



# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## ZONING CODE ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT

**Submission Deadline: August 23, 2021**

Submit Response to:

**Attn. Ed LeClear, AICP**

**Planning & Community Development Director**

Borough of State College

243 South Allen Street

State College, PA 16801

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Borough of State College is seeking the services of a qualified consultant to provide professional planning services toward evaluating the economic feasibility of proposed zoning ordinance changes. This will involve a collaborative process with the community stakeholders including State College Borough Council, Planning Commission, Zoning Revision Advisory Committee, as well as Borough Planning Department staff. The chosen consultant will utilize input from all four groups collected as part of the Borough's current zoning ordinance revision process to gauge the market feasibility of certain development types within a limited number of zoning districts.

## **COMMUNITY PROFILE**

Information about the Borough of State College, State College Downtown Master Plan, State College Neighborhood Plan, and the Planning Department is available on the Borough website at <https://www.statecollegepa.us/160/Planning-Zoning>.

## **PROJECT BACKGROUND**

The current zoning ordinance was adopted in 1959 and has been amended periodically (over 220 times since 1959) to reflect current planning concepts and to be more compatible with the current development trends of the Borough. The Borough began a comprehensive revision process in 2017 resulting in preferences for land use characteristics which now must be tested within the real estate market to determine whether there is market interest to develop under the proposed standards.

## **SPECIFIC SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

The Borough of State College is looking for a qualified consulting firm that has the skills to evaluate proposed land use regulations in terms of market feasibility for development. Skill and experience in developing example proformas for various land use types and evaluating the market demand for the various types is critical. Skill at providing suggestions for changes in zoning regulations to better calibrate the zoning to the market demand while preserving development form and community character is also necessary. Experience in understanding the complexities and characteristics of State College as a university community, along with familiarity of Pennsylvania/East Coast/Mid-Atlantic communities is preferable.

# DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

The State College Neighborhood Plan provides information on who lives in the Borough. The next few graphics are taken from that Executive Summary of the plan that was adopted in July of 2014.

## explore the Borough's neighborhoods

The State College Neighborhood Plan provides information about many aspects of the Borough and its individual neighborhoods, including who lives in them. Here's a snapshot of the information about the Borough's residents.



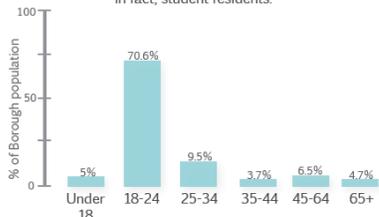
In 2010 the population of State College was **42,034 residents**

57.2% of these residents live in one of the Borough's neighborhoods and the other 42.8% live downtown, on campus and in multi-family areas.

According to the 2010 US Census,

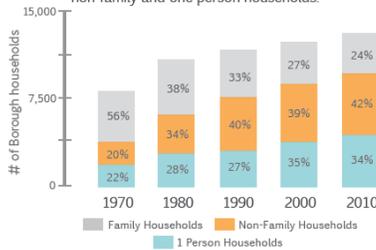
**70.6% of the population was 18-24 years old**

representing the largest age cohort in the Borough. While this age cohort is not exclusive to undergraduates of Penn State University, it is presumed that a majority of these residents are, in fact, student residents.



Percentage of the Borough population within each of the age cohorts above, according to the 2010 US Census.

In 2010, there were **12,610 households** in the Borough. Since 1970, there has been a growth in non-family and one person households.



Borough households from 1970-2010 according to the US Census.

In the Fall of 2013 the enrollment at the Penn State University Park Campus was **46,184 students**

Off-campus living has been increasing. In the Fall of 2012, approximately 32% of the enrolled student body lived in on-campus housing.

**68% live off campus**



## explore the Borough's neighborhoods

The State College Neighborhood Plan provides information about many aspects of the Borough and its individual neighborhoods, including its housing stock and other amenities. Here's a snapshot of the information about housing and services.



**12,610 occupied housing units**

The 2010 Census reported 97% of the Borough's units were occupied and 3%, or 397 units, were vacant.

According to the 2010 Census Bureau, vacant units include year-round vacancies, seasonal homes or homes that are occupied on an intermittent basis. The Borough's Planning office has not verified the status of each of these units.



Of the Borough's occupied housing units, 20% are owner-occupied and 80% are renter-occupied.



According to the Census Bureau, a housing unit is defined as a single family home, one half of a duplex, one townhome unit, one apartment unit, one mobile home, or one room that is occupied independent of other parts of the structure in which it is located.

Of the 13,000 total housing units, roughly 27% of these were single-unit structures and 73% were multi-unit structures.



27%



73%

In the 2012 National Citizen's survey, **82% of residents rated their neighborhood as an excellent place to live.**

State College's neighborhoods have many amenities that make them livable, such as an abundance of public park space, schools within walking distance and a bus system that has earned State College a designation as one of the top three transit-intensive small communities in the US.



**13 parks**



**8 schools**



**27 transit routes\***

\*Number of CATA Routes that were operated during full service schedule in Spring 2014. This includes community routes and campus routes. Additional special event shuttles are operated on an as-needed basis, particularly for home football games.

In 2012, the League of American Bicyclists designated the Borough and the Centre Region as a

**Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community**



## **SCOPE OF SERVICES AND DELIVERABLES**

### **PURPOSE**

To utilize input collected as part of the Borough's current zoning ordinance revision process to gauge the market feasibility of certain development types and to calibrate zoning revisions to achieve market acceptance while preserving the intent of the zoning regulations for shaping development form and community character.

### **KEY ISSUES TO ADDRESS**

- 1) Define expected development prototypes that will result from or are desired from the new zoning regulations. Specifically, no fewer than five and no more than eight prototypes shall be developed as part of the consultant's scope.
- 2) Gauge the market demand for these prototypes (e.g. no/very little demand for this product, moderate demand in key locations, high demand). The focus of the project is to evaluate feasibility and tradeoffs, but the degree of demand will also influence feasibility
  - a. Overall feasibility of varying levels of density in three areas of community: downtown, the west end and the middle-density neighborhood to the south-east of downtown.
  - b. Impact of parking requirements on development costs and feasibility
  - c. Impact of zoning changes and resulting prototypes on land values
  - d. Potential financing gaps associated with affordable housing requirements and other public benefits. Consultant will work with staff to propose a limited number of scenarios to clearly define and test.
- 3) Staff may be able to support the consultant with massing diagrams as needed utilizing ArcGIS Urban. Demonstrated use of GIS technologies such as ArcGIS Urban by the consultant team is desirable.

### **TASK 1: PROJECT KICK OFF, DATA GATHERING, TARGETED OUTREACH**

- 1) Identify and discuss zoning/code issues to evaluate based on input received from stakeholder groups and staff
- 2) Begin identifying initial prototypes to evaluate
- 3) Develop contact list of key developers, realtors, and potentially landowners for one on one or small group interviews (input on code, prototypes, costs, values/revenues, etc)
  - a. This group could be the Technical Working Group that the consultant checks in with mid- 2/3 way through the project to review draft results
  - b. Data/information requested from the Borough

## **TASK 2: WORKING GROUP ENGAGEMENT**

- 1) Engage with the Technical Working Group two to three times over the course of the study to solicit input and review draft and final results.

## **TASK 3: DEFINE DEVELOPMENT PROTOTYPES**

- 1) Define desired building types resulting from the new zoning
  - a. Approximate range of height and residential density
  - b. Ground floor and mixed-use requirements
  - c. Parking requirements and format (surface, podium, structured)
  - d. Define construction type for each prototype consistent with local codes (e.g. wood frame, wood frame over concrete podium, light gauge steel, etc.)
- 2) Informed both by code and input from developers and other local real estate experts
- 3) Define desired number of prototypes (specifically, no fewer than five and no more than eight prototypes shall be developed as part of the consultant's scope).

## **TASK 4: MARKET AND COST INPUTS**

- 1) Perform a concise market overview or assessment to gauge overall real estate demand in the Borough, addressing at the planning level the potential demand for the prototypes.
- 2) Gather inputs on rents, sale prices, vacancy rates and other factors needed to evaluate residential and non-residential land uses comprising the prototypes.
- 3) Strive to collect costs from any recent similar projects from interviews or information sharing with local builders and developers.
- 4) Include developer, realtor, and other local expert outreach in this assessment and data gathering.

## **TASK 5: PROFORMA MODELS**

- 1) Prepare a financial proforma analysis of the defined development prototypes
- 2) Define at least two public benefit scenarios to evaluate such as enhanced affordability requirements.
- 3) Recommend the degree of feasibility of the different prototypes. Identify major factors or assumptions affecting the results or the sensitivity of the results. Specifically identify aspects of the zoning ordinance that could be revised to improve the market acceptance of the prototypes.
- 4) Document all assumptions and estimates used, including sources. The Borough discourages the use of proprietary software or models.

## **TASK 6: REPORT AND PRESENTATION**

- 1) Prepare draft and final reports including all information, charts, tables, and sources and methods needed to document the findings.
- 2) Report should be understandable by audiences with varying levels of experience with real estate and economics.
- 3) Make two presentations to joint meetings of Borough Council, Planning Commission and the Zoning Revision Advisory Committee. Staff will work with the chosen consultant to determine the appropriate point in the process for both meetings.

## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND INQUIRIES**

Consultants are advised to adhere to the submittal requirements of the RFP. Failure to comply with the instructions of this RFP may be cause for rejection. Consultants must provide information in the appropriate areas throughout the RFP. By submitting a response to this RFP, you are acknowledging that if your Proposal is accepted by the Borough, your response and related submittals may become part of the contract.

At a minimum, the Proposal response must include the following items:

### **Cover Letter:**

Consultants must submit a cover letter signed by an authorized representative of the entity committing to provide the services as described in this RFP in accordance with the terms and conditions of any contract awarded pursuant to the RFP process. The cover letter must:

- 1) Identify the specific services as described in this RFP that applies to this submission.
- 2) Indicate the number of years the company has been in business and provide an overview of the experience and background of the company and its key personnel committed in each proposed service.
- 3) Identify the legal name of the company, the address of its headquarters, its principal place of business, its legal form (i.e., corporation, joint venture, limited liability company or partnership, etc.), and the names of its principals or partners.
- 4) Indicate the name, telephone number(s) and email address of the principal contact for this submittal, oral presentation or negotiations.
- 5) Acknowledge receipt of Addendum issued by the Borough, if any.

### **Executive Summary**

Consultants must provide an executive summary which explains its understanding of the Borough's intent and objectives and how they would achieve those objectives. The summary must discuss the consultant's overall strategy and methodology for successfully

implementing and managing projects specific to each service for the Borough of State College; capacity to perform, and approach to project management, satisfying the scope of services in the RFP and any additional factors for the Borough's consideration.

**Professional Qualifications, Specialized Experience and Local Availability of Key Personnel who will be dedicated to the Services Category.**

Consultant must provide a summary of individuals who will be dedicated to the services described in this RFP. For each key person identified, the consultant must provide the following information:

- 1) Summary of the key personnel who will be dedicated to the services proposed.
- 2) Key personnel areas of expertise and areas for prime responsibility for various tasks or aspects of the services.
- 3) Resumes or corporate personnel profiles with past experience for each of the key personnel, including a description of their roles and responsibilities on recent projects of similar type, scope, and magnitude relating to the Services described in this RFP. Consultant must provide the following information:
  - a. Title and reporting responsibility.
  - b. Proposed role, including the functions and tasks for which they will have prime responsibility (also indicate secondary responsibility, if applicable)
  - c. Resumes or corporate personnel profiles which describe their overall experience and expertise.

In addition to resumes, consultants must provide a detailed description of the roles and responsibilities by job titles (executives, project managers and key staff, etc.). Add any other types of staff/personnel whom the consultant may propose for any task role, including any other subconsultants that may be engaged. Also, provide the anticipated percentage of time devoted by each team member to the project.

**Approach, Strategy and Methodology for Implementing Engagements**

Approach to Implementing Services:

Describe your policies and procedures, strategies and methodology for implementing projects, quality control/assurance checks, project management, response times, project support and reporting/recommendation services, including your approach to overcoming obstacles, if any, and troubleshooting to resolve problems related to each proposed Service.

Organization Chart:

Submit an organization chart which clearly illustrates the team structure comprising all firms (joint venture partners and sub consultants if known); their relationship in terms of

proposed services; and key personnel involved and the specific role of each of the firms/organizations.

**Budget**

The budget for services will not exceed \$40,000. Responses should include the billable rate for all staff members assigned to the project, as well as an estimate of the number of hours that each staff member will work on the project.

**Examples of Similar Studies**

As part of your response, please provide at least two examples of similar studies that the team members have contributed to drafting and/or leading the public participation effort for the project. The examples may be provided as a web link to the study. At least one example must have been managed by the project manager that will be assigned to the State College Borough project. Both examples must be accompanied by an explanation of the role the team members proposed for the State College services played in the representative projects.

**Five copies of the above mentioned may be delivered by mail in a sealed envelope along with a digital copy in .pdf format on a compact disc or a USB storage device no later than August 23, 2021 at 5:00 pm Eastern Prevailing Time to:**

Ed LeClear, AICP  
Planning & Community Development Director  
243 South Allen Street  
State College, PA 16801

**Inquiries:**

If any additional information is needed regarding the project, you may contact:

Ed LeClear, AICP | Planning & Community Development Director

Phone: 814.234.7100

Email: [eleclear@statecollegepa.us](mailto:eleclear@statecollegepa.us)

**PROJECT TIME FRAME**

The Borough will evaluate all submitted qualifications based on the responsiveness of the work approach proposed, the qualification of the staff that will work with the Borough, the overall qualifications of the firm and the value of the proposed budget.

The Borough may schedule oral interviews with some or all of the firms responding, and the outcome of such interviews may influence the evaluation of qualifications.

**State College Borough anticipates the following schedule for the RFP process:**

**Milestone Dates**

RFP released by Borough: July 22, 2021

Deadline for questions to Borough: July 29, 2021

Response to questions posted by Borough: August 6, 2021

Qualification submissions DUE: August 23, 2021

Evaluation: August 24 – August 27, 2021

Shortlisted Respondents announced/invited for interview: Week of August 30th, 2021

It is estimated that the services procured through this process will begin on or about October 5th, 2021 and will be completed no later than May 6, 2022.

**PROPOSAL SELECTION**

The members of the Planning Staff will review the statement of qualifications and recommend the most qualified consultant to the Borough Council for approval. In general, review will focus on the following criteria:

- Relevant experience of primary firm & project manager
- Relevant experience of project team
- Demonstrated success achieving municipal adoption of the zoning ordinances
- Public process and demonstrated ability to build consensus on complicated issues
- Understanding of the issues
- Clarity of presentation
- Value of services

**ADDITIONAL DETAILS OF THE RFQ PROCESS**

**Addenda**

If it becomes necessary to revise or expand upon any part of this RFP, an addendum will be issued no later than four (4) working days prior to the RFP acceptance date. Prospective vendors shall have complete responsibility for being aware of any and all addenda.