



CITY OF GAHANNA

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Strategic Planning & Facilitation Services

Date of Issue
April 22, 2015

Due Date for Response
May 8, 2015

Electronic proposals must be received no later than 5:00 PM by:
Jennifer Teal, Assistant City Administrator/Director of Finance
City of Gahanna, Office of the Mayor
200 South Hamilton Rd.
Gahanna, OH 43230
jennifer.teal@gahanna.gov

Copies of this Request for Proposals may be obtained from the:
City of Gahanna
200 South Hamilton Rd.
Gahanna, OH 43230
www.gahanna.gov

Invitation

The City of Gahanna is accepting proposals from qualified consultants to plan and facilitate a strategic planning process including Gahanna's Mayor, Council, City Attorney, department directors and the public. Proposals will be considered from any professional firm, company or individual with demonstrated experience and success in strategic planning and facilitation for local governments.

Final proposals are due on Friday, May 8 by 5 PM unless there is an extension provided (at the option of the City of Gahanna) to all parties.

Questions regarding this RFP should be addressed to:

Jennifer Teal, Assistant City Administrator/Director of Finance

Phone: (614) 342-4060

Fax: (614) 342-4100

E-mail: jennifer.teal@gahanna.gov

Background

The City of Gahanna is twelve square miles and has a population of over 33,000. Gahanna's location 15 minutes from Downtown Columbus provides it with numerous advantages, including convenient access to the Columbus International Airport as well as multiple major interstates.

Gahanna operates under a strong Mayor-Council form of government. The Mayor serves as the chief executive of the City, is separately elected and serves four year terms. Gahanna's Council is comprised of seven members; four elected by ward and three at-large. Gahanna also has an elected City Attorney, who serves a four year term. None of the positions currently have term limits.

In November 2015, the Mayor, three at-large Council seats and City Attorney are up for election. The City's incumbent Mayor is retiring after 14 years in office, deciding not to seek re-election. City Council recently convened a citizen governance commission, at the request of several citizens, to evaluate the City's form of government (i.e. Council-Manager vs. strong Mayor). Should this commission identify any recommendations for change, these could be placed on the ballot as early as 2016.

Gahanna has one of the lowest income tax rates in Central Ohio at 1.5% and has weathered the great recession and accompanying state cuts to local government funding by making numerous reductions to programs and services in line with its Sustainable Operating Model. The City had two failed ballot-attempts in 2013 to increase the local income tax to 2.5%.

Over the past few years, the City has made notable efforts to promote transparency, financial accountability, citizen engagement and process improvement.

Previous Strategic Planning Efforts

In 2012, the Mayor, City Council, City Attorney and department directors engaged in a facilitated one-day strategic planning retreat at which time the City's longstanding vision and mission statements were affirmed.

Vision: to be an innovative model community that values its rich heritage, pursues high standards, and promotes respect among its citizens.

Mission: to ensure an exceptional quality of life by providing comprehensive services, financial stability, and well-planned development which preserves the natural environment, in order that city government will continue to be responsive, accessible and accountable to our diverse and growing community of citizens.

At this time, City Leadership also affirmed five “Critical Success Factors” or strategic priorities for the City that had been developed through previous strategic planning efforts in 2008.

Citizen Centricity: Gahanna is committed to keeping the health, safety and welfare of our citizenry as the focal point of all policy decisions. Gahanna will always strive to be responsive, transparent and accountable to the community.

Smart Growth: Gahanna is committed to effectively managing its growth and assets.

Economic Success: Gahanna is committed to ensuring financial sustainability through smart revenue generation, business growth and prudent short and long term financial management.

Effective Communication: Gahanna is committed to communicating critical information to our citizens, stakeholders and employees while also listening to their wants, needs and feedback.

Innovation: Gahanna is committed to continually reinventing the way we do business to be relevant, effective and efficient.

As a follow-on to the 2012 strategic planning session, the Administration developed a set of focus areas for each of the Critical Success Factors. While these were shared with Council, no action was taken to create action plans for achieving these strategic priorities.

Critical Success Factor	Focus Area
Citizen Centricity	Citizen Engagement Performance Measurement Core Services Emergency Preparedness Safety
Smart Growth	Annexation Economic Development and Redevelopment Infrastructure & Asset Planning and Maintenance Master Plans: Development, Parks and Recreation, Community
Economic Success	Long Term Financial Plan/Forecast Increased Resources through Business Attraction, Retention and Expansion Prudent Fiscal Management
Effective Communication	Public Information Website Public Meetings and Workshops Citizen Surveys and Focus Groups
Innovation	Brand Development Private and Nonprofit Partnerships Grant Opportunities

Since this 2012 planning session, and the subsequent failure of two income tax levies, the City has focused its efforts on developing a long-term plan for financial sustainability with the resources it has available. Throughout 2014, two senior staff members facilitated a collaborative effort between Council and the Administration to create a common understanding of what sustainability looks like for Gahanna and developed a Sustainable Operating Model (SOM) for ongoing operating revenues and expenditures in the General Fund. The 2015 budget was the first City budget built using the SOM as a baseline.

Planning Goals

Gahanna desires to create a city-wide strategic plan that links the City's Mission and Vision to actionable strategic goals and objectives as well as measurable departmental implementation programs in light of changing environments and new mandates. This work should include a review of the existing Critical Success Factors to determine if they are still the highest priority strategic goals of the City. This process should involve the Mayor, department directors, City Council, the City Attorney and the public through a variety of means including one-on-one interviews, collaborative work sessions, survey techniques and online tools.

Public involvement in this process is highly prioritized, and is expected to be implemented in several ways including multiple facilitated in-person sessions for citizens, business leaders and other stakeholders, the use of the City's Open Town Hall electronic platform for civic engagement as well as a community survey. Part of the planning process will include reviewing historical community surveys from 2008, 2010 and 2012 and developing a recommendation for a follow-on survey that maintains key longitudinal data historically collected and collects responses on future areas of focus for the strategic plan. The survey contract and vendor will be separately considered.

The desired outcome of this strategic planning process is an action-oriented set of documents that translate the City's broad mission and vision statements into measurable and achievable goals and targets, and that focus City efforts, resources and performance reporting on what is truly important.

The City envisions a summary report that provides an outline of the overarching strategic goals and objectives to be developed, at least in draft format, in time for the 2016 budget process in the fall, along with separate departmental implementation plans to be developed in early 2016. Departmental implementation plans are expected to include program-specific performance measures and targets. The City currently participates in the ICMA Insights performance measurement program. Consideration for whether or how these targets align with the ICMA program is expected.

Proposal Guidelines

Proposals are limited to 30 pages, including exhibits and must be submitted electronically

At a minimum, proposals should include the following:

- A tentative project plan, describing the approach to be taken and expected outcomes, timelines, proposed fee structure and reporting.
- Clear evidence of an understanding of the goals and challenges of facilitation and strategic planning in a municipal environment.

- A listing of previous work experience in the area of strategic planning similar to that proposed in this request for proposal, including three references. References should include client name, contact person, phone number, project description, and results.
- Statement(s) of qualifications for the individual(s) expected to lead and participate in the process.
- Brief description of innovative strategies and approaches that will be provided for this project.
- Cover letter signed by a person authorized to legally bind the facilitator to the statements made in the response to this request for proposal.
- Proven experience in facilitating and planning for local governments, including links to examples of successful projects.

Selection Process

The City of Gahanna will hire a firm, company or person based on review of the merits of the proposals received. Facilitators will be evaluated based on their capabilities and qualifications to achieve overall project goals and ability to meet the City's timetable and objectives.

The Mayor's Office and Council leadership will evaluate proposals and, upon selection, the provider will be contacted to negotiate a final agreement and fee structure, which may require City Council authorization. Additional information and/or interviews may be requested from selected firms considered to be the best qualified.

Proposals must be submitted electronically in PDF format. Proposals may be emailed to jennifer.teal@gahanna.gov. Electronic media such as CDs or memory sticks may be mailed to the attention of:

Jennifer Teal
Assistant City Administrator/Director of Finance
200 S. Hamilton Road
Gahanna, OH 43230

Please Note: All materials submitted regarding this RFP are public property and are subject to Ohio Public Records Laws. The City of Gahanna reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, and the submission of a proposal is not a guarantee of a contract award.

Addendum #1- Responses to Questions

The following information is provided in response to questions received by the City from interested firms.

Question: Is there an established budget for the Strategic Planning & Facilitation Services project?

Answer: The 2015 Appropriations included \$100,000 for this project.

Question: Does the city have a formal or informal preference for local/ Ohio firms?

Answer: The City does not have a formal preference for local or Ohio firms. We do value accessibility and responsiveness as well as familiarity with central-Ohio's political and economic environment.

Question: Is there a separate budget for the survey work - review of past surveys, recommendations for future surveys, conduct of one survey?

Answer: The 2014 Appropriations included \$20,000 to conduct the biennial citizen survey, separate from the strategic planning project budget. This amount was carried forward into 2015 to coincide with the strategic planning project. The City's expectation is for the chosen strategic planning facilitator to review past survey data and methodologies and make recommendations for the 2015 survey so that it may be a useful resource in the strategic planning process.

Question: What is the budget range for the survey work for this project? For the entire strategic planning project, if the survey is not separated?

Answer: Please see above.

Question: What firm has done strategic planning for Gahanna in the recent past?

Answer: The City has most recently utilized PROS Consulting for an update to its Parks and Recreation Master Plan. In 2012, the City utilized The Novak Consulting Group for its strategic planning retreat.

Question: Should the creation of Departmental implementation plans be included as part of this RFP response or is the intent that the creation of those plans will be addressed in a separate contract or addendum following the creation of the City-wide Strategic Plan?

Answer: The City expects that the creation departmental implementation plans should be included as a part of this RFP response.