

# **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

## **City of Baton Rouge-Parish of East Baton Rouge Comprehensive Plan**

The City of Baton Rouge-Parish of East Baton Rouge is accepting proposals to assist in the preparation of the new Comprehensive Plan (hereafter referred to as “Plan”). This RFP is being sent to three consultant teams that were short-listed after issuing a response to an earlier Request for Qualifications (RFQ). Information from the original RFQ will not be included in this RFP, but should be referenced.

The Mayor-President believes that this is the appropriate time to create a new Plan to provide direction in the areas of land use, transportation, infrastructure, housing, community services, growth management, and quality of life for the community. The goals and objectives set forth in the Plan will be implemented, with community-wide support, by amendments to the Unified Development Code.

This scope of services details the tasks to be performed and deliverables to be produced by the consultant. This RFP contains the following: a project introduction; project oversight; the scope of work and description of deliverables; an overview of current plans and initiatives; and an overview of the selection process.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

#### **Project Area**

The City of Baton Rouge-Parish of East Baton Rouge is located in the southeast area of the State of Louisiana. The City-Parish has experienced unprecedented growth because of the population shifts that followed Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita in 2005. The population doubled immediately following the hurricanes which resulted in demands on housing, public safety, and transportation. Significant opportunities and needs remain in all these areas, and must be addressed in the plan.

The Parish is bounded by the Mississippi River on the west and southwest, by Bayou Manchac on the south, by the Amite River on the east and by East Feliciana Parish on the north. The average elevation is 19 feet above sea level, total area is 470 square miles or 302,144 square acres, land area is 455 square miles, water area is 15 square miles. Fifty (50) percent of all Parish land area is within the 100 Year Flood Plain.

The City of Baton Rouge is situated on the east bank of the Mississippi River along the Istrouma Bluffs. The average elevation is 46 feet above sea level, total area is 76.5 square miles or approximately 49,000 square acres, land area is 74.3 square miles, and the water area is 2.2 square miles.

#### **Existing Comprehensive Plan (Horizon Plan)**

The current 20-year Comprehensive Plan for the City-Parish (hereafter referred to as the “Horizon Plan”) was adopted by the Metropolitan Council in January 1992, and became effective in April 1992. Horizon Plan was created with substantial citizen involvement and is the “blueprint for the future.” Economic vitality, a high quality of living and an efficient use of community resources are important goals of the Horizon Plan. The

Comprehensive Plan governs future development for all areas within the City of Baton Rouge, and all unincorporated areas of East Baton Rouge Parish. This does not include the cities of Baker, Central, or Zachary. The most recent five-year update was completed in 2007 and is available for viewing at [www.brgov.com/dept/planning/compplan.htm](http://www.brgov.com/dept/planning/compplan.htm).

### **City-Parish Government Administration**

The City-Parish is jointly administered by the Mayor-President and a 12-member Metropolitan Council. The cities of Baker, Central, and Zachary are incorporated with their own governing boards. The chosen consultant team will be expected to coordinate activities with the City-Parish Administration.

### **City-Parish Government Structure**

The City - Parish is managed by a single, consolidated form of government. This form of government efficiently combines all executive, legislative, and judicial functions under one umbrella organization, thereby eliminating duplication of services and functions, as well as providing a streamlined and efficient system of governing. This consolidation was accomplished in 1947, through a citizen-supported referendum.

### **City-Parish Planning Commission**

The City-Parish Planning Commission was created by the Metropolitan Council in 1949 as the single body charged with the authority to enforce and enact land development regulations. The Planning Commission is authorized by state law and the Metropolitan Charter to guide the physical growth of Baton Rouge and the Parish through comprehensive planning and the establishment of land use controls.

The Commission consists of nine members. Seven of those members are appointed by the Metropolitan Council for a five-year term, on a rotating basis. Four of these appointees are selected from residents inside the city limits, and three are selected from residents outside the city limits. Of the remaining two members, one Commissioner is a representative from the Office of the Mayor-President and the other Commissioner is a representative from the Metropolitan Council. Any action taken by the Planning Commission, as it relates to the creation or update of the Comprehensive Plan, must be ratified by the Metropolitan Council. Planning Commission staff is responsible for making recommendations on zoning and land use decisions to the Planning Commission and providing updates on implementation activities of the Horizon Plan.

### **Comprehensive Plan Requirements**

As required by the Plan of Government, the Comprehensive Plan guides the physical development of the metropolitan area for the City of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish. The Plan is required to include, but is not limited to, the following elements:

1. future land-use;
2. transportation, including traffic circulation and mass-transit;
3. infrastructure and capital improvements plan
4. conservation and environmental resources;
5. recreation and open space;
6. housing element;

7. public services and facilities;
8. urban design;
9. health and human services;
10. natural hazards; and
11. implementation and financing

Each element must include policy recommendations for implementation and shall be implemented, in part, by the adoption and enforcement of appropriate land development regulations. The Metropolitan Council is responsible for approving recommended methods to finance Plan implementation.

## **II. SCOPE OF SERVICES**

Responses to this RFP should include a Scope of Work (SOW) that follows these basic steps: create a public outreach and participation plan, define existing conditions and develop a “vision,” develop a detailed Comprehensive Plan, and create an implementation strategy with policy recommendations and action items. The steps are further described below.

### **A. Public Outreach, Participation and Intergovernmental Coordination Plan**

The implementation of the City of Baton Rouge - Parish of East Baton Rouge Parish Comprehensive Plan should depend upon extensive public participation and leadership throughout the planning process. Due to the lack of land-use planning in most Louisiana communities, it is vital that an educational component be incorporated into every stage of plan creation. Public input is a vital part of the planning process. It instills a sense of pride and ownership in the plan with the community, thereby leading to a greater desire to implement its goals and objectives. Therefore, this participatory planning process should engage residents, neighborhoods, industry, small business leaders, civic leaders, neighboring parishes, and other stakeholder groups including those from the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

The consultant team will develop a public participation and outreach plan that describes how they will engage and inform residents about the Comprehensive Plan. The SOW contained in responses to this RFP must outline outreach and education methodologies as specified above. As part of your proposal, describe in detail successful methods for seeking input and engaging the public. The consultant team should describe a process that gathers information in a variety of ways, utilizing focus groups, surveys, interviews with agency leaders, meetings with stakeholders, and/or other methods deemed appropriate by respondents.

### **B. Defining Existing Conditions and Developing a Vision**

The City of Baton Rouge - Parish of East Baton Rouge is in need of a unified Vision to provide direction and clarity to the community for a sustainable future, one that balances economic, environmental and social needs. This vision will emerge from extensive public input, overlaid by the expertise of the selected consultant team.

Using existing plans, projects, and background data as a starting point, the SOW contained in responses to this RFP must describe how the respondents will synthesize community input collected above to interactively outline a broad, consensus “vision” for City of Baton Rouge - Parish of East Baton Rouge Parish.

Responses to this RFP will be evaluated, in part, by the extent to which they address the ULI Advisory Services Panel recommendations. The Urban Land Institute (ULI) Advisory Services Panel identified the following keys to a successful plan and plan implementation:

1. Create a Plan with a “strong vision which will provide the direction, clarity, and purpose Baton Rouge needs to become *America’s Next Great City*”;
2. Conduct extensive community involvement and public education;
3. Perform thorough mapping to identify opportunities and constraints to development. Create a map to identify the best and least likely areas for development, prior to the preparation of any land use recommendations;
4. Prioritize short, medium, and long term action items based on the Vision of the City-Parish;
5. Conduct constant and careful monitoring of the Plan as it is implemented;
6. Provide periodic, cautious amendments of the Plan; and
7. Ensure that appropriate and adequate resources are provided to implement the plan goals.

To ensure maximum public participation, the Consultant will, at a minimum:

- Hold public meetings in each of the sixteen (16) planning districts. The consultant will work with City-Parish Planning Commission staff to coordinate the number and specific location of meetings.
- Prepare meeting agendas and other materials for the meeting
- Create a web-site dedicated to the Plan and the planning process. The website will be updated as needed to provide the community with information on meeting dates, project progress, and other updates. This website will provide one mechanism for the general public to provide input and comments throughout the planning process.
- Create update materials in hard copy format to be distributed to libraries to be viewed by members of the community whom do not have access to the internet.

### **C. Develop the Comprehensive Plan**

Within a Smart Growth framework and in the context of an ongoing public process, the SOW must describe the development of a Comprehensive Plan that consolidates and coordinates the following elements, based on issues and trends in the City- Parish. The City-Parish has established the following plan elements to serve as a guide for the plan development and the consultant is welcome to suggest creative or innovative additions or modifications to these components. The SOW should also describe which of the described elements would be separate sections, and which might be combined:

### **1. Future Land-Use**

The Land Use Plan will incorporate a strong community design component. Residents wish to have a better idea of the uses, location, density, scale, and the "look" of future development in the area before development proposals are processed. This element will identify the community design objectives for the all areas of the City-Parish. The consultant is encouraged to propose a process of creative and interactive methods for soliciting both citizen and developer input and channeling this input into realistic alternatives for consideration by the public, the Planning Commission, the Mayor-President, and the Metro Council. Multiple land use alternatives will be developed and tested by the consultant. One of the alternatives will consider build-out based upon current zoning. Use of techniques such as "charrettes" or other methods to achieve this objective should be considered. The consultant will need to ultimately reach a realistic consensus on a preferred alternative or alternatives for various development areas in the community. The Plan is to be applied Parish-wide and must coordinate with the municipalities of Baker, Central and Zachary.

### **2. Transportation**

The preservation of community character and identity increasingly turns into a discussion of traffic impacts. The transportation element provides important input into the definition of a preferred land use alternative. A full range of transportation policies would address multi-modal opportunities and design elements of arterial, collector, and local roadways. Utilizing, but not limited to, past transportation studies, a Sustainable Regional Comprehensive Transportation Plan shall be created in tandem with the Comprehensive Plan. The element will acknowledge and incorporate goals and policies, which reinforces the Parish's participation in the Baton Rouge Loop process.

The SOW should describe how the multi-modal model and integrated transportation plan will assist key agencies in their planning and review processes, and how it will assist in determining which projects reduce congestion, minimize vehicle miles traveled, reduce energy consumption, enhance air quality, enhance pedestrian/bicycle safety, and reduce travel time.

### **3. Infrastructure and Capital Improvements Plan**

Provide a SOW for developing an Infrastructure and Capital Improvements Plan which focuses on integrating aspects of future land use, conservation, and environmental resources, to ensure the integrity of planning for sustainable and affordable infrastructure which supports the City-Parish's growth over the next 20 years. This policy element provides the opportunity to address a wide range of governmental services. Goals would potentially address maintaining the high standards of public safety and crime prevention in the parish. Goals addressing coordination with the Fire Districts, the coordination of educational goals with the East Baton Rouge Parish School District, youth programs, and library and senior services and other municipal facilities may be pursued in this element. Future service capacities of parish utilities will be central

to this element as well as being an important input to the land use element. Acquisition of water rights and recognition of future master water, drainage and wastewater plans will be discussed in this element.

#### **4. Conservation and Environmental Resources**

This element is vital in addressing overall quality of life and health of the community as well as sustainability in the City-Parish. The consultant should propose in the SOW a system for predicting the impacts of other Plan elements on environmental quality and the means of implementing methods which will preserve our natural resources.

#### **5. Recreation and Open Space**

The Comprehensive Plan provides an opportunity to integrate facility inventories, trail connectivity and service goals. In the proposed SOW, the consultant should identify strategies for: intergovernmental and interagency coordination and facility sharing; adding and preserving open space; linkages between recreational facilities, open space and population centers.

Opportunities through intergovernmental cooperation to further expand buffering and connectivity with adjoining jurisdictions should be encouraged in the Plan.

Although the East Baton Rouge Park and Recreation Commission (BREC) is a major provider of recreation facilities in the Parish, its services and future development plans should integrate into the growth management policies of the City-Parish.

#### **6. Housing**

The Housing element provides an opportunity to set policy direction relative to the range of housing products provided in the Parish. The City-Parish has the opportunity to address housing affordability and integrating housing products with various densities. Alternate land use scenarios will provide an opportunity to evaluate under-served residential product types, and the respective densities. This element will be supported by Plan charts and graphics related to population and housing.

#### **7. Public Services and Facilities / Buildings**

The SOW should provide for recommendations relative to new investments made by the City-Parish and other governmental entities, and how those investments can be planned to serve the future needs of the City-Parish. The SOW should also include recommendations for implementing sustainable practices in current and new public facilities. This section will also provide the opportunity to review the impact of additional housing on existing and planned public facilities.

#### **8. Urban Design, Development and Redevelopment**

Baton Rouge's suburban growth has outpaced that of its downtown and the older parts of the City-Parish. Infill development and redevelopment of vacant

and abandoned properties is vital to the future of Baton Rouge. The Consultant will identify neighborhoods and/or communities that are ready to begin redevelopment planning at the community level. Where redevelopment or new development is discussed, the character of that development will be directed in a manner which results in compatibility and integration with the community vision. This element will set out policies that address community gateways, community image, the integration of major roadway corridors, and the preservation of community cultural and historic attributes. Development densities, particularly for residential development, are an important focus of this element. This element will serve as a vehicle to direct the on-going use of existing design standards and guidelines as well as proposed standards such as for historic preservation or redevelopment. This element will create policies that guide the economic development and redevelopment of the City – Parish as well as its physical development. Understanding the jobs-housing balance that must exist in any vital city, the Consultant should seek input on ways that this element can work to support the objectives of the Housing and Future Land Use elements.

#### **9. Health and Human Services**

All recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan shall consider the provision of health and human services and, when applicable, specifically address the impacts of the other elements on said services. This section will also provide the opportunity to review the impact of new developments and such new developments should be directed in a manner which results in compatibility and integration with the community vision.

#### **10. Natural Hazards**

Natural hazards provide a “reality check” to growth in any region, a yardstick against which we can ask, “has the region’s future been built on solid ground?” This component shall address goals, objectives and policies concerning hazard mitigation, emergency preparedness, disaster response, and recovery. Much of East Baton Rouge Parish lies within the 100-year flood zone and South Louisiana, in general, is susceptible to natural disasters such as hurricanes and flooding. Because of these inherent characteristics, the consultant will also provide recommendations for hazard mitigation, which may include the prohibition of development in certain areas of the Parish.

#### **11. Implementation / Financing**

The ultimate objective of this Plan is to implement the stated goals and recommendations. While implementation often requires funding, policies, incentives, regulations and enforcement are important components of any implementation strategy. The Consultant should create a Capital Improvement Plan; suggest specific recommendations for amending the Unified Development Code to implement the vision and goals of the Plan; devise a strategy for implementing the appropriate mix of incentives, disincentives and regulations to create the desired development scenarios; and

develop an implementation/finance matrix that identifies priorities and responsible parties.

The Comprehensive Plan must contain both a detailed land use plan (including maps) and actionable implementation plans with high-priority/catalyst projects that address immediate needs of the city-parish as well as relevant ordinance language. The most common criticism of any plan is that it sits on a shelf and gathers dust. In order for this plan to avoid this fate, the plan shall include an aggressive and rational work program or strategy for implementation of the goals and objectives of the plan.

#### **D. Deliverables**

The respondents' SOW must incorporate descriptions of all deliverables to be created during the planning process. The SOW should also describe the specific processes for creating and providing each deliverable to the client, including necessary inputs, client/stakeholder/public review, as appropriate, and means for inclusion in final documents. Please indicate in the RFP your firm's ability to deliver all map data in GIS format.

The Comprehensive Plan format will consist of both text (Microsoft Word) and maps in an 8 1/2" x 11" three ring binder format that lends itself to amendments. Maps shall be produced in a format of 22" x 34", with the capability of being legibly reduced to 11" x 17" for inclusion into the binder. The consultant shall deliver the draft and final documents in both hard copy and electronic formats that allow easy reproduction, direct web readiness and the ability to edit. The specific format of electronic submissions may be discussed with the Planning Commission but, at a minimum, the Consultant must be able to provide documents in PDF form and maps in CAD form.

#### **E. Proposed Project Schedule**

The applicant is required to submit a project schedule showing key task target dates, including public meetings and hearings and estimated task duration indicating that this requirement will be met.

### **III. CURRENT AND PAST STUDIES AND PLANS**

The new Plan will be consistent with existing plans and will re-evaluate and build upon their objectives. The reports and plans in place include the Plans and Agencies that are listed in the RFQ and on the Comprehensive Plan Update website. The SOW should describe how each of these would be incorporated.

### **IV. CONTRACT DELIVERABLES**

The final deliverables may potentially include, but are not limited to:

1. A Comprehensive Plan for the City of Baton Rouge–Parish of East Baton Rouge, including maps, with all elements;
2. Presentations of the Plan to the Planning Commission, Advisory Committee, Administrative Committee, and community members at regular intervals;

3. Recommended changes to the Unified Development Code as a mechanism to implement the long-range goals of the Plan;
4. The creation of all plans, models, and studies called for under the Transportation Element section of the RFQ;
5. An interactive web site for the dual purpose of marketing the Plan and receiving input about the Plan;
6. A communication strategy and public education plan for the purpose of marketing the new Plan and engaging the public in its implementation;
7. A prioritization of the Plan's recommendations, a timeline for implementation, and identifying the lead agency and possible funding sources.
8. A quality assurance / quality control program to ensure proper implementation of the Plan after the completion and adoption of the plan, which should include:
  - a. Training for Planning Commission and Metropolitan Council members on implementing long-range land use goals.
  - b. An interagency coordination plan to implement the Plan. The implementation plan should include, but is not limited to, the following Agencies:
    - East Baton Rouge Department of Public Works;
    - Parish Attorney's Office;
    - East Baton Rouge Parish Housing Authority
    - East Baton Rouge Schools;
    - East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority;
    - Office of Community Development
    - Capital Region Planning Commission;
    - Metropolitan Planning Organization;
    - Baton Rouge Parks and Recreation Commission;
    - City-Parish Planning Commission;
    - Louisiana Statewide Office of Planning;
    - Louisiana Recovery Authority;
    - Louisiana Department of Transportation;
    - Adjacent Parishes; and
    - State Agencies (such as DEQ and DNR).

## **V. SUBMISSION DETAILS**

### **Deadline for Submission**

Proposals must be received no later than 12:00 Noon CST on **March 23, 2009**. Packages should be delivered via UPS, FedEx, or DHL to: Office of the Planning Commission, Attn: Troy L. Bunch, Planning Director, 1755 Florida Street, Third Floor, Baton Rouge, LA 70802. Questions regarding this RFP should be addressed to: Troy L. Bunch, Planning Director, via email at [tbunch@brgov.com](mailto:tbunch@brgov.com). Responses to all questions will be provided to the identified team lead on each consultant team.

### **Important Dates**

The following dates are intended to provide a guideline for this process, and are subject to change.

- RFP available to consultants (*February 23, 2009*)
- Deadline for Proposal Submittals (*March 23, 2009*)
- Consultant interviews and presentations (*April 2, 2009*)
- Selection announced (*April 2009*)

### **Submission Requirements**

Applicants should submit **thirty** hard copies of the proposal package and 10 copies in Adobe PDF format on a CD-ROM that includes the following components:

The proposal should include the following items:

1. Statement of Interest: Provide a statement of interest and understanding of the work. The letter, written on the firm's letterhead, shall cite the individual who will be the primary point-of-contact for matters relating to the proposal and shall be signed by an individual with the authority to commit the firm to the project. The letter shall include a narrative description of the strengths of each team member. The letter should also include full contact information such as name, address, telephone, fax, and email address.
2. Proposed Methodology: Describe the general methodology to implement the planning process including: planning philosophy and/or general planning methodology, technology and resources to be used in public participation strategy, and implementation approaches.
3. Proposed Project Work Scope and Timeline: Provide a detailed work scope and timeline that meets or exceeds the scope of services described above.
4. Experience of Participant Firms: Provide an organizational chart showing the roles of the lead firm and each consultant firm or individual. Please include a narrative or chart outlining the teams' current workload and personal capacity for this project. Describe the proposed project assignments and system/structure of authority and communication between principals and key professional members of the lead firm and sub-consultant(s). Provide qualifications and experience of the principals and key professional members of the consultant team that will be involved in the project. Highlight their experience with similar projects and specific issues relevant to this project. Include a statement describing how the applicant(s) will identify local experts and encourage their participation for this project.
5. Representative Projects and References: Provide a brief narrative for a maximum of five projects performed by the lead firm and a maximum of three projects for each sub-consultant that are most similar and relevant to this project, and that have been completed within the last seven years. Provide current contact information for all projects listed. All references will be contacted.

6. Proposed Budget/ Cost Estimate: Include a detailed budget for the proposed work scope and timeline. Include each consultant's hourly rate and expected hours according to task.
7. Work Samples: Include comparable work products for the prime firm and all sub-consultants. Sample work products may be submitted in Adobe PDF format on a CD-ROM. If a disc is included, please provide one per packet to ensure that each selection committee member is able to view contents.

Additional Information: Provide any additional information that the lead firm believes may better describe its qualifications or be of benefit to the City- Parish.

### **Selection Criteria**

Consultants submitting proposals will be interviewed by the Advisory Committee and City-Parish staff on April 2, 2009. Details of this interview regarding time and location will be arranged with the consultants. The interview process will give the Consultants an opportunity to demonstrate:

1. Consultant's specialized experience, expertise, and performance in providing similar or related services.
2. Qualifications and experience of the project team.
3. Record of implementation ability via public participation process, plan development, and past plan adoption.
4. Demonstration of experience conducting effective outreach to elected and appointed officials.
5. Knowledge of key planning issues and influences impacting Louisiana and its Parishes.
6. Consultant's overall suitability to provide the required services within the time and budget constraints.
7. Consultant's ability to approach and utilize local experts in the creation of this plan. How these experts will be identified and what role they will play in the overall formulation of the plan, must be clearly indicated.
8. Consultant's ability to integrate environmentally and socially sustainable planning principles (such as Smart Growth Principles) into the Plan.

### **General Notifications**

Expenses incurred by the respondents in replying to the RFP or in making any appearance before the Advisory Committee are at the respondents' own expense and risk.

Any concerns or questions, along with the response and answer, will subsequently be available to all respondents to this RFP on the Planning Commission's website at <http://brgov.com/dept/planning>.

Direct contact with the Mayor-President or Office of the Mayor-President, Metropolitan Council member, Planning Commission member, any Administrative Committee or Advisory Committee member is NOT allowed. Any attempts to establish contact with any of the aforementioned individuals will result in disqualification.