

Request for Proposals

2024 Comprehensive Plan Update

Swarthmore Borough



The Borough of Swarthmore, Delaware County, (hereinafter referred to as “the Borough” or “Borough”) is issuing this Request for Proposal (“RFP”) to obtain written proposals from professional consultants who are interested in assisting the Borough in preparing an update to the Borough’s Comprehensive Plan (“the Plan”) in accordance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (“MPC”). The update shall also align with the Delaware County Comprehensive Plan and with policies regarding land use by all other authorities having jurisdiction.

The Borough is seeking a consultant who has experience with land use regulations, public involvement processes and the ability to apply and effectively present innovative concepts to policy makers and the general public. Public input shall be a significant part of this planning process. The consultant shall also have experience with planning for affordable housing, environmental stewardship and historic preservation.

This project is funded by Swarthmore Borough Council.

All responses to this RFP shall be received via email only to William Webb, Borough Manager, at wwebb@swarthmorepa.org by 5:00 PM, April 11, 2024 to be eligible for consideration.

Questions may be e-mailed to William Webb at wwebb@swarthmorepa.org

I. Background

Swarthmore Borough is located in Delaware County, Pennsylvania approximately 10 miles southwest of the City of Philadelphia and is a suburban community of 6,595 persons according to the 2021 census data. The Borough is a mature inner ring suburb with limited opportunities for large scale development. It is located in the Wallingford-Swarthmore School District and is home to Swarthmore College.

The Borough adopted a Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan (MMCP) in October 2006 and is planning to adopt a standalone plan in 2024. Utilizing the critical groundwork set within this plan the Borough has accomplished most of the outlined goals of the MMCP. The Borough also completed the Town Center Revitalization Strategy in 1999.

The 2006 Comprehensive Plan can be found on the Borough's website at www.swarthmorepa.org/DocumentCenter/View/80/Multi-MunicipalComprehensivePlan?bidId= and the Town Center Revitalization Strategy can be located at www.swarthmorepa.org/DocumentCenter/View/137/TownCenterrevitalizationstrategy-pdf?bidId=.

Although the MMPC has not been updated since 2006, there has been considerable activity within the Borough with respect to planning and zoning matters. Significant accomplishments implemented since the MMPC was adopted include the installation of the roundabout to replace a dysfunctional intersection and the development of the Inn at Swarthmore by Swarthmore College. Recent and proposed redevelopment projects in the historic town center have prompted an evaluation and rewrite of the Town Center Zoning District to address issues such as historic character, building height, and architectural design standards, and raised broader questions regarding the community's aspirations for future development, housing affordability, preservation, decarbonization, and sustainable construction practices. The recommended amendments in the draft Town Center District were derived from an intensive public participation process. The Borough's Planning Commission is currently evaluating the proposed amendments to implement the findings from that Town Center zoning study. The draft Town Center zoning district can be found at Town-Center-Zoning-Draft---20231024 (swarthmorepa.org).

II. Scope of Services

The scope of services to be provided by the Consultant shall include, but not be limited to, the elements identified in this RFP. This is a guide to prospective Consultants. Consultant creativity and ideas on approaches for strengthening the planning process will be considered. The Borough expects a plan tailored to meet the specific needs and unique circumstances of Swarthmore, with particular attention to those issues of highest concern for the community, including:

- Historic Preservation
- Affordable Housing
- Future Development/Redevelopment
- Sustainability

The following are the primary project tasks and minimum responsibilities of the Consultant. Consultants may add data, methodology, meetings, or other appropriate steps in the process but must include the minimum responsibilities in their proposal. As part of each task, the Consultant shall document all meetings, public hearings, workshops, open houses, or other public participation sessions.

Task 1: Steering Committee Coordination

The Borough would like the consultant's guidance in forming a Steering Committee comprised of members such as representatives from:

Borough Council,
Planning Commission,
Environmental Advisory Council
Development and Affordability Task Force
Historic Preservation Task Force
Swarthmore College
(1+) member of the public

to guide the development of the plan and evaluate all deliverables prior to presentation to the public.

It is expected that the consultant will meet with the Steering Committee up to six times during the planning process to confirm the plan schedule of tasks, confirm the public participation plan, and review deliverables at key points in the planning process.

Task 1 Deliverables:

- Meeting agendas and minutes
- Meeting and presentation materials

Task 2: Research and Analysis

Background analysis will be conducted including Borough characteristics and trends. Land use patterns will also be analyzed including future trends and the impact on Borough revenues.

2.1 Existing Plans and Reports

The consultant will review current and previous plans, ordinances, and reports, including the 2006 comprehensive plan, to understand the evolution of the Borough's planning goals and objectives and to document the accomplishments from previous plan recommendations.

Previous plans, ordinances, and studies to be reviewed have been organized in a virtual document room and include the following:

- 2006 Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan
- Aging in Place report
- Public Realm documents
- All ordinances adopted since the beginning of 2021
- All ordinances in place (including the zoning code)
- Borough's budget

- Swarthmore College master plan
- SEPTA accessibility plan
- Ready for 100 Resolution
- Town Center Revitalization Strategy
- Bike and Pedestrian Plan
- Historic Preservation Task Force Report
- Task Force on Housing Affordability Report
- Multi-Municipal Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Plan
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and Action Plan
- Town Center Zoning update (latest draft)

2.2 Existing Conditions Maps and Data

The consultant will compile available data to create tables, charts, and base maps that will be used to provide snapshots of existing conditions and inform the planning themes and goals and objectives for the following:

- Demographics
- Land Use and Zoning
- Historic Resources
- Natural Resources
- Transportation Facilities
- Parks and Recreation
- Infrastructure and Utilities
- Community Facilities
- Housing
- Economic Development

The consultant will review data, trends, and previous plans to evaluate the impacts of trends on future demand, including but not limited to the following:

- Land Use

The consultant will conduct analysis of existing land use patterns, development and redevelopment trends, zoning, development and redevelopment land suitability, regional traffic patterns, and population trends and the impact on future land use and Borough revenues.

- Transportation Infrastructure Study

The consultant will work with the Borough's Engineer and incorporate a Transportation Infrastructure Study within the Comprehensive Plan. The Transportation Analysis will include analysis of present and future multi-modal transportation demands throughout the Borough in order to properly address current and future growth patterns. Transportation approaches will include critical intersections, corridor analysis, development and redevelopment areas, parking, and sidewalk and bikeway analysis.

- Parks, Recreation and Open Space Study

Inventory and assessment of existing facilities and resources and identify future demands.

- **Housing Affordability Study**

The consultant will review the report by the Development and Affordability Task Force, incorporate data and analysis assessing housing affordability in Swarthmore and consider and expand upon the recommendations in the report (e.g., Accessory Dwelling Units, inclusionary zoning incentives, Co-Housing, conversions, etc.).

- **Historical Resource and Preservation Study**

The consultant will review and evaluate the draft report, currently in progress, by the Historic Preservation Task Force and incorporate data and analysis assessing historic resources in the Borough and consider and expand upon the recommendations in the report.

Task 2 Deliverables:

- Summary of Existing Plans and Studies
- GIS maps, data tables and charts
- Land Use Study, Transportation and Infrastructure Study, Parks and Recreation Study, Housing Affordability Study, Historical Resources Study.

Task 3: Community Engagement

Public participation is critical to the development of the Comprehensive Plan. Numerous public meetings will be conducted throughout the course of the formulation of the final Plan. The consultant shall develop a survey to gain additional public feedback as to what residents want the Borough to look like in ten (10) years. Consultants will be required to post interim and final drafts on the Comprehensive Plan web site. It is also expected that the consultant provides formal public presentations before Borough Council and the Borough Planning Commission, prior to the adoption of the final plan.

Respondents are encouraged to include in their response methods for soliciting and incorporating public input based upon their experience in the field. The community and stakeholder engagement process shall be designed to reach as many residents and community stakeholders as possible through the following strategies and platforms:

3.1: Public Open Houses

The consultant shall conduct two in person and two virtual open houses to gather information from members of the public and to solicit feedback at various stages of the process.

3.2: Community Surveys

The consultant will conduct up to two online surveys to obtain further community input. One survey will be a general survey that will seek to identify and prioritize issues, and the second will be a confirmation and prioritization of proposed implementation projects.

3.3: Stakeholder Interviews

The consultant shall conduct stakeholder interviews with topical experts and implementation partners to avoid political obstacles, be consistent with regional goals, and obtain early buy-in. The following stakeholders shall be interviewed:

- SEPTA
- PENNDOT
- DELCORA
- Wallingford Swarthmore School District
- Swarthmore College
- Centennial Foundation
- Delaware County
- Developers/Real Estate Brokers
- Swarthmore Recreation Association
- Business Owners
- PAC
- Places of Worship
- Historic Preservation Task Force
- Housing Affordability Study Group
- Aging in Place Task Force

3.4: Virtual Office Hours

The consultant shall conduct two one day sessions of virtual office hours to increase access to community engagement opportunities. The office hours will be conducted after the first draft of the Plan has been submitted for public review.

3.5: Pop-Up Events

Members of the Borough Planning Commission, Borough Council, and other community volunteers will conduct pop-up events at key locations in the Borough, such as the train station, farmers market, library, etc. to gain additional community feedback. The consultant will incorporate comments from these events into their findings.

3.6: Planning Commission and Borough Council Meetings

The consultant will present the status and key findings of the planning process at up to six regularly scheduled Planning Commission meetings that are open to the public. The consultant will meet with the Borough Council at up to four regularly scheduled meetings to provide status reports at key deliverable and decision points and to review the draft plan prior to plan adoption.

3.7: Catalyst Project Charrette

Through the public engagement process, the consultant will work with the Steering Committee to prioritize and identify up to three physical locations in the Borough that will represent catalyst projects. The consultant will facilitate one public charrette to generate ideas and conceptual sketch plans, and digital 3D modeling for the catalyst projects.

3.8: Communications

The consultant will be responsible for providing all draft and final materials to be posted on the Borough website by Borough staff. The consultant will also be responsible for creating all outreach materials about the comprehensive plan and public meetings and surveys. The Borough will be responsible for distributing all outreach materials.

Task 3 Deliverables:

- Community Engagement Plan
- Event agendas and materials
- Outreach materials, notes, survey responses
- Outreach materials
- Summary report from each engagement session / survey results
- Summary of community priorities

Task 4: Comprehensive Plan Framework

The comprehensive plan framework will become a record of accomplishments and a prioritized guide for implementation projects. The consultant shall design an approach that will foster immediate action and ensure that the Plan is flexible and realistic to allow for changing conditions. The comprehensive plan framework shall incorporate the following components:

4.1: Executive Summary

An executive summary for the plan and a summary of recommendations for each of the Comprehensive Plan elements will be provided.

4.2: Vision Statement

A vision statement shall be prepared based on community input that reflects a shared understanding of the community core values and vision. The consultant will assist in the prioritization of goals and objective as set forth by the Borough Council, the Borough Planning Commission, Borough Manager and Staff.

4.3: Goals and Strategies

The consultant will define desired goals and a priority list of achievable strategies based on the vision statement and community engagement process. Implementation strategies must be clearly described for each goal. In preparation of goals and strategies, the following key topics are preferred for consideration:

- Balanced Land Use and Development
- Economic Development and Financial Stability
- Multi-Modal Transportation and Mobility
- Diverse and Equitable Housing Options
- Historic and Cultural Resource Preservation
- Green Energy and Infrastructure
- Natural Resource Protection
- Community Resources (parks, libraries, open space, public safety, etc.)
- Open Space and Viewsheds

4.4: Future Land Use Plan

The consultant shall develop a future land use plan that physically depicts the vision for land use and transportation improvements in the Borough over the next ten years. The future land use plan shall include potential development/redevelopment areas, preservation and community resources areas, and multi-modal mobility enhancements.

4.5: Catalyst Project Concept Plans

The consultant shall develop up to three illustrative concept plans of catalyst projects. Catalyst projects are projects that will have the most impact and influence in implementing the Swarthmore Borough vision. Projects will be prioritized and selected through the public engagement process, including open houses, surveys, and stakeholder interviews. Conceptual plans, including sketch plans and incorporating digital 3D modeling illustrating the massing of catalyst projects will be derived from the charrette process described in Task 3.7 The concept plans will include plans for specific places in the Borough that will have the most impact and influence in implementing the vision. The concept plans shall be accompanied by potential policy, zoning, agency support needed to implement the project as well as estimated timeframe, order of magnitude cost estimate, partnerships, and funding sources.

4.6: Implementation Plan

The final plan shall identify short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals and recommendations that are clear, concise, and relevant. Careful consideration should be paid to developing specific goals identifying appropriate entities responsible for implementation. The plan should set priorities based on time and required/available funds. As described herein, the plan should address ways to achieve affordable housing, historic preservation and environmental stewardship. Where possible, the final plan should be accompanied by model ordinance examples and proposed amendments to the Borough's Zoning Code to reflect revisions to support the plan's implementation.

Task 4 Deliverables:

- Executive Summary
- Vision Statement
- Goals and Strategies
- Opportunity Concept Plan
- Catalyst Project Concept Plans and digital 3D modeling
- Implementation Plan Matrix

Task 5: Comprehensive Plan Development, Review, and Adoption

The Comprehensive Plan will undergo a rigorous review process to ensure that the goals, objectives, and recommended solutions have the full support of those responsible for implementing the plan, including elected officials and Borough administrators with the help of Swarthmore's residents and key stakeholders.

5.1: Preliminary Draft Plan

The consultant will prepare one preliminary draft plan for review by the Steering Committee and conduct one review session with the Planning Commission and one review session with Borough

Council to discuss comments from the members and determine the next round of revisions into the draft and final draft plans.

5.2: Draft Plan

The consultant will incorporate comments on the Preliminary Draft Plan from the Steering Committee, Planning Commission, and Borough Council into a Draft Plan for review by the Steering Committee, Planning Commission, and Borough Council prior to submission for public review. After addressing their comments, the Draft Plan will be submitted for a 30-day public review period. Comments from the public will be presented at a public Planning Commission and the consultant will work with the Steering Committee to decide how to address and incorporate public comments into the Final Draft Plan.

5.3 Final Draft Plan

After Steering Committee review of the draft plan, the necessary modifications will be made in consideration of comments by the Planning Commission and Borough Council. Once all revisions are made and confirmed by the Planning Commission and Borough Council, the consultant will submit a final draft document to the Steering Committee for one final review and revision before submitting for the required 45-day review process by Borough Council, contiguous municipalities, the school district, and Delaware County. The consultant will be responsible for finalizing and formatting the plan for printing. Swarthmore Borough will be responsible for printing and submitting the final document in accordance with submission requirements established through the MPC.

5.4: Plan Adoption

The consultant will be responsible for finalizing and formatting the final document in PDF format for adoption in accordance with submission requirements established through the MPC.

Task 5 Deliverables:

- PDF of Preliminary Draft Plan
- PDF of Draft Plan
- PDF of Final Draft Plan
- PDF of Final Plan

III. Proposal Submission

All responses to this RFP shall be received via email only to William Webb, Borough Manager, at wwebb@swarthmorepa.org by April 11, 2024 at 5:00 PM, to be eligible for consideration.

Questions may be e-mailed to William Webb at wwebb@swarthmorepa.org

IV. Limitations and Liability

Swarthmore Borough assumes no responsibility or liability for costs incurred by those firms responding to this RFP or in responding to any further request for interviews, additional data, etc.

V. Materials

Consultants will be responsible for providing all necessary materials at all meetings, and workshops. The Consultants shall provide the municipality with a PDF version and editable version of all documents and maps. All mapping will be prepared in ArcView Format and will be provided to the Borough for reproduction.

VI. Format for Proposals

Respondents are requested to be concise and proposals should include, in order, the following:

- A.** Letter of Transmittal
- B.** Executive Summary
- C.** Brief organizational profile, including background and experience of the firm.
- D.** Previous project summaries, including reference contact information, for a minimum of three (3) projects that are similar in scope to the project described herein that demonstrate pertinent corporate and key personnel experience; listing of the pertinent projects may be included. (The Borough reserves the right to contact any references provided herein or otherwise obtained).
- E.** Proposed Operation Plan and potential Project Schedule including an explanation/discussion of technical approaches and a detailed outline of the proposed services for executing the requirements of the Proposed Scope of Services. Please note that the final master plan document as well as all maps and supporting information is expected to be delivered in both hard copy and electronic format.
- F.** Project management including:
 - i.** Project organizational chart including key staff to be assigned and their roles in the project.
 - ii.** Location of office from which the management of the project will be performed.
 - iii.** Summary/matrix of key personnel's shared project experience
- H.** Appendices: Resumes of person(s) who will be performing the work.
- I.** Cost estimates and typical billing rates (In a separate sealed envelope):
 - i.** Proposers are urged to provide a Matrix for the Project, showing hours by classification (i.e., Principal, Project Manager, etc.) for the tasks identified in the proposal. A schedule of billing rates by classification, etc. is also desired.
 - ii.** Cost will be broken out by plan tasks.

VII. Signature Certification

The proposal shall be signed by an official authorized to bind the offer and shall contain a statement to the effect that the proposal will remain effective for review and approval for ninety (90) days from the deadline for submitting proposals.

VIII. Right to Reject Proposals and Waive Informalities

Swarthmore Borough reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any irregularities or information in any RFP response, and to accept/reject any item or combination of items. The contract is subject to approval by the Swarthmore Borough Council and is effective only upon its approval.

IX. Criteria for Evaluation

- Proposals submitted will be evaluated based on the following:
- Qualifications of the firm based on previous relevant experience;
- Demonstrated understanding of the project;
- Approach to the project;
- Quality of work determined from both samples of work submitted for similar projects and for the proposal itself;
- A demonstrated ability to write clearly and concisely;
- Qualifications of the person(s) to be involved;
- Project cost;
- Items identified in **Section VI** Format for Proposals.

Request for Proposal Tentative Timeline

RFP Distribution March 12, 2024

Deadline for RFP Submittals April 11, 2024

Review/Select Consultants for Interviews May, 2024

Interviews May, 2024

Public presentation by invitation during Borough Council meeting on June 1, 2024

Contract Award June 8, 2024