

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
TO DEVELOP THE SOUTH CENTRAL ARMSTRONG MULTI-MUNICIPAL
IMPLEMENTABLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

Participating Municipalities: Leechburg Borough, Gilpin Township, Parks Township, and Bethel Township
Armstrong County, Pennsylvania

PROPOSED TIMELINE:

RFP Issued by Municipal Steering Committee:	April 20, 2026
Due date of Final Questions:	May 20, 2026
Question Responses Issued:	May 26, 2026
RFP Due:	June 5, 2026
Interview of Finalists:	Week of June 15-19, 2026
Anticipated Date of Award:	June 29, 2026

PURPOSE AND INTENT

Leechburg Borough, Gilpin Township, Parks Township, and Bethel Township (collectively “the Municipal Steering Committee”) invite qualified planning and multidisciplinary consulting firms to submit proposals to prepare a **Multi-Municipal Implementable Comprehensive Plan Update**. This plan should be completed in compliance with the latest edition of the PA Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) and guided by the planning principles and objectives set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) regarding creating an implementable plan.

The implementable comprehensive plan will present a vision for the South Central Armstrong Region’s future and strategies for attaining its goals. The plan will be strategic and will outline workable action plans focusing on the next 10 years, address means of financing and demonstrate how to effectively build capacity to implement. The consultant to be hired will provide the full range of planning services necessary to undertake the implementable comprehensive plan focusing on coordinated land use, economic development, housing, infrastructure, and conservation decisions for the region. Gilpin Township will serve as the fiscal agent on behalf of the partnership.

BACKGROUND

The municipalities form a connected regional planning area in southern Armstrong County centered along the Allegheny and Kiskiminetas River corridors. The communities share:

- Transportation systems and commuting patterns
- School districts and service networks
- Housing and labor markets
- Economic development opportunities
- Environmental assets and infrastructure challenges

The previous comprehensive planning effort is now outdated and does not reflect current demographic trends, infrastructure needs, economic conditions, or redevelopment opportunities. Key regional challenges include:

- Population decline and aging demographics
- Housing vacancy and aging housing stock
- Underutilized industrial and commercial properties
- Infrastructure maintenance pressures
- Limited municipal capacity

PROJECT GOALS

The Implementable Comprehensive Plan Update shall:

- Establish a shared regional vision and identify
- Guide coordinated land use and strategic growth management.
- Support economic revitalization and redevelopment where appropriate
- Address housing stability and residential reinvestment strategies.
- Improve infrastructure coordination and resilience.
- Promote recreation, conservation, and riverfront assets.
- Provide implementable strategies aligned with funding opportunities.
- Strengthen intergovernmental cooperation.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

All proposers are required to submit their proposal and fee structure as a separate file electronically to [RFP Submissions](#).

The proposal must be received no later than **2:00 PM** Eastern Standard Time (EST) on **Friday, June 5, 2026**.

Note: All Documents and information submitted in response to this solicitation may be discoverable under Pennsylvania's Right to Know Law. The Municipal Steering Committee will not be responsible for any costs associated with the oral or written presentation of the proposals. The Municipal Steering Committee reserves the right to make such investigations as it deems necessary as to the qualifications of all firms submitting proposals and reserves the right to re-solicit proposals as needed.

PRE-SUBMISSION QUESTIONS:

All interested parties who plan to respond to this RFP must register via the [RFP Inquiry](#) form to receive a list of all submitted questions and responses:

All inquiries concerning this RFP must be submitted via email addressed to yinz@swpahub.org with **South Central Armstrong Multi-Municipal Implementable Comprehensive Plan Update** in the subject line.

Deadline for inquiries is **May 20, 2026 at 12:00 PM EST**. Questions received will be compiled and a response will be emailed to registered parties no later than **May 26, 2026 5:00 pm EST**. The written specifications will be considered clear and complete unless written attention is called to any apparent discrepancies or incompleteness before the opening of the proposals.

PROPOSAL FORMAT:

Submissions shall be made in the following pdf format:

1. Cover sheet with Firm name, Address, Primary Point of Contact information, and Project Title.
2. Letter of Interest (1 page).
3. Executive Summary (1 page).

Brief organizational profile, including background and experience of the firm(s). Location of office from which the project management will be performed. Project organization chart including key staff to be assigned, their roles in the project, and their home office. A statement shall be included indicating current workload of assigned staff and their capacity to undertake this project in a timely manner. Ideal organizations will include regional staff for the outreach and engagement components of the project.

4. Key Personnel to be utilized on this project and their expertise in developing multi-municipal or implementable comprehensive plans, as well as capacity to complete the project in a timely manner. Resumes shall be included here. A listing of the percentage of total project hours worked by each employee in relation to the total project shall be included.
5. Provide a community engagement plan that outlines the following:
 - a. The consultant shall clearly describe their approach to communication, key materials and engagement strategies they deem appropriate for this plan.
 - b. Describe how they will engage with the steering committee, target audiences, and the general public at every stage of the project, including implementation.
6. Provide a detailed project schedule and narrative that demonstrates the consultant's understanding of scope of services clearly outlining anticipated timelines from initiation through adoption. The schedule should clearly outline all phases of work, including project kickoff, data collection and analysis, community engagement, visioning, plan development, draft review, and final adoption. It should identify key tasks, milestones, all anticipated deliverables, and decision points along with estimated timelines.
7. Narrative proposing innovative solutions and approaches to address the South Central Armstong County's challenges can lead to more creative and impactful comprehensive plans. This can include leveraging technology, data analytics, and best practices from other municipalities.
8. Consultant firm's experience and references, specifically focused on Implementable Comprehensive Plans experience and knowledge of Federal, State and local code and regulations. Listing, description, and link to similar projects that have been completed in the past 5 years by the prime consultant and/or proposed subcontractors. Reference list (minimum of three) that may be contacted by the Municipal Steering Committee for recently completed similar projects. (3 page limit)
9. Technical and price proposal of services to be provided, including but not limited to estimated time per activity, wages, travel, copies, etc. in a separate pdf. Document. The Proposal shall include a lump sum fee as well as a detailed budget. The consultant's bid must also include any related expenses, such as travel. The budget must include an hourly rate schedule and estimated number of hours to be performed by each staff member assigned to the project. If any work is to be subcontracted, the Proposal should reference the specific areas and costs. Costs for GIS services and all costs related to meetings shall also be specifically listed. Any reimbursable expenses must be clearly indicated, and an estimate provided.

10. Certificate of insurance detailing the amounts of all insurance coverage \$1,000,000 million per occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate.

SOUTH CENTRAL ARMSTRONG REGIONAL INFORMATION

The South Central Armstrong County Region is a historically connected river-valley community centered along the Allegheny and Kiskiminetas Rivers. The municipalities share economic history, infrastructure systems, school districts, transportation corridors, and housing markets. This planning process seeks to leverage these municipalities natural assets, historic character, and regional collaboration to create more resilient communities, diverse economic opportunity, and high quality of life. This geographic areas functions as a gateway between Armstrong and Westmoreland Counties. The region benefits from riverfront access, state Route 66 corridor connectivity, proximity to Pittsburgh labor markets and has legacy industrial sites suitable for reuse. Like much of southwestern Pennsylvania, Armstrong County's population continues to decline modestly, falling from 65,558 residents in 2020 to an estimated 63,679 in 2024.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The consultant will utilize the planning principles outlined in the Pennsylvania Department of Community Development's (DCED) "Creating an Implementable Comprehensive Plan." The consultant will prepare a plan that achieves the 9 primary goals. Firstly, the Plan will craft a vision for the South Central Armstrong County Region over the next decade, reflecting the direction desired by officials, citizens and various stakeholders. Secondly, the Plan will identify the top priorities associated with achieving that vision. Thirdly, the plan will include set of achievable action strategies (projects, programs, initiatives and implementation guidance) that can be enacted to realize the envisioned future.

The consultant will focus their services on conducting engagement with the public and steering committee to identify top community priorities; preparing action strategies that provides the municipalities with answers, direction and outlines steps to address the priorities; and preparing implementation guidance that identifies completion timeframes and next steps, responsibilities, resources and/or potential sources of funding for projects. The focus will be on discerning the needs and aspirations of the communities rather than conforming to a traditional comprehensive plan format.

The consultant will be tasked with delivering implementation guidance for executing the plan. A key outcome will be to provide pertinent information, innovative ideas, actionable plans, and implementation advice that will aid municipalities in forging partnerships and building the capacity to execute the plan effectively. As previously stated, the comprehensive plan should be an "implementable plan," adhering to principles and guidelines currently endorsed by the PA Department of Community and Economic Development.

To ensure the preservation of each municipality's autonomy and to accommodate their distinct socio-economic and geographical characteristics, the plan will integrate collective regional goals and objectives. Additionally, each municipality will be allocated a dedicated section within the plan, delineating its individual background, specific goals, objectives, and a tailored action plan. This approach aims to honor the diverse identity of each municipality while fostering collaboration towards overarching regional objectives.

The consultant should start the planning process by engaging with the public and Steering Committee to identify the top priorities and needs in the South Central Armstrong County Region. The following summarizes topics identified by the municipalities and Planning Commission that may be addressed in the plan. These may be in addition to other topics that emerge from the public during the planning process.

1. **Shared Services** – Examine a more formalized between municipalities to include shared staff, public works, equipment, and utility services, aiming to optimize efficiency and enhance service delivery across the region.
2. **Economic Development** – Identify strategies to strengthen or expand existing commercial corridors and business districts that integrate smaller, mixed-use businesses into residential areas for economic vitality and enriched community fabric, fostering a vibrant, sustainable community.
3. **Fiscal Impact Analysis** – Evaluate projected public financial costs and benefits associated with anticipated growth within each municipality would be best suited from a financial standpoint of land use planning, anticipated tax revenue, and from a long-term maintenance perspective for each municipality as it pertains to infrastructure, recreation, and other relevant municipal services.
4. **Bicycle and Pedestrian** – Enhance pedestrian infrastructure with sidewalks, bike lanes, and crosswalks by developing a comprehensive network for safe pedestrian and cyclist in relation to existing assets and planned regional trail networks. Creating a bikeable and walkable community will promote healthier lifestyles and enhancing quality of life for residents and visitors.
5. **Environmental** – Prioritize protection of sensitive environmental areas, preservation of open spaces, critical agricultural properties and viewsheds, and suggest implementation of sustainable stormwater solutions to safeguard natural resources, promoting environmental stewardship and ensuring long-term sustainability of the region's ecological assets.
6. **Housing and Blight** – Implement proactive maintenance and rehabilitation initiatives for existing housing, addressing aging and blighted structures to foster stable communities. Additionally, outline targeted revitalization efforts, rehabilitation programs, and responsible redevelopment plans to uphold residential integrity and property values.
7. **Regional Identity** – Create a branding strategy for the South Central Armstrong County communities that can start to showcase and highlight these communities unique appeal and be an attraction mechanism for new residents.
8. **Land Use Regulations-** Modernize antiquated land use ordinances, codes, and regulatory processes by streamlining existing frameworks and creating tailored ordinances for municipalities without them, promoting responsible development, preserving community character, and facilitating sustainable growth.
9. **Recreation-** Develop a comprehensive parks and recreational approach that evaluates options for regional recreation programs, including potential collaboration with existing recreation providers and neighboring municipalities. The plan should explore both passive (trails, connectivity) and active (gyms, courts) recreational opportunities, as well as service contracts with nearby communities.

PROJECT COORDINATION

Throughout the project, the consultant will maintain regular coordination with the Municipal Steering Committee. In addition, the consultant's approach and method must include, at a minimum:

- An initial meeting with the Municipal Steering Committee and DCED staff to review the project scope and establish the project delivery schedule and public engagement program.
- Input gathering from the public through a variety of techniques to include but not necessarily limited to public workshops and surveys that will result in a wide cross section of people having been consulted. Public engagement activities should be designed to promote the South Central Armstrong County Region and the plan, and should result in local enthusiasm, buy-in and participation.
- Consultant shall assist with the outreach to neighboring municipalities, school districts, and the County
- At a minimum, virtual bi-monthly (or as needed) project review meetings with the Municipal Steering Committee.
- Monthly update meetings should be provided to the contract holder, Gilpin Township to ensure progress on the project.
- Preparation and presentation of draft and final plans.
- Presentation of the final plan to the public, municipal officials and participation in a public hearing to formally present the plan for approval and adoption if necessary.

DELIVERABLES

The consultant shall submit the following products to the Municipal Steering Committee in accordance with the approved Project Completion Schedule:

- Produce a digital and print version of the PDF of the Implementable Comprehensive Plan with an and executive summary.
- Provide 4 copies of one (1) package of editable files of the plan t for the Municipal Steering Committee on a thumb drive.
- The consultant will be responsible for providing necessary materials at all meetings, workshops, and hearings.
- Electronic copies of all materials, research, data, GIS shapefiles, maps, etc. developed or collected by the consultant over the course of plan development in editable formats. The software packages used will be agreed to prior to any work being produced. Maps should be developed for easy integration into an ArcGIS Online system.
- Completed community survey identifying the priorities of each municipality and the region as a whole.

INTERVIEW

The top ranked candidates will receive an invitation for an interview with the Municipal Steering Committee. The proposal should be comprehensive and complete on its face. The Committee reserves the right to request clarifying information subsequent to submission of the proposal.

SELECTION CRITERIA

A selection committee of the participating municipal representatives will competitively evaluate the proposals. Selection of a consultant will be based on the following criteria:

- Overall quality and experience of the firm. Municipal planning experience with emphasis on preparing an implementable comprehensive plan in conformance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. (20%)

- Relevant qualifications and experience of the assigned personnel in preparing implementable municipal comprehensive plans and meeting objectives outlined in this RFP. Personnel shall include at least one AICP. Experience working in similar communities in Pennsylvania. (30%)
- Understanding of the Scope of Services and the objectives of the project. Creativity of ideas and suggestions to enhance and/or amend the scope of work and additional details of the approach and methods to carry out the project. Quality of work plan and organization structure with identification and prioritization of measurable goals, estimated costs and potential sources of financing, actionable timeline, quality of products and support materials. Participation plan reflecting commitment to gaining buy-in from the municipalities. (30%)
- Proposed costs, with elements clearly defined and priced. Cost-saving techniques. (15%)
- Proximity to Armstrong County. (5%)

PROJECT BUDGET

The Municipal Steering Committee has been awarded grant dollars through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's Municipal Assistance Program PA Local Share Account.

RFP DISCLOSURES

The Municipal Steering Committee reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any non-material irregularities or information in any RFP, and to accept or reject any item or combination of items. The Municipal Steering Committee assumes no responsibility or liability for costs incurred by Proposers in responding to this RFP or in responding to any further request for interviews, additional data, etc. Any award of a contract shall be contingent upon receipt of MAP and LSA funding by the fiscal host, Gilpin Township. Following award of the contract by the Gilpin Township, RFP submissions are considered public records that are subject to Pennsylvania's "Right to Know" laws. Materials considered confidential by the Consultant must be clearly identified and include a statement of why said records should not be considered public record.

