RFP for Consulting Services for 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update

Request for Proposals: 2019

Comprehensive Plan Update

Town of Big Stone Gap, Virginia
Release Date: January 3, 2020
Proposal Submittal Deadline: February 18, 2020 by 4:30 P.M.
505 E 5th St S
Big Stone Gap, VA 24218

Introduction:

Purpose: The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to receive competitive proposals from qualified planning individuals and consultant teams (hereinafter referred to in the singular as “consultant”) who are interested in carrying out a comprehensive update to the Big Stone Gap Comprehensive Plan (“Plan Update”), which was last adopted in 2017 via a mid-term update. The Plan Update should provide vision and policies that will guide the Town’s future land uses and will incorporate plans currently underway. A Plan Update will assist Town staff, Planning Commission, Town Council, and its advisory committees to gauge the direction that citizens and various other stakeholders within the community would like to see the Town move towards. The Plan Update must provide guidance to the Town on how to appropriately implement new development and redevelopment within the community while also meeting the service demands that come with community growth.

History and Background: The Town of Big Stone Gap is a town of approximately 4,900 people, located in Southwestern Virginia in Wise County and was founded as a result of the Appalachian coal boom of the late 19th century. Big Stone Gap has remained an independent locality since its first charter was issued in 1888, and shortly after became a municipal water provider with the acquisition of the Big Cherry Watershed. Big Stone Gap is home to the “Trail of the Lonesome Pine”, the official outdoor drama of the State of Virginia, and offers many opportunities for tourism and outdoor recreation via its five museums, Greenbelt Trail, multiple parks, disc golf course, and sport facilities. The Town of Big Stone Gap faces the same challenges that many smaller communities now face due to the downturn of natural resource extraction-based industries which once served as economic mainstays for the community.

Scope:

Expectations: The Plan will guide decisions affecting the physical development and redevelopment within the Town’s planning area. The process for the Plan Update will be critical to its success and must ensure that the final document reflects the desired vision for the community as determined by citizens, developers, land owners, business leaders, appointed and elected officials, and other stakeholders.
through community participation. The Plan will be a guiding document that reflects the community’s unique natural character and provides a clear process, together with specified objectives and policies, of how the Town can build upon its strengths while becoming more economically resilient.

Services: The services provided by the chosen consultant will include, but not necessarily be limited to:

1. A thorough evaluation of, and recommendations for, modifications to the existing plan, including its vision statement, guiding principles, goals, policies and elements.
2. An analysis and incorporation of relevant data and trends related to population, employment and housing forecasts.
3. An effort to encourage public participation to ensure community involvement in the Plan Update process. A proposed schedule of open houses and public hearings shall be proposed by the consultant at key points in the process.
4. Effective coordination with staff, Planning Commission, and Town Council.
5. Recommendations and a plan for integration with other relevant plans and initiatives adopted by the Town. A list of plans currently underway to be integrated are included in this Section.
6. Development of feasible and fiscally responsible recommendations as determined by the Plan Update process.
7. Development of a sound economic development strategy that strengthens tourism while minimizing impacts from economic downturns.
8. Re-evaluation of all land use maps.
9. All maps currently used in the Comprehensive Plan will be re-drawn and adapted into a format suitable for the newly updated plan.
10. The development of a final Comprehensive Plan that will be relevant to the needs of the Town and respects the culture and vision of the stakeholders and citizens of Big Stone Gap.
11. General recommendations on appropriate changes that should be made to the Big Stone Gap Zoning Ordinance, and any other relevant local ordinances to make them consistent with the Plan Update.

These are general requirements for the Plan Update and are not intended to be a comprehensive list of tasks and deliverables. It is expected that the chosen consultant will provide the Town with more specific recommendations for approaches, tasks and deliverables based on their experience and expertise from past work on comprehensive plan projects, especially for localities with similar demographics and needs.

Community Involvement: The Town of Big Stone Gap places a strong emphasis on the importance of input from citizens during the development of the Comprehensive Plan, and the selection of a consultant will consider the ability of applicants to demonstrate facilitation skills with respect to the public hearing process.

Existing Plans: The Plan Update should coordinate with other plans of the Town of Big Stone Gap, including, but not limited to: The Master Improvement Plan, the Six-Year Improvement Plan, the Economic Restructuring and Improvement Plan, and the Transportation Systems Plan.
**Intermunicipal/Interagency Coordination:** The Town of Big Stone Gap desires to see a Plan Update which includes a focus on strategies for improving and strengthening existing intermunicipal/interagency relationships, and strategies for creating relationships where they do not exist.

**Products and Deliverables:** Some of the deliverables to be included with the Plan Update are expected to be, but not limited to the items below. Other areas of emphasis may be identified during the Plan Update process.

**Comprehensive Plan Document:** A completed Plan Update document that incorporates the required information outlined under the Services subparagraph as outlined previously in this document. Consultant shall provide one (1) unbound copy and 12 bound copies of the final Plan document to the Town, including graphics. The consultant shall also provide (1) electronic submission via physical storage media of the Plan document, including attachments and other graphics, in an editable format commonly used by the employees, consultants, or any other person whose services the Town has retained to perform future edits to said items.

**Special Note on Graphics and Maps:** The consultant will be expected to re-draw all maps currently used in the Comprehensive Plan. These maps shall be drawn in a suitable vector format to enable future editing, display, and publication. Any graphics included in the plan shall be submitted in vector format as well, unless otherwise authorized by the Town of Big Stone Gap. All maps, graphics, or any other artistic, graphic, cartographic, or other design elements which are a part of the Comprehensive Plan will become the intellectual property of the Town of Big Stone Gap upon their creation, and may be modified, re-used, published, reproduced, or otherwise used as desired by the Town of Big Stone Gap. An agreement to this effect will be included in the contract for services to be executed between the Town of Big Stone Gap and the chosen consultant.

The Town will also require that drafts of the Plan be provided for review at the completion of various key phases of the project. The timing and number of copies to be submitted will be mutually agreed upon between the consultant and Town staff as the project moves forward. It should be noted that most Town staff and community members are used to accessing electronic documents in Big Stone Gap but some paper copies will need to be available.

**Community Engagement Tools:** The chosen consultant will be expected to assist the Town staff with developing and implementing community engagement tools that should foster public outreach and citizen participation. The Town of Big Stone Gap’s website and social media outlets should be used in disseminating information related to the Plan Update. The consultant should also collaborate with Town staff to utilize social media to keep the public informed on the Plan Update process. Other public input outreach methods should be recommended by the chosen consultant, such as meetings, mailings, phone apps, questionnaires and specialized websites, and the firm should implement these outreach efforts or assist Town staff with their implementation.

**Meetings and Presentations:** The consultant is expected to attend key meetings with Town staff, citizens, developers, land owners, business leaders, appointed and elected officials, and other stakeholders. The consultant will prepare and conduct key presentations as appropriate. The Town is equipped to conduct virtual meetings with the consultant when appropriate to save travel time and expense.
GIS Data: Relevant GIS data and digital map documents used in the creation of maps and other supporting documentation in the Plan Update shall be provided to the Town and the Wise County GIS Department at the end of the project. GIS data formats and standards shall be created in consultation with Wise County’s GIS team to ensure the data can be used later in Town and County operations. Relevant metadata, if applicable, shall be created and provided to the Town and County as well.

Qualifications and Experience:

Qualifications: The consultant’s planning team should include at least one AICP certified planner, or at least one member with at least eight (8) years of professional planning experience.

Experience: The consultant should have experience in developing comprehensive plans for localities of size and demographics similar to those of the Town of Big Stone Gap.

Proposal Requirements:

Proposal Submission Requirements: The consultant shall submit one (1) unbound original, and ten (10) copies and one (1) digital copy of the proposal submittal. The Town encourages the use of recycled paper products and double-sided print. The deadline to submit proposals is no later than Tuesday, February 18, 2020 at 4:30 PM. The proposal submittal should be submitted in an envelope labeled “2020 Comprehensive Plan Proposal” and delivered to

Matthew Bright, Planning Administrator
Town of Big Stone Gap
Building and Zoning Department
505 E 5th St S
Big Stone Gap, VA  24219