

**CITY OF BETHLEHEM**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT  
ORDINANCE**

ISSUED: Friday, February 16, 2018

PROPOSALS DUE: Friday, March 16, 2018

CONTACT PERSON:

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**Assistant Director of Planning and Zoning**  
**City of Bethlehem**  
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**610-865-7088**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The City of Bethlehem is a mid-sized municipality within the State of Pennsylvania and one of three cities within the region known as the Lehigh Valley. Both the City and the region are growing in population due to proximity to New York City, New Jersey, and Philadelphia. Situated along the confluence of the Monocacy Creek and the Lehigh River and following the South Mountain and the Saucon Creek, the City of Bethlehem has a 265-year history of settlement. The City was the headquarters and the location of the flagship plant of the former Bethlehem Steel Corporation from the late 1800's until the mid-1990. Lehigh University, Moravian College and Northampton Community College are all located within the City. The Bethlehem Area School District includes city, borough, and suburban municipalities, which provide a diverse student population.

The City of Bethlehem faces opportunities for growth and also challenges to grow in an orderly manner. In order to meet those challenges, a comprehensive plan was adopted in 2009, a new zoning ordinance was adopted in 2012 and several area-specific master plans have been completed to help direct development and investment in specific areas of the City.

The City will now be undertaking the development of a Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. Through this Request for Proposals, the City seeks to select a Planning Consultant to assist with this project. The selected consultant must be able to show experience and knowledge of the specific requirements of the Municipalities Planning Code, the ability to be creative yet practical in the development of provisions of a SALDO, and also have experience in developing technical and detailed provisions of a SALDO as specifically tailored to the City's needs as described in the Comprehensive Plan.

The SALDO update comes at an important time for the City. The City has just completed at least a few master plans for specific areas of the City.

The Bethlehem Steel lands have seen a significant amount of redevelopment in both the Beth Works and the Commerce Center portions of the site. In addition, the City is currently experiencing an explosion of new development and redevelopment in other areas of the City. The City seeks to develop a SALDO that will drive its 21<sup>st</sup> century development by continuing to build on its unique history and exceptional quality of life.

The SALDO will meet all MPC requirements and will be completed within a 9 month time frame.

## **2.0 PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The goal of the project will be to develop a SALDO that reflects the long-range goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and the City as a whole. The City has been developing or participated in the development of specific long-range plans for targeted areas of the city for several years. These plans include:

- Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan (2009)
- Zoning Ordinance (2012)

- The South Side Master Plan, an economic development plan for the South Side downtown ( 2001)
- The South Side Vision 2020 plan, a long range plan for the residential areas surrounding the South Side downtown (2014)
- The South Bethlehem Greenway Master Plan (2005)
- The Elm Street Plan, a long range planning study for the north and west side neighborhoods immediately surrounding the north side downtown (2005)

The SALDO is an ordinance that outlines provisions and procedures to guide subdivision and land development plans that ensure quality development in the City. The new SALDO ordinance will streamline the Plan Review process while ensuring quality and detail in development.

The City proposes to actively engage the community in developing the plan, possibly including the following minimum activities:

- public meetings with professionally facilitated, idea-generating and consensus-building exercises
- web site opportunities for the public to view plan proposals and respond with comments
- networking directly with potential SALDO users including municipal officials, the Planning Commission, regional planning agencies, engineers and other technical professionals, realtors and developers, and other citizen leaders
- an official public hearing

The selected consultant will be encouraged to devise creative public input techniques.

### **3.0 RESOURCES**

The City will provide the technical resources available at the time of the study such as

- copies of prior master plans that have taken place in the City in the last several years
- copies of current ordinances and the current comprehensive plan
- the City's electronic mapping, including AutoCAD and available GIS mapping, if necessary
- other pertinent background data that may be required.

Information will also be available through City staff meetings and interviews. Staff will be available to the consultant as needed. The project will be managed through the Bureau of Planning and Zoning.

Project funding is available through the City's general fund budget and CDBG funds.

#### 4.0 SCOPE OF WORK

The consulting team will provide a broad range of planning services necessary for the completion of the City of Bethlehem SALDO.

Interested consultants should involve a multi-disciplinary team either through their own firm or by subconsulting or cooperating with other firms. The consulting team must provide the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to undertake the basic and unique aspects of the scope of work paying particular attention to:

Municipalities Planning Code – The team must be experienced and skilled in preparation of basic elements of SALDO as specified in the PA Municipalities Planning Code and accepted professional practice.

Design – The team should be experienced and skilled in urban and community design in order to provide practical suggested plan development guidelines, possible schematic drawings for best practices, and/or regulatory standards for development activity recommended in and desired by the plan. The consultant will develop plan elements that will lay the foundation for innovative land use regulations that allow mixed-use redevelopment in the downtowns and commercial areas and traditional neighborhood development in the denser residential areas of the City in keeping with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

Plan Review Processes – Development in the City has been occurring at a rapid pace. The team will provide recommendations and solutions for an improved work flow and management of the plan review process so that the City is able to adequately respond to and consider new development proposals without inhibiting the development process.

Transportation – The current SALDO has a fairly recent traffic impact report component which shall be reviewed and updated if necessary.

Recreation Fees – The current SALDO has a fairly recent section addressing recreation contributions and fees, which shall be reviewed and updated if necessary.

Addition of current/innovative design provisions – The selected team will propose appropriate improvements to the SALDO plan requirements to address current and innovative land development considerations, such as green infrastructure, traffic calming, complete streets, bicycle and pedestrian safety, land conservation planning, etc.

Public Participation - The selected consulting team will have experience in developing innovative public involvement in the comprehensive planning process. The public involvement process will at least include:

- public meetings designed to solicit public input in creative ways and to build consensus (any submitted proposal should specifically note how many public meetings are proposed and considered appropriate for the project),
- key person interviews with SALDO users from a variety of backgrounds
- meetings with the Planning Commission.
- utilization of the City's website to allow data dissemination and opportunities for public comment

Implementation - The selected consultant will prepare a detailed submission and plan review process. The City is particularly interested in the development of a streamlined plan submission and review process that is practical and productive.

Deliverables -The final SALDO will be the fully adopted document. The consultant will provide a reproducible original ordinance along with any maps and supporting documentation. The consultant will also provide an electronic version that is easily distributable and able to easily be placed on the City's website.

The consultant shall provide bound copies of the draft SALDO ordinance to the City for distribution and review as it is developed. In addition, the consultant shall provide documents in a suitable electronic format for posting on the City's website to allow for public access and review. The city will prepare a consolidated list of review comments to be addressed by the consultant prior to finalizing each draft. Upon adoption, the consultant shall produce fifty (50) copies for distribution and shall provide the final plan report in a suitable electronic format for reproduction and posting on the City's website.

The consulting team should be prepared to meet with the city staff and a selected task force as requested on at least a monthly basis to report project status and discuss interim project milestones. The consultant will meet with the Planning Commission a minimum of 4 times throughout the process. A final presentation will be made to city council prior to adoption.

## **5.0 COMPLETION SCHEDULE**

The SALDO is long overdue. It is the City's desire to move forward in an efficient way that still allows for a thorough public input process. The SALDO ordinance will be completed within 9 months of the contract date.

## **6.0 PROPOSAL CONTENT**

At a minimum the proposal shall respond to the following:

1. Description of firm organization. Provide all contact information for the primary contact person, along with all of the people that will be a part of the consultant's team. Provide information about the size of the firm, years in business and any consulting specialty.
2. Describe the firm's related experience. Present a summary of your ordinance development experience especially in urban communities. Describe any related projects and how they relate to the Bethlehem proposal. Describe the firm's experience with projects that require compliance with the PA Municipalities Planning Code.
3. Project Management. Describe how the project will be managed. Who will be the City's primary contact for the project? Will there be any subconsultants? How will the firm meet the projected timeframe for the project? How will the consulting firm ensure coordination between our office, your staff, the public and interested parties? How would your firm approach the public participation portion of the process?
4. Proposed Work Program. The proposal shall include a work program of techniques and methodologies to accomplish the scope of work. The consulting

- team shall demonstrate a capacity for professional creativity, innovation and contemporary planning approaches and shall carefully describe how these techniques will be utilized to implement the scope of work. A written “Statement of Project Understanding” should be included to clearly demonstrate that the team understands the scope and intent of the project.
5. Budget Considerations. Explain how your firm will meet all of the project goals within the proposed budget. How will the budget be allocated to each aspect of the proposed project? A detailed budget for the project shall be included. The consultant shall provide a “not-to-exceed” lump sum fee for professional services required to complete the Scope of Services.
  6. References. List at least three references from projects similar to this proposed project. List only projects that have been undertaken in the last 5 years.
  7. Describe why your firm should be selected for the project. Specifically and most importantly, clearly and specifically show examples where you have been able to find creative, yet realistic, planning solutions for an older urban community that is still experiencing development pressure and demands.
  8. Each proposal shall contain a table of contents to allow for easy reference of the information.
  9. Disclosure of Interests. Include a disclosure of any known competing interests or potential conflicts of interest for the consultant and any subcontractor(s), including the consultant’s work for persons who own land or have development interests in the City.

## **7.0 SELECTION CRITERIA**

The following criteria will be utilized to evaluate proposals and select a consultant.

1. Experience with innovative ordinance development projects in urban communities.
2. Experience with and knowledge of the MPC.
3. Prior and related experience of the personnel assigned to this project.
4. Proven innovation and creativity in the planning process including the approach to public participation.
5. The consultant’s proposed work program and its thoroughness, workability, and likelihood to generate desired results.
6. Ability of the consultant to perform requested services within the available budget.
7. Ability of the consultant to meet the desired project schedule.

If a consulting team is selected for an interview, the manager of the project, the proposed day-to-day contact person for the project and the person that will be leading the public meetings must all attend the interview. A second interview may be required depending on the results of the first interview.

## **8.0 CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENTS**

The consultant will be paid on a regular basis (no more frequently than monthly) upon receipt of proper invoices, certifications, and progress reports. Payment will be made on a reimbursement basis for services actually performed.

## **9.0 SELECTION PROCEDURES**

Five (5) copies of the proposal must be submitted to:

Tracy Samuelson  
Assistant Director of Planning and Zoning  
City of Bethlehem  
10 E Church Street  
Bethlehem, PA 18018

Proposals must be submitted no later than 4:00 PM on Friday, March 16, 2018 to be eligible for consideration. Any questions on the request are directed to Tracy Samuelson, Assistant Director of Planning and Zoning, City of Bethlehem, via e-mail [tsamuelson@bethlehem-pa.gov](mailto:tsamuelson@bethlehem-pa.gov) no later than noon on Friday, March 2, 2018. Responses to the questions will be forwarded to all firms requesting the RFP no later than 4:00 PM on Wednesday, March 7, 2018.

A short list of consultants may be asked to schedule and make presentations to a consultant selection committee. It is anticipated that consultant selection will occur within 2 to 3 weeks of the date of presentations. A notice to proceed will be issued as soon as possible thereafter.

## **10.0 CONCLUSION**

The City will evaluate all proposals and select the successful firm. The City is not responsible for any costs incurred by prospective bidders in responding to this RFP. The City reserves the right to award the project in the best interests of the City and is not obligated to select the lowest priced proposal.