

June 30, 2026

Request for Proposals
Cambridge Springs Borough/Venango Borough, Crawford County
Pennsylvania
Comprehensive Plan

The Cambridge Springs Borough and Venango Borough, (“Boroughs”) are jointly soliciting a proposal from qualified professional planning consultants for the preparation of an Implementable Joint Comprehensive Plan (“Plan”). The previous comprehensive plan was adopted in 1960s and last updated in 1998.

CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS BOROUGH BACKGROUND:

The village of Cambridge was settled in 1822 and named for the town of Cambridge, Massachusetts. It was incorporated into the borough of Cambridge Springs Borough on April 3, 1866. In the late 19th century, Cambridge Springs Borough was known for its mineral springs. The discovery of the springs eventually led to the borough being renamed to Cambridge Springs on April 1, 1897. The borough is located in Crawford County within the PENNCREST School District. The Borough is approximately 0.872 square miles in size with a population of approximately 2,500. However, 900 of these residents are inmates at State Correctional Institute located within the borough limits, who are non-contributing taxpayers. It is surrounded by neighboring Cambridge Township.

The Borough is governed by a council of seven elected members, each serving a four-year term. The Cambridge Springs Borough Planning Commission serves as the advisory body to the Council on matters related to planning and site development. Consistent with these duties, the Planning Commission will oversee this project with final approval by the Council.

Cambridge Springs Borough has recently seen a revitalization effort due to the establishment of a non-profit called CREATE (Cambridge Revitalization Economic and Tourism Expansion). Through the efforts of this organization, several beautification projects are underway including the paving of the Firemen’s parking lot, a fundraiser for Christmas Star decorations for the downtown area, flower planters to be displayed next Spring on the main bridge in the town and a 3–5-year plan to establish a park and rebuild of the Firemen’s Carnival grounds. CREATE also spearheaded efforts to fund 6 new Cambridge Springs signs and a hotel study.

The Boroughs would like to create a joint comprehensive plan to guide their future efforts to revitalize their downtown areas, update the aging infrastructure and bring more businesses and visitors to the area.

VENANGO BOROUGH BACKGROUND:

Venango is a borough in north central Crawford County. It is bordered by Venango Township to the north, west and south and by Cambridge Township to the east, across French Creek. It has a total area of 0.27 square miles. Venango is located on conjoined US Route 6 and US Route 19, with Cambridge Springs 4 miles to the northeast and Meadville, the county seat, 10 miles to the south. Interstate 79 passes 2 miles to the west of Venango, but without any nearby exits. Population was 288 in 2020. The borough has recently added Karl Gerdon Park and a Historical Museum.

The Borough is governed by a council of seven elected members, each serving a four-year term. There is also an elected mayor of the town. The Venango Borough Planning Commission serves as the advisory body to the Council on matters related to planning and site development. Consistent with these duties, the Planning Commission will oversee this project with final approval by the Council.

Together with Venango Borough, the Borough of Cambridge Springs has been able to share information so that the efforts of both Boroughs are fruitful and provide assistance towards grant writing efforts and strategic direction of both boroughs. The Borough of Venango has no public water or sewer.

The Boroughs share the beauty of French Creek which runs through both areas. There are many visitors that come to the area from Pittsburgh, Ohio and New York to kayak, attend music events and to enjoy the small towns. Fishing has also been a favorite sport in the area for over 100 years.

SCOPE OF WORK:

As stated previously, the comprehensive plan should be an “implementable plan” following principles and keys currently being promoted by the PA Department of Community and Economic Development as well as the Crawford Inspired Comprehensive Plan.

This Plan is expected to address the following issues, though additional items may arise through the planning process. The planning process will investigate shared priorities, while identifying individual priorities. Finally, the plan will focus on identifying the top 3-5 priorities in each community and developing plans to address the priorities.

Utilities & Infrastructure

- Examine existing utilities and other infrastructure available within the Boroughs.

- Identify areas in which providing added capacity would benefit current and future growth of the Boroughs including:
 - Municipal water
 - Sanitary Sewer
 - Stormwater
 - Sidewalks

Downtown Revitalization & Economic Development

- Revitalize downtown business districts
- Review existing zoning ordinances for updates to encourage development
- Strategies for business attraction, retention, and expansion
- Increase collaboration amongst participating municipalities

In addition to the priorities or related goals or themes that emerge from the planning process, the consultant should propose a concise **Public Engagement Strategy**, in which the following is expected.

- Facilitate a minimum of two (2) joint public meetings across both Boroughs:
 - The first meeting to be held in the initial stage, with the second to be held at the end of the planning process.
- Develop and deploy a public survey to document how public input influences the establishment of priorities.
- Steering Committee meetings will be conducted jointly (expectation to be held in-person, with virtual option available as necessary).
- Facilitate the adoption process, including public hearings at each municipality (to each governing body).

The consultant’s work and the Plan document should be organized based on the Boroughs’ shared priorities or related goals or themes that emerge from the planning process, not based on a traditional template of land use plan, housing plan, transportation plan, etc. The Plan document should be written for use by both Planning Commissions, Councils and others who will implement the plan after completion.

The Plan should provide workable action plans for top recommendations with a series of strategic projects, programs and initiatives that emerge from the planning process. The Plan should set priorities and a timetable for action based on expected results and ability to finance and carry out. Action plans should include reasonable depth and detail, specific action steps, responsible parties, estimated costs, and proposed means of financing to facilitate implementation after the Plan is completed. The consultant is asked to include some immediate action recommendations that would provide short-term, visible results and motivate further implementation of the Plan.

The consultant should facilitate a plan process whereby the communities “own” the Plan, and the elected officials and community leaders are spokespersons for the Plan and have a consensus commitment to implement it. There should be effective means within the project budget to obtain public vision and aspirations for their community. There should be involvement of elected officials to ensure their understanding and acceptance as the Plan proceeds from issues to ideas to action plans.

The consultants will ensure the Comprehensive Plan meets the minimum requirements of the PA Municipalities Planning Code. The consultant may have to address minimal subject matter not addressed in analysis and recommendations presented for the Boroughs’ priority issues.

Boroughs are open to consider consultant suggestions for alterations to the work scope that would be in the project owners’ interest and not vary from the essential goals and objectives outlined in the RFP. Alterations could be considered in developing a final scope of work for contract with the selected consultant.

DELIVERABLES:

The consultant will deliver a complete Comprehensive Plan document(s) ready for adoption, one (1) digital copy in Microsoft Word format and one (1) digital copy in PDF format, print-ready graphics.

BUDGET:

A DCED grant is being sought for the project. Seed money may be obtained through private donations and contributions. The budget will be split between the boroughs at an agreed percentage.

COMPLETION SCHEDULE:

It is expected that the consultant will complete the Plan within 12 months of execution of the contract.

CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENTS:

Because a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is being applied for, the consultant must comply with grant-mandated requirements to be included in the consultant contract.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT:

The project will be managed by one appointed representative from each planning commission, who will be the Boroughs’ primary contact for communications with the consultant.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

Proposals will be evaluated, and a consultant will be selected based on the following criteria listed in order of importance:

- The relevant qualifications, skills, and experience of the consultant(s) in performing work requested herein and working with communities similar in size and character to the Boroughs of Cambridge Springs and Venango.
- The qualifications, skills, and experience of personnel to be assigned by the consultant(s) to the project.
- The consultant's proposed scope of work and approach, methods, etc. to carry out the project. Proposals will be competitively judged on the quantity, quality, and value of the proposed work approach, products, etc., given the project budget of \$60,000.
- The ability of the consultant to meet the expected project completion schedule.

PROPOSAL CONTENT:

Consultant proposals must include:

1. Cover Letter: Provide a brief cover letter summarizing the key points of the applicant's proposal and confirm an understanding of the Scope of Work. Include the applicant's full name, mailing address, phone number, primary contact person and email address.
2. Project Personnel and Qualifications: Provide a narrative for the proposed project, including types of services for which the applicant and any prospective subcontractor are qualified. The narrative shall include the names of principals and key personnel from the applicant firm and prospective subcontractors that will be assigned to the project, along with a resume or listing of relevant education and work experience.
3. Project List and References: Provide examples of at least three (3) similar projects completed by the applicant that best illustrates your qualifications for this project. Include name, address and phone number of individuals who can be contacted for references.
4. Work Program: Provide a narrative of the overall project approach, process and methods to be employed to carry out the project, separated by individual tasks. Include a list of proposed deliverables for each work step. Discuss any proposed changes/revisions to the scope of services or deliverables in order to meet the project objectives.
5. Work Schedule: Provide a timeline for the performance of the Work Program, including the completion of all tasks and the delivery of all materials for each phase.
6. Cost Proposal: Provide a "not to exceed" cost proposal that includes the following:
 - Labor hours and billing labor rates for each key staff person and labor category for other staff.
 - Itemized estimate of reimbursable expenses including reproduction, travel, printing, mailing, and other direct project expenses not detailed herein; and
 - Total proposed price detailed by task for the completed project.

SELECTION PROCEDURE:

Proposals must be received no later than COB, Tuesday, August 4, 2026, to be eligible for consideration. All proposals should be emailed to Kim Radler, 412-596-0608, chipper119@comcast.net.

After review by both Commissions, a short list of consultants will be selected and scheduled to make presentations to the Planning Commissions. It is anticipated that consultant selection will occur within 45-60 days of the RFP deadline. A notice to proceed will be issued as soon as possible thereafter.

The selected consultant's proposal will be sent via a digital Adobe in Word or PDF format that can be legibly printed on 8.5" X 11" paper to the following:

Sandra Pude, Borough Manager
Borough of Cambridge Springs
161 Carringer St.
Cambridge Springs, PA 16403

Robert Thayer, Borough Manager
Borough of Venango
21622 Erie Street
Venango, PA 16440

The Boroughs are open to consider consultant suggestions for alterations to the work scope that would be in the Boroughs' interest and not vary from the essential goals and objectives outlined in the RFP. Alterations could be considered in developing a final scope of work for contract with the selected consultant.

RIGHT TO MODIFY, RESCIND OR REVOKE RFP:

The Boroughs reserve the right to modify, rescind or revoke this RFP, in whole or part, at any time prior to the date on which the Boroughs execute a contract with the selected consultant.

RIGHT TO REJECT:

This RFP does not commit the Boroughs to select a consultant or to award a contract to any consultant.

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY:

All proposals become the physical property of the Boroughs upon receipt. All work product prepared by the selected consultant for this project shall become the property of the Boroughs.

RISK OF LOSS, DAMAGE OR DELAY:

The consultant acknowledges and agrees to release and hold harmless the Boroughs, their officers, and employees from and against any and all claims, liability, damages, and costs, including court costs and attorney's fees, arising out of or pursuant to the delivery of the proposal or failure to deliver the proposal as directed by this RFP.