Planning & Development
PO Box 1390 * 10 North Public Square * Cartersville, GA 30120
Main: 770-387-5600 * www.cityofcartersville.org

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS AND FEE PROPOSAL

City of Cartersville Comprehensive Plan
5-Year Update

By:
The City of Cartersville
Planning and Development Department
2nd Fl
10 N. Public Square
Cartersville, GA 30120

Contact: David Hardegree, AICP
Phone: (770) 387-5614
dhardegree@cartersvillega.gov

November 06, 2026

I. CALL FOR PROPOSALS:

The City of Cartersville is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified planning consultants for the 5-year update to the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Respondents must submit **five (5) copies** of their qualifications and fee proposal in an opaque envelope marked on the outside with the Request for Proposal – Cartersville Comprehensive Plan Update and Company Name. Proposals will be received until **5:00 P.M. on Friday, December 4, 2026,** at the City of Cartersville Planning and Development office.

Proposals may be submitted via USPS to:

City of Cartersville
Planning and Development office
ATTN: David Hardegree
P.O. Box 1390
Cartersville, GA 30120
Re: Cartersville Comprehensive Plan Update

In person or other delivery services submitted to:

City of Cartersville
Planning and Development office
ATTN: David Hardegree
2nd Floor City Hall
10 N. Public Square
Cartersville, GA 30120
Re: Cartersville Comprehensive Plan Update

The proposal must be signed by an official authorized to bind the firm to the project and contain a statement to the effect the proposal is binding for at least ninety (90) days from the submission deadline date. The proposals must contain all of the information listed in Section III of the RFP.

The City reserves the right to consider modifications to proposals prior to the award of a contract and to reject any and all proposals received as a result of the RFP. The City is not liable for costs incurred by respondents prior to contract award.

The written proposal documents supersede any verbal or written prior communications between the parties.

Selection criteria is outlined in Section VI Criteria for Evaluation and Selection of Consultant. The City of Cartersville reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive technicalities, and to make an award deemed in its best interest.

We look forward to your proposal and appreciate your interest in the City of Cartersville.

David Hardegree, AICP
Assistant Planning Director

II. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Located in Bartow County, the City of Cartersville is located approximately 40 miles north of Atlanta and is easily accessed via I-75 and State Highways 20, 41, 61, 113 and 411. Cartersville has served as the county seat since 1867. The City currently occupies a land area of approximately 29 square miles, with a population estimated at just over 25,000. Known as the Museum City, Cartersville is home to award winning museums- Tellus Science Museum, Booth Western Art Museum, Savoy Automobile Museum and the Bartow History Museum.

In addition to museums, Cartersville has a vibrant and ever evolving downtown with entertainment, dining, living and shopping options set within a walkable, historic fabric. Outside downtown, Cartersville maintains a balance of residential, commercial and industrial developments mixed with a vast network of trails, parks and green space, access to the Etowah River, and a short driving distance to Lake Allatoona and LakePoint Sports.

The City's commitment to a long-range vision with balanced growth and development has resulted in a community valued for its' schools, downtown, historic charm, and quality of life.

Project Description

The City of Cartersville (City) is accepting proposals from qualified firms for the purpose of completing the 5-year update to its local comprehensive plan (Plan). The City seeks an update to its' short term planning goals and objectives and to ensure they are aligned with regional and state planning goals, including Economic Development, Natural and Historic Resources, Community Facilities and Services, Housing, Transportation and Land Use. The Plan must be prepared in accordance with DCA Rules, Chapter 110-12-1, et seq, O.C.G.A. 50-8-1 et seq., and the Environment pursuant to O.C.G.A. 12-2-8.

The methods to achieve the plan must follow the applicable planning standards and procedures for local comprehensive planning outlined in each of the state code sections, and supplemental rules and regulations.

The comprehensive plan update will guide and support the efforts of the community work program, providing detailed strategic implementation plan, and direction for the next five years.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Plan must be prepared in accordance with DCA Rules, Chapter 110-12-1, et seq.

Specifically, the consultant will need to: Collect and analyze data; Develop and implement an inclusive community participation plan; Develop and facilitate inclusive engagement exercises to help stakeholders and citizens define a vision for the community; Identify development or preservation challenges and opportunities; Amend the future land use map according to community preferences; Coordinate the exchange of information and reviews with the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission;

The Scope of Services to be accomplished under this contract is divided into the following tasks:

Task 1 – Inventory and Assessment

The goal of this task is to update community data and historical trends for each planning element identified below and develop projections where applicable.

- Community Demographics: total population, households, age distribution, racial composition, educational attainment, and income.
- Economic Development: economic base, labor force, local economic development resources.
- Open Space and Natural Resources: water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, flood plains, soil types, tree canopy, major park, recreation and conservation areas.
- Historic Resources: residential, commercial, industrial, institutional resources.
- Community Facilities and Services: broadband services, solid waste management, public safety, public health facilities, recreation, general government, educational facilities, libraries and other cultural facilities.
- Housing: types of housing units, age and condition of housing, owner and renter occupied units, cost of housing.
- Transportation: roadways, signalization, railroad, transit, bicycle and pedestrian, traffic counts.
- Land Use: using the standard classification system (residential, commercial, industrial, public/institutional, transportation/communications/utilities, park/recreation/conservation, agriculture/forestry, and undeveloped land uses) develop an existing land use assessment and future land use map with a descriptive narrative.

Task 2 – Community Participation

The goal of this task is to develop a local planning outreach process that will engage a broad cross-section of stakeholders, including under-represented segments like low income, minority, ethnically diverse, youth, elderly, and disabled citizens.

These tasks will be documented through meeting notices, meeting summaries and other written communications. Documentation of public comments and the plans' response, if any, to those comments should be addressed in the study reports and

included in the Appendices. The public involvement process shall, at a minimum, include the following components:

- Project Management Team- representatives from City staff and the consultant. This team shall regularly meet in person or virtually to discuss the study progress and provide advice on public involvement and other planning process issues.

- Steering Committee- representatives from relevant local government departments and appointed boards responsible for land use planning, economic development, transportation, and housing; plus, community leaders from Bartow County, Cartersville City Schools, the Downtown Development Authority, Etowah Valley Housing Authority, Cartersville-Bartow County Tourism, the Cartersville-Bartow County Chamber of Commerce, and major employers.

- Public Engagement - A minimum of three (3) public engagement activities are to be planned. The activities may be a public survey, steering committee meetings, stakeholder interviews, and/ or a Community Workshop, formally scheduled, or as a "drop-in" format at a local public event such as the weekend farmers market, festivals or concerts.

  The following topics should be covered by the public engagement process:
  - Provide overview of planning process, the goals, key dates, and public input opportunities.
  - Solicit opinions on goals and objectives of the plan, stakeholder needs, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) in the community.
  - Establish the community's needs, goals and vision for each element.

- Public Hearings – A minimum of three (3) public hearings must be held- one at the beginning of the planning process, and two prior to the adoption of the plan. It is anticipated that one (1) work session with the City Council will be held to present the draft plan prior to adoption.

Task 3 – Statement of Needs and Opportunities

The goal of this task is to develop a locally agreed upon list of needs and opportunities the community intends to address. The Statement of Needs and Opportunities conveys short-term tasks which will require direct attention from the community in the upcoming five years. The list should be developed with the following considerations:

- Involve community stakeholders in carrying out a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) or similar analysis of the community (Task 2).

- Check for potential needs and opportunities by reviewing the 2022 Comprehensive Plan and evaluating demographic, economic, housing, transportation and other data and information about the community. When

evaluating this data and information, focus on:

- Whether it verifies needs or opportunities identified previously;
- Whether it uncovers new needs or opportunities not previously identified;
- Whether it indicates significant local trends that need to be considered in the planning process.

- Evaluate the community's current policies, activities, and development patterns by comparing them with the Quality Community Objectives and best practices developed by GA Department of Community Affairs. Use this analysis to identify any community needs and opportunities for adapting local activities, development patterns and implementation practices to the Quality Community Objectives.

- Identify community goals, needs and opportunities, and work program items for each of the elements of Task 1.

Task 4 – Community Work Program

The goal of this task is to chart the specific activities the community plans to undertake during the upcoming five years to address its Needs and Opportunities while moving toward the realization of its community goals. This includes activities, initiatives, programs, ordinances, or administrative procedures and policies to be put in place to implement the plan. The Community Work Program should be developed for the time period of 2028 thru 2032, and must include the following information for each listed activity:

- Brief description of the activity;
- Timeframe for initiating and completing the activity;
- Responsible party for implementing the activity;
- Estimated cost (if any) of implementing the activity; and
- Funding source(s), if applicable.

The most recent annual adoption of the Capital Improvements Element/ Community Work Program may be used as the starting point for Task 4.

Task 5 – Deliverables

Deliverables include visual displays for public presentations and presentations to elected officials summarizing the process and findings, including any Boards and Commissions instrumental to providing recommendations to City Council prior to final action and adoption by City Council.

Deliverables also compile the results of the overall work effort, the study process, relevant findings, and recommendations into a final document. The final Plan shall include the following elements in an easy to read format with appropriate graphics or illustrations:

- Executive Summary
  - **Summaries of the Plan development process:**
    - A description of the planning process and methodology, data gathering techniques and findings, and general outcomes.
    - A description of the public participation process used to achieve a community-supported vision and community work program.

  - Report of Existing Plans and Data Trends from Task 1:
    - A description of the inventory and assessments including the status of key recommendations from current plans and policies.
    - Concept Plan and Study, including: Maps, concept illustrations, and other graphic representations to support the plan including, but not limited to: existing land use, future land use, population trends, economic trends, existing transportation facilities, and proposed transportation improvements.

  - Report of Needs and Opportunities from Task 3:
    - Include results from the community-based SWOT.
    - Include previous needs and opportunities and whether they are still relevant; and newly identified needs and opportunities for each planning element.
    - A description of the analysis conducted comparing local policies, activities and development patterns with DCA's Quality Community Objectives and regional plan goals.

  - Community Work Program from Task 4:
    - Include a table or similar graphic representation of specific activities the community plans to undertake during the time period of 2028 thru 2032.

  - Implementation Strategy:
    - Describe the organizational structure and processes that will be used to ensure the Community Work Program items are implemented. Focus should be given to collaboration opportunities with other organizations and public-private-philanthropic strategies to ensure continued support from local elected officials, citizens, and businesses.
    - Describe any policies that need to be developed and adopted to support the community vision.
    - Define the priorities of the Community Work Program.

  - Appendices:
    - Include data, full survey results, public comments, photos of interactive activities, and similar input that helped to

develop the plan.
- Inventory and any other asset reports or maps.
- Any other technical reports as necessary.
- Documentation of public hearings or notices.

Format of Final Deliverables (To be finalized at end of process):

- Six (6) printed and bound copies of the complete final report and appendices (8.5"x11"), conceptual plans and graphics may be 11"x17" folded format
- PDF file of Final Report and all appendices
- The Community Work Program in Excel
- All electronic files in their original formats (e.g. MS Word, Excel, InDesign, etc.) with supporting graphics and GIS shape files (Future Land Use Map)

IV. PROJECT SCHEDULE

The Request for Proposals is scheduled as follows:

Milestone	Deadline Date
Issue and Advertise RFP	Friday, November 6, 2026
Deadline for Question Submission	Monday, November 30, 2026 (5:00 pm EST)
Deadline for Submitting Proposals	Friday, December 4, 2026 (5:00 pm EST)
Interviews for Selected Firms	Week of December 14, 2026
Notice of Award and Contract to Successful Firm	Monday, December 21, 2026
Recommendation to City Council for Action	Thursday, January 7, 2027
Firm Returns Executed Contract (Approximate)	Monday, January 11, 2027
Issue Notice to Proceed (Approximate)	Week of January 11, 2027
Target Date of Plan Completion/ Adoption	February 2028

Question Submission and Answers:

All questions concerning this RFP must be submitted to David Hardegree, Assistant Planning Director. O: 770-387-5614. dhardegree@cartersvillega.gov

Questions and clarification requests must be received per the schedule table above. Answers and clarifications issued by the City will be in the form of an addendum to the proposal instructions and will be issued to all known potential offerors. It is the proposer's responsibility to ensure that they have all applicable addenda prior to submittal.

V. CONSULTANT INFORMATION

Each respondent is required to submit five (5) copies of a written proposal containing the information listed below. Failure to provide all of the required information will affect the evaluation of the proposal. Proposals should include the following:

1. History and Background of the Firm- This should provide the history of the firm, identify the principles and their qualifications, and describe the firm's area of expertise.

2. Approach to the Project- This should describe how the firm proposes to fulfill the responsibilities outlined in Section III, Scope of Services

3. Project Personnel- Provide names, resumes, and relevant experience of personnel who would be assigned to the project. Please include a description of their experience with similar projects.

4. Time Schedule- Provide an estimated schedule for completing the project.

5. Project Budget- Outline the fee the firm would charge for work included in the Scope of Services. Be as specific as pratical in enumerating professional fees, clerical and technical support, overhead costs, and any incidental expenses.

6. Description and References on Similar Projects- Provide a description of similar projects completed by the firm in the last five years, including the names and phone numbers of persons who can be contacted about the firm's performance on these projects.

VI. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF CONSULTANT

The selection will be based on the qualifications of the consultant team and the quality of the Proposal. The City of Cartersville does reserve the right to contact references provided in the submittal and to communicate with firms requiring additional evaluation. The following criteria will be used for the evaluation:

CRITERIA	SCORE
Quality and thoroughness of the proposal. Consultant understanding and approach to the required tasks and needs.	30
Related experience of the firm/team with similar projects comparable in type, size, and complexity. Preference will be given to firms with experience in the State of Georgia.	20
Demonstration of understanding and commitment to execute creative, contextual, and engaging approaches to community engagement. Ability to reach under- represented citizens and their successful inclusion into the engagement process.	20
Demonstrated ability to perform high quality work, to control costs, and to meet project schedules.	20
Pricing approach for the tasks listed.	10

The selection committee may shortlist the highest scoring firms for an in-person interview session. The number of respondents shortlisted will be at the discretion of the selection team.

The City reserves the right to negotiate price and scope of work with the consultant scoring highest in an attempt to reach an agreement. If negotiations with the highest scoring consultant are unsuccessful, the City may then negotiate with the second highest scoring consultant and so on until a satisfactory agreement has been reached. Firms not selected for the contract will be notified after a consultant is selected.

The City of Cartersville reserves the right to reject any submittal it considers to be incomplete or submitted after the deadline.

VII. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR DEVELEOPING THE PLAN UPDATE

- Bartow County Joint Development Comprehensive Plan Update 2022
- Cartersville Zoning Ordinance (2015, as amended)
- Cartersville Development Regulations Ordinance (2015, as amended)
- Cartersville-Bartow 2050 Metropolitan Transportation plan (2025)
- Cartersville Residential Districts Historic Resource Survey (2026)
- Cartersville DBD District Historic Resource Survey (2027, in process)
- Downtown Development Master Plan update (2024)
- Parking and Landscape Plan for the DBD (2026, in process)
- City of Cartersville Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2026, in process)