

October 6, 2015



MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP, INC.

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

Professional Services Relating to Development of an Organizational Strategic Plan
“Building Organization Capacity for Long Term Success”

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Friday, November 6, 2015

SUBMISSION CONTACT AND ADDRESS:

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Proposals will be accepted in electronic form only.

Purpose

The Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc. (“Partnership”) is seeking to obtain the services of a qualified Consultant who will guide the Partnership’s Board of Directors, staff, and stakeholders including but not limited to the Town of Mansfield, University of Connecticut, downtown property owners, downtown and community residents, and downtown tenants, through a thorough and engaging strategic planning process. The Consultant will facilitate the development of a three-year Organizational Strategic Plan.

Background

The Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Inc., (a 501 (c) (3) organization) consisting of representatives from the Town of Mansfield government, the University of Connecticut (“UConn”), the Mansfield business community, and local residents was formed in 2001 to

promote economic development in three areas of Mansfield, CT (Storrs Center, Four Corners, and King Hill Road). The main focus for the last fourteen years has been the development of a downtown – Storrs Center – in the heart of Mansfield. The Partnership is a membership organization with over 300 individual, business and organizational members. The Partnership’s vision has been to create a vibrant, economically viable downtown with retail, restaurant, office, residential, and public space. The goal is for the downtown to attract residents, visitors, and University of Connecticut faculty, staff, and students. The Partnership has successfully realized this vision.

Storrs Center broke ground in May 2011. Phase 1 opened for business in August 2012 and the final phase will be completed in late 2016. Storrs Center is a pedestrian oriented mixed-use town center at the crossroads of the Town of Mansfield, Connecticut and the University of Connecticut. Located along Route 195/Storrs Road adjacent to the University, the Town Hall, the regional high school, and the community center, Storrs Center includes a new Town Square across from the University’s fine arts center and combines retail, restaurant, and office uses along with a variety of residence types. Storrs Center also includes several public infrastructure elements including a parking garage, transportation center, and local and state road construction and renovation.

As of September 2015, Storrs Center includes 618 apartments and 33 businesses. A day care center will open in November. An additional 15 or so businesses will open over the next year. Construction has begun on 42 townhomes and residential condominium units which will begin to open in early 2016. Twenty-five of these homes have been pre-sold thus far.

For the past fourteen years, the Partnership has been the coordinator and the catalyst to develop Storrs Center. This role has included developing an initial master plan, followed by a comprehensive state approved Municipal Development Plan (including, but not limited to, a description of land use, financing plan, environmental analysis, and relocation plan); and selecting master developer LeylandAlliance LLC to implement the Municipal Development Plan. Along with this planning function, the Partnership also worked with LeylandAlliance to secure the various approvals needed for Storrs Center including approval of the Municipal Development Plan by the Mansfield Town Council, the Windham Region Council of Governments Regional Planning Commission, Mansfield Planning and Zoning Commission, University of Connecticut Board of Trustees, and ultimately the CT Department of Economic and Community Development; approval of the traffic analysis by the CT State Traffic Commission; and environmental approvals by the Town’s Inland Wetlands Agency, the US Army Corps of Engineers and the CT Department of Environmental Protection (now known as the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection).

The Partnership also developed the regulations and guidelines included in a Storrs Center Special Design District (SDD) with LeylandAlliance, to allow for the project area to be developed as a mixed-use project. The Storrs Center SDD was approved by the Mansfield Planning and Zoning Commission. Subsequent to that approval, the

Partnership has coordinated the zoning permit approvals for each phase of Storrs Center, i.e., mixed-use buildings, parking garage, transportation center, and Town Square.

To date, through the efforts of the Partnership, the Town of Mansfield has received over \$25 million in state and federal funding for the creation of Storrs Center, testament to the broad support for a project that will enhance the economic strength of the Town and the region while promoting environmental sustainability through careful planning, preservation, and density of uses.

In addition to the planning role of the Partnership, one of its key roles has been communication about and advocacy for Storrs Center. The community was engaged in the planning process at many levels – committee, public information, and individual meetings, surveys, and charrettes, etc. Over the first 10 years, over 400 public meetings were held. An advocacy group, Smart Growth for Mansfield, was formed to solidify support as the Storrs Center team worked to maintain momentum during the downturn in the economy in 2008. The Partnership has utilized all media formats including a newsletter, annual report, website, e-mail blasts, Facebook, twitter, and Instagram.

Finally, the Partnership has also planned and run special events in the downtown including the Celebrate Mansfield Festival (just completing its 12th year), Trick or Treating, Winter Welcome, and Live Music Wednesdays.

With the opening of the first phase of Storrs Center in 2012, the Partnership Board of Directors recognized that it needed to reconsider its mission and role from establishing Storrs Center to managing, protecting, and enhancing a new civic asset for the benefit of the Town, UConn and the community. A three-year transitional strategic plan and implementation plan was approved in early 2013 with input from the Partnership Board of Directors, its staff and members, Town employees, UConn representatives, and master developer LeylandAlliance.

The Partnership's "Strategic Plan 2013 to 2015" included a new mission and vision statement that placed increased emphasis on the Partnership's management of Storrs Center and less emphasis on the Partnership's role in Four Corners and King Hill Road.

With the "Strategic Plan 2013-2015" as its guide, the Partnership focused its efforts on building operational capacity by developing an operations plan for Storrs Center with the Town of Mansfield, LeylandAlliance, rental housing partner EdR/The Oaks on the Square, and Hart Realty Advisers with The Wilder Companies as its property manager (*Note: In 2014, Hart Realty Advisers bought the developed commercial property in Storrs Center from LeylandAlliance on behalf of the Connecticut Retirement Plans and Trust Funds*). The operations plan addresses the maintenance of the parking garage, parking lots, sidewalks, roads, and the Town Square including clean-up and snow removal. The Partnership has taken the lead role in implementing the operations plan and ensuring that the downtown is safe, friendly and clean.

In 2015, the Mansfield Town Council authorized the Partnership to manage the new Nash-Zimmer Transportation Center which includes local, and regional bus service, a bike commuting club, and “Library Express” – a small service branch of the Mansfield Public Library.

The Partnership has drafted ordinances, policies, and procedures related to the operations of the downtown, with a focus on the Town Square. The Town Council will be reviewing these drafts in fall 2015.

While Storrs Center became synonymous with the downtown, it only encompasses the new development. Over the last two years, the Partnership has also worked to integrate other commercial properties adjacent to Storrs Center, the Town Hall, Mansfield Community Center, EO Smith High School, the south end of the UConn campus, and public trails as part of the entire downtown Storrs area. By doing this, the downtown becomes a point of destination and a regional draw. A resident or a visitor can hike a trail, see a show at UConn’s Nafe Katter Theater, and have dinner all in one day. “Downtown Storrs” is unique from other downtowns in the region and state because of all the activities you can do in the downtown, not just shopping and eating. The Partnership engaged the UConn Digital Media and Design program to develop a logo and marketing plan for Downtown Storrs.

Situation Analysis

With the three year “Strategic Plan 2013-2015” timeframe coming to an end, and with Storrs Center scheduled to be complete in 2016, the time is right to evaluate and transition to the most effective organizational structure to manage Downtown Storrs.

When the Partnership was organized in 2001, its mission was to envision and develop Storrs Center. This required a distinctive set of Board, committee, and staff skills. In order to manage, promote, enhance, and protect Downtown Storrs, a different set of skills and organizational structure may be required.

The Partnership has already begun to take on a management role including overseeing the operations of the Nash-Zimmer Transportation Center, coordinating events on the Town Square, and working with the Town Department of Public Works and the private property owners on the maintenance of the downtown.

On September 3, 2015, the Board of Directors adopted new vision and mission statements to reflect its current direction:

Vision: The Mansfield Downtown Partnership – comprised of a committed alliance of voluntary community and business members and Town of Mansfield and University of Connecticut officials and administrators, its development partners, and Partnership staff – will provide collaborative and balanced on-going leadership in the continuing economic, social, and cultural development within the Town of Mansfield. Through shared, cooperative effort, the Partnership will continue to work to help provide a rich diversity of

offerings that will make the Town of Mansfield a regional destination and a vibrant, thriving community.

Mission: The Mansfield Downtown Partnership seeks to foster the continued development, management, and promotion of downtown Storrs – a vibrant and economically successful community in the heart of Mansfield. The Partnership will, where appropriate and upon request, assist in the future economic development of other areas within the Town of Mansfield deemed strategic by the Town of Mansfield, the University of Connecticut, and the Partnership Board of Directors.

During this process, the Partnership Board of Directors removed specific reference to a role in promoting the economic development of Four Corners and King Hill Road, but left the door open to assistance in these or other areas in Mansfield.

As part of its review of its mission and vision, the Partnership Board of Directors confirmed core components that are critical for the effective management of Downtown Storrs, whether it is by the Partnership or others. Overall, the goal is to provide an interesting, clean, safe, and welcoming downtown. The Partnership either has the lead or a supporting role in all these components:

- Oversight of parking operations (enforcement) (supporting but very involved)
- Oversight of Nash-Zimmer Transportation Center (lead)
- Coordination of special events (lead)
- Coordination of marketing and promotion (supporting with respect to Storrs Center; lead with respect to Downtown Storrs)
- Business retention and attraction (supporting)
- Tenant relations (residential and commercial) (supporting)
- Community relations (ombudsman for issues raised by downtown commercial and residential community, and Mansfield community at-large (lead))
- Coordination in conjunction with the Town of Mansfield of public infrastructure (lead)
- Maintenance of private infrastructure (supporting)
- Coordination of the beautification of downtown (lead)
- Advocacy of Downtown Storrs and local, state and federal issues that affect downtowns (lead)

The goal of this strategic planning process is to establish an organizational development strategy to strengthen the Partnership's capacity to successfully manage Downtown Storrs in Mansfield. **The focus of the Organizational Strategic Plan is to recommend a leadership structure and resources (staffing and funding) for the Partnership with an implementation plan.**

Project Description

The Consultant will help develop and facilitate a process that will: engage the Partnership's Board, staff, and stakeholders; allow for a thoughtful review of the current Partnership structure; and provide guidance on adapting to the current environment and

its implications for the Partnership and its future plans. The process will ultimately lead to the adoption of a final Strategic Plan that has detailed recommendations **and** is achievable.

Products and services will include:

- ✓ Development and execution of an inclusive planning process that engages the Partnership Board of Directors, staff, committees; and stakeholders including but not limited to the Town of Mansfield, University of Connecticut, downtown property owners, downtown and community residents, and downtown tenants in a roundtable discussion on the downtown (concerns, issues, ideas)
- ✓ Review of any work, research, data or other pertinent materials that the Partnership has completed or issued to date, including a review of core programs
- ✓ Review of other local, regional or national models of downtown management (structure, funding, staffing), keeping in mind the uniqueness of Downtown Storrs as described in the “Background” section
- ✓ Evaluation of the Partnership’s governing structure including how to engage all property owners in the management of the downtown, and recommendations for a governing structure
- ✓ Evaluation of Partnership funding (including membership and stakeholder contributions), and development of a funding plan for the Partnership
- ✓ Evaluation of Partnership staffing, and recommendations for staffing
- ✓ Three-year written Organizational Strategic Plan, and a summary PowerPoint presentation of the plan
- ✓ The final Plan will include an implementation strategy with specific recommendations and timelines for organizational leadership, staffing, and financing of the Partnership for the next three years. The timeline should include definitive goals and objectives for each year of the three year Plan, against which the success of the Plan can be measured. The Plan will include clear and reasonable measures to monitor success. The Plan will include a realistic evaluation of the cost to implement all recommendations.
- ✓ An Appendix with management models/organizational charts, best practices examples, and other appropriate material
- ✓ The Plan will be an important tool for engaging the support of local, state, federal, and non-profit agencies, potential funders, and the private sector

Submittals

The Proposal submitted should include the following components:

- A. Description of Consultant’s firm and the firm’s areas of expertise, particularly as they relate to the project described above.
- B. Names and resumes of the firm’s project manager, and staff members who will lead and be assigned to the project;

- C. Proposed scope of work, a fee schedule and timeline for the project activities.
- D. A resume of other related completed projects with at least three references attached.

Submittal Criteria

The following criteria shall be considered in evaluating the proposals:

- 1) Costs for proposed work;
- 2) The reputation, experience and efficiency of the Consultant;
- 3) The ability of the Consultant to perform the contract or provide the goods and services within the time specified;
- 4) The comparative quality of the goods and services bid;
- 5) The Consultant's performance under similar projects;
- 6) The Consultant's references;
- 7) The number and scope of conditions attached to the proposal;
- 8) The Consultant's interest in the project, as well as their understanding of the project scope and the specific requirements of the Partnership;
- 9) The Consultant's schedule of completion;
- 10) The application of all of the above criteria to any sub-consultants, subcontractors or products to be utilized by the Partnership;
- 11) General qualifications of the firm and the qualifications of the assigned staff; and interview evaluation.
- 12) Financial strength of the Consultant;
- 13) Any other criteria deemed relevant by the Partnership.

Standard Terms and Conditions

Consultants shall be aware of the following terms and conditions addressing Requests for Proposals for the Partnership:

- A. The Partnership does not expressly state or imply any obligation to reimburse firms for any expenses incurred in preparing submissions in response to this request.
- B. The Partnership reserves the right to reject any or all submissions, to select a firm in a manner that is advantageous to the Partnership and to waive any or all formalities in the bidding.
- C. The Partnership does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, national origin, age, marital status, sexual orientation or disability of the Consultant, its employees or contractors in the award to the successful Consultant.
- D. The selected firm must be able to meet all Partnership, state and federal affirmative action and equal employment opportunity practices and guidelines.

- E. The Partnership reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to consider alternatives, to award the contract to a Consultant in part or parts, to waive any informalities and irregularities, and to re-solicit proposals, at its sole discretion.
- F. The Partnership reserves the right to conduct such investigations of and discussions with those who have submitted proposals (“Consultants”) or other persons or entities as deems necessary to assist in the evaluation of any proposal or to secure maximum clarification and completeness of any proposal.
- G. All proposals submitted must be valid for a minimum period of sixty (60) days after the date of the proposal opening. Each Consultant must submit with the proposal a list of all subcontractors, independent contractors or sub-consultants employed or proposed to be employed by the Consultant in the performance of the contract.
- H. The Partnership reserves the right to select the most responsible and responsive proposal that it finds to be within the best interests of the Partnership, including the right to select a Consultant for reasons other than lowest price.
- I. The Partnership makes no guarantees to any Consultant. The only obligations to be undertaken by the Partnership will be those contained in the negotiated contract with the successful Consultant.
- J. All work product generated by Consultant will be the property of the Partnership, including without limitation all rights to reproduce, license, assign, sell and otherwise use the work product in any form, size, format or medium for any purpose. Consultant will convey and assign all rights of ownership and authorship in the work product to the Partnership.
- K. The Consultant will agree not to discriminate through the services or activities made possible by or resulting from this contract on the grounds of sex, race, color, creed, national origin, age (except minimum age and retirement provisions), marital status, sexual orientation or disability. Any violation of this provision shall be considered to be a violation of a material provision of the contract and shall be grounds for cancellation, termination or suspension of the contract. The Consultant shall at all times, both in the proposal and in the contract process, comply with all applicable city, state and federal anti-discrimination laws, rules, regulations and requirements thereof.

Schedule

Proposals must be received electronically by the Partnership by 5:00 pm, local time on Friday, November 6, 2015. Proposals received after said closing time of 5:00 pm, local time, on said date will not be accepted. Proposals should include the following in the subject line: (“**STRATEGIC PLANNING SERVICES**”).

Only electronically submitted proposals (via e-mail) will be accepted. Please e-mail the proposal to Cynthia van Zelm at vanzelmca@mansfieldct.org. If the submission is larger

than 10 megabytes, please send it via a web service that accommodates larger documents.

The Partnership intends to “short-list” Consultants responding to this RFQ and to interview two or more Consultants to accurately assess their qualifications. The Partnership will negotiate a final scope of services and fee proposal with the selected Consultant. The goal is to have the Plan completed by early spring 2016.

Please address any questions related to this RFQ to Cynthia van Zelm, Executive Director, at 860.429.2740 or via e-mail at vanzelmca@mansfieldct.org.