



Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR THE Creation Of The Lower Connecticut River Valley Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Introduction

The Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG) is seeking a consultant to create a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the region that fulfills the requirements of both state statute CGS § 32-742 and federal statute 13 CFR § 303.7. The CEDS should also provide the foundation for establishing a federally recognized Economic Development District for the Lower Connecticut River Valley in accordance with 13 CFR § 304.1.

Project Description

Following the recent adoption of the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (RPOCD) and concurrent with the creation of the Regional Housing Plan (RHP), RiverCOG would like to develop a CEDS for the seventeen-municipality region that integrates and builds upon the findings and recommendations in those documents, as well as the 2016 GrowSMART economic strategic plan and 2019 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The CEDS should be a strategy driven plan which builds capacity and guides economic prosperity and resiliency in the region.

Plan Content

Consistent with CGS § 32-742 and 13 CFR § 303.7, the CEDS must incorporate the following components:

Summary Background: A summary background of the economic conditions of the region;

SWOT Analysis: An in-depth analysis of regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;

Strategic Direction/Action Plan: The strategic direction and action plan should build on findings from the SWOT analysis and incorporate/integrate elements from other regional plans (RPOCD, RHP, Regional Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), etc.) where appropriate. The action plan should also identify the stakeholder(s) responsible for implementation, timetables, and opportunities for the integrated use of other local, state, and federal funds;

Evaluation Framework: Performance measures used to evaluate the implementation of the CEDS and impact on the regional economy.

The CEDS should be grounded in accurate and accessible data, including but not limited to metrics, trends, and demographics, that facilitates a region-wide understanding of economic development. In addition, the CEDS must address the concept of economic resiliency and demonstrate how the region will avoid, withstand, and recover from economic shifts, natural disasters, and the impacts of climate change.

The concept of equity should be woven throughout the CEDS. The CEDS should advance racial equity,

diversity, and inclusion; identify economic inequality; and promote the creation, expansion, retention, and attraction of business investment while supporting inclusivity, resiliency, and sustainability. In doing so, the CEDS should identify areas of economic distress and promote opportunities for people of color and lower income residents, particularly those living in distressed areas.

Public Engagement

The CEDS should emerge from a planning process developed with broad based and diverse stakeholder participation. A Strategy Committee representing the main economic interests in the region will be assembled to steer the creation of the CEDS. This committee will include representation from the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce and the Middlesex County Revitalization Commission (MCRC) as well as from the private sector, state and other public officials, community leaders, private individuals, representatives of workforce development boards, institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups, and others who can contribute to and benefit from improved economic development in the region.

In addition, the CEDS should incorporate a rigorous public engagement process to solicit stakeholder input and support. Stakeholders may include, but are not limited to, the public sector, private interests, non-profits, educational institutions, and community organizations, such as the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce and MCRC. The outreach plan should not only focus on building participation and support, but on identifying and strengthening strategic partnerships between stakeholders in order to coordinate work and economic investment across the region. Emphasis should be placed on equity and inclusivity, ensuring that underrepresented voices are heard in all stages of the outreach process. Strategy to reach non-English speaking populations, particularly Spanish speaking residents, will be necessary and fluency in multiple languages is desirable. The CEDS should include a plan to regularly engage stakeholders in implementing and monitoring progress of the CEDS to keep it current and relevant.

Plan Design and Web Integration

The CEDS document should be visually stimulating and engaging to the public. It should incorporate innovative design elements, images, and infographics. The document should be suitable to web integration and incorporate impactful interactive components. The web integration should not only display important content from the CEDS but link that content to relevant information in other regional plans.

Addenda and Supplements

In the event that it becomes necessary to revise any part of these instructions, a supplement will be posted to <http://www.rivercog.org/publicnotices>. Respondents are free to amend or replace an already-submitted proposal up until the RFP submission deadline.

Rejection Rights

RiverCOG retains the right to reject all proposals and to re-solicit if deemed to be in their best interest to do so.

Cost of Proposal Preparation

No reimbursement will be made for any costs incurred for the preparation of a proposal or during the selection process.

Proposals to Be In Effect

Each proposal shall state that it is valid for a period of not less than 120 days from the date of receipt.

Selection is also dependent upon the negotiation of a mutually-acceptable contract with the chosen firm.

Response Requirements

The following information must be submitted with the proposal. Any additional information should be contained in a clearly marked appendix.

1. Qualifications of the firm or individual proposing to conduct the study. Name, team size, and team organizational structure under which the firm(s) and personnel will conduct the study must be included. Relevant experience in economic development planning and public engagement should be presented. Any proposed sub-consultants must be clearly identified, along with their roles in the project and relevant experience. The location of the primary office to be used in the project should be included.
2. Qualifications (resumes) of key personnel to be assigned to the project and a description of their responsibilities in conducting project tasks must be included.
3. Description of other similar or related experiences completed within the last few years with reference and contact information for each.
4. A draft Scope of Work for the project, including a description of the project approach and detailed work-plan set out by task.
5. A timeline detailing the order and duration of listed tasks and the project as a whole, as well as which tasks will be completed by the lead, subcontractors (if any), RiverCOG, and municipalities.
6. A detailed budget set out by task.
7. A list of current projects/contractual commitments with end dates for each.
8. Proof of appropriate insurance (general liability, auto, workers compensation, and/or professional liability coverage) for the firm and its subcontractors.
9. Statement of compliance with all federal and state laws and local ordinances.
10. Submittals: An electronic submittal is required and must be received by 4 pm on Monday, January 10, 2022. Digital storage media may be mailed to RiverCOG, 145 Dennison Rd., Essex, CT, 06426, or emailed to Eliza LoPresti at elopresti@rivercog.org.

After the submittal period has closed, RiverCOG will conduct interviews of select firms, based on a review of proposals, prior to making a final decision.

Inquiries

Questions may only be submitted in writing and sent to Eliza LoPresti, at elopresti@riverocg.org

All questions submitted and responses will be made publicly available at <http://rivercog.org/publicnotices>.

The identity of persons submitting questions will not be posted.

Late Responses

RFP responses arriving late or not meeting these minimum requirements may be disqualified.

Funding

Funding for this project is from a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration

Small and/or minority businesses are encouraged to apply. The chosen firm must meet affirmative action and equal employment practices.