2017*)
- (4) 1997 Downtown Master Land Use Plan
- (5) 2001 Community Appearance Master Plan
- (6) 2003 I-40 Corridor Study (Joint City/County)
- (7) 2005 Downtown Cultural District Master Plan
- (8) 2006 Morganton Retail Study
- (9) 2007 Morganton Wayfinding Plan (*in its final phase of completion*)
- (10) 2015 Implementation of a New Zoning Ordinance (Marvin Collins Award Recipient),
- (11) 2016 (Re)Imaging Broughton Reuse Study

Most of these plans can be found on line at <http://www.morgantonnc.gov/index.php/documents/category/8-development-and-design-services>. Others can be requested.

The consultant is encouraged to employ a multi-disciplinary team to obtain this information including: analysis of current land use patterns, market analysis, employment trends, demographics, transportation initiatives; historic preservation and arts initiatives; utility policies, redevelopment activities, residential, commercial & industrial development demands; open space preservation techniques, urban design approaches and other necessary contributors to the built and cultural environment.

Central to this effort is the examination of demographics, infrastructure, natural resources, economic position, geographic location, regional position and general political direction. Many of the changes that the City is facing requires sound community service and facility investments. The City is looking for a qualified professional planning team that can analyze the various plans discussed above, evaluate the current planning regulations initiated from those plans, and analyze current demographic data to compile a new plan. This document should provide effective and creative strategies to preserve Downtown Morganton's existing qualities establish goals and opportunities for viability and improvement in the future.

## **SCOPE OF SERVICES:**

The City's Main Street Department will be the direct contact for the consulting firm. The Development and Design department of the city will be in a support position to the Main Street Department throughout this process. An Advisory Committee will be appointed by the Morganton City Council to work directly with the Consultant and staff to provide review comments and recommendations. The selected consultant will need to:

- (a) Attend, record, and process information gathered from a determined number of Community Wide Meetings beginning February 27, 2017 at a scheduled Council Workshop and extending over the determined Planning Process time frame.
- (b) Attend regular Advisory Committee meetings and work sessions over the period of Plan development.
- (c) Analyze demographic, economic, infrastructure, transportation, and environmental data to recognize historical trends and to project future trends.
- (d) Analyze existing Land Use Regulations and Policies.
- (e) Evaluate existing traffic patterns, i.e. one way streets, and make recommendations
- (f) Evaluate existing parking and make recommendations for future needs.
- (g) Evaluate merits of public art policy.
- (h) Evaluate need for policy for itinerant merchants (food trucks, craft vendors, etc.)
- (i) Recommend sustainable growth opportunities (charging stations, solar, recycling, etc.)
- (j) Evaluate and recommend Land Use Goals and Objectives to be achieved over the next 20 years.
- (k) Evaluate and recommend Cultural Activities Goals and Objectives to be achieved.
- (l) Prepare a draft document, representing the committee's work and long-range recommendations.
- (m) Deliver presentations to various stakeholder groups as necessary as determined during the process.
- (n) Evaluate and plan for connectivity to Broughton Campus and new Western School of Math and Science; and connectivity to Greenway.
- (o) Prepare Implementation Strategies to achieve Goals and Objectives and assign responsibility.

## **DELIVERABLES:**

- Digital copy of all reference data and preliminary study documents.
- Power point presentation of the new plan for promotional purposes.
- Print ready digital copy of the plan.
- Conceptual Drawings, both hand-drawn and computer generated. (A range of 12 to 18 is acceptable)
- Electronic maps provided in Arc Info format
- Wall size display defining goals and timeline.

## **RFP RESPONSE:**

In order to be considered for selection, Consultants must submit a complete response to this RFP. Three (3) originals must be received no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday January 13, 2017.**

## **Qualifications**

- (a) The consultant must demonstrate qualifications in the area of downtown planning, including data collection, streetscape plans, visual analysis, public facilitation and mediation, land use analysis, and planning regulations. Knowledge of the Main Street approach toward downtown revitalization and an overall understanding of the practices applicable to this effort are required.
- (b) The staff assigned to the project must have extensive experience in urban planning, neighborhood revitalization and commercial development. Depending upon the results of the initial meetings to more narrowly focus the Scope of the Plan, it may be necessary for the consultant to demonstrate experience in formulation of a market analysis as well as a capital plan to identify potential funding needs to implement the Plan's recommended projects.
- (c) The proposal should give specifics of the experience of the staff assigned to the project, including level of involvement in previous projects. In addition, the lead project consultant must be registered with the N.C. Board of Landscape Architects.
- (d) Demonstrate past experience with North Carolina Department of Transportation working in a community where most major roadways are controlled by the Department of Transportation.

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

Selection will be based upon, but not limited to the following criteria:

- Consultant's expertise and experience with downtown planning. Demonstrated experience with urban landscaping, downtown revitalization, urban architectural projects, the Main Street Program (with an inclusion of a façade program), completion, as well as construction of adopted downtown plans, development and adoption of mixed use zoning regulations related to a downtown neighborhood, as well as any local government policy, design rendering or economic development opportunity that may fit the project is important to convey in the proposal. Consultant's ability to adequately staff the project.
- Consultant's ability to complete the project within an acceptable timeframe.
- Consultant's reference material and information.
- Consultant's ability to fashion a meaningful and active public engagement process.

If needed the City will interview the top three (3) Consultant firms the week of January 23, 2017

It is the intent of the City Council to award a contract on February 6, 2017

[www.downtownmorganton.com](http://www.downtownmorganton.com)

<http://www.morgantonnc.gov/index.php/documents/category/8-development-and-design-services>